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Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf Project



Jamaica Association
for the Deaf

FINDINGS, RESULTS & LESSONS LEARNT



The Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf Project is a cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to enhance the literacy development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children within Jamaica.

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The success of the USAID-sponsored Partnership for Literacy for the Deaf Project would not have been made possible without the invaluable support of our stakeholders:

All Schools for the Deaf in Jamaica to include the School Boards, senior management teams, teachers, Deaf Culture Facilitators, administrative and auxiliary staff, students and parents:

*Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf
Caribbean Christian School for the Deaf – all campuses
Danny Williams School for the Deaf
JAD PreSchool
Lister Mair/Gilby School for the Deaf
Port Antonio Unit for the Deaf
May Pen Unit for the Deaf
St Christopher’s School for the Deaf
The Jamaican Deaf Community*

*Jamaica Association for the Deaf - Staff and Management with special recognition of the
Education and Training Division and Project Staff
Special Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
Local and International Partners and Consultants*

CCCD	Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf
DCFs	Deaf Culture Facilitators
D/HH	Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing
DWS	Danny Williams Schools for the Deaf
IR	Intermediate Result
JAD	Jamaica Association for the Deaf
JCSD	Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf
JSL	Jamaican Sign Language
JSLGC	Jamaica Sign Language Grammar Curriculum
KP/MV	Knockpatrick/ Mandeville
LMG	Lister Mair/Gilby High School for the Deaf
LMS	Learning Management System
MDRT	Mico Diagnostic Reading Test
MOEYI	Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
MPU	May Pen Unit for the Deaf
PAU	Port Antonio Unit for the Deaf
PLED	Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PY:	Project Year
STC	St. Christopher’s School for the Deaf
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government



The Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) is especially grateful to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their considerable support through the Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf (PLED) Project. The PLED project has allowed the JAD to continue in its commitment to ensure that a robust education system is in place for our Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children. This required deliberate efforts such as capacity building of instructors, policy design and implementation, parental support, partnership and the design of a specialised Jamaican Sign Language Grammar Curriculum.

However, even more importantly, the JAD recognises the tremendous support from all its stakeholders to include the schools, Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, parents, students and the JAD staff. It is therefore with sincere gratitude, that we share the findings from the activities of the project.

Thank you!

Kimberley Marriott - Blake

Executive Director
Jamaica Association for the Deaf



Partnership. Literacy. Deaf. These words possess a very powerful connotation and indeed have fuelled the daily operations of the USAID-sponsored Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf (PLED) project over the April 2017- Feb 2021 period. They have also driven a very dedicated team to realize the targets set for this extraordinary project.

The collaboration among the schools for the Deaf in Jamaica to successfully implement this project as well as to realise the gains are truly historic. We have definitely learnt that “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” Networking with key partners locally and abroad has also opened doors of opportunity and access to resources that otherwise would not have been possible.

Globally, literacy development is a major challenge for students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. Designing and implementing targeted interventions for teachers, students and parents were the core of the project operations. We are thankful for the gains realized and are confident that our D/HH students will continue to excel not only in school developed examinations, but local regional and international assessments as well.

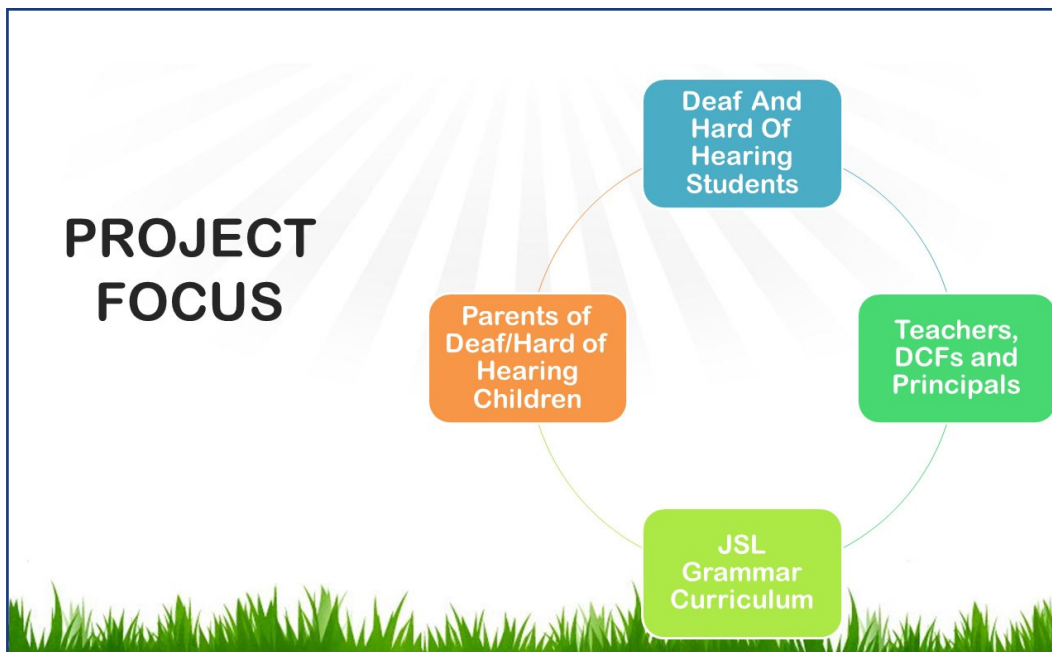
This publication provides but a few of the many successes realised under this project. Full reports may be accessed at <https://lms.jamdeaf.org.jm>. We look forward to continuing this journey in collaboration with you, to support the literacy development of our Deaf-and-Hard of-Hearing children in Jamaica!

Tisha Ewen-Smith

Project Manager
Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf

The main aim of the USAID-sponsored PLED project is to improve the literacy level of students enrolled in Schools for the Deaf in Jamaica. The literacy formation efforts of the project were anchored in a bilingual philosophy, which recognizes academic proficiency in the first language of the student as a vital component for success. It was cemented in the belief that helping Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students to progress beyond basic interpersonal conversational skills, to developing academic language proficiency in their first language; providing a stronger foundation from which to learn English as a second language.

