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Deaf Gain and Deaf Education: In Theory, In Practice, and Implications for Research.

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Deaf Gains in Education

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Agenda

- **TOPICS:** Questions
- **ALLEGORY:** What can we compare deaf gain to?
- **DEFINITION:** What is the theory of deaf gain?
- **LINKING:** How is deaf gain useful for theorizing educational practices and designing research?
- **CASE STUDY:** What does educational deaf gain research show?
- **DISCUSSION:** How can you apply deaf gain in your teaching and learning?

**Notes:**
All citations retain original (d/Deaf) capitalization. References are limited to: Bauman, H-D.L. and J.J. Murray (Eds.) *Deaf Gain: Raising the Stakes for Human Diversity.* (2014). University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.
An Allegory for Deaf Gain

- Imagine the country Greece in your mind’s eye.
- Conjure up an image that, to you, *encapsulates the overall feel and look* of the Greek nation. Maybe you have taken a trip to Greece in order to see its historical sites. Maybe you have only seen photos of the Acropolis or the Aegean sea.
- In any event, take a moment to consider the following question:
  - *What do you see* when you envision Greece?
What do you see when you think of Greece?
What do you see when you think of Greece?

Ancient Greeks had no word to describe the color ‘blue.’

How is it that a people, whose country is blue from sky to sea, had no word to describe that color?

Deaf Gain is our ‘blue’.
Two Theoretical Views of Deafness

Deaf Gain names and describes (emic) phenomena of deafness that are taken for granted among deaf people but may not be widely known outside of (etic) deaf communities. (Bahan, 2014; Kusters, 2014). Deaf gain is the research new term used to describe what deaf people have always known.
Extant Definitions of Deaf Gain

- “advantages that are specific to deaf children and adults”
  (Hauser & Kartheiser, 2014, p. 134)

- “affordances that convey the Deaf way of doing, seeing, and representing”
  (Raike, Pylvänen, & Rainò, 2014, p. 415).

- “biological, social, and cultural … difference”
  (Bauman & Murray, 2014, p. xv)

- “to combat the abnormalizing characteristics of deafness as ‘hearing loss,’ we get Deaf Gain”
  (Tabery, 2014, p. 23)

“Deaf Gain and Sign Gain can work together to promote healthy cognitive, linguistic, and social-cultural development in deaf children”
Dye, 2014, p. 207
Deaf Gain is an **ideological inversion**.

Bauman and Murray’s Deaf Gain is a new name for an old idea. It is the **ideological inverse** of ‘hearing loss.’ Deaf Gain challenges traditional deficit ideologies and medical pathology.

Deaf Gain grows theories like deafhood, deaf epistemology, and deaf ontology.
Synthesis of Deaf Gain Theory

- Deafness is a part of, not apart from humanity.

- **Intrinsic deaf gains** include capacitating deaf people to leverage deaf being and knowing in schools and societies.

- **Extrinsic deaf gains** highlight deaf contributions in arts and sciences that benefit all humankind. Deaf Gain theory places deafness in a wider social ecology.
Domains of Deaf Gain in Educational Research

- **Deaf Ontology** — Being deaf in the world
  - Cognitive, psychological, and sensory gains

- **Deaf Epistemology** — Knowing deaf in the world
  - Sociocultural, linguistic, and communicative gains

- **Deaf Education** — Deaf social learning and teaching
  - Gains for bilingual education, curriculum design, and visual pedagogy
Cognitive, psychological, and sensory gains

The deaf brain is shaped by reduction in audiological capacity and by enhancements to visual and manual systems. Loss is offset by gain; simultaneously, they shape bodies, minds, and societies.

Deaf gains are empirically measureable. They occur in visual, kinetic, and tactile sensory systems and languages and cultures adapted to them.

