



## Signing Art

*An informal learning programme for adult British Sign Language (BSL) users  
wishing to become presenters within cultural institutions*

**PROJECT IN A BOX**

## Project Summary

The project was intended to encompass the informal training and development of Art presentation skills of Deaf people and promote further Deaf Awareness in an organisation.

'Signing Art' was an informal learning programme for adult British Sign Language (BSL) users wishing to become presenters within cultural institutions.

Our experience of working with Deaf audiences has shown preference for events to be delivered by native Deaf speakers<sup>1</sup>. However, there are presently few native Deaf BSL users with the necessary professional skills and experience to deliver high quality BSL talks and tours. This project sought to address the gap in provision of Museum and gallery tours delivered in BSL by Deaf native speakers by training them in a Museum and Gallery setting.

There is a lack of informal learning and cultural provision for the Deaf community, which includes BME and older people. RNID surveys since 2000 indicate that 52% percent of deaf or hearing impaired individuals had been prevented from pursuing further training or education. Without support this group is at risk of marginalisation.

The Signing Art project provided high quality informal learning for BSL users to develop personally. They increased their skills, confidence and employability and were empowered to provide cultural access to others, learning through practical experience.

The project supported Big Society aims for social inclusion and mental well-being. This is a particular issue, with 10% of Deaf people having a Psychological or Emotional Condition, compared to 6% of the general population (IpsosMORI GP Patient Survey 2009/10).

Learners have acquired the skills to become employed presenters, which can support independence. They had 'on the job' experience at one of the best cultural institutions in the world and produced a video résumé, increasing digital inclusion and enabling them to seek training or employment.

In 2002, RNID carried out a survey into the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing people. Respondents had an unemployment rate of 19%, which is four times the national average. Learners who successfully completed our course are ready for employment as museum and gallery guides.

The Signing Art project is an innovative model of best practice that can be shared and replicated.

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<sup>1</sup> Significantly higher numbers of attendees are recorded at events delivered by Deaf native BSL users. Qualitative feedback gathered is also more positive.

## **Project Objectives and Planned Outcomes for Learners**

- To enhance the skills of Members of the Deaf Community needed to present in Museums and Art Galleries, i.e. Research, Presentation, British Sign Language (BSL), Professionalism and Finance skills.
- To create a new programme of BSL events at Museums and Galleries, which provide a platform for 'Signing Art' learners to showcase their skills and facilitate access to art and heritage for the wider Deaf community
- To increase Deaf awareness in the wider community and introduce staff to basic BSL and encourage progression to a formal BSL Level 1 course.
- To encourage future formal learning for participants and staff alike.
- To develop partnerships with key Deaf community organisations and individuals.
- To develop a new program of monthly BSL tours
- To develop gallery staff skills in working with Deaf communities including communication skills.
- To build and develop Museums and Galleries BSL audience both locally and online.
- To increase access to the Museums and Galleries collection and exhibitions for Deaf BSL users.
- To increase and open up future employment opportunities for the Deaf Community within other Museums and Galleries.
- To enable Deaf trainees to market their new skills to future employers through the production of video CV's.
- To create a replicable model of best practice when working with Deaf communities
- To share model with museums and galleries nationally
- To create an online resource as legacy for project and to enable wider audience to access programme.
- To widen awareness of access needs of BSL audiences and what can be done to meet these; both internally and externally at Museums and Galleries.
- To help promote social inclusion for the Deaf community.

### **What a Difference it will Make**

- Increased community cohesion.
- Developing Professional relationships.
- Greater confidence of Learners and others involved.
- Better Communication and Language skills.
- Better awareness of the Deaf Community.
- More people learning BSL.
- More people involved in informal learning of Art.

