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"HANDS OFF!":

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN
AND THE ROLE OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Pauline Hart


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SYNOPSIS.
This thesis examines how deafness is socially constructed and the forms that such constructions have taken in different historical periods and within different communities. The thesis challenges the social construction of deafness as "hearing-deficit" as it operates within the field of the education of deaf children by focussing on the social bases of opposition and resistance to such constructions of deafness. It utilises material gained from interviews conducted with 10 Deaf adults living in Sydney on their life experiences and views on deaf educational issues. Finally, the thesis analyses the challenge laid down to deaf education by alternative constructions of deafness.
INTRODUCTION.

The subject matter of this thesis is deafness, and the approach taken derives from the general literature that claims to analyse 'disability' of various kinds. Of the many ways to examine the phenomenon of 'disability', current approaches fall into four main areas: psychological analyses, economic analyses, sociological analyses and political analyses. Stone (1984) summarises these approaches:

*Psychological analyses tend to regard it (disability) as an individual experience, with an eye to understanding how physical and mental limitations interact with personality development. Economic analyses treat disability as a social position with its own income stream, much like a job, and seek to explain the extent to which individual choice determines the assumption of the disabled role. Sociological analyses focus on the institutions that treat, house, and manage disabled people... and examine disability as a stigmatized social status, exploring the means by which stigma is created, maintained and resisted. Political analyses explore the meaning of disability for the state - the formal institutions of government, and the intellectual justifications that give coherence to their activities.*

(Stone 1984:3)

Linked to the literature of 'disability' is the concept of deviance which was initially conceived as a social pathology, and more recently within social control perspectives as society's struggle
between conflicting groups for scarce commodities. Analysis of deviant causation has in the interim attracted the attention of functionalists, anomie theorists, value conflict theorists and labelling theorists. Douglas (1975) argues that:

Sociological constructions of deviance display blank spots as well as idealized images of American society. A liberal consensus in sociology has nearly blotted out any conception of diversity and dissension. Such terms as power, class, conflict, elites, violence and repression are rarely used. While the liberal ideology is not a monolithic doctrine, its political sentiments have infiltrated sociological theory, obscuring the origins and development of legal and institutional control over political minorities.

(Douglas 1975:192)

Current approaches do not sufficiently explain the effects of the application of categories of deviance and disability. The ethos of individualism holds that rationality and motives are controlled by the individual, an ethos which is refuted by social reality in industrial societies in which rationality has shifted to large-scale organisations. Current approaches also have logical flaws such as the principle of liberalism's notion that the State acts as a political broker in a value-neutral manner. Far from being value neutral, Douglas argues that "the State is a weapon in the hands of those who control it." (Douglas 1975:194). Thus in the literature of 'disability' and deviance, as Stone argues:
Granting that there are always multiple understandings of a particular social phenomenon such as disability, and that there can never be a perfect correspondence between a measure and the underlying phenomenon it is trying to capture, one can try to examine how particular constructs and measures systematically exclude certain understandings and include others, how they serve the political interests of some groups at the expense of others, and how they work to produce particular types of policy results.

(Stone 1984:117)

Adherents of current approaches cannot analyse themselves as a powerful set of actors defining deviant or disabled careers, as legitimated authority rests in their hands as professionals.

Davis (1975) argues that:

*Professional academics have played a myth-maker role, providing a tacit support source for State control over nonelites....They desire a well-ordered (not necessarily homogeneous) society in which personal careers and private interests assume priority over collective inequalities and oppressions.*

(Davis 1975:194)

Stratification into deviant/non-deviant and disabled/non-disabled forms a complex that operates to differentiate theoretically and practically.
Institutionalized inequality, power and its abuses, and enduring social conflict may well be the major public (if not international) issues of our time. They deserve to be seriously addressed by a sociology willing to examine the economic and political underpinnings of institutionalized stratification.

(Davis 1975:3)

There are alternative ways of thinking about institutionalized stratification in the areas of deviance, disability and deafness (a submerged tradition). One such type of alternative analysis is that of symbolic interaction-labelling theory which as Suchar (1978) argues lead one to analyse deviation within the framework of the sociology of occupations and professions:

As in the commitment to occupational careers, motivations to deviant behaviour have a social character: they are learned in interaction with others. They develop after the individual has had certain experiences and has learned certain definitions of the situation and “vocabularies of motives”.

(Suchar 1978:189)

This alternative view of deviance sees stigma as being constructed by experts, serving to limit, amalgamate and suppress the articulation of alternative viewpoints, including those of Deaf people:

Conventional categories impede a critical understanding of deviance. By adhering to dominant definitions of
deviance as abnormal, theorists fail to critique the social order that generates stereotypes. As a result, deviance research often displays excessive concern with the problems formulated by administrators or enforcement groups. This trivializes the research product, reducing it to a rhetoric for elites that justifies their dominance over powerless groups.

(Davis 1975:xii)

The major analytic concerns of labelling theory are that social acts are not deviant in and of themselves, but it is the imputation of deviance to ongoing social acts by some audience that leads any form of behaviour to be termed or labelled deviant. Thus the application of labelling theory has no meaning until one can specify the actual interactional-situational relational context of the rules and audiences under analysis. Within such an alternative analytic framework, Scott (1970) elaborates on the relational context between professionals who claim expertise with the problems that people with stigma have and the stigmatised:

The meanings of stigma that experts construct are deeply influenced by values, attitudes, and beliefs that are central to the society. It was bureaucratic necessity that led to the creation of legal definitions of impairments. However, once they were constructed, they became sacred and were reified. There often resulted some major discrepancies between the definitions that experts imposed on a person who was impaired and that person's own subjective reactions to his condition.

(Scott 1970:280)
Similarly, Adam (1978) speaks of blacks, Jews and gays as 'interiorized' people. By that he does not mean that they are inherently inferior, rather, that they have been put in an inferior position: for example, "Scientific studies have repeatedly attempted to link low intelligence with interiorized groups." (Adam 1978:50)

Attending to the relational context in which rules of deviance are developed reveals that in some situations the disabled are viewed in a positive fashion. Safilios-Rothschild (1970) reports that in certain segments of the Brazilian population and in some African tribes, epileptics qualify for the prestigious position of witch doctor because of their symptoms. The societal reaction or labelling perspective emphasises the assessment and reaction of others to the putative deviant. According to this approach, the key to understanding the physically disabled is not their impairment, but the non-disabled's reaction to it (Safilios-Rothschild 1970:115)

Anspach (1979) presents the concept of identity politics to refer to social movements which seek to alter the self conceptions and societal conceptions of their participants, so in attempting to examine how 'particular constructs of deviance, disability and deafness exclude others and serve the political interests of some groups at the expense of others', this thesis does something rarely attempted - the author interviews the marginalised, in this instance Deaf adults. This is done in a way that gives the 10 Deaf adults some orienting topics but allows them to define appropriate content. The problems encountered in doing so are described in the Appendix.
I have divided the thesis into four main chapters: 1) How deafness is socially constructed; 2) The consequences of the social construction of deafness where Deaf people are categorised as 'hearing deficient'; 3) The social bases of opposition and resistance to the dominant consensus accounts; and 4) The challenge to deaf education.

"For me it's normal to be Deaf - it's abnormal to be hearing for me".

"Our world is a visual world. I believe in giving sign language with the English language - both together".

"Language and culture for the Deaf are very closely connected".

"They must have Deaf teachers in a deaf school".

(Interview with D)

These extracts from the responses of one of ten Deaf adults interviewed for this study to the question "What type of educational model would you implement for deaf education?" pose a significant challenge to deaf education as it is currently being implemented in the N.S.W. Ministry of Education and non-government schools. This thesis examines current ideology and practice in deaf education, and will establish why an alternative account to the dominant consensus is necessary by detailing a) how deafness is socially constructed; b) the consequences of this social construction in the
categorisation of Deaf people as "hearing-deficient"; c) the social bases of opposition and resistance to the dominant consensus accounts; and d) how deaf education should be changed to reflect Deaf community interests and research findings.

This thesis examines how the assumptions of those who hear adversely affect the education of deaf children. It also examines how consensus accounts of deaf education cannot adequately explain why Deaf adults and educators of deaf children remain diametrically opposed as to the appropriate philosophy, methodology and practices of deaf education.

Throughout this thesis I use a convention adopted by a number of researchers where the capitalised 'Deaf' is used when referring to cultural aspects, as in the culture of Deaf people. The lower case 'deaf', on the other hand, refers to non-cultural aspects such as the audiological condition of deafness. This convention is not utilised in all sources quoted, so in all extracts quoted, the original upper and lower case usages are adhered to for accuracy, even though the Deaf/deaf distinction would in many instances clarify the text.
CHAPTER ONE: DEAFNESS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION.

DEAF EDUCATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

In order to discover how current practice in deaf education came to be characterised by i) the view of deafness as disability ii) the exclusion of sign language iii) the exclusion of the Deaf community and deaf culture iv) the absence of Deaf teachers and v) the policy of integration of deaf children rather than provision of large schools for deaf children, it is essential to examine the historical origins of these practices.

Lane (1984) prefaces his history of the Deaf community with the statement that

"The history of relations between the society of hearing-speaking people and the community of deaf-signing people is an excellent case study in the motives and means at work when fear of diversity leads majorities to oppress minorities."

(Lane 1984:xiii)

His history of the Deaf community documents the attempt to force assimilation, to claim biological insufficiency when assimilation fails, and to indoctrinate minority (deaf) children in majority values through the schools. He characterises his history "When the Mind Hears" as a study of "the anatomy of prejudice".

"With the recent evidence from linguistics that (full) ASL (American Sign Language) is a natural language, the signing community is revealed to be a linguistic minority
and this history interprets the record of their struggle in that light".  

(Lane 1984:xv)

Groce (1985) casts the history of Deaf people in a similar light to Lane:

"Unfortunately, until very recently, little information has been available on deaf people as a group. Only in the past two decades has serious consideration been given to the psychological and sociocultural aspects of deafness in our own society. Historical studies of deafness have generally focussed on laws from Biblical, classical and medieval times referring to deafness, and on formal attempts to teach deaf persons to speak".  

(Groce 1985:99)

From 1830 to 1900, "the deaf" were included in the broad and demeaning category of "defectives" in the United States Census.

Woodward (1973) states that:

"It is still the case that through prejudice and ignorance, hearing people see deaf people as physically, socially and linguistically pathological".  

(Woodward 1973:191)

Deaf education developed in Europe in the eighteenth century with the establishment of schools for the Deaf in the 1760's and 1770's in Paris, Leipzig and Edinburgh (Groce 1985:101). 

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Lane argues that the signing communities of the Western world were laid waste by a conspiracy of educators of the Deaf that pursued self-interest and by through a series of self-styled international congresses, particularly the Milan Conference of 1880, where the following resolution was passed:

1. The congress, considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs for restoring deaf-mutes to social life and for giving them greater facility in language, declares that the method of articulation should have preference over that of signs in the instruction and education of the deaf and dumb.

2. Considering that the simultaneous use of speech and signs has the disadvantage of injuring speech, lipreading and precision of ideas, the congress declares that the pure oral method ought to be preferred.

(Lane and Phillip 1984:1)

Similarly, within the American historical context, Lane and Phillip (1984) state that

"The relations between the community using the sign language of the deaf and the surrounding community using English have been the subject of impassioned debate..... ever since the deaf Frenchman Laurent Clerc and his American colleague Thomas Gallaudet created a network of schools for the deaf throughout the land [the first American school for the deaf opened in 1817] where a
single language, evolving from the manual, or sign, language of the deaf in France, served all the purposes of daily life, including worship and instruction".

(Lane and Phillip 1984:1)

Lane summarises the effects of this determined pursuit of oralism at the expense of sign language in the U.S.A.:

"The fraction of pupils taught with English as the vehicle rose from near zero in 1870 to half at the turn of the century to nearly all by World War I and ever since. The fraction of deaf teachers fell from nearly 1/2 at mid-century to 1/5 by World War I to 1/8 in the 1960's, with most of these in the South, teaching manual trades in just a few schools."

(Lane 1984:371)

Such were the consequences for deaf education of the "fear of diversity" identified by Lane which has repeatedly led to the hearing majority's repression of the deaf minority. In the U.K., Vines (1990) argues that oralism was also fully embraced, to the exclusion of sign language: In 1889, A Royal Commission ruled that British deaf children should only be taught to try to learn to speak - the "oral-only" method (Vines 1990:23)

As Sacks (1990) writes:

The study of the deaf shows us that much of what is distinctively human in us - our capacities for language, for thought, for communication and culture - do not develop automatically in us, are not just biological functions, but
are, equally, social and historical in origin: that they are a gift - the most wonderful of gifts - from one generation to another.

(Sacks 1990:xi)

DEAF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

After an initial period when sign language was in widespread use in education, (though not included in official educational policy) Australia followed this worldwide trend of the exclusion of sign language from deaf education. The prohibition of sign language, with deaf children being required to learn in the language of English, has been the policy of successive Department of Educations in N.S.W., since shortly after the inception of deaf education in 1860 to the present day. Auslan (Australian Sign Language) existed as early as that date, as sign language was introduced to Australia by the early immigrants who used either British Sign Language, from which Auslan developed as a dialect, or Irish Sign Language.

In deaf education Australia-wide, including non-government schools, the use of the Auslan sign language of the Deaf community has never been part of any school or educational authority's policy. Educational policy has at times specifically prohibited the use of signing and has repeatedly specified that instruction be in the language of English with the use of speech and lipreading being the official method of communication. Because sign language is ideographic and because its concepts are not in English word
order, it has long been believed by teachers and educational administrators that thinking in signs created many of the English language problems of the typical Deaf person, as sign language was considered to be limited, and unable to deal with abstract concepts. It was not thought to be a language, as it was perceived to have no grammar.

Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli (1990) summarise the establishment of deaf education in nineteenth century Australia, and the consequent communication methods used in the classroom:

*Educational services to deaf students in Australia have been available through the public and private sectors for over one hundred years. The first schools for deaf students were established in Melbourne by F.J. Rose, a deaf educator from England and in Sydney by Thomas Pattinson, a deaf educator from Scotland in 1860. The Catholic Church was also prominent in establishing early education services for deaf students in this country. The evolution of services to deaf students in Australia followed world-wide trends with a movement from segregated to integrated provisions and the growth of services employing Total Communication, Oral-Aural, Cued Speech and, more lately, Auditory Verbal philosophies.*

(Ballge-Kimber & Giorcelli 1990:1)

Under the guise of "progress", these worldwide trends resulted in the removal of Deaf teachers and of officially-sanctioned sign language from deaf education, and in the closing down of large
schools for deaf children in most Australian states. In observing the early activities leading to the establishment of schools for deaf children, Crickmore (1990) argues that it is significant that "early Australian schools for the deaf were established by concerned and educated deaf adults who responded to the compassionate pleas of parents of deaf children." (Crickmore 1990:91)

It is recognised historically that Deaf people initiated and established the first institutions of deaf education. Since the first Principals/teachers of voluntary schools for the Deaf in New South Wales and Victoria were Deaf themselves, their educational philosophy was based on communicating visually through sign language, with their students. Burchett (1967) describes the Victorian situation:

*Mr Rose introduced the manual method into his school, and well it served both teacher and taught. When it is remembered that he was managing the Institution and at the same time teaching single-handed upwards of 30 children of all ages, degrees of hearing and intellect, the results were astounding....*

*To those who have been privileged to meet some of the pupils taught during the first quarter of the school's century, this command of correct English has always been a striking commentary on the efficient system by which they were instructed.*

(Burchett 1967:27)
However, by the turn of the century, all non-Catholic schools for the Deaf had become government funded and were managed by Hearing Principals who repeatedly adjusted their educational mandates between various communication strategies within an oralism framework. These adjustments may have only served to confuse parents who have been consistently confronted by a diverse range of educational philosophies to this day. One of the people interviewed commented on the importance of education and of their experience of contact with professionals in the deaf education field:

*When I had a deaf baby I knew I must check out deaf schools and deaf education and prepare my baby's life for the future. Everything was very negative. Professionals were always negative in their information and they were always talking about hearing aids and hospitals. It made me feel that I'd like to work in the Deaf community. I feel that very strongly because the Hearing don't know anything about deafness.*

(IInterview with F)

Deaf adults maintaining an interest in their past educational experiences have noted the changes in education philosophies. One outstanding feature of the evolution of deaf education is in the fact that after the 1890's, Hearing teachers have dominated the deaf classroom.

*I read a book about the history of deaf education in Australia, and we did have Deaf teachers in Melbourne*
and Sydney many years ago. What happened to change that? Hearing parents especially have oppressed Deaf teachers of deaf children, as the Hearing have taken over deaf education. The history is there. (Interview with F)

**STIGMA AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DEAFNESS**

The social construction of deafness has a long history of aiming to "restore Deaf people to social life" and to give them "greater facility in language" through an oralism methodology.

Implicitly within these aims there also lies a stigmatised view of Deaf people as being deficient on many more counts than just audiological hearing loss. An examination of research findings in the areas of stigma and the separation of labelled children into the area of special education gives further insights into the ways in which these particular social constructions of deafness have operated historically and continue to operate at present.

The notion of certain people as stigmatised individuals, as expounded by authors such as Douglas (1975) and Goffman (1968) has relevance to Deaf individuals. Both authors argue that what the label of deafness does for Deaf individuals is to reduce them in the minds of the non-Deaf from being whole and usual to being tainted and discounted, thus reducing their life chances. The Deaf individuals for their part are caught by this definition of themselves if they too see the world through 'normal' eyes, and as a consequence may resort to all manner of deceit of self and others.
about who they really are. Goffman explains why such reductionist views involved in applying stigma become the social reality for many Deaf people and their families, but also argues that shared stigma can have a positive outcome such as to help create the Deaf community, to recruit people to it and to act to socialise its members. The particular form of stigma associated with deafness defines the loss of hearing as a handicap and requires the learning of a social role associated with deafness. Thus the various attitudes and patterns of behaviour commonly associated with deafness are not inherent in the hearing loss but are acquired through the ordinary processes of social learning.

