



DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

A guide for teachers of English in Chile



Pedagogía en
Inglés
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA SERENA
CHILE



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Humanidades
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Departamento de
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De La Serena

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Second National Study on Disability, carried out in 2015 by SENADIS(1) a total of 2,836,818 people, over 2 years of age, are in a situation of disability in Chile, corresponding to 16.7% of the population surveyed . Of this figure, 8.2% are Deaf or hard of hearing people, even with hearing aids. Although this figure is gross, it is estimated that there are about 500,000 deaf users of Chilean sign language.

This guide was born as a real and growing need on the part of English teachers to have timely and pertinent information about the reality of deaf students that we can have in our classrooms. Knowing their own culture, context and characteristics is relevant to be able to achieve effective curricular adaptations and achieve our learning objectives.

For decades the Deaf have been exempted from the English subject, assuming that the development of this language is not within their capabilities. However, this reality has changed in the last time, which has led us to face the new scenario, with Deaf students who do are present in English classes, so we need to redouble efforts to achieve the development of their communicative skills in this language. However, we must be realistic, flexible and, above all, believe in the abilities of our students with hearing disabilities, always respecting their own culture and identity.

1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The legal framework that regulates education and inclusion in our country is given by several instances. At the international level, Chile is attached to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24 – 2006), ratified in 2008. This means that Chile, as a State Party to this convention, recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education, without discrimination and with equal opportunities, in addition to ensuring an inclusive education system at all levels. , as well as teaching throughout life. This Convention also establishes the bases for an Inclusive, non-segregated Education.

General Education Law, Law No. 20,370 of 2009 expressly states that “the system will tend to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to receive a quality education, with special attention to those persons or groups that require special support”, in attention to the concept of diversity. It also mentions interculturality "the system must recognize

and value the individual in their cultural specificity and origin, considering their language, worldview and history”.

There is also the School Inclusion Law, **Law No. 20,845 of 2015**, which regulates the rights and duties of the members of the educational community; sets the minimum requirements that must be demanded in each of the levels of preschool, elementary and secondary education; regulates the duty of the State to ensure its compliance, and establishes the requirements and the process for the official recognition of educational establishments and institutions at all levels, with the aim of having an educational system characterized by equity and quality of its service.

In 2015, the Decree No. 83, which indicates that regular education establishments must incorporate innovations and curricular adaptations, infrastructure and support materials necessary to allow and facilitate people with disabilities access to existing courses or levels, providing them with the additional resources they require. to ensure their permanence and progress in the educational system.

The concept of Educational Needs

Special, SEN, involves focusing on what the educational environment requires (design, adapt, adjust, make flexible, etc.), so that the student, without barriers and providing the necessary additional support, can opt for comprehensive development and increase their levels of participation and learning

(Library of the National Congress of Chile / BCN www.leychile.cl, www.senadis.gob.cl, SENADIS information booklet).

In this way, a student is considered to have Special Educational Needs when, due to their individual characteristics or differences or their context (family, social, cultural or others), they face some barriers at school that make it difficult or prevent them from advancing suitable for their educational process. Then the SEN are born in response to the barriers or difficulties that the student faces, so each educational community must seek and promote the strategies, tools and adaptations necessary to support the student in their process.

The SEN can be divided between permanent and transitory, depending on the period of time of delivery of the supports and specialized additional aids that the students require.

students to participate and progress in the school curriculum, supports that if not provided will limit their opportunities for learning and development. Within this classification, hearing impairment corresponds to a permanent SEN, and is diagnosed in clinical terms when the hearing loss is greater than 40 decibels, which causes limitations in the reception and handling of auditory information, which affects significant in development and learning.

(Support Manual for School Inclusion within the framework of the Educational Reform Inclusion Law 20,845, 2016 - MINEDUC)

1.1. Curricular adaptations

Curricular adaptations are the set of modifications that are made in the contents, achievement indicators, activities, methodology and evaluation to attend to special educational needs. It is a planning strategy that is born in response to the barriers or difficulties faced by the student, it is variable and adaptive, so its design will depend on each particular case.

Just as decree 83 of 2015 consigns, there are two large groups or types of curricular adjustments, access adjustments and curricular adjustments in learning objectives.