## Project Timetable

Phase 1		
Launch of BSL Talks, project planning, participant recruitment, promotion and staff training.		
Date	Activity	Outcomes
<b>Week 1</b>	Project course planning including; setting the course content, identifying suitable tutors, planning the location and duration of sessions.	Project partners identified, project outline created, lesson locations decided.
<b>Week 2</b>	Script for Signing Art recruitment Video and BSL talks launch created.  Signing Art Planning Day.  BSL talk.	Script finalised. Filming and marketing materials created.  Plan out details of course with all project partners and outline fees to partners.  BSL talk and launch of BSL Talk series.
<b>Week 3</b>	Filming for Signing Art promotional video.  Distribution of Signing Art promo video online.	Promotional and informational film for Signing Art to distribute via online platforms such as Facebook.  Wide distribution of information regarding talks and Signing Art course.
<b>Week 4</b>	Signing Art Welcome Day.	Give more information to potential participants and collect initial applications from participants.
<b>Week 5</b>	BSL talk. Applicant interview day.	BSL talk on a current exhibition. Selection of candidates.
<b>Week 6</b>	Applicant interview day.	Selection of candidates.
<b>Week 7-9</b>	3 x Deaf Awareness Training for staff.	Training front of house and learning staff on Deaf culture and communication
<b>Week 10</b>	BSL talk.	BSL talk on a current exhibition.

<b>Week 11</b>	External evaluator contacted and confirmed through tendering process (need three tenders).  Applicants informed of acceptance/rejection  Procured BSL training material for Staff.	10 trainees selected for programme.
<b>Week 12</b>	BSL talk.	BSL talk on a current exhibition.
<b>Week 13</b>	Spend Financial Report to ACLF	

<b>Phase 2</b> <b>Continuation of BSL Talks, project delivery, promotion and marketing, staff training, production of video resumes, Celebration event</b>		
<b>Week 14</b>	Research Skills Training Day.  BSL talk.	Training in Library and Archives on research. Practical work on researching and presenting on an artwork.  BSL talk on a Historical collection.
<b>Week 15</b>	Presentation Skills Volunteer on BSL talk in the evening	Training on Presentation skills with practical work in the galleries.
<b>Week 16</b>	Presenting to a BSL Audience Volunteer on BSL talk in evening.	Training by a presenter on presenting to a deaf audience.
<b>Week 17</b>	Participants present a 10-minute BSL talk in the galleries.	Participants have opportunity to practice in front of live audience and receive feedback.
<b>Week 18</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of video resume filming.  2 <sup>nd</sup> Day of video resume filming.  5 participants present a 10-minute BSL talk in the gallery.	Production of video resume for participants  Production of video resume for participants  Five participants have opportunity to practice in front of live audience and receive

		feedback.
<b>Week 19</b>	Celebration Day and film screening. BSL talk.	Networking event for participants and certificate presentation. BSL talk on Historic Collection on theme of Family.
<b>Week 20</b>	All spending finished. Project finished.	
<b>Week 24</b>	Evaluation Report produced	

## Financial resources

Resource	Cost (£)
Production of BSL video E-flyer	200.00
Production of Video CVs for 10 learners	1800.00
BSL Level 1 and Deaf Awareness training	2000.00
Catering (including Welcome evening and Celebration event for 100 people)	1000.00
Project Evaluation	4100.00
Research & development	200.00
Production of online video tutorials	1500.00
Deaf Tutor, and Deaf presenter fees	4500.00
Interpreting fees for whole project	6000.00

## Learning resources

See the attached Lesson plans for Research, Presentation and BSL Skills, and Professionalism and Finance sessions.

## Promotional materials

See the attached promotional materials used to advertise the course.

### Facebook Signing Art Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Signing-Art-at-Tate/334831173198338>

### Tate Deaf Events Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tate-BSL-and-Deaf-Events/253362754725214>



### **Top Tips to replicate the project**

- Involve Deaf professionals from the outset.
- Ensure BSL capability with participants.
- Involve other professionals and staff in project delivery.
- Get really good partners on board.
- Work with BSL Interpreters who have knowledge of the specialist language.
- Schedule everything as far in advance as possible.
- Make clear the level of commitment involved.
- Ensure the course length matches the needs of participants.
- Be clear that this is not something to be entered into lightly.
- Be thorough in all of the above and doubly so in finance.

### **Who to contact to start your own project.**

Tate BSL Team at [bsl.britain@tate.org.uk](mailto:bsl.britain@tate.org.uk)

Project in a Box was compiled on behalf of the Tate Signing Art Team by evaluator Edward J Richards.

[www.cuttingedgedesign.co.uk](http://www.cuttingedgedesign.co.uk)

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