Deaf Children Around the World
Express Their Grief Over The Terrorist Attack

SignWriting provides an avenue of expression for Deaf children

Irina, age 9, in Germany writes:

"Ich habe einen Film im Fernsehen gesehen. Darüber war ich sehr erschrocken..."
"I have seen a film on television. I was very frightened..."
Deaf Children in Albuquerque, New Mexico

A Message Posted on the SignWriting List
September 12, 2001

I thought it 'timely' to post one of our primary Deaf student's written commentary on this week's tragic historic event. Kate, the classroom teacher started the day anticipating that the students' would be arriving at school with many questions and comments about the horrific events that occurred on the east coast. One student requested time to express himself using one of the four SignWriting computers set up within the classroom. He recruited another peer to join him at the computer to 'write' about what had happened the day before and how they were feeling about it. The teacher reported that the two boys were seated at the SignWriting computers for an hour 'co-writing' the following commentary (see page 3). The teacher added the English 'cues' for the student's parents so that they could read their son's 'reflections'....

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SignWriting Literacy Project
Albuquerque, New Mexico
http://www.SignWriting.org

Albuquerque Deaf students also write SignWriting by hand. Writing directly in Sign Language can be a source of personal expression for deaf children.
9/11/01

I feel sad.

Building: A plane flew into a building.

A plane hit another building. Mom and Dad lowered the flag. Here safe school me. Far.

Julio
Reporter berichten vom Unglücksort;  
Brief von Irina an Valerie Sutton anlässlich der Terrorakte in Amerika.

Reporting about the sad events;  
Letter from Irina to Valerie Sutton about the terrorist attack in America
Die Übersetzung lautet:
"Hallo Frau Valerie Sutton,

Translation reads:
"Hello Valerie Sutton,
I saw a film on television. I was very frightened. Danny informed me. Then I also saw the film. The airplane flew into the skyscraper. The skyscraper collapsed. There was dirt and smoke. There was also fire. Did you see how the skyscraper collapsed?   Bye, Irina"
Brief von Irina an Valerie Sutton anlässlich der Terrorakte in Amerika.

A letter from Irina for Valerie Sutton about the terrorist attack in America.

September 14, 2001
SignWriting List


Irina asked me to give a letter written in SignWriting to Valerie Sutton - the inventor of SignWriting. Irina stood near the computer and signed, read, corrected and created new sentences, creating this letter in SignWriting. She waited for Valerie’s answer! Irina was astonished. Promptly, on the next Monday, we could read Valerie Sutton’s answer on the Internet. This was an interesting experience for the children. It was in a Sign Language they could not understand... Ah ha! So that is how they sign in America!... Thanks to SignWriting, we could produce the movements of the signs. The English translation also helped us to understand the meaning.

Stefan Woehrmann
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Valerie Sutton
Inventor, SignWriting
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Translation:
“Hello Irina. Thank you for your letter. I was happy to read it. The world is sad, but now people help each other, and give support and love. We are becoming a world family.”

Valerie Sutton's answer to Irina in American Sign Language.
This student dates her comments two days after the event. Her very first comment, written by herself in SignWriting, was one of ‘shock’. The simplicity of her statements is profound. The juxtaposition of the aircraft approaching the building not yet destroyed and the prominence of the flag’s position may be significant for us all.

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SignWriting List
September 28, 2001

Well, here are some drawings and writings from our children in Canada, all hearing, to our children friends in Germany and New Mexico.

As you can see from the pictures we talked about "HOPE".

We had a good conversation together, the children and I, about the terrorist attack.

The result you see from the pictures....

Tini Pel, Teacher
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Jimmy in Canada (age 10) writes to Irina in Germany.

Paul in Canada writes to Eduard in Germany

Hello Edward my name Paul, Sad I Feel also.
Darin, right, worked at the computer with Julio. (Julio is in the photo on page 2, typing at the computer). Their teacher, Kate Lee, pictured below, reported that the two boys were 'writing' at the computer for almost an hour, expressing their reflections about the terrorist attack on New York. Darin's writing (above) is similar to Julio's (page 3) but with significant differences. Darin attempted to express a feeling of overwhelming silence...