Bogdan and Biklen (1977) identify barriers to learning associated with the concept of handicapism. They define it as:

"A set of assumptions and practices that promote the differential and unequal treatment of people because of apparent or assumed physical, mental or behavioural differences and relate the definition to the terms prejudice, stereotype and discrimination."

(Bogdan and Biklen 1977:15)

The influence of the stigmatised labelling of a Deaf person as handicapped has directly created a struggle for defining one's concept of self identity. This has been reflected by Deaf people themselves:

I feel I do have a "handicap", but it's not a lot of difference to me. I really don't miss anything because I can do everything - the only thing I miss is hearing.
The stigma of the label is not restricted to the Deaf person as an individual, as it also influences the immediate family and their beliefs and expectations:

When I had my first baby, I was so thrilled to have this little deaf baby. My father's family said "Oh, what a shame. Pity she's deaf." I said "What!! What happened with me when I was a baby?" My question really put them back in their place. I called the baby a normal baby. She's deaf and I'm deaf and that's normal. When my other two children were born hearing, I felt they were born handicapped, because both of us are Deaf and they're hearing. In the same way, a hearing family labels a deaf child "handicapped" in the opposite case - what's the difference?

In family life, the handicap label may be applied as part of the Deaf person's personality. As Becker (1980) explains, the behaviour of the family members may evolve into giving unwanted responses pertaining to deafness instead of to the person who is deaf.

The dinner table, the symbol of family togetherness and primary forum of children among middleclass families has become a symbol of isolation and even alienation for many deaf individuals.

(Becker 1980:26)
When I left school my hearing family weren't happy when I started to sign. It was really my choice to sign and I actually developed so much as a person through signing. Now I'm married and my wife is signing Deaf. All her family are Deaf and she has very rich communication with her family. That's very different to my home background. At dinner time in my home I didn't understand at all what was said. I'd keep eating my dinner and it was still warm when I ate it. But when I go to my wife's family for dinner, communication is all around the table, so much that I eat my dinner cold. We just talk so much - it's great.

(Interview with F)

Woodward (1982) argues that scientific and religious institutions have also reinforced this pathological (and derogatory) view of deaf individuals:

"Hearing negative attitudes are supported and reinforced by our social institutions, especially by the two institutions of our science and our religion. Our science advocates intervention with technological devices such as hearing aids or "cure" through surgical procedures. Mainstream religious tradition in the US shares a similar view of deafness. Passages in the Judeo-Christian Bible referring to deafness and Deaf people view deafness as a pathology, something to be cured, usually by God. Thus the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition supports, reinforces, and gives supernatural justification to the Hearing pathological view of deafness. In addition to being
detrimental to Deaf people, the handicapped classification of Deaf people is also detrimental to Hearing people. The detriment to Hearing people is more subtle, yet perhaps more serious. By labelling deaf people as handicapped, Hearing people reject deaf culture, deaf values and the self-worth of deaf people. By using the term handicapped, Hearing people have placed themselves, consciously or unconsciously, in the role of oppressor."

(Woodward 1982:7)

Such social constructions of deafness have resulted in people who have a hearing loss being indiscriminately described as hearing-impaired, deaf, disabled or handicapped. The following definitions recommended by the World Health Organisation (1980) help to identify the socially constructed components of deafness:

"An impairment is an anatomical or functional abnormality which may result in a disability. A disability is a loss or reduction of functional ability which results from an impairment. A handicap is the disadvantage caused by the impairment or disability. Handicap represents the social and environmental consequences to the individual which stem from the presence of an impairment or disability."

In the Australian context, Deaf people prefer not to identify themselves as having a disability. Emphasis is focused instead on skill and ability to communicate at a relaxed and functional level:
I feel I have a very good life. One big important thing is being a Deaf person. Deafness is an important part of my life - not in a way that makes me "different" but in the same way that someone who is Italian or Japanese has their culture important in their lives. In the same way deafness is important to my life - it's part of me. It's part of what makes me who I am now. I can't say that I would be a different person if I wasn't deaf because I don't know, but I feel yes, maybe I would be.

(Interview with D)

All communicators, both Deaf and Hearing, have the opportunity to learn many different communication methods. While most Deaf people are continually exposed to these varied communication modes, Hearing people who are associated with Deaf people seldom practise in or use the base language used by Deaf people. This again privileges oral communication, marginalises Deaf people, as well as giving the impression that the dominant language of Hearing people has a superior value. The stigma of the disability label is ascribed to the Deaf by the Hearing community. Deaf people may then have to struggle to identify themselves in their own way as opposed to adopting the spoiled identities of the dominant stigma:

I'm not disabled. I'm just Deaf. So my outlook to me is of a professional woman. I have a hearing problem but I'm not "hearing impaired", I'm Deaf.

(Interview with A)

Other Deaf people try to ignore the disability stigma, by focusing themselves as the centre of their life:
I don't see myself as a disabled person - I find myself "normal", I think. I don't feel I need sympathy and I don't need self pity.

(Interview with B)

Identification as belonging to a minority group is also commonly accepted by Deaf people. As many Deaf people are united through using the same unique language, the notion of being disabled disappears:

I don't see myself as disabled, No. Minority, yes, very much the minority group but I'm definitely not comfortable with calling myself "disabled" because I don't see myself as that.

(Interview with D)

Deaf people may actually identify Hearing people as being disabled, because they deem Hearing people to be different. However, there are occasions when Deaf people are confronted with poor communication between themselves and a group of Hearing people which leads them to momentarily think of themselves as disabled.

I've never thought of myself as being disabled. I think the only times I've felt disabled are when I'm in a group of Hearing people who can't sign and who aren't aware there is a Deaf person in the room. When I tell them I'm Deaf, they close up - I don't let them put me down, but it is one time I feel disabled.

(Interview with H)
While many Deaf people do not identify themselves as being disabled, many Hearing people have the opposite view. This has led to bureaucratic management based on stigmatised definitions of deafness and identification problems within many government departments, particularly in those in the educational area.

Contact with these conflicting viewpoints presents obstacles to identity development in deaf children. As Becker elaborates:

Interaction with other deaf people tends to reinforce positive feelings about one's abilities and validates one's worth as an individual. Regardless of the actual quantity of interaction with either hearing or deaf people, however, the symbolic conflict (made explicit in interactions with hearing people because these interactions call attention to the deaf person's inadequacies) is kept alive in the person's mind by the inconsistencies between self-perception in the in-group and the way one is perceived in dealing with the outside world.

(Becker 1980:41)

THE IDENTIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT OF DEAFNESS

Problems of validity and reliability exist in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1988) data (Disabled and Aged Persons) on the prevalence of audiological deafness in Australia, as these statistics are affected by unclear definitions of what constitutes hearing loss, patterns of hearing-aid use, age of onset of hearing-loss and functional outcomes of hearing-loss. Results from these ABS statistics identify 7.4% of the Australian population over 15 years as
hearing impaired. 40% of this group of a million people who are audiologically deaf have prelingual deafness, (where the language referred to is the English language) with one quarter of them (10,000 people) identifying themselves as relying on manual rather than oral means of communication. 2% of the population under 15 has trouble hearing and/or possesses a hearing-aid.

Surveys such as the ABS referred to above attempt to quantify deafness by concentrating on the nature of deafness’s "severity and restrictiveness", and are based on self assessment rather than objective data.

Audiological testing is administered by audiologists who test hearing across a wide range of frequencies and intensities. A hearing "loss" is usually identified by audiologists as occurring at 35 - 40 decibels, with differentiation of mild loss at 35 - 55 db, moderate loss at 55 - 70db, severe loss at 70-90db and profound hearing loss at 90db. These measures are in use as one of a range of factors in decision-making about initial educational placement. In general, individuals in the first two categories are deemed to occasionally require special class or special school placement, and individuals in the latter two categories are routinely deemed to require special class or special school placement.

The utilisation of a physiological measure of hearing loss by professionals from a medically-oriented background acts to ground deafness in biological difference, with emphasis placed from the outset on deafness as an audiological factor to the exclusion of social factors. Deafness is characteristically seen as a defining
characteristic of a deaf child in a way that hearing would be unlikely to be used in defining a hearing child.

Benderley (1980) distinguishes between the Deaf and the hard of hearing/hearing-impaired:

"The hard of hearing are rarely fraternal. Indeed the hearing impaired who decline to associate themselves with the deaf community in a sense define its outer limits."

(Benderley 1980:231)

One of the critical factors which determines the effect of deafness on an individual is the age of onset, as 60% of the audiologically deaf population is postlingually deaf. Postlingually deaf individuals have a natural basis for developing speech and language skills of the written/spoken language in which they are immersed.

Higgins (1980) identifies two types of interdependencies:

First, the deaf community, the identity of its members, and the interaction between the deaf and the hearing are interrelated. Each influences the other. Second, being deaf and being able to hear are interrelated. The deaf community (emphasis in original) and the identity of deaf people arise out of the deaf's experiences in a hearing world. Although hearing is usually taken for granted, the full significance of being able to hear is in contrast to those who cannot hear.

(Higgins 1980:18)
The problem of teaching the English language to a prelingually deaf child by lipreading when that child can recognise less than 30% of the sounds on the lips is entirely different to teaching lip reading to a deafened person who has sufficient English language proficiency to benefit from such teaching. In one study of the 2% of the audiologically deaf population under 15 years of age, the cause of the hearing impairment was Disease or Illness 38%, Congenital/Hereditary cause 21.2%, Accidental cause 4% and Other/ Cause not known 36.8%. (Deaf Society of N.S.W. 1989)

Not only do socially constructed definitions of deafness affect the Deaf individual, but the educational setting (special school, deaf unit or integrated context) also determines the effects of such social constructions of deafness on an individual child. In 1984 Rumsey noted that 88% of NSW hearing impaired children were partially or fully integrated with hearing peers, as compared with the USA's 36% (Rumsey 1984:28).

DEAFNESS AND DEFINITIONS OF LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY

Researchers have consistently implied a causal relationship between prelingual deafness and reduced proficiency in the spoken/written language which surrounds the characteristically low achieving prelingually deaf individual, without challenging how the social construction of deafness as hearing deficiency may itself provide a causal relationship between the two. Moores (1987) for example argues that:
Research has consistently demonstrated that deaf children score lower than hearing children on tests of academic achievement. Achievement is highest in those areas in which proficiency in standard English is least relevant.

(Moores 1987:302)

There are other explanations that might account for this association. Consideration—should also be given to the possibility that Deaf people who communicate in sign language are reinforcing their language skills in Auslan. English is not then given high priority as a communication tool. When a person’s academic achievement is being measured using English as the only valid communication tool, it may appear to Deaf people as inappropriate to their needs, so that they may see assessment using English as a restrictive condition during their schooling.

Schein’s (1976) descriptive account of prelingually deaf individuals who are subjected to the dominant social definition of deafness based on the stigma/handicapism/pathological model concludes that

*Deaf persons tend to be less educated, hold lower status jobs and earn less than their general population peers. A higher percentage of men than women are deaf, but deafness affects females more adversely than males. When deaf males and females are compared to like sex persons in general, rather than to each other, deaf females
show higher unemployment rates, lower personal incomes, higher divorce rates and lesser educational achievements.

Stereotypes of deaf workers and of occupations receive little support from the facts. Deaf persons work in every industry performing a vast array of tasks, however the proportion of blue collar workers is far higher among deaf workers than among workers in general.

In the communication patterns adopted by deaf people, most use speech expressively and lipreading receptively at least some of the time in their daily intercourse, but many also use finger spelling, signing and writing in interpersonal contacts depending on the circumstances. In short, the majority of deaf persons are polymodal communicators.

(Schein 1976:6)

Groce identifies the social bases of such characteristics:

The difficulty in communicating, along with the ignorance and misinformation about deafness that is pervasive in most of the hearing world, combine to cause difficulties in all aspects of life for deaf individuals in education, employment, community involvement, and civil rights.

(Groce 1985:4)

Deaf people often teach Hearing people communication methods through signing, therein "teaching" nondisabled people how a Deaf person prefers to be treated. With time, some Hearing people in the
community adjust to this alternative method of communication. As long as Hearing people do not assume that spoken English is the only important language of the community, Deaf people feel comfortable with Hearing people:

Lots of the hearing people I know use sign language so I have no real problem with deafness. I don’t see myself as disabled because I can do lots of things.

(Interview with F)

and:

I see myself as a normal person, doing lots of things...I’m so glad that there’s not restriction in my life-that I am a free person and I can do anything as normal-hearing people can do.

(Interview with C)

Johnson (1989) summarises the identity challenges for deaf children inherent in deficit categorisations of deafness:

A sense of identity - that sense of wholeness which all human beings must have before the ordinary accomplishments of education become possible - is regularly assaulted in our deaf children’s education, however unintentionally.

(Johnson 1989:36)

DEAFNESS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

There has developed a whole literature on the social problem created by "defects" or "disabilities" and particularly their impact on the families of disabled children and the place of the disabled in the
community, especially after passing through special education. As Carrier (1984) argues:

"All educational systems in industrial societies are characterised by differentiation of pupils into different sorts or types and their allocation of different pedagogies or curricula. This springs from the basic task of social reproduction and the consequent tendencies of schools to favour children of the higher classes and award them access to pedagogies and curricula more likely to lead to higher education attainment or at least not to foreclose that attainment. Special education is a significant differentiating and allocating device. It is not a random occurrence, but appears only when mass education occurs in conjunction with an egalitarian ideology. Mass education obliges schools to differentiate and allocate pupils, and an egalitarian ideology renders illegitimate differentiation on the basis of ascribed social attributes."

(Carrier 1984:59)

Special education policies are based on two principles - those of assimilation, and those of equality of opportunity. However, the policies developed under each principle are constrained by competition over both priorities and scarce resources. Such a conflict analysis challenges the validity of a consensus analysis that implies unanimity on priorities and definitions by counterposing the argument that establishment and maintenance of a field of special education is the result of conflict over education's priorities and over use of its scarce resources.
Voysey (1975) examines the operation of the consensus in the self description of families with "handicapped" children. She analyses the "apparent theoretical forces" in operation with parents who have a disabled child, and in detailing their principal organising elements or structures, comes to an important conclusion also applicable to the Hearing parents of deaf children. She concludes that the consensus ideology acts to:

"Define the situation of parents with a disabled child in such a way that it appears congruent with the normal order of child rearing. If parents, like the majority of the members of our society are deprived of an overall theory of existence, then having a disabled child 'cannot' be a tragedy. The only categories available to them construct their experience as a "constant burden"

(Voysey 1975:223)

The prevalence of this definition is frequently alluded to by Deaf adults:

As I became more and more successful, my father was stunned, surprised and very proud, but he says he wishes that long ago someone had told him and helped him understand that it would be OK - that I wouldn't be a lifetime burden, to look after this deaf child and that I could be both - Deaf and successful.

(Interview with D)
Voysey examines not only these "apparent theoretical forces" of parents' ideology but spells out the ideology's organising elements:

1. The acceptance of the inevitable.
2. Partial loss of the taken for granted.
3. The redefinition of good and evil.
4. The discovery of true values.
5. The positive value of suffering.
6. The positive value of difference.

Voysey thus argues that parents' responses tell us nothing about what it is like to have a disabled child in the family, but a lot about other people's ideas of what it would be like. She argues:

"The majority of parents appear able to make sense of the presence of disability in their child, however, it cannot then be assumed that parents accept or believe that their child is disabled."

(Voysey 1975:2)

According to Voysey's analysis, as others treat more of their activities as relevant to their parenthood, parents of a disabled child become more committed to fulfilling their responsibilities. Hence their identities as parents may attain greater salience than normal which may be one reason why they are so often held to be "a model for us all." This may be a source of public and private consolation to parents but Voysey argues, it "may also constitute the most effective, ubiquitous form of control." (Voysey 1975:216)
Thus the Hearing parent (over 90% of the parents of deaf children) is, in Voysey's analysis, very much the subject of control by the dominant societal views of not only who is defined as a deaf child but also of how parents of a deaf child should behave. This is further compounded, as "deaf children generally do not share the identifying characteristic of this minority group with their parents. No other subculture's children are similarly isolated. Moreover, these children often do not share a common language with their parents. The ramifications for self-perception or self-concept are obvious.

(Champie 1984:317).

A trainee teacher of the deaf explained in an interview with me how such views are passed on in training:

At college, it was drummed into us how grief-stricken hearing parents are when they have a deaf child. I tried to understand that, but it's hard when they're not looking at the deaf child - they're looking at themselves. I know it's not easy - I know it would be disappointing to have a child that's not perfect, but I feel parents' grief is reinforced by doctors and by the current situation, by the deaf units and schools. I feel parents must visit a deaf school to get positive things - to see that deaf children can have a wonderful life. I feel parents need to be strengthened by looking at positive things and at the reality of Deaf people's lives.

(Interview with J)
Since the inception of deaf education in Australia, most deaf children were sent to boarding schools, where they were separated from their parents for the majority of their schooling. This separation minimised parental influence and gave the deaf child the opportunity of learning different life values from those learned by other children in a family. Becker (1980) argues that the situation of deaf children created a distinctively different pattern of socialisation.

The role of the family in socializing the child was considerably diminished for those deaf children of hearing parents who boarded at school. As a result, the socialization and education processes occurred together, a unique situation in complex societies.

(Becker 1980:30)

However, the effects on family relationships of boarding school placements were often severe:

The trauma for my parents (sending me from a country town to a residential school, a boarding school), I didn't realise at the time. I felt they loved me, but that they just wanted to get rid of me.....There was a lack of bonding with my family and with my brother.

(Interview with A)

At boarding schools, deaf children were taught and cared for by Hearing staff who were largely ignorant of Deaf values:
The problem (at the deaf residential school) was that they did not understand the Deaf community, and our communication. They had no awareness of our culture, and thought there was no difference between hearing children and deaf children.