The main goal of the project was to increase the literacy level of Deaf children in schools operated by the major service providers of Deaf Education in Jamaica (JAD, Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf and the Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf) by ten percentage points. The outcomes of the project were to be ascertained based on the achievement of the following four components:



The activities implemented during the project period of April 2017– February 2021, focused primarily on improving the language development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students through guided language enrichment activities via the introduction of JSL as a Curriculum Subject as well as the training of parents in appropriate techniques for learning support. Emphasis was also given to the coaching and mentorship of teachers and school administrators to build self-efficacy in the implementation of a bilingual approach to deaf education. Six schools and three units collaborated over the period for the implementation of project activities which are listed in the table below.



- Lister Mair Gilby High School for the Deaf: Hope Estate Papine, Kingston 6
- Danny Williams School for the Deaf: Hope Estate, Papine, Kingston 6
- Ex-Ed Unit Class: Excelsior Primary School, 5 Courtney Avenue, Kingston 3
- Pre- School Centre for the Deaf: Hope Estate, Papine Kingston 6
- St Christopher's School for the Deaf: Brown's Town, St Ann
- May Pen Unit Class for the Deaf: Woodside District, Clarendon
- Port Antonio School for the Deaf: Williamsfield, Portland
- Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf: 4 Cassia Park Road, Kingston 10
- Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf: Betline Road, Knockpatrick, Mandeville
- Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf: Granville PO Box 24, Montego Bay
- Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf: Eden District, Montego Bay, St. James

OBJECTIVE 1	Literacy Development Enrichment for students Increase the number of deaf students functioning at age-appropriate levels for literacy
OBJECTIVE 2	Establish JSL as a subject within the schools for the Deaf by 2018.
OBJECTIVE 3	At least 75% of all teachers advancing at least two levels of JSL Communicative Competence at the end of the three years
OBJECTIVE 4	Provide learning fora for teachers in the areas of effective in-school transitioning and instructional practices for multiple
OBJECTIVE 5	Foster the development of parents' communication skills through JSL.

List of Schools for the Deaf in Jamaica

NAME OF SCHOOLSCHOOL	TYPE	AGE GROUP	ADDRESS
Lister Mair Gilby High School	High School	13-12	Hope Estate, Papine
May Pen Unit for the Deaf	Composite	3-18	Woodside District, Denbigh P.O. May Pen
Port Antonio Unit	Composite	3-18	School of Hope, Portland
Danny Williams School for the Deaf	Primary	6-12	Hope Estate, Papine
Exed Unit for the Deaf	Integrated Primary	6-12	5 Courtney Avenue, Kingston 3
St. Christopher's School for the Deaf	Primary - Residential	3-12	Brown's Town, St. Ann
	Composite - Residential	3-18	Cassia Park, Kingston 10
Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD)	Composite - Residential	3-18	Knockpatrick, Manchester Eden, Saint James

Intermediate Result #1:

Students Increased student attainment of age-appropriate literacy levels

IR SUB #	TARGETS	OUTPUTS	
1.1.	70 D/HH students to receive Psycho-educational screening and assessment, complete with the use of individual development plans	84 students screened	★
1.2.	15 quality educational trips for students towards improved vocabulary, increased use of sign language and critical thinking	16 trips hosted	★
1.3.	Under- performing students exposed to better reading skills in Reading Boot Camps	3 bootcamps hosted	★
1.4.	Participation of students from the primary and secondary levels in Reading Competitions to equip them with better reading and comprehension skills	3 reading competitions (inclusive of one online version)	★
1.5.	12 Senior Management staff to receive coaching/ mentoring for management of literacy development in participating schools	12 School Senior management staff received coaching/mentorship	★

Intermediate Result #2:

Students formally acquiring JSL within the school environment

IR SUB #	TARGETS	OUTPUTS	
2.1:	20 educators trained as trainers for JSL delivery as a curriculum subject	21 teachers/DCFs trained as Curriculum Mentors	★
2.2:	JSLGC resource kits developed and reproduced for at least 65% of the 9 levels of the curriculum	Resource kits developed for 67% of the 9 levels (Levels 1-6)	★
2.3:	JSL curriculum developed and Level 1 piloted for primary and secondary grades	Curriculum developed with all nine levels Level 1 piloted with 57 students across	★

Intermediate Result #3:

Improved teacher competence for effective instructional practice

IR SUB #	TARGETS	OUTPUTS	
3.1:	40 teachers/DCFs trained in JSL Levels I & 2	43 teachers/DCFs trained	★
3.2:	80 teachers/DCFs trained in JSL Level 3	112 teachers/DCFs trained Level 3 and 4 Designed;	★
3.3:	Curriculum for JSL Levels 3 & 4 designed and developed. 50 teachers trained in L4	93 teachers/DCFs trained in L4	★
3.5:	4 instructional leaders benefit from a study tour/conference each year	PY 2016-2017: 4 PY 2017-2018: 9 PY 2018-2019: 5	★
3.6:	70 teachers trained in instructional methodologies	101 teachers/DCFs trained	★

Intermediate Result #4:

Increased parental competence to support literacy development

IR SUB #	TARGETS	OUTPUTS	
4.1	Shared reading implemented with 120 homes/families	133 families/ 172 family members	★
4.2	120 parents benefiting from parenting weekends	123 parents	★
4.3	150 families empowered via support groups and workshops	160 families	★
4.4	150 parents trained in JSL and positive parenting parish workshop	157 parents	★

