AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) LITERACY AND ASL LITERATURE: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

While there has been widespread acceptance of American Sign Language (ASL) as the language of instruction in residential schools for native/non-native ASL students and in colleges and universities as a foreign language, there has been little research on defining ASL literacy and ASL literature. In addition, while there has been academic debate on the existence or nonexistence of ASL literacy, there have been no studies that have defined and have described the characteristics of ASL literacy and ASL literature. To fill this void, this study answered the following research questions: (a) At a time when there is increasing recognition of ASL literacy, how would ASL literature be defined? (b) What are the features that characterize ASL literature? (c) What would such a literature comprise (e.g., genres)? To what extent is there a comprehensive taxonomy of genres captured in VHS and DVD publications? (d) What are examples of ASL literary works included in this taxonomy? A qualitative research design is used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The methodology utilized was a cross-case analysis of five interviews (four individual interviews and one focus group interview) using the constant comparison method where the information is categorized into responses (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). Eight native ASL respondents in the field of ASL and Deaf Studies who are knowledgeable and have expertise with ASL literature were contacted and interviewed. The rationale for this study was that such an investigation of ASL literacy and ASL literature will provide research in the field on this neglected topic. Such a study would have value and importance to the ASL culture and ASL community, who cherish the values embedded in

ASL literature, as well as accomplish education goals to instruct native/non-native ASL students with quality ASL literature.

DEDICATION

To loving memory of my son, Austin Andrew Byrne

June 15, 1994 – May 2, 2013

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Only my name is on the cover of my dissertation but many people have made a contribution to my work. The following people should be acknowledged and thanked for their assistance, encouragement, patience, and time.

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For any errors or inadequacies that may remain in my dissertation, the responsibility is completely my own.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

While there is widespread acceptance of ASL[1] as a true language with linguistic properties (Stokoe, 1960), there has not been the same level of discussion as to what constitutes ASL literacy and ASL literature. Since ASL has no widely accepted written form, could it still be viewed as having literacy and literature? This question has generated lively debate with two opposing views. The first view was espoused by Nover, program director of the Language Planning Institute's (LPI) Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research (CAEBER) at Gallaudet University. Nover (2004a, 2004b) has led a major reform movement in ASL/English bilingual education for native/non-native ASL students (see Nover, Christensen, & Cheng, 1998). Nover's claim is that "ASL has no written form and therefore no literacy" (Czubek, 2006, p. 374).

An opposing viewpoint was proposed by Czubek, a former teacher and coordinator in schools for the Deaf and now a PhD candidate in the Applied Linguistics program at Boston University. Czubek (2006) wrote an essay using quotes from poems, philosophers, theories, and personal stories from his grandmother to present the opposing

[1] In Canada, there are two cultural-linguistic minority groups named American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ). Each has its own distinct culture, which includes language, literature, social identity, shared common beliefs, values, tradition, and history. Language is the heart of culture. Since the terminological use of Deaf culture and Deaf people can be obscure, we should refer to ASL culture and ASL-using people (Gibson, 2006; Gibson & Blanchard, 2010). In other words, if we use Deaf culture and Deaf people, the readers may be uncertain whether we refer to ASL culture and ASL people or LSQ culture and LSQ people. In addition, a medical/audist model perceives deaf or Deaf people as audiologically defective or handicapped. Alternately, they should be viewed as being members of a cultural-linguistic minority group that uses a signed language as their birthright (see Small & Mason, 2008 for more information). In this dissertation, I will use the term *native ASL* to denote those who have acquired ASL from birth or during the critical period of language acquisition. I will also use the term *non-native ASL* for those who have learned and are learning ASL as a second language.

view that ASL, indeed, has a literacy. He claimed, "I believe that there is such a thing as ASL literacy" (p. 374). He presents his point of view and agrees that instead of limiting ourselves to labels such as literacy, we should go beyond by focusing on "whether or not we will accept parochial attitudes and exclusive taxonomies that perpetuate a bias against all things not written" (p. 374). However, even though Czubek defends the notion of ASL literacy with philosophical stances and entertaining stories, he does not fully develop the notion of ASL literacy in a scholarly fashion that could be useful to ASL and Deaf Studies specialists and educators.

Nover and Czubek are on opposite sides of the spectrum in their points of view. Indeed, opposing viewpoints or using the metaphor *wars* are not uncommon in any new developing discipline. Cases in point are the communication wars in Deaf Education (Ladd, 2008), the Reading Wars (Adams, 1990), and the Linguistic Wars (Harris, 1993). The field of ASL and Deaf Studies is no different. Indeed, a serious discussion of ASL literacy debate should bring both viewpoints to the table for discussion and debate.

The goal of this study was to make the case for ASL literacy and ASL literature in order to focus attention on this neglected area, inform the field, identify specifically what constitutes ASL literacy and ASL literature, and discuss implications for ASL/English bilingual programs. This study has enabled the researcher to critically examine the issue of ASL literacy and ASL literature.

Prior to explaining the rationale on why this topic of ASL literacy and ASL literature is important for the field, it is necessary to provide historical context. While it

has been researched by others, it is important to provide a brief review of how ASL came to be and how its uses have evolved from communication to the literary level.

History of ASL as a Language and Its Relationship to ASL Literacy and ASL Literature

Before the establishment of the first permanent and publicly supported school for Deaf students in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1817 (Carbin, 1996), several natural signed languages were possibly used in the United States. However, the first source of evidence was Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, which was used by Deaf and hearing people on the island of Martha's Vineyard beginning in the 17th century. What makes ASL what it is today may be seen from the combination of home signs used by isolated Deaf people that was created prior to attending the school in Hartford, several natural signed languages such as Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, and Old French Sign Language brought from France to the United States by Clerc, a Deaf teacher (Bahan & Nash, 1996; Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Stedt & Moores, 1990).

From 1817 to approximately 1835, the sign system of instruction for Deaf students was called methodical signing, which was a combined system of signed French and signed English presented in spoken English order (Jankowski, 1997). Possibly more reminiscent of today's Signed English, Old Signed English followed English grammar and included invented verb endings, articles, and prepositions (Wilcox & Wilcox, 1997). While methodical signing was used within the classroom, teachers noticed that their

students used a natural signed language with each other (Supalla & Cripps, 2008; Wilcox & Wilcox, 1997).

While ASL was adopted as a language of instruction in school settings, we have little knowledge of how it was used in its rhetorical and poetic forms except for brief comments made by Peters (2000) related to storytelling clubs set up in schools of the Deaf. It is noteworthy that with the addition of methodical signing, the potential of ASL communication being elevated to literature was diminished by the mere process of language users mixing the two grammars of the language. That is not to say that Signed English does not have its own literature, but if it does, it is aligned more to English literature than to ASL literature. An example of English literature that has been adapted and translated into Signed English is the Gallaudet University Signed English series. Published by Gallaudet University Press and used widely in the 1980s, this series has titles such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears: Told in Signed English* and *Little Red Riding Hood: Told in Signed English* (Bornstein & Saulnier, 1972, 1990, 1996; Moore, 1994). These are traditional European fairy tales that have made their way to English literature (Lerer, 2008) and then made their way into classrooms of Deaf education using Signed English.

The history of ASL commenced in 1834 or 1835 when the unnatural character of methodical signing caused it to be removed from every residential school of the Deaf (Jankowski, 1997; Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996). There were two reasons for this. Instead of one sign for a word, words would typically be broken down into two or more signs. Some words would require five signs or more (Stedt & Moores, 1990).

"Methodical signs lacked unity, was full of distractions, was far too long for a single unit of meaning, and, in the end, was unintelligible" (Lane, 1984, p. 62). Another reason is that Deaf students never used it on a daily basis outside the classroom (Stedt & Moores, 1990). "Methodical signs are altogether too artificial and stiff to be used in conversation, and they are in fact never used for this purpose. The only use to which they are applied, is to teach language by means of dictation" (Stone, 1852, p. 189). The replacement for methodical signing was natural signing which was subsequently called ASL (Jankowski, 1997).

Three initial events took place that changed the view of ASL as a true human language. First, Stokoe, a hearing professor of English at Gallaudet University, published his paper entitled *Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication Systems of the American Deaf* in 1960. He was the first researcher ever to analyze ASL for its linguistic structure. In his paper, he proposed three independent parts (or parameters) of a word: handshapes, locations, and movements. Subsequently, ASL researchers identified the fourth parameter: palm orientations (Bauman, Nelson, & Rose, 2006; Maher, 1996; Stokoe, 1960; Wilcox & Wilcox, 1997). Five years later, with his Deaf colleagues Casterline and Croneberg, Stokoe published the *Dictionary of American Sign Language on Linguistic Principles*. In the dictionary, words were not systematically organized by themes (food, family members, colours, etc.) but by their parameters and linguistic principles (Maher, 1996; Stokoe, Casterline, & Croneberg, 1965). Lastly, in 1979, a book entitled *The Signs of Language* was published by Klima and Bellugi of the

Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California. This book was the first ever to describe the grammar of ASL in depth (Wilcox & Wilcox, 1997).

Before the aforementioned publications, ASL was considered as "a hodgepodge of manually (and poorly) expressed English, pantomime, and nongrammatical gesture" (Baynton, 2002, p. 13). In the words of Maher (1996), Stokoe "was the man who had cracked American Sign Language (intellectually equivalent to cracking the Rosetta Stone, and emotionally, morally, infinitely more difficult because no one, at least of all the deaf, thought of Sign as a real language until he did this)" (p. ix). He successfully dismantled the preconceived notion that ASL was impossible to analyze.

Since 1960, there has been more than ample linguistic evidence indicating that ASL is a human language. Techniques that are used to analyze spoken languages are similar to what ASL researchers use to analyze ASL. In parallel to English words that can be broken down into vowels and consonants, ASL words can be analyzed into parameters, which consist of handshapes, locations, movements, and palm orientations (Lane, 1992; Wilcox & Wilcox, 1997). As clear-cut and versatile as any spoken language, ASL has its own grammatical structure including phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic properties. In other words, ASL shares a range of linguistic properties that have been found in spoken languages (Byrne, 2004; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Valli, Lucas, Mulrooney, & Villanueva, 2011; Wilbur, 1979). "To convey the logical relationships in a sentence, as any language must do, ASL incorporates the information into its signs; they are layered and richly configured, as appropriate to the sense of vision" (Lane, 1992, pp. 15–16). He adds that it "[has] its own genius to conduct

its grammatical housekeeping: utilizing space, direction of movement, handshapes, and facial expression, among other means" (p. 110) and "is not only intrinsically as good as any oral language but better" (p. 121). Because of studies done by ASL researchers such as Stokoe, Casterline, Croneberg, Klima, Bellugi, Valli, Lucas, and Mulrooney, ASL has been accepted as a legitimate language in academic settings.

In addition, the teaching of ASL has filtered down to parent-infant (Snodden, 2012) through high school settings. Indeed, there is growing acceptance of ASL as a first language for native ASL students with the teaching of English as a second language. The 1988 Deaf President Now movement at Gallaudet University shook the world and led to increasing numbers of Deaf superintendents and Deaf board members in schools for native/non-native ASL students across the United States as well as the establishment of ASL/English bilingual programs at the Learning Center for Deaf Children in Framingham, Massachusetts, the Indiana School for the Deaf, the California School for the Deaf in Fremont, the Maryland School for the Deaf, the Metro Deaf School in Minneapolis, the Texas School for the Deaf, and the Wisconsin School for the Deaf – a shift that began in the late 1980s and grew in the 1990s and 2000s (Gallimore, 2000; Jankowski, 1997; Simms, 2008; Stewart, 2006). On the basis of information provided by the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University, as of November 2004, 16 states had recognized ASL as a language (Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, 2004). Similarly, in Canada, the 1988 Deaf Ontario Now Rally and the 1989 Ontario Review of Provincial Programs for the Deaf led to the establishment of ASL/English bilingual programs at the three provincial schools for

native/non-native ASL students: Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville; Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, Milton; and Robarts School for the Deaf, London. In 1993, with the passage of Bill 4, ASL and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) were authorized as languages of instruction for native ASL students in Ontario (Gibson, 2006).

Another contemporary development that also points to the importance of this study on ASL literacy and ASL literature is the acceptance of ASL as a foreign language for hearing students in American high schools, colleges, and universities. The number of states formally recognizing ASL as a foreign language grew from 28 in 1997 to 38 in 2004 (Rosen, 2008). According to a comprehensive survey released by the Modern Language Association in 2006, in both 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities, ASL is the fourth most taught language other than English in the United States. Student enrollments have increased from 1,602 in 1990 to 78,829 in 2006 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2007). In addition, "enrollment in ASL classes is up an astonishing 432 percent over a 6-year period (1996–2002), as measured in a survey of foreign-language enrollments by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages" (Brueggemann, 2009, p. 68). Such a flowering of ASL teaching in high schools, colleges, and universities underscores another rationale for this study of the role of ASL literacy and ASL literature, that is, to develop the next generation of ASL/English interpreters and teachers who not only can communicate in ASL but can be informed and educated consumers of ASL literature.

As such, we see two populations that stand to benefit from a study of ASL literature. Results of such a study could improve the quality of instruction by adding ASL

literature to the curriculum for native ASL students, thereby exposing them to their culture through examples of quality literature. The second population consists of people who are learning ASL as a second language. A study such as this can add enrichment and rigour to their ASL Studies classes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizations of Literacy and Literature

Before making an attempt to comprehend what literacy is and the problem of defining literacy, the distinction of orality and literacy needs to be understood because these two terms come up often in the discussion of literature.

Between 1100 and 700 BC, Greek society was completely oral (Havelock, 1976, 1986); that is, stories were passed down through spoken language only rather than in written form. “Classics of ancient Greek literature must have been passed on orally for a long time before being written down” (Frishberg, 1988, p. 151). This indicates that “written forms of language are not required for a community to possess a well-formed aesthetic in poetry, narrative, humor, and rhetoric” (p. 150). The Greek alphabet was invented around 800 BC. Its original purpose was to mark ownership (Powell, 2002). “This society became literate only by slow degrees” (Havelock, 1986, p. 29). Three hundred years after the invention of the alphabet, the society had a considerable body of written literature, but “ancient Greece was in many ways an oral society in which the written word took second place to the spoken” (Thomas, 1992, p. 3). As time progressed, the Greeks became so accustomed to the written form that they had lost their grip on preserving their oral tradition. The oral poems composed by Homer and Hesiod were written down, which subsequently led to the beginning of the history of the European

literature (Havelock, 1976, 1986). Many people do not realize that the development of Greek literature actually came from an even older tradition of oral storytelling.

Tannen (1982b) provided a distinction between orality and literacy, which draws from the scholarly research of Havelock (1963), Lord (1960), Olson (1977), and Ong (1967). The distinction is as follows:

Table 1
The Distinction between Orality and Literacy

Orality	Literacy
• "Formulaic expressions (sayings, clichés, proverbs, and so on) are the repository of received wisdom" (p. 1). • "Thought is 'exquisitely elaborated' through a stitching together of formulaic language" (p. 2). • "Truth . . . resides in common-sense reference to experience" (p. 2). • In speaking, "the meaning is in the context" (p. 2).	• "Knowledge is seen as facts and insights preserved in written records" (p. 1). • "Thought is analytic, sequential, linear" (p. 2). • "[Truth] resides in logical or coherent argument" (p. 2). • In writing, "the meaning is in the text" (p. 2).

Interestingly, at the same time, Tannen (1982b) challenged this distinction between orality and literacy, which is also known as the oral-literate divide. Her research demonstrated that speakers who are "more 'oral' are nonetheless highly literate people" (p. 13). Therefore, the divide should be replaced with a continuum. She noted,

> Both oral and literate strategies [related to conversational style and fluency] can be seen in spoken discourse. Understanding this, let us not think of orality and literacy as an absolute split, and let us not fall into the trap of thinking of literacy, or written discourse, as decontextualized. Finally, the examples presented of conversational style make it clear that it is possible to be both highly oral and highly literate. Thus, let us not be lured into calling some folks oral and others literate. (Tannen, 1982a, pp. 47–48)

Furthermore, Edwards and Sienkewicz (1990) pointed out that orality and literacy should be considered a continuum, not a divide. An excellent example is the sermon of the African American preacher: "On the one hand the preacher is steeped in the literate culture of the book, of the Bible; on the other hand the medium of the preacher's message is purely oral" (p. 7). The preacher is in both oral and literate worlds almost simultaneously. This example is no different from a native ASL individual who uses ASL as "oral" and English as literate. To conclude the relationship of orality and literacy, Finnegan (1988) stated,

> Orality and literacy are not two separate and independent things; nor (to put it more concretely) are oral and written modes two mutually exclusive and opposed processes for representing and communicating information. On the contrary, they take diverse forms in differing cultures and periods, are used differently in different social contexts and, insofar as they can be distinguished at all as separate modes rather than a continuum, they mutually interact and affect each other, and the relations between them are problematic rather than self-evident. (p. 175)

Opening a dictionary of English word origins, one will usually discover that the term *literacy* is based on *literate*, which arose in the 15th century from the Latin word *litteratus*, meaning "one who knows the letters" (Chantrell, 2002; Harper, 2001a, 2001b). Also, it can mean "the man of letters" or "a reader of letters" (Havelock, 1976). Literacy by itself was defined for the first time in English in the 1880s (Brockmeier & Olson, 2009). Because of the origin of literacy, it is generally and automatically seen as referring to anything that is printed. However, Schad, an Oxford University Press etymologist specializing in Latin and Greek, made the following argument:

> It is a widely held misconception that establishing the original meaning of a word in some way helps to highlight the true meaning of the word. In fact, as you are no doubt aware, words change their meaning through time, and the current accepted meaning of a word may be very different from its original meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary, which illustrates the use and meanings of every word throughout its history within English, shows this very clearly. The etymology or derivation of a word may well help to account for its original meaning, and indeed the earliest sense of a word often sheds light on its etymology, but a word as used in contemporary English has often departed a long way from its original or "etymological" sense. (S. Schad, personal communication, August 13, 2010)

A dictionary of English word origins usually traces back to Latin, which is often seen as the stopping point. However, when checking out the website entitled My Etymology (www.myetymology.com), one will discover that the term *literacy* originates with the Greeks (see Table 2).

Table 2
The History of the Etymology of the English Word ***Literacy***

The English Word **Literacy**
Derived from the English word **literate**
Derived from the Latin word **litteratus** (learned, cultured, erudite; marked, branded, tattooed w)
Derived from the Humanistic Latin word **littera** (letter; letter, epistle)
Derived from the Etruscan word **littera**
Derived from the Greek word **diphthera**, διφθέρα, διφθέρα (skin, leather, hide)

When asked to share her perspective on the etymology of literacy and to clarify what the Greek derivation of leather, hide, skin actually represents, Schad explained the following:

> As for the etymology of Latin *littera*, this is in fact uncertain and disputed. The word used to be associated with Latin *linere*, "to smear", as Roman schoolchildren wrote on wax tablets (with a stylus), and smeared over the wax to

> erase the letters. But this view is now generally rejected. Derivation from Greek *diphthera* is another hypothesis that has been proposed. There are two problems with this: the form of the word and the meaning of the word. In ancient Greek *diphthera* means "piece of leather, prepared hide (of an animal), something made of leather". The evidence that it might mean "letter" is very late and very slight. Then we would have to explain how Greek *diphthera* turned into Latin *littera*. Some words were borrowed into Latin from Greek through Etruscan, a language spoken in ancient Italy, but there is very little evidence for Etruscan, so it is often difficult to prove that this is what happened. (S. Schad, personal communication, August 13, 2010)

One might use Schad's point as a basis to counter the general belief that the origin of literacy is solely connected to those who know the letters. No one is currently certain how Greek *diphthera* turned into Latin *littera* because, as Schad has pointed out, "a word as used in contemporary English has often departed a long way from its original or 'etymological' sense."

In the words of Roberts (1995), "The problem of defining literacy has bewitched scholars, policy makers and practitioners since the early 1940s. The range of definitions of 'literacy' and 'illiteracy' advanced in the past half-century is remarkable, yet there remains little agreement among 'experts' over what these terms mean" (p. 412). He adds, "The sheer number and variety of definitions is staggering in magnitude and, from one perspective, thoroughly confusing: literacy, it seems, can mean whatever people want it to mean" (p. 419). According to Street (2008), "The answers to the question 'what is literacy?' have been sometimes surprising. It turns out that literacy means different things to different people across different periods of time and in different places" (p. xiii). Interestingly, Olson (1987) argued that the reason for the unclear definition of literacy is a lack of theory. "What is lacking is not a definition but a theory. It is not clear how the

related notions fit into a theory. Lacking the theory, writers and laymen alike seize on some property – ability to read and write one's name . . . and the like – as a definition for literacy" (p. 7).

Nowadays, it is generally accepted that literacy itself means the ability to read and write (e.g., Gee, 1991; Lane et al., 1996; Langer, 1991; Luria, 2006; Narasimhan, 2004; Olson & Torrance, 2009; Pattison, 1982; Trezek, Wang, & Paul, 2010). However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2003) stated that "literacy is about more than reading and writing – it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture" (p. 1). In addition, Luria (2006) wrote that "literacy [is] more broadly defined not only as the ability to speak, read, and write, but also to do math, use the computer, and possess knowledge of one's place or situation within the local and larger society" (p. 233). Layton and Miller (2004) wrote, "Literacy is not restricted to the mechanics of reading and writing but that being literate involves taking part in oral discussions where the focus is literature" (p. 56). Another broader definition came from B. E. Foley (1994): "The term 'literacy' will be used broadly to refer to the mastery of language, in both its spoken (or augmented) and written forms, which enables an individual to use language fluently for a variety of purposes" (p. 184). Langer (1991) took this extension a step further by defining literacy as not just the acts of reading and writing but also culturally appropriate ways of literate thinking. Literacy can be defined as "the ability to think and reason like a literate person, *within a particular society*" (p. 11). The ASL community in

most parts of Canada and the United States can be considered a particular society within the global community of thousands of societies.

Where the definition of literacy was once restricted to the ability to read and write, literacy is now more broadly defined as the ability to use varied skills of language including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. The most comprehensive and current definition of literacy may be the following:

> Literacy is defined as the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, view, represent, and think critically about ideas. It involves the capacity to access, manage, and evaluate information; to think imaginatively and analytically; and to communicate thoughts and ideas effectively. Literacy includes critical thinking and reasoning to solve problems and make decisions related to issues of fairness, equity, and social justice. Literacy connects individuals and communities and is an essential tool for personal growth and active participation in a cohesive, democratic society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 6).

As a result of rapidly changing definitions, the term *literacy* as a single phenomenon, may be obsolete today. Roberts (1995) stated that "the term 'literacy' is thus always a kind of misnomer: an inadequate way of describing the myriad specific literacies. There is no core definition of literacy to which we can turn as a benchmark for testing the validity of particular definitions: particulars are all we have. Strictly speaking, for these thinkers, there is no such thing as *a* definition of literacy, only definitions of this literacy or that literacy" (pp. 422–423). According to Vincent (2003), "Literacy has become too promiscuous. The word itself, the fragment of language, is daily extending its application. We have more and more literacies" (p. 341). Street (1999, as cited in Crossley & Watson, 2003) stressed that there are many literacies within any culture. Each

has its own code and validity. Perceived as a possibly appropriate term for the 21st century, the acceptance of *literacies* as a term is growing. Currently, drawing from a variety of sources such as Abilock (2011), Grover (2002), Harste (2003), Kellner (2000), and Kenosha Literacy Council (2011), most examples of different kinds of literacy are as follows:

Table 3
The Different Types of Literacies

Academic	Adolescent	Adult	Alphabetic
Amish	Automotive	Biblical	Bilingual
Bureaucratic	Civic	Computer	Content
Critical	Cultural	Digital	Document
Early	Ecological	Emotional	Family
Financial	Fiscal	Functional	Geographic
Global	Health	Historical	Humanistic
Information	Legal	Liberatory	Linguistic
Mathematical	Media	Moral	Multicultural
Musical	Oral	Preschool	Prose
Pupil	Quantitative	Religious	School
Scientific	Script	Statistical	Technological
Universal	Vernacular	Visual	Workplace

Regardless of some critics thinking that the term *literacy*, as a single phenomenon, may be outdated today, this term continues to be used everywhere within the business, educational, legal, medical, and other sectors. All of the aforementioned definitions of literacy are applicable to both spoken and written languages. In addition, there are a growing number of publications that use the term *oral literacy* (see Balnaves, 2007; Hamer, 2005; Sayer, 1980; Spies-Butcher, 2007; Trezek, Wang, & Paul, 2010). In spite of perceptions that "oral literacy" is a contradiction in terms, a growing number of

people are accepting it because literacy is not limited to written (printed) form but applies also to spoken (oral) form.

To understand literature in its broadest sense, one needs to look at how it is defined. Defining literature appears to be less troublesome than defining literacy. Harkin (2006) succinctly remarked, "Literature is a vexed term" (p. 215). In his book entitled *The Interpretation of Literature*, Crawshaw (1896) wrote, "Definitions of literature are legion. The broadest conception of literature makes it include all record in language of the thought of man. [The narrowest conception of literature is] 'the class of writings distinguished for beauty of style or expression'" (pp. 3–4). In addition, Widdowson (1999) defined literature as "written works [or] works whose originating form and final point of reference is their existence as written textuality" (p. 15). Kearns (2006) wrote, "For decades we have hassled over what we mean by *literature*, as if literature is not 'writing,' not 'creative writing,' not the writing of historians, sociologists, what have you. Let us end this confusion by affirming simply that *literature is the language societies decide to keep*. The definition includes oral as well as print material. The key word is *decide* . . . which means . . . *to teach people how to create and judge language worth keeping*" (pp. 62-63).

As obvious as it may appear, the general definition of literature is still vague and mainly based on written works. This is what irks Willie van Peer the most. In his article *But What is Literature: Toward a Descriptive Definition of Literature*, van Peer (1991) conclusively defined literature as "a body of symbolic objects expressed in natural human language, possessing textual qualities of a non-institutional, homiletical kind" (p. 138).

