

# Cued Speech Association UK Newsletter



Complete spoken language  
through vision

Spring 2008  
Issue 36

## Important - change to newsletter distribution

### CONTACT US TO KEEP RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER!

We will continue to send the newsletters to some organisations and enquirers (and of course to all our members) but to save costs (and the planet) we are cutting down on the number we distribute. We would also like to increase the proportion we send by e-mail so **let us know if we can send your copy electronically.**

**Also** if you are NOT a member please get in touch:

- if you want to continue to receive the newsletter
- if you want to continue to receive information about courses.

**We hope you will want to hear our cueing news so please contact us (details back page)**

### Talk to your baby leaflet

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) is an independent charity that works to change lives through literacy. A new resource: *Talk To Your Baby - For parents and carers of children who are deaf* has been jointly produced with the Cued Speech Association as part of the NLT's Talk To Your Baby campaign, which aims to encourage parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three.

Communication and language are vital to the learning process to give concepts and understanding to the surrounding environment and this resource has advice and tips on communicating and talking with very young deaf children. Copies of the leaflet can be downloaded from: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby/TTYBhearingimpairmentresource>.

### Membership and fundraising

A heartfelt 'thank you' to those who gave more than the minimum for membership. Funding for the coming financial year is still needed. Can you help? Fundraising ideas, some of which will cost you nothing, are in the attached flyer.

### Long-term plans for Cued Speech

The open meeting held in London on Saturday 2nd February to look at the Association's long term goals was attended by 19 people and resulted in many interesting and positive ideas. Further work is needed to turn these into a robust business plan.

### Staff Changes

With the end of our National Awareness Campaign on March 31st our work will lessen and the funding for the post of Information Officer comes to an end. We are very sorry that Steve will no longer be employed as our part-time Information Officer but delighted that he is going to help out informally from time to time. We are also very sorry to say goodbye to part-time administrator Marion China who has left for a full-time post. Huge thanks to both Steve and Marion for their invaluable work. A warm welcome to Debbie Hawke our new, part-time administrator.

### Cued English at ERADE

We have been asked for more information about the work at the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education (ERADE) following last quarter's article about the use of Cued Speech with the Thrass system to teach literacy. An overview by tutor Cate Calder of some of the work with older students is in the inside pages.



Cate Calder in  
teaching mode

Correction: Laura Gratton, who is researching the use of Cued English at ERADE, has a degree in English Language Studies (Linguistics) and not Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) as stated in the last newsletter.

## Cued Speech Association UK

Making available information about and training in Cued Speech

# Cued English at the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

## How much can late and limited exposure to Cued Speech be of benefit to signing deaf students?

*The following article was written by Cate Calder for the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BAToD) Magazine and will be appearing in their May issue. We are grateful to them for allowing us to print it here.*

**About the author:** Cate trained as a BSL interpreter and can be seen interpreting the South West region's television news. She has worked as a Cued Speech Transliterator; is a part-time information officer for the Cued Speech Association UK and is an experienced and inspiring tutor.

**'Background.** In 2006 ERADE, in co-operation with the Cued Speech Association, initiated a trial of using Cued Speech with 19 signing deaf students. The aim was to support their vision of bilingualism and to improve literacy skills long term. Sessions at school include Deaf BSL-using adults to model and teach BSL skills and English modelled through Cued Speech (cued English or CE) as a tool for selected students to support literacy. The term Cued English is used within the school to emphasise its use as a literacy tool and to ensure there is no confusion with speech therapy. The use of CE with older (up to age 18) signing deaf children, using BSL as the language of tuition (rather than using Cued Speech as a direct communication method in the first instance) is pretty ground breaking. The process has been dictated by the needs and wants of the students. Both hearing aid and implant users are involved; but the degree of hearing loss does not seem to affect the 'ease of learning'. A research assistant has been employed to analyse the progress of 6 of the students.

**Where has the journey taken us?** For the teenage students afternoon workshops, given entirely in BSL, introduced the concept of English having different 'forms' using the metaphor of water. Water can take the forms of steam, ice or water, and this concept helped the students to separate English into the sounds made by speaking it (like steam in the air) the words frozen onto a page (ice) and the flow of words off a pen as they are written (a flowing river of water).

