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Book Review

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Toward Effective Public School Programs for Deaf Students: Context, Process, and Outcomes by Thomas N. Kluwin, Donald F. Moores, and Martha Gonter Gaustad, Editors. (New York, Teachers College Press, 1992.)

The field of education of deaf people has a long and sometimes sordid history, punctuated by vigorous and frequently heated debate. The recent trend toward mainstreaming deaf students is no exception. Hailed by some as breakthrough and others as a curse, the placement of increasing numbers of deaf children in public schools has proved a challenge for even the most enlightened and dedicated educators. Are deaf children better off academically in mainstream classes? Are they accepted socially by hearing peers? By what criteria should mainstream programs be evaluated?

While *Toward Effective Public School Programs for Deaf Students* does not provide all the answers, it offers a wealth of information to those who must grapple with these and other critical issues in making educational decisions regarding deaf students. As noted by Kluwin in the Introduction, the primary purpose of this book is to define and clarify the issues involved in education of deaf children and youth in mainstream public school settings. Drawing largely on data collected through the midpoint of a five-year study of 15 public school districts around the United States, the book offers readers a discussion of some of the most current and large scale research available on mainstream educational programs for deaf students.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part describes the context of educational programs, and includes chapters on the history of school placements of deaf students, descriptions of the concept of "local school program," ethnic and

cultural considerations, the influence of family factors on school achievement, and issues of educational interpreting. In the second part, the focus shifts to the process and outcomes of schooling. Chapters in this section cover communication patterns among deaf and hearing adolescents, the role of sport and extracurricular activities in shaping socialization patterns, deaf students' views of their social relationships, the efficacy of mainstreaming from the classroom perspective, an analysis of the contributions of school factors to the success of deaf students, and the career development of deaf youth.

There are several strengths to this book. First, it is well organized. The distinction between the context of educational programs and their processes and outcomes is a good one, encouraging readers to consider issues which are often overlooked but which are critical to a comprehensive analysis of schooling. For example, the historical perspective described in Chapter 1 underscores the ways in which the fate of deaf people has been tied to that of immigrants, blacks, and people with other kinds of disabilities, and the influence of eugenics and racism on the development of educational programs for deaf students.

Second, in most chapters the authors begin with a comprehensive review of the literature, often including descriptions of existing theories and interactive models. They then build on this earlier work to develop a model to address their area of focus. This is very helpful for the reader who is unfamiliar with the larger bodies of work, and provides all readers with a solid theoretical framework for understanding and applying the results of the current project.

Third, the book provides a great deal of new information. As noted earlier, much of the data presented is drawn from a longitudinal study involving 15 public school systems in the United

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States. This research project is one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind, and as such the results are of great value to those who seek to improve educational opportunities for deaf people.

There are two areas in the book which I feel might have been addressed differently. The first has to do with language, and involves issues of consistency and sensitivity. For example, in most chapters the terms "deaf" and sometimes "hard of hearing" are used, but in Chapters 8 and 11 the phrase "hearing impaired" is used. One is left wondering whether this is due to a fundamental difference in the populations discussed, or a simple inconsistency in choice of terms. The issue of sensitivity arises over the use of phrases such as "the deaf" and "the hearing impaired." It is now generally accepted that these phrases de-humanize those so denoted by portraying them solely in terms of impairment or hearing status; more appropriate phrases would be "deaf students," or "people who are deaf."

The second area of concern has to do with the degree to which the perspectives of deaf people are represented in this work. The book is written almost entirely by hearing people (eight of the ten contributors are hearing). Moreover, the extent to which deaf people have been involved in the design and implementation of the larger research project is not clear. While the research is sound and represents a valuable contribution to the field, it is also important that an enterprise of this magnitude provide opportunities for input by the people whose lives will be most affected by the results. This is especially the case when the topic is one which has engendered so much controversy. Opportunities for input may indeed have been created and simply not reflected in the final product. However, this leaves the work open to the criticism that it does not adequately reflect the perspectives of deaf educators, parents, and students. In lieu of inviting more deaf people to contribute chapters, the editors might have asked

deaf people to write commentaries at the end of individual chapters, collaborate in the interpretation of research findings, or write a preface or conclusion to the book. Perhaps in the final report—which I sincerely hope will be published in the near future—this will be addressed.

In summary, this book is an important resource for all those concerned with education of deaf students. Teachers, administrators, parents, students, and counselors will all find something of value in this work, and should add it to their personal and professional libraries. As Kluwin notes, those who approach this book seeking definitive answers regarding mainstreaming of deaf students will come away disappointed. However, those who seek new information to bring to bear on persistent problems will be more than satisfied.

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