An example of this type of curricular adaptation is the prioritization of learning objectives, which can be applied to the case of Deaf students.

In the first case, it refers to those that try to reduce or even eliminate barriers to participation, access to information, expression and communication, thus facilitating progress in curricular learning and equalizing conditions with other students, without lowering learning expectations. Generally, access curricular accommodations are used by students both at school and at home and in the community.

An example of this type of adaptation in the case of Deaf students is the presence of a sign language interpreter in the classroom.

On the other hand, the curricular adjustments in the learning objectives, refers to the adjustments that are made based on the specific requirements of each student in relation to the expected learning in the different subjects.

2. DEAF CULTURE AND DEAF PERSON

There are various approaches to address deafness, however, there are two major paradigms that oppose each other.

The first is the clinical or medical approach, which has historically been used and ratified in international conventions such as the Congress of Milan (1880). This approach proposes oralism as the cornerstone of work with the deaf community. From this approach, deafness is "suffered" and what is sought is that orality is achieved through various means such as hearing aids, cochlear implants and other technological advances that help the deaf to "rehabilitate themselves".

The second approach, which has taken a greater role in recent decades, is the socio-anthropological. From this point of view, the Deaf are a community with their own culture and a natural language, sign language, so their education is based on bilingualism, which in the case of Chile includes the Chilean Sign Language and literacy in Spanish. (Humphries et al., 2012). Also, from this perspective, the opinion of the Deaf community is transcendental, achieving great protagonism

Deaf groups and clubs, who have made great progress in recognizing their own culture and identity.

From the socio-anthropological perspective, to which this guide is adjusted, the Deaf community in Chile, as in the rest of the world, belongs to a linguistic and cultural minority, therefore, its members share common elements of their culture, which are mixed with the elements of Chilean culture. The cohesive element is sign language, which has been historically built within their communities, where also their own forms and customs, derived from their historical evolution.

Deaf communities around the world have managed over the years to validate some fundamental rights, such as linguistic rights, however, the communication barriers that still exist isolate them every day from the hearing society. There lies the urgency and need to make the necessary efforts to achieve a greater and real inclusion of the Chilean Deaf.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEAF STUDENT

Before delving into the characteristics of the Deaf student, it is essential to point out that deaf people are not unable to speak so the term "deaf and dumb" is offensive to them. The truth is that the vast majority of deaf people have not developed oral language because they have not heard it, that is, they have not had the *input* necessary for its production. This does not mean that deaf-mute people do not exist, but they are very exceptional cases.

It is equally essential to know that the deaf community is not homogeneous, and as in any other culture, there are differences between members, as well as similarities that unite them and give them that collective sense of community.

Within the differentiations that we can make between Deaf people, we find, for example, according to the type, place and time of hearing loss, which can occur for various reasons, at different ages, and at various levels.



(Graph 1 - example)

The level and type of hearing impairment will have a significant influence on the cognitive development of the Deaf person, as will the early and timely learning of their natural language, sign language.

As explained by Ximena Acuña, academic coordinator of the Course "Sign language and

school learning” (Ministry of education-UMCE), having an effective and shared communication system is essential, since learning is based on communication and is the result of a shared construction process between the student and his various interlocutors.

- Whether there are other deaf students in the school and how they interact inside and outside the classroom.
- If the other members of the educational community, who are listeners, know the LSCh or the dactylological alphabet, and to what level.

