

ABSTRACT

“The Importance of SignWriting in Deaf Education”

by

Mohamed Ali Balti

Signwriting teacher at Ibn Charaf University in Tunisia)

Email: livingtabernacle@yahoo.fr

Fedi Bahri

Email: behrifedi@yahoo.fr

(Tunisian Sign Language Teacher at Ibn Charaf &
Tunisian Deaf Sportive and Educative Academy President)

Wafa Laajili

(Tunisian Sign Language teacher)

Email: foofa.laajili@yahoo.fr

In Tunisia, and in the world as a whole, born-deaf people, or people who become profoundly-deaf at a pre-lingual age, are some of the least educated persons, since their native languages (sign languages) are not recognized in many countries, and because of oral schools, which have forbidden sign languages for centuries, presuming that spoken languages fit better for deaf education. This is not true, and nowadays we are repairing what they damaged.

Yet, using sign language to help deaf people improve their education level also remained difficult since, until now, sign languages could not be written. This problem has been overcome, starting 40 years ago, when Valerie Sutton first invented an innovative writing system, the SignWriting script, which is now making this dream come true and sign languages are becoming written languages.

In Tunisia, we used SignWriting to teach deaf children who attend the same schools that hearing children attend (a "mainstreamed school"). We translated some modules into Tunisian Sign Language, from different teaching manuals used in primary schools (Mathematics, physics, chemistry, Arabic, French, etc...) and we wrote them in the SignWriting script. So, our presentation will be as follows: "The Importance of SignWriting in Deaf Education". See our video. Teacher Wafa Laajili teaches SignWriting in the classroom with deaf children....The Deaf children give their opinions too!

Presentation 15 in Education:

<http://www.signwriting.org/symposium/presentation0015.html>