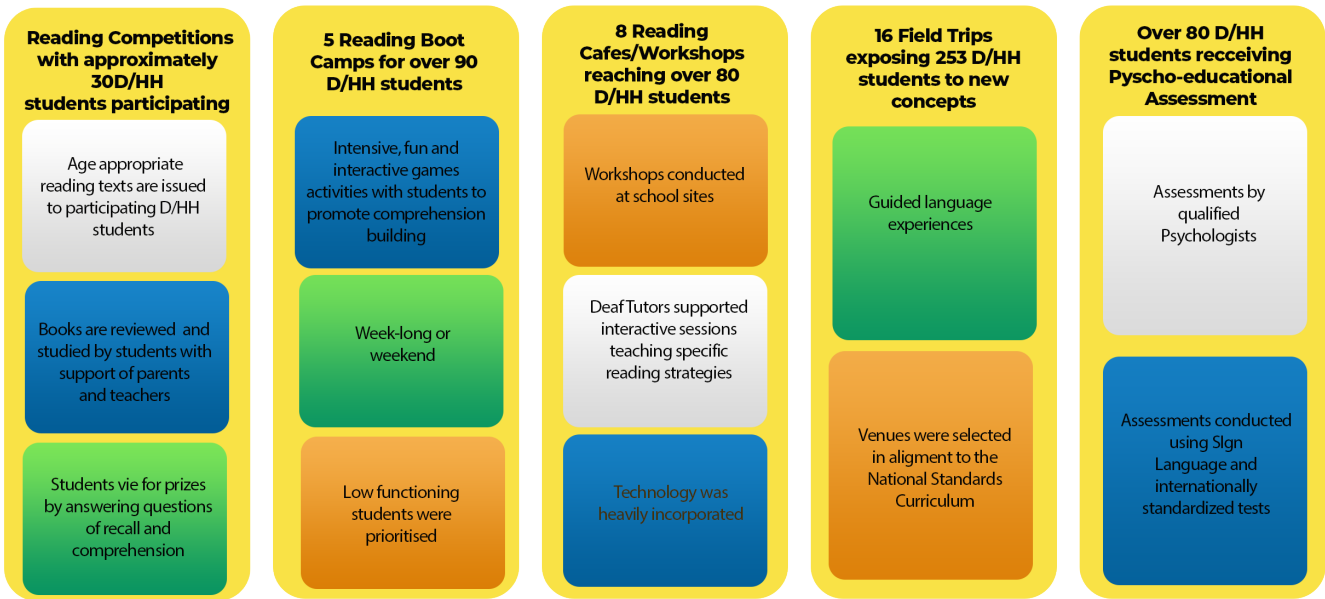


Specialized Reading Interventions for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students



The implementation of a Bilingual Approach to Deaf Education was the pedagogical strategy which created the foundation for the activities which promoted enhanced literacy development of Deaf students as a foundation for overall academic development.

Many Deaf students struggle with appreciating the rudiments of formal written English, and as such grapple with reading and comprehension. Focus was placed on improving the language development of D/HH students through guided language enrichment activities, which were specially designed to be executed with each school site. Literacy intervention activities included: diagnostic assessment of vulnerable students, guided implementation of instructional interventions, language experience field trips, reading boot camp, reading competition, Readers Café (student workshop) and reading workshop for educators of the Deaf.



Best Practices for Educational Field Trips for D/HH Students

- Align trip venues with curriculum content
- Facilitate soft exposure and in-class discussion with students prior to trips
- Have Deaf Language Models support tour guides on the day of the trip
- Label physical items or use labelled pictures to support exposure
- Engage students in discussion about the sites along the journey to the venue
- Have post-trip discussions and creation of experience trips or videos
- Gauge student learning through creative pre- and post-tests

Over 80 D/HH students received psycho-educational assessments using standardized tools to identify any psycho-educational contributory factors. The following represents the recommendations from the assessments for families and teachers of D/HH students with psycho-educational deficits:

- The classroom teacher, family and caregivers must develop JSL competence for successful language acquisition in and out of school.
- Community integration is important to facilitate diverse learning experiences , language stimulation and independence.
- Utilise games such as Games Concentration, Seek –A-Word, What’s missing or hidden shapes to support with short term memory, working memory and attention skills
- Classroom seating can be in an arched curve to facilitate peer modelling of language and peer-to-peer interaction/communication.
- Daily living skills should be explicitly taught inclusive of health, safety (adapted for visual alarms), leisure and basic academic skills.
- Visual cues should be emphasized such as for impulsivity such as a traffic light red-stop, yellow-think, go-respond.
- Visual cues for teaching concepts such as left and right can be an L and R taped to a desk.
- Consistent strong linguistic role models would improve student success.
- Environmental limitations to language should be removed.
- Utilize skills games like UNO, checkers and concentration which can reinforce those skills for planning, and predicting.

Overview

The 2019 Reading Camp had the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide 20 Deaf students in Grades 1-3 with an opportunity to engage in a 4-day reading camp that supports literacy learning through play-based activities and individualized instruction.

Goal 2: Provide 12 Deaf Cultural Facilitators (DCFs) working with Deaf students across Jamaica with an intensive and sustainable professional development opportunity to increase their assessment repertoire and pedagogical knowledge related to vocabulary instruction in order to better meet the needs of Deaf students in Grades 1-3.

Participants

- 12 DCFs working at Jamaica Association for the Deaf and schools across Jamaica.
- 20 D/HH students from Grades 1-3 enrolled in one of the Schools for the Deaf in Jamaica. Preference was given to students in Grade 2 which aligned with the project team's commitment to support early readers given the relationship between reading success and teacher knowledge and skill in the early grades (e.g., McGill-Franzen, 2001; Scanlon, Anderson, Sweeney, 2010).

Goal 1: Reading Camp

The first and primary goal was addressed by engaging the students in play-based literacy activities designed to increase student motivation and familiarity with letters, words, and concepts of print. Students received individualized instruction based on data collected at the beginning of camp.

While learning objectives were embedded in each activity, the activities were designed to be fun so the students were eager to participate. Some of the activities were so popular, campers would request them again. The activities allowed the students to repetitively engage in their individual goals and allow them to solidify literacy knowledge.

