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### Introduction & Activity Kit Design

#### The Elephant Game: Novice Level
*Appropriate for 1st/2nd semester ASL students*

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*Appropriate for 3rd/4th semester ASL students*

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Introduction

The purpose of the ASL and Deaf Culture Activity Series is to acquaint students with the major cultural ideas, themes, topics, and background knowledge of the Deaf World, presented in a way that stimulates meaningful language use. By actively using ASL to learn about Deaf culture, students deepen both their cultural and language proficiency.

The Elephant Game is one of the most well-known cultural activities enjoyed by Deaf individuals of all ages. It is generally introduced to ASL students as an entertaining diversion — sometimes as a reward, as a way to pass time, or as a warm-up or cool-down game. Too often, understanding of the activity remains limited to entertainment. Students lack the background knowledge that places the game into the cultural context of the Deaf World, such as understanding how the game is passed on between generations, the deep cultural value of the eyes, and appropriate times and places to play the game. By learning this cultural context, students can fully participate in the shared knowledge of the Deaf community.

In this set of activities, students engage in meaningful language and culture exercises on topics related to the Elephant Game. These activities are rich in classifiers, numbers, geography, ASL literature, fingerspelling, personal narratives, game-playing strategies, idioms, and more. Each activity focuses on one national standard, providing students a wide range of opportunities to communicate while learning new information.

By the end of the activities, students have learned far more than the simple rules of the Elephant Game. They have participated in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication; learned about Deaf traditions, products and perspectives; engaged in interdisciplinary learning and accessed new information available only in ASL; compared differences between ASL, English, and foreign sign languages; and have used ASL outside the classroom. Most importantly, students have developed a life-long enjoyment of playing the game, and also understand its cultural importance.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to view the Introduction video on the DVD to better understand the design and objectives of the Elephant Game.

About the Elephant Game

1. What are the rules?

To play the Elephant Game, players (often called elephants) are arranged into a circle and face inward towards the caller or pointer who stands in the middle. That person points to a player who must immediately form the elephant trunk by placing two S handshapes together in front of his or her nose. The two players on each side of the person forming the elephant trunk create that person’s elephant ears using the B or Open B handshapes, completing the arrangement. If no errors are made, then the caller/pointer selects a new person to become the elephant and the game continues.
However, if a handshape or location error is made, then the player or players who made the error are eliminated. The game continues until only the caller/pointer and two players remain, leaving three final players who win the game. Advanced players of the game often continue the game beyond this point with these additional steps: The caller/pointer continues to point to one of the two players. The player pointed to forms the elephant trunk, while the second player must lean over and form both elephant ears on that person. The caller/pointer continues to select who becomes the elephant. When one of the last two players is eliminated, the caller/pointer steps in to continue the game. Without being called or pointed to, the two players alternate forming the elephant trunk and ears until an error is made. The last player remaining wins the game.

2. I play a different version of the Elephant Game. Is that okay?

There are some minor variations of the Elephant Game in the Deaf community, though the general rules are fairly standard. Teachers are encouraged to follow the format provided in the Novice and Intermediate game rules. Some differences:

1. Not all versions consider the caller/pointer to be a player. In the Elephant Game activities, all students involved in the game are considered players.
2. In some variations the game ends when three players remain in addition to the caller/pointer.
3. In other variations, the game ends when two players remain in addition to the caller/pointer.

Curriculum & Teaching

3. What are the national standards and how do they apply to the Elephant Game?

Too often, ASL students may have good language skills but lack common cultural knowledge — or vice versa. It is critical for students to develop proficiency with both ASL and Deaf culture. The national standards increase language and culture proficiency by exposing students to a rich, comprehensive, and meaningful set of domains. These domains are:

1.1 Interpersonal communication (student to student)
1.2 Interpretive communication (viewing video materials)
The Elephant Game

Introduction

1.3 Presentational communication (formally sharing information)
2.1 Practices and perspectives (learning about what Deaf people do and why)
2.2 Products and perspectives (learning about what Deaf people create and why)
3.1 Interdisciplinary learning (using ASL to further their knowledge of other fields)
3.2 Acquire information (learning information available only in ASL)
4.1 Comparing languages (learning about how ASL and their own languages work)
4.2 Comparing cultures (learning about how Deaf culture and their own cultures operate)
5.1 Communities (using ASL inside and outside the classroom)
5.2 Life-long learning (using ASL for personal enjoyment and enrichment)

Together, the national standards are a dynamic approach to teaching and learning that encourage meaningful communication and active engagement with the language and culture.