His definition has three intertwined components: *language*, *text*, and *homiletical*. If not for the first component, language, literature cannot exist: "Literature . . . is to be defined as a form of art, the functioning of which is primarily dependent on the use of natural human language as its medium" (p. 128).

When discussing the second component, text, van Peer first makes a distinction between discourse and text. Discourse is defined as "the direct verbal interaction between participants [and has] its impromptu character" (p. 128). It refers to participants who are physically present sharing the same time and space boundaries. The definition of text may be opposite from discourse. While discourse occurs within the same time and space boundaries, text overcomes them: "In other words, texts transcend the time and space barriers that discourse is subject to" (p. 128). In addition, while discourse tends to be between impromptu and partly premeditated, text is by and large fully premeditated: "The major function [of text] is to preserve and pass on knowledge and values judged relevant or important to the culture. [Its capacity to be passed on continuously] lies in the knowledge and values it incorporates, which are thus preserved and re-actualized again and again in the course of time" (p. 129).

Now to the final component, homiletical. It is defined as "affable, social, relating to friendly companionship" (p. 141). Once again, it is necessary to explain the difference between discourse and text for this component. Institutional discourse is used differently from homiletical discourse. For instance, individuals working within the military institution or establishment use language forms and terminology differently from those who work in the medical institution or establishment. Within homiletical discourse,

individuals engage in daily conversations, tell stories in a bar, or talk about the weather at a bus stop. Van Peer then proceeds to make the distinction between institutional text and homiletical text. In relation to institutional text, each text has a specific purpose or task, such as schoolbooks produced specifically for an educational institution or prayer books used specifically for a religious institution. Homiletical text has three characteristics: *reflective*, *socially cohesive*, and *delight-inducing*. Homiletical text is reflective because individuals would require time to plan and reflect before they could compose a literary work. For social or group cohesion to occur, a special bond between a teller and an audience needs to be established. In other words, a sense of community for story sharing needs to be felt. The third characteristic is the experience of delight. When a story or a poem is being shared within the community between the teller and the audience, the experience of delight occurs. To sum up van Peer's definition of literature, previously mentioned, it is "a body of symbolic objects expressed in natural human language, possessing textual qualities of a non-institutional, homiletical kind" (p. 138).

Just as *oral literacy* is a controversial term, there are people who support the oxymoronic term *oral literature* while others oppose it. In the view of supporters, it is simply defined as "literature delivered by word of mouth" or as "those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression" (Okpewho, 1992, pp. 3–5). In addition, according to Albert Lord, who wrote *The Singer of Tales* in 1960, "because 'literature' *stricto sensu* is 'couched in letters,' 'oral literature' has to mean something like 'verbal expression artful

in ways familiar to use from texts, but without the text'" (Powell, 2002, p. 16). In the words of John Miles Foley (1986), oral literature is simply defined as "literature composed without the aid of writing" (p. 3).

On the other hand, Ong (1982) viewed oral literature as a "strictly preposterous term" because it has "nothing to do with writing at all" (p. 11). He added, "Thinking of oral tradition or a heritage of oral performance, genres and styles as 'oral literature' is rather like thinking of horses as automobiles without wheels" (p. 12). He based his argument on the etymology of literature. According to Harper (2001c), literature came from Latin *lit(t)eratura*, which means "learning, writing, grammar," originally "writing formed with letters," from *lit(t)era*, "letter." Ong continued,

> One might argue . . . that the term "literature", though devised primarily for works in writing, has simply been extended to include related phenomena such as traditional oral narrative in cultures untouched by writing. Many originally specific terms have been so generalized in this way. But concepts have a way of carrying their etymologies with them forever. The elements out of which a term is originally built usually, and probably always, linger somehow in subsequent meanings. (p. 11)

To counter Ong's argument of tracing the root of "literature" to Latin, Webster (2006) argued that:

> We will never know what a root "originally" meant for two reasons. First, we cannot trace a word to its source; rather, we will always make judgments about where to end our search. Second, we cannot assume that a word had "a" meaning; rather we should suspect that words have always had multiple semantic domains, fuzzy boundaries, as well as pragmatic meanings. In short, etymology seems a weak argument for eliminating "oral literature" (p. 297).

In addition to Webster's argument, Finnegan (1977) stated,

> "Oral" poetry essentially circulates by oral rather than written means; in contrast to written poetry, its distribution, composition or performance are by word of mouth and not through reliance on the written or printed word. In this sense it is a form of "oral literature" – the wider term which also includes oral prose. This wider term has sometimes been disputed on the ground that it is self-contradictory if the original etymology of "literature" (connected with *literae*, letters) is borne in mind. But the term is now so widely accepted and the instances clearly covered by the term so numerous, that it is an excess of pedantry to worry about the etymology of the word "literature", any more than we worry about extending the term "politics" from its original meaning of the affairs of the classical Greek *polis* to the business of the modern state. Over-concern with etymologies can only blind us to observation of the facts as they are. "Oral literature" and "unwritten literature" are terms useful and meaningful in describing something real, and have come to stay (p. 16).

In spite of its oxymoronic nature, *oral literature* is now very much accepted as a term, mostly as a result of a growing number of publications (see Courlander, 1996; Finnegan, 1977; Frey, 1995; Furniss & Gunner, 1995; Miruka, 2001; Ogunjimi & Na'Allah, 2005; Okpewho, 1992; Swann, 1983). There is even a website called World Oral Literature Project "to document and make accessible endangered oral literatures before they disappear without record" (University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2010). Out of approximately 3,000 spoken languages in the world today, there are only about 78 languages that have a written literature (Ong, 1982, 2009). Approximately 2,922 languages are oral only, and we cannot simply ignore the fact that oral literatures do exist, and that they are not inferior to the written literatures.

Conceptualizations of ASL Literacy and ASL Literature

Scholarly discussions about ASL literacy and ASL literature as language forms in and of themselves are sparse compared to the published discussions on the relationship between ASL and English, especially how ASL can be used to support the development of English literacy (Bailes, 2001; Gallimore, 2000; Goldin-Meadows & Mayberry, 2001; Hoffmeister, 2000; Lane et al., 1996; Neuroth-Gimbrone & Logiodice, 1992; Padden & Ramsey, 2000; Strong & Prinz, 1997, 1998, 2000; Supalla & Cripps, 2008; Wilbur, 2000). Comparatively there are fewer discussions of ASL literacy and ASL literature (Ashton et al., 2011; Christie & Wilkins, 1997; Czubek, 2006; Gallimore, 2000; Gibson, 2000; Hoffmeister, 2000; Kuntze, 2008; Lane et al., 1996; Paul, 2006; Snoddon, 2010). Clearly more attention should be spent on ASL literacy and the relationship between ASL literacy and ASL literature.

At the present time, the definition of ASL literacy has not yet been fully established and widely accepted. Since ASL has no widely accepted written form, could it still be viewed as having literacy? Critics differ. On one hand, some scholars consider ASL as having no literacy because literacy by itself refers to spoken languages that have written forms. On the contrary, other critics believe that signed languages with no written forms such as ASL do have literacy.

In the next section, definitions of ASL literacy (Ashton et al., 2011; Christie & Wilkins, 1997; Czubek, 2006; Gallimore, 2000; Gibson, 2000; Hoffmeister, 2000; Kuntze, 2008; Lane et al., 1996; Paul, 2006; Snoddon, 2010) will be presented, followed by a comprehensive definition of ASL literacy.

Table 4
Existing Definitions of ASL Literacy

Sources	Definitions of ASL Literacy
Ashton, Cagle, Kurz, Newell, Peterson, & Zinza (2011)	No distinct definition provided but the authors write, "Where once the definition of literacy was confined to the ability to read and write, literacy today is more broadly defined as the ability to function in a culture. Like many world languages ASL has no written form. Therefore standards in other languages for reading and writing do not necessarily apply in the same way to the study of ASL. The lack of a written form does not preclude literary uses of ASL. Similar to oral traditions in spoken languages, there is a long standing use of ASL for storytelling, poetry, drama, humor and folklore. There are emerging schools of thought that point to similarities between the skills needed in writing and those needed to compose recorded ASL products, such as videotexts, sign mail, and films" (pp. 8–9).
Christie & Wilkins (1997)	On the basis of the three positions of literacy identified by Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (see McLaren, 1991), in an effort to define ASL literacy, Christie and Wilkins describe each position of literacy: 1. *ASL Functional Literacy*: "basic language skills that enable a person to use ASL to communicate effectively in the DEAF-WORLD" (p. 57) 2. *ASL Cultural Literacy*: "the values, heritage, and shared experiences necessary to understand and interpret the relationships of ASL literary works to our lives as Deaf people" (p. 57) 3. *ASL Critical Literacy*: "the use of literature as a means of empowerment and an ideological awareness of the DEAF-WORLD in relation to other worlds" (pp. 57–58)
Czubek (2006)	No distinct definition provided but Czubek writes, "So, let us explore ASL and ASL literacy because as creative beings . . . we shall not cease exploration and at the very end of all our exploring will be to arrive at where we have started and to know the place for the first time – T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*" (p. 380).
Gallimore (2000)	"ASL literacy refers not just to a high level of proficiency in the language but to the knowledge of and ability to produce the 'oral literature' of the culture, in this case, signed literature, e.g., poetry, storytelling, etc. In fact, ASL, even

	though not a written form, can afford the user a high level of precision and beauty in the language" (p. 20).
Gibson (2000)	ASL literacy is defined as "a measure of [1] the ability to understand and express [ASL] eloquently; [2] acquisition of knowledge of content areas including Deaf history, ASL literature, different Deaf cultures, Deaf traditions, Deaf politics, controversial or current issues (Deaf Education, ASL Literacy, Deaf Community and Underemployment) and trends; [3] having extensive knowledge, and experience associated with Deaf culture; and [4] to feel empowered to connect with the world, take control of one's own life, and contribute to the Deaf community as well as to a changing society" (p. 10).
Hoffmeister (2000)	No distinct definition provided but Hoffmeister writes, "Literacy, as defined here, includes not only reading skills but also skills required to become a literate user of American Sign Language (ASL). Literacy skills in ASL have only recently begun to be identified" (p. 143).
Kuntze (2008)	No distinct definition provided but Kuntze discusses the following main topics: Analogic and digital symbols in human communication, inference-making skills, visual literacy, ASL literacy, text and literacy, and on being literate. Under the topic of ASL literacy, he discusses the use of analogic representations in ASL utterances.
Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan (1996)	No distinct definition provided but the authors write, "The stories told in Deaf clubs, in residential schools, by Deaf parents to their Deaf and hearing children, are all part of the literature of Deaf culture, learned, remembered and passed on from generation to generation. We consider this a part of ASL literacy, for we subscribe to the view that expands the notion of literacy beyond reading print and refocuses it on the language registers that must be mastered. These include the formal storytelling register, with its coherent, complex, decontextualized language, which exists as assuredly in ASL as it does in English" (p. 304). The authors add, "ASL literacy is similar in some ways to the literacy of many cultures where print is not available to carry messages from one generation to the next. Stories are developed which have particular structures, specific themes, and an established set of goals. The common structures make it easy for the members of the culture to recognize a story for the cultural artifact that it is, to identify with the elements of the story, and to remember it. The ability to understand and

	recognize the structure and theme of these stories is part of ASL literacy knowledge" (p. 304).
Paul (2006)	No distinct definition provided but, drawing from the work of Tyner (1998), different forms of literacies are divided into tool literacies and literacies of representation. While tool literacies refer to technological tools in society such as computer literacy, literacies of representation refer to the need to analyze information and understand how meaning is constructed. Some examples of literacies of representation include oral literacy, print literacy, and sign literacy (e.g., ASL literacy). Paul has proposed to reconceptualize literacy as a form of "captured" verbal information. "Script (or print) literacy refers to the capture of verbal language or information through print or written symbols, that is, via written language. Performance literacy refers to the capture of spoken or signed information only through the use of audio books or video books (in one sense, this is similar to ASL literacy – i.e., on videos). Caption literacy is the combination of script and performance literacy with a video background. Within Tyner's (1998) framework, script literacy, performance literacy, and caption literacy refer to different literacies of representation" (p. 383).
Snoddon (2010)	No distinct definition provided but, drawing from the work of Gee (2008), Snoddon views ASL literacy as "a social practice that must be acquired through social and cultural participation" (pp. 198–199).

So far, the contemporary definition of ASL literacy by Gibson (2000) may possibly be the most suitable. However, the definitions by Gallimore (2000), Gibson (2000), Lane et al. (1996), Langer (1991), and the Ontario Ministry of Education (2008) could be intertwined to create a more comprehensive definition of ASL literacy.

Table 5
A New Definition of ASL Literacy

ASL literacy is defined as the ability to use the linguistic structure of ASL for deciphering, organizing, and communicating information, ideas, and thoughts effectively

and eloquently in a variety of contexts. It involves the ability to decode, cogitate, reason, assess, and evaluate ASL informational texts, ASL literary works, and ASL media at the social and academic levels. An individual has the ability to construct and present ASL informational texts, ASL literary works, and ASL media imaginatively and eloquently. ASL literacy includes the ability to acquire extensive knowledge and experience associated with ASL culture, ASL history, ASL literature, ASL media, education, sign language cultures, and other relevant topics. It provides an individual with the ability to effectively lead one's life, to actively contribute to the ASL community and communities at large, and to effectively navigate global society. Full ownership of ASL language, ASL cultural space, and ASL cultural identity is crucial for the development and application of ASL literacy skills.

Elaborating several points of the definition is necessary for clarification purposes. The first point is the term deciphering. According to H. Gibson (personal communication, November 4, 2012), this singular term is important because it involves the use of three separate skills: (a) viewing, (b) comprehending, and (c) analyzing. The next point is that ASL literacy has three strands: (a) informational texts, (b) literary works, and (c) media (Ontario Provincial Schools for the Deaf, ASL Curriculum Team, 1999–2012). While the first strand comprises current news, history, science, health, dictionaries, how-to vlogs, and other related topics, the second strand focuses on narratives, poetry, legends, riddles, humour, and other genres. The last strand includes electronic media and film/video technology including computers, videophones, CDs, DVDs, vlogs, videography, video editing, video distribution, and others.

Gibson and Supalla developed an ASL word for LITERACY, which appears to perfectly match the comprehensive definition of ASL literacy. The ASL word uses an open "5" handshape touching the side of the forehead, wiggling the fingers, and moving in a circle over the side of the forehead successively. For ASL literacy, you fingerspell A-S-L and then produce the ASL word for LITERACY (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
An ASL Word for LITERACY

What is so important about ASL literacy? A native ASL student needs to be taught how to learn and how to think in order to navigate the complexities of life, society, economics, and the highly competitive job market. As previously noted, Langer (1991) defines literacy as "the ability to think and reason like a literate person, within a particular society" (p. 11). She adds, "Thinking is human and reflects the particular oral and written ways of solving problems, organizing knowledge, and communicating that are learned early and have enormous consequences for the acquisition and uses of language and knowledge throughout life" (pp. 11–12). The comprehensive definition of ASL literacy above comprises many skills that the student needs to possess to effectively lead his or her life and function in the highly literate world.

There are three main reasons to support the existence of ASL literacy. Firstly, there is no strong argument that literacy must be limited to the written form. Secondly,

the term *oral literacy* is becoming more widely accepted. While both Hamer (2005) and Balnaves (2007) viewed oral literacy as a powerful tool for oral storytelling, Sayer (1980) defined oral literacy as the ability to express thoughts verbally and critically. He felt that, in relation to the importance of teaching reading and writing, speaking as a skill should be given equal priority. According to Spies-Butcher (2007),

> The skills of oral literacy clearly go beyond those learned in debating and public speaking. Oral literacy is about a broader notion of communication. Nonetheless, these skills are an important component of our ability to communicate, and particularly our ability to gain recognition and respect for our ideas and opinions. These skills are particularly important because they are central to much of the way in which our society publicly deliberates, and because these skills are often used as an informal mechanism for stratification and establishing (or more likely reinforcing) social hierarchies. (p. 269)

In parallel with the wider use of the term *oral literacy*, the proposed term *signed literacy* (e.g., ASL) should be considered.

Thirdly, even though definitions of ASL literacy are currently sparse, the works by Ashton et al., Christie and Wilkins, Czubek, Gallimore, Gibson, Hoffmeister, Kuntze, Lane et al., Paul, and Snoddon should be viewed as steps toward defining and more fully developing the notion of ASL literacy in a scholarly fashion that could be useful to the fields of ASL and Deaf Studies.

A contemporary development points to the importance of ASL literacy. In 1993, with the passage of Bill 4, ASL and LSQ were authorized as languages of instruction for native ASL students in Ontario. When compared to norms of first-language students, the expectations of native ASL students' average ASL literacy skills were lower (Gibson, 2006). In response to this, the establishment of an ASL curriculum began in 1999 under

the direction of Heather Gibson. Similar to English- or French-speaking Canadian students taking formal courses in English and/or French, Deaf students in Ontario are now being offered "(a) the formal study of their own language (that is, of the grammatical structure, vocabulary, and pragmatics of ASL, including its discourse, conversational structures, and rules of use, and the stylistic and register forms found in the literature and text of the language and (b) extensive exposure to ASL and ASL literature, texts, and media arts at the academic level" (Gibson, 2006, p. 101). Currently, the general and specific expectations for nursery to Grade 8 have been developed and are being field tested (H. Gibson, personal communication, December 27, 2009). Exclusively field tested on native ASL students of native ASL parents, field testing consists of videotaping learning activities according to the ASL curriculum, field notes taken during the instruction of native ASL students, and participation by classroom observers in various learning activities as presented by the ASL curriculum. The main purpose of this curriculum is to measure native ASL students' progress in the development and demonstration of their ASL and ASL literacy skills (Gibson, 2006). Two separate assessment tools are used to measure progress: ASL Development Checklist for students up to 5 years old and ASL Proficiency Assessment (ASL-PA) for students from 6 to 12 years old (H. Gibson, personal communication, May 18, 2010).

The Ontario ASL curriculum is the first one used at an academic level in the almost two centuries since the establishment of the first permanent and publicly supported American school for Deaf students in 1817 (Carbin, 1996), and the only one in existence anywhere in North America. Also, for the first time, native ASL students are

given opportunities to study their own language and experience sophisticated ASL literary works throughout their schooling. The ASL curriculum is still in draft form and the final version will be submitted soon.

In any emerging and new discipline, there is an attempt to coin and publish new terms. For instance, Dr. Stokoe invented the word *chereme* to correspond to the equivalent in spoken language, the phoneme. Since sounds do not exist in ASL, Stokoe believed that a new term was in order (Stokoe, 1960). Similarly, in the area of ASL/English bilingual education, Dr. Nover has coined the term *signacy* to represent the receptive and expressive use of ASL (see Nover, Christensen, and Cheng, 1998). As in any new discipline, new terms must be scrutinized and debated. Is this term *signacy* limiting to our broad concept of ASL literacy and ASL literature? These are questions that need academic discussion and empirical research.

Bahan (2005, as cited in Czubek, 2006, p. 376) and Czubek (2006) have boldly challenged the term *signacy* with irony, humour, and sarcasm:

> Let's get this straight. Literacy is reserved exclusively for reading and writing, and literature is the term we use for the body of written materials. The proposal is to create this new category called "signacy" . . . what term do we then use for the body of signed materials – "signature"?

Boldness, irony, humour, and sarcasm are common responses when a new discipline is defining itself because no empirical knowledge base exists. Consequently, writers such as Bahan and Czubek engage their audience with emotion and entertainment. These kinds of reactions, although amusing and entertaining, point to the need for more research in the area of ASL literacy and ASL literature in order to fully understand this

phenomenon. Much is at stake. ASL literacy and ASL literature is a serious topic. It is a critical part of ASL culture, its survival, and its transmission to youth. The topic is too important to the ASL community to allow it to languish in humour, emotion, and bantering prose. Thus, this study proposes to lay the groundwork to develop a scientific knowledge base about ASL literacy and ASL literature.

The firm recognition of ASL as a natural and legitimate language has led to the growing recognition of ASL literature in the last 50 years (see Bahan, 1992; Bauman et al., 2006; Brueggemann, 2009; Byrne, 1996; Christie & Wilkins, 1997; Frishberg, 1988; Kuntze, 1993; Lane et al., 1996; Marsh, 1999; Peters, 2000; Rose, 1992; Supalla & Bahan, 1994a, 1994b; Valli et al., 2011). Interestingly, according to Bauman et al. (2006), the pre-videotape period of ASL literature started in the mid- to late 19th century when Deaf people created and shared stories and poems, which were passed down through ASL from one generation to the next.

At the present time, there are eight different definitions of ASL literature in a scholarly fashion. It is possible that there are more out there but the definitions are as follows:

Table 6
Existing Definitions of ASL Literature

Sources	Existing Definitions of ASL Literature
Byrne (1996)	"The term 'ASL literature' includes not only stories in ASL but also ASL poetry, riddles, humour, and other genres of a 'through the air' literary tradition. ASL literature is not English literature *translated* into ASL but is comprised of original compositions that have arisen from the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of culturally Deaf people, and have been passed on by 'hand' (through ASL) from one generation

	to another" (p. 49).
Christie & Wilkins (1997)	"Like most languages without a written form, ASL has a literature that has been passed down and shared within generations in a face-to-face manner. And like most languages having a rich 'oral' literary tradition, the storytellers/poets of ASL have a respected and leading role in the nurturing and growth of ASL literature. The basic ingredients of ASL literature include not only the building blocks and grammar of ASL, but also miming and gestures that exploit the visual medium. Thus, in much the same way that the poetry of nonsigned languages use sound play and rhyme, ASL poetry uses visual play and sign rhymes" (p. 58).
Gibson (2000)	"ASL literature is conveyed in a *visual-spatial* dimension. It shares similar elements and functions of any literature in any language. For Deaf children, it is an important building block that presents them with opportunities to learn language, knowledge, values, morals, and experiences of the world around them. It also provides them with the bridge to English and other literatures. It exists in two forms; 1) through the air and 2) on videotapes" (pp. 9–10).
Gibson & Blanchard (2010)	"ASL has a literature of its own that has been passed down from generation to generation by the ASL community. It shares similar elements and functions of any literature in any language. For children that use ASL, it is an important foundation that presents them with language, heritage, and experiences of the world around them. ASL also provides them with a bridge to English and other literatures. ASL literature exists in two formats: live and on video" (p. 24).
Marsh (1999)	The definition of ASL literature is "signed expressions of enduring interest" (p. 269).
Peters (2000)	"The very label 'ASL literature' – applied to a work not written down – itself breaks the rules of literature" (p. 17).
Peters (2001)	"Vernacular ASL literature is more of an 'art for a people's sake' than an 'art for art's sake.' The literature in the vernacular is largely a collective, 'orally' (via sign language) transmitted body of performative works. Although ASL works are increasingly recorded or even composed on videotape, many Deaf American storytellers, like the storytellers of old, still travel about and render stories and other vernacular art forms to comparatively small groups of people, frequently as part of some occasion such as a social gathering, ceremony, or festival. Drawing on a traditional stock of stories and other ASL art forms, an ASL artist can choose a story, art form, or even an original piece by another

	ASL artist, make individual modifications, and, at one time or another and in front of one or another group of viewers, render his or her own variant. An ASL storyteller, in telling a story to a group of viewers, does not just recite but performs to keep the interest and attention of the viewers, enacting one or more characters in a kind of semi-play, semi-mime, all the while conveying mannerisms, appearances, attitudes, and emotions" (p. 130).
Rose (1992)	"ASL literature refers to texts (all aspects of articulation, gesticulation, and mise-en-scene in printed, spoken, or performed form) *created in ASL* by Deaf people, whether the pre-videotape folklore forms or the new body of single-authored preserved on videotape" (pp. 23, 26).

Byrne (1996) defined ASL literature as the inclusion of "not only stories in ASL but also ASL poetry, riddles, humour, and other genres of a 'through the air' literary tradition. ASL literature is not English literature *translated* into ASL but is comprised of original compositions that have arisen from the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of culturally Deaf people, and have been passed on by 'hand' (through ASL) from one generation to another" (p. 49). Gibson (2000) added that "[ASL literature] is conveyed in a *visual-spatial* dimension. It shares similar elements and functions of any literature in any language. For Deaf children, it is an important building block that presents them with opportunities to learn language, knowledge, values, morals, and experiences of the world around them. It also provides them with the bridge to English and other literatures. [It] exists in two forms; 1) through the air and 2) on videotapes" (pp. 9-10).

To reflect on whether or not ASL has an "oral" literature, three different but interrelated arguments are presented. The first is the etymological fallacy of literature. As with the case of literacy, we are uncertain how Greek *diphthera* (meaning skin, leather, hide) turned into Latin *littera* (meaning letter) and quite unable to successfully determine

if this means “letter.” Thus, using etymology as an argument appears to be weak. Because of this, we should argue that we should not use the etymology of *literature* as the sole basis and that we should use it to validate the “oral” literary tradition of ASL.

Interestingly, before the advent of film technology to record stories and poems in ASL, ASL culture was considered “oral” because it was based on live, face-to-face communication and because stories and poems told by native ASL people were being passed on “orally” or “through space” (Bahan, 1992; Krentz, 2006). At that time, we were quite uncertain about how to label the literary tradition of native ASL people appropriately, so compared to “written”, “oral” was seen as a better fit.

The second argument begins with the fact that, according to *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, there are 6,909 living languages in the world (Lewis, 2009). How many of these are unwritten? No systematic way of collecting data on the exact number of unwritten languages exists today (Robinson & Gadelii, 2003). However, several statistics have been published. Firstly, out of approximately 3,000 spoken languages in the world today, about 2,922 languages are oral (Ong, 1982, 2009). Secondly, out of 5,000 or more languages, roughly 500 have a written tradition (Kenrick, 2000). Lastly, according to O’Neil (2009), between 5,000 and 6,000 languages are spoken today. Most of them are unwritten. Some excellent examples of the spoken languages that have no written form but have an oral literature are Abom (a language of Papua New Guinea), Alabama (a Native American language of the United States), Assiniboine (an Aboriginal language of Canada), and Reli (a language of India). A

further example comes from the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico:

> Like most tribes in the [Western] hemisphere the Pueblos maintain all of their 5 languages primarily in oral form, and generally shy away from writing their languages. Pueblos with no written system include: Taos and Picuris Pueblos who speak northern Tiwa; Ohkay Owingeh, San Ildefonso, Pojoaque, Tesuque Pueblos who speak northern Tewa; Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Zia Pueblos who speak Keres; Jemez Pueblo who speak Towa and Sandia Pueblo who speak southern Tiwa (F. Colon, personal communication, May 28, 2010).