Students spent time daily writing about their experiences. They worked collaboratively in a group using JSL to discuss what they wanted to include and how they wanted to phrase what happened both in JSL and English. They built upon each other's learning and language to co-create descriptive paragraphs they felt their families would enjoy reading.

They worked on various literacy skills such as letter recognition, sight word knowledge, and concepts of print. By engaging in a number of different activities, students were able to interact with the same concepts a number of different ways. This allowed them to internalize new concepts and cement knowledge in areas targeted for growth.

The Reading Camp for students had the following structure:

- Three and a half hours of play-based reading activities.
- One hour of classes with DCFs and project team.
- Additional one on one small group instruction with DCFs during morning “pull out” instructional work

The structure of the Professional Development for DCFs/teachers were as follows:

- One hour of direct instruction on literacy concepts and strategies (DCF).
- One hour of rotating opportunities to implement planned activities with a member of the project team present to give support and feedback.
- Two and a half hours of engagement in reading activities led by a project team member in order for them to learn novel and impactful instructional practices.

DCF Involvement. DCFs participated in the activities in different capacities including observing and supporting students as they went from activity to activity. DCFs received an overview of the day’s activities in the morning which allowed them to ask questions and make contributions and comments about the design.

Student Assessment of Literacy-related Concepts

The following assessments were used to both monitor student growth over the 4-day reading camp and to provide JAD faculty members with additional ways to monitor student progress throughout the academic year.

- Student motivation survey. McKenna & Kear’s (1990) Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was administered to students at the start and end of the reading camp to establish individual attitudes towards recreational and academic reading and to monitor the attitudinal impact of the reading camp.
- Vocabulary measure. DCFs who attended the professional development created a vocabulary measure based upon words that they taught to children through meaningful, text-based interactive activities that are designed via the professional development experience. On the second day, the DCFs selected words they believed would be unfamiliar to their students based upon the texts they used to teach. They assessed students’ knowledge of these words on the afternoon of the second day of camp and then assessed them again at the end. The development of this assessment was informed by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan’s (2013) three-tiered model of vocabulary development.

- **Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency.** The TOSWRF was administered to students at the start of camp. This is a standardized measure of reading fluency that does not require oral reading making it more appropriate for deaf learners than most other tests of fluency. This assessment asks students to draw a line between words that have no space boundaries (i.e., onmyhego to on/my/he/go). It results in raw and standard scores, as well as grade and age equivalencies. This measure was given at the beginning and end of the camp, and served to support teachers with the planning of instruction.
- **Assessment of Print Awareness.** Students were assessed on their knowledge of print concepts using an adapted version of McGill-Frazen’s print awareness assessment. This assessment was given at the beginning and end of the camp to document change over time.

Word Writing Task.

McGill-Frazen’s word writing task was administered to students at the beginning and end of the reading camp to measure change in amount and type of words produced by each student.

Letter Identification Tasks

(letter to name, name to letter). Students were tested at the beginning and end of the camp on their knowledge of letters. They were asked to identify both uppercase and lowercase letters in print, and also the sign representing the letter.

Results of Assessments

The results of assessments administered to the students at the beginning and end of the camp are a reflection of the impact of Goals 1-2 and a preliminary summary of findings is presented below.

Given that learning to administer assessments was a part of the professional development training (described in the narrative related to Goal 2), it is important to note that various factors may have impacted the final data set. For example, the assessments were administered by a different team member and/or DCF at pre and post, and the post tests were administered while the facility was setting-up another event which caused distraction.

Lessons Learnt from Reading Boot Camps for D/HH Students

- Reading Boot Camp is not a one-size fits all approach
- Students should be carefully selected
- Teachers/DCFs can use findings from the camp to influence in-class instruction
- Preparatory work with students can influence the effectiveness of the intervention.
- Teachers, DCFs and Dorm

Based on preliminary analysis, a wide variability was found in the literacy readiness of the students who attended the reading camp. Some students were still acquiring knowledge about upper and lowercase letters and concepts of print (while other students demonstrated an ability to write and read with relative fluency. Based on these findings, it is not possible to make a generalizable statement about overall literacy readiness, however, based on the gains made by students across skill areas (as seen in the table below) it was found that these literacy skills were appropriate to teach and that the students were developmentally able to successfully acquire them.

Assessment/ Skill	Average Gain (across campers from pre to post)
Concepts of Print	+1.27 points
Word Writing	+4.56 words written
Fluency	+3.67 additional words identified
Motivation	+7.56 points
Lowercase Letters	+3.27 additional letters identified
Uppercase Letters	+2.93 additional letters
Sign to Letters	+4.87 additional letters

Goal 2. Professional Development Approach

The second goal was addressed by providing professional development that was designed for DCFs to engage in targeted strategy and interactive reading instruction to develop their knowledge related to instructing deaf children in developing contextualized vocabulary knowledge. This included opportunities to engage with new content related to the literacy needs of D/HH learners, plan instructional sessions with feedback from the Professional Development team, and apply what was learned with D/HH children attending the camp. Additionally, DCFs learned about four types literacy assessments which were outlined above.

Observations of attendees during the PD sessions indicated that they were highly attentive and engaged with the material. The DCFs were also able to successfully implement the strategies learned about during the PD sessions with deaf campers. Pre-assessment of knowledge of vocabulary instruction suggested that this was an area that had the potential for considerable growth among attendees.

The Jamaican Sign Language Grammar Curriculum: Pilot Implementation



Rationale and Background

The PLED project was implemented within a bilingual framework. As such, the formal introduction of JSL grammar studies in schools for the Deaf was expected to develop metalinguistic awareness in and about the students' first language and provide a foundation for more effective learning of English as a second language. The JAD functioned as team lead in a collaborative endeavour with major providers of Deaf education in Jamaica, members of the Deaf community and American -based Curriculum Specialists.

