



GIVE ME A SIGN PROJECT

Level A1 delivered to Students on the Sign Guide Project 27/1/2017

The UK team are involved in another international project called Sign Guides. We recently hosted a group around 10 people on a 1 week programme from partner countries (Turkey, Italy, Romania and Spain) to teach A1 BSL for a 4 hour slot (10am-3pm).

The project Co-ordinator had requested a full day session in BSL. The UK team thought it would be a good idea to video the session aligned with the Common European Framework for languages A1. The video and written evaluation to be uploaded to the "Give me a Sign" Google drive. This validation of the A1 programme to foreign sign language students would be good evidence to support a proposed phase 2 Project.

There were a mixture of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in this group. An International Deaf Sign Language interpreter was present in the group; he had been employed to support the learners on their Sign Guides one week programme. The international interpreter should have been observing the session but kept interrupting the lesson. This resulted in the group learning BSL to be distracted and when the session was challenging they tended to use international sign language. As a tutor it annoyed me whilst I was trying to get the group to focus on BSL.

- *Should we focus on a 4 hour or 6 hour slot for a full day teaching?*
- *Should we avoid having an international sign language interpreter in class?*

The group of 8 to 10 people was difficult to teach as each country has its own sign language, there was not a lot of time for interacting with the students and for the group to understand each other

I would recommend that "Give me a Sign Project" should focus on one country to teach A1 sign language (beginners). It was extremely difficult to teach this group as some has international sign language as well as their own. It is not practical to teach 4 different countries at the same time.

- *Numbers in a class should be limited to 10 or flexible for a full day teaching?*

- *Should we focus on one country at a time?*

As the only tutor teaching BSL for 4 hours it put too much pressure on me. It left me feeling worn out at the end of the day. I would recommend for the 'Give me a Sign' project to consider having two tutors to co-work during a full 4-6 hours session for both A1 and A2. It would be more practical and beneficial to share the session and workload to give tutors a 10 or 15 minutes break. The session would work better.

- *Should we have two tutors instead of one tutor for a full day teaching or a full week teaching depending on the timetable? Partners should reconsider this carefully.*

I felt the group activities could have been better with two tutors as some were quick to pick up British sign language and others much slower which resulted in some learners waiting for others to complete. If there were two tutors presents, there will be lots of group activities (split into two groups), there would be more interaction and fun in the lessons.

- *How could we make these sessions more fun and interactive in a full day's teaching?*

Each session was timetabled for 50 minutes with breaks in between. These timings I would highly recommend as they worked well and concentration levels were good. Whilst my PowerPoint slides worked well for the foreign students, we need to think of more interaction material, resources and fun for the learners.

- *I feel 50 minutes slots worked well.*

We had a number of technical problems some Sign Videos didn't work properly and this affected the session, learners had to wait whilst we uploaded the videos. We need to be careful we do not use too many at once. I think it would be better to use the videos for receptive skills only (question and answer). I think some additional videos would be very useful. I will try to arrange to improve this Presentation before Easter and try to use different Deaf colleagues to film.

- *My opinion is delivering A1 BSL or other sign languages should be face to face between the tutor and learners instead of watching the videos. However I feel the signed videos are important because we have to think carefully for the next level A2 whether a student wants to learn online!*
- *Uploading some videos for receptive skills would be good and when filming a variety of deaf people should be filmed.*
- *My recommendation would be to have additional filming/videos for receptive skills ONLY.*
- *What is your opinion do you agree it would be good to have some videos for receptive skills during the teaching sessions.*

From my point of view, the initial assessment is vitally important for tutors to assess the learners' level of sign language in order to know which level A1 or A2 is right for them. This enables the tutor to place the learner on the correct level. During this particular session I didn't carry out an initial assessment and at the end of the session I concluded these learners were natural sign language users, and they would have been better starting on the A2 programme as the A1 was too basic for them. It really is important to carry out an initial assessment with all learners. Beginners on the A1 programme would benefit more from face to face teaching and group work to achieve A1. Level A2 programme can be delivered either face to face or online, this will give them a choice depending on their study duration or the time they will be staying in a different country.

- *Do you agree to achieve Level A1 this should be taught by face to face?*
- *Do you agree to achieve the next level A2 learners should be given a choice to have face to face teaching or online?*

At Level A2 project partners need to expand the programme/vocabulary from A1.

- *A BIG question for us to think about on phase 2 Give me a Sign Project, materials, resources needed on the agreed learning hours. We need to look at delivering these programmes on-line we would need tutorials etc. How much time will we have to create materials for face to face teaching and online?*
- *How can we mark their signing skills online?*

Overall, I felt teaching A1 worked well all learners achieved Level A1 objectives; they can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases in BSL. They could introduce themselves, could exchange personal information, they were all able to interact in a simple way.

Two tutors would have worked better, group work could have been completed much quicker, and we could have completed more activities and had more interaction.

The Level A1 programme proved interesting to learners it enabled the Deaf and hard of hearing to work together, learn about another country and their sign language (BSL).

I personally would recommend that the basic A1 programme should be delivered in a classroom by a tutor face to face. I believe learners with basic sign language could learn Level A2 via an online course, this would provide easy access for people with commitments and would also generate income.

Natalie Pollard UK Partner