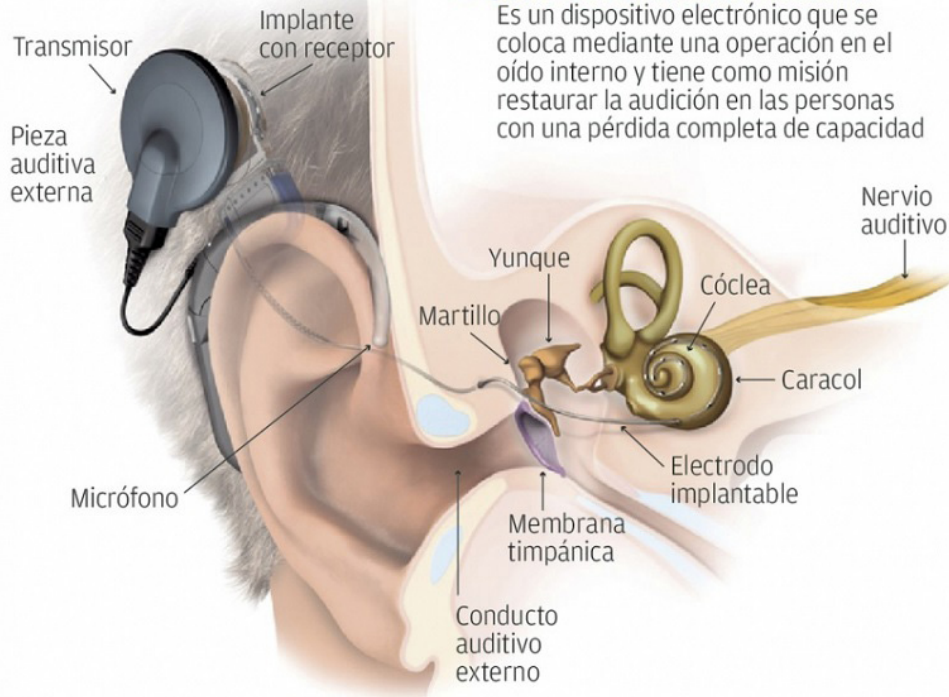
In this sense, it is essential to take into account the following:

- Degree and type of hearing loss (see graph 1)
- What system does the student use to communicate?
- It can be LSCh, lip reading, own signs, oral language, bimodal language (oral and signs) or another communication system.
- LSCh domain level.
- Level of proficiency in reading and writing in Spanish
- Strategies used to relate, both with their peers and with adults.
- Use of cochlear implant (see graph 2) or hearing aids.

El implante coclear

■ ¿Que es un implante coclear?

Es un dispositivo electrónico que se coloca mediante una operación en el oído interno y tiene como misión restaurar la audición en las personas con una pérdida completa de capacidad



Consequently, when we have a deaf student in our classrooms it is essential to know their own characteristics and those of the school environment that influence their learning process, in order to develop better pedagogical support strategies.

Image: <https://www.cochlearimplantlife.com>

4. THE CHILEAN SIGN LANGUAGE

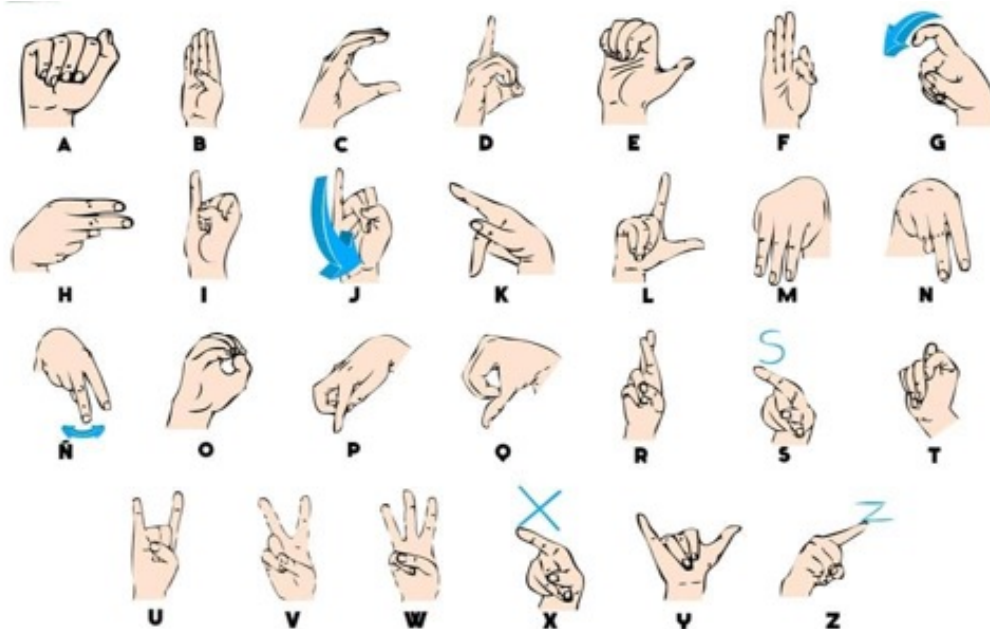
On February 10, 2010, Law No. 20,422, known as the Inclusion Law, entered into force in Chile, establishing standards on equal opportunities and social inclusion of people with disabilities. It took 10 years for this legal regulation to include the Chilean Sign Language as the natural, original language and intangible heritage of Deaf people. In this way, with this modification, it is established that the Chilean State is obliged to promote, respect and ensure sign language in access to public and private services, in education, in employment, in health and all the areas of life in society of Deaf people.

