**Sign Language in the Gym: Relax, You Can Do It!**

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Say it with your hands! Attendees will be exposed to and made comfortable with physical education/activity basic sign language. Conventional signs, symbols, gestures, and strategies will be demonstrated for infusion into the gym. Select team sports, as well as, physical education/activity signs will be the focus of this session. Come, sign, and play!!!

Identifying the most effective communication strategy for any student to use in the physical education/activity setting – can be a challenge. Below are ten strategies for physical educators to use to enhance communication to ensure success of deaf or hard-of-hearing students in an inclusive physical education setting:

* Learn basic signs, symbols, facial expressions, gestures, and other body language; use and teach to the entire class.
* Coordinate communication methods for each student: sign language: ASL, Signed Exact English, Total Communication; interpreter use; basic knowledge and safety with various hearing devices, etc.
* Position self appropriately so: student may have clear view of teacher and interpreter, block sun, avoid dark shadows, and avoid turning back on student when talking assuring full view of face/mouth while eye contact is maintained.
* For these visual learners, use a variety of materials to convey content: Smart boards, black or whiteboards, videos with open or closed captions/subtitles, YouTube/iPad/iPod video footage, field diagrams, sport position pictures, illustrations, and stations; scoreboards, visual timers, start/stop signs, signals, lights, cue cards, posters.
* Provide repeated physical demonstrations, trials, and attempts to increase skill acquisition.
* Teach sport specific terms, rules and strategies, cues/idioms of a sport, game concepts, or lesson plan activity in advance and check for understanding.
* Recognize that excessive background noise may be a distraction.
* Provide partners, peers, buddies to model skills and increase opportunities for socialization, level of involvement, and success.
* Introduce students to Deaf sports, competitions, and recreation opportunities.
* Allow deaf or hard of hearing students opportunities to experience leadership roles in class.

(Adapted from Schultz, Lieberman, Ellis, & Hilgenbrinck. (in press). Ensuring success of Deaf students in inclusive physical education. JOPERD.)

Resources:

<http://www.lifeprint.com/> website for American Sign Language (ASL) students and teachers

<http://www.handspeak.com/> website to learn sign language (ASL dictionary)

<http://www.signingonline.com> website to learn ASL via a computer, tablet, smart phone

<http://www.aslpro.com> website for classroom teacher

<http://www.aslized.org> website of teaching/learning materials

<http://www.msmproductionsltd.com> QNA about Deaf culture, community, and communication

Promoting language through physical education. Columna & Lieberman (2011). Text features sign and Spanish languages; with DVD. Available [www.humankinetics.com](http://www.humankinetics.com) (DVD) – ASL focused text.

*Additional recommendations: website, text, DVD:*

<http://www.usdeafsports.org> Official website of the USA Deaf Sports Federation

Signing Exact English (SEE). Gustason & Zawolkow (1993). Text: pocket edition (not ASL).

A closer look: Signs for sports. (2006). Available @ [www.pepnet.org/sports](http://www.pepnet.org/sports) (not ASL).

DVD containing sign language for: baseball/softball, basketball, football, golf, and track and field.

Besides the listed online resources, various books are available to help you learn sign language.