

Deaf Culture
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In the book "Introduction To American Deaf Culture ", there are many different views and values described regarding the Deaf community and Deaf culture. In chapter one, the main point being discussed is an introduction about the Deaf community and culture of Deaf people. There are also several examples and stories about the negative connotation towards Deaf culture and community. When children are first born they are required to pass a hearing test. If your child fails the hearing test they immediately tell the parent that they must go forward with a surgery that will help correct their hearing. This surgery is known as a cochlear implant. "Professionals often materialize to support parents through this "difficult" journey ahead and help them to rehabilitate, medicate, and fix their deaf child, with the obvious goal of overcoming the disability". Not only is a deaf child looked at as if he or she has a disability, but their parents and doctors are looking for a way the child can conquer their deafness. Society has consistently looked at deaf people in a negative way and labeled them as disabled.

While talking about the Deaf community and the culture of Deaf people, the book recognizes one of the most important people in the Deaf community, Laurent Clerc. Laurent Clerc was a Deaf teacher that was recruited and arrived from France in 1815. He co-founded the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut with Thomas Gallaudet. Once the

American School for the Deaf was created, this was the start of when “American deaf culture was born”(p.3). This school allotted for many Deaf students to come together and congregate with others just like them. Deaf students and teachers were able to be surrounded by people like them and made them feel more comfortable. The result was a more positive learning environment than what had existed in the past.

In chapters two and three the word culture comes up quite frequently. The cultural differences between Deaf culture and Hearing culture are very different. Although the Deaf community is relatively Deaf people, there are some circumstances where a hearing person will be allowed to join. In this case they will receive the title “HEARING-BUT”. People who receive this title must have “exhibited a positive attitude toward Deaf people and a deep respect for Deaf culture in general”(p.48).

Throughout the Deaf community there are terms and labels given only by Deaf people. For instance, the term ““Deafies” is often used among Deaf people when referring to their own kind”(p.53). There are several labels given and used in the Deaf community, but there is one specific term the Deaf strongly discourage and dislike. The term “hearing-impaired”, which is the one they dislike the most. In the Deaf community, Deaf people do not feel impaired in any way, shape, or form. This term is used in today's society quite often by hearing people who do not know the difference between Deaf and “hering-impaired”. The hearing world is so involved within themselves that they do not take the time to understand or even respect the Deaf community or culture. Hearing people often live their lives as members of multiple communities. As hearing people it is much easier for them to be involved in the subcultures of America, such as athletics, choir, and different types of clubs that require specialized knowledge or skill. The Deaf community is one way the Deaf are able to feel comfortable and welcome, but they find it is more difficult when wanting to be a part of another community outside their own.

Another aspect talked about during class discussion was audism. Audism in today's society happens frequently. As hearing people, we do not realize the lack of communication that

can occur while being Deaf. An example of audism playing a major role was in the deaflympics. The captions for the opening ceremony had a malfunction and were not projected for the Deaf to see what was being said. Therefore the hearing people kept on with the ceremony without thinking about the communication barrier. While the ceremony was happening a person unplugged the electricity and everything shut off. Once the hearing people could not hear, the ceremony stopped. This example makes me realize how much hearing people do not think about the complications of communication for the Deaf.

Not only does the hearing world have its own culture, but has many different cultures within. In America we have many different traditions and what is known as the “Hallmark of American Culture”. This includes different holidays such as Christmas, Easter etc..

Overall the information and knowledge that I have gained from this reading and lecture have been beneficial and educational. Knowing more about the Deaf community I realize how unaware we are as hearing people. Even though people have all different types of cultures we need to be accepting. Learning about the Deaf culture was very interesting because not only was it cool to see how Deaf people view us hearing people, but I also got to be able see how the Deaf live on a daily basis.

I do not feel that sign language should be banned from the home when having a cochlear implant implanted. If you are born deaf there is no way you will be able to “cure” it. I feel that if your child is deaf you should teach them sign language and emerge himself into the Deaf culture. Even though they live in a predominantly hearing community, it is a great way to get them involved with other Deaf people who sign and are going through the same situation.

Deaf people are not people who have disabilities. They are fully capable of doing everything a hearing person can, they just can't hear.

Holcomb, Thomas K. *Introduction to American Deaf Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2013.