The history of sign languages throughout the world has been one of constant struggle, since for many decades this language was not an instructional alternative for teaching children and Deaf people. In fact, until recently it was not even considered a language. During the 1960s William Stockoe published research that revolutionized the way sign language is viewed or

signs. Stockoe (1960), considered the creator of the linguistic study of sign language for Deaf people, proposed and promoted a change in the paradigm regarding the use of sign language, which was seen as a mere pantomime of oral English (Stockoe, 1960). Through his work, he managed to get sign language recognized as such, a language, with all that this implies, and changed the oralist approach that prohibited the use of signs since it was thought that they harmed the learning of literacy.

Currently, in most of the countries of the world, the importance of sign language has been claimed, recognized as the natural language of deaf people, its equivalent to the mother tongue of hearing people. Sign language is a visual and gestural language that involves the articulation of the hands and the body in terms of shape, orientation, location and movement, as well as facial expression, which plays an essential role in the communication process.

All the properties of language, such as: displacement, arbitrariness, productivity, cultural transmission, discrete character and duality, described by Yule (2006), are



Diccionario Bilingüe Lengua de Señas Chilena – Español



present in sign language. According to the same author, deaf children in the United States acquire American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language using strategies similar to hearing children in learning oral language.

Under this perspective, the deaf are in equal conditions to achieve a cognitive development similar to that of a listener, in fact and as emphasized by Salamanca (2007), cognitive potentialities have nothing to do with deafness, however there are certain factors -

external factors that limit this potential in the case of deaf people, among which are, first of all, the late acquisition of sign language and its systematic denial as a natural language, late access to education or care programs early, among other family, educational and social factors. The Chilean Sign Language is typical of deaf Chileans and each country has its own.

The LSCh dactylological alphabet consists of 27 letters, and is used to spell words that do not yet have an associated sign. It does not consist of the use of the Chilean Sign Language, but it is a resource widely used by listeners when it is necessary to spell a particular word.

"Lengua" or "Language"?

A recurring error among those who are not familiar with sign language is to name it as "lengua" which is incorrect, since "lengua" in Spanish is the ability that human beings have to communicate with others. On the other hand "lenguaje" is the code we use to communicate, for instance, English, Arabic, or Sign Language.

4.1. The role of the interpreter in Chilean sign language

As detailed by the MINEDUC on its website, the Special Education Unit of the Ministry carried out in 2018 a survey of the profile of the Chilean Sign Language Interpreter in the educational context, which was validated with the participation of Deaf people and interpreters. Within the description of said profile it is clearly stated that it is a person who must:

"Apply interpretation strategies in any educational context, according to the meaning and intention of the sender's discourse, both in LSCh and in Spanish (oral or written), with the aim that deaf students access information and to facilitate the communicative processes between the teacher, the deaf students, their classmates, educational assistant professionals or other professionals of the institution, regarding the curricular contents and dynamics within the educational community, according to the needs of the curriculum and the characteristics of the students".

In short, the Chilean Sign Language Interpreter fulfills an essential task as a communicative bridge between the school community and the Deaf students.



Interpreters in Chilean sign language can work in schools with or without an integration program for SEN, as well as in special education schools, universities or any other type of organizations where the educational modalities of the Chilean educational system are developed.

The role of interpreters goes beyond the classroom and it is a linguistic right of Deaf people to have an interpreter in the classroom, even more so with the amendment to Law 20,422, which re-

cognize the Chilean Sign Language as the natural, original language and intangible heritage of Deaf people.