(Interview with B)

With the continued emphasis on the development of oralism as a communication method, deaf children increasingly attend integrated schools. This leads to a deaf child having to consistently confront the Hearing values of both teachers and hearing children. The belief that Deaf people are different, despite efforts by deaf children to imitate hearing values with the aim of being classified and accepted as a normal person is often reproduced in the classroom:

I definitely don't remember the deaf students being treated as equals to hearing students at school. We were treated more like dirt - it was always "you poor deaf girls - you can't hear." It was always "you poor thing - you can't do that". I think it made some of us more determined to do things.

(Interview with H)

Caccaimise, Garretson, and Bellugi (1982:12) argue that the cause is differences in the world views of Hearing teachers of the deaf and the Deaf community. They also highlight the effect of these differing world views on the status of Auslan sign language and the status of deaf culture itself. They argue that the most dramatic and persistent disagreement between Hearing providers and Deaf receivers concerns the role of the language of the Deaf, and therefore the
employment of Deaf teachers. Hearing providers emphasise the power of spoken English to put the deaf child in contact with the larger English speaking community, what is called the extensive power of language for the child. People who are Deaf generally emphasise the power of sign language to put the deaf child in intimate contact with his/her fellow human beings, what is called the intensive power of language for the child.

Thus the giver and the receiver have very different priorities. The Hearing, English speaking majority of givers is prepared to concentrate on the hope of procuring greater extensive power through spoken English. Spoken language users take the intensive power of their language for granted, scarcely realising how important it is for their psychological and intellectual well being.

Many teachers still fail to adequately recognise the skills of deaf children. So much time was spent, and continues to be spent on speech practice that the normal education curriculum given to other students was regularly neglected. Deaf children were subjected to end of year assessments given to all students to determine their placements for proceeding years. As a result many deaf children were tested on classwork they had never been taught, which inevitably forced them to fall behind in their schooling. In many school settings for deaf children, this has not changed.

*In a mainstream hearing school, I just didn't know what to do, where to go. They put me two years behind my age group and I was made to sit right up the front of the class.*
I felt very self-conscious about staring at the teacher and using oralism.  

(Interview with B)

Hearing teachers believed that if a child uses the oral method, he/she should be sitting at the front of the class where the teacher could be clearly seen for lipreading. Deaf people in this situation have experienced the constant embarrassment of being treated differently to other students in the class without being consulted as to their preference.

Where I felt the impact of my education there (in an integrated school) was later on, when I found really my self esteem was very low.

(Interview with D)

However not all deaf students become successful lipreaders and speakers of English. Many students are then forced to get their basic education at a mature age when it is realised that the oral method has failed them.

Now they give oral education, lipreading, English, but if it fails for a child they then get put into a signing Unit. But then it's after the child is 6, 7, 8, or 10. All that time is wasted, all that education

(Interview with D)

This expectation of educational compromise has its roots in the opinions of Hearing doctors and professionals who work with grief stricken parents of deaf children. The advice that determines the
educational path of the deaf child starts with the confirmation by a Hearing professional that the child has a hearing loss.

My mother told me that when I became deaf, both my parents were shocked - a deaf kid - they'd never met a deaf person. They knew I couldn't hear, but what did it mean for mental growth, intelligence or education? They had no idea, and the doctors said to them the same old story, like so many others: "The important thing is to teach her how to talk. If you don't teach her how to talk, you won't be successful....Now my parents say they really regret what happened then - that they should have learned sign language.

(Interview with D)

Intrinsic to oralism is the practice of being required to wear a hearing aid. Many Deaf people believe that hearing aids are worn to satisfy Hearing people, to establish the belief that the deaf child is trying to communicate in English, with Hearing people, as much as possible.

In the 1900's, technology still hasn't improved enough to change Deaf people into hearing people - Deaf people still use sign language.

(Interview with F)

Hearing aids proved a useless device for many deaf children who were forced to wear them.

As I grew up I kept being told you must wear your hearing-aids. I would just wear them to avoid an
argument. When I left school there were newer, higher quality hearing-aids, but I still didn’t want to use them. Eventually I just got rid of them. I don’t wear them any more.

(Interview with B)
The three major consequences of such a social construction of deafness where Deaf people are categorised as "hearing deficient" are:

a) the ideological denigration of the Auslan sign language, of Deaf individuals and of the Deaf community and the dominance of oralist-based methodologies
b) the structural location of deaf education within a disability/special education context rather than a bilingual/bicultural context
c) the marginalisation of deafness by the exclusion of Deaf peers and Deaf role models from teaching in school settings for deaf children.

Each of these three processes is critical to the establishment of an individual's sense of identity as access to language, group affiliations, the characteristics attributed to different groups and the socialisation process as it occurs in educational settings are critical for identity development. The social construction of deafness within a "hearing deficient" model has resulted in this "no Auslan, disability context, no Deaf teachers" philosophy of deaf education in NSW. Such a social construction has negative consequences on three major elements of culture i.e. language, institutional arrangements and values or moral imperatives.
DENIGRATION OF AUSLAN, OF DEAF INDIVIDUALS AND OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY, AND THE DOMINANCE OF ORALIST-BASED METHODOLOGIES

Rodda (1982) points out the damage which is done where Deaf people are viewed as 'defective' hearing people. This view ignores other qualities of the Deaf community and the accomplishments of Deaf individuals. No other medical 'defect' group has developed a sociolinguistic community with clubs, schools, lobbying efforts, publishing concerns, regularly scheduled cultural and sporting events all tied together by common experiences and, critically, a language (Charrow & Wilbur, 1975; Bonvillian, Charrow & Nelson, 1973; Markowicz & Woodward, 1978).

Stokoe (1965) established that the linguistic principles involved in sign languages give them claim to be treated as one of the world's languages - that they are linguistic systems with all the characteristics of a spoken language, including subtlety and abstraction. Stokoe developed the concept of a chereme as a motor analogue to a spoken phoneme. Cheremes constitute the visible distinct elemental units of a sign language, much as phonemes constitute the auditory distinct units of a spoken language. Sign languages require precision, and have clear rules governing location, shape, direction and speed of movement and orientation of the hand as well as the use of head and body movements, facial expression and direction of eye gaze.

Vernon (1972) argues that misdirected paternalism which accompanies a definition of deafness as hearing deficiency results
in both the denigration of the various sign languages throughout the world, and in the authoritarianism as a structural pattern of interaction prevalent in deaf education:

"A deaf child or adult often symbolises to the authoritarian the very weakness and defects she/he fears her/himself. Sign language makes the deafness visible whereas its repression 'hides' the defect. Obviously, repressing sign language is the first step in the denial of the weakness which deafness symbolises to the authoritarian. The repression is inevitably rationalised and intellectualised as it remains an unconscious or preconscious motive."

(Vernon 1972:15)

The inclusion of Auslan in the Australian National Language Policy eight years ago has not brought about a single Auslan classroom in NSW deaf education as there is no mechanism which binds educators to the achievement of the Policy's goals, nor does the Policy address in depth how the dominant social construction of deafness denigrates Auslan and Deaf individuals. The policy document contains an unequivocal statement that "Deaf people are entitled to government services in the language they know best, and to increased opportunities to continue learning their first language (Auslan) in addition to English" (National Language Policy 1984). The implications of this statement for the education of deaf children have been largely ignored in terms of educational practice and access to Auslan as the primary language of instruction in any school in NSW.
Deaf individuals on the other hand stress that access to sign language is an important aspect of their education, as it is their most appropriate educational tool.

*English truly is a second language for prelingually deafened children, but sign language has received no status educationally as their first language.*

(Cham pie 1984:18)

Cham pie also argues that:

_Omission of sign language from the curriculum has significant effects on deaf students in two areas: self-concept and English skills. The lack of instruction in sign language transmits society's values: Sign language is to be tolerated, but for serious study use English. The hearing majority continues to have cultural supremacy._

(Cham pie 1984:317)

The use of English for education does not always have a positive effect on a deaf child's learning. Many Deaf people are left with a minimal level of formal education as a result of the continued use of spoken English in the classroom. This was commented upon a number of times in the interviews. For example:

*I didn't learn much at school - I missed a lot - so I learned about the world visually later, through the pictures of sign language. It's very visual and it made me feel good - the opposite to lipreading which was very boring and difficult*

(Interview with F)
I am much more comfortable in Auslan than I am with my oral skills, particularly with my Deaf friends where I use Auslan.

(Interview with B)

Denial of the cultural potency of the Auslan sign language of the Deaf community also allows Hearing teachers to lay the blame for the poor academic achievements of deaf children on the deaf children themselves. The illiteracy of deaf children which condemns them to low career expectations, social exclusion and cultural deprivation is similarly blamed on the early deprivation of the English language because of deafness. An alternative view is that the blame should be laid on the early deprivation of language and of deaf culture because of the educational decision to deny deaf children access to sign language and to the Deaf community. There is also some evidence that points to the linguistic competencies learned in sign language having positive flow-on effects in the learning of English:

*Deaf children of Deaf parents who are native ASL users tend to do better in reading and writing in English than do deaf children who have hearing parents and are taught using either the oral method or the Signing Exact English method. Linguists explain this by saying that the former group have already learned a natural language and can transfer that process to learning a second language* 

(Barnum 1984:406)

Lack of language input is not responded to by teachers of the deaf by choice of the visual/gestural language of sign language to
increase language input, but by attempts to remediate "disordered English." This is usually defined in terms of the lack of competence of the deaf children rather than the failure of the professional regime.

Broadly speaking, the (deaf education) system has been able to convince its own members and the general public that the failure of speech-centred deaf education has been the fault of the students rather than that of the system or the practices of the people in it. Thus the public image of an educator of deaf children (although seldom stated so explicitly) is one of a highly skilled, almost mythically qualified, altruistic practitioner, who is "helping" deaf people to achieve something greater than they would otherwise have been able to. At the same time the educator is presented as one who is limited in what he or she can do by the inherent limitations of deaf people. As a result, the system itself is not subject to criticism and has been allowed to exist without expectations of success.

(Johnson, Liddell and Erting 1989:13)

The repercussions of oralism are far-reaching for the majority of deaf children for whom its methodologies are applied, in particular its effects on the acquisition of knowledge and social competencies. As Johnson et al (1989) point out:

The situation is perpetuated through a commitment to a set of beliefs that devalue sign language, restrict access to information, deny deaf students' capabilities, and diminish deaf independence, all by placing a higher educational value on speaking than on communicating or learning.

(Johnson, Liddell and Erting 1989:14)
This is supported by one Deaf adults' reflections on the educational barriers implicit in traditional deaf educational practices:

If I see a group of deaf children signing with a Hearing teacher, I always have the feeling that I would like to be an intermediary between them, between the Hearing teacher and the deaf children. I want to make sure that the deaf children are understanding what's being said to them because often I feel it's worse for the deaf children when they're trying to communicate with a Hearing teacher of the deaf. Often they nod their heads pretending they understand but they don't. How can deaf children learn and improve if they're not understanding their teacher? They will only understand when the communication is fluent and when they want to understand.

(Interview with G)
INTEGRATION AND ORALISM

Integration policies and the use of oralist-based methodologies go hand in hand with a philosophy that denigrates the use of Auslan sign language in the education of deaf children. As a result of a shift in placement policy in deaf education during the 1970s in Australia, as in many other countries, the majority of deaf pupils, including those with substantial hearing losses and those born to Auslan-using parents are currently receiving their education in ordinary rather than special schools, though still administratively within the domain of special education administrators. Educators keen to promote integration policies claim that a mainstream school education represents an enlargement of educational opportunity for the deaf pupil.

The Australian Deafness Council, predominantly comprised of hearing professionals working in the area of deafness, identifies the primary objective of deaf education as "the placement of a student in an educational situation which allows the hearing impaired and hearing students to gain mutual benefit from contact with a wider spectrum of students in society" (Australian Deafness Council 1987:3)

But as has been argued, equal status is not given in an educational setting which allows the deaf student to gain mutual benefit from contact with Deaf adults and with other deaf students. Deaf adults who were integrated and taught by oralism are often critical of both facets of their education, and a number of interviewees expressed this dissatisfaction. For example:
I blame the deaf education system now-how deaf children are integrated and put into O.D.Units, with no large school for the deaf. Oralism only suits a small number of deaf children, and integration does not give a deaf child deaf friends.

(Interview with C)

I'm obviously not an oral failure - I'm one of the few oral successes...But I'm not really an example of the deaf oral successes. I'm just one person who is successful - that doesn't mean that oralism itself is successful because it's not. I look at my old classmates. None of them, well very few of them can speak well at all. Do you call that successful?

(Interview with D)

The educational policy of integration is based on the belief that it is good for deaf children to adapt to and participate in the hearing/spoken world, a further consequence of the social construction of deafness as "hearing deficiency". Those in favour of integrating deaf children into ordinary schools are Oralists, or advocates of oralist-based philosophies, such as Signed English or Total Communication. They believe that maximum use should be made of any residual hearing to develop oral language and an ability to understand the speech of others. They believe that if the deaf child is surrounded by the everyday language of normally hearing children and adults in mainstream schools, this is conducive to improving the rate of the deaf child's spoken English language development.
The assumption common to all pro-integration, oral educators is that 'normalisation' is an appropriate goal in deaf education. The principles of 'normalisation' that were to be applied to people with disabilities were defined by the NSW government in May 1985 as full participation and equality for people with disabilities and their families, maximum realisation of individual potential and equity of service provision. Proponents of normalisation have interpreted its goals to mean that the primary purpose of deaf education is to prepare the deaf child for as full a participation as possible in normal-hearing society by helping him or her to acquire as best s/he can the language of the normally hearing i.e. English. Moores repeats the comment of a deaf individual on 'normalisation':

A disconcerting trend in special education today is what I feel is a deliberate 'normalization' of the deaf person. The implicit goal is to eliminate differences and thereby eliminate discrimination. To my mind this is another attempt toward encouraging the denial of deafness or disability. It is not going to help the total person if normalization means infringement upon self identity and whatever cultural pride may be derived from the deaf subculture.

(Moores 1987:133)

Normalisation as a practice is fundamentally flawed. While in theory its advocates argue it leads to "maximum participation", in practice it excludes the possibility of choice of a large school for the deaf, does not offer the choice of the use of Auslan in educational
settings, nor the employment of Deaf teachers or of Auslan interpreters; nor does it offer the teaching of Auslan sign language to teachers and students in integrated settings.

Moores' definition of the oral method states that "in this method, also called the oral/aural method, children receive input through speechreading (lipreading) and amplification of sound, and they express themselves through speech. Gestures and signs are prohibited" (Moores 1987:15). Thus, by definition, many oralists believe that parents who choose combined oral/sign programs or pure sign language programs if they were available, rob their deaf child of any chance to speak, speechread and integrate into hearing society.

**TOTAL COMMUNICATION**

Major confusion surrounded the introduction of the Total Communication (TC) philosophy in the early '70s in Australia, as it did elsewhere in the world. Moores (1987:12) traces support for T.C. among educators to be added to oralism as a philosophy to a number of factors including

1) the evidence that deaf children with Deaf parents achieve more academically than do those with hearing parents;

2) the growing tendency to accept the language of signs as a legitimate mode of communication;

3) dissatisfaction with results of traditional methods with the profoundly deaf;
4) the increasing militancy of some groups of Deaf adults who are only now beginning to make an impact on the field, the majority of whom, despite their own rigid oral training, strongly support the use of signing in education.

There has never been one accepted definition of this philosophy, and it appears still to have multiple meanings. Stated generally, it is a philosophy which appears to imply acceptance, understanding and use of all methods of communication according to which one is most appropriate to the needs of the individual deaf child. It is not a pro-signing philosophy, nor does it favour a particular methodology. Rather it seems to advocate choosing from a range of methodologies - speech, speech reading, utilisation of residual hearing, finger spelling, oral/aural, cued speech and sign language. There is some disagreement as to whether these forms of communication can be used simultaneously in T.C. or consecutively, or some at one time and some at another.

Confusion arose in the implementation of TC from the fact that it extended the existing single-channel methodology of speech and speech reading to include the use of the dual channel (speech plus sign used simultaneously) and Signed English methodology, a manual, word-for-word representation of English became synonymous with TC. This confusion resulted in many of the participants in deaf education i.e. Hearing teachers of the deaf, hearing parents, some Deaf parents and deaf children using TC and Signed English as interchangeable terms. They are not, as TC does not favour a particular methodology. Debate in deaf education has been characteristically centred on methodology, i.e. oralism vs
signing in Signed English, as many teachers of the deaf, parents and Deaf adults continue to wrongly identify 'Signed English' as a form of sign language, which it is not.