According to Mark Abley, the author of *Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages*, when a language is unwritten, it means that it has no written literature (M. Abley, personal communication, February 12, 2011). Obviously, when a language has no written literature, it means that it has an oral literature. Since ASL does not have a written form, it is considered as having an "oral" literature (see Bahan, 1992; Bauman et al., 2006; Peters, 2000).

The last reason is that it is possible to analyze and demonstrate that ASL narratives conform to the parameters of oral literature.

> The issue of whether literature needs to be written in order to be literature is a question of power, not merit. Literature can indeed be either oral or written. What we need to do is find a way to explicate and demonstrate the literary value of our oral tales. In order to do that, Bahan and Supalla . . . in their ASL Literature Series . . . have analyzed their narratives, *Bird of a Different Feather* and *For a Decent Living*. Each narrative has been divided into structural units and analyzed to show how both narratives conform to the tradition of oral literature (Bahan, 1992, p. 155).

Bahan's point is an excellent example of indicating that ASL does have its own literature. The only problem is the term *oral*. According to Krentz (2006), "The very term

oral seems a misnomer in connection with the Deaf community. After all, ASL is quite different from speech. *Oral* also echoes *oralism*, the movement spearheaded by Alexander Graham Bell to eradicate sign language, stop deaf intermarriage, and in effect quash Deaf culture" (pp. 52–53). Therefore, the term *signed literature* appears to better indicate the literary tradition of ASL bilingual people through signed language such as ASL.

What does it take to constitute something as literature? Every culture has its own literature, which consists of literary analysis (or elements) and narrative structure (or organization) (Bahan, 1992; Bhattacharyya, 2011). Referring to the former, there are 139 different elements (Applebee, 1977). To produce a work of literature, certain elements need to be used such as story genre, plot, setting, style of presentation, point of view, mood, specialized techniques (symbols and foreshadowing), character, and allusion (Bahan, 1992; Bhattacharyya, 2011). These elements are more geared for prose, which is different from poetry. Several examples of elements for poetry are rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, meter, and enjambment (Bhattacharyya, 2011; Zwaan, 1996). According to Swirski (1998), "The specifically literary elements (e.g., tropes) are an indispensable component of the cognitive dimension of a literary work. They are said to make an essential contribution to 'aesthetically valent qualities' which participate in the constitution of the polyphonic aesthetic value of the concretized work of art" (p. 10).

To demonstrate how the elements of literature can apply to ASL literature, Bahan (1992) outlined certain elements that can be found in the *ASL Literature Series: Bird of a Different Feather & For a Decent Living* (also see Supalla & Bahan, 1994a, 1994b).

Table 7
Elements of Literature Applied to ASL Literature

Story Genre	*Bird of a Different Feather*: Allegorical fable *For a Decent Living*: Novella
Style of Presentation	*Bird of a Different Feather*: Folksy *For a Decent Living*: Cinematic
Point of View	*Bird of a Different Feather*: From the point of view of an omniscient narrator *For a Decent Living*: From the first-person point of view of the protagonist
Mood	*Bird of a Different Feather*: Use of significant pauses and the emotions of the characters *For a Decent Living*: Same as above plus the use of setting of the story
Specialized Techniques: Symbols & Foreshadowing	*Bird of a Different Feather*: "The bird symbolizes a Deaf child, while the eagles symbolize hearing people. The image of the bird struggling to get out of the egg foreshadows its struggle throughout the rest of its life" (p. 157). *For a Decent Living*: "The manure in the barn in the beginning of the story symbolizes all the crap the protagonist has taken while living on the farm. The protagonist's struggle through the storm to get to the barn foreshadows the boy's continued struggle to earn a decent living" (p. 157).
Character	*Bird of a Different Feather*: Caricature-like qualities *For a Decent Living*: Caricature-like qualities

Referring to the narrative structure, Bahan (1992) clearly explained the following:

> There are some principles of narrative organization and structure that many oral narratives share, so that they might even be called universal principles of narrative organization and suggest something about the ways in which human beings organize, produce, and process narratives. Since oral narratives are not written, they might be structured and chunked in certain ways that make them easier for the teller to remember and the audience to process. (p. 158)

Most oral narratives can be divided into lines, stanzas, strophes, topic units, chapters, and parts. These divisions can apply to ASL literature. Bahan (1992) outlined the structural division of his narrative entitled *Bird of a Different Feather* (also see Supalla & Bahan, 1994a, 1994b).

Table 8
Structural Division of ***Bird of a Different Feather*** *by Ben Bahan*

Divisions	Definitions	Examples
Lines	"A line can hold one or more idea units. An idea unit contains a single idea chunk that provides new information and focus" (p. 158).	----------t 2. IX-loc. "mt." EAGLE Above is an example of a line showing the location of an eagle up in the mountain.
Stanzas	"Several lines that share a similar topic or content are patterned into a larger unit called a stanza (not to be confused with the way the term is used	**2: Father (2-6)** ----------t 2. IX-loc. "mt." EAGLE RS: husband 3. [(rh)SCL:bend-2"seated"/(1h) LCL:B"seat"] 4. (2h)ICL:A"open newspaper" READ NEWSPAPER 5. (2h)ICL:A"open and reading newspaper" SPORTS

	in poetry). Each stanza captures a single vignette" (p. 159).	6. (2h)ICL:A"holding and reading newspaper" READ++. "The focal point of this stanza is a description of the father and his action which forms a single vignette" (p. 159).
Strophes	"Stanzas typically fall into related pairs known as strophes. These are two stanzas that are paired with each other usually in terms of something they share. A strophe may also consist of three stanzas and occasionally of one stanza alone" (p. 159).	**<u>Strophe 7: HATCH</u>** **Stanza 12: Wiggle at Last (48-50)** ----------t 48. HAPPEN (2h)LCL:5"egg wiggles" <u>RS: Parent</u> 49. RELIEF 50. (2h)LOOK-at EXCITED (2h)LOOK-at **Stanza 13: Fourth Egg Cracks (51-55)** 51. (2h)LCL:5"egg wiggles" "then wiggles harder" 52. CRACK-intense <u>RS: Parent</u> 53. (2h)LOOK-at 54. !CRACK-intense! 55. [LCL:C"egg"/BPCL:S"head pops out"]
Topic Units	"Strophes combine to form a large unit based on one general topic area, definable by one topic or theme, called topic units. In each topic unit, the	Topic Unit: The Family Strophe 1: The Father Strophe 2: The Mother & the News Strophe 3: The Nursery Strophe 4: First Baby Eagle Strophe 5: Second & Third Baby Eagle Strophe 6: Quiet Egg Strophe 7: Hatch Strophe 8: Baby Bird

	place, time, and major characters remain constant, internal to the topic unit" (p. 160).	
Chapters	"Several topic units form a chapter, which contains one of the broader themes of the story" (p. 161).	Chapter 1: "The Eggs" Topic Unit 1: The Family Topic Unit 2: The Doctor
Parts	"Sometimes in narratives, there seems to be an end to the story. However, this turns out to be a false ending. Suddenly it appears that there is a new beginning in the story; there is a new location, and the story continues in a different time frame. Although the first part can be a story in itself, there are some narratives that	Part 1: "The Mountain" Chapter 1: "The Eggs" Chapter 2: "Search for Cure" Chapter 3: "The School Years" Chapter 4: "Vocational Training" Chapter 5: "Out in the World" Part 2: "The Valley" Chapter 6: "The Bird World" Chapter 7: "Return to Eagle World" Chapter 8: "The Operation" Chapter 9: "The Flight"

	have more than one such part" (p. 161).	

In addition to the discussion of the literary analysis and narrative structure for prose, to create a work of poetry, certain literary elements need to be used such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, meter, and enjambment (Bhattacharyya, 2011; Zwaan, 1996). To indicate how the elements of poetry can apply to ASL literature, Clayton Valli, a native ASL poet, developed an inventory of poetic elements or devices. "When we speak of rhyme in spoken languages, we have in mind a patterning of sound. When the components of ASL signs – handshapes, movements, orientations, and locations – are patterned in a poem, the effect is also esthetically pleasing to the native speaker" (Lane et al., 1996, p. 120). Further, in his doctoral dissertation, Valli (1993) connected a handshape rhyme to the concept of alliteration. He described, "Alliteration may be the repetition of the first sound of several words in a line, compared to the handshape rhyme, that is, the repetition of the handshape of several signs in a line" (p. 113).

In sum, literature is not only limited to written (printed) and spoken (oral) forms but also to the signed form. In other words, like literacy, literature is now an all-encompassing term for every human language, whether it is spoken, written, or signed.

Current Notions of ASL Literature

Although the discussion has been framed to include ASL literacy, the focus of this study is to investigate the question of ASL literature and the taxonomy of ASL literary

genres. The following research questions have been answered through the use of semi-structured interviewing of eight native ASL respondents in the field of ASL and Deaf Studies who are knowledgeable and have expertise with ASL literature:

Table 9
Research Questions and Sources to Use to Answer the Questions

Research Questions	Sources Used to Answer the Questions
At a time when there is increasing recognition of ASL literacy, how would ASL literature be defined?	1. Draw from the works of Byrne (1996), Christie & Wilkins (1997), Gallimore (2000), Gibson (2000), Gibson & Blanchard (2010), Marsh (1999), Peters (2000, 2001), and Rose (1992). 2. Interview respondents.
What are the features that characterize ASL literature?	1. Draw from the works of Kelleher (1986), Peters (2001), and Rose (1994, 1996). 2. Interview respondents.
What would constitute such a literature (e.g., genres)? To what extent is there a comprehensive taxonomy of genres captured in VHS and DVD publications?	1. Draw from the works of Bahan (2006), Bauman, Nelson, & Rose (2006), Brueggemann (2009), Byrne (1997–2012), Frishberg (1988), Jacobowitz (1998), Kuntze (1993, 1997), Lane (1992), Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, (1996), Marsh (1999), Peters (2000), Rose (1992), Rutherford (1993), Supalla (2001), Valli, Lucas, Mulrooney, & Villanueva (2011), and Wilcox & Wilcox (1997). 2. Interview respondents.
What are examples of ASL literary works included in this taxonomy?	1. Draw from the works of Bauman, Nelson, & Rose (2006), Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, (1996), Supalla (2001), Valli (1993), and Valli, Lucas, Mulrooney, & Villanueva (2011). 2. Interview respondents.

Byrne (1996), Christie & Wilkins (1997), Gibson (2000), Gibson & Blanchard (2010), Marsh (1999), Peters (2000, 2001), and Rose (1992) have provided their respective definitions of ASL literature but the definitions have not yet been recognized

throughout the ASL academic community. One goal of this study is to develop a more comprehensive definition. As well, so little is currently known about the characteristics of ASL literature, and an additional goal will be to expand on our knowledge in this area.

A published body of ASL literary works is currently growing but gloomily small. This has been partly due to the historical suppression of ASL in the classroom for more than a hundred years. Bauman et al. (2006) write, "Much of the growth of ASL literature has occurred in living rooms, kitchens, dorms, and other vernacular spaces" (p. 241). Kuntze (1993) stated,

> The literary achievements of deaf people throughout history have been confined to, and recognized only in the realm of, written language. Deaf people who do not express themselves in English as naturally as they do in ASL are at odds with the development of literary creativity in English. Historically, the prospects of producing literary works have been dismal for deaf people. (p. 267)

On the basis of the evidence provided by Bauman et al. (2006), Rose (1992), and Valli (1993), the published history of ASL literary works in VHS and DVD forms appears to have started in 1990, with the exception of the 1913–1920 National Association of the Deaf Film Project and the 1980 videotape of *American Sign Language: Tales from the Green Books*. The year 1990 has been considered the beginning of the publication of ASL literary works in their original form for the ASL community. Before that, ASL people usually published works that contained English originals and translations. The works that have been published have never actually been officially recognized as a corpus *until now*. The University of Arizona ASL Literature Collection inventory, originally compiled by Sam Supalla (2001) and comprising

originals and translations in both VHS and DVD forms, has been revised on the basis of scholarly works, the interviews with the eight respondents, and the researcher's scholarly knowledge and expertise (see Appendix B). The researcher has placed all the literary works into genres, sub-genres, and sub-sub-genres. Each category has a specific list of literary works. As such, the researcher has created an excellent resource for teachers, parents, and the ASL community. Such a resource will allow educators of native ASL students and ASL community members to have easy and quick access to ASL literature for scholarly, recreational, and pedagogical purposes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to arrive at a definition and a description of features and genres of ASL literature by asking native ASL respondents to answer the research questions through semi-structured interviews. After gathering the videotaped data in ASL and transcribing it into written English, the researcher began with a cross-analysis of five interviews using the constant comparison method (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001) by placing the data into categories from which common responses emerged. After this, the researcher grouped these common responses to address the four research questions. The research was approved by the York University Office of Research Ethics (ORE). Informed written consent was obtained. Confidentiality was ensured throughout the study and the respondents were given pseudonyms to protect privacy.

Participants and Context

A purposeful sampling procedure was employed. Purposeful sampling has been defined by Creswell (2007) as the selection of respondents based on underlying characteristics and experiences where they could potentially inform the research questions. From an original pool of 12 respondents, 8 were available for the study. Four of the respondents participated in the interview as individuals. The fifth respondent consisted of four respondents who acted as a focus group. The focus group members discussed each research question thoroughly, and reached a consensus on each question. Therefore, the focus group response is considered a single response.

All eight respondents are working professionals. The researcher contacted them through videophone at their home or university office. They were located in the northeast and western parts of the United States and Canada.

It is important to note that the researcher has defined *expert* as "a person who has special knowledge in a particular field" and who possesses "special skill or knowledge trained by practice" (Random House Webster, 1995, p. 470). For purposes of this study, an expert is a person who has knowledge of ASL literature as well as is known for being an ASL storyteller and has many years of practice in producing ASL literature either as a performer or a curriculum developer.

This definition of expert can also be supported in the literature related to the notion of "Deaf Epistemology or Deaf Ways of Knowing" (Holcomb, 2010). According to this perspective, Deaf Epistemology relies on "personal testimonies, personal experiences, and personal accounts to document knowledge" (Holcomb, 2010, p. 471). Hauser and his colleagues elaborate on Deaf Epistemology by proposing that it "constitutes the nature and extent of the knowledge that deaf individuals acquire growing up in a society that relies primarily on audition to navigate life. Deaf individuals are more visually oriented compared to auditory peers" (Hauser, O'Hearn, McKee, Steider, & Thew, 2010, p. 486).

Criteria to be considered as expert for this study included:

1. The expert has acquired ASL from birth or during the critical period of language acquisition.

2. The expert must be knowledgeable and have expertise with ASL literature (by teaching, researching, and/or publishing at the K–12 setting or university setting).

The eight respondents represented individuals with a range of degrees from the bachelor's level to the doctoral level. They represented scholars who are university professors and researchers, and K–12 teachers and administrators. They also represented storytellers who have taught and/or composed ASL literature. Most of them performed as ASL storytellers. Five were from native ASL families. The three respondents from hearing families learned ASL when they entered school.

All of the eight respondents identified in this study had extensive experience using ASL in the classroom setting. They were not just "armchair" theorists but they were active practitioners of ASL literature. Below are the details for each respondent.

Respondent #1 (Sonny): Possessing a PhD, this respondent has taught ASL literature for 15 years. He has been a professional ASL storyteller and author of ASL literature for the past 30 years. He has also conducted research on ASL literature with colleagues at other universities. He has made numerous scholarly presentations at research conferences. In sum, university preparation, teaching, and composing about ASL literature have informed his perspective.

Respondent #2 (Lindsey): Holding a PhD, this respondent has taught ASL literature at the university level for 13 years. She had developed multi-media curriculum in teaching ASL literature for university students. She is also an ASL storyteller and has performed for audiences for 27 years. She also has composed ASL literature related to

stories, jokes, and poetry. In a similar manner to Respondent #1, university preparation, university teaching, and composing ASL literature has informed her perspective.

Respondent #3 (Tim): This respondent has a PhD. At the university level, he had taught an advanced ASL course covering both the linguistic structure and literary aspects of ASL every year for over 20 years. He designed a comprehensive curriculum for an ASL program for which he trained senior lecturers to teach a series of introductory and advanced courses on ASL literature. He also has made numerous scholarly presentations in the area of sign language research and teaching, ASL literature, and Deaf history. In a similar manner to Respondents #1 and #2, his scholarly preparation, research, and family background have informed his perspective on ASL literature.

Respondent #4 (Jim): Possessing a PhD, this respondent has taught ASL literature and ASL linguistics at the university level for the past 5 years. In a similar manner to Respondents #1, #2, and #3, his scholarly preparation, research, and family background have informed his perspective on ASL literature.

Respondent #5: A focus group with four respondents was conducted. The group discussed each research question and reached consensus. Therefore, the focus group response was considered as a single response.

Respondent #5A (Holly): Holding two master's degrees and teaching native/non-native ASL students in K–12 settings for more than 20 years, this respondent has led an ASL curriculum team to develop and implement an ASL curriculum for native ASL students. ASL literature was an essential part of the ASL curriculum. She also has been active in staff development in ASL at her school. Her perspective was informed by her

teaching and leadership in K–12 educational settings and her development of the ASL curriculum, including ASL literature.

Respondent #5B (Selena): This respondent has a master's degree. She has taught ASL literature in classes from Kindergarten to Grade 8 for more than 5 years. She and her co-presenter have made scholarly presentations on a variety of topics in the area of ASL literature including literary devices.

Respondent #5C (Lara): Working on her master's thesis, this respondent has studied ASL literature through various professional workshops provided by different professionals such as Dr. Clayton Valli. She also has taught ASL literature in the classroom for 7 years.

Respondent #5D (Janelle): Possessing a master's degree, this respondent has attended professional workshops on ASL literature including stories and humour since 1995. She also has taught ASL literature in classes from Kindergarten to Grade 3 for more than 15 years.

Data Collection Procedures

The primary mode of data collection was through interviews with the respondents, conducted by the researcher in ASL through the videophone. Kvale (1996) provided a clear description on how interviews are related to qualitative research. He claimed,

> An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge. The research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation.

> The topic of the interview is introduced by the researcher, who also critically follows up on the subject's answers to his or her questions (p. 6).

Also known as in-depth qualitative interviewing, the qualitative research interview has three most common types: (a) participant observation, (b) in-depth interviews, and (c) focus groups (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In-depth interviews comprise three different types – unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews (I-Tech, 2008; Longfield, 2004; Santiago, 2009). In this study, the semi-structured interview was used. After posing pre-prepared questions to each respondent, the interviewer was able to follow up with probes seeking detail and description about what has been said. In other words, the interviewer was given opportunities to obtain in-depth responses, with nuances and contradictions. Because of the narrowed scope of this study, the semi-structured interview was best used when the interviewer only had one opportunity to interview the respondents who are geographically dispersed in Canada and the United States.

The researcher *first* asked all of the respondents through electronic video mail if they were interested in being interviewed. They were *also* given a list of semi-structured questions (see below) that address the four research questions (see below) to assist them in understanding what they were expected to perform. If they expressed an interest in being personally interviewed, *then* the interview was conducted through the videophone.

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. At a time when there is increasing recognition of ASL literacy, how would ASL literature be defined?
2. What are the features that characterize ASL literature?
3. What would constitute such a literature (e.g., genres)? To what extent is there a comprehensive taxonomy of genres captured in VHS and DVD publications?
4. What are examples of ASL literary works included in this taxonomy?

Using these four research questions as a launching point, the researcher expanded these questions in order to elicit more information from the respondents. During the interview through a recorded videophone, each interviewee was asked to answer the following questions:

1. At a time when there is increasing recognition of ASL literacy, how would you define ASL literature? (*Note*: Each respondent was given seven existing definitions (Byrne, 1996; Christie & Wilkins, 1997; Gibson, 2000; Gibson & Blanchard, 2010; Marsh, 1999; Peters, 2000, 2001; and Rose, 1992.
2. There are features that characterize oral literature such as repetition. Could you provide features that characterize ASL literature?
3. What would constitute such a literature (e.g., genres)? Please identify the genres or sub-genres that you consider exist in ASL literature.

4. To what extent is there a comprehensive taxonomy of genres captured in VHS and DVD publications? What are examples of literary pieces included in this taxonomy and how would you categorize them? For example, Dr. Sam Supalla considers ABC stories and Number Stories under the genre of Sign Play while Dr. Ben Bahan puts them under Stories with Constraints. However, Dr. Clayton Valli categorizes them under Poetry. (*Note*: Each respondent was presented with a diagram of existing genres and sub-genres based on a variety of sources.

Treatment of the Data

Transcription of the data. The data was videotaped and the videotaped interviews were transcribed into English by a graduate student who had approximately 20 years of using ASL in the home and had Deaf family members. An independent transcriber transcribed 30% of the transcripts. From this, inter-transcriber agreement was calculated using the inter-rater reliability formula (Posner, Sampson, Ward, & Cheney, 1990, as cited in Marques & McCall, 2005, p. 453):

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{number of agreements} + \text{number of disagreements}} \text{ X } 100$$

The independent transcriber found a 91% inter-transcriber agreement between the first transcriber's transcription and her own transcription.

Categorization of coding and categories. Using the written English transcriptions, the researcher made note of each category in each of the questions across the five respondents for an individual question, then that category was maintained. The categorization process was carried out by reading the sentences of the interviews, circling each similar response, and then placing them into categories related to the research question.

The data analysis was inductive as the study aimed to understand the perceptions of the respondents in relation to their answers to the research questions. Even though the researcher provided the respondents with definitions and lists of ASL literature titles, he did not impose his view on the respondents but allowed them to examine the question afresh. Categories were generated from the data. New categories were added as needed as the researcher analyzed the transcriptions.

Data collection and analysis are interrelated in qualitative research. Once the categorization was completed, the common categories were clustered around common responses to address each of the research questions.

A cross-case analysis of the interviews was carried out using the constant comparison method (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). This method allowed the researcher to categorize the data, then continually revisit the categorization (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). This method entails four steps as described by Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Coleman (2000): (a) categorization, (b) comparison, (c) inductive analysis (theory emerges), and (d) refinement of theory.

Validation of Data

Validation by the respondents was carried out by having them read the transcription of their interviews (member checking). Each of the respondents was asked to read the transcription of his or her interview. The results were that the respondents said the transcriptions were accurate. One respondent commented that the English translation of his concept was too strong, so the researcher made the change in the transcription.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS: THE CHARACTERIZATION OF ASL LITERATURE

The respondents were queried as to their perspectives about ASL literature. In this chapter, the responses to questions 1 and 2 are discussed, described, and analyzed. Following this description, the responses are categorized, and a summary of the similar and different perspectives of the respondents is presented in order to capture a diversity of beliefs.

A Definition of ASL Literature

At a time when there is an increasing recognition of ASL literacy, how would ASL literature be defined?

Respondent #1: Three key points emerged from Sonny's interview. He focused on ASL literature as a body of collected works. To summarize, he commented that:

1. ASL literature is a collection of works that must be memorized with its transmission being based on memorization. These memorized works are community-owned.
2. The availability of video technology allows ASL literary works to be videotaped and these works are typically single-authored.
3. English-to-ASL translated works should be placed under the category of single-authored works.

In Sonny's words, "I feel that ASL literature as a body of collected works is twofold: the first being storytelling that originated before videotaping technology existed, pre-videotaped era, and the second being those that originated after video technology was created, videotaped era."

In the first category, Sonny stressed the importance of memorization of the story by the storyteller who focuses on the content. This is a characteristic of folktales. An excellent example is the production entitled *Hitchhiker*. In the second category, of ASL literature being videotaped, Sonny noted that the ASL storyteller is more focused on form or the structure of the piece, rather than on only the content matter of ASL literature.

The last key point is the issue of English-to-ASL translated works. Sonny said, "For me, translated works should be included in ASL literature in order to have access to foreign cultures and learn about them through their literatures." He mentioned the work of Patrick Graybill who has beautifully translated poems and stories from English to ASL. Interestingly, Sonny mentioned that he must "give thanks to ASL for making it possible to produce such excellent translations." Sonny considered Graybill's translations to be part of ASL literature but he cautioned that these translated works constitute a sub-category of the second category of single-authored works, clearly differentiated from ASL works that are originally composed in ASL.

In his interview, Sonny also stressed the importance of longevity of ASL literature that can be preserved in video technology. He pointed out that videotaping ASL literature would preserve its originality as it would not change from ASL storyteller to the

next through multiple renditions but the stories would be preserved in their original form on videotape.

Respondent #2: Lindsey's interview brought up four key points:

1. An important part of the definition of ASL literature is the oral tradition.
2. To create a proper work of ASL literature requires an individual to be highly fluent in ASL.
3. ASL literature should have a category for English-to-ASL translated works.
4. ASL literature and Deaf literature should be defined differently.

Referring to the first key point, Lindsey pointed out, "The oral tradition of Deaf people is dying because many works have not been recorded until recently. Many works were created but lost because they were not video recorded. Now, we have many stories that have appeared recently. They are too young to be in the tradition now."

To elaborate on the next key point, Lindsey stressed that the individual also needs to have extensive knowledge of meta-linguistics, literacy, and culture. With all of the skills, a literary work in ASL can be created properly.

In her interview, Lindsey provided two reasons why ASL literature should have a category of English-to-ASL translations. One is that "English literature has works that are translated from other languages to English" and the other is that "we can compare ASL literature and other literatures. We can learn about other cultures by studying their literatures through ASL translations."

