Functional Sign Language

ASSEC, 2009
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What is functional sign language?

- American Sign Language (ASL) is its own unique language, with a complex grammar structure, idioms etc. Many countries have their own sign language. It can not be understood by people who have not grown up with it or studied it. It’s purpose is to convey a full message.
What is functional sign language?

- Signed English, also called Signed Exact English (SEE) or Pidgin Sign Language is a code of English. Although it is not a language in and of itself, it refers to English, which is a complete language. It’s purpose is to have meaning, while still being similar to English.
What is functional sign language?

- Functional sign language refers to the use of sign in a way similar to how object symbols are used. A smaller number of common, functional and concrete words are used to assist an individual in receiving or conveying a message. It’s main purpose is to be concrete and accessible.
What is functional sign language?

• let’s compare ASL and functional sign language. The first is used to convey language in all of its complexity, the second is used to convey language in its most concrete form.
What is functional sign language?

- Functional sign language is often iconic, and the conveying of the information is stressed over the “proper” method of signing. However, it is very important that all people sign each word the same way to the individual.
What is functional sign language?

- Functional sign language is used when an individual finds it accessible, and when other methods of communication are not, due to his or her neurological, cognitive, behavioral, or hearing status.
What is functional sign language?

• Sign language is an option.
What is functional sign language?

- If deafness is the student’s only or major disability, then ASL is most likely more appropriate. SESA offers resources in professional development opportunities for teachers and interpreters.
What are the Pros of using functional signs?

• Gives full access to the meaning of a spoken language if the receiver can access the message.
• It bypasses audition, lowering the stress of TRYING to hear, listen, or perceive sound.
• It takes less fine motor control to produce than speech.
What are the Pros of using functional signs?

- Uses the hands rather than the mouth.
- Is much more concrete than other forms of sign.
- Signs can be iconic.
- Staff only need to learn and use specific signs.
- Does not rely on speaking intelligibly.
- “Home signs” can be used, as long as everyone agrees.
What are the cons of using functional signs?

- Does not bypass some disabilities that relate to the retrieval, storage, use or processing of language itself.
- Many signs are similar. The signer needs to be able to produce subtle movements.
- If used in the Deaf community, eye contact is expected.
What are the cons of using functional signs?

- The communicator must be ready for symbolic communication.
- Relies on visual (or tactile) accessibility, and visual attending.
- Members of the community may not know the signs.
Let’s sign!

• More
Let’s sign!

• Finished.
Let’s sign!

- Eat (hungry)
Let’s sign!

• Drink (thirsty)
Let’s sign!

• Play
Let’s sign!

• Work