It is not Auslan sign language which is in use in some schools, but the use of 'Signed English', an artificial creation of Hearing teachers of the deaf. It is the common form of manually coding English, and it was initiated by Hearing teachers of the deaf who formed the Australasian Sign Development Project in the mid 1970's, who 'consulted' members of the Deaf community who were on its committee in order to borrow some of the signs of Auslan to fit into an English language structure. It is not a natural, visual/gestural language but a contrived use of signs "in English". Although its advent gave partial legitimisation for the role of manual communication in deaf education, Signed English has blocked the use of Auslan in deaf education by its inclusion of a core of borrowed genuine Deaf signs. It is not a sign language because it excludes the use of location, direction, sign modulation, topicalisation, facial expression and body language which are essential components of the Auslan language. (Johnston 1989)

Signed English is not a viable system as its use with speech considerably slows the rate of communication, and even proficient users of Signed English tend to omit manual expression of some spoken words or parts of words. Brill (1971) however states that there is much agreement that a great deal more communication has resulted from the use of TC than was true when communication was limited to speech and speech reading, especially for younger deaf children." (Brill 1971:272)
However TC has not delivered the wide ranging improvements in academic and linguistic ability which its proponents desired. Johnson, Liddell and Erting (1989) argue that TC is in fact oralism, given its requirement that teachers must speak as they teach and its emphasis on speech training for deaf students. They argue that although "Total Communication is typically viewed as "manualism", we refer to it as crypto-oralism, for the essence of Total Communication is to require students to comprehend and learn subject matter through spoken English, albeit supported by signs" (Johnson, Liddell and Erting 1989:13)

It would seem that the British Deaf Association's comment on TC is an accurate assessment of its claims and limitations. They say that "Total Communication is too vague a term. It does not require a commitment to sign language, or the involvement of Deaf adults in educating deaf children. In other words it allows teachers to ignore the natural language and culture of the deaf children they are teaching" (British Deaf News:1987)

CONSEQUENCES OF A "HEARING DEFICIT" CONSTRUCTION

The "methodology issue" in deaf education which has seen the development of TC and the use of 'Signed English' in some areas of deaf education since the early 1970's is essentially a monolingual methodological issue. Both Oralism and TC usage stress the channel of communication (speech-only or simultaneous speech with Signed English) and not the language of communication. The "methodology issue" is not yet an issue of language (English-only
language or Auslan language and English language), but rather an issue of channel within a purely monolingual methodology.

The various educational strategies tried, namely 'monolingualism' and 'monoculturalism', pure oralism and the artificial 'Signed English' all result for many deaf children in a paucity of information about what other people do and feel, approve and disapprove, which in turn affects knowledge of social mores, knowledge of communication conventions and knowledge of socially acceptable ways of expressing emotions. Without awareness of how other people function, a deaf child will find it difficult to empathise or to hypothesise about future situations. Their imaginative ability is impaired. As Johnson (1989) summarises

The education of deaf children in the United States is not as it should be. Recent studies have found that patterns of low achievement have persisted more than a decade after the beginning of Total Communication programs. Not only that, in each year of school deaf students fall further and further behind in reading and mathematics achievement. We've seen the results of an entire generation of deaf students going through the system. Current methods have had an opportunity to work if they were going to work. We propose that there are primarily two reasons for the failure of the system. The first, lack of linguistic access to curricular content. And the second, a cycle of low expectations.

(Johnson 1989:5)
LOCATION OF DEAF EDUCATION IN A DISABILITY CONTEXT.

The second major consequence of the social construction of deafness as "hearing deficiency" is that deaf education has been located within a disability context rather than a bilingual/bicultural context, a consequence that has its focus on deficit rather than difference.

This location has profound consequences for deaf children in the philosophy underpinning deaf education, in the objectives set by teachers in deaf education, the methodologies chosen and in the role of the parents of deaf children. Deaf education in the Ministry of Education in NSW has traditionally been, and currently is, in the area of Special Education, in the company of physically disabled, visually disabled, learning disabled and intellectually disabled educational programs. Thus it is essential to analyse the beliefs and ideologies that those in special education hold, as there is now in Australia as in other countries, a long legacy of grouping deaf and disabled students together, through common and socially-constructed definitions of disability as a shared experience.

Dominant societal values are regularly presented by Hearing medical doctors, audiologists, teachers and speech therapists to the parent of a deaf child. Winefield (1987) argues:

*One very important factor that affects parents' choice of methods is the testimony of experts. A mother remembered her pediatrician's recommendation that her child be enrolled in an oral program immediately so that he would learn to talk and to read lips. When she told this doctor*
that she was considering a program that used sign language, he informed her that if she chose it, he would refuse to treat the child.

(Winefield 1987:106)

A tremendous amount of pressure is put upon hearing parents both by other parents holding them up as 'a model for us all', and by experts in the field of deafness to make the 'right' educational method decision for their deaf child. Indeed parents are often held accountable for their deaf child's success at school. Oralists frequently assert that every deaf child should have the chance to be oral, a position which relegates the use of Signed English in education to a fallback methodology to be used at a later age if a child should fail to achieve within oralism.

Hearing parents of deaf children consistently report that medical doctors, audiologists, teachers and speech therapists recommend oral programs over programs that include signing. It is likely many such experts operate with the pathological psycho-social perspective. The active nature of professionals in constructing deaf careers has resulted in them valuing a healthy and fit individual, one with the ability to speak and hear, and to which parents are advised to "fit" their deaf child to the extent that the hearing loss allows.

Scott (1969) argues that the result of disabled people being put in an inferior position is that gradually, over time, the behavior of the disabled (in particular the blind) comes to correspond with the assumptions and beliefs that disability workers hold about disability
and blindness. As he says, the dominant position of such professionals means that experts' "practice theories have profound effects on the self-attitudes and behaviours of clients" (Scott 1969:286)

Incidence statistics of deafness in children consistently show that 91.7% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. (Erting 1983) These parents usually have no idea about what it means to be deaf nor do they know how to communicate fluently with their deaf child. According to Mindel and Vernon (1971), young deaf children face a challenging environment for growth and development. This is particularly true if their parents are not usually prepared psychologically for having an auditory impaired offspring. Therefore, the psychological adjustment to parenting a deaf child can be difficult, complicating the child's development and even interfering with the parenting process. This in turn can hinder the child's interactional and social development.

In the case of hearing parents, Altshuler (1974) contends that parental reaction to the discovery of deafness in the child is inevitably a depression.

Nothing quite matches the creative scope of giving life and it is imbued with all the unresolved fantasies and wishes of one's own early development. The presence of a defect is a blow to such aspirations and it is reacted to in proportion to the intensity with which they are present.

(Altshuler 1974:367)
The difficulty that hearing parents have in trying to adjust to this ordeal is compounded by their difficulty in trying to communicate with their deaf child. It is not unlikely that the child may very well be isolated and rejected during these important years for language and personality development. Plans are made and people move around to do things without the child ever fully knowing what is going on. The deaf child may become the focal point of family tension. As such children become older, their inability to hear and use spoken language fluently carries with it an increased stigma. Deaf children are seen by Hearing adults and children alike as being more physical and less tactful. Yet as Furth (1973) points out, tact is something learned through communication and has nothing to do with personality. It is culturally determined.

No parents want to admit that their child is handicapped or different from other healthy children. Voysey reports that

Parents (of a disabled child) reported that even sympathetic others don't really understand or only get upset, and it appeared that the more support parents were given by others, the less problems were acknowledged, and the more they defined their situation in terms of the official morality of child rearing and family life.

(Voysey 1975:215)

Usually the parents' first response on learning that their child is deaf is to search for a cure, or a remedy that would make their child 'normal', hence the popularity of the cochlear implant program with Hearing parents. The word 'normal' frequently enters into
conversation between hearing parents of a deaf child and service providers. The oral philosophy promoted by professional educators holds out the hope and reassurance to parents that their deaf child will learn to talk and lipread, and that with these tools they will fit into hearing society as any 'normal' person would.

As a result the deaf child may grow up not fully participating in family discussion because of poor lipreading or speech skills and may develop only limited relationships with family, friends and neighbours as a consequence.

My feelings about my hearing family are not good because there is a lack of communication there. They won’t accept me as a Deaf signing person and that makes me withdraw from my family. I still love my family but the communication is so important – it’s the centre of our relationships with each other.

(Interview with F)

Deaf children often face constant filtering, delimiting and lack of access to information because of communication limitations in a hearing family with a sole deaf child. Such thinness of input frequently results in a poor grasp of the language of one’s own native country and unawareness of social change and idiom and all of the other intangible nuances of the everyday dynamics of the Hearing oriented world, often resulting in what Rainer and Altshuler (1966) describe as the 'grossly acting out, demanding, impulsive deaf child who has little or no concept of cause or consequence.
From the deaf child's perspective however, lack of communication within a family is devastating:

I was an unhappy child during that period because my mother and father were so much in shock at me losing my hearing. It was as if I was cut off from them...The important part that I lost in my life was the communication that I lost with my parents.

(Interview with C)

It is no accident following on from Voysey's analysis of parents reactions to having a deaf child, that the pervasive theme in education of the deaf in NSW is that of language remediation conducted within a disability context rather than the exposure of deaf children to the culture of the Deaf community and to non-deficient and positive models of Deaf individuals. This has developed from the belief of Hearing professionals that the deaf child's lack of easy access to the spoken (English) word and concomitant difficulties with reading and writing English are not only inevitable consequences of hearing loss, but should be the primary focus of deaf education. Thus deaf education is habitually equated with remedial education.

Certainly no one would discount the theory that knowledge of English is a benefit to deaf people. This is true in any culture where a majority language is the language of education, government, prestige, and so forth. Therefore, the next question must be this: If deaf people cannot learn English through the oral-aural medium, how
can they best learn as much English as possible? The best avenue we can allow deaf children for learning English is acquisition of a natural sign language during the critical language-learning years.

(Barnum 1984:406)

Profoundly prelingually deaf children commonly do leave school at age 16 with reading ages of 8.5 years and below, but it can be argued that it is the choice of the perspective of language remediation, in preference to a bilingual/bicultural non-deficit perspective which is the primary causal factor of this linguistic impairment.

The language remediation perspective is based on the presumption that language acquisition by oral/auditory channels, with powerful amplification, will result in intelligible speech and proficient lipreading for the majority of deaf children. This presumption is erroneous on two counts. Firstly it denies the existence of the language competencies inherent in mastering the visual/gestural language of sign language, which challenges the assumption that the listening/spoken language is the only language available to the deaf child. Secondly it denies the existence of the active and flourishing Deaf culture which has its own language, and denies the significant role that deaf culture plays in the lives of Deaf adults and potentially plays in the lives of deaf children.
In addition, adherence to the language remediation perspective results in the neglect of many crucial elements in language acquisition such as the modes of communication, the timing, screenings and structuring of language input, the concepts of 'correctness' of language production of different stages in a child's development and the assessment of language competence and achievements.

Claims made by English as a second language researchers support the idea that it is not the amount of time a student is exposed to a language, but his or her motivation to learn it, that is important. When the school respects the social identity of Deaf people enough to use their language to at least some degree, students may become eager to learn English. In order for a child to reap the benefits of an enriched environment, it is necessary for him or her to have an awareness of self-worth and freedom from social stigma.

(Clements & Prickett 1986:219)

The deaf child often internalises such a "need to be remediated" message:

What I think parents can get from meeting Deaf adults is some knowledge of what all the systems are, and what they can do for their child - self esteem and relationship to the world. I think many parents now decide "Oh, let's go straight to oralism", or "Let's go straight to the cochlear implant" without really stopping to realise that what that
is saying to the child is that you’re not accepting the deaf child as a person. "We have to work on improving you because you’re not good enough" is their message to their deaf child. 

(Interview with D)

Special educational policies and practices are reflections of the cultural systems in which they operate, and disability labels are attached to children in a subjective fashion, often to "serve the purposes of the social agents who use them" (Kauffman 1981:15)

In their analysis of special education, Barton and Tomlinson (1984) take account of the social interests served by the development and expansion of special education:

There has long been an existing sociological tradition in special education which is the structural functionalist approach, epitomised by a concern for order, balance and equilibrium in a society, a model of social welfare which does not recognise conflict. The dominant concern of this approach has been the 'fitting in' of the disabled, adults and children, into society.

(Barton and Tomlinson 1984:6)

Functionalist approaches such as those which operate in deaf education are often based on the notion that consensus in society is a normal state of affairs and in much of the literature on special education, notions of conflict are absent although functionalism can also appear in a conflict guise. Literature produced from consensus
perspectives cannot handle or account for the growing conflicts in special education as increasing numbers of interest groups attempt to affect its purpose and direction.

An alternative approach to functionalism is to view much of what happens in special education as the product of power struggles and vested interests, where processes are not "natural" but rather the products of negotiations between groups who have power and groups who are weaker.

Johnson, Liddell and Erting (1989) argue that the widespread acceptance of a disability context and a language remediation goal for deaf education is specifically attributable to professionals' training programs, and that the present crisis in deaf education

*is not the result of widespread cynicism or malfeasance. In fact, the field is populated by dedicated, hard-working, and committed individuals, most of whom have made a principled choice to pursue a career of public service. The problem results more from training programs, which, through a belief in and a commitment to speech-centred educational methodology, fail to prepare aspiring teachers to meet the actual communication needs of deaf pupils.*

(Johnson, Liddell and Erting 1989 : 12)

They go on to say:
The speech-centred system of deaf education in the United States has not been held accountable for its failures. To the contrary, over the last 150 years the system of deaf education has been able to argue that its failures, rather than being reason for self-evaluation, are justification for its growth.

(Johnson, Liddell and Erting 1989: 13)

For example Sacks describes the teaching authorities at Gallaudet University who by the very nature of their employment in a University of Deaf students could be expected to have adopted a more positive view of deaf culture and of Deaf individuals thus:

The accusation that the Gallaudet authorities were 'deaf in mind' implies no malevolence, but rather a misdirected paternalism, which deaf people feel, is anything but benign - based as it is on pity and condescension, and on an implicit view of them as 'incompetent', if not diseased.

(Sacks 1990:151)

THE EXCLUSION OF DEAF ADULTS FROM TEACHING.

The third consequence of the social construction of deafness as hearing deficiency is that an alternative view of Deaf people as individuals with positive self identities and their consequent employment as teachers of deaf children has been excluded from the educational choices available to deaf children.
In 1989, there were only two deaf teachers in the NSW Department of Education for 1700 deaf children, and neither was deaf at the time of teacher training.

Teacher training still tends to indoctrinate trainees with an oralist/Signed English, monolingual and monocultural point of view, rather than encouraging a broad and questioning outlook, largely because lecturing staff and curriculum developers hold the same Hearing culture perspectives and values as do their students. Even a cursory glance at teacher training programs reveals that these programs for the most part perpetuate attitudes of monolingualism, and no Teacher of the Deaf training program in Australia provides its students with a healthy, positive attitude towards language diversity and cultural variation and differences.

In 1989 a signing Deaf teacher completed her Teacher of the Deaf qualification at the Nepean campus of the University of Western Sydney. Her battles with the educational bureaucracy against the obstacles of payment for an Auslan interpreter and the requirement to teach in hearing classes prior to acceptance into the deaf training course were many and bitter. She was successful only with strong union support. In an interview with her, she commented that:

*When I was accepted into the Teacher of the Deaf training course, I thought that doing the course would be easy. The lecturers will know how to treat a Deaf person and I thought I would really enjoy it, but the truth was I hated it. The lecturers knew less than the lecturers at Uni, or they acted like they knew less - they acted like they hated Deaf*
people. They didn't know how to use an interpreter— they were reluctant to give me an interpreter saying they didn't have any funds. In the last two weeks of Semester one, I got an interpreter. That meant I had fifteen weeks in the course with no interpreter.

(Interview with J)

That Deaf teacher's assessment of the training program is itself a damning indictment of how the policies and practices of Teacher of the Deaf training are inefficient, inadequate and totally unacceptable in terms of meeting the educational needs of signing Deaf teacher trainees.

In teacher training, all teachers should study deaf culture, the Deaf community and sign language. Fifty-two hours of Signed English in a one year course is not enough, and Signed English is not Auslan.

(Interview with J)

The current Teacher of the Deaf teacher training program at the Nepean campus of the University of Western Sydney which is the only teacher of the deaf training program available in N.S.W. is almost identical in content to my own inadequate training course of Teacher of the Deaf which I undertook in Victoria 19 years ago, in 1972. Only token coverage is given in the course to the Deaf community and little or no attention is given to Deaf cultural studies and Auslan is not taught to teacher trainees. Ironically, the only "innovation" since my training course is the involvement of a Deaf tutor, not for the teaching of Auslan but in the teaching of Signed
English, a system which attempts to combine sign language and the English language and distorts both languages. I say ironically because the Deaf tutor's presence grants a false credibility to a Signed English system which is foreign to the Deaf tutor, and to his/her Deaf community.

I'd like to change the teacher training system - all these teachers after being trained who've been out there are coming back with a bitter taste in their mouth. They come along and they meet Deaf adults. A lot of them have said they don't get to meet Deaf adults in teacher training - they're being taught by people who have taught deaf children but who are Hearing lecturers. The whole thing makes me sick. It's OK for me to say that not just because I'm a Deaf woman, but because I am a qualified teacher myself. It's backfiring. The whole thing needs to be re-analysed.

(Interview with A)

Hearing teachers of the Deaf characteristically do not participate in the Deaf community as they cannot use its language fluently, so that almost their whole professional career occurs in a Hearing culture where the lives of Deaf adults and Deaf adult views of ex-students are rarely encountered. This situation of the parallel development of a group of Hearing professionals outside the Deaf community commences within teacher training facilities. Crittenden's (1988) study of the attitudes of 222 teachers of the Deaf in the U.S.A. revealed:
The most surprising result of the survey is the relatively high percentage of educators of the deaf who felt uncomfortable with their understanding of their students' communications... These results suggest that there may be a serious problem in the preparation of educators of the deaf. It seems that professionals are not being trained to understand the languages of the children with whom they work. It is possible we have not accurately described the language process of deaf children, or the model for the language productions that they use. Education is predicated upon communication. Learning cannot occur unless there is understanding, and the results of this survey indicate that educators of the deaf are less than effective in promoting communication between the teacher and the learner.

(Crittenden 1986:278)

Far too many educational administrators in deaf education hold a clinical or pathological view of deaf children rather than a social or interactional view. Imbued with the notion that all reasonably intelligent deaf children can and will learn to communicate through speech reading and speech processes, Hearing teachers of the deaf attribute any failure to do so within the inherent and limited capability of the deaf child, since speech reading and speech skills are taught daily throughout the deaf child's school life.

As discussed earlier, Hearing teachers of the deaf need to make much of deafness for reasons of status and seriousness. Just as the special education system needs to identify 'helplessness' to
underline what a good and necessary job it is doing, teachers of the deaf also have their own reasons for doing the same.

