

## Deaf Education in America

### 1. Introduction

1. Americans with hearing impairments:
  1. There are approximately twenty to twenty eight million Americans suffering from some form of hearing loss. (Van Ingen 62)
  2. Sixteen million of the hearing impaired Americans are over 45 years of age. (62)
  3. There are more hearing impaired men than hearing impaired women in the United States. (62)
  4. Nine out of ten deaf Americans are deaf before they learn to talk. (Draper 15)
2. Eighty percent of communication in human beings is non verbal. (Winarski 30)
3. Technological solutions to hearing loss and breakdown in communication due to hearing loss:
  1. Conventional hearing aids. (Schwartz 34)
  2. FM amplification. (Winarski 31)
    1. FM amplification is a form of an auditory training device.
    2. It works much like a radio with the speaker holding and speaking into a transmitter and the listener wearing a receiver in the ear. (Schwartz 35)
  3. Transposers which work by transposing unhearable (usually high) pitches to hearable (usually lower) pitches. (36)
  4. Programmable hearing aids. (37)
  5. The cochlear implant. (37)
    1. The cochlear implant involves a microphone contained in an earpiece like a hearing aid. (Draper 16)
    2. The microphone receives ambient sound. (16)
    3. The sound is transmitted to a processor usually worn on the persons's chest or belt. (16)
    4. The transmitter amplifies parts of the sound waves used to interpret speech. (16)
    5. The transmitter then sends these amplified sounds to the earpiece which has a transmitting coil connected to a 25 millimeter wire which has been surgically implanted into the cochlea of the inner ear.
  6. There are medical requirements for the cochlear implant.
    - (1) The child must be at least two years old. (16)
    - (2) The patient must have bilateral profound hearing loss. (Schwartz 47)
    - (3) The patient must have undergone hearing aid trials and auditory

training for at least one half to one year. (47)

(4) The patient must be in good health. (47)

(5) The person must be free of any active ear disease. (47)

4. Arguments in favor of technological hearing aids.
  1. 95-98% of people suffering from hearing loss do have some residual hearing. (Goldberg 41)
  2. With the help of hearing aids, deaf or hearing impaired children can be taught to listen to and speak everyday language. (41)
  3. 93% of “graduates” from auditory verbal programs go on to pursue post secondary education. (41)

## II. A look at Deaf culture.

1. Deaf with a {D} means something different than deaf with a {d}. (Davis 30)
  1. Deaf with a {D} refers to people who are culturally deaf or consider themselves a part of the Deaf community, usually people who have been deaf since before their language development stage. (30)
  2. Deaf with a {d} refers to the actual physical loss of hearing. (30)
- B. Members of the Deaf community do not see their hearing loss as a handicap but as a reality of their lives (Van Ingen 64)
3. Members of the Deaf community do not appreciate term such as handicapped, hearing impaired, or hearing loss. (64)
4. Deaf people embrace their deafness as a part of their culture and community and they take great pride in their advancements. (64)
5. Most hearing impaired people who consider themselves a member of Deaf culture speak American Sign Language (ASL). (Draper 15)
  1. Almost half of them cannot follow speech. (15)
  2. 75% cannot speak English intelligibly. (15)
6. Nine out of ten Deaf Americans marry someone who is deaf. (15)
7. Deaf people have strong opinions on how the deaf should be educated.
  1. Most feel that too much focus is placed on overcoming the “handicap” of deafness. (Humphries 10)
  2. They feel that education should begin with a study of Deaf culture and ASL and culture should be maintained throughout the education process. (10)

## III. Sign Language.

- A. The origins of sign language are not really known although it has been recorded that several forms of sign have sprung up throughout history independent of one another. (Power 215)
2. There are currently at least 50 different native forms of sign language in the world and all of these are mutually incomprehensible to one another. (215)
3. American Sign Language is the preferred form of sign language for the Deaf community. (Van Ingen 63)
  1. American Sign Language was founded at the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. (Winarski 30)
  2. ASL is not based on or connected to the English language. (Van Ingen 63)

