

Teaching Writing

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Outline

- Language Experience Approach
- Writing Workshop (Process Writing/Signing)

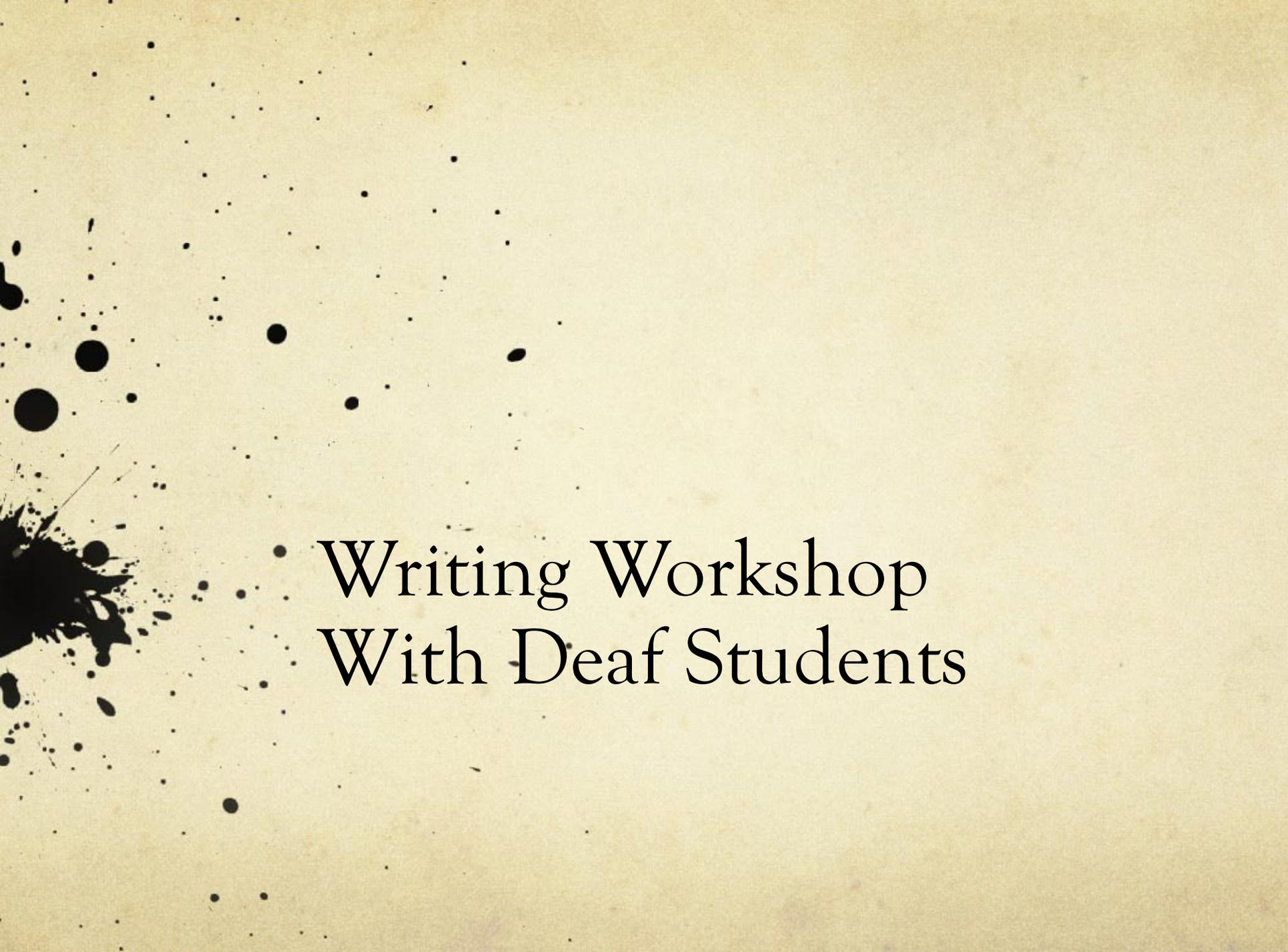
Language Experience Approach

- Students (or teacher) initiate the experience.
 - Topics include an object, animal, field trip, cooking activity, classroom concern, etc.
- Students and teacher document the experience.
 - Draw pictures or use digital photos during the experience
- Students dictate (signed or spoken) their expression of the experience and teacher records it in written English.
 - Collaboratively sequence the pictures and add the written story
- Students and teacher use the text for reading instruction.
 - Students copy story into notebooks, keep word bank, re-read, etc.

Follow-Up Activities

- Re-read the story
- Create mini-lessons related to the text
- Have students write their own stories
- Discuss favourite part and illustrate it
- Work with story parts – cloze, sequencing, photo match
- Develop comprehension questions
- Share the story – home, other classes, library

Discussion & Practice



Writing Workshop
With Deaf Students

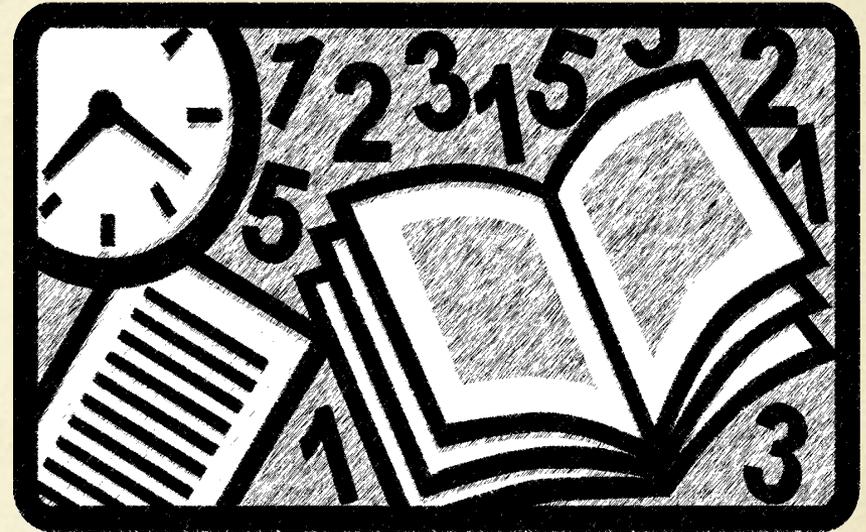
Issues and Concerns in Deaf Bilingual Programs:

