

Cued Speech can be of real benefit to adults with a hearing loss by giving them full access to spoken language through lip-reading, and to help them process new vocabulary accurately and keep their own pronunciation skills honed.

The situation for deaf adults falls broadly into three categories:

i/ deaf adults who are already fluent in English - and Cued Speech - because they have had access through Cued Speech from an early age

ii/ deafened adults who are already fluent in English because they have previously had normal hearing

iii/ deaf adults who may be signers and wish to learn English as a second language.

I. Deaf Adults who have had access to English through Cued Speech may continue to use it:

- To access any social or work situation as required.
- To clarify new words.
- To help themselves improve their own lip-patterns/pronunciation.
- To support lip-reading in 'difficult' situations e.g. over a wide distance, with someone who has unclear lip-patterns, in new situations.
- As a transliteration service.

Cued Speech Transliterators (see overleaf) are trained professionals who function in a similar role to the sign language interpreter or lip-speaker, cueing silently, and usually verbatim, the spoken message of a third party. They may also 'voice-over' the cued message of the deaf adult if required.

2. Deafened adults who are already fluent in English because they have previously had normal hearing:

This group of people will need to train with someone with whom they regularly communicate. They need to be able to 'receive' a cued message and do not need to learn to cue themselves, although many find it helpful to do so as a way to deepen their understanding of the system.

The English language is notoriously difficult to lip-read as about 70% of the lip-patterns are so

similar they cannot be differentiated. It does take time to learn to 'cue read', but it is worth the effort because with the cues added it may become possible to lip-read with almost 100% accuracy, which is a huge advantage for deafened people functioning 'in the hearing world'.

- By learning to lip-read somebody who is cueing, the ability to lip-read others who are not cueing is also increased.
- They may make use of a transliteration service.
- They may relieve the stress of lip-reading as this takes an enormous amount of energy and concentration, watching someone cueing is far less tiring.
- It will be possible learn/see the correct pronunciation of new vocabulary.
- You can use Cued Speech like a therapy tool to maintain and improve clear speech patterns.

3. Deaf adults who wish to learn English as a second language:

- One of the arguments for using sign language is that it is 'natural' because it is 'visual'. While sign language does not require the receiver to 'hear' at all, neither does Cued Speech. It is perfectly possible to 'receive' and understand spoken English entirely through vision with Cued Speech.
- Cued Speech may also support the understanding of written English as each sound within each word is visually represented. These individual sounds can then be separately emphasised and linked to the appropriate spelling choices. In this way the Deaf person can develop a phonological awareness and then draw on the same skills that hearing people use when they read or write English. Hearing people recall how words 'sound' when they read and write - they turn those sounds into letters when they write and turn letters into sounds when they read. With Cued Speech, Deaf people can learn to use those same techniques.

Overleaf, you can read the story of how Cued Speech has become a pivotal part of one adults life, how he came to hear about the system, and what it has helped him to achieve.

Cued Speech

Use with deaf or deafened adults



“ I found out about Cued Speech (CS) just over 14 years ago - aged 24 - something that I have not regretted. I was interested in the theory of conveying English totally through vision. I did feel a little dubious about it though.

On my foundation course (just 20 hours), I discovered how it was perfectly possible to convey English visually with CS. I had learned the whole system by lunch time of the second day, then all I had to do was practise. I found it so simple, I just absorbed it like a sponge with water.

I went on to teach CS, I attended exhibitions to promote it and later I gave presentations on it. CS is a subject really close to my heart.

I have a small hearing loss myself (that is how I would describe it) and in many situations, hearing what someone is saying is problematic e.g. in a restaurant, in a classroom, in a meeting or an assembly at my daughter's school.

Knowing what someone is saying is one thing, but understanding it is another. I found that not hearing everything made it very hard to understand the whole concept.

I developed some ability to read the cues from another person (known as 'cue-reading', which is speech-reading someone who is cueing) through my experiences of teaching. I could also cue-read through their errors, however this was still at a very rudimentary level.

Nowadays, I can make use of a CS Transliterator – someone who cues what another person is saying. My partner also learned to cue over 13 years ago, so she will cue now and then to clarify anything as I need it.

I found the difficulty was not getting enough exposure to people cueing, this meant my fluency in 'reading' it was limited. To overcome this, I

imagined someone cueing, in my head! I would then read this back. I am not sure how, but this actually worked, and despite almost no contact with cueing for receptive practise, I improved.

I am very happy to have learned CS and even more so that I can benefit from it receptively – I can follow speech at a fairly reasonable rate now and this will get faster as I am exposed to more cueing.

So much with lip-reading is guesswork...and that is only if you have perfect visual access to the person speaking! With CS, all that fuss is taken away. I can understand everything that someone is saying - indeed, I now have the ability to understand English through vision - the very thing I was dubious about in the beginning.

I would say to anyone reading this, CS is not just for babies, children, teenagers etc...It can be used for any age, whether your deafness is pre or post-lingual. It gives you visual access to spoken language, even if it is just one or two words here and there.

I have gained access to other languages and dialects/accents of English through seeing them cued. CS makes all the individual sounds within words clear, which helps with understanding the structure of words. I have recently begun to film myself cueing poetry with a Scottish dialect!

I adore CS and what it has done for me. A big thank you goes to all those who have helped me along the way.

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The system of Cued Speech has been adapted to represent approximately 60 languages and dialects (with more being developed all the time). Through CS, deaf people can learn more than one spoken language in this way, should they wish to.

For training and more information about the use of Cued Speech contact:

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CSAUK is a national charity run by users of Cued Speech (both professionals and parents).
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