3. ASL is more closely related to French than English. (63)
  4. ASL is a separate language with its own syntax, modifiers, structure, and even dialects. (63)
  5. ASL involves hands, eyes, face, arms, legs, and the movements and shapes created by all of these body parts. (63)
  6. Signs in ASL can mean different things based on context. (63)
  7. 500,000 Americans use American Sign Language. (Draper 15)
  8. Some arguments against ASL closely resemble arguments made for English as the official language of the U.S. and the ebonics debate. They include:
    1. ASL is not “really English.” (Davis 30)
    2. ASL is a “bastardized” language. (30)
    3. If a person is trained in ASL, they will never learn proper English. (30)
    4. Speakers of ASL who cannot or will not learn English will never be true Americans. (30)
    5. It causes too many problems when a deaf child’s parents do not speak ASL because it creates a cultural and linguistic block within the home. (Draper 15)
  4. In 1981, the Swedish Parliament officially recognized Swedish Sign Language as a language and as the official language of education for the deaf.
- IV. Sign Writing. (all information for this section taken from <<http://www.SignWriting.org>>)
1. One argument against ASL as a separate language has been the fact that it does not have a writing system.
  2. A writing system for all sign languages, Sign Writing, has been invented and is gaining popularity in the Deaf community.
  3. Sign Writing is based on a “movement notation” system meaning that the symbols used actually represent the movements made in the sign.
  4. Because it is based on movement notation, Sign Writing can be used, using the same set of symbols, to record all signed languages.
  5. Sign Writing is currently used by hundreds of people and is becoming the written form of sign languages in fourteen countries.
22. Different theories and practices for educating the deaf and hard of hearing.
1. Oralism.
    1. There is no one singular school of oralism. (Schwartz 163)
    2. Oralism is also sometimes referred to as the oral-aural method. (Moore’s 13)
    3. All of the schools of oralism agree on the main principle of the exclusive use of speech in educating the deaf. (Davis 31)
    4. Oralist instructors require only spoken language for face to face communication. (Schwartz 163)
    5. Oralist teachers and institutions ban the use of sign language in deaf education. (Davis 31)
    6. Oralists focus on the importance of speech (lip) reading. (Moore’s 13)
    7. Most oralists agree that children should begin instruction by age four or five to ensure good results. (Goldberg 40)

8. One type of oralist teaching is called the unisensory oral method. (Schwartz 166)
  1. This is the most common form of oralism.
  2. In this system, no other cues like lips or hands are allowed to supplement speech in communication. (Schwartz 166)
  3. Unisensory method instructors will often cover their mouths when speaking to keep their students from lip reading. (167)
9. Supporters of oralism argue many points.
  1. English is the “natural” language of our culture. (Schwartz 168)
  2. Most deaf children are born to hearing parents and any method other than oralism can lead to linguistic divides in the family. (168)
  3. Children who succeed in the oral method find it less difficult to mainstream into society, thus ensuring them a better lifestyle. (168)
  4. The majority of hearing impaired individuals have the potential to hear and speak. (Goldberg 41)
  5. Sign language can always be learned later. (41)
10. There are also arguments against orality, most of which come directly from the deaf community.
  1. Only about 30% of speech information can be understood from speech/lip reading. (Schwartz 164)
  2. No more than 10% of deaf students leaving public high schools, most of which use the oral method, can read at an eighth grade level. (Draper 16)
  3. The average reading level for deaf students leaving high school is the third grade level. (16)
  4. These students score lower on the SAT than learning disabled students. (16)
  5. Only 5% of these students attend college. (16)
2. Another form of deaf education is the auditory verbal approach.
  1. This approach is sometimes categorized with the oral approach.
  2. The auditory verbal approach focuses on improving hearing capabilities with hearing aids and then training the hearing impaired child to listen and speak well enough to survive independently in the hearing world. (Schwartz 54)
  3. This method uses weekly, one to one and a half hour, one on one teaching sessions. (54)
  4. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged. (54)
  5. Auditory verbal techniques include:
    1. Rewarding what has been said,
    2. Waiting or pausing for a response,
    3. Directing the child to “listen closely,”
    4. Repeating words, phrases, and statements,
    5. Moving closer to the child when talking to him/her,
    6. Providing visual clues and then replacing them with verbal cues,

