

## **"Understand and being understood: LORM with its simplified communication"**

Hello Everybody! Thank you for being here!

My name is Catherine HUTTER, I come from the French speaking part of Switzerland and I suffer from Usher Syndrom "type II".

Firstly I would like to introduce you to my friends and interpreters Gesa DAETWILER and Nicole NICOLET and to my friend and guide Christian BULLIARD who is standing by the overhead projector.

In Switzerland there are 2 groups of mutual aid for deafblind and seeing and hearing impaired persons. The first group called "TACTILE" is located in the German part of Switzerland and the second group "GERSAM" is in the French part of Switzerland.

These two groups are affiliated to SNAB (Swiss National Association of and for the Blind), central organisation in Switzerland, which also comprises the department of "Deafblind persons". Our groups are autonomous and self-governed but are politically supported by SNAB.

I am the president of GERSAM which was created in 1999. Our group is young and comprises 21 members.

I am a LORM teacher and I have just received my diploma last August.

LORM is a tactile form of communication and all the alphabetical letters are located in the left hand palm.

The LORM way of communication was invented by Mr. Hieronymus LORM whose real name was Heinrich LANDESMANN. He was borne in August 1821 and originated from Austria but lived most of his life in the Czech Republic, in the region of Moravia, East of Prague.

Mr. LORM was a brilliant pianist although he had a weak health and suffered from neurological troubles. Unfortunately at age 15 his health worsened very quickly and he lost his hearing in two days. Then his sight started to deteriorate. At age 20 he lost the sight of one eye and he suffered from night visions. Around 30 years old he could no longer read the lips.

Mr. LORM was married and had three children: 2 sons and a daughter; he invented this fantastic LORM method which helped him communicate with his family and keep in touch with his relatives. At age 60 Mr. LORM completely lost the sight.

Soon after his death (1902) his daughter published the LORM method. But the glove was created much later in the German language.

The glove that you can see here has been adapted to the French language.

How did we come to write this future brochure "Simplified LORM" ?

The reason why I want to talk to you about this project is:

>>avoiding being isolated <<

Our dual sensory handicap is specific and unique.

I fight not only for myself but also for my pairs. Nowadays the human being lives much longer and more and more persons will suffer from these dual sensory deficiencies when growing older.

Then I imagined myself how I would feel when I would be "obliged" to live in a home for elderly persons...

How would the personnel in the medical field be able to communicate with me since I would no longer be able to read the lips and would have greater hearing problems? Most of these persons would not know how to handle this situation as they would not know our way of communicating...

Then I also thought about the families of the concerned persons with more and more hearing and seeing impairment, their despair if they cannot communicate with them any more...

I also thought about US concerned persons and how communication could be so much easier. This is the reason why I am here...

Three members of my group and myself have created a working committee in order to work out our project : the SIMPLIFIED LORM method for a better communication.

Among my three friends one is deaf with visual deficiency (atrophied optic nerves) and she speaks French and the Sign language. The second person is blind with hearing impairment (has only one hearing aid) and he speaks French. The third person is also deaf, is hit by a glaucoma and is also bilingual: French and Sign languages.

As far as I am concerned I am "half and half"...that is, if I take my hearing aids off I will not hear any more and with my hearing aids I

hear 85%; lately my sight has worsened, I am dazzled and my field of vision has narrowed tremendously.

In order to better communicate with the members of my group I started learning the Sign language, Braille and now I thoroughly study the LORM method.

LORM is a fantastic way of communication but it takes time...

EXAMPLES:

I am going to LORM a sentence with my friend:

*Tomorrow we shall visit the beautiful castle*

Phonetically: *Tomoro we shal visit ze biutiful castl*

Hum, this takes time even when written phonetically.

Another sentence: *I eat an apple*

Phonetically: *ai it n apl*

When abbreviated:

Gesture: me; gesture or lorm: eat; lorm apple: apl.  
(*I will demonstrate*)

We can make it easier with a simplified method: by abbreviating some words, by writing them phonetically or adding tactile gestures. Like a patchwork: a mixture of abbreviated words or letters and gestures or tactile signs.

EXAMPLES:

*It is time to go for a walk (I will demonstrate)*

*It is noon, time for lunch (I will demonstrate)*

Now let me show you the project of our brochure which is unfinished, it is a long lasting work and more pages are still to be added...

Dedication:

*This future method for a better communication with deafblind persons is dedicated to the persons who are close friends, take care and guide all concerned persons and collaborate with them.*

Presentation of the basic gestures.

(I will demonstrate)

Presentation of a few sentences in a simplified manner.

(I will demonstrate)

Our aim is to put this brochure at the disposal of persons working in the medical field (for example in Old Age Homes or hospitals). It is also aimed at the families of deafblind persons, as well as to persons in the social, medical and school fields.

We believe that this SIMPLIFIED LORM method can be adapted to all languages.

We sincerely hope that you can follow our example...

*and that our double sensory handicap will be fully recognised !*

Thank you very much.

Lausanne, October 2006

Catherine Hutter