

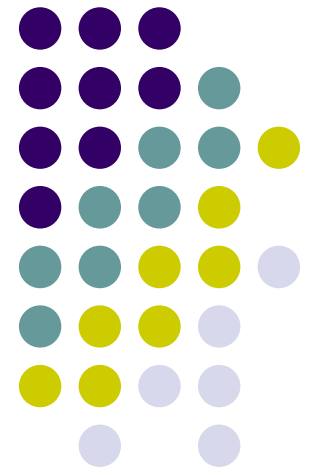
# WFD Education Policy - Strategy for a Change

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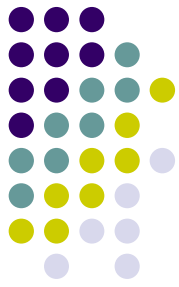
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# Content



- Principles
- Deaf education programmes
- Facts
- Some fundamental changes
- Multiculturalism, multilingualism
- Success?
- WFD Statement of Rights and Recommendations
- Action Plan

# WFD Educational Principles

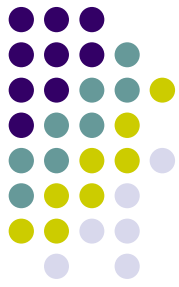


- Deaf children must have access to equal and quality education.
- Deaf people = primarily visual beings -> sign language and visual strategies must be made available to Deaf people as a birthright
- Education = a continuous, life-long process = life-long learning
- **WFD: to deny Deaf children access to a quality education and their bill of rights is tantamount to child abuse**



- Without a strong educational and language base, it is difficult to succeed in today's communities and marketplaces, and in the world of technology and information.

# Linguistic Human Rights



- WFD supports the right of Deaf children to acquire full mastery of their sign language as their 'mother tongue', as well as to learn the language(s) used by their family and community.
- Deaf children must also have access to adult role models fluent in sign language.
- The realisation of linguistic human rights -> realisation of basic human rights to education, freedom of thought and expression, enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, protection from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and freedom from subjection to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.
- mastery of language(s) enables a child to express her/his needs and desires, and gives him/her the tool to protect and to assert him/herself as a human being.

# Family Support Important



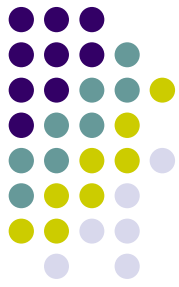
- The community (municipal) support to the families of a deaf child for example in the form of a sign language teaching to the parents as early as possible is very crucial to the overall development of a child

# Bilingual Deaf education?



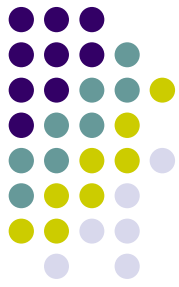
- Deaf children have their national/local sign language as their primary language.
- Later on they will learn spoken language of their environment as their second language in a written form.
- This is taught by using principles similar to teaching a second language.
- Both languages are given an equal status.

# Deaf education programmes



- language deprivation or submersion programmes
  - oral programmes (most deaf schools in the world)
- transitional programmes
  - Total Communication programmes
- language shelter or maintenance programmes
  - few bilingual programmes

# Some facts



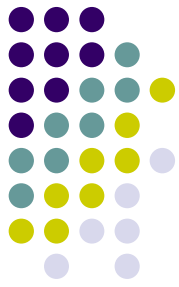
- **The brain, without adequate stimulation during the critical learning years, ages 0-3, may atrophy as much as 30%. Due to insufficient family and community support during this critical time, Deaf children are needlessly stalled in language acquisition until they commence formal schooling.**
- **Deaf children of Deaf adults generally have a head start in language acquisition, communication development and educational prowess, and do well in later life as employees, citizens and leaders.**
- **Literacy and language does not equal speech and communication. Language development must precede everything else, speech development can occur later. Conversely, early speech development alone will not guarantee language and literacy skills.**

# Some Facts



- **Programmes utilising bilingual or multilingual approaches, and employing qualified professionals, provide Deaf children with a strong language base, which equips them better for success in the broad range of educational subjects.**
- **Early educational intervention, bilingual/multilingual programmes and qualified professionals and role models enable Deaf learners to achieve full intellectual, social and emotional development, and enable them to reach their full potential as human beings, in all aspects of life.**

# New generation of deaf multilinguals



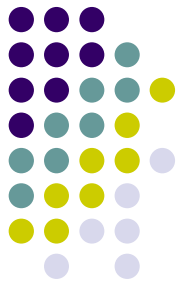
- Much fewer feelings of oppression
- -> no need to fight for equality and sign language - > no need for deaf advocacy??
- Role of associations of the deaf, deaf clubs?