4.2. The Deaf in English class

Although Deaf students can count on an interpreter in Chilean Sign Language, communication in the ESOL class can be seriously affected. We must consider that in Chile regular students show an insufficient performance

in English as a second language, this can be observed in standardized tests. According to a national English test carried out in 2017, 54% of 11th grade students hardly reach level A1 (CFER) which is expected for 6th grade according to the curricular guidelines. This poor performance has led Ministry of Education, through its General Education Division, to launch the national plan "English in English". This plan aims to improve the learning of English as a second language among students from 5th grade to 4th grade. One of the strategies is to encourage the use of the English language in the classroom, which is beneficial in terms of the active use of this language to foster more significant communicative situations, but what about deaf students? The interpreter in LSCh does not will be able to sign what the teacher says in English, generating an interruption of communication that leads into the Deaf student's misunderstanding of what is happening in the class and, therefore, a detriment in their learning process.

Later we will see some strategies to deal with situations like this and to avoid interruption of communication between the English teacher and the Deaf student(s).

4.3. The role of the Deaf co-educator

A deaf co-educator is a member of the school community who works in an articulated manner with teachers and other education professionals. The Deaf co-educator has the role of transmitting the LSCh and Deaf Culture, working collaboratively with regular and/or special education teachers and other education professionals such as speech therapists, psychopedagogues, LSCh interpreters, among others. With the aim of supporting the teaching and learning process of deaf students, the co-educator contributes with orientations and own experiences as a Deaf person.

Not all educational communities have the role of the Deaf co-educator, but many of them have opened to this possibility that contributes to enriching the interactions between the world of hearing and the Deaf and strengthening the culture and heritage of Deaf students. from your educational community.

5. STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING OF DEAF PEOPLE

In Chile there is little research regarding the teaching of English to deaf students, however, it is relevant to point out some assertions made in the Third Language Forum of the National Administration of Public Education in Montevideo, in 2010, where through the IX presentation entitled “English for deaf students in high school”, we can find some evidence on the matter.

One of the great shortcomings when wanting to teach English to deaf children is that teachers do not receive specialized training in the area that allows them to have the tools to successfully fulfill the goals set in the curriculum (Díaz, 2010).

When deaf students are included in the same classroom with hearing students, the class curriculum must be rearranged for a specific reality. The teacher must consider that their class will require curricular adjustments based on the deaf students. Norma Diaz (2010) points out

in her presentation, that one of the most important things in working with deaf children in the classroom is eye contact, in addition to teaching what deaf students can really use in their lives, avoiding making the teaching of the English language look like something difficult to learn. The same author (Díaz, 2011) claims that deafness is not synonymous with learning difficulties, however if the children's language is deficient, this affects the general student's performance not only in the ESOL class but in all other subjects.

Some research points out strategies for teaching reading and writing to deaf students, in the context of teaching in Spanish. According to Figueroa and Lissi (2005) morphological segmentation would be a viable alternative to advance in this process. In this regard, they point out that this methodology "would allow the decoding of written language and access to meaning more quickly." However, they add that it is necessary to study this strategy in depth and its implications in teaching a written language to deaf people. This strategy could also be used in English teaching, such as when adding suffixes or prefixes that change the category of the word.

An example of this would be the suffix “er” that usually changes a word from a verb to a noun. Ex: “teach” – “teacher”.

Along with the above, the same authors suggest the use of strategies *top down* in the teaching of literacy, since this methodology allows the deaf to use the context to deduce the particular meaning of a word. The only disadvantage of this model is the lack of general knowledge of the deaf, which is usual due to the lack of social and cultural contact.

The truth is that there is no clarity regarding what are the best strategies for teaching a written language to deaf people, however, there is an irrefutable relationship between early exposure together with mastery of sign language and the potential for acquire literacy. At the same time, the use of the context and the morphology of words can be such a great help for this purpose

By placing ourselves in the English class, the help of the sign language interpreter may be limited when the teacher develops the class using

mainly or totally in English, so other strategies must be used, in addition to curricular adjustments, that allow us to ensure good communication with Deaf students.

Strategies to get attention:

- Gestural movements, such as raising the arms, pointing towards an object or place. It is important to keep in mind that gestures play a predominant role for Deaf people, it is basically an essential component of their communication system.
- If the student has auditory remains that allow him/her to hear some sounds, we can name him/her out loud.
- If we are close to our Deaf student, the best way to get his/her attention is to gently touch his/her shoulder or touch the table.

Strategies to maintain attention:

- Our facial and body expression will be fundamental at this point, what we communicate verbally must agree

with our body language.