The last key point focuses on the difference between ASL literature and Deaf literature. The former uses "hands through the air" while the latter is defined as "the written form including Deaf characters and Deaf themes." Lindsey added that she has a high interest in written works by Deaf people with a focus on Deaf themes and Deaf life experiences.

Respondent #3: Three key points arose from Tim's interview:

1. What is the intention of storytellers when they contribute their works to ASL literature?
2. A work needs to be literary in order to be part of ASL literature.
3. ASL literature has both folkloristic works and single-authored works but they should be kept separate.

To elaborate on the first key point, Tim explained, "I think [that people] create works for continuity (works to be passed on from one generation to the next). It is part of a collective memory. How does an oral culture remember that work? It is through collective memory through the use of orality."

Naturally, every culture uses its own language to create its literary works. For a work to be considered under the umbrella of ASL literature, then a storyteller has to use a literary language. For purposes of this study, literary language can be defined as the creative use of language using literary devices and manipulating the structure of language for a specific effect. In contrast, everyday or ordinary language is the language used in everyday conversation to communicate. To support his perspective, Tim explained, "That

is why earlier I asked what the intention is of the person when creating a work. The person creates it and makes changes to it – composition – to make it different from everyday language . . . for the purpose of continuity. I think that is an important basis for literature."

Tim's issue of folkloristic works and single-authored works is simple considering that they belong to ASL literature but they should kept separate because, in his perspective, the former are created only for the purpose of transmitting the works while the single authors use ASL as a literary language for composition. This is what gives their works potential for continuity.

Respondent #4: Seven key points emerged from Jim's interview. He was the only respondent who considered each of the eight existing definitions of ASL literature.

1. For a work to be part of ASL literature, a literary language should be used.
2. Classics by Clayton Valli, Ben Bahan, and Sam Supalla should be included in the definition of ASL literature.
3. Definition by Heidi Rose (1992)
4. Definition by Andrew Byrne (1996)
5. Definition by Karen Christie and Dorothy Wilkins (1997)
6. Definitions by Charles Marsh (1999) and Cynthia Peters (2000, 2001)
7. Definitions by Heather Gibson (2000) and Heather Gibson and Nancy Blanchard (2010)

According to Jim's perspective, whether the storyteller is Deaf or hearing makes no difference as long as they use a literary language to create a work. He felt that Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs) such as Bonnie Kraft and Keith Wann should be allowed to add their works to ASL literature "as long as their ASL skills are at par."

Referring to Jim's second key point of classics created by certain native ASL storytellers, Cynthia Peters (2000) praises the ASL Literature Series for establishing the standardization of ASL literary works. She considers Ben Bahan's *Bird of a Different Feather* and Sam Supalla's *For a Decent Living* as canonical but she has not quite explained how she came to this decision. In addition, referring to the ASL Literature Series indirectly, Padden and Humphries (2005) write, "The performances of equally inventive and skilled ASL storytellers like Sam Supalla and Ben Bahan became a new standard for public performance, showing that ASL should become the name of the language of the community, because it had such rich potential" (p. 137). Jim felt that the classics (or canonical works) by Clayton Valli, Ben Bahan, and Sam Supalla should be included in the definition of ASL literature because "we should look up to them as our language and literary models."

The next key point is Heidi Rose's definition: "ASL literature refers to texts (all aspects of articulation, gesticulation, and mise-en-scene in printed, spoken, or performed form) *created in ASL* by Deaf people, whether the pre-videotape folklore forms or the new body of single-authored preserved on videotape" (1992, pp. 23, 26). Jim was in agreement with most of the definition except for the aspects of articulation, gesticulation, and mise-en-scène.

Jim completely agreed with Andrew Byrne's definition: "The term 'ASL literature' includes not only stories in ASL but also ASL poetry, riddles, humour, and other genres of a 'through the air' literary tradition. ASL literature is not English literature *translated* into ASL but is comprised of original compositions that have arisen from the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of culturally Deaf people, and have been passed on by 'hand' (through ASL) from one generation to another" (1996, p. 49). The only question Jim had was the limitation of the definition to Deaf people. He felt that there are CODAs such as Bonnie Kraft and Keith Wann who should be part of the definition as long as their works are literary.

The definition by Karen Christie and Dorothy Wilkins (1997) is as follows:

> Like most languages without a written form, ASL has a literature that has been passed down and shared within generations in a face-to-face manner. And like most languages having a rich 'oral' literary tradition, the storytellers/poets of ASL have a respected and leading role in the nurturing and growth of ASL literature. The basic ingredients of ASL literature include not only the building blocks and grammar of ASL, but also miming and gestures that exploit the visual medium. Thus, in much the same way that the poetry of nonsigned languages use sound play and rhyme, ASL poetry uses visual play and sign rhymes. (p. 58)

Jim expressed his full support for the definition except for the last part of the sentence: "but also miming and gestures that exploit the visual medium." He explained, "Miming must not be part of the definition because it is not equivalent to language. In other words, ASL literature must include the highest level of ASL language. If a hearing individual does not understand a literary work, then it should be considered as part of ASL literature because of the use of literary language. If the individual basically

understands the content of the literary work, then it is highly possible that it is a mime, not a poem or story."

Jim completely agreed with the definition by Charles Marsh (1999): The definition of ASL literature is "signed expressions of enduring interest" (p. 269). However, he found one part of the lengthy definition by Cynthia Peters (2000, 2001) puzzling. For instance, he questioned the meaning of the sentence: "Vernacular ASL literature is more of an 'art for a people's sake' than an 'art for art's sake.'" He provided an example of Valli's work. Jim pointed out,

> It took him [Valli] 3 years to create a poem called *The Cave*. It is a work of art, a skillfully crafted composition! It is not for a people's sake! Valli enjoyed creating his poems for himself. When asked to share them, he was hesitant. It is an art in his head. This proves that ASL can create highly composed works! Really, it is Valli for Valli's sake, not an art for a people's sake!

The definition by Heather Gibson (2000) is as follows:

> ASL literature is conveyed in a *visual-spatial* dimension. It shares similar elements and functions of any literature in any language. For Deaf children, it is an important building block that presents them with opportunities to learn language, knowledge, values, morals, and experiences of the world around them. It also provides them with the bridge to English and other literatures. It exists in two forms; 1) through the air and 2) on videotapes. (pp. 9–10)

Jim supported the definition with a question. He asked, "Is it language that is a building block or is it literature?" From there, he explained, "My theory is that language comes first. Literature is under it. If literature is above language, it will become confusing. Language should always control literature."

Lastly, Jim enthusiastically supported the definition by Heather Gibson and Nancy Blanchard (2010):

> ASL has a literature of its own that has been passed down from generation to generation by the ASL community. It shares similar elements and functions of any literature in any language. For children that use ASL, it is an important foundation that presents them with language, heritage, and experiences of the world around them. ASL also provides them with a bridge to English and other literatures. ASL literature exists in two formats: live and on video. (p. 24).

Respondent #5A: Holly; **Respondent #5B**: Selena; **Respondent #5C**: Lara; **Respondent #5D**: Janelle

Five key points arose from the group interview of four respondents.

1. Two separate definitions of ASL literature should be created: one for face-to-face and the other for videotapes.
2. Video technology is to be included in the definition.
3. Miming and gestures must not be used in the definition.
4. Literary devices should be included in the definition.
5. English-to-ASL translated works should not be part of the definition.

According to Holly, two separate definitions of ASL literature should be created to represent two different forms: (a) face-to-face and (b) videotaped. The two forms have different rules. Referring to the first form, she explained, "As for ASL literature, it is quite different from published literature [such as English] as changes can be made at any time when presented in front of a live audience. This allows the work to appear differently each time." On the other hand, the second form focuses on the use of video

technology and includes more specific information than the face-to-face form. The videotaped literature is equivalent to the written literature because both use a frozen text. Holly explained, "If we notice that there are mistakes or that information is incorrect, it is too late as it is already locked in. Mistakes or not, the presenter just keeps going and may not even realize it until it is too late."

Selena was in complete agreement with Byrne's definition of ASL literature (1996) but she felt that this definition should also include the use of video technology. The only reason for this is that "the definition won't need to be changed again as advances are made that impact the way we present our ASL literature."

In Selena's perspective, miming and gestures must not be included in the definition because of its negative connotation "that will cause people to really look down upon [ASL] literature." As a matter of fact, ASL literature is more complex than people realize.

When reading through the eight existing definitions of ASL literature, Lara realized that the definitions include no mention of literary devices. For purposes of this study, literary devices are "specific aspects of literature, in the sense of its universal function as an art form, which expresses ideas through language, which we can recognize, identify, interpret and/or analyze. Literary devices collectively comprise the art form's components: the means by which authors create meaning through language, and by which readers gain understanding of and appreciation for their works. They also provide a conceptual framework for comparing individual literary works to others, both within and across genres. Both literary elements *and* literary techniques can rightly be

called literary devices (Braiman, 2007). Lara explained, "When devices are used, the literary work will become an art."

In Janelle's perspective, English-to-ASL translated works should be excluded from ASL literature because the origin of language is English. In this way, a proper definition of ASL literature could be created.

Summary of a Definition of ASL Literature

When queried on their perspective on the definition of ASL literature, the respondents presented a diversity of perspectives to the researcher. All respondents agreed that ASL literature is its own discipline or constitutes its own body of artistic works that needs further scholarly scrutiny. However, the diversity of perspectives emerged when the respondents were asked what specific elements or features should be incorporated in the definition of ASL literature: community-owned vs. single-authored; how video technology affects ASL literature, not only preserving it but also affecting its structure. The respondents also commented on the qualities the ASL storyteller should have, whether mimery or gesture should be included, and whether translated works from English to ASL should be included.

For instance, all respondents emphasized the way in which ASL literature is *transmitted*, through face-to-face renditions to audiences and through video technology. All generally agreed that video technology, while preserving ASL literature for posterity, represents a "frozen form" that differs from ASL literature composed in "pre-technology times" before VHS and DVD technology. Two respondents categorized these differences (pre-technology and technology) as "folkloristic" or "community-owned" works that

change from audience to audience compared to "single-authored" works represented on videotape. One respondent described this difference by commenting that users of folkloristic traditions of ASL literature focused on the content because the ASL storyteller had to rely on memorization. In contrast, while current ASL storytellers using video technology focus on meaning too, they also focus on the form or structure of ASL.

Other respondents emphasized the *skill of the ASL storyteller* as part of the definition of ASL literature. For instance, the ASL storyteller needs to be "highly fluent in ASL." The ASL storyteller should use "a literary language" (as opposed to conversational language) and that "miming and gesture" should not be used in this definition. And still another respondent commented on the "*intention*" of the ASL storyteller. Why was he or she composing ASL literature? For himself/herself or for the sake of art?

One respondent pointed to his perspective on the difference between ASL literature that uses the structure of ASL to render stories, poems, etc. to Deaf literature which is literature that has Deaf themes, characters, plots in it.

A major difference in perspective was related to the question whether or not English-to-ASL translated works constitute part of ASL literature. One respondent said emphatically, no, translated works should not be part of ASL literature, as they do not originate from the language of ASL. Four respondents said, yes, translated works can be a part of ASL literature but they must be grouped under a sub-section or sub-category of ASL literature. As one respondent pointed out, the Deaf community can learn much from the literature of other cultures, and thus can benefit from these translated works.

Only one respondent commented on the set of definitions the researcher presented at the beginning of the question. He agreed with previous definitions of ASL literature provided by Rose (1992), Byrne (1996), Christie & Wilkins (1997), Marsh (1999), Peters (2000, 2001), Gibson (2000), and Gibson & Blanchard (2010).

Features of ASL Literature

What are the features that characterize ASL literature?

Respondent #1: Sonny referred to the paper by Nancy Frishberg (1988) entitled *Signers of Tales: The Case for Literary Status of an Unwritten Language* to present a singular feature: oral literature. Sonny explained, "[Frishberg] was the first to consider oral literature for ASL. In essence, the bottom line of her article is that the term *oral*, as it refers to literature, simply means a form that is *not written*. Video recorded literature is not considered as a *written* form so it can be included under the oral literature category."

Respondent #2: Lindsey presented a singular feature: the audience. She stressed that a storyteller needs to know who the target audience is before s/he presents his/her works. In her words, "If I present in Texas, then I will talk about the Texan culture and its characteristics. If the audience is full of children, then I will adapt my stories to match their interest. I always create stories for different kinds of Deaf people in the U.S."

Respondent #3: Tim's interview presented the three following features of ASL literature:

1. *Distinctive storytelling styles*: "I remember when NTD (National Theatre of the Deaf) had a tour in the 1960s. I recognized specific people's different styles when presenting their works."
2. *Cadence*: Dictionary.com defines cadence as rhythmic flow of a sequence of words. When it is used, a literary work will appear smooth. In Tim's words, "The NTD people used some kind of Signed English but they tried to make their works look smooth and beautiful." According to Bahan (2006), there are quite a few storytellers or smooth signers who "can weave a story so smoothly that even complex utterances appear simple, yet beautiful" (p. 24).
3. *Rhyme*: Tim referred to Clayton Valli's work that described different rhymes used in ASL poetry. Several instances are handshape rhyme, movement rhyme, location rhyme, and handedness rhyme.

Respondent #4: Rhythm is the only one feature that emerged from Jim's interview. He emphasized that music must have rhythm but, when asked if ASL poetry has rhythm, he agreed.

Respondent #5A: Holly; **Respondent #5B**: Selena; **Respondent #5C**: Lara; **Respondent #5D**: Janelle

Four features of ASL literature arose from the group interview.

1. *Pattern*: Different genres use pattern as an ASL cultural marker. An example that is seen in some literary works is the use of a unique hand movement for ASL organizations such as the Ontario Association of the

Deaf (OAD), the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD), and the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD). Why? This indicates a sign of respect for the vision and mission of these ASL organizations.

2. *Oppression*: In Holly's words, "Most literary works are connected to oppression. It creates stories and poems. The works seem to be used as a way to escape the oppressive experiences for survival purposes."
3. *Celebration of ASL people*: In contrast to the feature of oppression, there are ASL literary works that celebrate ASL people and their successes in life. An example is Andrew Byrne's story called *PAH SAFE*.
4. *Literary devices*: Holly explained, "Many stories and poems are based on our people's experiences, which become stories. We select and use certain literary devices within a literary work to 'mask' the obvious representation of oppression. They are not obvious about oppression but they do include the representation of it. Why is it not that obvious? The answer is the selection and use of certain literary devices!"

Summary of Features of ASL Literature

When queried on their perspective of the features that characterize ASL literature, the respondents provided a diversity of perspectives. The features are as follows:

1. ASL literature is "oral" or a form that is not written. Therefore, when an ASL literary work is videotaped, it will still be considered "oral."

2. An ASL storyteller needs to be aware of who the audience is before presenting his/her work.
3. Every ASL storyteller has his/her own storytelling style.
4. There are a few ASL storytellers who are able to "weave a story so smoothly that even complex utterances appear simple, yet beautiful" (Bahan, 2006, p. 24).
5. An ASL poet uses a variety of rhymes and rhythms in his/her poems.
6. One of the ASL cultural markers is the use of pattern in different genres.
7. There are many ASL literary works that are connected to either oppression or the celebration of ASL people and their successes in life.
8. Literary devices are used in many stories and poems to mask the obvious representation of oppression.

Conclusion

After analyzing the responses from the respondents, a table below indicates which genres, sub-genres, and/or sub-sub-genres should and should not be part of ASL literature:

Table 10
Inclusion and Exclusion of ASL Literature Genres

Individual Genres	Respondent #1 (*n* = 1)	Respondent #2 (*n* = 1)	Respondent #3 (*n* = 1)	Respondent #4 (*n* = 1)	Focus Group #5 (*n* = 1)	Total of Yes	Total of No
Poetry	Yes but worded, alphabetical, & initialized handshape rhymes to be removed	Yes	Yes	Yes for poems that have rhyme; alphabetical handshape rhyme to be based on ASL-phabet, not English alphabet	Yes but numeral, worded, initialized, & alphabetical handshape rhymes to be removed	5	0
Fairy Tales	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	3	2
Stories	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Yes but not cartoon-based	4	Unsure
Expositions	No but place it under oratory	No	Yes	Yes	No	2	3
English-to-ASL Translations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4	1
Personal Anecdotes	Yes but biography & autobiography to be added	Yes but place it under humour	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Sign Play	Yes except for ABC stories	Yes but place it under humour	Yes	Yes for poems that have no rhyme; a sub-genre of mimicry to be added	Yes but rename it word play	5	0
Songs	Yes	No but rename it ASL rap	Yes	Yes	No	3	2
Monologue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4	1
Fable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes but rename it allegory	5	0
Riddles	Yes	Yes but place it under sign play	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Tall Tales	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Epics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Humour	Yes	Yes (jokes, personal anecdotes, & sign play as sub-genres)	Yes	Yes (pre-video and video technology eras)	Yes	5	0
Legends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Oratory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	0
Mimery	No	Yes but create a new genre called visual vernacular and place mimery under this genre	Yes	No	No but possibly rename it drama	2	3

Summary of Findings: The Characterization of ASL Literature

The researcher queried the five respondents about their definitions of ASL literature and the existence of the taxonomy of ASL literary genres. Not unexpectedly, he found a variety of responses as a result of the diversity of the five respondents' educational and professional backgrounds from university professors of ASL Studies and ASL linguistics to K–12 teachers who not only teach native/non-native ASL children bilingually in ASL and in English but also are developers of curriculum related to ASL as a first language. In relation to the first research question, all five respondents agreed that ASL literature was an academic discipline that needed further scrutiny and definition. They believed that ASL was first community-owned and transmitted through face-to-face encounters at clubs and schools and now has developed because of the use of videotape technology that preserves it.

A major difference in belief centred on the question of whether or not ASL literature includes translated works that originated in the English language. Only one of the five respondents said no, that translated works should not be included. The remaining respondents said that English-to-ASL translations can be included.

In relation to the second research question, all respondents agreed that the term *oral literature* could be applied to ASL literature even though the conventional definition of oral is related to speech. "Oral literature" related to ASL literature can be represented by live signing as well as videotaped presentations of ASL literature. The respondents generally agreed that literary devices such as the manipulation of the structure of language for a specific effect exist in ASL poems, and that the ASL storyteller often has

his or her own particular style, uses ASL cultural markers, weaves a story fluidly, and masks political themes, such as oppression, underneath the story.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS: THE TAXONOMICAL GENRES OF ASL LITERATURE

The respondents were queried as to their perspectives about the taxonomical genres of ASL literature. In this chapter, the responses to questions 3 and 4 are discussed, described, and analyzed. Responses are then categorized and a summary of the diversity of perspectives is presented.

The questions under discussion are:

Question 3: What would constitute such a literature (e.g., genres)? To what extent is there a comprehensive taxonomy of genres captured in VHS and DVD publications?

Question 4: What were examples of ASL literary works that the respondents believed should be included in this taxonomy?

Because the two questions appear to overlap, the interviewees were asked to answer both questions at the same time or alternately. In addition, during the interview, each interviewee was asked to analyze the taxonomy of ASL literary genres captured in VHS and DVD publications (see below) and determine which genres, sub-genres, and/or sub-sub-genres should and should not be part of ASL literature.

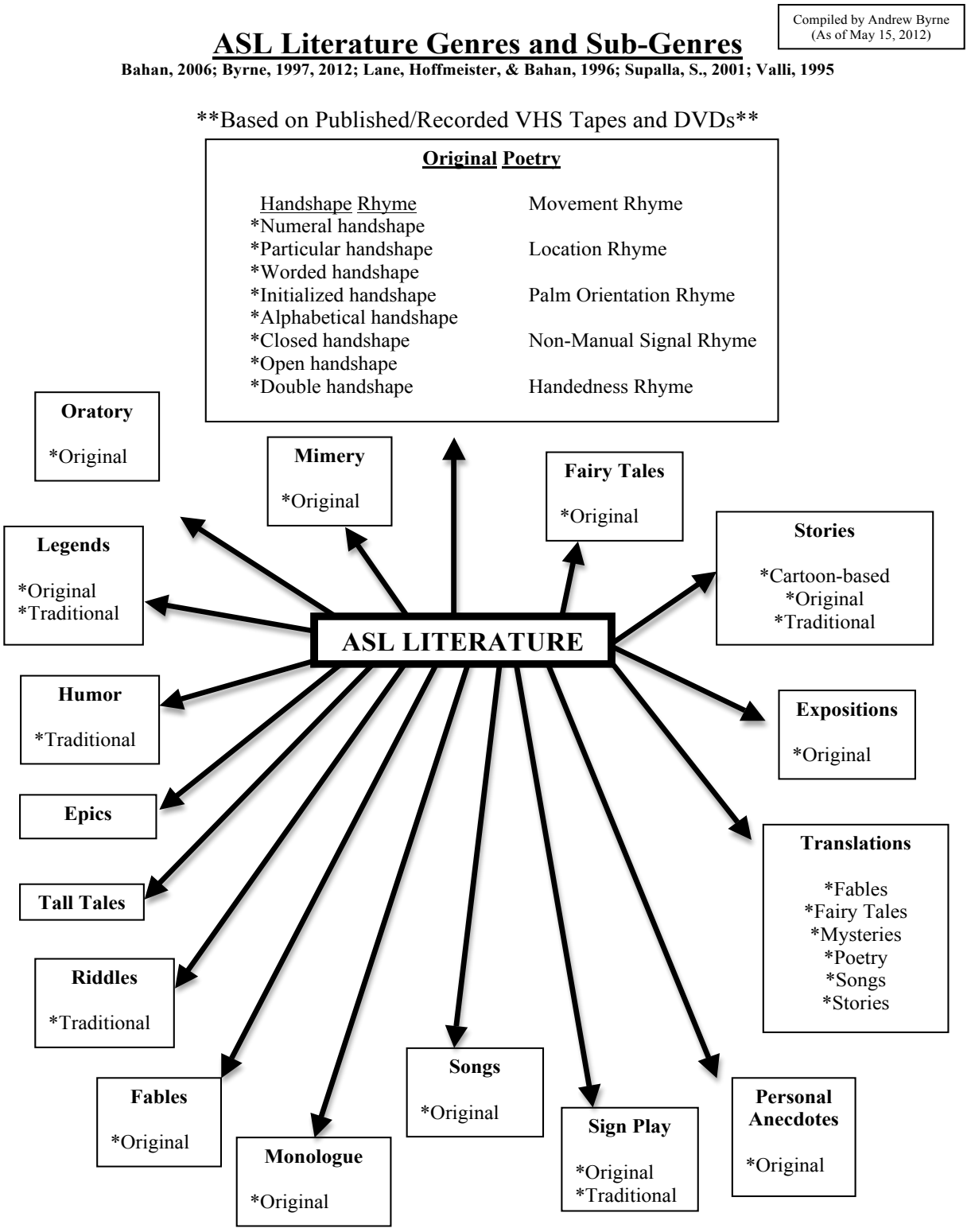

Figure 2
Taxonomy of ASL Literature Genres (Before the Interviews)

Taxonomy of ASL Literature Genres (Before the Interviews)

In the words of Baldick (2008), the definition of *genre* is:

> The French term for a type, species, or class of composition. A literary genre is a recognizable and established category of written work employing such common conventions as will prevent readers or audiences from mistaking it for another kind. Much of the confusion surrounding the term arises from the fact that it is used simultaneously for the most basic modes of literary art (lyric, narrative, dramatic); for the broadest categories of composition (poetry, prose fiction), and for more specialized sub-categories, which are defined according to several different criteria including formal structure (sonnet, picaresque novel), length (novella, epigram), intention (satire), effect (comedy), origin (folktale), and subject-matter (pastoral, science fiction). While some genres, such as the pastoral elegy or the melodrama, have numerous conventions governing subject, style, and form, others – like the novel – have no agreed rules, although they may include several more limited subgenres. (p. 140)

The researcher reviewed the work of Bahan (2006), Byrne (1997–2012), Lane et al. (1996), Supalla (2001), and Valli (1993). From these works, the researcher identified 17 so-called genres (see Figure 2). Some are similar to those found in English literature and some (marked with asterisks below) are new to ASL literature and were coined by researchers in ASL literature. Definitions of the 17 genres follow:

1. ASL *poetry* is defined as "signs (signs include non-manual signals like questions and non-manual markers like adverbs) and the signs of poetry are arranged usually in lines. The visual movement of an ASL poem, controlled in large part by its space, gives it an object's shapeliness and contributes to both pleasure and wisdom. The movement captures us. Phrases in poetry are shortened compared to ASL prose but give more clear and powerful meanings. Rhythm is arranged in ASL poetry with various feature poetics such as rhymes (repetition of handshape, movement path, non-manual signals, and/or location), handedness (use one hand, two hands, or alternating both one hand and two hands), assimilation (particular signs blending together), change of a sign (at least one parameter is changed), and movement duration. Poetry is the feelings and thoughts we derive from watching poems, but feelings and thoughts

are not poetry's medium. Whatever poetry accomplishes in us it accomplishes by signs. As paint and canvas form the medium of painting, and as sequences and combinations of movement different in stress, duration, and quality form the medium of motif or melody, so the chosen signs in the chosen order make ASL poetry" (Valli, 1993, p. 134).

2. **Oratory* is defined as "the art of public speaking; or the exercise of this art in orations – formal speeches for public occasions" (Baldick, 2008, p. 241). However, Supalla (2001) identifies oratory as a genre for the four works: *The Igorot People* by Cinnie MacDougall (2001), *The Preservation of Sign Language* by George Veditz (1913/2003), *A Plea for a Statue of de L'Epee* by J. H. Cloud and Michael R. McCarthy (1913/2003), and *Some Thoughts on Fingerspelling* by Laurene Gallimore (2001). Since the works appear to be informational and non-literary, it might be more appropriate to remove them from ASL literature and place them under informational texts.

3. *Legend* is defined as "a story or group of stories handed down through popular oral tradition, usually consisting of an exaggerated or unreliable account of some actually or possibly historical person – often a saint, monarch, or popular hero. Legends are sometimes distinguished from myths in that they concern human beings rather than gods, and sometimes in that they have some sort of historical basis whereas myths do not; but these distinctions are difficult to maintain consistently" (Baldick, 2008, p. 185). Lane et al. (1996) identify the legend of origins as an independent genre while Bahan (2006) identifies legends as a sub-sub-genre of the sub-genre of folktales of the main genre of narratives.