# Bilingual Deaf Education?



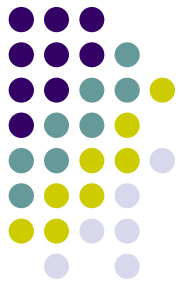
- Sign language is a language of teaching and teaching subject of a mother tongue. Language of majority is learned through written form. Awareness of the differences between two languages is one of the key areas. Speech training is individual based on skills and desires of each pupil.

# Some fundamental changes



- **changes of learning theories happened lately**
- **changes on research paradigms of developmental psychology on how a child acquires a language and how he/she is seen as an active partner in interaction with other people right from birth**
- **view on Deaf people as a linguistic and cultural minority who have a right to have their education by their mother tongue**
- **phases of a development of the education of the Deaf**

- changes in awareness of Deaf people themselves
- social political climate and democratic principles held in Nordic countries from 70's which had a profound effect in the implementation of education of minority language children and thus also Deaf people
- changes in work life (more teamwork, skills to get and select information and multilingual and multicultural skills)
- the need of multicultural and multilingual view on education today all over the world





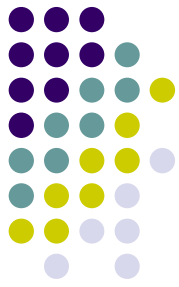
# Principle of inclusion

- A school for all, inclusive education
- No more parallel systems: general and special education
- Specialists go to schools and work with students and other teachers, not vice versa
- Full inclusion for a Deaf learner means a totally supportive, signing and student-centred environment.

# New school form

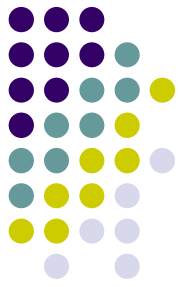


- Should we prepare for inclusive schools?
- Iceland model?



# Deaf children encounter extra problems compared to other children of linguistic minorities

- Sign languages are not seen as full fledged languages and mother tongues of Deaf children + Deaf children are seen still exclusively as disabled children → other terms than “Deaf”? → **Sign language users?**



# Sign Language Users

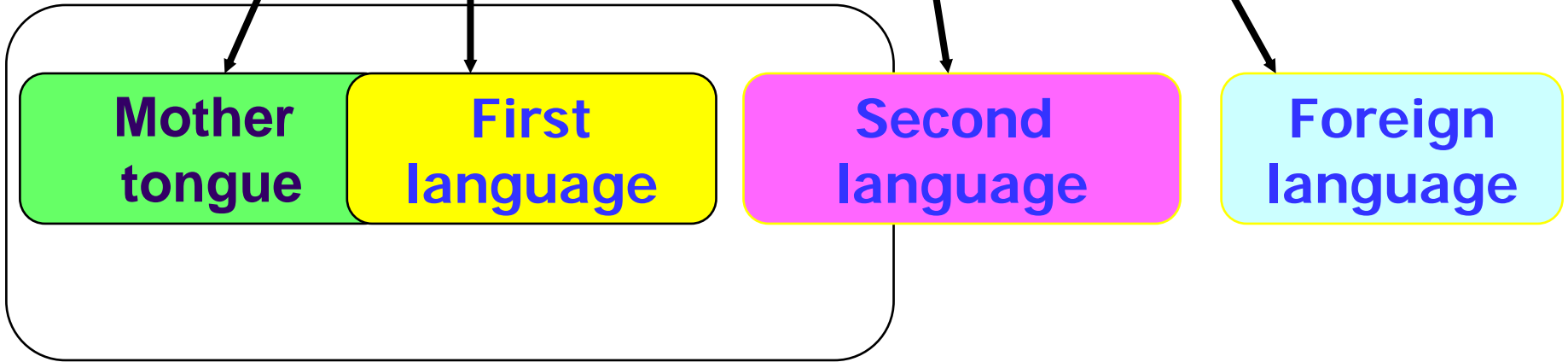
**Sign Language Persons/  
native signers**