(Bahan, 2014; Dye, 2014; Petitto, 2014; Sutherland & Rogers, 2014)
Educational Research Domains of Deaf Gain
Deaf Epistemology – knowing deaf

Sociocultural, linguistic, and communicative gains

Deaf gain is a domain of bioethics and biocultural diversity. It exposes destructive ideologies about deafness and redefines them from a prosocial and emic theoretical stance.

Deaf Gain consolidates beneficent research about deaf people and the social use of signed languages in deaf cultures and school settings

(Bauman & Murray, 2014; Calton, 2014; Kusters, 2014).
Gains for bilingual education, curriculum design, visual pedagogy

Deaf education has a **conflictive history** and “dreary focus on remediating hearing loss” (Bauman & Murray, 2014, p. xxxii). Reimagining deaf education through deaf gain provides a pathway to **envision and enact** new methods, new standards, and new participatory spaces for deaf learners.

Learning theory and teaching theory are enhanced by **collaboration with deaf educators and deaf students**.

(Garcia & Cole, 2014, Raike, Pylvänen, & Rainò, 2014; Sutherland & Rogers, 2014).
Case Studies of Deaf Gain Pedagogy

“Co-Design From Divergent Thinking”

Antti Raike, Aalto University
Suvi Pylvänen, University of Kymenlaakso
Päivi Rainò, Humak University

Abstract:

Deaf Gain Pedagogy is reciprocal and recursive. Here, deaf gain theory is used in pedagogical praxis in two case studies in Finnish higher education. Two projects involved designing and refining educational web-based tools for interactive curricula. One set of tools were developed in collaboration with deaf graduate students who were teachers-in-training and the second involved deaf community members. Findings show that deaf students excel in classroom learning when they are encouraged to explore multimodal communication, non-hierarchical power structures, and dynamic interaction among participants and course materials.
“Co-Design From Divergent Thinking”  

Co-Design from Divergent Thinking

Cinema Sense [Case 1]
- N=7 deaf bilinguals
- N=5 hearing monolinguals

Knack [Case 2]
- N=16 deaf, hard of hearing, and dyslexic deaf community members
Theoretical Framework:

1) **Co-designed curricula** “support effective learning and personal reflection by augmenting collaborative knowledge-building with peers” (p. 402).

2) **Communities of Practice**: “humans learn effectively by doing; people become experts through participation in an expert community” (p. 411).

3) **Divergent Thinking**: “the essential element of creativity [that] requires flexibility” (p. 405).

Conceptual Framework:

1) Traditional deaf education **encourages assimilation** to the “hearing world.” Deaf students are often **marginalized** in education systems. If used, Deaf values and languages are subtractive or exploited for normative purposes.

2) Deaf gain rejects the idea that deaf learners are passive subjects; instead, it considers them to be **dynamic agents**. Contemporary deaf education leverages visual strengths toward **prosocial educational development**.
CinemaSense [Case 1]

- Methodological Framework and Research Design:
  Qualitative Network Analysis. Purposive theoretical sampling for participants. There were two groups:

  **Novice designers** (n=7), deaf bilinguals (in Finnish Sign Language and Finnish), all Masters students majoring in Primary Education

  **Expert designers** (n=5), hearing (Finnish speakers), all Masters students majoring in Film arts

- Data Collection & Analysis:
  1) Data were collected over two years (2000-01)
  2) Three iterative re/design cycles occurred
  3) Film analysis, reflective writing, and student-produced graphic tools comprised the data corpus
Example Image from CinemaSense:

Notable Features:

- Networked concepts
- Visual hierarchies
- Process “Flows”
- Text augmented by shapes
- Dense, processual aesthetic
Knack [Case 2]

- Methodological Framework and Research Design:
  Qualitative Aesthetics Analysis. Purposive theoretical sampling for participants:
  - Deaf Community Members (n=16), all deaf community members, all stakeholders in the Knack project
  - Deaf (n=14),
  - Hard of hearing (n=2)
  - Dyslexic (n=4)