- Eye contact is important with all our students, however, with the Deaf it allows us to maintain their attention, as they are people who have a much more developed visual sense, so it should not surprise us that they are usually very expressive.
- The spatial location within the room is another fundamental factor. Deaf students should always have a good view of what is exposed to the class and the teacher.

In order to maintain communication with Deaf students we must be more aware of our corporality, gestures and expressions. It is very easy for the Deaf student to lose communication with the teacher, for example, when we talk and turn our heads or walk around the room and turn our backs on them. It is a great challenge to develop a class in front of hearing and Deaf students, but when we manage to internalize the difficulties that our students with hearing disabilities must face on a daily basis, our work becomes more conscious.

Other recommendations for the development of the English class are the following:

- Simplified statements or yes/no questions with short answers, will help to foccus their attention on the essentials of the message.
- Establish a classroom language and routine, making sure that the Deaf student knows and understands it. For example: Post useful phrases on the clasroom walls that may also be accompanied by a pictogram, or, if possible, ask the LSCh interpreter to explain them this classroom language.
- Ask for the support of listening peers. Whenever possible, ask a hearing student to assist with note-taking or other activity that is helpful to the Deaf student.
- Use visual resources as much as possible to explain activities or give examples. It can be a projector, flashcardsor the study texts.

The Association of Deaf People of Zaragoza and Aragón (ASZA, 2010) published a document addressed to teachers with guidelines

and information necessary for classroom work with deaf students. From this guide we rescue the following points to consider in Chilean classrooms.

Noises: Sometimes, the deaf child unconsciously, when performing a certain movement, causes a noise that can disturb the rest of the group (banging the pencil on the table, or with the tip of the foot on the floor, turning the leaves, moving the chair or the table...). In these cases, you should not scold him, but make him see in an appropriate way that he should avoid, as far as possible, these movements.

Sensitivity of other senses: This situation often arouses the suspicions of the teachers since it makes us think that the child hears something, because he turns his face when someone approaches, passes or speaks to him. This is due to the sensitivity that they develop with the other senses and that allows them to notice shadows and lights, vibrations, moving air...

Mimicry: This is a situation that we must be very aware of to avoid it. Sometimes, the actions and behaviors of the deaf student are guided by what their classmates do, they copy them, that is why we must

ensure, at all times, that these students understand all the information we transmit. (ASZA, 2010, p. 12 and 13)

6 SUGGESTIONS AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

As indicated above, the curricular adjustments are varied and specific, so there is no single formula for developing activities with Deaf students. In addition, there are other factors that influence, such as the level at which it is taught (course), the level of English that you seek to achieve or the learning objectives, and also the previous knowledge that the Deaf student has.

Hinojosa and Lobos (2016) used the lexical approach (*Lexical Approach*) to teach English to two deaf students in 8th grade. From the conclusions of this case study, carried out in Puerto Montt, it can be drawn that when creating material to work with Deaf people, real images must be used as far as possible or realia, in addition to concrete material, since Deaf students reacted more excited when the material fulfilled these characteristics. At the same time, when planning manual activities, a longer execution time must be considered, since Deaf students tend to

Be more meticulous and detailed.

This research also concluded that a basic level of sign language handled by the English teacher allows a class to be held without the need for an interpreter.

Finally, it is suggested to incorporate cultural components of the Deaf community within the English content, such as a famous Deaf or words related to Deaf culture such as "*sign language*" either "*deaf culture*".


Some activities worked with Deaf students are briefly detailed below.

"Matching"

In the following activity, in order to adapt it to a Deaf student, the concept of "matching" must be highlighted or highlighted, making sure that the student understands what it means and what it has to unite, for this an example must be modeled so that it remains The instruction is completely clear.

1. Check your vocabulary: picture matching

Write the correct verb phrase in the box below the picture.

go to bed	do homework	get up	have breakfast	have lunch	have dinner
brush your teeth	wake up	have a shower	go to work	go home	go to school
					
					
					

Source: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/>

This activity is designed for the whole class, however, small adjustments will ensure that those students with hearing disabilities will be able to correctly understand what they have to do. In addition, here the use of real images is being privileged, which also benefits other students with SEN.

Pictodictionary

Another activity suggestion to teach vocabulary is the creation of a pictodictionary which can be made by the students themselves.