4. According to California Department of Education (2012), *humour* is a genre, which means "fiction full of fun, fancy, and excitement, meant to entertain; but can be contained in all genres." Abrams and Harpham (2012) place humour as a sub-genre under the genre of comedy. Humour is defined as "either to a comic utterance or to a comic appearance or mode of behavior" (p. 421). Also, it "refers to what is purely comic: it evokes, as it is sometimes said, sympathetic laughter, or else laughter which is an end in itself" (p. 421). One of the forms [another term for genres] of ASL literature is humour (Lane et al., 1996) or performed jokes (Harmon, 2006).

5. *Epic* refers to "a work that meets at least the following criteria: it is a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race" (Abrams & Harpham,

2012, p. 107). An example of an ASL epic is *Epic: Gallaudet Protest* by Gilbert Eastman (see Harmon, 2006).

6. *Fable* is defined as "a brief tale in verse or prose that conveys a moral lesson, usually by giving human speech and manners to animals and inanimate things" (Baldick, 2008, p. 123). Peters (2000) and Supalla (2001) identify Ben Bahan's *Bird of a Different Feather* as a fable. Lane et al. (1996) recognize this work as an allegory while Bahan (2006) identifies it as an allegorical fable under the genre of original fiction. *Allegory* might be a better term because of its definition as "a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning. The principal technique of allegory is personification, whereby abstract qualities are given human shape" (Baldick, 2008, p. 7). This is what Bahan attempts to perform with his work.

7. *Monologue* is defined as "an extended speech uttered by one speaker, either to others or as if alone. Significant varieties include the dramatic monologue (a kind of poem in which the speaker is imagined to be addressing a silent audience), and the soliloquy (in which the speaker is supposed to be 'overheard' while alone" (Baldick, 2008, p. 214). However, instead of using the term monologue for the singular work called *The Deaf Mute Howls* by Bruce Hlibok, *soliloquy* might be a better term. It is defined as "the act of talking to oneself, whether silently or aloud. In drama it denotes the *convention* by which a character, alone on the stage, utters his or her thoughts aloud" (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 370). According to Baldick (2008), "drama is a major genre of literature" (p. 97). Thus, soliloquy is under the genre of drama. Another term for soliloquy is *monodrama*, which is defined as "a play or dramatic scene in which only one character speaks; or a sequence of dramatic monologues all spoken by the same single character" (p. 214).

8. Bahan (2006) recognizes *song* as an independent genre, which has two sub-genres: (a) translated songs and (b) percussion signing. Some elements of the genre of songs "are transposed into the signed modality, such as fluidity of words/signs and the rhythm. The cadence of songs usually springs from the structural way signs are formed (e.g., phonology/morphology) and is visually pleasing" (p. 34). In the first sub-genre, "the lyrics of various songs are translated into ASL and performed for an audience" (p. 34). Two examples are *Star Spangled Banner* and *Yankee Doodle*. The second sub-genre consists of the arrangement of signs according to certain beats. A drum is usually used to follow the beats. Bahan (2006) mentions that there may be three different types of cadences: (a) one, two, one, two; (b) one, two, one-two-three; and (c) a mixture of the first two. Peters (2000) mentions the fourth cadence, which

is a slow one-two-three-four drum beat. An example for the second type is cadence is the *Bison Song*, the college song of Gallaudet University. Mary Beth Miller's *Cowboy Story* is an example of the fourth type.

9. *Exposition* is defined as "the setting forth of a systematic explanation of or argument about any subject; or the opening part of a play or story, in which we are introduced to the characters and their situation, often by reference to preceding events" (Baldick, 2008, p. 121). Supalla (2001) uses this genre for religious stories, which are on the DVD called *Life Signs* published in 1991.

10. The term *story* by itself can be very broad and vague. According to Baldick (2008), *story* is an everyday term. Abrams and Harpham (2012) define *narrative* as "a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do" (p. 233). They add, "A primary interest of structural narratologists is in the way that narrative discourse fashions a story – a mere sequence of events in time – into the organized and meaningful structure of a literary *plot*" (p. 234). Compared to story, narrative may be seen as more literary. Thus, narrative may be a better term. Bahan (2006) explains that the main genre of narratives has five sub-genres: (a) narratives of personal experience; (b) cinematographic stories; (c) folktales; (d) translated works; and (e) original fiction.

    (a) *Narratives of personal experience* are "real-life accounts of various events, including those that are humorous or tragic and those of struggles to overcome various odds" (p. 29). Lane et al. (1996) have a different name for this sub-genre, which is the success story (as a genre).

    (b) *Cinematographic stories* use cinematographic technique from the beginning to the end. They "may be attempts to retell or re-create scenes from (or sometimes entire) movies to an audience. But even stories that have no connection with any motion picture may extensively use various filmlike techniques, such as close-ups, panning, zoom in, zoom out, medium shots, far shots, and even the morphing of objects while telling stories" (p. 30). This sub-genre is similar to *classifier stories*, which are made of completely or almost completely of classifiers, one type of the linguistics of ASL.

    (c) *Folktales* are defined as "a body of work whose origin is lost but that have been shared in the community for a long time. Many stories whose origins have been lost may have begun as narratives of personal experience and subsequently been passed around" (p. 31). This sub-genre includes legends, tall tales (e.g., mechanical

clocks rigged with "weights waken all the Deaf people in the town" – see Lane et al., 1996, p. 155), and riddles as sub-sub-genres. Two different kinds of humor include jokes that belong to folktales (community owned – see Peters, 2000) and original humor (single-authored).

(d) *Translated works*: See no. 16 below.

(e) *Fiction*: This sub-genre includes novellas such as Sam Supalla's *For a Decent Living*.

(f) *Non-fiction*: This sub-genre includes factual works presented in a narrative fashion, such as *Alarm Clocks* by Byron Burnes.

(g) *Biographies and autobiographies*: There are several DVDs of individual biographies and autobiographies (e.g., Patrick Graybill, Clayton Valli, and Debbie Rennie, produced by Sign Media, Inc.; M. J. Bienvenu, Gilbert Eastman, and others, produced by Sign Enhancers under Harris Communications, Inc.; and Sam Supalla and Ben Bahan, produced by DawnSignPress).

Genre of Narratives (In Summary)

- Sub-genre of narratives of personal experience
- Sub-genre of classifier (cinematographic) stories
- Sub-genre of folktales including legends, tall tales, and traditions (humour to be added – see Peters, 2000)
- Sub-genre of translated works
- Sub-genre of original fiction
- Sub-genre of original non-fiction
- Sub-genre of biographies and autobiographies

11. *Fairy tale* is defined as "a traditional folktale adapted and written down for the entertainment of children, usually featuring marvelous events and characters, although fairies as such are less often found in them than princesses, talking animals, ogres, and witches" (Baldick, 2008, p. 124). Supalla (2001) uses the genre of fairy tales for translated fairy tales from English to ASL.

12. Supalla (2001) identifies *personal anecdote* as a genre for stories of personal experience. The term *anecdote* may be perceived as not literary-related so, for a possibly more appropriate term, see no. 10(a) above.

13. **Mimery* (*mime* in English literature but *mimery* is a term coined by Supalla, 2001) is defined as "the art or technique of portraying a character, mood, idea, or narration by gestures and body movements; pantomime" (p. 861).

14. *Tall tale* is defined as "a humorously exaggerated story of impossible feats" (Baldick, 2008, p. 331). See #10c above.

15. *Riddle* is defined as "a puzzlingly indirect description of some thing, person, or idea, framed in such a way as to challenge the reader to identify it. Riddles, usually in verse, are found as a popular literary form in most cultures and periods" (Baldick, 2008, p. 289). Supalla (2001) uses this genre for riddles by Simon Carmel.

16. *According to Bahan (2006), ASL literature does have a sub-genre of *translated works* under the genre of narratives: "Since many members of the DEAF WORLD are also bilingual speakers of ASL and English, they have access to stories that appear in print. There have even been literary organizations/societies in the DEAF WORLD that have encouraged discussions and translations of these printed works. Translations of printed works into face-to-face interactions have been well documented and preserved in various archived films and videotapes over the years. Often in the process of translation, Deaf cultural behavior, values, or norms find their way into the work, whether the translator is aware of this or not. For example, in telling "Little Red Riding Hood," a translator may unconsciously make the characters "Deaf" by assigning them behavior and discourse that are visually based, akin to those in the DEAF WORLD (such as waving one's hands to get attention of another character). An example of conscious translation (i.e., adaptation) of this story might involve making the mother, girl, and grandmother Deaf and the Wolf hearing, to set up a dichotomy that reflects conflicts in the culture" (pp. 32–33).

17. **Sign play* is a term created by Susan Rutherford (1993), who borrowed from speech play coined by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Joel Sherzer. Speech play refers to "puns, jokes, proverbs, riddles, play languages, verbal dueling, parallelism, metaphor, grammatical stretching and manipulation in poetry and song" (www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/shespe.html). Rutherford (1993) explains, "Employing an interplay between the community's two languages, ASL and English, the ABC story is a form of linguistic play, carried on for its own sake, that consciously manipulates the phonetic system of one language with the phonological system of the other. Briefly, the mechanism of interplay between English and ASL in the ABC Story is

> that a story is performed in ASL with the external structure of the English alphabet determining the handshapes used for the story" (p. 28).

Responses to the Taxonomy of Genres of ASL Literature

One can see that four of these so-called genres coined by ASL literature "experts" are new: oratory, mimery, translated works, and sign play. The rationale of the researcher was to present these 17 "genres" to the respondents and ask them to agree or disagree (or validate) each of them. This study is an attempt to get "experts" to examine the genre terminology and discuss it as "valid" or "not valid" in light of their own knowledge and experiences or their expertise.

Respondent #1: The first genre that Sonny noticed which puzzled him was mimery. When asked if this genre should be under the umbrella of ASL literature, he responded,

> I prefer that it not be included as ASL literature. You see, there is an inseparable connection between language and literature. A genre of mimery should be removed from ASL literature, as it is not considered an actual language. If we were to include mimery as a genre of ASL literature, it will set a precedent that will allow for such future works to also be included as a genre of ASL literature.

The next genre is personal anecdotes. After debating whether this genre should be replaced by another, more appropriate, term, Sonny finally decided to keep this genre with the understanding that *biography* and *autobiography* should be added under this genre. There are several excellent biographies and autobiographies that have been done by Sam Supalla, Ben Bahan, Debbie Rennie, Patrick Graybill, Clayton Valli, and Ella Mae Lentz.

When asked if the genre of sign play includes A to Z stories and number stories, Sonny responded, “Yes but not ABC stories. I struggle with that. I really don’t like ABC stories personally.” He provided several reasons why ABC stories should be removed from ASL literature:

1. “ABC stories are not ASL.”
2. “It is okay for deaf children to go to school to learn the alphabet in English for reading purposes. Incorporating the English alphabet in ASL is too much. To me, we cross the line when we do that.”
3. “I think that ABC stories are unattractive, for lack of a better word! I can see how signers had trouble trying the English alphabet through ASL. It is really hard and awkward. Why? ABC stories are a bastardized form of ASL and English. In any case, ABC stories are not an aesthetic piece of work.”

Directing Sonny to the genre of poetry, especially its sub-genre of handshape rhyme that has eight sub-sub-genres (numeral handshape, particular handshape, worded handshape, initialized handshape, alphabetical handshape, closed handshape, open handshape, and double handshape), all of the sub-sub-genres should be left alone except for worded handshape, alphabetical handshape, and initialized handshape because they are English-influenced. Referring to the worded handshape rhyme, he explained, “I would not include it in ASL literature because it has no real rhyme. Poetry is supposed to

be beautiful. I understand all about language play but worded handshape rhyme plays with English; it's not ASL."

When asked about the genres of epics, expositions, monologue, and oratory, Sonny supported them with an exception. He explained, "I like oratory better than expositions. The genre of expositions is comprised of religious sermons, so this genre may be better placed under the genre of sign language-based oratory."

Respondent #2: Lindsey was not the only one who was puzzled by the term *mimery*. She agreed that ASL literature does have it but it has a different term. She mentioned,

> I think it is called visual vernacular (VV), not mimery. I think you should place mimery under visual vernacular because mimery is an international level. VV is roughly similar to visual and gestural communication. Gestures are very challenging. They require a high level of thinking or creativity. Perhaps you should think about where to place mimery, perhaps under or over something like VV.

Lindsey believed that the genre of songs should be replaced with the genre of ASL rap because "the term song is more meant for hearing people. In other words, because songs as a genre are sound-based, it might be more appropriate to rename it as ASL rap because it is visual-based."

Lindsey's stand on the genres of sign play and humour is somewhat uncertain with an exception that she felt that poetry and sign play are different. She said, "There are stories that use sign play. It has something to do with funny signs. An example is NOSE THROW, which is translated as don't care. It makes fun of Deaf people's low English skills. Is this example under humour or sign play?" In reference to humour, she originally

mentioned that humour is composed of three types: (a) jokes; (b) personal anecdotes; and (c) sign play including puns, riddles, and rhymes. However, later in the interview, she said that humour has "two groups: (1) humour based on sign language and (2) humour making fun of Deaf people."

When asked if the sub-sub-genres of worded handshape rhyme, initialized handshape rhyme, and alphabetical handshape rhyme (under the sub-genre of handshape rhyme which is under the genre of poetry) should be under the umbrella of ASL literature, Lindsey gave an affirmative answer. She added, "ASL borrows heavily from other languages, including English. If you look at other literatures, they borrow a lot from each other." She then focused on the discussion of alphabetical handshape rhyme (also called ABC or A to Z). She explained, "In reference to the A to Z stories, the confusion arises when some individuals use 'A to Z poem' while others use 'A to Z story.' I view the A to Z poem as having rhythm, chorus, and repetition while the A to Z story is seen as a complete story from the beginning to the end."

Lindsey believed that ASL literature should have a genre of adaptations: "Any work that is adapted from other cultures (e.g., from Cinderella to Deaferella) should be part of ASL literature." In addition, she supported the genre of legends but she believed that Deaf heroes should be under that genre.

In reference to the genre of expositions, Lindsey first asked for the difference between expositions and stories. She was told that religious sermons are mostly under expositions. In her words, "There are some religious stories that are more inclined to humour, not expositions. There is a fine line between expositions and humour. To me,

literature requires language play. Religious stories are more factual than literary. I think that religious stories should be separate from ASL literature."

Lastly, referring to a cartoon-based story called *The Roadrunner* under the genre of stories, Lindsey was uncertain if this story should be considered a cartoon-based story or a translated work.

Respondent #3: When asked to take a look at the taxonomy of ASL literature genres captured in VHS and DVD publications and determine which genres should and should not be part of ASL literature, Tim appeared to be in full agreement with the entire taxonomy. He made a general comment:

> I think that it is advantageous to have as many genres as possible so that they can be studied and enjoyed. There are works that have more than one genre. What should you do? Which genre should you place that story in? There are videotapes and DVDs that have more than one genre in them. It is quite challenging when you try to separate them into proper genres. What might be more efficient is to combine two or three genres with similar characteristics into a larger genre.

Tim responded to the question whether or not the sub-sub-genre of alphabetical handshape rhyme (under the sub-genre of handshape rhyme under the genre of poetry) should be part of ASL literature:

> Yes, it is unique. Remember what I said before about the intention of the individual who creates the literary works? That individual is aware of what language can do. Yes, it can be considered as part of ASL literature because of its uniqueness. Borrowing the alphabetical system from English is not a question as long as the individual modifies it to create an ASL story using meta-language skills. That's all. As a matter of fact, when the individual borrows the alphabet from English and creates an ASL story based on the alphabet, it is no longer considered as borrowing from English. The story becomes ASL of its own. It is not a question of borrowing from another language. The English alphabet is a code. We should not focus on the idea of borrowing from another language that

> seems to be better. Why not create a literary work by taking advantage of the code of another language? That is how I see it.

Respondent #4: When Jim looked at the taxonomy of ASL literature genres captured in VHS and DVD publications, the first genre that puzzled him was mimery. He said, "It is the same thing as VV (Visual Vernacular). Maybe, for now, we can put a question mark on it until we have a checklist to determine which work is under ASL literature and which one is not." Interestingly, earlier in his interview, he mentioned that he disagreed with VV and gave this reason:

> Miming must not be part of the definition because it is not equivalent to language. In other words, ASL literature must include the highest level of ASL language. If a hearing individual does not understand a literary work, then it should be considered as part of ASL literature because of the use of literary language. If the individual basically understands the content of the literary work, then it is highly possible that it is a mime, not a poem or story.

His comments may lead one to assume that the genre of mimery should not belong to ASL literature.

The University of Arizona ASL Literature Collection inventory developed in 2001 identifies the genre of fairy tales as original. An example is *Cinderella* by Mary Beth Miller. Jim disagreed that this genre actually belongs to ASL literature because "the root is not ASL. We can't call it original ASL. It should be seen as an adaptation. Fairy tales came from Germany."

In reference to the genre of humour, Jim felt that ASL literature should not be limited to the traditional form (pre–video technology era). He explained,

> We do have original humour [video technology era]. One example is Keith Wann's works. Another example is Bonnie Kraft who went to Deaf clubs sharing her humour about her mother. Her work is original, not traditional. The works by CODAs such as Bonnie and Keith should be included as long as their ASL skills are high.

Jim was asked whether or not the genre of expositions belongs to ASL literature. He used an example of a Deaf pastor named John Graham to answer the question: "Yes because John gives his sermons 'orally.' The same goes with African oral people who do religious rituals. Interestingly enough, African cultures are on the border of oral and written cultures while ASL is completely oral because there is no written system to represent the language." Before moving on to the next genre, Jim suggested reading *Oral Cultures Past and Present: Rappin' and Homer* by Edwards and Sienkewicz (1990) to see if this book has a better term for expositions.

Jim provided two works to indicate that the genre of epics does exist under the umbrella of ASL literature. One epic was created by Carl Schroeder but Jim was uncertain of the title. The other epic-type work was called *Eyeth* by Keith Gamache. The interviewer mentioned to Jim that there is one more epic called *Epic: Gallaudet Protest* by Gilbert Eastman (see Bauman et al., 2006, Appendix A, for more information).

What distinguishes poetry from sign play? Jim explained that poems that have rhyme should be placed under poetry while the other poems with no rhyme should be categorized under sign play. For instance, a poem called *G-O-L-F* by Alan Barwiolek (see DVD entitled *American Culture: The Deaf Perspective: Deaf Folklore*) should be placed under sign play, not poetry, because it has no rhyme.

In addition, Jim suggested that, instead of following the English alphabet, the sub-sub-genre of alphabetical handshape rhyme (under the sub-genre of handshape rhyme under the genre of poetry) should be based on the ASL-phabet, "an inventory of handshapes, locations, and movements that shape the word structure of ASL" (Supalla & Cripps, 2011, p. 7). Another possibility is to create an independent genre for ASL alphabetical handshape rhyme meaning no need for A to Z or ABC poems/stories from now on.

When asked if the sub-sub-genre of initialized handshape rhyme (under the sub-genre of handshape rhyme under the genre of poetry) should be part of ASL literature, Jim responded that this sub-sub-genre by itself might not be acceptable for ASL literature unless mockery is used within a poem. An example is called *Something Not Right* created by Clayton Valli (see *ASL Poetry: Selected Works of Clayton Valli* on DVD). Presented by Tim Gough, this poem uses initialized handshape rhyme to "spell out" the English sentence: *Deaf Education Fails*. The message behind the poem tries to inform us that something is not right about Deaf education. Jim explained, "How Tim presents *Deaf Education Fails* makes it look 'acceptable.' Also, this poem has a hidden message, which mocks the failure of Deaf education. If mockery is not used in a poem, then there is no reason to have the [sub]-sub-genre of initialized handshape rhyme under ASL literature."

While Jim supported the genre of monologue, he felt that the sub-genre of mimicry should be added under the genre of sign play. Responding to the issue of only one work captured on VHS, he said, "You can say that this work survives! Really, there are many more out there but they are not video-recorded." When asked about the genre of

stories, he liked the cartoon-based story called *The Roadrunner*. Even though this is a translated work, it is assumed that he accepted this genre as part of ASL literature.

> **Respondent #5A**: Holly; **Respondent #5B**: Selena; **Respondent #5C**: Lara; **Respondent #5D**: Janelle

When asked to answer the question whether or not the genre of mimery should be part of ASL literature, Holly responded,

> For me, literature requires not just for enjoyment but also the application of a literary work to my daily life. Also, literature should allow me to analyze different literary devices within the work including symbolism and metaphor. Now, can I analyze a work of mime? Can I? It appears that mimery limits me. How a literary work uses language and how a storyteller chooses specific words for impact – when I first saw the term mimery, I was confused. What if mimery has what literature has? Why? English literature does have a genre for drama. Students tend to study Shakespeare more through drama. That is how they learn English literature through drama. English literature has two opposing views on drama. One view looks at drama as a genre and the other sees it as a strategy, which is used to help students understand the works of Shakespeare.

In response to Holly, Selena said, "I suggest we replace mimery with *drama* because I don't think that we have enough research on mimery under ASL literature. If there is no research, how can we justify by putting mimery under ASL literature? How?"

Directing the respondents to the genre of English-to-ASL translations, they were asked to provide their rationale whether or not this genre should belong to ASL literature. The respondents except for Janelle who went along with the debate were in full agreement that this genre should be removed from ASL literature for the following reasons:

1. **Selena:** "The origin of language of translated works is English, not ASL. The works do not have ASL cultural experiences. [They] should be under English literature, not ASL literature. If we keep [the works], what kind of message do we give? English is more important than ASL. Also, it shows that, because the number of ASL literary works is truly small, we have to have English-to-ASL translations. Is that the message we want to send?"
2. **Lara:** "I see English-to-ASL translated works as a medium for ASL students to read and understand English literature. It is similar to hearing students who use audio books (hearing and reading at the same time). So, for ASL students, they watch translated works in ASL and read books at the same time. Therefore, the English-to-ASL translations should not be under ASL literature. [Also], to translate a book from English to ASL is easier than creating an original ASL literary work. To create an original ASL literary work requires hard work – thinking, creating, revising, etc. It could take months and years to do one. Because translating literature from English to ASL is easier, there are so many translated works out there."
3. **Holly:** "All translated works have no ASL cultural markers. For the audience, especially for myself, it is difficult to make the connection to the works. Secondly, the works are based on English culture. We have no or limited experience with English culture. The hidden message of English literature is the experience of oppressors. Yes, there are works that are based on oppression. Poor people tend to create their works to escape from

> the experience of oppression. For ASL people to understand and appreciate English-to-ASL translated works, they need to first understand and appreciate their own language and culture. ASL children of ASL parents are better equipped in understanding translated works from English to ASL because they have a strong foundation in ASL culture including ASL language and ASL literature."

In reference to the genre of songs, with support from Holly and Selena, Lara provided her rationale for removing this genre from ASL literature. She explained,

> Why are English-to-ASL translated works so popular and widely used? It is because translating a book from English to ASL is easier than creating an original ASL literary work. Also, hearing people love translated works and are more willing to support the use of them compared to original ASL works. They resist ASL works. Even though Deaf rap is very noisy, hearing people still enjoy it. Deaf rap originated from the Gallaudet University Bison song. This song is more suitable for motivating and cheering up a large audience who attends a football game than using it in a classroom.

As for Janelle, she was uncertain whether or not this genre should be removed but she suggested replacing songs with sign play. After participating in the discussion, Janelle came to agree with the other respondents.

With the agreement from the other respondents except for Holly who was uncertain, Selena viewed the genre of original fairy tales as not suitable to be part of ASL literature. She said, "When I first saw the genre of fairy tales on the taxonomy sheet, I was confused. For me, if I see this genre, I automatically consider it as part of English

literature. I would not use this genre in an ASL class. That is my personal view." Why was Holly uncertain? She explained,

> First I need to know what it takes to create fairy tales. It seems that certain cultures have their own fairy tales. The underlying themes are wealth, comfort, abundant food, and others. I need to know the definition of fairy tales. Does ASL culture have fairy tales? I mean our own. Fairy tales tend to include castles. Does the Deaf community have them? No. I am not sure if fairy tales have to be based on the past. I don't know. Honestly, I don't know the definition of fairy tales.

The issue with the genre of sign play is indeterminate. For example, Sam Supalla places A to Z stories and number stories under the genre of sign play while Ben Bahan puts them under stories with constraints. However, Clayton Valli categorizes them under poetry. Selena was uncomfortable with the term *sign play* and believed that it should be replaced with *word play*. She said, "It seems to me that the status of the term *sign* appears to be lower than *word*."

The respondents had a general consensus that the sub-sub-genres of poetry (numeral handshape rhyme, worded handshape rhyme, initialized handshape rhyme, and alphabetical handshape rhyme) should be removed from ASL literature for the following reasons:

1. **Selena:** "The origin of language is English. The production and use of some handshapes is awkward because the handshapes do not follow ASL rules. Also, initialized handshape rhyme represents the use of SEE. Should I introduce this rhyme to students who do not have full understanding of ASL?"

