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### Abstract

The practice of teaching deaf children how to read has always lacked effective pedagogy. The crux of this predicament is that educators do not provide students with opportunities to access the prior linguistic knowledge in American Sign Language that is critical for effective reading development experiences. Unlike hearing children who are learning to read, deaf students are presented with linguistic differences between what is signed and the sounds of print embedded within the English alphabet. The fact that the English alphabet is sound-based and its associated phonetic skills are critical to successful reading, demands the development of an alternative curriculum and assessment designed to combat the effects of disability (i.e., deafness) on reading.

Phonetic skills can be developed through the signed medium are made available through curricular tools called the ASL-phabet and The Resource Book. In addition, gloss text allows deaf students to experience reading in an accurate and fluent manner. This special text utilizes capitalized English words written according to ASL's morpho-syntactic structure (e.g., DOG NOW CHASE>IX=3 CAT for 'the dog is chasing the cat'). While reading connected text, deaf students are able to decode unfamiliar words using The Resource Book (e.g., one could decode the word 'CAT' by finding and reading its written equivalent in ASL:  $\Psi \subset \& \mathfrak{H}$ ). Deaf students are able to independently self-monitor their reading behavior, decode unknown words, and develop reading-for-meaning strategies. Comparative analysis between gloss and regular English texts completes deaf students' transition from ASL to English. These students are able to learn the grammatical rules unique to English that help ensure that they do not encounter difficulties in reading English.

The presentation will focus on validating the tools and teaching procedures that connect deaf students' signed language knowledge with print in a cross-linguistic fashion (i.e., ASL and written English). Videotaped clips from a tutorial will demonstrate two elementary-aged deaf students' reading behavior, including their ability to make predictions based on the use of context and letter-sound relationships (via reading the gloss text and written sign equivalents to English words). The video clips will show other effective reading strategies demonstrated during the tutorial including the students' re-examination of text to determine if their predictions are accurate, self-correction of vocabulary within the context of a sentence (according to ASL grammar), and reading what they do not understand with both accuracy and fluency.

This presentation will include an examination of the tutor's role in the instructional process. Video clips will model his use of explicit, indirect and systematic teaching skills and strategies. Also, the quantitative outcomes of how the two students applied their knowledge of ASL phonemes and effective decoding strategies while learning to read will be presented. The data will include daily ASL-phabet probes as well as results of running record observations over a two-week tutorial period. The combination of quantitative and qualitative considerations will shed light on the effectiveness of the alternative curriculum and assessment under investigation. The conclusion will include long-term considerations for testing of the reading program and for the special tools involved.