But did the students think in English? Staff and students alike drew 'think bubbles' to show what languages they had in their own heads. Most staff felt their 'think bubbles' held more English than signing; most students felt they had more signing than English. With some students we were able to discuss the idea of 'full language' ie BSL rather than 'signing' and fluent English rather than 'knowing some English words'.

Interestingly, the students didn't feel they had 'full BSL' in their heads and most felt that they struggled to 'remember' English words.

We looked at why lip-reading is so hard, from those terrible visemes to beards! We talked about the number of words most English users know (approx 250,000) and we explained that every one of these words is made up of smaller 'building blocks' of sound. They thought there must be hundreds, thousands, even a million of such building blocks and were surprised and delighted to find that there were only 44 sounds. 44 is do-able!

We showed them a DVD of 'born profoundly deaf just like them' teenagers in America. These folk had 'think bubbles' which held 'full ASL' and 'full English'. Full English? How was that possible? The answer is that they were all exposed to English through Cued Speech from an early age.

**Steam, water and ice.** This brought us full circle back to 'water'. We explained that hearing children 'absorb' language by being 'immersed in the steam of its sounds'; they hear it used all day. Their 'think bubbles' get filled with this language of sound. At school they are taught to 'catch' these 'sound words' by writing groups of letters; steam gets turned to ice. When hearing people look at this ice on the page their brain remembers the steamy sounds in their head. Take a pen and you can make the words flow yourself – you 'catch' the sounds and let them flow off your pen to freeze as ice. And the hearing child does this, because their head is full of sound. The only difference with the American, deaf, Cued Speech-using teenagers was that rather than absorbing the sounds by hearing them they absorbed them by 'seeing' them. Cued Speech showed them visually what their ears could not hear and their minds stored these 'silent sounds'; their heads were still filled with 'sound language'.

We discussed Cued Speech as something that works at the 'steam' level of English – it could show which sounds hearing people use to make the words they speak. This could help them to more easily understand how English works, it could make sense of the lip-patterns and may help them fill their 'think bubbles' with more English. We explained that this was a new idea for deaf people of their age but we would give it our best shot if they wanted to try. To their credit every one of them said yes.

## Cued Speech

Giving access to spoken language for deaf babies, children and adults



## Cued English at the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

**Then the journey really began!** It turned out that the individual 'building blocks' were not at all what interested these deaf students. Plan A, to start with phonemes and build up words, was scrapped for plan B which involved weeks of 'whole' words and phrases – everything from 'football' to 'will you be my girlfriend?' This does affirm the findings of research which says that deaf children initially understand the cued word in the same way as they understand a signed word – as a whole, - and only later comprehend how the system works.

Empty diagrams of the hand shapes and faces were subtly filled in with the phonemes that their chosen words highlighted. So, all the while they asked for more and more words an enormous wall chart was taking shape. Then quite spontaneously each student started to remark on the occurrence of certain sounds: 'My name *L* is the same *L* as *Liverpool* and *football*'; '*snow* is the same sound as *no*' and so on.

**Next - literacy.** They had seen 'whole words', they had broken them down into individual sounds and they could look at individual sounds and make up whole words. It was time to look at the mystery of spelling choices. We are using Cued Speech to unlock the teaching materials of the THRASS system of developing literacy skills.

The concept of 'one sound but many spelling choices' is proving a challenging one. Sometimes they may suddenly exclaim 'But you cued it 'rockit' and the letters say 'rocket' why did they put an 'e' there if its an 'i'? And so you explain again. Sometimes they jump up and explain it to you as though they just discovered it, but it can all be mystery again the next week. Why do they use the 'wrong' letters? Why are you saying it's 'shef' when the letters say 'chef'? But you just said it was an 'oringe' so why can't I spell it with an 'i'?

Luckily they haven't given up. Sworn, huffed, puffed and marvelled at the stupidity of those mad hearing people and their spelling, but not given up. They now know that although we hearing people pretend that spoken English and written English are the same language it is not entirely true. They know that it's not they who are 'stupid' but the crazy English spelling system!

**The development of other skills.** Deaf people who learn language through watching cues invariably have better lip-reading skills even when the cues are removed. 'Cue reading' or lip reading with added cues was built into every session and this is where they truly excelled. They took great pleasure in being 'better than the hearing staff', usually winning a weekly cue quiz of staff vs students.