4. When should I teach the Elephant Game?

Use your judgment to decide the best time for students to work with the Elephant Game activities. Some suggestions:

Novice Level:
- Begin the activities towards the end of their first semester, or any time during second semester.
- Another option is to use the activities as a cumulative review for the entire year.
- The activities are ideal to use as lesson plans for a substitute to handle when the teacher must be away from class.

Intermediate Level:
- Begin the activities any time during the third or fourth semesters.
- Another option is to use the novice level activities as a cumulative review of the first year, and then to introduce students to the intermediate activities towards the end of the fourth semester.
- The activities are ideal to use as lesson plans for a substitute to handle when the teacher must be away from class.

5. Where does the Elephant Game fit into my curriculum?

Whether you use Master ASL!, Signing Naturally, or other ASL curricula, the Elephant Game activities are useful for expansion and reinforcement of many language skills. The activities can be done independently or as part of a specific unit. Major language and culture topics that are emphasized in the activities are listed here:

Activity 1: Elephants at Play
Handshapes, classifiers, visual discrimination
Introduction

The Elephant Game

Activity 2: A Trip to the Zoo
Classifiers, maps, sequencing, numbers, non-manual signals

Activity 3: Picturing the Story
ABC stories, visualizing information, sequencing information

Activity 4: Elephant Signs Around the World
Analyzing sign parameters, international sign languages, fingerspelling

Activity 5: Roving Reporter
Deaf culture traditions, receptive comprehension, fingerspelling

Activity 6: The Elephant Game Rules: Down to Three Players
Receptive comprehension, eye contact, handshapes, sequencing information, Deaf culture traditions

Activity 7: Playing the Elephant Game
Hand-eye coordination, collaboration, Deaf culture traditions

Activity 8: All About Elephants
Numbers, fingerspelling, geography, science

Activity 9: Games for Eyes, Games for Ears
Interpersonal communication, visual awareness

Activity 10: Sharing the Elephant Game
Presentational communication, register, eye contact, presentational behaviors

Activity 11: How to Play the Elephant Game
Presentational communication, eye contact, visual awareness, presentational behaviors, best practices for live and recorded presentations

Activity 12: Elephant Mind Map
Interpersonal communication, collaboration, hypothesizing, fingerspelling

Activity 13: Where in the World?
Numbers, fingerspelling, geography, charts & graphs

Activity 14: Trust
Classifiers, storytelling, Deaf art

Activity 15: Strange But True
Classifiers, non-manual signals, science, language analysis

Activity 16: ASL & English Idioms
Interpersonal communication, receptive comprehension, ASL idioms

Activity 17: Origins of the Elephant Game
Receptive comprehension, Deaf culture traditions and values, fingerspelling, non-manual signals

Activity 18: The Elephant Game Rules: Down to One Player
Receptive comprehension, eye contact, Deaf culture traditions, sequencing information

Activity 19: Playing the Elephant Game
Hand-eye coordination, collaboration, Deaf culture traditions
Activity 20: Debate: Animal Cruelty  
*Interpersonal communication, presentational communication*

Activity 21: Step Into the Picture  
*Visualization skills, classifiers, storytelling, presentational communication, best practices for live and recorded presentations*

Activity 22: Planning an ASL Games Night  
*Interpersonal communication, collaboration, fingerspelling, numbers*

6. Do I teach all this information before beginning the Elephant Game?

Do not feel you must pre-teach the content that appears in the Elephant Game activities. Because the activities include such a wide variety of skills, it is likely that students will encounter new, unfamiliar information. However, having students work with challenging material is beneficial for their language development. You might wish to use the activities as a way to introduce or review particular topics or skills, but avoid interrupting the flow of activities to teach new topics in depth. In most cases, the activity content is self-contained, meaning even a student who does not have much background experience with a language topic can complete the activity. For example, the novice level Activity 1 asks students to use classifiers to describe elephant actions. While students might not have much experience using classifiers, they are given a list of visual prompts that help guide them to selecting and successfully using the appropriate classifier.