- Data Collection & Analysis:
  1) Data were collected over two years (2008-9)
  2) Three inquiry phases
  3) Thematic interviews, observations, focus groups, and Prototype-workshops comprised the data corpus
Example Image from Knack:

Notable Features:

- Sign language is centralized
- Icons for all navigation buttons
- Text balanced with imagery
- Interactive video interface
- Clear, sparse aesthetic
Findings 1:

Visual accessibility is differently defined by deaf and nondeaf groups

1) “Deaf people—whose language is visuospatial, based on [signed] gestures and movements—are more sensitive to visual elements than hearing people [...] Visual features of an interface may be more important for sign-language users than for mainstream users. Consequently, Deaf people have a smaller tolerance for visual clutter and discontinuity” (p. 415)

2) “…even if visual content was [central], ease of use and speed were equally important…participants yearned for visual guidance [to facilitate ergonomics, such as] icons for navigation, photos to illustrate the context of signing, colors to visually differentiate different sections of the site, and visual responses to mouse movements to clarify functionality” (p. 413)
Findings 2:

**Problem-posing education evinces dynamic interaction in deaf pedagogy**

1) “Traditional [didactic education models] may fail to provide Deaf students with competencies to solve the complex and ill defined problems of professional life and thus precludes Deaf Gain in co-design projects. [Instead], students should learn to **construct knowledge through problem solving** in communities of practice” (p. 404)

2) “In developing tools for collaborative learning, one cannot advance straightforwardly from ideas to their implementation; a more complex process is needed in which **ideas and visions coevolve** with the experiences and practices of the user communities involved” (p. 408)
Deaf Gain Education Research

- Implications for Education:

  “We can now imagine [...] a Deaf Gain-focused education that maximizes the visual-spatial-kinetic nature of deaf ways of being and the use of sign language to produce cosmopolitan, technologically-savvy, yet collectivist global citizens who live in deep intersubjective reciprocity with fellow citizens of the world”

  - Bauman & Murray, (2014) p. xxxiii

  “In education, Deaf teachers develop pedagogical strategies such as performance, storytelling, and visual-arts production, which are indispensable [tools] in Deaf education. [Deaf learners] present cultural artifacts that reflect the singularity of their visual, linguistic, literary, sporting, political, and material experiences, as in the use of technologies [for education].

  - de Quadros, Strobel, & Masutti (2014) p. 98
“Deaf Gain Education Research”

- Implications for Research

“Deaf gain research practices [focus] on the development and use of ‘visually reliant tools’ as a method for collecting data […] Deaf researchers [use of] visual methodologies result in a view of Deaf abilities rather than disabilities”

  - Bauman & Murray, 2014, p. xxxvi

“Research paradigms need to be Deaf-centered and visually oriented […] We need to [develop] Deaf-centered research that is appropriately designed, in order to capture Deaf people’s perspectives and linguistic and cultural characteristics in a positive way”

  - Sutherland & Rogers, 2014, p. 280
Discussion Prompts

1) THINK: Take 2-3 minutes to think about, then write down a specific educational problem that you encountered this week. You may focus on the education problem from the perspective of a learner, educator, or researcher.

2) PAIR & SHARE: Turn to a neighbor and describe the problem you encountered. Use any and all resources (drawing, writing, pantomime) and languages (ASL, ...

3) INVERT THE PROBLEM: After you have described your problem, let your partner invert the problem. You should try to use Deaf Gain as a theoretical lens to “flip” the problem into an opportunity for building knowledge.

4) SYNTHESIS: If time allows, we can share a few findings from the discussion session and bring together our findings using thread for learning, teaching, and research.
Thank you!


- https://academic.oup.com/jdsde/article/21/2/234/2404228

I highly recommend that you find a copy of the book and read it yourself. My graduate students find it very useful and I hope you do too.

- Publisher’s Site:
  https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/deaf-gain

If you are interested in my research, please check out:

- https://rit.academia.edu/MichaelSkyer

Deaf gain is our “blue”. Be blue; think blue; and share it too.