It is recommended to organize the pictodictionary by group of words or classify them by subject E.g.: "*Fruits and vegetables*". This activity can be adapted to any level and also becomes a complement to the learning of the

Deaf and/or hearing impaired students



student. The only drawback may be the representation of abstract concepts, for which it is suggested to talk with the Deaf student(s) so that they can decide which image can best represent those words.

Labelled

In English plans and programs, as well as in school textbooks, activities often appear where the parts of an object, a place or the human body must be described. One way to adapt these types of activities to our Deaf students is to use labels to indicate these parts.



(Photos: deaf students, 8th grade, Technical College United Nations, Puerto Montt, 2016)

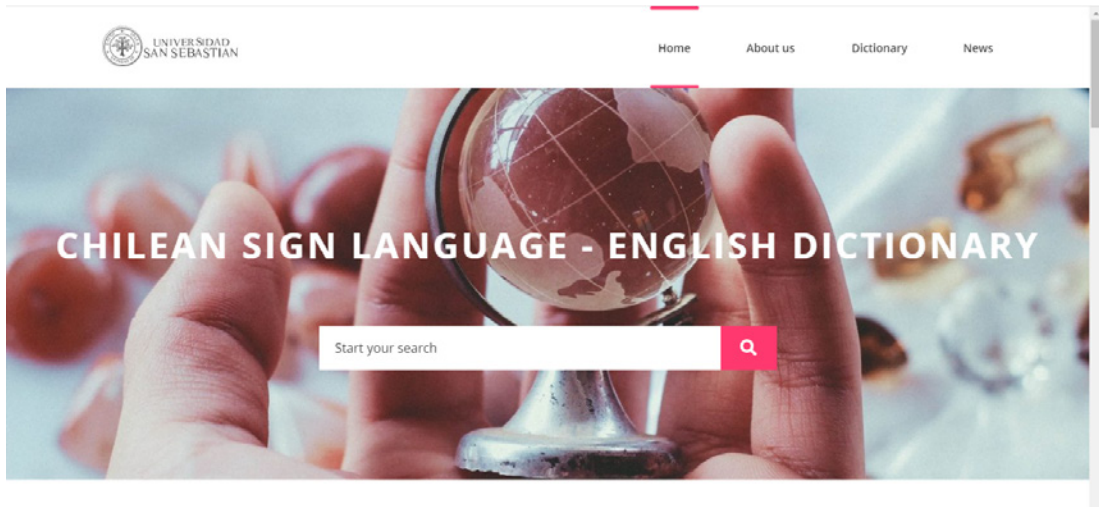


(Photo: Deaf student Joaquín de Los Andes School, Puerto Montt, 2014)

7 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Although the resources available to work with the Deaf in the English subsector are not abundant, the truth is that there are some that can be support for the teacher.

A basic resource for learning a language is a dictionary, a tool that is used in various formats to teach English to hearing students. In Chile there is



It should be noted, as has been pointed out before, that the ideal context is for the English teacher to handle Chilean Sign Language, even if it is at a basic level (A1). It is suggested to start with class vocabulary, which allows establishing communicative situations in the classroom, both to give instructions or ask simple questions to the Deaf student.

The first and only bilingual dictionary of English for the deaf, in which each concept in English is associated with its translation in Chilean Sign Language.

This dictionary was created by a multidisciplinary team, made up of English teachers, differential education teachers,

experts in English linguistics and members of the deaf community. It is accessible online and free on the website www.lschingles.uss.cl, where you can find the vocabulary corresponding to the national curriculum for all levels.

Words can be organized alphabetically, by topic or level.

Listed below are sites and resources that may be beneficial to the learning process of teaching English to Chilean deaf students.

Resource	Glossary of LSCh in Education
Entity in charge	Chilean Deaf Foundation
link	https://glosariolsch.cl/educacion/
Resource	Support Guide for Families of deaf children
Entity in charge	MINEDUC
link	https://especial.mineduc.cl/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/08/LahistoriadeMatIasysufamilia1.pdf
Resource	Sign Language Course
Entity in charge	Civil Society Council
link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZnv7yCE3ys
Resource	Vocabulary in Chilean Sign Language
Entity in charge	MINEDUC Innovation Center
link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3jA42TdMw

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