

Manual Alphabet and Classifiers

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DFST 335

Storytelling ASL: Receptive and Expressive Skill Development

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Manual alphabet and classifiers

We will be looking into what manual alphabet and classifiers are and how they are used in storytelling.

Manual alphabet

What is the manual alphabet? It is “an alphabet especially for the deaf in which the letters are represented by finger positions”(Merriam-Webster). How can it be worked into storytelling? “An ABC story is a form of ASL performance art consisting of telling a story using the handshapes of the ASL alphabet in sequence. It is unique to Deaf Culture.” (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority). “ABC stories use each letter of the ASL sign alphabet to represent something. For example, the "A" handshape can be used to "knock" on a door, "B" could be "opening the door", etc. Creating these stories are fun and help develop sign language skills. They offer the opportunity to be expressive and use your imagination to create a story while practicing ASL.” (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority). “an ABC story is just like any other story. It has a beginning, middle, and end. Many of the best ABC stories have a problem or conflict in the beginning and end with a solution. The story starts with a sign that uses the "A" handshape, then the next sign in the story uses a "B" handshape, then the next sign uses a "C" and so forth until the story ends with a "Z." Focus is not on the letter itself, but what the letter is being used to represent.” (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority)

Classifiers

“American Sign Language (ASL) classifiers show where someone or something is moving, where it is, and its appearance (e.g., size and shape). In sign language, an ASL classifier serves the same purpose as a pronoun in English. First, the word must be used, then the ASL classifier can be used to represent the word.” (Berke, J.). “Examples: There are many ASL

classifiers, involving handshapes that represent numbers and letters. Classifiers are referred to as "CL" followed by the classifier, such as, "CL:F." One set of classifiers is the use of the numbers one to five. Another set of classifiers uses the letters and letter combinations A, B, C, F, G, ILY(Y), L, O, S, U, and V. As an example, the "1" ASL classifier can represent people walking. In another example, the "A" classifier can represent a house." (Berke, J.). "Classifiers can be used to: * describe the size and shape of an object. * represent the object itself. * demonstrate how the object moves. * convey how it relates to other objects and or people." (American Sign Language University).

Conclusion

We looked into what manual alphabet and classifiers are and how they are used in storytelling.

References

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