2. **Holly:** “Deaf education always feels the need to connect ASL children to English culture. How do they do that? Through assimilation. An aspect of assimilation is the attempt to internalize ASL children with English literature. An example of worded handshape rhyme is P-L-A-N-T. A teacher mentioned to me that s/he feels the importance of incorporating worded handshape rhyme in the classroom so that the students can play with English words and use ASL to enter English culture. I already saw a teacher who used the sub-sub-genre of alphabetical handshape rhyme all year with the hope that she could help her students to internalize the English alphabet. She gave her students opportunities to experience and create alphabetical handshape rhyme according to the monthly themes (e.g., Apples for September, Halloween for October, Remembrance Day for November, Christmas for December, and so on). By the end of June, she discovered that her students had no complete knowledge and application of the English alphabet. She was shocked! She was wondering what happened. I tried to explain to her that the alphabetical handshape rhyme is based on English culture, which is foreign to ASL. The same goes for numeral handshape rhyme, which is not ASL. During my conversation with Valli, I asked him why he had not created alphabetical handshape rhyme. He shook his head and gave no explanation for it. However, he gave the explanation that he would like to challenge us by creating poems using closed handshape rhyme, open handshape rhyme,

double handshape rhyme, movement rhyme, location rhyme, palm orientation rhyme, non-manual signal rhyme, and handedness rhyme. I sensed from conversing with him that the rhymes can connect with ASL culture and its markers successfully and appropriately. I asked him why he included numeral handshape rhyme, particular handshape rhyme, worded handshape rhyme, initialized handshape rhyme, and alphabetical handshape rhyme in the genre of ASL poetry. He responded that these rhymes are being used out there. He would not create poems based on these rhymes."

3. **Lara:** "I believe that it is easier for hearing teachers to teach English-influenced sub-sub-genres of poetry. They are easier for hearing teachers to do with their students compared to other sub-genres that require high levels of ASL linguistic and literary knowledge and application. Another point I want to discuss is when you create and present an A to Z story, two thinking processes are involved. One is to be conscious of the letter succession and the other is to think of an appropriate handshape to match each letter to create a story."

The genre of monologue only has one English-to-ASL translated work, which was based on a book called *The Deaf Howls* by Albert Ballin. A Deaf man named Bruce Hlibok translated the book into a monologue in ASL and performed it alone on the stage. The respondents were in agreement that ASL literature has no place for the genre of

monologue because the origin of language is English so this genre should be placed under English literature.

In reference to the genre of expositions, Holly explained, "The term *exposition* has another word, which is *composition*. It means to explain or inform. The reason why I picked this word [exposition] is that it applies generally to something such as composition. Now, when I saw the genre of expositions under ASL literature, I was puzzled. This should be placed under text, not literature." The respondents agreed that this genre should be part of informational texts, one of the three categories of ASL literacy.

The genre of stories should be left intact but the sub-genre of cartoon-based (only one work called *The Roadrunner*) should be removed. With support from the other respondents, Selena provided her rationale. She stressed, "We need to think about the origin of culture? Based on what culture? What? Who originally wrote the *The Roadrunner* cartoon? English or ASL? Use ASL language and ASL culture as a measure to determine which literary work or genre belongs to ASL literature."

ASL literature only has one fable, *Bird of a Different Feather* by Ben Bahan. After the debate, the respondents agreed that the term allegory is better than fable. Why? Selena explained, "I think that we should use allegories instead of fables. For example, an Aesop's fable is short with a moral lesson. Ben's *Bird of a Different Feather* is different as it has no moral lesson in it. It is much longer than a fable. It has many hidden messages and symbols so his work matches the allegory better."

Lastly, the interviewer explained to the respondents that there is a video clip of a native ASL woman imitating how a hearing teacher in home economics acts and talks. The title of the clip is *The Cooking Teacher* by Liz Baird (see the DVD called American Culture: The Deaf Perspective: Deaf Folklore). This DVD uses custom imitation as a classification of folklore. The taxonomy of ASL literary genres does not have this classification. When asked which genre *The Cooking Teacher* should be placed under, one of the respondents responded, "I think it should be under the genre of personal anecdotes."

Revised Taxonomy of ASL Literature Genres

On the basis of the interviews with the respondents, the taxonomy of ASL literary genres has been revised. For each genre to remain under the umbrella of ASL literature, it has to be based on the agreement of 60% or more (i.e., 3 out of 5 respondents). Figure 3 on page 103 shows the taxonomy after the interviews, which can be compared with the taxonomy prior to the interviews in Figure 2 on page 76. Figure 2 was the researcher's attempt to categorize ASL literature genres, sub-genres, and sub-sub-genres on the basis of the existing research, which include recorded VHS videotapes and DVDs. From this, he constructed Figure 2, an overview where he identified 17 genres: poetry, fairy tales, stories, expositions, English-to-ASL translations, personal anecdotes, sign play, songs, monologue, fable, riddles, tall tales, epics, humour, legends, oratory, and mimery.

From the common responses captured in this study, he found that the majority of respondents agreed that these areas constitute ASL literary genres: poetry, fairy tales,

stories, English-to-ASL translations, personal anecdotes, sign play, songs, monologue, fable, riddles, tall tales, epics, humour, legends, and oratory. The areas that were eliminated were expositions and mimery. These results are summarized in Table 10.

Why are there these differences? There are noted differences because the genre of expositions is related to the English language. Since the study of ASL linguistics has progressed so far in the past 50 years, today there is more awareness of the form and structure of ASL and this may have influenced the five respondents in their opinions.

A surprising finding in the study was that 60% of the respondents did not want to include A to Z stories as part of ASL literature. A to Z stories are frequently used in K–12 schools as well as in ASL classes at universities. There are also several DVDs commercially available on A to Z stories and YouTube is filled with ASL users who enthusiastically share their A to Z stories with internet users. In general, the three respondents did not believe A to Z stories were part of the linguistic structure of ASL. Neither did they believe that A to Z stories represent artistic examples that were aesthetically pleasing to the viewer as other ASL genres were.

To understand these views, it is helpful to define A to Z stories and the manual alphabet, and untangle the differences between the manual alphabet and ASL. First of all, according to Rutherford (1993), the A to Z story allows for the interplay between two languages — ASL and English. The A to Z story manipulates the phonetic system of English with the phonological system of ASL. The story is made up of a set of manual or fingerspelled handshapes that become the structure of the story; however, the story is told using ASL. A well-known example of an A to Z story is *The Haunted House*. It begins

with the A handshape (signifying a knock on the door, followed by the B handshape (the door opens), followed by the C handshape (looking around), goes through all the letters of the alphabet and ends with Z (escapes). Rutherford (1993) notes that the artist is playing between two images: the manual representation of the alphabet (A to Z), which represent the orthography of English, and the phonological units of another language, American Sign Language. A to Z stories are very popular and easy to learn for hearing persons learning ASL as a second language because these students are already well-versed in the English language. However, these stories may be more difficult for young ASL children who are initially confused by the orthographic letters of English (which fingerspelling represents) and the manual handshapes of fingerspelling, which correspond to ASL handshapes.

The manual alphabet or fingerspelling consists of 26 handshapes that represent the English alphabet. Fingerspelling, according to Padden (2009), is older than ASL as the first recorded picture of the fingerspelled alphabet appeared in a book by Juan Pablo Bonet in 1620. Bonet taught Deaf children of the royalty in Spain and this alphabet spread from Spain to France to the United States with Laurent Clerc (Padden, 2009). Fingerspelling spread throughout the United States at schools for the Deaf (Padden, 2009). During the 1970s, there was even a communication methodology called the Rochester Method that utilized fingerspelling and speech and was used almost exclusively with young Deaf children in schools for the Deaf in the United S.

There is debate among linguists on whether or not fingerspelling is a part of ASL or a part of English. All do agree that fingerspelling has a long history in schools for the

Deaf and is used by most Deaf adults in their day-to-day communication. ASL uses fingerspelling more often compared to other sign languages. Typically its users will use it to fingerspell city names, names of people, company names, brand names, and food names (Padden, 2009). Fingerspelled words can be lexicalized in the formation of new signs such as JB or TB or NG (Padden, 2009). Most Deaf children will learn to fingerspell their names, family members, and short words (i.e., C-A-T, N-O) as young as 3 years of age.

Others argue that fingerspelling is a feature of language contact between signed and spoken languages (Valli & Lucas, 1995). Fingerspelling represents ASL handshape or phonological forms but uses them to represent the orthography of English. Within the A to Z story, the English alphabet (the letters A, B and so on) loses its English orthographic meaning and channels its meaning to represent an ASL word or series of ASL words. For instance, the A fingerspelled handshape that begins the *Haunted House* story loses its "A" English meaning and now becomes an ASL word for KNOCK-ON-DOOR. The handshapes representing the fingerspelled alphabet are used solely to organize the story, not to demonstrate their English orthographic meanings. Valli and Lucas (1995) explain fingerspelling in another way. They call fingerspelling not exactly language borrowing but representing a unique relationship between two phonologies, signed and spoken.

Another surprising finding was that 60% of the respondents wanted to eliminate mimery from ASL literature. Mimery as described in Chapter 4 is a kind of miming or gesturing. The fundamental reason why mimery was rejected was that it is not language-

based. Mime and gestures do not have the same linguistic structures that ASL has. And while mime and gestures are used as paralinguistic elements of all languages – spoken and ASL– they do not constitute a linguistic-based element. There is also an emotional reason. For centuries, ASL was oppressed in the schools. Many hearing people thought of ASL as gestures or miming instead of respecting it as a natural language. Thus, the respondents may have reacted to this emotional aspect.

Figure 3 shows the result of the interviews with the eight respondents.

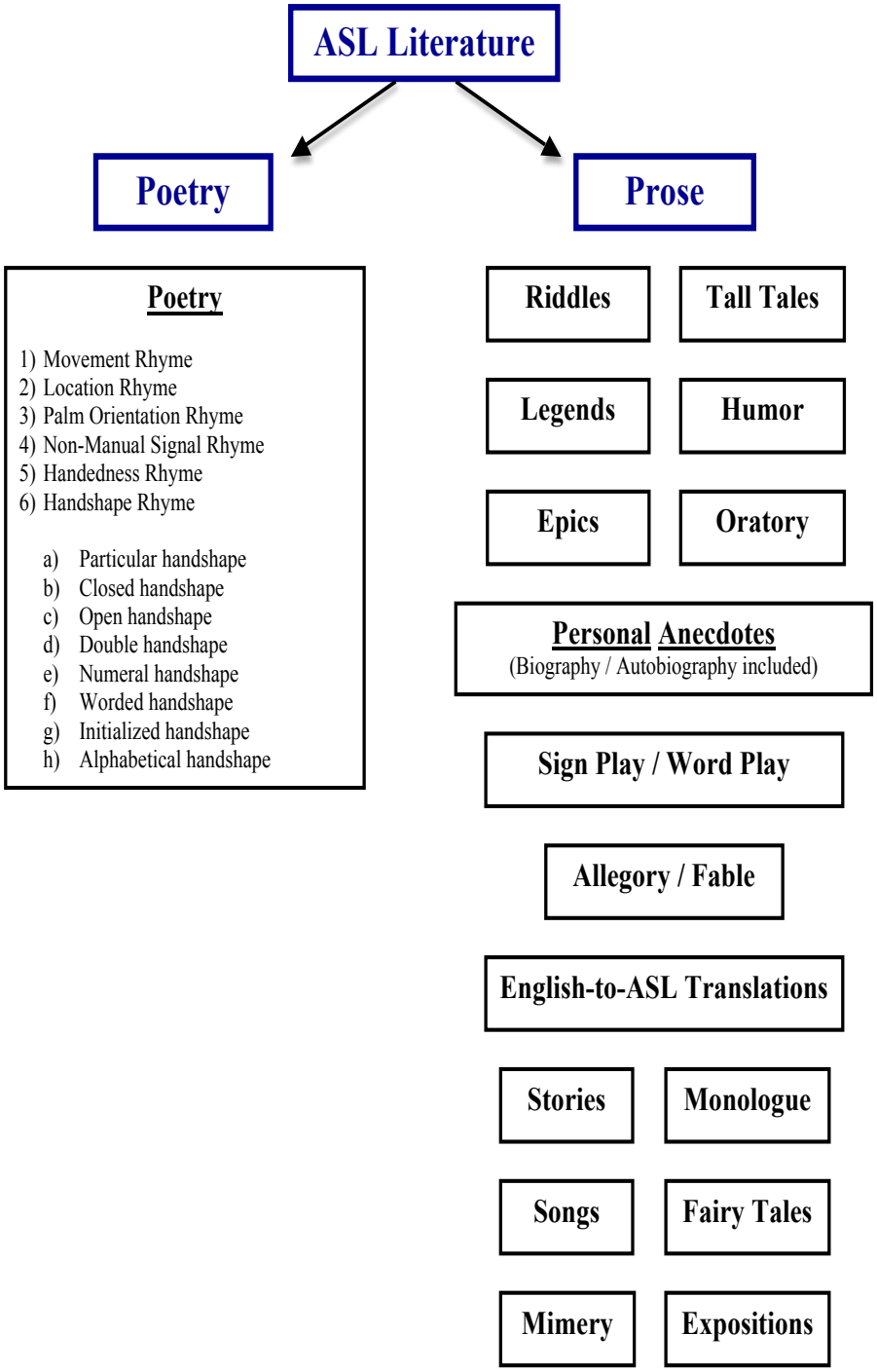

Figure 3
Taxonomy of ASL Literature Genres (After the Interviews)

Summary of Findings: The Taxonomical Genres of ASL Literature

During the interview, the five respondents were asked to analyze the taxonomy of ASL literary genres captured in VHS and DVD publications and determine which genres, sub-genres, and/or sub-sub-genres should and should not be part of ASL literature.

All of the respondents fully agreed that ASL literature has a place for the genre of poetry and its six sub-genres but one respondent believed that the sub-sub-genres of worded, initialized, and alphabetical handshape rhymes should be removed. Another respondent thought that the sub-sub-genres of numeral, worded, initialized, and alphabetical handshape rhymes should be excluded from ASL literature. One more respondent supported all the sub-sub-genres except for alphabetical handshape rhyme, which should be based on the ASL-phabet, not the English alphabet. In addition, this same respondent believed that the sub-sub-genre of initialized handshape rhyme might not be acceptable for ASL literature unless mockery is used within a poem.

While three respondents supported the genre of fairy tales, the rest did not because the origin of language is English, not ASL. This genre received sufficient support to be placed under ASL literature.

In reference to the genre of stories, three respondents fully supported it. A fourth respondent believed that it should be left intact but the sub-genre of cartoon-based (only one work called *The Roadrunner*) should be removed because the origin of culture is English. The last respondent was uncertain whether *The Roadrunner* should be considered a cartoon-based story or a translated work.

Only two respondents agreed that the genre of expositions is part of ASL literature. Two other two respondents disagreed, believing that this genre should be part of informational texts, one of the three categories of ASL literacy. The last respondent also disagreed but felt that this genre should be placed under the genre of sign language–based oratory.

Four respondents supported the genre of English-to-ASL translations while the last respondent believed that ASL literature has no place for it. One supporter said, "ASL borrows heavily from other languages, including English. If you look at other literatures, they borrow a lot from each other." On the other hand, there are several reasons why this genre does not belong to ASL literature:

1. "The origin of language of translated works is English, not ASL."
2. "All translated works have no ASL cultural markers."
3. "To translate a book from English to ASL is easier than creating an original ASL literary work. [This is why] there are so many translated works out there."

The genre of personal anecdotes had full support from the five respondents with two exceptions. One respondent felt that two sub-genres of biography and autobiography should be added to the genre. The other respondent suggested that this genre should become a sub-genre of humour.

An important point regards a video clip of a native ASL woman imitating how a hearing teacher in home economics acts and talks. Entitled *The Cooking Teacher* by Liz

Baird, it is classified as custom imitation (folklore). The taxonomy of ASL literary genres does not have this classification. When asked which genre *The Cooking Teacher* should be placed under, a respondent suggested personal anecdotes.

Once again, the five respondents favoured the genre of sign play, with four exceptions. One respondent strongly believed that ABC or A to Z stories should be removed because they are not ASL. Another respondent wanted it to become a sub-genre of humour. The third respondent felt that poems with no rhyme should be categorized under sign play. Also, this same respondent wanted to place mimicry under sign play as a sub-genre. Mimicry is similar to custom imitation (*The Cooking Teacher* by Liz Baird). Lastly, one respondent suggested renaming it word play because, she said, "It seems to me that the status of the term *sign* appears to be lower than *word*."

Three respondents agreed that ASL literature has a place for the genre of songs. The other two respondents strongly disagreed because this genre is "more suitable for motivating and cheering up a large audience who attends a football game than using it in a classroom" and because it is more geared for hearing people because they are sound-based. Thus, this genre should be renamed ASL rap.

Four respondents favoured the genre of monologue while the fifth believed that ASL literature has no place for it because the origin of language is English. Therefore, this genre has sufficient support to be placed under ASL literature.

Four respondents supported the genre of fable while the fifth favoured renaming it allegory because *Bird of a Different Feather* by Ben Bahan is much longer than a fable. It has many hidden messages and symbols so it matches allegory better.

In reference to the genre of riddles, four respondents favoured it. The fifth believed that riddles should be placed under the sub-genre of sign play (under the genre of humour).

All of the respondents fully agreed that ASL literature has a place for the genres of tall tales, epics, humour, legends, and oratory.

The genre of mimery appeared to encounter more heated discussion from most of the respondents than all the other genres. Three respondents believed that it should not be included under the umbrella of ASL literature because it is not considered an actual language. Also, whether or not a work of mime can be analyzed for literary devices was questionable. The fourth respondent suggested renaming it drama. According to the fifth respondent, a new genre of visual vernacular should be created and mimery could be placed under it as a sub-genre.

Questions 3 and 4 were combined as they both related to the respondents analyzing the taxonomy of ASL literary genres captured in video technology in order to determine what genres, sub-genres and/or sub-sub-genres should be a part of ASL literature. All respondents agreed that poetry had a place in ASL literature. However, two respondents believed that worded, initialized, and alphabetical handshape rhymes should be removed. Interestingly, two of the five respondents said fairy tales should be eliminated too as they are translated works and have not originated in ASL. Two of the five respondents believed that expositions should be a part of ASL literature. Four of the five respondents stated that English-to-ASL translations had a place in ASL literature. All five agreed that personal anecdotes should be a genre in ASL literature. There was a

diversity of opinion on the inclusion of songs. Two of the five respondents disagreed and said that songs were translated from English and so should not be included. Four of the respondents claimed that monologues belong to ASL literature, but one disagreed, saying that monologues are chiefly translated from English. In addition, four agreed that fables should be included while the fifth favoured renaming them allegories. Four agreed that riddles should be included. All five agreed that tall tales, epics, humour, legends and oratory should be included.

Interestingly, the category of mimery received the most heated debate. Three respondents claimed it should not be included because its use did not rely on the linguistic structure of ASL but instead relied on facial expressions, gestures, movement, and mime. One other respondent suggested placing mimery under drama and other suggested placing it under its own category of mime as a sub-genre.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study was to investigate the question of how ASL literature is defined and what constitutes ASL literary genres. In this chapter, the researcher explores and speculates on the findings, ties the findings to previous research outlined in the first and second chapters, and makes recommendations for future research and practice.

Summary of Research Design, Participants, Research Questions, and Findings

A qualitative design was utilized using semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. The researcher interviewed four individual respondents and a focus group, all working in the field of ASL and Deaf Studies, in a discussion that focused on the four research questions. The respondents were interviewed through videophone or through face-to-face interviews at their home office or work setting.

Queried about their definitions of ASL literature and the existence of the taxonomy of ASL literary genres, the respondents provided a variety of responses due to the diversity of their educational and professional backgrounds from university professors of ASL and Deaf Studies to K–12 teachers in ASL/English bilingual settings.

Having collected the data, the researcher categorized it into common responses, compared the responses across respondents, and compiled a definition of ASL literature based on these data. From these data, the definition and taxonomy of genres of ASL literature can be further developed and refined.

Findings

Related to the first research question, all respondents agreed that ASL was first transmitted "orally" and is now being passed on by the use of video technology that preserves it. A major difference centred on the question of whether or not ASL literature includes English-to-ASL translated works. A majority of the respondents believed that the works should be included.

The next research question focused on the features of ASL literature. All respondents agreed that the term *oral literature* could be applied to ASL literature even though the conventional definition of *oral* is related to speech. "Oral literature" related to ASL literature can be represented by live signing as well as videotaped presentations of ASL literature. The respondents generally agreed: (a) that literary devices such as the manipulation of the structure of language for a specific effect exist in ASL poems, and (b) that the ASL storyteller often has his or her own particular style, uses ASL cultural markers, weaves a story fluidly, and often masks political themes (e.g., oppression) in the story.

Questions 3 and 4 were combined as they both related to the respondents analyzing the taxonomy of ASL literary genres captured in video technology in order to determine what genres, sub-genres and/or sub-sub-genres should be a part of ASL literature. All respondents agreed that poetry has a place in ASL literature. However, two respondents believed that worded, initialized, and alphabetical handshape rhymes should be removed. Interestingly, two respondents said fairy tales should be eliminated too as they are translated works and have not originated in ASL. Two respondents believed that

expositions should be a part of ASL literature. Four respondents stated that English-to-ASL translations had a place in ASL literature. All agreed that personal anecdotes should be a genre in ASL literature. There was a diversity of opinion on the inclusion of songs. Two respondents disagreed and said that songs were translated from English and so should not be included. Four respondents claimed that monologues belong to ASL literature, but one disagreed, saying that monologues are chiefly translated from English. In addition, four agreed that fables should be included while the focus group favoured renaming the genre allegory. Four agreed that riddles should be included. All five agreed that tall tales, epics, humour, legends. and oratory should be included.

Interestingly, the category of mimery received the most heated debate. Three respondents claimed it should not be included because its use did not rely on the linguistic structure of ASL but instead relied on facial expressions, gestures, movement, and mime. One other respondent suggested placing mimery under drama and the other suggested placing it under its own category of mime as a sub-genre.

ASL and oral literature. In the introduction to the first chapter, two opposing viewpoints were discussed as to whether or not ASL literacy exists. Nover's claim is that "ASL has no written form and therefore no literacy" (Czubek, 2006, p. 374). In other words, because a general definition of literacy usually refers to spoken languages that have written forms, this definition obviously does not apply to ASL. In contrast, Czubek claims that ASL literacy does exist. He believes that we should not limit ourselves to the belief that literacy refers only to spoken languages that have written forms.

In support of Czubek's viewpoint, this study has developed a new comprehensive

and broader definition of ASL literacy, indicating that literacy should not be limited only to spoken and written forms, but can include signed forms as well. Consequently, literacy can be viewed as an all-encompassing term for every human language, whether it is spoken, written, or signed.

It is interesting to note that Stokoe (1960) had a similar challenge in making his argument for the linguistic principles of ASL. Prior to his work, most thought of ASL as a "loose collection of gestures," not a bona fide natural language. But Stokoe's linguistic analysis broadened the definition of languages to include signed languages. In a similar vein, research in ASL literature (see Chapter 2) and the data presented in this study suggest that ASL has a literacy and a literature.

Before the advent of video technology to record literary works in ASL, ASL culture was considered "oral" because it was based on live, face-to-face communication and because the works created by native ASL people were being passed on "orally" or "through space" (Bahan, 1992; Krentz, 2006). All works were community-owned. Frequently, these stories, poems, and narratives were signed at residential schools in the dorms and in the classrooms, in native ASL (Deaf) clubs where Deaf people used to congregate, at Deaf banquets, and in Deaf homes (Peters, 2000). The stories were told to entertain and instruct the young generation and to pass on the precious ASL culture. This point was reiterated by Tim, one of the respondents, who explained, "I think [that people] create works for continuity (works to be passed on from one generation to the next). It is part of collective memory. How does an oral culture remember that work? It is through collective memory through the use of orality." Thus, used in this context, orality means

through visual and kinetic media and through space, not through sound.

The introduction of video technology has led to the creation of single-authored works in ASL. According to Holly, another respondent, "the videotaped literature is equivalent to the written literature because both use a frozen text." In other words, while video technology is used to preserve ASL literature for posterity, it represents a frozen form that differs from ASL literature composed in pre-videotape times. For instance, in pre-videotape times, a story could be changed as it passed from storyteller to storyteller. The main idea might remain, but the storyteller could add a segment or delete a segment or expand an idea or de-emphasize an idea. The power remained in the hands of the live storyteller. In contrast, when the story is "frozen" in videotape, then these changes do not occur and the story remains the same in the eyes of the audience.

Even though the term *oral literature* is perceived as oxymoronic, it is now very much accepted, mostly as a result of the growing number of publications (see Courlander, 1996; Finnegan, 1977; Frey, 1995; Furniss & Gunner, 1995; Miruka, 2001; Ogunjimi & Na'Allah, 2005; Okpewho, 1992; Swann, 1983). One definition of oral literature is "literature delivered by word of mouth" or "those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression" (Okpewho, 1992, pp. 3-5). Another definition is "literature composed without the aid of writing" (J. M. Foley, 1986, p. 3).

Most respondents agreed that ASL literature is "oral," which means a form that is not written. Even when an ASL literary work is videotaped, it will still be considered

"oral." According to Sonny, one of the respondents, "Video recorded literature is not considered as a *written* form so it can be included under the oral literature category."

Authors of ASL literature. Since he was a young boy growing up in Perth, Ontario, Canada, using ASL as a first language, the researcher has spent countless hours as the recipient and creator of ASL stories in his home. Additionally, he attended a residential school for native/non-native ASL students for more than 10 years and also experienced many hours of ASL storytelling from his peers at Gallaudet University. Since 1993, he has been a classroom teacher and university professor and has taught ASL literature both in his capacity as an ASL storyteller and as a scholarly discipline. With this background and interest, he designed this study to further add to the knowledge base on what constitutes a definition of ASL literature and what genres are included in ASL literature. To this end, he contacted the respondents in the field of ASL literature on the basis of the diversity of their educational and professional backgrounds, from university professors of ASL and Deaf Studies to K–12 teachers in ASL/English bilingual settings. However, just because the researcher has been exposed to ASL literature all of his life and has spent much of his professional life studying it, does this make him an expert in ASL literature? In other words, who can produce ASL literature?

According to Lindsey, one of the respondents, to create a proper work of ASL literature requires an individual to be highly fluent in ASL as well as to have extensive knowledge of ASL meta-linguistics and ASL culture. Another respondent named Jim felt that whether the storyteller is Deaf or hearing makes no difference as long as they use a

literary language. For instance, CODAs could be allowed to create works "as long as their ASL skills are at par."