This curriculum was designed with nine levels and Level 1 of the JSLGC was piloted from September 2018 to June 2019 with participants drawn from all 8 schools participating in the PLED project. The pilot implementation was coordinated by a project team of Deaf and Hearing staff, supported by a technical team comprising key stakeholders in the education system and Deaf community.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE JSLGC PILOT

- Teacher's commitment to a diagnostic approach is critical.
- A team approach to meeting student's development needs holds greatest promise of success.
- Student readiness to engage the JSLGC is key and where this is not in place, an intensive intervention must be undertaken
- Buy-in of the instructional leadership is absolutely vital to provide the necessary support and guidance for the change process.
- The use of a visual approach to scaffold students' concept development and use of active engagement strategies captivated students and inspired confidence in their ability to achieve learning objectives.
- The reliance on a visual instructional approach and the visual modality of a signed language, made access to technology a critical component of this curriculum delivery.
- Computer literacy of staff and students, and access to appropriate technological resources must be factored into full implementation.

Objectives:

The objectives of this pilot were to:

1. assess the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation process flow
2. assess the usefulness of the curriculum guide and supporting resources for teachers
3. measure the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum in achieving the course objective with students

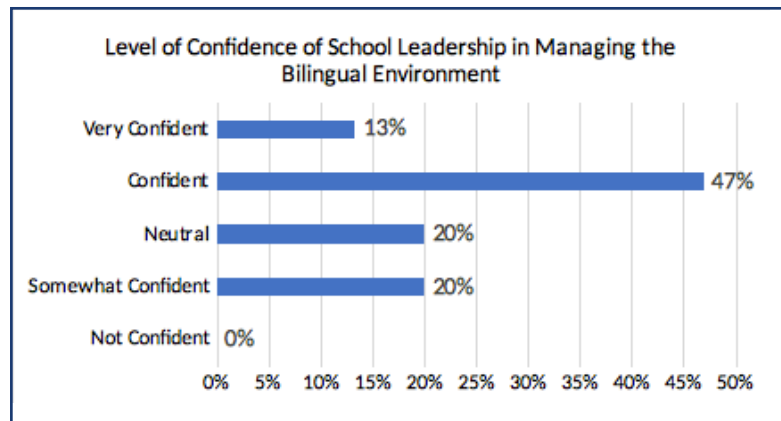
A purposive sample was obtained from each of the 8 schools, in order to have a spread of grades across the primary and secondary educational levels and to ensure that teachers were motivated to be involved in the pilot. All selected grades were required to have a native signer as the facilitating instructor. Eleven classes associated with the instructors who volunteered for the pilot yielded a sample of 57 students: - 26 (46%) at the primary level and 31 (54%) from the secondary level.

The year-long trial of the JSLGC Level 1, successfully engaged a representative sample of facilitators and students, that mirrored the “real-world” conditions of the Schools for the Deaf in Jamaica. This allowed key stakeholders to work through implementation challenges in a way that was both realistic and meaningful. It further made the final outcomes more credible with respect to the potential of the curriculum to produce the desired results. The engagement of a diverse stakeholder group for technical support included representatives of the Ministry of Education, affiliated tertiary educational institutions, school leaders, teachers, and the Deaf community.

Results

This pilot of the JSLGC Level 1 proved effective in achieving the course objectives. All students in the sample demonstrated progress in learning, based on a comparison of post-intervention test scores with baseline. Performance on the JSL content test reflected a 37% growth in the number of students attaining mastery (a score of 80% or more).

Although deliberate strategies were not employed to promote the transfer of JSL grammar knowledge to English grammar studies, student performance on an equivalent English test reflected a 45% growth in attainment of mastery scores, thereby affirming the assumption that students would transfer their understanding of JSL grammar to the learning of English as a second language.



In the course of this developmental work, several issues emerged that needed to be addressed in preparation for full implementation:

1. Cultivating student readiness to engage grammar studies
2. Access to supportive technology
3. Cultivation of Curriculum Mentors to guide implementation
4. Ongoing grammar training for facilitators
5. Online access to curriculum resources
6. Development of a Teacher's Guide for English instruction as a second language

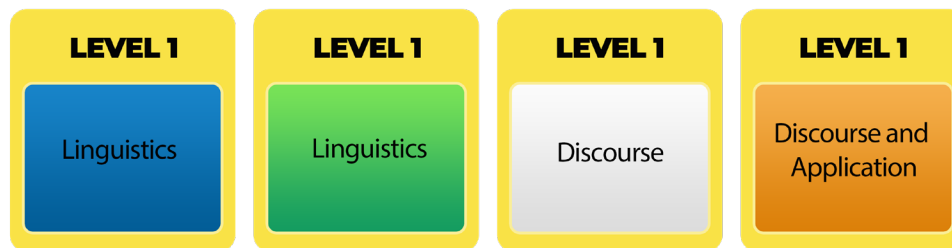
Improved Teacher Competence for Effective Instructional Practice



High communicative competence of educators in JSL is a requisite for the effective implementation of bilingual education and also strongly correlates with improved educational outcomes of D/HH students. To support the bilingual approach, the project placed a strong focus on competency building of all educators within the schools for the Deaf to improve the quality of student/teacher discourse and cultivate culturally congruent teaching strategies for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Working collaboratively with Deaf Adults as linguistic and cultural models, a series of four Academic JSL courses were designed, developed, and delivered to instructional staff. Through workshops, study tours, participation in conferences, and practical application in model classrooms, capacity in Deaf friendly instructional practices were cultivated.

To support the bilingual approach, there was a strong focus on training all educators within the schools for the Deaf in Jamaican Sign Language up to Level 4. A robust four-level curriculum was designed and delivered as follows:



Fifteen (15) Deaf Culture Facilitators within the JAD were trained as trainers to deliver the 4-level training at the school level following a training and certification process. An additional twenty-one (21) unattached Deaf adults were trained in JSL Level 1.

