

A Continuum of Communication: Manually Coded English Systems

Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing

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**Early
Childhood &
Family
Services**

**Offering
information and
support to all
Maine families.**



Welcome to the Communication Continuum Webinar Series



Participants will:

Gain awareness about Manually Coded English Systems (MCE)

Obtain information about children's language acquisition using MCE.

Discover resources for learning MCE.

Discover answers to commonly asked questions about MCE and how it differs from ASL.



What is Manually Coded English (MCE)?

Manually Coded English (MCE) is the term used to encompass a variety of visual communication methods expressed through the hands, which attempt to show the English language visually.

Unlike native signed languages, which have developed naturally in Deaf communities and have their own grammar, the different forms of Manually Coded English were artificially created and generally follow the grammar of English.

Is Manually Coded English a Language?

- None of the various types of Manually Coded English systems are a language in and of themselves.
- MCE systems are almost always used with simultaneous communication (Sim Com) or sign supported speech—speaking and signing at the same time.



How Do Manually Coded English Systems differ from ASL?

- ◆ American Sign Language (ASL) cannot be used simultaneously with spoken English because it has a very different grammar, including word order than English does.
- ◆ Native Deaf sign languages such as ASL make use of spatial relationships, facial expression, and body positioning, while MCE tends to be a linear and purely manual communication system, not to be confused with a complete language.
- ◆ Native signed languages developed naturally just like spoken languages. Manually coded languages are the invention of hearing people, and mostly follow the grammar of the oral language.

The History of Manually Coded English

- ◆ The earliest known attempt to develop a complete signed mode of a language which could be used to teach deaf children was by the Abbé de l'Épée, an educator from 18th century France.
- ◆ While the Deaf community already used a native sign language, Épée thought it must be primitive, and set about designing a complete visual-gestural system. His system of Methodical Signs laid the groundwork for the signed oral languages of today.
- ◆ The real proliferation of such systems occurred in the latter half of the 20th century, and by the 1980s, manually coded languages were the dominant form of communication used by teachers and interpreters in classrooms with deaf students in many parts of the world.

Different Manually Coded English Signing Systems:

- ♦ **Seeing Essential English (SEE1):** This method was developed in the US in 1966. The intent was to teach proper grammatical construction by using gestures borrowed from ASL but it using English word order, and other grammatical markers. In SEE1, all compound words are formed as separate signs - instead of using the ASL sign for butterfly, SEE1 places the signs for butter and fly in sequential order. Many gestures from ASL are initialized in SEE1. Grammatical markers also have signs of their own, including the -ing ending and articles such as the, which are not typically included in ASL.
- ♦ **Signing Exact English (SEE2):** This method was developed in the early 1970s. As an offshoot of SEE1, many features of SEE2 are identical to that code system. Initializations and grammatical markers are also used in SEE2, but compound words with an equivalent ASL sign are used as the ASL sign, as with butterfly. About 75% to 80% of SEE2 signs are either borrowed from ASL or are modified ASL signs.

Different Manually Coded English Signing Systems Continued

- ♦ **Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE):** Developed by Dennis Wampler in the 1970s, LOVE is also quite similar to SEE1 in construction. This system is no longer used.
- ♦ **The Rochester Method:** This method involves fingerspelling *every* word. It was originated by Zenas Westervelt in 1878, shortly after he opened the Rochester School for the Deaf. Use of the Rochester method continued until the 1940s. It has fallen out of favor because it is a time-consuming process to spell everything manually, though it is still used in some settings with dual sensory impaired students.
- ♦ **Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE):** CASE combines the grammatical structure used in Signed English with the use of concepts rather than words, as is done in ASL. It is the most commonly used form of MCE used today, and has been used in both interpreter training programs and mainstreamed deaf education. The terms Sign Supported English or Sign Supported Speech and Pidgin Signed English (PSE) are sometimes used to refer to the same thing.

Examples of Markers in Manually Coded English systems



verb form: -ing
climbing, playing,
running



regular plural nouns: -s
bears, houses



possessive: -'s
cat's, daddy's, chair's



adjective: -y
sleepy, sunny,
cloudy



regular past verbs: -ed
talked, wanted,
learned



Irregular past verbs:
(sweep RH open B, tips
out, to the right) saw,
heard, blew

Types of Markers Added in Manually Coded English Systems That Differ from ASL:

- ♦ **Initialization of signs:** RED, LIVE, I
- ♦ **Articles:** THE, A, AN (the dog, an apple)
- ♦ **Prepositions:** AT, ON (at home, turn the TV on)
- ♦ **Conjunctions:** AND, SO
- ♦ **Plurals:** S (dogs, cats)
- ♦ **Possessive:** S (Daddy's, Bob's)
- ♦ **Auxiliary verbs:** AM, ARE, IS (am going, are eating, is helping)
- ♦ **Verb tenses:** -ING, -ED, -D, IRREGULAR PAST VERBS. (walking, walked)
- ♦ **Adverbs:** -LY (nicely, happily)

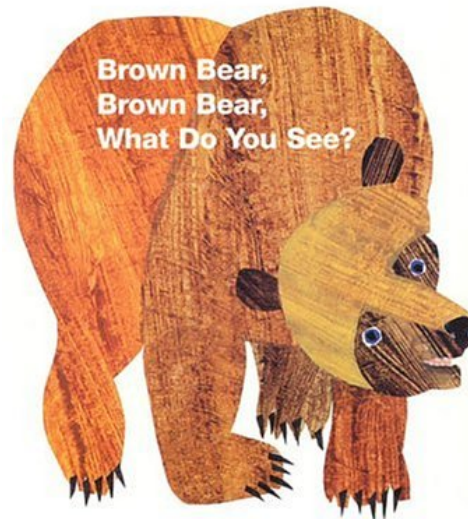
Why do Families Choose Manually Coded English?

- ◆ Families want to use a communication system that allows them to impart the native language of their home to their child, in this case, English. Manually Coded English systems allow families to speak and sign simultaneously, and the goal is to give the child complete visual access to all of the main components of spoken English.
- ◆ Manually Coded English systems have been used extensively in educational settings from the 1970s through the 1990s. Many educational programs for Deaf and hard of hearing children today continue to use a modified Manually Coded English system.

Video of MCE used with young children

- Here is a video of Manually Coded English being used with young children to facilitate reading a book written in English.

Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle



Learning Manually Coded English

- ◆ A Complete Guide to Using the Signed English System: The Comprehensive Signed English Dictionary, Bornstein et Al. 1983.
- ◆ Signing Exact English, Gustason et Al, 1993.
- ◆ DVD/CD Rom courses:
 - Signing Exact English interactive CD-Rom. Modern Signs Press.
- ◆ Online resources:
 - <https://www.signingexactenglish.com/>
 - <http://www.modernsignspress.com/index.html>
- ◆ Apps for tablets and smart phones:
 - See Sign App on the Apple store.

Resources

- ♦ <http://www.seecenter.org/>
- ♦ <http://www.handsandvoices.org/comcon/articles/see.htm>
- ♦ The Development of American Sign Language and Manually Coded English Systems, Brenda Schick, 2011.
- ♦ Language And Deafness: Fourth Edition, Paul 2009.
- ♦ <http://everything2.com/title/Manually+Coded+English>

Any Questions?

- Do you have any questions about Manually Coded English?
- Remember, MCE is just one of a continuum of communication opportunities available for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. For more information on the other opportunities, please see our archived webinars: <http://www.mecdhh.org/resources/webinars/webinar-archive-list/>



Thank so much for joining us today!