As is true with many of the regular classroom teachers of deaf children, the majority of the teacher training lecturers themselves are unable to communicate with Deaf people in Auslan sign language as they have never needed to do so as an intrinsic part of their careers. This has led to a practice of restricted experience with Deaf people for student-teachers in training since it is still the case that lecturers are unable to initiate an extensive plan for interaction between students and Deaf people in the Deaf community. An ever-recurring demand from Deaf adults is that trainees preparing to become teachers of deaf children have as part of their program the opportunity to interact with Deaf people no longer in school. The teacher preparation lecturing staff have the responsibility to incorporate such experiential opportunities into the programs, and sadly do not.

While educators of the deaf and researchers have long defined the need for lifelong learning access for Deaf adults, the potential learners themselves i.e. Deaf adults have only recently realised their goal of Deaf adult access to post-secondary education or to teaching training.

The innovative Bachelor of Education in the teaching of Auslan, commencing at Latrobe University in Victoria in 1990 for native speakers of Auslan can now be added to the University of Technology Sydney achievement of training two prelingually Deaf adults in teaching literacy to adults and six Deaf adults in language
teaching respectively, and the intensive tutor and interpreter support of the NSW TAFE service for 450 plus Deaf adults annually as facilitators of Deaf adult educational access.

Adults who are Deaf are often frustrated by educators' attitudes towards them, and they have had little opportunity in Australia to describe their own educational goals and accomplishments. They require recognition of the set of values and beliefs implicit in deaf culture to learn successfully as adults rather than to be viewed as failing members of the dominant better-educated Hearing culture. Orientation to achievement is critical in teacher training, as a Deaf adult explains:

*With teacher training, one thing I would definitely make sure of would be to have more time on Auslan signing and deaf culture in the training. Those teachers have to teach deaf children who will grow up and join the Deaf community. They will, and whether the teachers and parents like it or not, the majority of deaf children will grow up and join the Deaf community.*

(Interview with D)

Hearing parents and families have the right to access a wide range of Deaf people and their individual views on the deaf education system. Despite many hard won improvements in public attitudes in the 1980s, the Deaf community remains a largely powerless group in the deaf education context, constantly struggling against misinformation, misunderstanding and prejudice in the very
educational administrators and teachers of the deaf employed to assist deaf children.

The stereotypical ways in which Deaf people are viewed by other members of society, in particular by Hearing parents and Hearing teachers, have the potential to become a self-fulfilling prophecy which hinders a Deaf person's chances for success. It is very improbable that deaf children will ever achieve educational equality unless Hearing educators cease to view deafness in the single dimension of loss i.e. unless Hearing educators reject the deficit classification of deaf children, a disability context and the exclusion of Deaf teachers from deaf education.
CHAPTER THREE: THE SOCIAL BASES OF OPPOSITION AND RESISTANCE TO THE DOMINANT CONSENSUS.

The social bases of opposition and resistance to the dominant consensus ideology take the form of Deaf people trying to wrest definitional control of deafness from those in power in deaf education, and to confirm alternative definitions of community, culture and language for Deaf people arising from lived experience connecting with an alternative ideology. It is the Deaf community which leads the challenge to the dominant ideology, through presenting community studies and research which substantiate these alternative definitions, and by the way in which they live their lives as competent Deaf adults.

DEFINITIONAL CONTROL.

Exclusive promotion of the stereotypical norms encompassed in terms such as "the hearing impaired" sustains a false and negative image of a population of people homogenised by its reductionist common feature - deafness. In many respects however, people who have a hearing loss differ as much from each other as they do from all other individuals. They share characteristics with other groups such as Jews, Aboriginals, Italians etc. Universal application of such reductive categorisation both oppress the individuals thus labelled, and provide a base for opposition to such labels. For many Deaf adults, this has resulted in a choice between identities:
The definition of the word "normal" is so important. Hearing people from their point of view think that normal is like them - they won't accept Deaf people like myself as being a normal person. For me it's normal to be Deaf - it's abnormal to be Hearing for me.

(Interview with D)

An alternative to functionalist theory which presumes only one possible outcome for the manner in which deafness is socially constructed, is conflict theory. George and Wilding (1971:244), examine the role played by dominant values legitimated by the institutional order and internalised by the whole population in the control of conflict.

In relation to deaf education, using conflict theory allows one to examine the social, political and phenomenological assumptions of deaf educational practice. Many of the features of deafness that are taken for granted in the functionalist models of 'deafness as deficit' become issues for further analysis. It also allows for the existence of rival views of deafness marginalised by dominant professional views. I would suggest that analysis of the comments made in interviews, and of literature generated by Deaf people reveals an alternative and opposed definition of deafness that is rarely articulated in the conventional literature generated by Hearing professionals. The key components can be identified as:

1. Deaf students are not disabled in any absolute sense.
2. The physical and behavioural characteristics of deaf children enter into the educational process through which the meaning of the deaf child emerges, but not in the deterministic way that is commonly believed.

3. Deafness is interactional.

4. When we apply the concept of 'deafness', we represent a situation in a particular way.

5. How individuals define themselves in regard to deafness is a function of, and is constructed through, interaction.

6. Deafness as Hearing teachers of the deaf construct it is only one particular way of defining and organising the world.

7. Deafness is situational.

8. Deaf education programs exist in a larger context - they are part of schools, school systems, states and nations.

9. Deafness has moral meaning.

Johnston (1989) for example provides one version of this alternative construction to the hearing-deficit definitions of deafness as follows:

"Those with early onset profound deafness may not at all see themselves as people who 'lack' something (i.e.
hearing) but rather see themselves as people with an altogether different, and positive, kind of identity.

(Johnston 1989:470)

In interviews, Deaf adults consistently emphasise that:

I wouldn't change my deafness for the world.

(Interview with A)

The community study of the island comprising the Martha's Vineyard community off the coast of Massachusetts provides another version of this alternative construction:

Most Vineyarders remembered that those who were deaf regarded their inability to hear as a nuisance rather than an overwhelming problem, an attitude not uncommon among many deaf people.

(Groce 1980:53)

And Anspach (1979) argues that the "politicization of the disabled represents an attempt to wrest definitional control from 'normals'"

(Anspach 1979:768)

A further source of challenge to the dominant consensus definition of Deaf people as "hearing deficient" occurs in the manner in which individuals respond to the attribution of that stigmatised identity to them. Anspach argues that historically the typical responses to disability - normalization, disassociation, retreatism and political activism - provide the individual (in this case the deaf individual) with an array of possible "solutions" to the dilemmas of problematic identity.
There are a myriad of factors which may lead the individual to adopt a particular stratagem. While not exhaustive, the list of such factors includes physical, interactional, social, structural and societal variables. Naturally the choice of stratagem is subject to the impress of historical events, for definitions of disability and responses to them are historical, as well as interactional, emergents.

(Anspach 1979: 770)

Disassociation from those people who would impose the restrictions of 'deficit' definitions of deafness commonly characterises the response of many Deaf individuals to such definitions of deafness:

Within deaf communities, members seldom face the difficulties and frustrations which arise when they navigate through the hearing world. A sense of belonging and wholeness is achieved which is not found among the hearing. Among fellow members there is no shame in being deaf, and being deaf does not mean being odd or different.

(Higgins 1980:76)

Each of the Deaf people I interviewed gave an example of how this disassociation takes form in their lives:

Because I come from a Deaf family, I was brought up in a Deaf world. I socialise all the time with the Deaf. I do mix a little with the Hearing through my husband's family, but not much. Socially, I don't have very strong bonds with Hearing people. My relationships are stronger with Deaf
people because the bonds there are stronger. The Deaf world is my world. When I am with Hearing people I feel left out; I don’t feel like one of them - I never feel like one of them.

(Interview with G)

Another outcome of the social bases of opposition to the dominant consensus accounts occurs is political activism which is increasingly a characteristic of Deaf community members providing an alternative to 'deficit' categorisations:

The deaf are among many of the physically disabled who have become politically active in demanding new legislation to ensure their rights. With this awareness movement among the deaf will probably come results similar to those that have developed within the black community: an increased self-esteem, less significance given to the trappings of the dominant world, and greater certainty among the outsiders as to who they are.

(Higgins 1980:102)

In referring to the Deaf student and Deaf community protests which occurred at Gallaudet University in 1988, the first Deaf President analyses the gains of such heightened levels of political activism:

One of the most important outcomes from the events of March 6 - 13 and the months following has been that new level of awareness. Deaf people and Gallaudet University have reached new heights... More people realize now that
deafness is a difference, not a deficiency. There is a growing interest in learning about our beautiful language, our unique culture and our cherished history. I believe that deafness imposes no limitations that cannot be overcome. Given the opportunity, I am confident that we will prove that.

(Dr. Irving King Jordan. President Gallaudet University quoted in Gannon 1989 : 173)

The political activism of sections of the Deaf community arises out of attempts to defend the activities of the Deaf community which gives an identity that 'normal' society does not. The Deaf community thus rejects the characteristics of the subcultures of 'deviants' referred to earlier in Adam's analysis adopting instead disassociation and retreatism from Hearing deficit categorisations.

*Managing their putative stigmata is of relatively little importance to members of the deaf community.*

(Higgins 1980:171)

Padden and Humphries (1988) assert that Deaf people like themselves within the Deaf community have *never* seen themselves as disabled:

*Disabled is a label that historically has not belonged to deaf people. It suggests political self-representations and goals unfamiliar to the group. When deaf people discuss their deafness, they use terms deeply related to their language, their past and their community. Their enduring concerns have been the preservation of their language.*
policies for educating deaf children, and maintenance of their social and political organisations.

The modern language of "access" and "civil rights", as unfamiliar as it is to Deaf people, has been used by deaf leaders because the public understands these concerns more readily than ones specific to the deaf community."

(Padden and Humphries 1988 : 44)

Identification as a member of the Deaf community inherently involves a rejection of the socially-determined stigma of disability/handicap in favour of the positive identity that membership of the Deaf community offers.

ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.

The social bases of opposition and resistance to the dominant consensus accounts of deafness also arise from alternative definitions of community, culture and language, specifically of the Deaf community, of deaf culture and of sign language articulated predominantly by Deaf people themselves. As Barnouw (1973) stresses:

Culture is the way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all of the more or less shared and stereotyped patterns of learned behaviour, often obtained through the means of language and imitation. It is the symbolic and learned aspects of various human societies,
and includes language, custom and convention. It leads to the maintenance of certain belief systems, systems of values and even ideology. Overall it can be understood as a social phenomenon based on learning from generation to generation. This learning is taught by communication, i.e. language.

(Barnouw 1973:6)

Members of the Deaf community argue that there is a deaf culture which embodies the symbolic and learned aspects of Deaf communities, with systems of values which are communicated to its members via sign language. For Deaf people, recognition of this deaf culture is essential to their way of life:

*My education was very difficult for me because it was outside my deaf culture. Everyone expected me to speak, but I argue that I needed language to be a speaking person.*

(Interview with B)

In the Deaf community, as in any community of human beings, language and culture are linked. Without culture there can be no language because there would be no reason to communicate. Culture allows social and linguistic bonds to form and be maintained over time between its members. Without language there can be no culture - there would be no means for a group of people to interact as social beings and contribute meaningfully to the life of the culture. Thus culture is both a way to communicate and a reason to communicate.
Each of the Deaf people I interviewed emphasised the importance of sign language to deaf culture and to their lives as Deaf adults:

*Of course sign language is so important if you're Deaf because you miss out a lot with speech. With signing you don't miss out. I believe that sign language gives us the message and the means to understand. It's very important that teachers understand the deaf culture, not just the sign language itself, but the culture also because many Hearing teachers see their deaf students as too noisy or too out of their control. When they think that way it damages their deaf students. They have to understand that something as simple as being noisy is part of the deaf culture.*

(Interview with E)

Gumperz (1975) similarly stresses the intimate relationship between a community, its culture and its language: here language "is simultaneously a store or repository of cultural knowledge, a symbol of social identity and a medium of interaction".

Within the Deaf community, sign language is a primary enculturation tool, as language is in any culture. Research into the lives of Deaf people indicates that the primary language of the Deaf community is sign language. Besides being its vernacular language, it also serves as the principal identifying characteristic of its members. (Stockoe, 1970; Woodward, 1973 A; Padden and Markowicz, 1976;)
Sign language is part of a Deaf person's cultural identity, and is essential for full social interaction. As an American Deaf person explains:

*Sign language is very much a part of a deaf person. If you want to change sign language or take sign language away from that person, you are trying to take his or her identity away.*

(Gannon 1981:376)

Within this alternative construction of deafness, audiometric deafness and the actual degree of hearing loss often has little to do with whether a person identifies as a member of the Deaf community. Attitudinal deafness, self identification as a member of the Deaf community and identification by other members as a member appear to be the features defining a person's membership in the Deaf community. Attitudinal deafness explains why some hard of hearing persons consider themselves Deaf; why some profoundly hearing impaired individuals claim to be hard of hearing or actually Hearing and why some young children of Deaf parents may refuse to speak for some time even though they are quite capable of speaking. This point is put well by Johnston:

*It should be noted that it is the use of a sign language itself which is one of the prime defining characteristics of a Deaf community - sign language is the cement that binds the community together and it is the medium that facilitates the smooth interactions thought typical of a 'community' rather than just a collection, group or population of individuals.*

(Johnston 1989:471)
The potency of sign language access for emotional well-being for a Deaf person is often graphically expressed:

On my last day at school, I cried and cried. People asked me why. They said it was good to get out into the world but I knew I was going to be living with my Hearing family and working in a Hearing environment, and of course I would be a long way away from my Deaf friends. When my friend who had a deaf family asked me why I was crying, I realised that he was going back to a deaf family - he had no worries.

(Interview with F)

How has the Deaf community been able to maintain its own language, given its denigration by educators who accept the social construction of deafness as "hearing deficiency"? Woodward proposes three possible reasons:

One reason seems to be that the oppression which has confronted the deaf community has greatly strengthened the ethnic bond that unites people who choose to identify with the deaf community....

The second possible reason for the thriving of sign language relates to the channel and code structure of ASL (American Sign Language) as compared with English..... It seems that the visual/manual channel of sign language prohibits very great influence from English structure which is constrained by a different channel.
The third reason, the diglossic situation of the deaf community, serves as a way of maintaining linguistic and cultural integrity. Sign language is preserved since sign language and Signed English have completely separate social functions. Sign language is used for intimate interaction between members of the deaf community. Signed English is used in classroom situations and in conversations with hearing people.

(Woodward 1982:16)

A British publication by and for Deaf people further emphasises how crucial sign language is to the life of a Deaf person. Its major point is that:

BSL (British Sign Language) is part of a deaf person's identity. This is tremendously important in itself but in addition early use of BSL and the opportunities for communication this creates allows deaf people to achieve their true learning potential hence enabling them to compete on equal terms with educated hearing people. It is scandalous that so many very clever deaf people are being held back, not through their own fault but because in their school days they have been forced to work in English. Deaf people are capable of holding complex intellectual discussions in BSL. Why is this option being denied to deaf children? They should be able to begin the process at birth and continue it through school with all curriculum subjects being taught in BSL.

(British Deaf News 1987:12)
Although 25 years have passed since Stokoe's (1965) work that argued sign language is a distinct language, resistance to its use as deaf children's primary language in schools has dominated the educational context in NSW. Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli note that

*While there is increasing acceptance of the linguistic status of (sign language) both among professionals linked with deafness and the wider public, there remains resistance to the obvious implications of this linguistic standing.*

(Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli 1990:4)

Resistance to the use of sign language in the education of deaf children has not always removed sign language from educational settings for deaf children:

*Spoken language was used as Oralism in the classrooms or within earshot, but the minute the teachers turned their backs, behind the curtain I call it, it was full Auslan.*

(Interview with A)

*My daughter and her deaf classmates use Signed English in the class because that's the way the teacher teaches them. When they go outside, the deaf kids use Auslan, their natural language.*

(Interview with F)

*I remember, and I always wonder how I knew this, but I remember that I would be signing but I always stopped dead when a teacher came towards me. I suppose that*
came from being smacked on the hands and being warned not to use my hands and to speak (Interview with D)

This interdependence of sign language and deaf culture explains why Deaf communities have developed in most spoken language societies of the world. Deaf people form groups with common interests, a common language and common leadership, and are regarded by others as having these things in common.

There is a need to examine who are the members of a Deaf community and what the identifying characteristics of such a community are. Johnston defines the Deaf community as an entity that:

- can be said to include "deaf identified" native hearing signers and a few exceptional hearing individuals who have acquired near native fluency in signing through involvement in and identification with the Deaf community, e.g. welfare workers, as well as those that form the vast majority - signing deaf people i.e. the sociological Deaf, as distinct from the term deaf which refers to audiological deafness.

(Johnston 1989:470)

Padden (1980) further argues that the term Deaf community has been used in two restricted ways - either meaning only those persons who are audiologically deaf, or those persons who are a part of the culture of Deaf people. But it is clear that Deaf people work with and interact with other people who are not Deaf and who
share the goals of Deaf people and work with them in various social and political activities. Padden proposes the following definition:

\[\text{A deaf community is a group of people who live in a particular location, share the common goals of its members, and in various ways, work toward achieving these goals. A deaf community may include persons who are not themselves Deaf, but who actively support the goals of the community and work with Deaf people to achieve them.}\]

(Padden 1980:92)

The shared geography of a Deaf community referred to by Padden and the habitual use of the definite article of the Deaf community raise the issue of whether the term refers to a single Deaf community in NSW for example or multiple Deaf communities in say the Hunter, or Illawarra. Higgins responds to this question:

\[\text{While the deaf community may be similar to an ethnic community in many respects, it is not geographically like a small, ethnic neighbourhood in a large city. Through clubs, sports tournaments, former classmates, co-workers, friends, deaf relatives and the TTY teletype system, deaf people scattered throughout a metropolitan area keep in contact with one another. In fact, through the above means as well as through state, regional, and national organizations, meetings, and publications, deaf people keep in contact with one another in ever widening circles. A national network of contacts unites widely dispersed}\]

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deaf people. These relationships begin at the local level and build to the national level. (Higgins 1980:70)

Deaf community groups develop strong feelings of internal solidarity and come together in sufficient numbers and in conditions such as where society stigmatises the mere difference of audiological deafness that emphasise both their similarities to one another, and their differences from surrounding others.