7. How advanced is the language?

The narrator’s language is simplified for novice students in Activities 1–11 (first and second semester ASL students), but intermediate students in Activities 12–22 experience signing at native speed. Some teachers may feel the signing to be too difficult for students and be tempted to give instructions in spoken English. If this is the case, make the instructions a learning opportunity and work with students to help them decode meaning before beginning the activity. Giving instructions in spoken English diminishes the benefit students receive by being immersed in the target language. Work with students so that they can comprehend the material in ASL.

8. Is there voice-over and captioning?

Throughout each activity, students communicate in ASL only. There are no captions or voice-overs on the DVD. Students rely on receptive and expressive communication to complete the activities by working alone, with a partner, or in small groups. The goal is to immerse students into the target language.

9. What are some suggestions for the teacher?

- Consider laminating the cards for re-use the next time you teach the Elephant Game.
- Before beginning the activities, create a class set of all the activity materials.
- The Elephant Game activities function as excellent lesson plans for a substitute to follow.
- Complete one or two activities per day if desired, or spread them out over a longer period of time rather than rushing through them.
10. Is there any vocabulary support?

Some activities include relevant vocabulary, such as country signs and regional variations. Items are located in the Vocabulary section located at the bottom of the screen of the final activity menu. Each sign is accompanied by a picture to convey its meaning. There is no English interpretation of the sign.

About the Activities

11. How are the activities presented?

The activities are divided into two levels: Novice and Intermediate. Each level is designed to challenge students and encourage meaningful communication to further develop proficiency, with intermediate activities reflecting more complex instructions and language use.

Novice Level:
- Activities are intended for first or second semester ASL students, and feature a slightly slower native sign speed;
- Activities have greater emphasis on receptive communication;
- Students work with pictures to connect concepts with language;
- Instructions include examples to show students what they are expected to do.

Intermediate Level:
- Activities are intended for third or fourth semester ASL students and feature native signing speeds;
- Activities emphasize more discussion, debate, and advanced interpersonal communication;
- Students work at an advanced level, particularly with classifiers.

12. What components are included?

The teacher’s manual contains activity instructions, student handouts, and answer keys. The DVD contains student instructions, language and culture content, quizzes, warm up and follow-up discussion prompts, and a vocabulary section.

13. What do the instructions look like?

Each activity is self-contained, with the instructions, materials, outcomes, and necessary preparation presented together.
About This Activity

Lets you know which specific national standard is focused on and general ASL topics that appear in the activity.

Student Outcomes

Student outcomes describe exactly what students accomplish by the end of the activity.

Preparation

Describes anything the teacher does before beginning the activity.

Materials

Lists the DVD and handout contents.

Instructions

Step by step instructions for the teacher.

Discussion Starter and Follow-Up Discussion

Opportunities for class-wide discussion.

Suggested Next Activity

After this activity is completed, continue to the next activity shown here.


**About the DVD**

14. **What equipment do I need for the Elephant Game activities?**

The Elephant Game activities are DVD-based, so teachers will need a DVD player and projector. In most cases showing the video content on a standard monitor limits student access, so teachers are strongly encouraged to use a digital projector to broadcast the DVD onto a wall or screen.

15. **What should I know about the DVD?**

   - The DVD works with any standard remote control.
   - The back arrow (←) takes you to the beginning of the previous segment.
   - The forward arrow (→) takes you to the beginning of the next segment.
   - The up arrow (↑) repeats the current segment.
   - Press the Menu button to return to the main activity menu.
   - The boxes at the bottom of the screen let you know which segment you are currently on and how many segments remain until the end of the activity.
   - Note: If the pause button is engaged, be aware that the forward, back, and up arrows will not be active.