7. And using hand cues. (Schwartz 59)
3. Cued Speech
  1. Cued speech was invented in 1966 by Dr. R. Orin Cornett. (Schwartz 118)
  2. Cued speech is a phonological model of English where hand shapes are associated with certain sounds. (Goldberg 45)
  3. Hand shapes are used to supplement speech reading. (Schwartz 118)
    1. There are eight hand shapes that relate to consonant sounds. (118)
    2. There are four positions about the face that signify groups of vowel sounds. (118)
  4. Cued speech is always used in conjunction with speech. (121)
  5. Supporters of this method list many benefits.
    1. Students develop speech reading skills almost effortlessly. (122)
    2. They develop an awareness of speech sounds. (122)
    3. Their speech is improved through therapy. (122)
    4. Users of cued speech can indicate correct pronunciation even if they cannot pronounce a word orally. (122)
    5. They can learn about and express dialects and accents. (123)
    6. Cued speech can be applied to foreign languages. (123)
    7. Cued speech works to supplement what is already spoken in the home and school. (124)
4. The bilingual-bicultural method.
  1. This method of instruction uses ASL as its primary language of instruction. (Moore 13)
  2. English is used for reading and writing. (13)
  3. Speech, auditory training, and manual English codes are not used. (13)
  4. This method also puts emphasis on the teaching and maintenance of deaf culture. (Schwartz 90)
  5. There are many factors that seem to support bi-bi education.
    1. Vision is the deaf child's "chief modality" for learning language. (Schwartz 92)
    2. ASL is the only complete entirely visible language. (92)
    3. Speech/lip reading stimuli are often ambiguous or invisible. (92)
    4. English can be learned more successfully by deaf students as a second language. (92)
    5. Interaction with deaf peers and teachers is important to the social development of the deaf child. (93)
  6. Bi-bi education is what most members of the deaf community support. (90)
5. Total Communication
  1. Total communication is the "philosophy incorporating the appropriate aural, manual, and oral modes of communication in order to ensure effective communication with and among hearing-impaired persons." (Pahz 67)
  2. Total communication combines manually coded English with auditory oral stimulation. (Goldberg 45)

3. Speech reading, fingerspelling, signs, and sound amplification can also be used. (Moore 13)
4. Total communication could be defined as a “conscientious selection” of communication methods based on the individual communication and education needs of particular people. (Schwartz 209)
5. Total communication uses an English based sign system. (210)
6. Supporters of total communication argue that it recognizes the “right of a deaf child to use all forms of communication available to develop language competency.” (Pahz 101)
6. There are several variables that affect the progress of the deaf student in any of these educational modes. These include:
  1. Age at diagnosis,
  2. Cause of impairment,
  3. Degree of impairment,
  4. Effectiveness of hearing aids,
  5. Hearing potential,
  6. Health,
  7. Family participation,
  8. And intelligence and learning style of the student. (Schwartz 61)

#### VI. Specific programs in the United States.

1. Some states with public schools with good programs for the deaf include:
  1. Iowa,
  2. Colorado,
  3. California,
  4. And Florida. (Goldberg 44)
2. The American School for the Deaf
  1. The ASD is located in Hartford, Connecticut. (Winarski 30)
  2. The goal of the school is to “teach students to thrive in a hearing world.” (30)
  3. The ASD is a school for children with hearing losses ranging from mild to total. (31)
  4. The classes are split into regular and special needs courses. (31)
  5. The school has a small student to teacher ratio. (31)
    1. The largest classroom has 10 students. (31)
    2. The smallest classroom has 3 students. (31)
  6. ASD classrooms look like normal good classrooms. (32)
    1. Vibrant art and print lines the walls. (32)
    2. Desks and tables form circles. (32)
    3. There is a carpeted reading area with pillows and couches. (32)
  7. ASD participates in a sister school program with Braeburn public elementary school in which students from both schools visit each other and hold class sessions together. (30)
3. Gallaudet University is the only liberal arts college in the world for hearing loss students and is therefore a great symbol of pride for the Deaf community. (Van Ingen 63)

4. The school was founded in 1856 in Washington DC. (63)
5. The school now has over 2,000 students. (63)
6. Although Gallaudet has been a source of pride for the Deaf community, it has also been the source of some controversy.
  1. Several years ago the demand for a deaf president of the university led to protests by the students, faculty, and deaf community.
  2. Some feel that Gallaudet does not serve its purpose because it is “run by hearing and speaking teachers and administrators who have no desire to learn the Deaf language or culture.” (Treesberg 154)
  3. A protest against regulations which require students to pass an English proficiency test to graduate led to the death of one student in 1990.
    1. Carl DuPree was a 41 year old father of four and student of Gallaudet University.
    2. Carl, his parents, his wife, his wife’s parents, and two of his children were all deaf.
    3. After arguing the results of his English proficiency exam in an administration building, Carl angrily left and went to meet his wife and two of their children at another location on campus.
    4. Carl was stopped by security guards whom he could not communicate with, and in frustration, tried to break away from them.
    5. He was wrestled to the ground by the five guards and died due to a fractured bone in his neck which caused him to suffocate. (Treesberg 156)
7. A school for the deaf in New York became the first and only public school for deaf children to offer high school diplomas. (School For... 20)
  1. The school also instituted language development classes for parents and infants. (20)
  2. They are working to increase the number of ASL proficient staff. (20)
  3. They also set up a community resource center for the deaf. (20)