I was about 14 or 15 when I first went to the Deaf Club and I met a lot of Deaf adults there. It was a lovely balance in my life to realise that I could identify with so many Deaf adults using sign language. (Interview with J)

The linguistic and social behaviours in the Deaf community support such a definition of community as an accurate depiction of the lives and group activities of Deaf communities in the large Australian cities and regional centres. The social lives of signing Deaf people are consistently lived wholly within the group with other signing Deaf people with only minimal participation with the non-Deaf, non-signing community, usually only for work or for limited other formal activities.

People who are Deaf maintain that they are a community not an association, as their group involvement consists of more than the pursuit of an interest or a group of interests.
With the Deaf community it's much stronger time and involvement there - a much more quality time than with Hearing people.

(Interview with B)

Deaf culture can be made up of a distinctive set of learned behaviours of a group of Deaf people, a Deaf community, who have their own language, values, rules of behaviour, traditions and identity. People who are Deaf argue that sign language is the main thing that belongs to the Deaf community completely, and that communication through sign language with other Deaf people is so important to the Deaf individual that they consider the prohibition of signing a denial and devaluation of deaf culture. Thus respect for sign language is an example of the values held by Deaf people. Other values include a general disassociation from speech, a strong emphasis on maintaining social and family ties with other Deaf people, and values contained in the stories and literature of the culture.

The relationship between cultural continuity and identity development among the deaf is apparent. Both the continuity of language and transmission of culture among deaf people descended from deaf parents produces a sense of self-acceptance. Beliefs and values are validated by the sense of cultural continuity in one's personal history.

(Becker 1980:35)
COMMUNITY STUDIES

Resistance to the dominant consensus accounts of deafness as "hearing deficiency" is also described in community studies where positive, non-pathological views of deafness indicate that a different focus of existence is possible for Deaf people.

Such community studies clearly document the viability and positive gains to be had from a hearing community's non-pathological approach to deafness. One such group of studies are those of deaf and hearing members of the Providence Island community in the U.S.A., which had an hereditary deafness and where both hearing and deaf used sign language. Woodward, one of the investigators argues that:

"The research in this paper, conducted in five villages, supported field observations of relatively positive attitudes towards Deaf people and towards sign language held by Hearing people on Providence Island. From comparisons with traditional attitudes toward Deaf people and toward sign language in educational institutions in the US, it appears that Providence Island indeed has a more positive attitude toward Deaf people and sign language."  
(Woodward 1982:74)

Woodward's studies also reveal an opposite view to the dominant view that deaf people should learn speech. He says:

"In relation to Providence Island's Sign Language, over three-quarters of the respondents (79%) stated that the
Hearing people should learn signs, rather than Deaf people having to learn to talk, while only 11% of the respondents indicated that the Deaf people should learn to talk without it being necessary for Hearing people to sign.

(Woodward 1982:76)

The reaction of Hearing people is also noted by Woodward to be markedly different from the conventional one. He finds that while:

Hearing people on Providence Island obviously know that deaf people cannot hear - they tend to classify this as a difference rather than a deficit. They do not view hearing as such an "essential" quality as US society does. Moreover, the attitude studies on Providence Island definitely show that Deaf people are not considered defective. Deafness tends to be accepted as a fact .... It should be stressed that the situation on Providence Island is not perfect for Deaf individuals, but the more positive attitudes of Hearing people towards the Deaf certainly help toward integrating Deaf people into the larger society.

(Woodward 1982:76)

Another documented example of Hearing people coming closer to an acceptance of Deaf people and sign language than do those in most of the hearing societies that have been studied is in the U.K. Lorraine Fletcher, a British hearing mother of a congenitally deaf son chose to raise her son using British Sign Language (BSL) after
experiencing the failures of oralism in her son's toddler-aged training programs. The decision she and her husband made to fight the British deaf educational authorities for the right to employ a Deaf native-speaker of BSL to be paid to accompany her son to an integrated kindergarten was successful. Having a Deaf adult for her son Ben provided constant BSL access to him in the kindergarten environment and its acceptance by Hearing kindergarten staff helped Ben's parents succeed in the battle against the hostility and obstructionism of a state educational bureaucracy which viewed deafness in the same way as those in NSW. So strongly did Lorraine Fletcher feel that Deaf people are not handicapped with a disabling condition that needs curing that her response to the crucial question of wanting to change her deaf son's deafness is in direct opposition to the dominant psycho-social/pathological perspective. She and her husband were subject to constant pressure to give in and follow the same pattern of education as other deaf children:

Someone asked us recently if we would change things if we could. 'But you'd have him hearing wouldn't you if you had the choice?' The reply took a bit of thinking about but it came straight and true. No, we wouldn't. Ok, life is different with Ben. We have to allow more time for things because communication takes time. As a family we have a fair amount of interference by professionals to put up with, and yes we do have to think very carefully about schooling but we can cope now. We have learned how to handle these things without them getting on top of us and we are very happy with Ben. No, we do not wish to
change him. Throughout his nursery years we have resisted the pressure from those who would have changed him and we have won for him an education that allowed him to be himself. We would not wish him hearing any more that we would wish him red haired or green eyed.

(Fletcher 1987:256)

A further example of a community where non-pathological views of deafness prevailed was Martha's Vineyard in New England, U.S.A.

On the Vineyard, the hearing people were bilingual in English and the Island sign language. This adaptation had more than linguistic significance, for it eliminated the wall that separates most deaf people from the rest of society. How well can deaf people integrate themselves into the community if no communication barriers exist and if everyone is familiar and comfortable with deafness? The evidence from the Island indicates that they are extremely successful at this.

(Groce 1985:4)

These studies suggest the reaction of Hearing people is not an inevitable or necessary one. Instead they suggest that much greater flexibility could be cultivated amongst Hearing persons:

The fact that a society could adjust to disabled individuals, rather than requiring them to do all the adjusting, raises important questions about the rights and the responsibilities of those who are not. The Martha's Vineyard experience suggests strongly that the concept of
a handicap is an arbitrary social category. And if it is a question of definition, rather than a universal given, perhaps it can be redefined, and many of the cultural preconceptions summarized in the term "handicapped", as it is now used, eliminated.

(Groce 1986:108)

One of the N.S.W. Deaf people interviewed also expressed similar aspirations, saying:

I find with my hearing friends, if they become good friends, they will usually learn sign language. I think it comes from respect and equality in friendship. Those friends know that if we are going to be friends and accept each other on equal terms, then they can't force me to communicate in a way that is not always comfortable for me, so they learn signing.

(Interview with D)

CHALLENGES TO RESEARCH FINDINGS.

A further source of intellectual validity for rejecting dominant consensus accounts is found in the challenges which now exist to research findings which purport to support the "hearing deficiency" accounts of Deaf people. One summation of decades of research suggests:

Research is consistently showing that native signers do better academically and maintain that advantage throughout their school years.

(Barnum 1984:404)
The extensive literature on the "Psychology of deafness" has often seemed to be concerned with discovering difference without acknowledging competence. The purpose of these investigations is usually to compare the intelligence and performance of Deaf people with those of Hearing people.

The sociological literature on deafness is meagre in comparison to other disabled groups, and much of it is of limited value because it is anecdotal and speculative.

(Scott 1980:7)

The important point to note about these studies is that they contain no recognition of the effects of the deaf experience and deaf culture on the testing situation, and that they were predominantly conducted by researchers who didn't involve Deaf people as research associates. Schein (1968), a clinical psychologist, former Director of the Office of Psychological Research at Gallaudet University, and critic of orthodox psychological research writes dismissively of the research done to date:

If you have read some of what has been passed along under the heading of psychology of deafness you will probably agree that indeed there are psychologists who support academic non-achievement as a reasonable goal for deaf children. Most psychologists would endorse the statement that severe hearing impairment affects the psyche sufficiently to justify a psychology of deafness.

They are probably compelled to this point of view by over six decades of research on various psychological
Schein argues that there has been a consistent misinterpretation of data, confusing causes with effects, and a refusal to analyse the context of behaviour that is labelled as connected with or caused by the deafness, not the societal reaction to it:

One finds a lack of understanding and regard for the feelings of others, coupled with limited awareness of the impact of their own behaviour on others; an egocentric view of the world and coercive demands to have their needs and wishes satisfied. You see a reaction to frustrations, tensions or anxiety that is typified by a kind of primitive reaction through action rather than through internalised constraints and controls. Deaf children are consistently described as "grossly acting out, demanding, impulsive, with little or no concept of cause and consequence.

(Schein 1968:96)

Such "typical" clusters of deaf personality traits is a false view of Deaf people as they function in a Deaf community. Such descriptors do not distinguish between deaf and Deaf subjects, and is based on research which is consistently marked by its failure to identify any group of deaf children as being 90% comprised of children who...
have had little or no contact with adult Deaf people and with the Deaf community. Research strategies conducted in the English language rather than in sign language also help to perpetuate the myth that the societal reaction to deafness is intrinsic to the hearing loss, denying the alternative analyses discussed earlier offered by authors such as Scott (1969), and Adam (1978).

The continued dominant position of such "typical" clusters of personality characteristics of the Deaf within the beliefs and ideologies of psychologists and current deaf educators constitutes a very potent ideology of failure. The Deaf community struggles against this ideology. It cites in its defense alternative studies, such as the community studies above, which are premised on a non-pathological definition of deafness.

For example, during the March 1988 strike and protest at Gallaudet University (the only University for the Deaf in the world) at its failure to appoint the first Deaf President in the University's 124 year history, the single statement which most incensed the Deaf community was the statement which the (Hearing) Board of Trustees Chair Jane Spilman allegedly made that "Deaf people are not ready to function in a hearing world".

The differences in world views between Hearing teachers of the deaf and the Deaf community are highlighted in the Deaf community's challenge to the single context of language held by Hearing educators. The Deaf community poses a double context of language in challenging the restrictions of the Hearing world view.
An alternative view can now be put forward that avoids the pitfalls of the orthodox studies. Deaf children send and receive language signals while this is located in a culture which defines its uses. In this first context, there is a great difference between expressive and receptive language experiences and subsequent understanding in the perceptual systems between a child born with normal hearing and the child born deaf. Children who have been hearing from birth grow up with the experience of using their language to influence others long before they enter school. In contrast most prelingually deaf children would get most or all of their English language where the predominant role of language is responding rather than initiating and controlling. Goldenberg (1979) believes that although the deaf child's language is developed as a tool, it is not theirs to use - rather it is a means for others to control them. Unless language is of service to deaf children, their spontaneous use of it will be minimal.

Typically the deaf child is born into a hearing family where, in most cases, the parents have had no previous experience with deafness. Parents are often unaware that their child is deaf at least for the first year, and sometimes there is not an explicit acceptance of the fact that the child is deaf for three or four years.

The home is generally considered to be the initial locus of language learning and enculturation for hearing children acquiring a spoken language. Since only 10% of the deaf population has Deaf parents and because Hearing parents usually do not sign extensively when their child is first identified as deaf, the home is frequently not the initial locus for language learning and enculturation for the deaf child. Thus in this first context of language of the deaf child, the
speech and lipreading methodology, a very inadequate means of language transmission and of language reception for the majority of deaf children, is utilised instead of sign language. In the second context of language i.e. culture, only the deaf child of Deaf parents is raised in a language environment which recognises the status of the Auslan sign language and its importance to the Deaf community and to deaf culture. Thus Caccaimise, Garretson and Bellugi argue that Deaf people "strongly resist this sacrifice of the intensive power of sign language imposed by the hearing majority" (Caccaimise, Garretson and Bellugi 1982:12). The sign language environment of the deaf child of Deaf parents is intrinsically linked to the cultural acceptance of that child's deafness within the Deaf community:

The deaf parents' acceptance of the child's deafness, the ability to communicate through sign language, the availability of role models, the support of the surrounding deaf community, and the knowledge of how to manage day-to-day problems are all cited as factors in this advantage. Particularly important is the head start these deaf children receive in the first few years of life.

(Groce 1986:75)

There are many cultural groups within Australia's multicultural society which are concerned about the status of their languages. Through its representatives in, and in leadership positions on committees of peak national deafness organisations, the Deaf community has joined the many other groups whose community languages are not English, in an attempt to challenge the single context view of language, to ensure that such languages are
recognised by government authorities, and maintained. This in many cases means ensuring the continued existence and conveyance of their culture.

In 1982, elected representatives of the Deaf community made recommendations to the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia for their interest in the development of the National Language Policy. The Deaf community through these representatives called for a recognition of its language, Auslan, as a community language and called for educational institutions to use the resources of the Deaf community, e.g. Deaf Teachers' Aides and Deaf teachers of the Deaf. The National Language Policy, 1984 gave Auslan this status of a community language, thereby gaining community language research facilities and access to such schemes as Bilingual educational research funding, and access to training programs for community language teachers of Auslan.

However, regardless of the amount of research on the Deaf community or comparative research in other communities presented to demonstrate that Deaf people form a minority group with language varieties quite different from English, the Hearing-controlled educational establishment, including the special education sector generally continues to conceptualise deaf children differently to the way in which the Deaf community conceptualises deaf children.

Researchers (Freeman, Carbin and Boese, 1981; Scouten, 1984) have found that whereas Hearing and Deaf teachers might claim that their overall goal is to prepare the deaf student for entry into the hearing world, differences may involve the added expectation of
Deaf teachers that students be prepared for participation in the Deaf community. As Byers summarises:

There is no reason to exclude deaf teachers, even in the domain of teaching English and every reason, moral, social and educational to include them. Indeed it is the Hearing who must demonstrate their good faith and their capacity to work alongside the Deaf teachers in the first place by working to acquire their language. Deaf teachers are needed as an inroad to putting education of the deaf back into the hands of the Deaf. Ruling authorities always resist sharing authority. They point to their obviously greater intelligence, superior acquaintance with public affairs and accumulated experience as compared with those they govern. We should tell the Hearing monopoly that benevolent authority is wrong. It is demeaning, it is self defeating because it prolongs oppression. It is often misguided because it does not share the world view or intimately know the problems of those who receive that benevolence. The more the receivers form a community founded by language, custom and tradition the more the giver is an outsider prone to error.

(Byers 1982:14)

The exclusion of Deaf teachers from deaf education is against the wishes of the Deaf community - Deaf people want to teach. The deaf education system rarely has granted more than token consultation to Deaf adults when planning goals and objectives for curriculum
development and/or modes of communication related to the education of deaf children. In addition, Deaf adults because of communication barriers between them and Hearing teachers tend not to be as involved in their children's schooling as Hearing parents. There is an unused resource in the Deaf community which can be capitalised upon to support the aims of education of deaf children in schools.

Sociological studies, especially in the field of gangs and minorities stress the importance of understanding a group's structure. It is possible to understand a "gang" only if the context, structures and relationships within the particular group are known. So it is with the Deaf community. Understanding of the distinctive features of this group is essential for any group working with deaf children or Deaf adults.

Other basic assumptions of current deaf education are also challenged by recent research.

*Neuropsychologists have too discovered sign languages, and have found remarkable parallels in the way the brain processes signed and spoken language. For instance, the left side of the brain, which processes spoken and written languages, also deals with sign languages, even though other, nonsymbolic, visual tasks are handled by the brain's right hemisphere.*

(Vines 1990:25)
Deaf children of Deaf parents consistently score higher on performance IQ tests than unimpaired children and deaf children of Hearing parents. The consistency of this phenomenon has been documented over time and numerous independent studies. (Brill 1969; Conrad & Weiskrantz, 1982; Kusche, Greenberg & Garfield, 1983; Meadow 1968; Ray 1982; Sisco & Anderson 1980). The common interpretation of this phenomenon is that Deaf parents are better prepared psychologically for a Deaf offspring than Hearing parents and therefore their family setting provides a more positive environment for the deaf child's growth and development.

Braden (1987) however offers another interpretation where of the three elements critical for differences in intellectual performance (the speed of information processing, the application of strategies to problems or tasks and decision-making or metastrategy functions for strategy allocation and deployment,) it is the first where deaf children of Deaf parents are superior. Braden links this superior performance of deaf children of Deaf parents on timed tasks of manipulation to sign language exposure. Braden also seeks to identify the inferior strategies and metastrategy operations of deaf children of Hearing parents relative to hearing peers. He attributes these to two factors:

a) the reduced sphere of contacts and communication with others of deaf children, even deaf children of Deaf parents
and

b) academic programs for deaf children which "have often been characterised by memorization, drill, rote learning
and other activities unlikely to foster higher-order intellectual skills." (Braden 1987:265)

Deaf adults argue that:

*Deafness is wrongly identified as the causal factor of their literacy-disability. Rather in their view their literacy disability is environmentally determined and is a symptom of lack of accessible linguistic input via the visual/gestural language of sign language.* (Ladd 1987:198)

Counter arguments to the absence of Deaf teachers in the deaf education system characteristically centre around the poor academic standards of many Deaf adults. Vorlinde (1987) however shows how educators of Deaf adults can potentially take advantage of post-secondary educational environments in which Deaf adults feel a high level of self sufficiency, confidence and self worth by building upon existing Deaf community networks. Social networks are very important to Deaf adults because of the sense of respect, comfort, and support which they provide. Vorlinde's findings from interviews with Deaf adults about their adult education needs indicate that they turn to their social networks to achieve the learning they desire when they encounter barriers to education:

*A significant finding was that coping with deafness (in educational settings) is expensive, exhausting, time-
consuming and so isolating that the networks' support of learning is of vital importance.