One hundred and twenty-four (124) or 97% of the 127 staff received training in JSL over the project resulting in 89% advancing at least 2 levels within the period from entry with the completion of certification.

Additional instructional capacity efforts included participation in Study Tours, presentation at Deaf Education Conferences, six workshops on bilingual strategies; our workshops on Managing Multiple Disabilities; three specially designed workshops for D/HH instructors and one workshop on Preparing Educators of the D/HH for Online Instruction in a Bilingual Environment. Model Classrooms were set up in all schools to allow for implementation of best practices.

BEST PRACTICES FOR JSL CAPACITY BUILDING OF EDUCATORS OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING:

- Utilize the Train-the-Trainer Approach
- Use more Deaf persons as trainers/tutors
- Provide more practice time between classes
- Ensure ongoing and timely feedback to trainees
- Employ a plethora of Assessment Methodologies

- Provide an understanding of bilingual instruction for the Deaf
- Identify how Deaf children learn to read
- Supply specific strategies for increasing reading comprehension
- Increase awareness of the main challenges Deaf students experience when making inferences
- Utilise strategies for improving writing skills such as Daily Quick Writes.
- Use technology in the classroom to create and present lessons and apply techniques to help students develop independent writing skills
- Apply bilingual translation of English and JSL for the development of students' reading fluency and spelling techniques.



Deaf Adults changing the delivery of Deaf Education from within



Deaf adults were empowered to become Tutors of Jamaican Sign Language (JSL Tutors) to address the problem of language deprivation within schools for the Deaf in Jamaica. Over the past two decades the Jamaica Association for the Deaf, in collaboration with the Deaf community, has sought to develop a more inclusive learning environment in schools for the Deaf, that is responsive to the communication access rights of Deaf learners and values the role of Deaf culture and language in achieving quality education for the Deaf.

The goal of the JSL Tutor training programme was to create a cadre of at least 15 Deaf adults who could effectively transmit:

- The value of JSL and Deaf culture in educating Deaf learners.
- Provide instruction in JSL to improve the communicative competence of teachers of the Deaf in four incremental proficiency levels.
- Model Deaf-friendly teaching strategies.

Drawing on Freirean methodologies, the JSL Tutors initiative offered a series of intensive training and personal development workshops of over 100 hours to a cadre of Deaf Adults employed in the Deaf Education system. This training which was led by Deaf professionals, built cultural and linguistic understanding as a priority. This was followed by adaptation of tested sign language training models to create a four-tiered academic JSL training programme for teachers, while honing the instructional skills of the Tutors. The process included opportunities for guided planning and presentation of lessons by tutors with feedback from peers and teachers. Following the pilot phase, full implementation of training at the four levels was undertaken, resulting in over 80% of the teachers in Schools for the Deaf developing JSL competence to a Level 4.

This case study of empowering Deaf Adults to be JSL Tutors affirmed the potential of Deaf adults to be change agents in Deaf Education, a reality promoted by the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disability (CRPD). Outcomes of their delivery of training to teachers confirm the invaluable contribution they can make to preparing professionals for the education and training of Deaf learners. This realization has implications for the recognition of this para professional training role as a career path for Deaf adults, and the need to formalise this position on the establishment within the field of Special Education.



**Professional Development
of Instructional Leadership
in Schools for the
Deaf in Jamaica**



Background and Rationale:

School Leaders are extremely critical in the implementation of the bilingual approach as well as leading in the charge for improving literacy development among the D/HH students within their schools. As the global best practices for Deaf Education emerge, the repertoire of instructional and personnel leadership skills of school leaders must also evolve. Professional Development was therefore specifically designed to empower and support school leaders (i.e. Principals, Vice Principals, Senior Teachers and Guidance Counsellors) to create and maintain a deaf friendly ethos and bilingual framework within the respective schools for the Deaf in Jamaica.

Interventions:

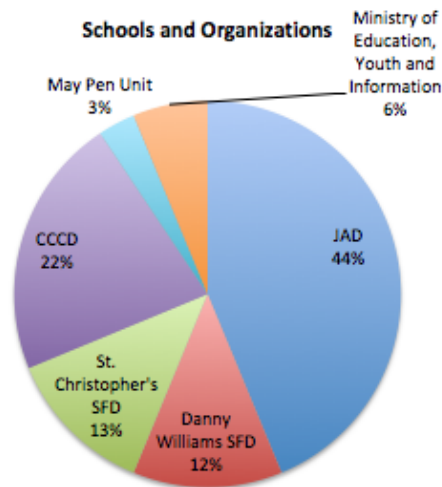
This activity was managed in phases as follows:

Phase One: Needs Analysis of Instructional Leadership Capacity

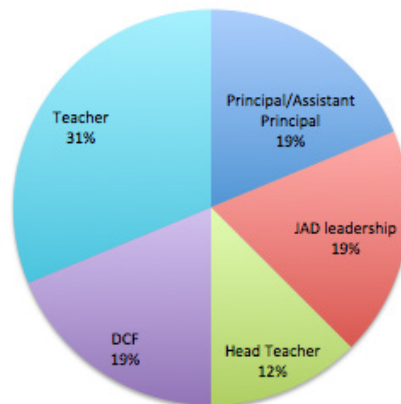
A Needs Analysis was conducted with 35 individuals using two surveys as well as interviews designed to investigate among PLED project partners, school leadership and teachers from all participating school. The gaps in understanding of the role of leaders in effective people management, instructional leadership and assuring positive educational outcomes. This included a focus on the readiness, willingness and ability to successfully lead the effective implementation of a bilingual education approach.

