

OPINION

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Choose what works

Kate Matairavula (Letters, July 24) points to a critical situation where Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is a fantastic method of communication; face-to-face conversations. The captioning system Ai-Live is designed to meet the specific educational needs of deaf and hearing-impaired students in mainstream classrooms; providing direct access to spoken English without the need for sign language as an intermediate step.

Deaf children need solid English literacy to help them get jobs. For the first time, deaf students and parents now have a choice between using captioning and Auslan interpreting at school. No doubt they will choose the one that works best in each situation.

Lest anyone fear that captions will kill Auslan, our experience suggests the reverse. Having deaf colleagues in the workplace or at school is one of the best motivators for others to learn Auslan (with the Auslan tutor on the iPhone, this has never been easier).

Achieving genuine inclusion of deaf and hearing-impaired people demands better than a one-size-fits-all approach to communication.

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