**Mother  
tongue**

**First  
language**

**Second  
language**

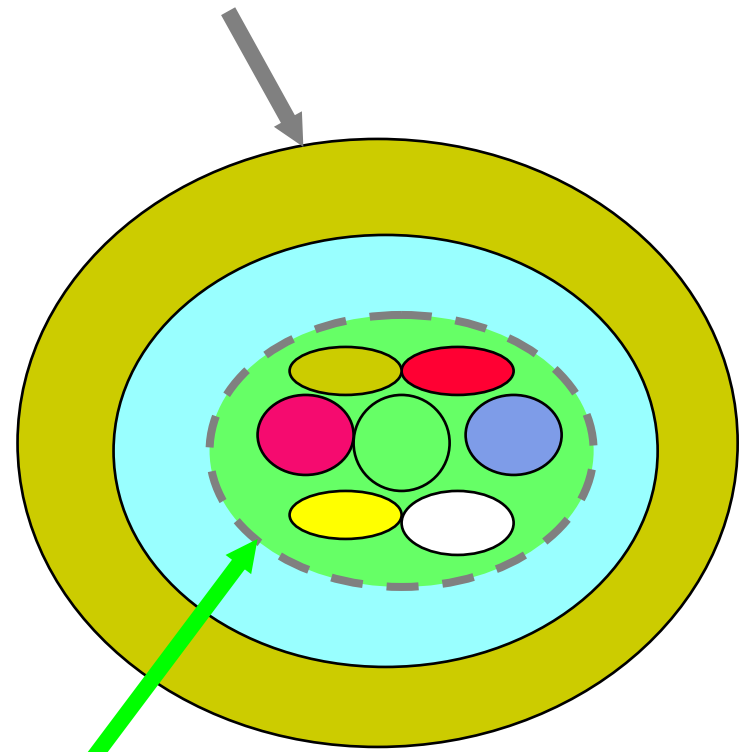
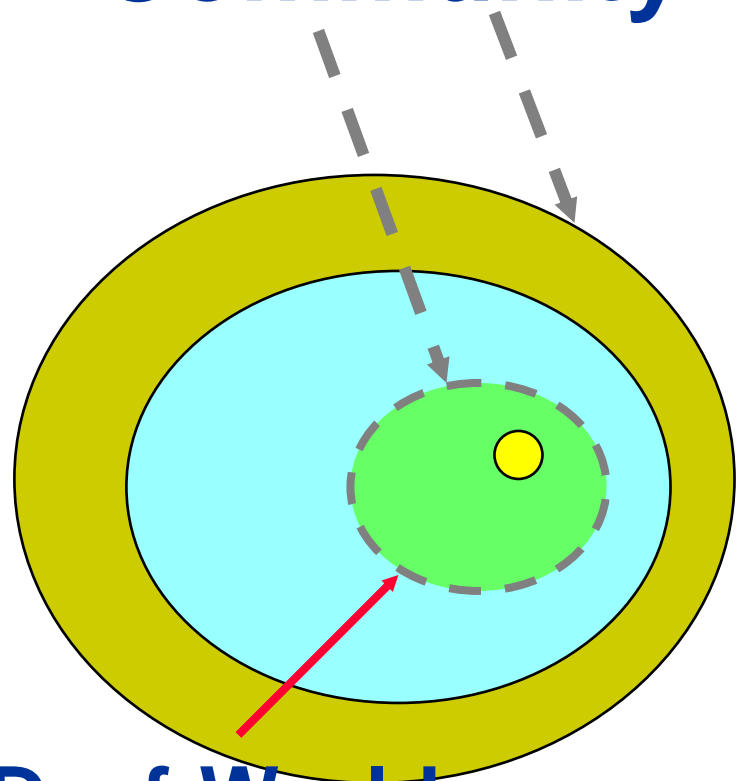
**Foreign  
language**





# Deaf Community

# Sign Language Users



**Deaf-World**

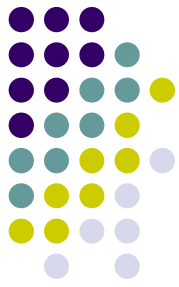
**SL Persons/Native signers**

# Multiculturalism

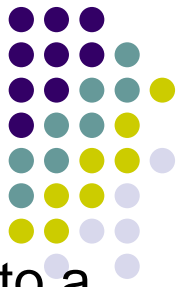


- Education in multilingual world
- Globalisation
- Immigrants, refugees
- Respecting linguistic and cultural diversity
- Principles of multicultural education
- New evidences for multilingualism: creative arguments
- Multilingualism enhances creativity: **“High-level multilinguals as a group do better than corresponding monolinguals on tests measuring several aspects of 'intelligence', creativity, divergent thinking, cognitive flexibility, etc.” (Wurm et al.)**
- Additive teaching leads to high-level multilingualism

# Multilingualism

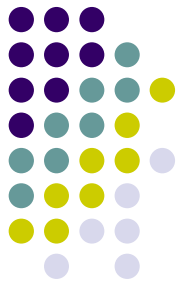


- Bi- and multilinguals tend to be superior to monolinguals in having more flexible, more alert minds and a greater and quicker thinking capacity on the basis of a much greater volume of memory which they have for mastering two (or in the case of multilinguals more than two) different language systems with different vocabularies, grammars, sound structures and idiomatic expressions. Bi- and multilingualism from very early childhood onwards, to be maintained past the age of six years, is the most advantageous quality any person can possess (Wurm 2001: 15).
- And in describing the "intellectual and emotional advantages of bi- or multilingualism and biculturalism" (ibid., 22), Wurm claims the following<sup>10</sup>:

