



Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Sense for Technology

Subject

Contemporary Studies

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- discuss American Sign Language (ASL);
- work in pairs to review the fingerspelling alphabet and learn how to spell a few common words; and
- work with a partner to learn signs for 10 different words related to a selected topic and then write and perform a piece that uses those 10 signs.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Print and online resources about ASL
- Copies of the ASL fingerspelling alphabet

Procedures

1. After watching the video, ask students to describe the main way deaf people communicate. (*They use sign language.*) Share these facts about ASL:
 - The sign language used by deaf people in the United States and Canada is American Sign Language, often called "ASL."
 - People speaking in ASL use their hands to form signs; ASL also uses facial expressions and body movements.
 - ASL is a language. For most deaf people in America, ASL is their native language in the same way English is the native language for most hearing Americans.
 - Anyone can learn ASL, just like they can learn French, Spanish, and German.
 - Deaf people in many countries use signs. However, different countries use

- different sign languages.
- ASL is the third most common language used in the United States, after English and Spanish.
2. Tell students they will be learning about two different forms of ASL: fingerspelling and signing. With fingerspelling, every letter of the alphabet has a special sign. These signs are used to spell the word you want to communicate. With sign language, you use a hand gesture – along with facial expressions and other movements – to express an entire word or phrase. Although students will learn the basic alphabet (fingerspelling) and a few simple signs, explain that it would take years of practice to become fluent in this language.
 3. Tell the class that the first step of the lesson is working in pairs to learn the ASL fingerspelling alphabet. (You may also want them to learn how to sign the numbers 1 through 10.) Before they begin, share the following simple rules:
 - Fingerspell with the hand you write with.
 - Don't move your arm when you spell.
 - Pause briefly between words.
 - You don't have to spell quickly, just clearly.
 4. Once students have selected a partner, give each pair a copy of the ASL alphabet from the first Web site below. (Note that the letters "J" and "Z" entail movement. Either review these two letters as a class, or have the pairs visit the site and watch how each is signed.) Have students spend the rest of the class period and their homework time that evening familiarizing themselves with the ASL alphabet. Their assignment for the next class is to spell "hello," their first name, their partner's first name, and their favorite food. (Students should not reveal their favorite food to their partners.) If students also reviewed numbers, have them learn their phone number. If students are unsure about what a word would look like, have them use the "ASL Fingerspelling Converter" site below.
 - ASL fingerspelling alphabet
<http://where.com/scott.net/asl/abc.html>
 - ASL fingerspelling converter (see words fingerspelled)
<http://www.where.com/scott.net/asl/lookup.html>
 - Facts and tips about fingerspelling
<http://www.signingonline.com/demo/fingerspelling/index.html>
 - ASL signs for the numbers 1-10
http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/Numbers.html
 - Rules for signing numbers
<http://www.signingonline.com/demo/numbers/index.html>
 5. At the beginning of the next class, have the pairs practice what they learned. When students fingerspell their favorite food, can their partners understand them? Then, have them take turns asking and answering short questions.

6. Explain that in the second part of the lesson, they will learn a few ASL word signs. With this method, people use one sign for an entire word, rather than spelling it out. Have students choose new partners, and assign each pair a topic. You can use these topics or create your own:
 - Around the House
 - Human Body
 - Mealtime
 - Family
 - At the Store
 - At School
 - Around Town
 - Weather
 - Nighttime
 - Music

7. For their assigned topic, have each pair list 10 common words, being sure to include at least two verbs and two adjectives. (For example, the "mealtime" pair may want to learn: food, hungry, eat, cook, delicious, hot, pizza, cheese, pepperoni, and mushrooms.) Have students use the site below to learn the signs for those words. If the sign isn't given, have them find a new or related word. Have partners practice their signs.
<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

8. Finally, ask each pair to come up with a short skit, poem, or song that incorporates their 10 signs. Students should perform their pieces for the class, with partners taking turns speaking the words and signing.

Extensions

- Divide the class into five groups, one for each of these bat topics: habitat, diet, physical, communication, and breeding. Have each group research important facts about their topic, including at least one surprising or fascinating fact, and present their findings to the class.

- Have students research Dolly, other cloned animals, or other attempts at cloning and then present their findings to the class. What animals are being cloned? What is the main purpose of this scientific research? Why is it so difficult to clone an animal?

- Reinforce lessons about how the eye works and reacts by showing your class optical illusions. These sites provide some great ideas:
 - <http://www.harmsy.freeuk.com/eyemagic.html>
 - <http://www.vision3d.com/>

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; demonstrated how to fingerspell most of the letters of the alphabet; were able to fingerspell all the assigned words, research and demonstrate ten ASL signs, and perform a clear, coherent piece using all 10 ASL signs.

2 points: Students showed satisfactory participation in class discussions; demonstrated how to fingerspell some of the letters of the alphabet; were able to fingerspell most of the assigned words, research and demonstrate most of the ASL signs, and perform an adequate piece using most of the ASL signs.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; could fingerspell few or none of the letters of the alphabet; were not able to fingerspell the assigned words, research and demonstrate the ASL signs, and create an adequate performance using ASL signs.

Vocabulary

American Sign Language (ASL)

Definition: The system of sign language used in America and Canada

Context: Facial expressions and body movements are important components of ASL.

fingerspelling

Definition: To use your hands to sign the letters of a word (also called the "manual alphabet")

Context: Fingerspelling is often used for names and for obscure or unknown words.

sign language

Definition: A form of communication based on hand gestures ("signs" formed by the hands), body movements, and facial expressions rather than the spoken word

Context: Over one million people in the United States communicate using sign language.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following science education standards created by the National Academy of Sciences:

- Life Science: Regulation and behavior; Diversity and adaptations of organisms
- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Populations, resources, and environments

Credit

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