(Vorlinde 1987:1)
CHAPTER FOUR : THE CHALLENGE TO DEAF EDUCATION

It is clear from the thesis that a different model of deaf education is currently being proposed to replace the one that has held sway since the early part of this century. Given the strength of the opposition and resistance to the social construction of deafness as "hearing-deficiency", deaf education is currently challenged in its philosophy and in definition, but is as yet showing few signs of change. The pressure to incorporate bilingualism and to adopt Auslan as one of the choices available to deaf children, accept a re-examination of the bases of integration, Total Communication, Signed English, and Oralism, promote the employment of Deaf teachers and the application of dual category membership (of disability and bicultural status) to deaf education is mounting. Such changes are advocated by the Deaf community and researchers looking anew at the effects of deaf education. In this chapter I shall outline the main lines of change that are being proposed and discuss each of them briefly.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND DEFINITIONAL CHANGE.

The model of 'integration' as the best philosophical underpinning for deaf education is increasingly subject to attack. Bart (1984) suggests:

*Our major criticism of the movement for integration is motivated by our belief that it is based on a totally unwarranted optimism. Despite claims about the*
privileges and opportunities in our society in which the "special" or the "handicapped" share, there is a vast amount of research evidence to show that our society and in this instance the school system are characterised by gross inequalities. Historically, equality of opportunity has not and does not exist for large numbers of the populace who both within and after school experience the personal, social and economic effects of failure. We are not arguing here that integration is of no value nor that there ought not to be demands for such practices.

What we are seriously suggesting is that given the inequalities within our society at large and given those dominant assumptions and practices that are firmly established in our school system, if integration is to have any major significance then the struggle for its realisation must include a coherent concentrated criticism of those unacceptable features of the education system and the demand for more fundamental social changes. To do less will mean that integration will lead to subordination in an already divisive system and be further illustration of the way in which political rhetoric supersedes practice.

(Bart 1984:79)

The prelingually deaf child can acquire the academic and linguistic skill levels comparable with their age peers. There is nothing inevitable about the common but superficial impressions which are still widespread amongst Hearing parents and Hearing teachers of
the deaf that Deaf people are self-centred concrete thinkers, devoid of conceptual ability. Myklebust and Brutton (1953) stated that deafness "restricts the child functionally to a world of concrete objects and things" (Myklebust and Brutton 1953:93).

Despite all of the research which has occurred since the 1960's which establishes that deaf children are, on the contrary, intellectually normal, these impressions remain amongst many Hearing people. As long as such beliefs remain prevalent amongst this group it will be difficult for Deaf people to realise their potential, either at work or in society, especially to realise their potential as competent signing Deaf teachers of deaf children.

Integration of hearing impaired people into mainstream education offers little unless it enables them to socialise, to be confident and develop decision making skills. The rationale that Oralist approaches in deaf education prepare the deaf child for integration into the hearing world is very much disputed by findings that less than 10% of all children born deaf ever develop intelligible speech. Further:

*Fluency in spoken English, even if the end were attained, will not confer sound judgement, keen observation and appreciation of life's comedy and tragedy or sensitivity to human relationships, including a respect for human diversity.*

(Caccamise, Garretson and Bellugi 1982:11)
Yet perhaps the major argument against integration is its underlying assumption that "normalisation" is an appropriate goal. If Deaf people accept their deafness and feel comfortable within the Deaf community then it can be strongly argued that they are already leading a "normal" life and don't require integration to "normalise" them. This paradox has yet to be addressed by proponents of integration.

Issues raised by the Australian Deafness Council present a further challenge to current practice. The Australian Deafness Council (an organisation formed in 1974 by representatives of deaf people and service providers rather than Deaf consumers) underwent a major restructuring in 1989 to achieve significantly increased participation by Deaf consumers, in recognition that Hearing service providers have dominated its first 15 years of life.

The recently formed Australian Association of the Deaf is now the major consumer body representing Deaf people, particularly those individuals who use sign language as their primary means of communication. The AAD has developed a policy on teaching deaf children which contrasts sharply with the one developed by the Australian Deafness Council. Its main assertions are as follows:

1. All Deaf children should have access to Auslan as a first language.

2. The AAD strongly advocates the introduction of bilingual and bicultural programs in schools for Deaf children.
3. Parents have the right to access to information about Auslan and bilingual education.

4. The AAD strongly advocates Deaf professionals being employed in school programs where there are Deaf students.

5. The AAD strongly advocates that Deaf people participate in Teacher training and other professional training to enable Auslan and Deaf Culture to play a larger role in education.

6. The AAD strongly emphasises that interpreters in Auslan be accredited to a minimum standard of Level 3 and that programs to train interpreters for educational settings be set up. The study of Auslan at a tertiary level must be available to enable this."

  (Australian Association of the Deaf Inc. 1991:1)

These guidelines were developed by Deaf adults after thorough consultation with signing Deaf adults and students Australia-wide, to develop an ideal educational model for deaf education. The Australian Association of the Deaf believes that:

  Deaf people have a right to equal access to education. Historically in Australia, the Deaf Community has been viewed from the medical model. It should be viewed from a cultural perspective. Deaf children should be able to grow up with a positive self image of themselves as healthy people who can do anything they want to do, educationally, socially and in the workforce. This positive
self image should be fostered from discovery of the child’s Deafness.

(Australian Association of the Deaf Inc. 1991:1)

Similarly, Johnson (1989) enumerates the principles which he believes should now guide deaf education within a linguistic/cultural perspective:

1. "Deaf children will learn if they have access to the things we want them to learn".
2. "We think the first language of deaf children in the United States should be American Sign Language".
3. "The acquisition of a natural sign language should begin as early as possible in order to take advantage of critical period effects".
4. "The best models for natural language acquisition, the development of a social identity, and the enhancement of self esteem for deaf children are deaf adults who use the language proficiently".
5. "The natural sign language acquired by a deaf child provides the best access to educational content".
6. "Sign language and spoken language are not the same and must be kept separate in use and in the curriculum".
7. "The learning of English for a deaf person is the process of learning a second language through literacy".
8. "Speech is not the primary vehicle for the learning of a spoken language".
9. "The development of speech-related skills must be accomplished through a program that has available a variety of approaches".

10. "Deaf children are not defective models of hearing children".

11. "There's nothing wrong with being deaf".

12. "The least restrictive environment for deaf children is one in which they may acquire a natural sign language, and through that language achieve access to a spoken language and the content of the school curriculum".

(Johnson 1989:11)

Such principles would necessitate as a minimum, resources to bring about the retraining of Hearing teachers of the Deaf to be fluent users of sign language, sign language courses being readily accessible to parents of deaf children immediately after the diagnosis of hearing loss, the employment of Deaf adults in all early intervention and educational settings, and the employment of sign language interpreters in integrated settings or alternatively the return to large schools for deaf children using sign language as the deaf child's first language.

When they find the child is deaf, a Deaf adult should move in with the family. That way that Deaf person can give practical advice to Hearing parents on how to communicate with the child and on how to meet his or her needs - that would be number one - advice from a Deaf
person from their educational experiences and in their language, Auslan.

(Interview with H)

Implementation of such educational models in the future necessitates philosophical and definitional change, so that deaf people can be expected to learn as much as hearing children, that the teaching methodology and practice must be subject to evaluation and revision, and that not all failure can be blamed on the students.

Barnum (1984) summarises the challenge which the alternative philosophical and definitional stance embodies for deaf educators:

It was decided that educating deaf people meant teaching them to speak, read and lipread English. This decision would affect psychological well-being, learning about subject matter, and learning and communicating in a natural language during the early years of life, a time when normal-hearing children are mastering their language and environment by leaps and bounds. The rationale for all those years of frustration and sacrifice for hearing-impaired children and their parents was the advantage these children would have when they entered school. But on what was this rationale based? Where was the study group that gave credence to this theory? When does any professional field accept a hypothesis without backing and instigate its implications without reservation? Rarely has any group been so irresponsible. Not only was the hypothesis untested but also there is no evidence that
these educators, well-meaning decision-makers, made any attempt to seek input from linguists, researchers who could have offered valuable data to the educators; from deaf adults who were products of one system or another; or from deaf educators.

(Barnum 1984:405)

ADOPTION OF BILINGUALISM AND AUSLAN.

The concept of bilingual/bicultural education for deaf children is founded on an analysis of Deaf life and culture. This differs greatly from previous educational approaches that have been founded on a medical or pathological view of Deaf people. A bilingual/bicultural program would represent a major shift in educational philosophy and attitude, and is needed to replace the easy acceptance of outmoded and often destructive teaching methods, the ineptness of misguided policy makers and the lack of foresight and vision at all levels of the deaf educational hierarchy.

We propose that changing the language policy and permitting the use of ASL in the classroom would be of benefit in attempting to bring deaf children closer to normative grade level achievement. This alone, however, would probably not bring children up to parity with their hearing peers. Deaf education in the U.S. has come to expect that deaf children cannot perform as well as hearing children and has structured itself in ways that guarantee that result. Aspiring teachers are taught that
deaf children are deficient. Courses which focus on positive aspects of the language and culture of deaf people are noticeably absent from the curriculum... The result is that although teachers meet the qualifications of their teacher training programs, they are nevertheless singularly unqualified to teach deaf children.

(Johnson 1989:8)

Deaf adults also stress the Deaf cultural perspective lacking in their educational backgrounds:

An educational model for deaf education - The first thing that came to my mind was Total Communication, but Total Communication can cover topics such as Cued Speech, Signed English, Oralism, Oral/Auditory but what about Auslan? Auslan was my first language really. It must be in Total Communication. Education must be bilingual and bicultural. Culture is the most important thing. If I'd known what deaf culture was as a child, and they'd taught me that as a child, I wouldn't have a problem. I wouldn't have this health problem.

(Interview with A)

I think that's a very important first step (to meet with Deaf adults who are successful and talk with those Deaf adults about what their experiences are, what their lives are like) before any parent decides on education, is having all that information to make "educated" decisions.

(Interview with D)
Research to support the potential gains of using bilingual/bicultural approaches in the education of deaf children was presented at the Deaf Way Conference in Washington, D.C. in July 1989. Selected experts in deaf education from seven countries reported that gains could be attributed to the adoption of bilingual/bicultural approaches within their respective education systems, with many of the approaches having commenced more than ten years ago. The national governments of Denmark and Sweden have recognised that sign language is the first and natural language of deaf children. Most deaf children and their parents there are being taught in bilingual programs and deaf children are gaining competence in sign language before attempting competence in the spoken/written language, as soon as the child is identified as deaf.

*Hearing parents have a lot of strategies available visually and gesturally that we don't now capitalize on in our educational intervention schemes.*

(Johnson 1989:40)

*One of the things that we have to remember is that we've never really given hearing people, hearing parents, much of a chance to learn ASL. The assumption has been that they can't. And I think that we don't know that at all and that if the proper support and the proper environment were provided we could help them go a long way toward communicating with their child in the visual language that they need.*

(Johnson 1989:40)
Scandinavian studies show that parents can learn enough sign to help their child if they begin to study the language in the child's infancy. (Vines 1990:26)

The result of this radical change in teaching practice is that as deaf children are entering the school with the same grasp of language as hearing children. This change of policy in educating Deaf children is not initially a policy of bilingual education:

It is education that would create people who are bilingual, not take advantage of the fact that they are bilingual and get rid of one language. So our goal is essentially monolingual education in ASL, particularly in the beginning. (Johnson 1989:43)

Hansen (1989) details the results of the first experimental bilingual approach in Denmark in 1982 involving 9 deaf children, on which the current national bilingual practice is based. It is worth quoting fully:

The reading skills of the children have improved tremendously compared to what we used to see in the education of the deaf generally. Whereas 10-15% of deaf children used to learn to read for meaning, we now see 55% of them being able to do this at the age of 12. That means 55% of them read Danish at an age appropriate level. This radical improvement of the children's reading skills is one very important result of the bilingual teaching program. Also their lip reading skills have improved,
simply because they now know so much more of the Danish language. But, what is even more important is the children's development of cognitive, social and academic skills as such. They can communicate about the world. They can control their own daily life through linguistic means, which include discussions of what is right and wrong. They have got the power of being able to influence what is going to happen to them. They can argue and understand an argument, provoking their adult surroundings into new areas of explanation and thinking. They are not ashamed of using DSL openly - neither are their parents. They are actually proud of what they can do and also very curious of what hearing people can do with their language. They know about some of the differences between spoken Danish and written Danish and they accept their situation as deaf in a hearing society. They are the first group of deaf children to actually question the way they are approached by hearing people at the same time as they accept that they are different.

(Hansen 1989:7)

The goal of 100% of deaf children reading for meaning at age 12 under this example of bilingual education is still elusive, perhaps because of the lack of experienced sign language teachers, the evolving nature of knowledge about the language of sign, and the time lag for hearing parents to acquire competence in sign language at the time of diagnosis that their child is deaf. However, 55% is a vast improvement on the habitual 10-15%.
Much of the success of bilingual programs results from children and their parents being allowed and encouraged to have pride in their own language and culture. Students who do poorly in academic and cognitive areas tend to be those who are ambivalent about both their own culture and the majority culture.

(Cummins 1980:40)

Gains similar to these attributed to the adoption of bilingual/bicultural approaches in Denmark were reported from six other countries.

Overseas research shows that Deaf students who have had access to sign language as a first language perform better cognitively, that is, at academic tasks and in the second language than those who had no access to the first language. Therefore schools for Deaf children with a bilingually taught curriculum (comparable with mainstream systemic schools) shall provide more opportunities for academic and social development.

(Australian Association of the Deaf Inc 1991:2)

Cahill (1979) describes additive bilingualism as a situation in which the bilingual child's first language is maintained and accorded such prestige that there is no danger of replacement by a second language, even though the second language dominates the social context.

Bilingualism presumes the competence of all teachers and educators in both languages (Auslan and English), a situation which is non-existent at present in the NSW deaf education system.
What currently exists for the deaf child of Deaf parents is not additive bilingualism, as there is no Auslan maintenance or prestige accorded to Auslan in schools. Rather, subtractive bilingualism exists. This is essentially destructive, as it threatens the development of native-like competence in both languages.

Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli's survey shows that in Australia as in similar surveys in the U.K. and Canada, thirty teachers of deaf students "produced a positive response in favour of Auslan's recognition as a complete, distinct and grammatical language" (Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli 1990:4).

Vernon's (1972) analysis requires Hearing teachers of the deaf to not only recognise Auslan as a language as the Ballge-Kimber and Giorcelli survey (1990) indicates is happening, but it requires Hearing teachers to make the deafness visible by actively supporting the immediate adoption of Auslan as an official mode of instruction for deaf children within a bicultural educational context.

If the Hearing educational establishment were to recognise the Deaf community as a legitimate minority group, they would soon be forced to admit that they know little about the structure of the community and that Deaf people could probably help themselves a lot better than Hearing people can.

It's very important that Hearing teachers can use sign language-deaf culture and the deaf community are such important areas it's worth having University degrees in these areas. Hearing teachers should not be uncommitted.
They should have a full knowledge of the issues involved in educating deaf children, and be confident they are teaching in the way the Deaf community wants.

(Interview with B)

Parent involvement is also crucial:

I would try to get a mix of hearing parents with a deaf child, Deaf parents with a deaf child and Deaf parents with a hearing child to get a variety of views, and Deaf involvement to fight and fight to the death to make the government and the Education Department aware that the deaf child's language is Auslan, not Signed English.

(Interview with H)

The Australian Association of the Deaf emphasises the importance of language training in Auslan for all persons associated with the education and development of the deaf child:

Language training in Auslan must be provided for parents of Deaf children. This can be done with the involvement of Deaf people, other professionals and parents in a comprehensive early intervention program which aims at first language acquisition in Auslan and appropriate training and support for parents.

(Australian Association of the Deaf Inc 1991:2)

Cummins (1976) presents a theoretical framework for understanding a bilingualism methodology which would accompany such a linguistic minority/dual category membership. He stresses the
interdependence of both languages suggesting that the development of skills in the second language of the child is a function of the level of the child's competence in his or her first language:

The cognitive advantages of bilingualism are achieved only when a 'threshold' level of competence is achieved in the first language before the second language is introduced .... A child who is immersed in the new language before he or she has developed competency in his or her native language may encounter academic and cognitive disadvantages.

(Cummins 1976:64)

The implications of Cummins' research for the immersion of the deaf child of Deaf parents into the English language with all education in English from the age of diagnosis (usually before age 2) are enormous. The level of sign language competence cannot possibly be at this 'threshold' level of competence at age 2,3,4 or 5 when deaf children start their education so even deaf children of Deaf parents do not 'de facto' currently receive a bilingual education. Bilingualism and the use of Auslan offers enormous potential for all deaf children, regardless of the degree of their hearing loss or their potential for speech.

To enable bilingual and bicultural educational programs to be introduced, there is a need for more Deaf professionals. Training and recruitment programs should be reviewed and modified to ensure that they do not
discriminate against Deaf people. Schools for the Deaf should employ Deaf professionals in teaching, counselling and other professional capacities. Regular schools and other colleges should examine their Equal Employment Opportunity practices and make provisions that allow Deaf teachers to be employed.

(Australian Association of the Deaf Inc 1991:2)

CRITIQUE OF ORALIST METHODOLOGIES.

The integration of the deaf with hearing children is not the desired goal. For every deaf child the desired goal is not only that they are achieving academically and learning how to become independent adults but, just as important, that they grow up with positive self images and emotional well being. If deaf children are to be educated in an environment with hearing children, then safeguards need to be built-in which assure positive emotional growth, as well as scholastic growth. As Mervin D Garretson (1981) states:

"Over zealous and poorly informed groups have determined that the least restrictive education environment for deaf children lies in wholesale mainstreaming in the regular public school system. We need to come to grips with this problem of naivety about the unique communication barriers imposed by hearing loss. The law must clearly state the the most appropriate placement takes precedence over simplistic interpretations of the least restrictive environment."