- Similarities and differences between deaf bilinguals and hearing bilinguals
- Empirical evidence to support the theory that learning signed language leads to increased literacy skills
- Mixing languages in the classroom
- Knowledge of signed language transferring directly to knowledge of written or spoken language
- Introduction of languages - timing and procedures
- Language influence and/or interference - how does signed language affect speech and vice versa
- Connection between “storytelling” (or story signing) in signed language and reading skills

Sources: *The ASL Language Arts Curriculum*, Edmonton Public Schools; Naylor, A. (2002). *The Thomas Pattison School Literacy Plan*; Star Schools Project, USA (www.starschools.org); Swedish Schools for the Deaf (www3.skolverket.se)

Key Concepts

- Language, not speech, is the foundation for literacy learning
- Literacy involves making and sharing meaning
- The transition from language to literacy in deaf children has some unique features



Activity: Process Writing

Description

- Preparatory work (ideas, planning, brainstorming)
- First draft (rough)
- Feedback (response from peers/teacher)
- Revision 1 (content)
- Revision 2 (style, form, language)
- Revision 3 (proofreading, spelling, punctuation, choice of words)
- Publication (sharing)
- Evaluation (grading)

Modifications for Deaf Students

- Introduce “Process Signing” to produce texts in signed language (add language to their thoughts)
- Combine process signing and process writing to produce texts in two versions (written and signed)
- First draft can be written, drawn or signed
- Connect print to pictures or signs
- Each version has a “published” form (print or video)

Study: Implementing Writing Workshop

- Classrooms at the Manitoba School for the Deaf (grades 3, 4, & 5)
- Approximately 1 hour/day for 10 - 12 days
- Researcher worked with teachers to plan activities
- Data collected through assessments, classroom observations, interviews

Creating stories (English and ASL) involved the following steps:

- Pre-writing (Planning)
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing
- Publishing

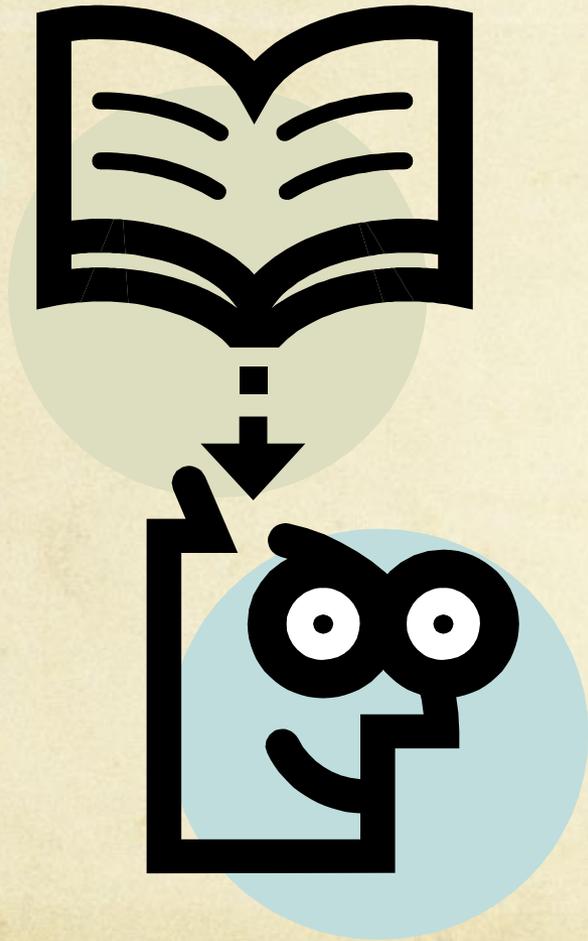
Teacher's Perspectives

- Developed a positive attitude towards writing
- Lack of time for background, skills, and process
- Activities that allow choice and have a purpose
- Students' knowledge of ASL influences English literacy skills
- Importance of metalinguistic skills

Findings

- Concerns regarding the logistics – additional personnel and equipment
- Importance of **ASL** in facilitating the writing of English versions of the stories
 - knowledge base, independent thinking
- Need to develop **metalinguistic skills** to create good stories
 - story structure, self-evaluation, editing and revising
- Greater **ownership of stories** contributes to learning
 - providing choices, building self-esteem, creating enjoyment

Conclusions



- Although writing workshop was a procedure that was implemented in all three classrooms, the piece that was different in this project was producing a parallel story in ASL.
- This provided more choice for the students which resulted in greater ownership of their stories, and it facilitated the writing of their English versions of the story.

Closing Comments

If one assumes that Deaf students have an established first language and that others in the environment can understand this language (often huge assumptions!), then the process of modifying existing language arts curricula to accommodate the visual and bilingual needs of Deaf students is quite straightforward. You need:

- Teachers with fluency in both languages
- Texts in both languages (print and video)
- An understanding of cultural beliefs and values, and
- Creativity to adapt the best practices used with all children.