Several other respondents believed that a storyteller should possess two important skills. One is cadence, which means rhythmic flow of a sequence of words. A literary work that has cadence will appear smooth. In the same vein, there are quite a few storytellers or smooth signers who "can weave a story so smoothly that even complex utterances appear simple, yet beautiful" (Bahan, 2006, p. 24). The second skill is the use of a literary language, as opposed to everyday or ordinary language. Literary language involves using literary devices and manipulating the structure of language for a special effect (Dictionary.com, 2003–2013). Before creating a literary work, the storyteller should be mindful of what devices are to be included in order to make the work a work of art.

In addition to what makes the work a work of art, Tim referred to the intention of storytellers when they contribute their works to ASL literature: "I think [that they] create works for continuity (works to be passed on from one generation to the next). It is part of a collective memory. How does an oral culture remember that work? It is through collective memory through the use of orality."

Jim's question of who can produce ASL literature raises another important question. How does one who produces ASL literature decide what is "good" and what is not? According to Peters (2000), "good" works are defined as "works of high aesthetic worth that exhibit masterful use of the language, unity of structure, universality, and humanistic values and that, at least in modern times, are attributable to the individual,

imaginative genius of one author" (p. 178). Furthermore, drawing from the works of Bloom (1994), Brown (2010), Fairbrother (2000), and Warhol and Herndl (1997), the qualities that make a literary work "good" are as follows:

Table 11
Qualities of "Good" Literary Works

Heading	Description
Use of Language	• "One indisputable requirement . . . is that a work of literature must be perceived as aesthetically superior" (Brown, 2010, p. 547). • Dense and ornate language • Innovative and complex yet simple • Artistic beauty and unity • Felicity
Representation of Human Beings	• Ability to present consistent and forceful representation of human character and personality
Informative Content	• "Works . . . always teach us something. A text that is valued for its informative content can inform in one or more specific areas. It can transmit knowledge about culture, history, the human experience, politics, ethics, and/or marginalized groups and minorities. Under these six headings, we find the truths that we seek in literature" (Brown, 2010, p. 544).
Originality	• "All strong literary originality becomes canonical" (Bloom, 1994, p. 25).
Authenticity	• Trueness to general experience • An author [or a storyteller] who is known and can be validated
Tradition	• "Tradition is arguably the most significant factor in any canon. Literary tradition can thus be viewed as a positive effort to honor and extend a cultural heritage" (Brown, 2010, p. 538).
Recognition	• "All valuation is tied to the perception that a work has merit" (Brown, p. 538).
Ability to Entertain or Move the Reader	• A work's ability to entertain or move the reader

Because the field of ASL literature is very young, it is difficult to define all of these standards of quality ASL literature. This study is an attempt to start this line of

inquiry by identifying key elements in the definition of quality ASL literature. This study only scratches the surface of a young field in need of more rigorous research to further define and refine definitions of quality ASL literature.

English-to-ASL translations. The respondents presented different perspectives as to whether or not English-to-ASL translations should be part of ASL literature. Four respondents supported inclusion of the translations. For instance, Sonny said, "For me, translated works should be included in ASL literature in order to have access to foreign cultures and learn about them through their literatures."

Lindsey provided two reasons why ASL literature should have a category of English-to-ASL translations. One is that "English literature has works that are translated from other languages to English" and the other is that "we can compare ASL literature and other literatures. We can learn about other cultures by studying their literatures through ASL translations."

On the other hand, the focus group gave three reasons why the translations should be excluded from ASL literature:

> The origin of language of translated works is English, not ASL. If we keep [them], what kind of message do we give? English is more important than ASL. Also, it shows that, because the number of ASL literary works is truly small, we have to have English-to-ASL translations. Is that the message we want to send?"
>
> I see English-to-ASL translated works as a medium for ASL students to read and understand English literature. It is similar to hearing students who use audio books (hearing and reading at the same time). So, for ASL students, they watch translated works in ASL and read books at the same time. Therefore, the English-to-ASL translations should not be under ASL literature. [Also], to translate a book from English to ASL is easier than creating an original ASL literary work. To create an original ASL literary work requires hard work – thinking, creating, revising, etc. It could take months and years to do one. Because translating

> literature from English to ASL is easier, there are so many translated works out there.
>
> All translated works have no ASL cultural markers. For the audience, especially for myself, it is difficult to make the connection to the works. Secondly, the works are based on English culture. We have no or limited experience with English culture. The hidden message of English literature is the experience of oppressors. Yes, there are works that are based on oppression. Poor people tend to create their works to escape from the experience of oppression. For ASL people to understand and appreciate English-to-ASL translated works, they need to first understand and appreciate their own language and culture. ASL children of ASL parents are better equipped in understanding translated works from English to ASL because they have a strong foundation in ASL culture including ASL language and ASL literature.

In response to the two opposing viewpoints of English-to-ASL translations, the researcher is more inclined to agree with the focus group's position that the translations should be excluded from ASL literature. However, it is important to be clear that translating works from English to ASL is permissible as long as the works are placed under English literature, not ASL literature. For instance, Sign Media, the publisher of videotape and print materials on ASL in Burtonsville, MD, published a DVD set of *Sherlock Holmes Mysteries*. This set includes *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, and *The Adventure of the Red-Headed League*. Since they are originally published in English and translated into ASL, they should be appropriately placed under the genre of mysteries under English literature. In the same vein, original written works by Deaf or hearing writers about Deaf people and their life experiences should also be placed under English literature. For instance, *Islay* is a novel originally written by Douglas Bullard. It is about a Deaf man who expresses his desire to

turn an imaginary island into a state populated by Deaf people. This novel would be appropriately placed under the genre of novels under English literature.

Because of linguistic and cultural differences and complexities, not every work can be appropriately and accurately translated. For example, "poems, humour, puns, a play between different linguistic registers or vocabulary, stylistic qualities, multi-levels of meaning, connotations, imagery, and culturally specific allusion" cannot be translated (Finnegan, 1992, p. 178). Sapir (1921) clearly explains the following:

> Language is the medium of literature as marble or bronze or clay are the materials of the sculptor. Since every language has its distinctive peculiarities, the innate formal limitations – and possibilities – of one literature are never quite the same as those of another. The literature fashioned out of the form and substance of a language has the color and the texture of its matrix. The literary artist may never be conscious of just how he is hindered or helped or otherwise guided by the matrix, but when it is a question of translating his work into another language, the nature of the original matrix manifests itself at once. All his effects have been calculated, or intuitively felt, with reference to the formal "genius" of his own language; they cannot be carried over without loss or modification. Croce is therefore perfectly right in saying that a work of literary art can never be translated. Nevertheless literature does get itself translated, sometimes with astonishing adequacy. This brings up the question whether in the art of literature there are not intertwined two distinct kinds or levels of art – a generalized, non-linguistic art, which can be transferred without loss into an alien linguistic medium, and a specifically linguistic art that is not transferable. I believe the distinction is entirely valid, though we never get the two levels pure in practice. Literature moves in language as a medium, but that medium comprises two layers, the latent content of language – our intuitive record of experience – and the particular conformation of a given language – the specific how of our record of experience. Literature that draws its sustenance mainly – never entirely – from the lower level, say a play of Shakespeare's, is translatable without too great a loss of character. If it moves in the upper rather than in the lower level – a fair example is a lyric of Swinburne's – it is as good as untranslatable. Both types of literary expression may be great or mediocre. (pp. 237–238)

Referring to the two distinct levels of art discussed earlier, an example of using the lower level is the translatability of a book entitled *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle from English to ASL "without too great a loss of character." At the upper level, an excellent example of the untranslatability from ASL to English is an ASL poem entitled *The Treasure* by Ella Mae Lentz. ASL's distinctive peculiarities (e.g., linguistic registers, multi-levels of meaning, and imagery) cannot be clearly and completely transferred to English without losing much of the original essence.

Alphabetical handshape rhyme poetry. Alphabetical handshape rhyme poetry (also known as A to Z stories or ABC stories) is another controversial issue that has arisen from the interviews. Two of the five respondents felt that this rhyme should be part of ASL literature. For instance, Tim felt that this rhyme is unique:

> Borrowing the alphabetical system from English is not a question as long as the individual modifies it to create an ASL story using meta-language skills. That's all. As a matter of fact, when the individual borrows the alphabet from English and creates an ASL story based on the alphabet, it is no longer considered as borrowing from English. The story becomes ASL of its own. It is not a question of borrowing from another language. The English alphabet is a code. We should not focus on the idea of borrowing from another language that seems to be better. Why not create a literary work by taking advantage of the code of another language? That is how I see it.

On the other hand, three respondents supported the exclusion of this rhyme from ASL literature. For instance, Sonny reasoned that "ABC stories are not ASL" and that "ABC stories are a bastardized form of ASL and English." He added, "In any case, ABC stories are not an aesthetic piece of work." The focus group gave these reasons:

> The origin of language is English. The production and use of some handshapes is awkward because the handshapes do not follow ASL rules.
>
> Deaf education always feels the need to connect ASL children to English culture. How do they do that? Through assimilation. An aspect of assimilation is the attempt to internalize ASL children with English literature. Alphabetical handshape rhyme poetry is based on English culture, which is foreign to ASL.
>
> I believe that it is easier for hearing teachers to teach English-influenced sub-sub-genres of poetry. They are easier for hearing teachers to do with their students compared to other sub-genres that require high levels of ASL linguistic and literary knowledge and application. Another point I want to discuss is, when you create and present an A to Z story, two thinking processes are involved. One is to be conscious of the letter succession and the other is to think of an appropriate handshape to match each letter to create a story.

This researcher is more inclined to support the respondents who do not want to see A to Z stories included as part of ASL literature. He agrees with the respondents' reasons presented above. He also believes that the essential reason for its exclusion is that it is arguably a bastarized form of ASL and English. According to Rutherford (1993), the A to Z story manipulates the phonetic system of English with the phonological system of ASL. This may be difficult for young ASL students who are initially confused by the orthographic letters of English (which fingerspelling represents) and the manual handshapes of fingerspelling, which correspond to ASL handshapes.

Adaptations of English literature. While English-to-ASL translations are language-based, adaptations are culturally based. For example, an adaptation of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* could be translated from English into ASL and it could also be adapted into "Deaf Culture" by having Red Riding Hood become a Deaf girl. Only two respondents brought up the issue of adaptations. Lindsey believed that ASL literature

should have a genre of adaptations: "Any work that is adapted from other cultures (e.g., Cinderella to Deaferella) should be part of ASL literature."

The University of Arizona ASL Literature Collection inventory developed in 2001 designates the genre of fairy tales as original. An example is *Cinderella* by Mary Beth Miller. Jim disagreed that this genre is under ASL literature because "the root is not ASL. We can't call it original ASL. It should be seen as an adaptation. Fairy tales came from Germany."

In an ASL/English bilingual classroom, a teacher usually selects a storybook in English and translates it into ASL for instructional purposes. Bahan (2006) describes the process of translation including adaptation:

> Often in the process of translation, Deaf cultural behavior, values, or norms find their way into the work, whether the translator is aware of this or not. For example, in telling "Little Red Riding Hood," a translator may unconsciously make the characters "Deaf" by assigning them behavior and discourse that are visually based, akin to those in the DEAF WORLD (such as waving one's hands to get attention of another character). An example of conscious translation (i.e., adaptation) of this story might involve making the mother, girl, and grandmother Deaf and the Wolf hearing, to set up a dichotomy that reflects conflicts in the culture" (pp. 32–33).

Raising a similar question as that of English-to-ASL translations, is it appropriate to consider adaptations a part of ASL literature, since the origin of adaptations is not ASL but English?

Original works of ASL literature. Language is one of the markers of identity of every linguistic and cultural minority group (Schmidt, 2008). The United Nations Office

of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2013) describes the importance of language:

> Language is a central element and expression of identity and of key importance in the preservation of group identity. Language is particularly important to linguistic minority communities seeking to maintain their distinct group and cultural identity, sometimes under conditions of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination.

Language and literature cannot survive without each other. They are closely intertwined for linguistic and cultural survival, maintenance, and vitality. Between 5,000 and 6,000 languages are spoken today. Most of them are unwritten (O'Neil, 2009). Possessing no writing system, every linguistic and cultural minority group has its own oral (unwritten) literature. Every oral literature has its own genre of folklore, which is the first and original identification of the oral literary group. In speaking of folklore, Holden (2008) explains:

> Folklore passes on the information and wisdom of human experience from generation to generation. In this sense folklore is the original and persistent technology that gave us human culture in the first place by allowing us to build on our experience over the generations. Oral tradition is the original form of education, in which both social values and environment knowledge are transmitted.

It makes no sense for a linguistic and cultural minority group such as the ASL-using Deaf community to solely translate literary works from other languages to their own without having their own original folktales in the first place. There are numerous examples of original pieces of ASL literature in the ASL community today that have yet to be recorded and archived. This view was supported by one respondent who said, "I

feel that ASL literature as a body of collected works is twofold: the first being storytelling that originated before videotaping technology existed, pre-videotaped era, and the second being those that originated after video technology was created, videotaped era." In the first category, he stressed the importance of memorization of the story by the storyteller who focuses on the content. This is a characteristic of folktales. An excellent example is the production entitled *Hitchhiker*. In the second category, of ASL literature being videotaped, he noted that the ASL storyteller is more focused on form or the structure of the piece, rather than only on the content matter of ASL literature.

In other words, it is important that original works of ASL literature that have been created by native ASL storytellers who originated their art using ASL be continually collected. As mentioned above, these original ASL literature works do exist in abundance and there is a need to collect them to preserve ASL literature for generations to come.

Contributions of This Study

Drawing on work of previous researchers, including the key eight existing definitions of ASL literature as well as the interviews with the respondents, a new comprehensive definition has emerged from this study. This new definition has the potential to assist educators of native ASL students and ASL community members to have a better understanding of what ASL literature is and is not. Also, the definition could possibly assist them in creating, developing, and using quality materials for ASL literature class in K–12 and post-secondary settings. Based on the data in this study, the new definition of ASL literature may be constructed as follows:

Table 12
A New Definition of ASL Literature

ASL literature is defined as a body of works that has been passed down from generation to generation by the ASL community in most parts of Canada and the United States. It has similar literary elements and functions that can be found in literatures of different languages both unwritten and written. The genres include poetry, drama, and narratives including humour, riddles, and allegories. ASL literature is not English literature translated into ASL but comprises original compositions that have arisen from the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of native ASL people using the linguistic structures and features of ASL. It includes the ability to decipher, organize, construct, and present literary works effectively, imaginatively, and eloquently. Every work should comprise the use of literary devices and different qualities including the correct and appropriate use of ASL language (i.e., word production, grammar, non-manual signals, superior artistry, innovative and complex yet simple, highly cohesive, and delight inducing), ASL culture (i.e., authenticity or trueness to experience of native ASL people), and ASL cultural markers (i.e., specialized handshape movement). Full ownership of ASL language, ASL cultural space, and ASL cultural identity is crucial for the development and application of ASL literary skills.

After reviewing the works of other ASL literature scholars along with the interviews with the respondents, the researcher has proposed a taxonomy of ASL literary genres as an attempt to provide a true representation of each genre of ASL literature (see Appendix A). The scholars included: Bahan (2006), Bauman et al. (2006), Brueggemann (2009), Byrne (1997–2012), Lane et al. (1996), Peters (2000), Rose (1992), Rutherford (1993), Supalla (2001), Valli (1993), and Valli et al. (2011). From this work, it was determined that ASL literature has three main genres: poetry, drama, and narratives.

How did the researcher determine the new taxonomy of ASL literary works? What reasons did he have that led to the arrangement of the genre categories?

1. English-to-ASL translations, monologues, expositions, fairy tales, worded handshape rhyme (poetry), initialized handshape rhyme (poetry), and

alphabetical handshape rhyme (poetry) are removed from ASL literature because they do not originate from the language of ASL. In addition, they do not have ASL cultural experiences and markers. To be under the umbrella of ASL literature, every work should be original and developed in ASL.

2. Because songs are sound-based, they are non-ASL. Therefore, ASL literature should not adopt them.

3. Supalla considers A to Z stories and number stories under the genre of sign play while Bahan puts them under stories with constraints. Valli categorizes them under poetry. Supalla places under sign play a work entitled *The Bridge* (to be placed under the sub-sub-sub-genre of numeral handshape rhyme), another work entitled *Flash* (removed because non-ASL), another work entitled *Fun with Fives* (to be placed under the sub-sub-sub-genre of particular handshape rhyme), and another work entitled *G-O-L-F* (to be removed because non-ASL).

4. Supalla (2001) identifies oratory as a genre for the four works: *The Igorot People* by Cinnie MacDougall (2001), *The Preservation of Sign Language* by George Veditz (1913/2003), *A Plea for a Statue of de L'Epee* by J. H. Cloud and Michael R. McCarthy (1913/2003), and *Some Thoughts on Fingerspelling* by Laurene Gallimore (2001). Since the works appear to be informational and expository, it might be more appropriate to remove

them from ASL literature and place them under informational texts as opposed to literature.

5. Originally, there was a genre of personal anecdotes. These works have been transferred to the sub-genre of narratives of personal experience.

6. A sub-genre of biographies and autobiographies has been newly created to allow the inclusion of works created by Patrick Graybill, Clayton Valli, Debbie Rennie, M. J. Bienvenu, Gilbert Eastman, Sam Supalla, Ben Bahan, and many others. While biographies and autobiographies are often considered nonfiction and historical accounts providing information, these forms can be considered a form of literature as well. The writer or "biographical artist" arranges the facts and portrays the individual he or she writes about using an imaginative ordering of facts to achieve artistic effect. An example is James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.* (1791) (Kendall, 2013).

7. Originally, legends, tall tales, riddles, and humour had their own independent genres. They have now been placed under the sub-genre of folktales under the main genre of narratives because, in the strictest sense, legends, tall tales, riddles, and folk humour are always considered as part of folklore.

8. A sub-genre of science fiction has been newly created to include *Eyeth* by Keith Gamache, Jr.

9. To be part of ASL literature, a storyteller should be highly fluent in ASL, using ASL language correctly and appropriately (i.e., word production, grammar, and non-manual signals). In addition, the storyteller should be able to "weave a story so smoothly that even complex utterances appear simple, yet beautiful" (Bahan, 2006, p. 24). Therefore, all works by the performers on the *My Third Eye* production by the National Theatre of the Deaf are not included because of the overuse of Signed English in the dialogue instead of ASL.

It was clear from the outset of this study that the field of ASL literature is new. Scholars have only recognized ASL as a language since the 1960s. The same is true with ASL literature. In fact, some argue that ASL literacy and literature do not exist because ASL has no commonly used and accepted writing system. In contrast, others argue that ASL literature may exist, but that research has not precisely identified what criteria are used for analyzing it. This study was an attempt to expand the conversation about ASL literature.

There is a need for building a theory of ASL literature that future researchers could examine, question, and use to generate hypotheses. The new taxonomy of ASL literary genres (see Appendix A) constructed from this data can be thought of as a new theoretical perspective on ASL literature.

Limitations

Only eight respondents were interviewed in this study. To further add to the knowledge base about ASL literacy and literature, more respondents in K–12 and university settings are needed. By continually adding to this database, definitions of ASL literacy and literature can be further refined. In addition, to add to the validity of future studies, the selection of the respondents can be more geographically spread out to capture diverse beliefs about ASL literacy and literature.

Future Research

On the basis of this study, the researcher has determined that the relatively new field of ASL literature is ripe for future research. For instance, more information is needed to describe the genres of ASL literature, the term *Deaf Literature* needs to be further described and explored and arguments against the use of mimery and gestures need further elaboration. In addition, while the field has only 526 recorded titles of ASL literature (see Supalla, 2001), compared to the thousands of titles found in other cultures, there is a need to gather more titles and conduct future research on these titles. Finally, future research is needed to further define the qualities of ASL literature. Specific research questions follow:

Question 1: More scholarly studies on the genres of ASL literature are needed. The first issue is whether or not one literary work can have its own genre. For instance, the genre of monologue has only one play (English-to-ASL) called *The Deaf Mute Howls* by Albert Ballin. Also, the allegory called *Bird of a Different Feather* by Ben Bahan has

its own genre. The second issue relates to the genres of poetry and sign play. For instance, Sam Supalla considers A to Z stories and number stories to be under the genre of sign play while Ben Bahan puts them under stories with constraints. However, Clayton Valli categorizes them under poetry. According to Jim, one of the respondents, poems that have rhyme should be placed under poetry while the other poems with no rhyme should be categorized under sign play. For instance, a poem called *G-O-L-F* by Alan Barwiolek should be placed under sign play, not poetry, because it has no rhyme. The third issue is whether all personal anecdotes are literature. Should the genre of personal anecdotes be replaced with biography and autobiography? The last issue is the obscurity of the genre of stories. What literary works should be included and should not be included in this genre?

Question 2: English, French, Spanish, and Russian literature are not termed *hearing literature*, but the term *Deaf literature* is used among researchers. This conclusion comes from the respondent discussions on pages 58, 59, and 67. We need more scholarly studies on this aspect.

Question 3: The researcher was surprised to learn about strong negative beliefs regarding mimery and gestures. Most respondents believed that mimery and gestures should not be considered in the definition of ASL literature. Lay people can see an ASL literary work and get its meaning through mime and gestures, but they cannot appreciate the artistic handling of the structure of ASL within the work, so they miss the artistic aspect of ASL literature. This finding raises questions as to how mimery and gestures

should be defined within ASL literature. Perhaps they can be considered paralinguistic features of ASL literature but not part of the linguistic structure of ASL literature per se.

Question 4: There are innumerable numbers of English literary works in all kinds of genres for a variety of people of all ages at different reading levels, possibly covering every theme there is. "There are more than 50,000 English-language children's titles in print, with 5,000 new titles published every year in the United States alone. Children's literature spans the range from alphabet books and nursery rhyme collections for the very young through novels and informational books for adolescents (or young adults, as they are called in the book trade) – in other words, from birth to about age fifteen" (Temple, Martinez, & Yokota, 2006, p. 6). In comparison, the body of ASL literature is almost nil. Based on the University of Arizona ASL Literature Collection inventory developed in 2001, the number of titles is 526, covering a few genres. A large number of videotapes and DVDs are readily available for use with intermediate and senior ASL students, while an extremely small num ber are available for use at the elementary level. More ASL literary works are needed to cover different themes in a range of genres across a broad age and grade range. A body of ASL literary works would support the development of ASL literacy within the ASL curriculum from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Question 5: Cynthia Peters (2000) praises the ASL Literature Series for establishing the standardization of ASL literary works. She considers Ben Bahan's *Bird of a Different Feather* and Sam Supalla's *For a Decent Living* canonical but she has not quite explained how this decision was reached. In addition, referring to the ASL Literature Series indirectly, Padden and Humphries (2005) write, "The performances of

equally inventive and skilled ASL storytellers like Sam Supalla and Ben Bahan became a new standard for public performance, showing that ASL should become the name of the language of the community, because it had such rich potential" (p. 137). Scholarly studies are needed to develop the qualities that make the ASL Literature Series canonical and use them to determine which other ASL literary works are canonical and which are not.

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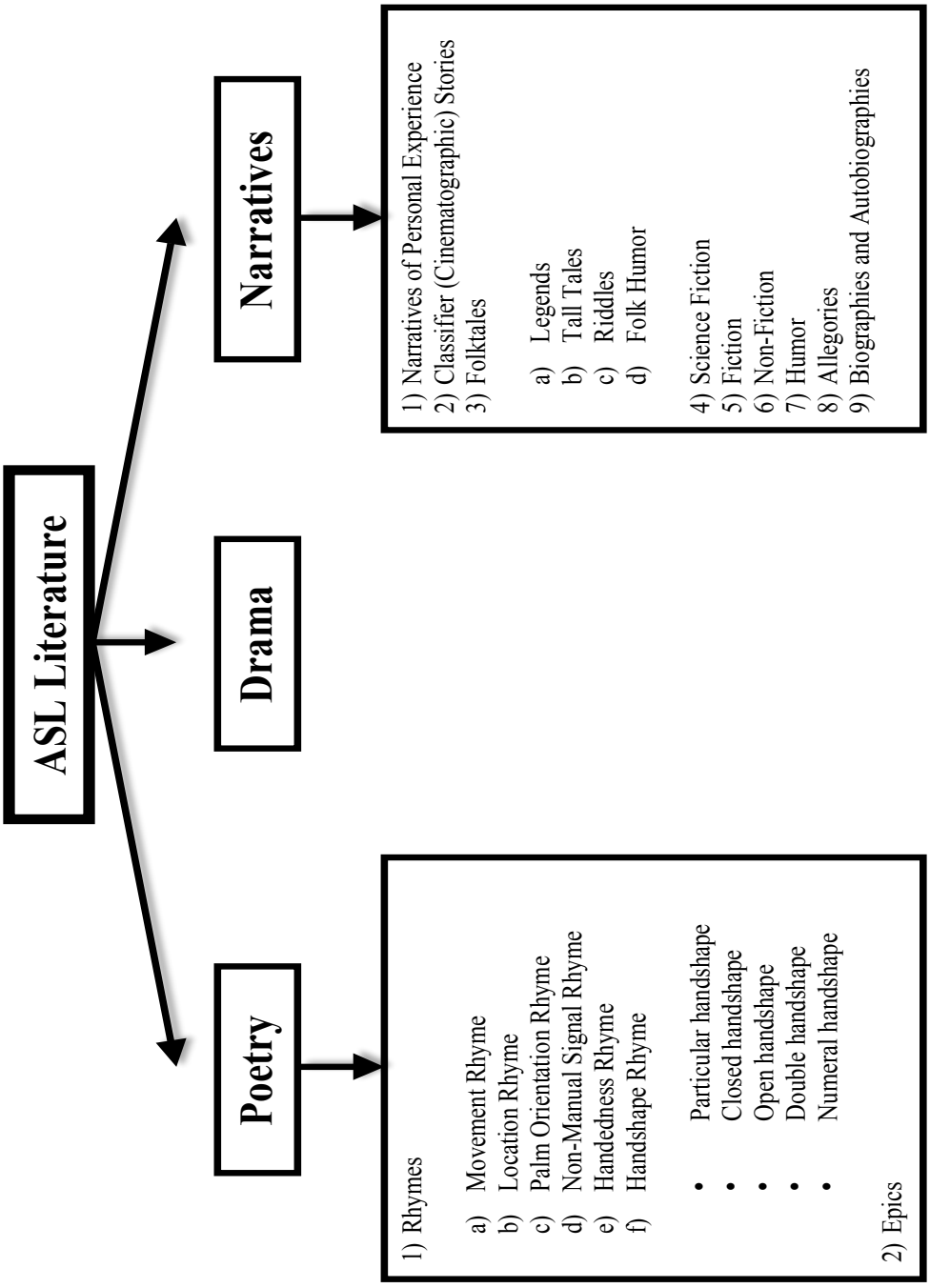
APPENDICES

Appendix A

A New Taxonomy of ASL Literature Genres



Appendix B

A New Corpus of ASL Literary Works Elaborated by Andrew Byrne
Adapted from Sam Supalla (2001)

*(Captured in VHS / DVD / Online Publications)
(As of September 2013)

POETRY

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
A Full Hand	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Norman, Freda. (1992). *Signing naturally student's workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Alien	Poetry	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
At the Park	Poetry: P.O. Rhyme	Original	General	Kuntze, Francis. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Bear	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Ramlogan, Kevin. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Big Dog vs. Little Dog	Poetry	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Black Hole: Color ASL	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD].	Yes

				Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	

Broken Voice	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Cat	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Crockford, Chelsea. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Cave	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Children's ASL Poems (1)	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Children's ASL Poems (2)	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Children's ASL Poems (3)	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Children's Garden	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Circle of Life	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes

Cocoon Child	Poetry	Original	General	Galimore, Rosa. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Cow	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Brewster, Joshua. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Cow and Rooster	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Laird, Annalee. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected words of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Crystal Marie	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Dandelion	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Deaf World	Poetry: Location Rhyme	Original	Deaf	Galimore, Jed. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Deer	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Dayment, William. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Dew on Spiderweb	Poetry: Move-ment Rhyme	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Dinosaur	Poetry: Numeral	Original	General	Mallach, Brandon. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number*	No

	HS Rhyme			*stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	

Disasters	Poetry: Move-ment Rhyme	Original	General	Martin, Julie. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Dog	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Bell, Cassandra. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Elephant	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Mahabir, Veeta. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Epic: Gallaudet Protest	Epic	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert C. (1993, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Gilbert Eastman* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Eye Music	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Fireworks	Poetry	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Fish	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Elliott, Mallorie. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Fourth of July	Poetry	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD:	Yes

				Sign Media.	

