

A Deaf child in a Hearing family: Towards a bi-cultural understanding

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Basic Biases

- “Deaf People can do anything, except hear”
 - I. King Jordan
- “Deaf children are not hearing children who can’t hear.”
 - Marc Marschak

Deaf

- Cultural Terminology – Deaf with capital “D” the same as Black, Indigenous, etc.
 - May be Hard of Hearing (HOH) or profoundly deaf.
 - A linguistic minority whose language is ASL and who share common values, beliefs and attitudes

Hearing

- A term used by Deaf culture to describe individuals with a normal audiogram who come in contact with Deaf culture
 - The dominant culture that possesses the most power in society
 - Distinction made between “hearing” and “Hearing”

Definitions:



- “hearing impaired” – Deaf community does not consider themselves impaired, and “hearing” is not the important word
- The Deaf community prefers the terms Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Hearing-impaired is also ambiguous as it does not define cultural identity

Language Definitions

- American Sign Language (ASL)
 - ASL is a visual and manual language made up of signs created with the hands, facial expressions, and body posture and movement. ASL is not encoded English nor is it universal.
- Pidgin Signed English (PSE)
 - PSE describes naturally occurring contact languages that incorporate ASL signs in a flexible English grammatical order.
- Manually Coded English (MCE)
 - MCE is the term for contrived systems for encoding English in manual form. Examples of MCE are Signing Exact English (SEE), LOVE, Manual English, Signed English, and many other derivatives.
- Pantomime
 - A universal method of communication through gestures. This is a nonverbal system of communication that is used in all modalities of sign language, crossing all signing spectrums.

Dimensions of the Issue

- Approximately 11,500 Deaf adults in SC
- Approximately 200,000 who identify themselves as deaf or hard of hearing
- For Deaf children:
 - 92% have two hearing parents
 - 4% have one hearing and one deaf parent (2.5% deaf mom, 1.5% deaf dad)
 - 4% have two deaf parents

- “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”
 - George Bernard Shaw, (1856-1950)
 - (possible apocryphal reference, maybe William Whyte, 1950)

Parent/child communication

- 35 – 65% of deaf children use sign language (no consistent research)
- 30% of spoken English is visible (Tevenal & Villanueva, 2008)
- 90% of hearing parents have limited sign language communication
- 72% of parents of children who use sign language report they have no sign language skills

Impacts of Deafness

- Kinesthetic
- Environment
- Communication
- Cognitive
- Linguistic
- Social/Emotional



Social Emotional Impact

0-1	1-2	2-6	6-12	13-18	19-40	40-65	65-
						Integrity v Despair	
					Generativity v Stagnation		
				Intimacy v Isolation		380 per 100,000	
			Identity v Role Confusion		Deaf vs. Hearing		
		Competency v Inferiority		Requirement of Educational Failure			
	Initiative v Guilt		Lack of Internalization of Societal Norms				
Autonomy v Shame		Shame-based perspective on self and "disability"					
Trust v Mistrust	Requires recognition of deafness and communication needs						

Linguistic Development

- Communication starts at birth and
- We are wired for language but . . .
- Language doesn't start until exposure
- Parents and professionals confuse language with speech with communication

0 – language exposure	Deaf children babble (using both voice and gestures)
As early as 9 months	Basic signs for concrete objects
As early as 18 months	Two word phrases and signs using non basic handshapes
As early as 2 years	Respond to wh' questions, use facial expression
As early as 3 years	Use directional signs and concrete classifiers
As early as 4 years	Use of ASL grammar and non-manual markers

Neural development and Communication

- Neural plasticity for language until 3 to 4 years old
 - After this period, auditory receptive area converts to visual receptive area (Martin, K. C., Ketchabaw, W. T., & Turkeltaub, P. E., 2022)
- Non-linguistic attachment occurs before age 3 to 4
 - Secure attachment patterns evident in right brain development (Sharma, A., 2008)

On Sign Language and Spoken Language

- Advantages of sign language fluency
 - Children in sign-based intervention programs have better developmental success than those in oral programs (social, language, early academic) (Marschak, 2008)
 - Enhanced visual-spatial skills
 - Mental generation and manipulation
 - Sensitivity to change in peripheral vision
 - Ability to rapidly shift visual attention

On Sign Language and Spoken Language

- Advantages of spoken language fluency
 - Sequential/temporal processing and memory
 - Later academic achievement
 - Literacy?
 - Employment mobility

On Sign Language and Spoken Language

- But, only about 25% of deaf children develop speech skills sufficient for full educational access
 - Language delays in oral settings are typical, even with intensive speech therapy (Geers, 2002) and CIs
 - There is much less evidence supporting oral methods than is generally assumed (Eriks-Brophy, 2006)

Language deprivation/neglect

- Language deprivation syndrome
 - (Glickman 2007, W. C. Hall et al. (2017); Humphries et al. 2016).
- Language Disorder
 - 5% of hearing people
 - 25% of deaf people

Language Deprivation Syndrome

- A hearing loss
- The child is not exposed to American Sign Language (or other sign languages)
- The person is severely dysfluent in his or her best language or communication modality with deficits such as these:
 - Severely impoverished vocabulary
 - Absence or minimal use of grammatical features
 - The person communicates mostly in signs or phrases rather than full sentences

Language Deprivation Syndrome

- From childhood, the child displays a global pattern of behavioral, social, and emotional disturbances
- The person demonstrates an enormous deficit in fund of information
- As an adult, the person experiences great difficulties developing work skills (Glickman, 2009)

50% of deaf and hard-of-hearing
18-year-olds in the U.S. read below the
4th grade level

- Holt, Traxler, (1992)

Hearing Aids vs Bone Attached Implants vs Cochlear Implants

- Hearing aids – best for moderate to severe hearing loss
- Bone Attached Implants (BAHA) – Severe to profound hearing loss, most effective if inner ear intact
- Cochlear implants – Severe to profound hearing loss, most successful in adult onset hearing loss, or when implanted early

What We Know About Cochlear Implants

- Model/brand of CI's does not make any noticeable difference
- CI's provide most deaf children with some benefit for hearing and language
- CI's can be valuable even if they only provide access to environmental sounds
- Children with CI's are more like hard-of-hearing children than hearing children (vs. "stars")

What We Know About Cochlear Implants

- CI's require team efforts, time, and lots of energy
- Signing does not reduce CI success or effectiveness (Davidson et al. 2013)
- Most children with CI's still have significant language delays and in speech and language
- Children do best who have a CI and sign language (Amraei et al. 2017)
- CI's do not make a child part of the "hearing world"
- CI's have no particular (positive or negative) psychological impact on children

Deafness as Culture



Deaf Community Characteristics

- Values
 - Relationship to the Deaf-World
 - Endogamous marriage
 - Group membership
 - Consensual decision making
 - Culturally related names
 - Respect for the language

Deaf Community Characteristics

- Knowledge
 - Who are Deaf leaders
 - Important events in history
 - Interactions with Hearing people
 - Code-shifting



Deaf Community Characteristics

- Customs
 - Introductions/departures
 - Turn taking
 - Speaking frankly
 - Speaking politely

Audism



- An attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks. (Humphrey and Alcorn 1995: 85)

On Sign Language and Spoken Language

- Surround deaf children with accessible language
- Encourage parents to constantly seek to improve sign skills
 - Warn them that their children will learn faster than they do
- Follow the lead of their child's strengths
- Be involved!

Humphries, T., Kushalnagar, P., Mathur, G., Napoli, D. J., Padden, C., Rathmann, C., & Smith, S. R. (2016)

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