Participant Demographics

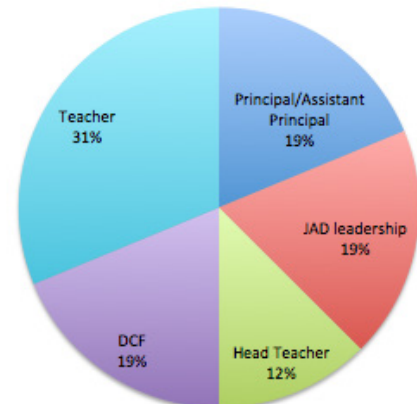
Schools and organizations represented in the survey



Survey Participants



Interviewed Participants



The findings indicated a need to:

- Create a framework for Deaf education that links a school’s mission and vision to specific instructional and linguistic practices relative to curriculum and assessment.
- Create a communication and knowledge-building plan for a bilingual approach that includes expectations for classroom applications, school structures, routines, evaluation/reflection protocols and resources.
- Promote and execute explicit teaching of JSL and Deaf Culture/Deaf Studies to both teachers and students across grades in a developmentally appropriate curricular sequence

The final report influenced the design and execution of the leadership workshops and other interventions.

Phase Two: Intervention Response I: Professional Development Workshop on Instructional Leadership in Schools for the Deaf:

A 3-day residential workshop was held with leadership from the schools within a bilingual environment and aligning operational practices to an established language policy. The workshop was designed to thoroughly and interactively engage with the following two overarching learning objectives drawn from the needs analysis:

1.1 Clarify a language philosophy that describes how a bilingual approach contributes to a vision for effective instruction for Deaf students.

1.2 Develop leadership and implementation plans for this vision. There were on average 25 participants which included Principals, Vice Principals, a Board Chair, Senior Teachers and Project Staff.

Throughout the workshop, participants made notes, engaged with examples and planned collaboratively in an individual “Leader’s Manual,” which served as a personalized resource related to the information shared and ideas generated during the workshop. School leaders also developed draft language philosophies that would guide the bilingual thrust at their respective schools.

Feedback indicated that the majority of participants reported the content was applicable to their jobs (average rating of 3.8/4). The majority of participants reported that the content was presented in a clear and organized manner (average rating of 3.9/4) and that the facilities were adequate and comfortable (average rating of 3.5/4).

1.3 Phase 3: Intervention Response 2: Mentorship and Coaching: Mentorship and coaching was provided to at least 12 school administrators by trained literacy and leadership coaches via video consultations and a Curriculum Lab/Community Knowledge Building forum.

1.4 Phase 4: Intervention Response 3:

A three-day professional development workshop Approximately 23 school leaders and 7 Project/JAD staff members participated in workshops which were offered over a three-day period (January 14-16, 2020) with at least two school groups attending each. The sessions were conducted by trained and practicing educators in the field of Deaf Education.

The workshop focused on three key objectives:

- a. Develop a set of shared Leadership Skills & Strategies
- b. Examine and use a set of problem-solving protocols based on site-specific concerns problem-solving protocols
- c. Understand tools to support inquiry processes for site-specific questions (potential for conference presentations by fall)

Outcomes of Interventions:

In addition to the leadership essentials interventions, school administrators also participated in workshops which focused on a range of topics that included managing multiple disabilities, JSLGC and bilingual strategies.

When surveyed, 60% of the 15 leaders surveyed indicated that they had some level of confidence in managing the bilingual environment with 40% indicating a lower level of confidence or uncertainty.

This confidence was evidenced in school leaders' indication that subsequent to their participation in the series of activities, they have implemented the following deliberate strategies to improve the bilingual environment in their respective schools for Deaf:

- Implementation of Model Classrooms which demonstrated Deaf friendly techniques for instructional delivery.
- JSL First Approach(Concept-JSL-English).
- Personal Development – Participation in JSL classes and commitment to using JSL while in the presence of the Deaf
- Teacher Professional Development
- Ensuring that all the teachers are trained in and practice JSL in the classrooms.
- Implementing “Sign a Day” sessions which were coordinated by Deaf Culture Facilitators (DCF) with teachers in the morning before school starts

- Ensuring a Deaf Friendly ethos to include:
 - JSL being the first language used at all times - in giving instruction, delivery of lessons and all dissemination of information.
 - All announcements posted coupled with JSL, e.g., verse of the week, value of the week, using JSL for at least the first half of staff meetings and PTA meetings
 - Posting signs with JSL pictures and English words
 - JSL club for students and teachers.

- In-class approaches:
 - JSL & Deaf Culture videos, having the students meet successful Deaf persons, and using visual aids in bilingual strategy.
 - 'Voice-off' in the classroom and encouraging the staff members to use JSL when signing to the Deaf and Standard English when writing.
 - JSL word wall separate from an English word wall.
 - Quick writes, bedrock vocabulary, JSLGC, leadership strategies
 - Making the learning more visual, encouraging more cooperative learning
 - Creating stories from field trips, pre-teaching of vocabularies, using sentence frames to give students practice with Standard English, transposing from English into JSL and vice versa, Drop and Read Aloud sessions.

- Instructional Supervision/Leadership:
 - Encouraging persons to sign more in class by doing regular classroom observations.
 - Design of the Deaf Education policy and guidelines
 - Sensitisations on educational philosophy at the management level.
 - Incorporation of the JSL curriculum materials into the school-wide timetable.
 - Regular reviewing and discussions of the materials and practices reflecting the school's identity (purpose, vision, mission and core values) to monitor and evaluate fidelity.

Promoting and mainstreaming a language policy and broad communication policy for staff and stakeholder engagement which guide communication and the way information is shared.

KEY OUTCOMES OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING:

- Development of Language Philosophy for each school location
- Empowered School Leadership to lead in a bilingual environment
- Action Plan for each school site to support the bilingual and language philosophy



Partnering with Parents in Jamaican Sign Language (JSL)



BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND PROBLEM

In Jamaica, out of a population of about 2.7 million people, approximately 54,000 are Deaf. (The Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2015), Globally, more than 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents. (National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders, 2016) with this trend being equally true in Jamaica. Most hearing-families had never interacted with someone who was D/HH prior to having a D/HH child and this can impact their ability to communicate effectively with their Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing children which in turn influences their language and academic development.