(Garretson quoted in Gannon 1981:397)
In an interview with a Deaf adult, it was pointed out that the unique communication barriers imposed by hearing loss, when not addressed, serve to separate hearing children from deaf children in an integrated school environment:

I regularly visit the (Signed English Unit) at the school, and my view is when I see the hearing parents of the deaf children there hoping their deaf child is mixing with the hearing children that it doesn't work. Mixing hearing children with deaf children never works - the deaf stick together and the hearing stick together. Each group has its own identity, and the children stay in their own groups, because of the communication. *(Interview with F)*

The AAD stresses that severely and profoundly deaf integrated students should have access to interpreters and teachers able to sign using Auslan. However this communication triad can only be met by teachers and interpreters who are fluent Auslan users, or the deaf student's right to educational access through Auslan cannot be achieved.

Deaf children in America today are experiencing isolation to a greater degree than at any other time in recent history. Ironically, the isolation of deaf children is occurring largely through the misapplication of a concept which promotes the integration of deaf children into the mainstream. The bitter lessons of history clearly tell us
that the most certain way to destroy a culture is to isolate its members.

(Johnson 1989:20)

The reality of integration is often less a move towards the mainstream than it is a cost-effective charade. Mainstream classes for deaf children frequently include minimal interaction with regular students in classes such as Home Science, Industrial Arts and Sport because communication opportunities in class are subjugated to meeting curriculum needs, and potential integration often occurs only during lunch periods and outside exercise. Regularly such times see deaf and hearing students congregating into their respective communication cliques.

So, the mere physical presence of deaf children in a school does not guarantee integration. In fact, this experience can be negative for deaf children if efforts to sensitise and educate teachers, students and parents from the hearing population and to teach them sign are not made.

Intrinsic to bilingual/bicultural approaches for the education of deaf children are the establishment and maintenance of large schools for deaf children, courses in sign language up to University level and a sign language video service. As discussed earlier, in bilingualism the educational program is initially a monolingual program which concentrates on fluency in sign language as the target language. It requires the development of appropriate resources to teach parents and train teachers in sign language. After sign language fluency is achieved, then the program slowly changes into a bilingual
approach with the spoken language becoming an equally important part of the teaching curriculum.

The research previously cited in the area of bilingual education indicates that a bilingual/bicultural approach to the education of deaf children is potentially an exciting and productive alternative to the current monolingual approach.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF DEAF ADULTS.

Adults who are Deaf have an important role to play in the development and education of deaf children and the interaction of Deaf adults with parents, deaf children and teachers can enrich the socialisation of the deaf child. One interviewee reported that at their school:

_The Crafts teacher and the Typing teacher were Deaf - they were the only two Deaf teachers we had. When I was in Crafts I was always so keen to go into those classes. I used to count the minutes before we'd go in because we'd talk and talk with the Deaf teachers - we communicated so well. The marks I got in those subjects were my top marks compared with my other subjects at school because I would be very comfortable with the communication and very excited with those two Deaf teachers._

(Interview with I)
Another said that:

*Deaf adults in the classroom as teachers would give so much more than just education. They would also give self esteem and an “it's OK to be deaf” attitude.*

(Interview with D)

Role models were important for Deaf interviewees:

*Deaf children should have role models to know that Deaf people can be in authority also, like hearing people. Deaf people can lead. Also to see that it’s OK to be deaf, and OK to talk in sign language.*

(Interview with D)

The employment of Deaf teachers has a two fold benefit. It provides students with adult models of sign language and it provides students with Deaf adults to serve as models in a wider sense than linguistic modelling. Both factors are vital to the Deaf teachers serving as role models and increasing the career and achievement aspirations of deaf children. A Deaf teacher of the deaf commented:

*Now I've reached my goal and I've become a teacher of the deaf. I think now I can practise my views and really try and give deaf children the chance to have an easier way to receive their education. Hopefully I will have better relationships with them when they can tell me their problems and I can draw on my own experience to try and...*
help them. That's something I would have loved when I was at school.

(Interview with J)

Many Deaf adults now urge the return to large schools for deaf children rather than the current practice of isolating deaf children into schools where at the most they may have a peer group of ten deaf children.

I would like there to be a large special school for deaf children, and for the Deaf people to be teachers there. That would give a good quality understanding in the communication because it would be the same culture and the same language between the teacher and the student.

(Interview with B)

Deaf people I interviewed stressed that large schools for the deaf were essential as they enable Deaf teachers to gain employment more easily, and promote higher achievement among deaf peer groups drawn from a larger population of deaf students attending one large school for the deaf:

I felt at home at the school for the deaf because I felt at last that I had found my own kind.

(Interview with C)

For Deaf students, adherence to the usual curricula taught in their natural language of sign would foster positive self images, and
learning would not be undermined by ineffective communication methods:

You've got to open up the way for Deaf people to become teachers, lawyers, doctors and gain respect from people in the general community.

(Interview with D)

Exposure to Deaf adults in professional roles would also help to remove the misconceptions that many deaf children have about life after childhood:

Deaf adults should be into the schools showing deaf children what Deaf people's lives are like. Once I went to the school and one deaf child said to me "Are you deaf?" I said yes - he was surprised because he thought that when he became older he would become hearing.

(Interview with F)

Arguments in favour of the gains to be had from the employment of Deaf teachers are not only based on the findings in educational settings where Deaf teachers are employed, but in research into how the perceived status of the individual doing the educational modelling affects learning. Hoemann and Farquharson (1982) note that nonlinguistic factors such as the perceived status of the individual doing the modelling may affect the likelihood of the child being receptive to training. These studies indicate that motivation may be a factor which affects the outcome of the training studies, the
likelihood of generalisation to other environments and eventually the overall capability and interest which the deaf child or adult displays in communication, particularly with Hearing people.

With generally negative attitudes towards education, English, grammar and Hearing authority figures and overwhelming feelings of inferiority, frustration and failure, deaf students are not positively motivated to communicate in the ways which are encouraged by Hearing society.

(Hoemann and Farquharson 1982:9)

The employment of Deaf teachers to teach deaf children thus can enhance their education not only because of more ready communication between teacher and pupil but also because Deaf teachers can be expected to have a particularly sympathetic interest in the results of their teaching, to be particularly good at matching instruction to their pupils' abilities and to be particularly ready to spend time with them. Vitigliano and Licata (1989) in comparing Hearing teacher and Deaf teacher pupil control concluded that:

Deaf teachers generally were able to pick up on the precipitative communication and byplay among students who had potential for classroom disruption. Hearing teachers often missed this byplay and had to intervene at an escalated level of classroom misbehaviour.
As one deaf teacher reported: "It is harder for the hearing to act as role models, because they view deafness as a handicap rather than the basis for potential".

(Vitigliano and Licata 1987:203)

Caccamaise, Garretson and Bellugi's study of Deaf leadership adds further evidence to the growing body of research that Deaf adults as well as Hearing adults do have the capacity to be fully involved in deaf education. They concluded that:

*Deafness is not necessarily a handicap in leadership behaviour and in many ways may be a definite asset. The important thing is removal of communication and attitudinal barriers which can then lead to excellent rapport between Deaf supervisors and their staffs.*

(Caccamaise, Garretson and Bellugi 1982:39)

Verlinde concludes her study of Deaf adult learners thus:

*The findings from this study suggest that an alternative form of education is needed which is able to combine both the empowerment and fellowship achieved through networks with education and training efforts that acknowledge the reality of structural discrimination against Deaf people and the need for collective political action to overcome the barriers to participation which Deaf learners have faced.*

(Verlinde 1987:116)
During the 1980s deaf welfare organisations reported that demand has grown for information and instruction in Auslan, the sign language of the Deaf community in preference to Signed English. One obstacle in satisfying this demand has been the lack of research into Auslan, but the Auslan dictionary of Johnston (1989) overcomes part of this difficulty since it provides a detailed record of the sign language of the Australian deaf community. Many Deaf adults have had several years' experience in teaching Auslan in the community to Deaf or Hearing people and NSW TAFE and the Adult Evening College for Deaf/Hearing Impaired have recently developed an extensive curricula for the teaching of Auslan. Classes for the learning of Auslan are essential for young deaf students given the importance of sign language in being accepted as a member of the Deaf community. At present, deaf children are not being provided with the Auslan skills needed to choose either to function as effective members of the Deaf community or to facilitate access to adult Deaf education.

This paper has examined the three fundamentals of "no sign language, disability context and no Deaf teachers" on which the current practice in deaf education in NSW is erected, with particular emphasis on how each of these challenges the major elements of any culture i.e. language, institutional arrangements and values/moral imperatives. It is my conclusion that sign language must be introduced into the deaf education system, to enable deaf children to have a choice of access to the language of sign as well as to the language of English. I further conclude that deaf education should be within a bilingual/bicultural philosophical framework, with the essential employment of Deaf teachers.
AN INTERIM SOLUTION - DUAL CATEGORY MEMBERSHIP.

Furthermore, it is essential that educational administrators in deaf education be educated in the alternative model of Deaf people as a linguistic minority, and allocate dual category membership status to deaf children.

Ladd (1987) argues that:

*Major problems have been created this century by lumping deaf and disabled people together. The new model of deaf people as a linguistic minority is clearly the model which, if implemented, will solve most of the problems of deaf people. Dual category membership must urgently be established and accepted by disability professionals in order to prevent one major abuse of single-category thinking - the obsession that deaf children should be mainstreamed at all costs.*

(Ladd 1987:199)

Braden argues that there are only two functional impairments in which prelingually deaf children are correctly defined as ‘disabled’, given the qualification that within constructionist theories there are no disabled children in any absolute sense. These areas are language-centred disability and sound-centred disability. As I have established earlier in this text, the current language-centred disability status occurs in a listening/spoken English framework,
where the potential of the language skills accessible to a deaf child via the visual/gestural language of sign language is suppressed. Thus the enormity of the literacy problem, where deaf school leavers characteristically leave school with an English reading age of 8.5 years and functional illiteracy, is a genuine language-centred disability.

The major sound-centred disability associated with deafness is use of the telephone, a sonic instrument where it could be argued a disability-oriented solution is required. However when you have worked with born-deaf professional colleagues as I have who establish work and social environments which bypass the telephone (via teletypewriters for the deaf, deskside Fax machines, print-out pagers and answering machines/clerical support), one is sharply reminded to what extent deafness as a handicap is interactionally defined. The technology exists. It is just that the Hearing majority do not design work and social life to encompass it.

Educational administrators and Hearing teachers of the deaf must begin to bring about the changes sought at the Deaf Way Conference held in Washington, D.C. in 1989. This conference was an historic event, where 6,000 Deaf and hearing people gathered for 6 days and nights in a unique celebration of the achievements and artistic skills of Deaf people. Educators of deaf children might well benefit from paying attention to the scholars, professionals, artists and performers from the 75 different countries who shared their knowledge and skills on a range of topics covering the four themes of: Deaf history, Deaf culture, Deaf language and the Deaf arts.
The XI Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf held in Tokyo in July 1991 similarly stressed the need to depathologise and humanise deafness and to introduce a 'wellness' concept:

The importance of the wellness model is stressed, especially as it relates to deaf people themselves, their families, and professional people who work with them. The presentation makes it clear that depathologization does not mean de-emphasis of assistance and services for deaf people who need them. Rather, it is an attempt to place deafness in its proper perspective, with more emphasis on deaf people's inherent abilities, assets, strengths and potential for continuous growth and development. We need to learn about these well adjusted deaf people. Armed with such knowledge, wisdom learned from them, and examples, we will be in a far better position to help many other deaf people achieve psychosocial health, effectiveness, self sufficiency, equality and happiness.

(Sussman 1991:11)

Throughout this thesis I have explored assumptions and routine practices of the Hearing which increase the limitations of deafness beyond those caused by the impairment. As Ladd concludes,

The very minimum one can ask for is the return of Deaf teachers to the system, the compulsory training of teachers in sign language, Deaf history and Deaf culture
and a major review of the policy of mainstreaming, leading to a half-way return to the oldest concepts of the deaf school. Parents should have the right to accurate information about the above, and the chance to learn sign language and participate in the deaf community, thus enriching it.

(Ladd 1987:198)

An immediate achievement of the alternative model proposed in this thesis is however not imminent for the reasons contained herein. As Higgins cautions:

We should be cautious, however, as we view the future of the deaf. The history of other outsider groups warns us that centuries of oppression and neglect will not be righted in a few years.... Therefore, with an optimism tempered by the history of other outsider groups, I look forward to the future of those who are outsiders in a hearing world.

(Higgins 1980:182)
APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS WITH DEAF ADULTS

A major part of this Masters Thesis work involved addressing the problems involved in interviewing 10 members of the Deaf community about their lives and their views on deaf educational issues. This exploratory study uses a qualitative research method of open-ended, intensive interviews conducted with the individual Deaf adults. Bogdan and Bilken (1983:20) argue that qualitative methods offer a potential for understanding the perspectives of "the powerless and the excluded - those individuals who have never felt valued or represented." Face to face interviewing is thus an indispensable tool for the naturalistic researcher. However there are some important points to note when interviewing Deaf people that are not alluded to or covered in any of the standard literature on interviewing. Where much material was available to guide the interviewer in the design of schedules for women, young and old, native and overseas born, there were very few hints available to anyone wanting to interview the Deaf, blind or significantly disabled. For these reasons this study began life as a series of interviews conducted to gather some exploratory data and to see if interviewing could be made to work. If the perspectives of the Deaf were sought, it seemed important to find a way they could have their experiences recorded.

The study used semi-structured, open-ended interviews which were taped using a dictaphone. The interviews were conducted with the author using Auslan and simultaneous interpretation of the Deaf
adults' views into standard English were later produced as written transcripts. In the case of interviews involving Deaf individuals, the interviewer must take special precautions not to intimidate or overwhelm the Deaf person during the interview conversation. It is essential to establish an atmosphere of trust and comfort where neither the interviewer nor the Deaf person feels reluctant to repeat questions or ask for clarification. Moreover it is important for the interviewer to play down aspects of professional demeanour in order to put the Deaf person at ease. The purposes of naturalistic inquiry which focus on the multiple perspectives and multiple realities of Deaf people are best served by non standardised interviews. Naturalistic enquiry in which the interviewer is a human instrument allows the interviewer to be responsive to contextuality by observing body language and gesturing cues which provide data. Sign language relies heavily on both hence is a rich source of opportunity for data collection of Deaf adults in naturalistic community settings.

The purpose of the interviews was to record the attitudes and educational experiences of the Deaf people and their views on deaf education policy. Four broad interview topics were developed (1) their view of their life; 2) their educational experiences as a child; 3) the type of educational model they would implement for deaf education and 4) the advice they would give to Hearing parents with a newborn child on how to make the NSW deaf education system work for their child] from a combination of research into deafness through the relevant literature discussed earlier, and through discussions with members of the Deaf community. The four interview topics were supplemented by other questions during the
interviews to elicit the Deaf person's views relating to specific issues e.g. Childhood involvement with Deaf adults, technology; ability of teachers and teacher training.

A limitation inherent in interviewing Deaf adults is the communication gap which exists between the interviewer and the Deaf adults. Although I am proficient in Signed English from my career of 17 years as a teacher and social worker with Deaf people, and although my receptive levels of Auslan are adequate for basic communication, I do not have sufficient Auslan competence to ensure that the interviews could achieve the relaxed conversation level so important for qualitative research studies of this type. The use of an Auslan-proficient interpreter (speaking into a dictaphone) in 8 of the 10 interviews closed this communication gap between myself and the Deaf adults. The remaining 2 Deaf adults chose to voice their interviews themselves, preferring not to use an interpreter. These two interview tapes presented more difficulties in transcription than the former because of each Deaf individual's variations in pronunciation and speech clarity, but they eliminated any variations that might occur between the Deaf person's interpretation from Auslan to spoken English and an Auslan interpreter's reverse interpretation.

Reverse interpretation is the process by which the Deaf person's views are interpreted into spoken English. Within this process, the signed language, facial expressions, body language and gestures of a Deaf person are translated by a hearing person into words. Reverse interpretation of the interviews was chosen by 8 of the 10 Deaf people. As the syntax of Auslan is different from standard
English, the interpreter made only the grammatical changes necessary for an understandable interpretation of the Deaf person’s views. This entails the maintenance of the intent, mood and emotions of the Deaf person’s Auslan.

Reverse interpretation of interview data poses a problem that is similar to the interpreting process between other languages. The interpreter must remain very close to the actual responses given, and use concepts and vocabulary that are as close an approximation as possible to what the Deaf people has signed. The interpreter must also be non-judgemental and not interfere in the interviewing process. The interview methodology used in this study is similar to video interviews in Auslan currently being utilised in deafness projects such as the Deafness Resources Project currently being conducted by Brisbane University. A more reliable interview methodology is obtained in research studies in which the researcher is a native user of sign language e.g. the studies of Carol Padden. The methodology used in these 10 interviews is however not used by most researchers who rarely undertake this approach, so that the views of Deaf people are not only not usually sought, but standard research reproduces the exclusion of Deaf people from their own experience.

The 10 Deaf people interviewed whose forbearance could be guaranteed are members of the Deaf community known to me through my associations with the deaf community. They are concerned about deaf education which they see as important to their welfare as Deaf people in the deaf community. In order to reflect the 90% of deaf children with hearing parents and 10% of
deaf children with Deaf parents incidence statistics, 9 of the 10 Deaf adults interviewed have hearing parents and one has Deaf parents. The age range (20-50) and the sex of the Deaf people interviewed (8 females and 2 males) were not considered. The audiological status (mild, severe or profound) was not considered, as the primary identifying characteristic of those interviewed is social deafness i.e. self-identification as a member of the Deaf community.

The data collected proved very rich, although it cannot be considered valid or reliable by conventional criteria. Rather, I have chosen to use the data collected as illustrative of points made in the text, and suggestive of the ways in which Australian Deaf people view their lives. What is now required is a study with a larger sample and more rigorous schedule to gather the data that would allow generalisations to be made with some security.
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