Friends	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Fuchsias	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Fun with Fives	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Traditional	General	Beinvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Funeral	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Hands (1)	Poetry	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Hands (2)	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Hands (3)	Poetry: Open HS & NMS Rhymes	Original	General	Jimenez, Claudia. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Hands Folded	Poetry: Move-ment Rhyme	Original	Deaf	Carter, Mel Jr. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

How Many Indians	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Tradi-tional	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
I'm Sorry	Poetry: Open HS & Closed HS Rhymes	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Liberation	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Lone Sturdy Tree	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Love Lesson	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Memories	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Missing Children	Poetry	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Monkey	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Laird, Joshua. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No

More	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No

Mushroom	Poetry: Metaphor & Personi-fication	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
My Favorite Old Summer House	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Nature Metaphor	Poetry	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Notre Dame	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
On Valentine's Day	Poetry	Original	General	Simmons, Vivienne. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Ones	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Ostrich	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Reeds, Marnie. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No

Parade	Poetry: Particular HS & Numeral HS Rhymes	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Paradox	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Pawns	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Rabbit	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Ocbazghi, Samuel. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Raccoon	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Tu Lam, Thien. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Rape Chocolate	Poetry	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Reflection	Poetry	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Season's Greetings	Poetry	Original	General	Martin, Julie. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

Sign Is Like a Tree	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

Silence Oh Painful	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Sit & Smile	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Thompson, Darla. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Snake	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Campbell, Gregg. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
Snowflake	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Still Friends	Poetry	Original	General	Almendares, Lisette. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Storm	Poetry	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Swan	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

Tears of Life	Poetry	Original	General	Simmons, Vivienne. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

The Baseball Game	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Bridge	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Reda, Abraham. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Distant Call	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Dogs	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Door	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Surprise	Poetry: Particular HS Rhyme	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Train	Poetry: Numeral	Traditional	General	Seago, Howie. (1984). *American culture: The*	Yes

	HS Rhyme			*Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	

The Train Ride	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella M. (1988). *Language landscape* [VHS]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	No
The Treasure	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Tree	Poetry	Original	General	Eastman, Gilbert C. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Wall and the Quilt	Poetry	Original	General	Carter, Mel Jr. (1995). *ASL poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Tiger	Poetry: Numeral HS Rhyme	Original	General	Boyd, Dallas. (1998). *Andrew Byrne's number stories: Animals* [VHS]. Toronto: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.	No
To a Hearing Mother	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Total Communi-cation	Poetry	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San	No

				Francisco Public Library.	
Travels with Malz: The Next Generation	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1995, 2006). *The treasure: ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: In Motion Press and DawnSignPress.	Yes
Wedding Poem	Poetry	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1988). *Language landscape* [VHS]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	No
Windy Bright Morning	Poetry	Original	General	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

DRAMA

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Laurent Clerc: A Profile (Part 1 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1976). *Laurent Clerc: A profile* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16778	Yes
Laurent Clerc: A Profile (Part 2 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1976). *Laurent Clerc: A profile* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16779	Yes
Laurent Clerc: A Profile (Part 3 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1976). *Laurent Clerc: A profile* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16780	Yes
Sign Me Alice	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1973). *Sign me Alice* [Online video].	Yes

(Part 1 of 3)				Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17048	
Sign Me Alice (Part 2 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1973). *Sign me Alice* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17049	Yes
Sign Me Alice (Part 3 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1973). *Sign me Alice* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17050	Yes
Sign Me Alice II (Part 1 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1983). *Sign me Alice 2* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17058	Yes
Sign Me Alice II (Part 2 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1983). *Sign me Alice 2* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17059	Yes
Sign Me Alice II (Part 3 of 3)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1983). *Sign me Alice 2* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17060	Yes
Sign Me Alice (2007)	Drama	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (2007). *Sign me Alice* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17078	Yes
Tales from a Clubroom	Drama	Original	Deaf	Bragg, Bernard & Bergman, Eugene. (1991). *Tales from a clubroom* [Online video]. Retrieved from http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=7319	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Narratives of Personal Experience)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
"Colored"?	N.P.E.	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
A Bus Ride	N.P.E.	Original	General	Rajagopalan, Poorna. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Camping Experience	N.P.E.	Original	General	McCaskill-Gilchrist, Angela. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Dream	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Family Trip	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Flores, Elsa Lorraine. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Lesson About Sound	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Telford, Mary. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
A Little Bit at a Time	N.P.E.	Original	General	Miller, Mary Beth. (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language: An introduction* (5th ed.) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.	Yes
A Misunderstood Sign	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Volger, Angela. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No

A Nightmare	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Pair of Gloves	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	McCaskill-Henry, Carolyn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Ride on the Airplane	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Rajagopalan, Poorna. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Strange Encounter	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Teacher I'll Never Forget	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Telford, Mary. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
A Trip to Europe	N.P.E.	Original	General	Flores, Elsa Lorraine. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Trip to Japan	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Lee, Yoon K. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A Visit at the School	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Rajagopalan, Poorna. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
A War	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Acting at Gallaudet	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

An Exquisite Sunday Brunch	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Sutherland, Laura. (1989, 1992). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Anthony's Car Incident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Natale, Anthony. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
April Fool's Day	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Mitchiner, Brenda S. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
ASL – Code Switching	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
ASL is a Language	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
At the Airport	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
At the Beach	N.P.E.	Original	General	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
At the Hotel	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Flores, Elsa Lorraine. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Back House	N.P.E.	Original	General	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Baseball	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD:	Yes

				Sign Media.	
Basketball at New York	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Becoming a Priest	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Black First	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Brotherhood	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Building the Bay Bridge	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Norton, Ken. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
Buying a Car	N.P.E.	Original	General	Bridges, Byron. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Byron's Motorcycle Incident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Bridges, Byron. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Cafeteria	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Carter, Mel. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Cake	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD].	Yes

				Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	
Can You Spare a Quarter?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Maucere, John. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Caught in the Act	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Bridges, Byron. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Clothes at Deaf School	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media Inc.	Yes
CODA Is My Deaf Club	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Common Sense?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Cookie Cutter	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Deaf Counselor	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Quartermus, Lil. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Deaf School	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Deciding to Marry	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Keast, Missy. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD].	Yes

				San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	
Differences	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Marbury, Nathie. (1981, 2007). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

Down Cactus Hill	N.P.E.	Original	General	Schmitz, Nikki. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Dumbo	N.P.E.	Original	General	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Earliest Memories	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Elevator Talk	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Embarrassed Heckler	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kuntze, Marlon. (1989, 1992). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Exploring the Cave	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	MacDougall, Cinnie. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Family	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

First Day on the Job	N.P.E.	Original	General	Natale, Anthony. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Funny Experiences	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Games with Family	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Gibberish – I Can	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Grand Canyon Sunset	N.P.E.	Original	General	Berke, Larry. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Grandpa was a Farm Boy, but Grandma Loved the Zoo	N.P.E.	Original	General	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Grandpa's Radio	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Guacamole Sushi	N.P.E.	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Hawaii	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign	No

				Media.	
Hearing Awareness	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Home Is Where the Hands Are	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Bienvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Hook	N.P.E.	Original	General	Lundquist, Cheryl. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD] Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
House (1)	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Lundquist, Cheryl. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD] Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
House (2)	N.P.E.	Original	General	Mitchiner, Brenda S. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD] Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
How Did I Lose My Hearing?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	McCaskill-Gilchrist, Angela. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Hurricane	N.P.E.	Original	General	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
I Never Teased It, Honest!	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
I Was a Male	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Labor Day Weekend	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Volger, Angela. (1991). *ASL story time* (Vol. 5) [DVD].	No

				Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	
Learning Black Culture	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Let Your Fingers Do the Talking	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Bienvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Life at the Deaf School	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Life in Dorm	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Woods, Betty. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Longhorn	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Look Out for Traffic	N.P.E.	Original	General	Rajagopalan, Poorna. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Look, Look	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Volger, Angela. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Looking for a House	N.P.E.	Original	General	Clark, Ken. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Lost Keys	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Poynor, Lee Ann. (1992). *Sign naturally teacher's video: Level 2* [DVD]. San	Yes

				Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	
Malibu Vice	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Maucere, John. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Mama Speaks	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Mexico–USA	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Morales, Mark. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Miss Gallaudet Pageant	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	McCaskill-Henry, Carolyn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Missed the Plane First Time	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Sutcliffe, Agnes. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Missy's Bicycle Incident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Keast, Missy. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Missy's Car Accident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Keast, Missy. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Mother Knows Best	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Marbury, Nathie. (1980). *American Sign Language; Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
My Family Roots	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Pedersen, Ken. (1989, 1992). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego CA:	Yes

				DawnSignPress.	
My First Day in Italy	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
My Power of Smell	N.P.E.	Original	General	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Necco	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Never Above the Waist	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	MacDougall, Cinnie. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
New York, New York	N.P.E.	Original	General	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Nick	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Nikki's Dirt Bike Incident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Schmitz, Nikki. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Nikki's Horse Incident	N.P.E.	Original	General	Schmitz, Nikki. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Nitty	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis*	Yes

				[DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	
No Interpretation Required	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Nostrils & Ear Hair	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
NTD	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
One Day at School	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
One Day in a Class	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Gordon, Jean M. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
One Embarrassing Moment	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Morales, Mark. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Ordering at McDonald's	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Maucere, John. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Our Family Cat	N.P.E.	Original	General	Sutcliffe, Agnes. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Papa Breaks His Hip	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

Priest	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Raw Oysters	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Rifle	N.P.E.	Original	General	Lee, Yoon K. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Role Models	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Rover	N.P.E.	Original	General	Flores, Elsa L. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC. Gallaudet University.	No
School Days	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
School Mates	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Pat. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
School Schedule	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Pat. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
See New, Never See Again	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No

Shopping with Kids	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Mitchiner, Brenda S. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Shower	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Berrigan, Dennis. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Siblings	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Sign Language Class	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Sign Language Class	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Snakes	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Somethin's Fishy	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Berke, Larry. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Speech Class	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Spelling?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Curtis, May. (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language: An introduction* (5th ed.) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet	Yes

				University Press.	
Supervisor Story	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Pat. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No

Taken for a Ride	N.P.E.	Original	General	Theriot, Terrylene. (2001). *Signing naturally teacher's curriculum guide: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Teachers and Staff	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Holcomb, Sam. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
Teaching at Kendall	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Telephone Nightmares	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Terrylene's Moving Violation	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Theriot, Terrylene. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
That's Life	N.P.E.	Original	General	McCaskill-Henry, Carolyn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
That's Who I Am	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign	Yes

				Media Inc.	
The Blackout Blues	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert C. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Candy Caper	N.P.E.	Original	Humour	Bienvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Convent	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Pat. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school day* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
The Cooking Teacher	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Baird, Liz. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
The Evolution of Poet: English-ASL	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Lentz, Ella Mae. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
The Fearful Fisherman	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Berke, Larry. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Gift	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Importance of Fingerspelling	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC:	No

				Gallaudet University.	
The Letter 1	N.P.E.	Original	General	Graybill, Pat. (1986). *The world according to Pat: Reflections of residential school days* [VHS]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	No
The Letter 2	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Patrick Graybill* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Snowmobile Story	N.P.E.	Original	General	Dively, Val. (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language: An introduction* (5th ed.) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.	Yes
The Three Boys	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Whistle Stops the Game	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kuntze, Marlon. (2001). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 3* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Tomorrow Dad Will Still Be Deaf	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Tour Guide	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Gordon, Jean M. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Trouble with Tarantulas	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

Truck Driver	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf/ Humour	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Turtle Soup	N.P.E.	Original	General	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Twenty Dollars	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 3) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Uncle Richard	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Volleyball	N.P.E.	Original	General	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Which Door?	N.P.E.	Original	General	Rajagopalan, Poorna. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Why Call it Hearing-Impaired?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Supalla, Clarence. (1991). *Short stories in American Sign Language* [VHS]. Riverside, CA: ASL Vista Project.	No
Why Did I Move to America?	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Lee, Yoon K. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 4) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
World Afire	N.P.E.	Original	General	Madsen, Willard J. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Youth Leadership Camp	N.P.E.	Original	Deaf	Gordon, Jean M. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No

NARRATIVES

(Classifier or Cinematographic Stories)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Chasing the Ball	Classifier	Original	General	Bahan, Ben. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Durassic Park	Classifier	Original	General	Hernandez, Manny. (2006). Durassic park. In H-D. Bauman, J. L. Nelson, & H. M. Rose (Eds.), *Signing the body poetic: Essays on American Sign Language literature* (DVD). Berkeley: University of California Press.	Yes
Golf Ball	Classifier	Original	General	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Pinball Machine	Classifier	Original	General	Miller, Mary Beth. (1988). *Language landscape* [VHS]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	No
Right Hand and Left Hand	Classifier	Original	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Folktales)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Abraham Lincoln	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1986). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 2)	No

				[VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	
Alarm Clocks	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Burnes, Byron B. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
Bird on a Wire (1)	Riddle	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 1) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Bird on a Wire (2)	Riddle	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1986). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 2) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Deaf and Law	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). American folklore in the Deaf community (Pt. 1) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Deaf Speeding	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Kuntze, Marlon. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
Deaf State	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1986). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 2) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Deaf Zen Game	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Fortney, Olin. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
Frog	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 1)	No

				[VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	
Gallaudet and Alice	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1986). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 2) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Hitchhiker	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 1) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
King Kong	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Ryan, Stephen. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Peet	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1986). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 2) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Speech	Tall Tale	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 1) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
The Deaf Miner	Tall Tale	Traditional	Deaf	Burnes, Byron B. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
The Deaf Spies of the Civil War	Legend	Traditional	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Train Crossing	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Solow, Sharon N. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes

Tree Joke	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Carmel, Simon. (1981). *American folklore in the Deaf community* (Pt. 1) [VHS]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
We Got Plenty of Them Back Home	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Which Room Is Mine?	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	Fant, Lou. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
Which Room Was It?	Humour	Traditional	Deaf	MacDougall, Cinnie. (1988). *Signing naturally student videotext: Level 1* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Science Fiction)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
A Deaf Mountain Climber Alone	Science Fiction	Original	Deaf	Supalla, David. (1991). *Short stories in American Sign Language* [VHS]. Riverside, CA: ASL Vista Project.	No
Deaf in the Year 2001	Science Fiction	Original	Deaf	Baer, Ann Marie. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
The Eyeth Story	Science Fiction	Original	Deaf	Gamache, Keith, Jr. (2005). *The eyeth story* [DVD]. American Fork, UT: Eye-Sign Media.	No

Visuth	Science Fiction	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL story time* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Where is the Master-Mind?	Science Fiction	Original	Deaf	Supalla, David. (1991). *Short stories in American Sign Language* [VHS]. Riverside, CA: ASL Vista Project.	No

NARRATIVES

(Fiction)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
A Fishy Story	Fiction	Original	General	Burdett, Ron. (2008). *Signing naturally student workbook: Units 7-12: Level 1* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
A War	Fiction	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
ABC Gum	Fiction	Original	General	Lentz, Ella Mae. (2008). *Signing naturally student workbook: Units 7-12: Level 1* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Farmer Johnson	Fiction	Original	General	McCaskill-Gilchrist, Angela. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Final Exam	Fiction	Original	General	Bahan, Ben. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

Football Fantasy	Fiction	Original	General	Eastman, Gilbert C. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
For a Decent Living	Fiction	Original	Deaf	Supalla, Samuel, & Bahan, Ben. (1994a). *ASL literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living – student workbook*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
House	Fiction	Original	General	Mitchiner, Brenda S. (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language: An introduction* (5th ed.) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.	Yes
How the First Deaf Emerged in the World	Fiction	Original	Deaf	Supalla, David. (1991). *Short stories in American Sign Language* [VHS]. Riverside, CA: ASL Vista Project.	No
June's Dinner	Fiction	Original	General	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 1) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Sports Scene	Fiction	Original	General	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
St. Valentine's Massacre	Fiction	Original	General	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Candy Bar	Fiction	Original	General	Bahan, Ben. (2008). *Signing naturally student workbook: Units 7-12: Level 1* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

The Gum Story (New Version of ABC Gum)	Fiction	Original	General	Ellis-Gonzales, Stefanie. (2008). *Signing naturally student workbook: Units 1-6* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Highdiver	Fiction	Original	General	Bienvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Highdiver	Fiction	Original	General	Eastman, Gilbert C. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Mouth Story	Fiction	Traditional	Deaf	Miller, Mary Beth. (1991, 2010). *Live at SMI!: Mary Beth Miller* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Timber	Fiction	Traditional	Deaf	Baer, Joey. (2008). *Signing naturally student workbook: Units 1-6* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Non-Fiction)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Alarm Clocks	Non-Fiction	Original	Deaf	Burnes, Byron B. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
El Salvadore	Non-Fiction	Original	Deaf	Kemp, Mike. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC:	No

				Gallaudet University.	
Reveille	Non-Fiction	Traditional	Deaf	Bernstein, Ethan. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
The History of American Sign Language	Non-Fiction	Original	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
The Rat Funeral	Non-Fiction	Traditional	Deaf	Mikos, Kenneth. (1984). *American culture: The Deaf perspective: Deaf folklore* [DVD]. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library.	Yes
Uncoding the Ethics	Non-Fiction	Traditional	Deaf	Norman, Freda. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Humour)

Title	**Genre**	**Type**	**Orientation**	**Source**	***Still Available?**
A Kiss	Humour	Original	General	Lundquist, Cheryl. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 6) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Don't Count Your Chickens Before They're Hatched	Humour	Original	Deaf	Berke, Larry. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Don't Sign With Your	Humour	Original	Deaf	Bienvenu, M.J. (1980). *American Sign Language:*	Yes

Hands Full				*Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	
Gulf War	Humour	Original	Deaf	Ryan, Stephen. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Washington DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Hey Mister! I Can't See	Humour	Original	Deaf	Fant, Lou. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
In Motion	Humour	Original	General	Berke, Larry. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
King's Island	Humour	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8.) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Planet Way Over Yonder	Humour	Original	Deaf	Ryan, Stephen. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 5) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Play on Signs!	Humour	Original	Deaf	Fant, Lou. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
Quacky	Humour	Original	Deaf	Lundquist, Cheryl. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 7) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No
Revival at Mississippi	Humour	Original	General	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Technology Funnies	Humour	Original	Deaf	Jacobowitz, E. Lynn. (1991). *ASL storytime* (Vol. 8) [DVD]. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.	No

The Dead Dog	Humour	Original	General	Norman, Freda. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
The Genie	Humour	Original	General	Pineda, Dan. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes

The Harmfulness of Tobacco	Humour	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Hitchhiker	Humour	Original	Deaf	Pineda, Dan. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
The Interpreter	Humour	Original	Deaf	Ennis, Bill. (1993, 2011). *Live at SMI!: Bill Ennis* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
The Mad Scientist and the Frog!	Humour	Original	Deaf	Solow, Sharon N. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
The Spike!	Humour	Original	General	Pineda, Dan. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H* [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	Yes
Think Big	Humour	Original	General	Graybill, Patrick. (1980). *American Sign Language: Tales from the green books* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
What to Wear???	Humour	Original	General	Pineda, Dan. (1994, 2006). *ASL funny bones: Favorite*	Yes

				Deaf jokes told in ASL: Tape 6H [DVD]. Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.	

NARRATIVES

(Allegories)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Bird of a Different Feather	Allegories	Original	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1994). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Student workbook* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Bird of a Different Feather	Allegories	Original	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1994). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Teacher's guide* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes

NARRATIVES

(Biographies and Autobiographies)

Title	Genre	Type	Orientation	Source	*Still Available?
Ajax Story	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
ASL Champ	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No

Book Leftovers	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Choir	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Cinnie's Auto-biography	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	MacDougall, Cinnie. (1992). *Signing naturally student workbook: Level 2* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Clayton's Background	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Valli, Clayton. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Clayton Valli* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Alfred Sonnenstrahl	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Sonnenstrahl, Alfred. (1989, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8C* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes
Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Dennis Schemenauer	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Schemenauer, Dennis. (1990, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8F* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes

Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Gilbert Eastman	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Eastman, Gilbert. (1989, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8A* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes

Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Howie Seago	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Seago, Howie. (1990, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8H* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes
Deaf Culture Auto-biography: M. J. Bienvenu	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Bienvenu, M. J. (1989, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8B* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes
Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Patrick Graybill	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Graybill, Patrick. (1990, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8G* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes

Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Paul Johnston	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Johnston, Paul. (1989, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8D* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes

Deaf Culture Auto-biography: Rev. Thomas Coughlin	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Coughlin, Thomas. (1989, 2006). *ASL, interpreting & Deaf culture: Deaf culture autobiographies: 8E* [DVD]. Eden Prairie, MN: American Sign Language Productions. (For more information, see http://www.signenhancers.com/index.html)	Yes
Deafness Saved Me	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Debbie's Background	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Rennie, Debbie. (1990, 2007). *Poetry in motion: Original works in ASL: Debbie Rennie* [DVD]. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media.	Yes
Family Visit	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Hearing Aids & Headphones	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
I Was a Football Player	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No

Interview with Ben Bahan	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1994). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Student workbook* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Interview with Ben Bahan	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Bahan, Ben. (1994). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Teacher's guide* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Interview with Bonnie Kraft by Ben Bahan	Autobio.	Original	Deaf/ Hearing	Kraft, Bonnie. (1997). *Tomorrow Dad will still be Deaf & other stories by Bonnie Kraft* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Interview with Sam Supalla	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Supalla, Sam. (1994a). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Student workbook* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Interview with Sam Supalla	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Supalla, Sam. (1994b). *American Sign Language literature series: Bird of a different feather & For a decent living: Teacher's guide* [DVD]. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.	Yes
Introduction	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Jimmy Smith	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN:	No

				Tactile Mind Press.	
Learning Family	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Miss Nafie	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Mother-in-Law	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
My Old TTY	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
My WPSD	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Picking Up ASL	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Pink Envelope	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Sunday Dinners	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Washington Monument	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No
Weekend Visitor	Autobio.	Original	Deaf	Marbury, Nathie. (2005). *Nathie: No hand-me-downs* [DVD]. Minneapolis, MN: Tactile Mind Press.	No

Appendix C

A Copy of York University Office of Research Ethics Approval Letter

YORK
UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
ETHICS (ORE)

5th Floor,
York Research Tower,
4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736 5201
Fax 416 650 8197
www.research.yorku.ca

Certificate #:	**STU 2012 - 070**
Approval Period:	**04/30/12-04/30/13**

Memo

To: Andrew Byrne, Faculty of Education, Andrew.byrne@lamar.edu

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Wade Cook, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: **Monday 30th April, 2012**

Re: Ethics Approval

Making the Case for American Sign Language (ASL) Literature Corpus

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I am writing to inform you that the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee has reviewed and approved the above project.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,
Office of Research Ethics

Appendix D

Dr. Samuel Supalla's Letter of Permission

Subject	Permission
From	"Samuel J. Supalla, Ph.D." <ssupalla@u.arizona.edu>
Date	Thursday, February 14, 2008 11:37 am
To	Andrew P Byrne <apbyrne@hawaii.edu>

Dear Andrew,

I am giving you permission to use the University of Arizona ASL Literature Collection inventory for your dissertation work. This is with the understanding that you give credit to me for organizing and compiling the inventory and use the year as cited.

Thank you,

Sam

Samuel J. Supalla, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Sign Language/Deaf Studies
Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Interdisciplinary Program
Cognitive Science Program

Mailing address:
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College of Education
University of Arizona
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(520) 621-9466 TTY
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E-mail for IP address (videoconference)