

## **NZSL Day School - the success of a day class for mainstreamed Deaf students whose primary language is New Zealand Sign Language**

Deaf children in mainstream school settings often face challenges due to limited access to New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and Deaf Culture. The “Day School” concept offered by Kelston Deaf Education Centre brings students from the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions of Aotearoa New Zealand’s North Island together, with their natural peer group and highly competent language models, within a relaxed environment. The Deaf Teachers of the Deaf and NZSL Tutors focus on communication and language skills development by incorporating activities relevant to the students’ needs, interests or enquiries that the learners have raised.

This presentation will cover what a full day’s programme looks like and how the team of Deaf Teachers, NZSL Tutors and hearing Teachers of the Deaf work together to create productive and interactive learning programmes. The presenter will demonstrate how, in this situation, the NZSL students have the confidence to share their knowledge and experiences, a task they struggle with in their mainstream classes.

Another group of learners, the Teacher Aides and some parents/caregivers of the students, also benefit from the Day School, because we provide them with NZSL lessons following the same topic as the children. This gives these adults opportunities to extend their NZSL and so improve communication with their child, making a positive impact on the education and self-esteem of our students.

**Campbell, Janine**

*Resource Teacher of the Deaf, Kelston Deaf Education Centre, Hamilton, New Zealand, [janine.campbell@kdec.school.nz](mailto:janine.campbell@kdec.school.nz)*