These activities sought to address the core issue of low communicative competence in parents and other family members by improving their proficiency in Jamaica Sign Language which would help prepare their children for academic success. The follow interventions were initiated to achieve this objective and research conducted to assess its efficacy.

INTERVENTIONS AND MEASURES:

- Jamaican Sign Language Classes for Parents
- Parent Silent Weekends (Voice Off)
- JSL & Enrichment Weekends for Teacher, Parents and their Children/wards
- Whatsapp Parent Groups
- Follow-up Workshops

THE SAMPLE:

Type of Intervention	Males	Females	Total
JSL Classes	16 (19%)	70 (81%)	86
Parent Silent Weekends	13 (22%)	46 (78%)	59
JSL & Enrichment Weekends	4 (10%)	35 (90%)	39
Follow-up Workshop	3 (10%)	27 (90%)	30

The majority of parents were hearing (92%) with 5% being Deaf and 3% Hard of Hearing. In terms of gender the majority (90%) were females which included mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

- Self-Reports from Parents (Surveys)
- Interviews: Parents, Coordinator and Tutors
- Pre/Post Test Measures (Content Based)
- Testimonials
- Focus Groups
- Project Reports

Summary of results

INTERVENTION	Number of Participants	AVERAGE INCREASE IN JSL RECEPTIVE SKILLS (post intervention)
JSL Classes	86	47%*
Parent Silent Weekends	59	3%
JSL & Literacy Enrichment Weekends	39	20%
Follow-up Workshop	30	7%

*represents percentage passes

The following results were obtained:

- 20% increase in the JSL Receptive Skills among participating parents in the first round of JSL & Literacy Enrichment workshops
- 7% Increase in the JSL Receptive Skills among participating parents in the follow-up workshop
- 25% of participants indicated that they never used JSL to communicate with their children before the interventions, which was reduced to 8% after the intervention
- After the intervention, 38% (an increase of 13 percentage points) indicated that they most times or always use JSL to communicate with their D/HH children

PARENT’S FEEDBACK

- “... I feel like I can connect with her more and about her culture”
- “I understand now, so I don’t feel so bad.”
- “... For me, I didn’t know JSL. But now that I know a little. I promise to do more and to do more signing.”
- “I wasn’t aware of the big successes of Deaf Children. This [workshop] has encouraged me to set goals for her and to interact with her more”



Providing Psychosocial Support for Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child



BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND PROBLEM

The value of parental engagement is significant given that communication barriers between parent and child have long been a factor limiting parental support of their child’s education. Parents who have D/HH children tend to experience higher stress levels due to the unique demands of raising a D/HH child (Poon & Zaidman-Zait, 2014). They have to contemplate school options; medical treatment/therapy; and communication resources and options for their child. (Poon & Zaidman-Zait, 2014). The self-report of one parent succinctly captures this:

“When I found out that my child is deaf...I ended up in hospital because I have trouble with high blood pressure. It was very stressing but I am trying to get over it.”

The following series of project activities sought to address the gaps in parental knowledge and attitudes toward parenting D/HH children and research was also conducted to evaluate their effectiveness.

INTERVENTIONS AND MEASURES:

1. Whats-App Parents
2. Parents Day Activities
3. Parent Support Groups tacked to JSL Classes for Parents
4. Shared Reading – Home Visits
5. Parent Training via Parent Silent Weekends (Voice-Off)
6. JSL and Enrichment Weekends for Teachers, Parents and their children/wards – Parent Training, Shared Reading and Counselling

THE SAMPLE:



Males
17 (17%)



Females
81 (83%)



Total
98

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

- Self-Reports from Parents (Surveys)
- Interviews: Parents, Coordinator and Tutors
- Pre/Post Test Measures (Content Based)
- Testimonials
- Focus Groups
- Project Reports

Survey Item	BEFORE
Did your child enjoy reading with you?	59%
How confident did you feel reading to your child?	64%
How comfortable were you with using the Shared Principles that were taught?	59%
How often did you read to your child?	18% (Most times/Always)
How often did you read with your child?	14%
Did you allow the child to be more independent (age appropriate)?	75%
How often did you use JSL when communicating with your Child?	25%
Did you feel more confident using JSL to communicate with your child?	53%
How often did you help your child with homework?	63%

Challenges as identified from the Discourse with Parents

- Financial burden of raising a Deaf child alone
- Boarding hinders development of relationship with child
- Absence of father figure, parental separation and lack of support in raising the child
- Inadequate parental involvement in academic development
- Literacy Level of Parents
- Acceptance of the Deafness of the Child
- Low confidence and interest in themselves and their Deaf/Child
- Parent’s own emotional baggage and other personal stressors
- Insufficient understanding of Deafness and children’s developmental stages
- Effective Behavioural Management Skills

LESSONS LEARNT:

It is critical that that the following factors be thoroughly interrogated and addressed when designing interventions for parents of D/HH children:

- Geographical location and distance from home to venue
- Time, Day and Frequency of activities
- Residential vs Commuting nature of interventions
- Appeal to the cultural factors, with focus on The male factor

- Replicate design with considerations for extended intervention periods, ongoing support (out of workshops) and different assessment methodologies
- Robust data collection processes before and during interventions
- Redesign approaches to cater to the males; specifically, the fathers
- Explore a parent-led/trainer of trainers' approach

Tips for improving the Competence of Parents and other Relatives of D/HH Students in Jamaican Sign Language

- Use a "Full Immersion" approach to teaching parents and relatives in the SL classes
- Employ Parent Silent Workshops
- Strategically select venues and dates of training
- Partner with professionals who can relate to the needs of the Parents of D/HH Students
- Formation of a national PTA body which will function in the schools and at a national level.
- A nucleus of Guidance Counsellors should continue to work with parents through frequent counselling sessions focusing on coping skills, behaviour management, single parenting, self-esteem, parenting a Deaf child etc.

THANK YOU



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