Although it is not necessary for deaf people themselves to cue at all - they only have to 'read' it - as a teaching tool this has proved useful. Their visual awareness and dexterity made cueing fairly easy for them and the action of forming words has helped their awareness of how words 'worked'. Some students now ask teachers and TAs in other lessons, particularly maths, to cue words for them to help them spell and understand them better.

**Outcomes:** The students have a TINY amount of cued input. The main group get one and a half hours a week; since Sept 07 this has meant a theoretical total of 31 hours but illness and other school activities has reduced that significantly. The rest get about half an

hour to an hour a week.

However even with such a small amount of input subjectively changes have been huge. They enjoy idioms such as 'straight from the horse's mouth?' and are interested in and amused by regional accents. The main group can pick out individual phonemes within a cued word and the parents of several students have remarked that they are spontaneously picking up books for the first time ever.

Also the interim progress assessments have shown impressive results. Assessments of lip-reading, cue-reading, lip-pattern production, cueing production, reading and spelling accuracy showed progress – in some cases very significant progress - in all areas.

The work and research is barely half way through but there is no doubt in the minds of those who are delivering cued English that the benefits are enormous – we await with interest the final assessments in June 2008.'



Cue practice and cue games

## Cued Speech

Giving access to spoken language for deaf babies, children and adults



## Forthcoming courses 2008

Course Dates	Location	Level
Mon 7 & Tues 8 April 9.30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Exeter	Improvers/Advanced
25 April, 2,9,16 May 1.30 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.	Exeter	Foundation
Mon 4 - Friday 8 August 9.30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Exeter	Residential Summer School - all levels
tbc	London	Foundation
tbc	Scotland (several venues possible)	Foundation

**Book now for the popular summer school!** On site accommodation is limited. A day-time crèche is available.

Non-residential courses are continually being arranged to meet demand, sometimes at short notice. If you are interested, please get in touch. Current tuition costs have been increased to between £80 and £125 depending on the length of the course. For all course information and bookings please contact Kim, details opposite.

*Every effort will be made to run all courses as advertised, but please note that the Association cannot guarantee that no changes will be made.*

### Learn to cue or practice online

We have been trialling an acclaimed learn to cue website: [www.learntocue.co.uk](http://www.learntocue.co.uk), which was created for us by volunteer Andy Houghton. Some courses offered above expect students to work on the website in addition to face to face tuition. The site can also be used independently but some face-to-face tuition is strongly recommended. Please contact us if you use the site so that we can offer additional support.

### Presentations given & exhibitions attended included:

- 4/5 Feb Three Workshops by Anne Worsfold at the SENCO Conference, Sunderland
- 27 Feb Presentation to parents group by Anne Worsfold, Bristol
- 8 March Workshop by Alison Paton and Tina Kirwin at the BAToD Conference, Boston Spa
- 8 March Workshop by Cate Calder at the BAToD Conference, Scotland
- 8 March Workshop by Anne Worsfold at the BAToD Conference, London.
- 29 March Workshop by Catharine Seddon and exhibition manned by Catharine, Paul-Micheal Coldham and Angela McCool at City Lit Deaf Day.

### Forthcoming presentations, exhibitions and conferences:

15 June NDCS Family Fun Day, Crewe

## Cued Speech - complete spoken language through vision

Cued Speech is a simple sound-based system comprising eight handshapes, used in four positions near the mouth, in conjunction with the lip patterns of normal speech so as to make all the sounds of spoken language fully comprehensible to deaf and hearing-impaired people.

### Cued Speech Association UK

is a charity which was established in 1980 to provide information about and training in Cued Speech.

This is achieved by:

- providing tuition
- creating and making available teaching materials
- maintaining standards by examining
- collecting & disseminating information about international research and good practice
- creating and disseminating information
- working with other organisations and statutory bodies.

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**This Newsletter is produced quarterly.** We welcome comments, articles and news of your events. Please send copy for the next edition by 20th May 2008.

**Cued Speech** was devised by the late Professor R Orin Cornett in 1966 and has been adapted into over 65 different languages and dialects.