16. **How do the video quizzes work?**

Several activities include a video quiz. The quiz questions and answers play simultaneously and are repeated several times. Students view the question, select the best answer, and circle the corresponding symbol on the response sheet. Here is an example:
• The narrator asks the question.
• Students have three answers to choose from, marked by ▲■○.
• The remaining time is shown in the upper left corner.
• Students circle the symbol that appears on the quiz response sheet.
Activity 2

A Trip to the Zoo

About This Activity

Activity 2 focuses on Standard 3.1, which emphasizes interdisciplinary learning as students connect to other areas of knowledge and skills while learning ASL. Activity skills include:

- Receptive communication (from DVD, student, teacher)
- Expressive communication (student, teacher)
- Maps
- Classifiers
- Numbers

Student Outcomes

Students connect to other areas of knowledge and skills by:

- Working with a map to trace a journey
- Sequencing information
- Identifying animals based on descriptions
- Working with numbers

Preparation

1. Make copies of Handout 1: Zoo Map for each student. The answer key is located in Teacher Support 1.

2. Make copies of Handout 2: The Zoo Video Quiz Response Sheet for each student to take the video quiz. The answer key is located in Teacher Support 2.

ASL vocabulary alert: Signs for picnic, sandwich, and variations for rhino are included in the vocabulary section located at the bottom of the screen of the final activity menu.

Materials

1. A Trip to the Zoo DVD Lesson
   - Segment 1: Discussion Starter
   - Segment 2: A Trip to the Zoo Instructions
   - Segment 3: A Trip to the Zoo Video
Activity 2: A Trip to the Zoo

Segment 4: A Trip to the Zoo Review
Segment 5: Video Quiz Instructions
Segment 6: Video Quiz Questions
Segment 7: Follow-up Discussion

2. Handout 1: Zoo Map
3. Handout 2: Zoo Video Quiz Response Sheet
4. Teacher Support 1: Zoo Map Answer Key
5. Teacher Support 2: Zoo Video Quiz Answer Key

Instructions

1. Segment 1: Discussion Starter. Have students look at the pictures of common zoo exhibits. Prompt them to share which animals they most enjoy seeing while at the zoo. Introduce animal signs as needed. Use your judgment to decide how much time to devote to the discussion. Continue to Segment 2 when done.

2. Segment 2: A Trip to the Zoo Instructions. Show students the instructions. Students watch the narrator describe his family’s trip to the zoo and number which exhibit they visited first, second, third, and so on by placing the number in the box next to the corresponding picture. An example is provided. Distribute the Zoo Map handout to each student. Continue to Segment 3 after students understand the instructions.

3. Segment 3: A Trip to the Zoo video. Show the video to students. Students may need to view the narrative twice. Continue to Segment 4 after students complete the activity.

4. Segment 4: A Trip to the Zoo Review. Show the review to students after they complete the activity. The review explains which exhibits were visited in the order they appeared in the narrative. The answer key is located on Teacher Support 1. Continue to Segment 5 when done.

5. Segment 5: Video Quiz Instructions. Show students the instructions. The question and three possible answers appear simultaneously on the screen and are repeated several times. Students view the question and mark their selection, using the zoo map on the Zoo Video Quiz Response Sheet as a reference. Distribute the handout after students understand the instructions. Continue to Segment 6.

6. Segment 6: Video Quiz Questions. There are five video questions given with a time limit. The next question begins once the timer ends. Collect the response sheets after students complete the quiz. The answer key is located on Teacher Support 2. Continue to Segment 7.

7. Segment 7: Follow-Up Discussion. Have students look at the pictures and make guesses about what each person is reading or watching. Ask students if they know any stories in English or ASL that involve animals, such as Babar the Elephant®, Dumbo®, or others. Use your judgment to decide how much time to devote to the discussion.

— End of Novice Activity 2 —

Return to the Activity Menu and begin Activity 3: Picturing the Story
1. ▲ ■ ●
2. ▲ ■ ●
3. ▲ ■ ●
4. ▲ ■ ●
5. ▲ ■ ●
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