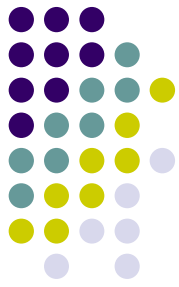


- From a practical point of view, those concerned have access to a far greater volume of information and knowledge than monolinguals, possess a larger stock of knowledge (both linguistic and general) in their minds, grasp different semantic associations better, and, being used to switching languages, and thought patterns, have more flexible minds.
- They are less rigid in their attitudes and have a tendency to be more tolerant of the unknown than monolinguals (i.e. they are less hostile and suspicious); they are more inclined to regard manifestations of other cultures by individuals as acceptable and respectable, even though different from their own cultures.
- Their thought patterns and world-view are better balanced due to their familiarity with different, often somewhat contradictory concepts. They have greater ability than monolinguals to learn concepts, ideas and things that are entirely new, to fit into novel situations without trauma, and to understand the different facets of a problem. (Wurm 2001: 22).

# Principles to high levels of bi- and multilingualism in deaf education



- use the child's mother tongue asap in education
- use during 8 first yrs a language which has less chance to develop to a high formal level
- children should be placed in a group where there are only children using the same language



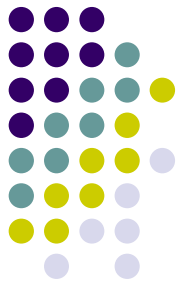
- **all children should be in the same position vis-a-vis their competence in the language of instruction**
- **all teachers must be bi- or multilingual**
- **all children have to study both their mother tongue and the second language**
- **both languages have to be used as languages of instruction at some stages of education**

# New teacher education curriculum at University of Jyväskylä



- Multicultural perspectives should be present in curriculum
- No more separate special education studies, they include in studies of school subjects
- Team work skills, social change agent
- Teacher as a guide, counsellor

# Teacher training programmes must include



- Courses
  - Sign Language as a mother tongue
    - Sign Language literature
  - Country's spoken language as a second language
  - Deaf culture, cultural and linguistic identity
  - Bilingual education and its methods
  - Multiculturalism
- Deaf students
- Deaf teacher trainers

# Success ? (Mahshie 1995)



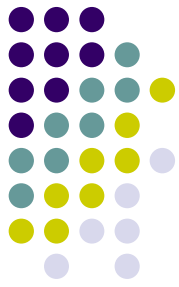
- **system promotes early fluency in a 1st language**
- **supports that 1st language as a tool for academic instruction and continued cognitive development**
- **includes a degree of realism what is reasonable to expect regarding to spoken, written, and academic proficiency in the majority language in the early years**

# Statement of Rights and Recommendations

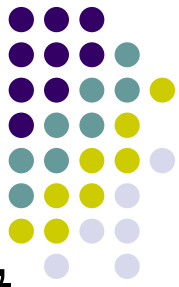


- all Deaf people, including Deaf children, have the right to full access to quality education through visual modes, including indigenous sign languages. This position is supported by several international conventions of the UN.
- early identification of Deaf infants and youth + sign language environments and educational intervention strategies and programmes, in partnerships between families, Deaf adults and professionals.
- Calls upon governments to ensure full and equal access to and educational success for Deaf learners based on regular education goals, standards and curricula.
- curricula should provide the opportunity for students to learn in and study both their local/national sign language and the local (written) language as academic subjects.

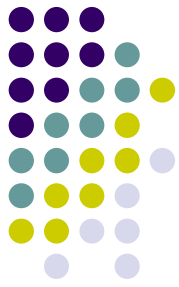
# Calls upon national and regional/provincial governments to:



- Put into practice policies or guidelines regarding early identification of and intervention for Deaf children that maximise their visual capabilities and sign language.
- Legalise sign language and quality education for Deaf people of all ages.
- Provide the resources necessary for the development of effective programmes for teaching sign language and Deaf Studies (history, culture, etc.) to involved people, such as:
  - Families of Deaf children
  - Teachers of Deaf children, administrators and other professionals
  - Professionals, including doctors and therapists, for preschool Deaf children
  - Interested parties such as but not limited to community service providers, interpreters, and other students



- Provide support for programmes for Deaf people to receive training and become employed as teachers, educational professionals and members of educational teams.
- Establish high standards for quality education programmes and outcomes, from early childhood to professional education, for all Deaf people equal to that for all people; implement assessment and monitoring programmes to ensure that each learner makes appropriate progress.
- Ensure that Deaf learners who may be placed in mainstream educational settings have access to the services of educated, trained and qualified **sign language interpreters**, other needed support services, **Deaf peers and role models**, and full participation in both the educative and co-curricular processes.



- Support further research into:
  - The development of strategies and valid instruments for teaching and assessing features in indigenous sign languages and the development of fluency in sign language.
  - The benefits of acquiring an education using direct communication pedagogies, versus indirectly through a third-party interpreter.