

American Sign Language (ASL) — What’s New?

The ASL as a Second Language curriculum is designed to contribute to the development of the educated citizen. The educated citizen is mindful, is able to learn and to think critically, and can communicate information from a broad knowledge base. Educated citizens understand the importance of learning languages and the opportunities for employment, travel, and connection with people and cultures outside of their own that language learning can bring.

The ASL curriculum aligns the curriculum goals with the Big Ideas and learning standards through the following new features:

- greater flexibility for teachers to use a wide range of approaches to language instruction
- a more integrated approach to required Curricular Competencies, Content, and transferable Big Ideas about language learning
- organization of the focus on “doing” in the Curricular Competencies based on the Core Competencies of thinking, communication, and personal and social awareness
- an emphasis on the exploration of culture as a vehicle for acquiring deeper understanding of language, of others, and of one’s own identity
- an updated definition of *text* that includes a wider range of text types
- recognition of the important role that stories play in the meaningful sharing of knowledge, ideas, and feelings
- the inclusion of First Peoples content and perspectives

For more information on these new features, please refer to the *Introduction to ASL*.

While the ASL curriculum enables a variety of instructional approaches, it was designed with a place-based approach in mind. A place-based approach is an evolving, cross-curricular instructional approach that emphasizes the value of learning directly from one’s own community or region. Place-based learning:

- emphasizes hands-on, real-world learning experiences
- helps students develop ties to their community
- enhances students’ appreciation for culture
- develops an active, engaged, educated citizenry

The connection between people and place is foundational to First Peoples perspectives on the world.

The redesigned ASL curriculum retains the following important features of the existing curriculum:

- a continued emphasis on the development of all of the language competencies — reading, writing, viewing, communicating and interacting
- adherence to the principle that acquiring ASL includes learning about Deaf culture
- the use of authentic documents, creative works, and tasks to support the development of communication proficiency

Teachers may use many strategies and resources to enhance and support language learning. The redesigned curriculum supports a variety of instructional practices and can be used with a range of curriculum and assessment resources.

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