

ODYSSEY



testing & deaf students

IN THE AGE OF THE

**no child left
behind act**

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EDUCATION CENTER

FALL/WIN 2005

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For Educators, Accountability Extends Beyond Test Scores

The No Child Left Behind Act has raised the bar for educators and ushered in an era of increased accountability. Assessment—evaluating our students' progress through a variety of measures in order to help them achieve—is an essential aspect of

accountability. In this issue of *Odyssey*, we consider the critical role of assessment as we respond to the No Child Left Behind mandate.

In the overview, Clerc Center program evaluator Linda Delk notes that assessment plays a meaningful role only when it is aligned with curriculum and instruction. Model Secondary School for the Deaf psychologist Eileen O'Toole demonstrates how schools can prepare students so that the standardized tests will reflect more accurately what their students know. Jane Nickerson, English professor at Gallaudet

University, reminds us that while we prepare our classes for required testing, portfolio development remains an effective way to look at the progress of individual students. Clerc Center transition coordinator Susan Jacoby and curriculum coordinator Matthew Goedecke affirm Nickerson's point and explain how the process of creating the portfolio is as important as the document itself. Nancy Braus, the mother of a deaf child from New England, expresses frustration with the way testing has seemed to reflect her daughter's deficits rather than her achievements.

Braus raises a critical point. The current emphasis on accountability and data seems to exclude everything other than test scores. In fact, there is evidence that student achievement scores rise when a number of other factors take place in the classroom. Educators who hold high expectations for their students, foster positive relationships with their students, and promote family involvement in their students' education are likely to make a significant difference in their students' learning. In the end it is this constellation of factors—high expectations, the sense of belonging that promotes a positive self-concept, and the support that family members provide to their children—that enables our students to achieve to their best potential.

At the Clerc Center, our response to No Child Left Behind has been to intensify efforts to align assessment, curriculum, and standards and to ensure that there are multiple ways to document student achievement. This occurs within a context where high expectations, positive teacher and staff relationships, and strong family involvement are promoted. After all, student achievement is what education is all about.

—Katherine A. Jankowski, Ph.D., Dean
Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center
Gallaudet University



On the cover: Assessment, always a critical factor in good teaching, has assumed even more importance as schools respond to the No Child Left Behind legislation. Photograph by Philip Bogdan.



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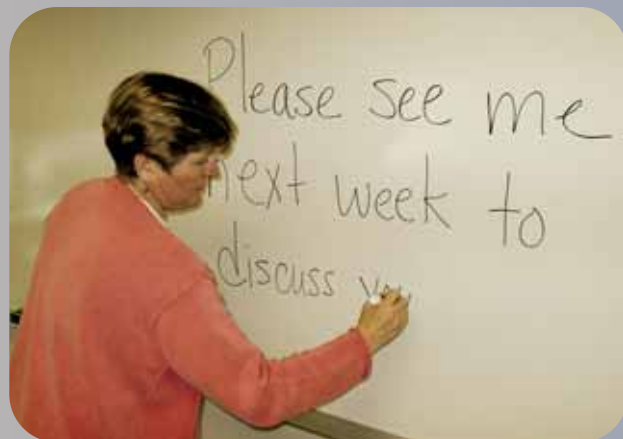
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Correction: The department name of one of the reviewers in last spring's *Odyssey* was incomplete. Arlene B. Kelly teaches in the Department of American Sign Language and Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University.

Special thanks to the student models for this issue: *Jene Kelly, Martin Ritchie, Darlene Jones, and Joseph Saccente* from the Model Secondary School for the Deaf, and *Marquita Whitfield and Miguel Ramos* and teacher *Ruth Reed* from Kendall Demonstration Elementary School.

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ODYSSEY

**LAURENT CLERC
NATIONAL DEAF
EDUCATION CENTER**

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

bringing together

instruction,
curriculum,
and assessment

ACHIEVING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

The No Child Left Behind Act is a landmark federal initiative designed to reduce the academic achievement gap between students who are achieving on grade level and students who are achieving below grade level. The law, passed in 2001, attempts to do this by guiding and supporting states' efforts to establish challenging standards, align performance assessments with those standards, deliver high quality instruction, and establish accountability reporting. This issue of *Odyssey* presents ideas and promising approaches to assessment and instruction that can also help deaf and hard of hearing children achieve high expectations.

—Linda Delk

ONE SCHOOL RESPONDS

outcomes for growth

students at the
Clerc Center are
expected to
demonstrate

- **Essential knowledge:** Students will acquire essential knowledge and skills in Language Arts, the Arts, Deaf Studies, Health, Physical Education, and Technology and be able to apply them in planning and carrying out complex projects.
- **Communication competence:** Students will achieve, to the best of their ability, a full repertoire of linguistic and communicative competence to use at their disposal in interaction with both deaf and hearing people.
- **Thinking skills:** Students will be critical, creative, and reflective thinkers, decision makers, and problem solvers who effectively cooperate and collaborate to achieve common goals in life situations and groupings which reflect cultural, social, and academic diversity.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Students will display emotional intelligence through a positive attitude, respect, and healthy patterns of behavior toward themselves and others.
- **Life planning:** Students will design, refine, and initiate a life plan based on self-exploration and experience that incorporates knowledge of their rights, available resources, and effective self-advocacy.

AT THE CLERC CENTER

assessment provides a guide to teaching

Linda Delk, Ph.D.,
is program evaluation
coordinator at the
Laurent Clerc National
Deaf Education Center
on the campus of
Gallaudet University in
Washington, D.C.

By Linda Delk

For educators of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, the No Child Left Behind Act, ideally implemented, allows for evaluation and assessment to proceed in meaningful ways for a group of students whose access to education and whose approach to learning may be different from that of their hearing peers. Assessment, as the author notes, has at its very roots the notion of care and individual focus. Aligned to the teaching that occurs in the classroom, assessment at once provides an invaluable tool for increasing student achievement and an appropriate response to No Child Left Behind.

The word “assess” has its roots in the Latin word “assessus,” meaning “to sit beside.” Teachers engage in assessment in this sense every day in their classrooms. Whenever students engage in learning activities, their teachers are there beside them, observing students’ responses, comparing those responses to expectations, and making immediate adjustments to instruction or planning the next steps to help students meet their expectations.

Whether a teacher literally sits beside one student or works with an entire class, assessment is the same basic process. When teachers make observations or gather information from students that they can use to gauge what students know or can do, they undertake a process of assessment.

Photography by John T. Consoli

Far right: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the three pillars of successful teaching.





But how do teachers know what kinds of observations to make about students' responses to instruction? What sources of assessment—other than their own observations—are available to teachers? What is the purpose of different types of assessment? And how can assessment information best be used to achieve learning results?

The answers may be found in school communities that have clear expectations about student outcomes, demonstrate

effective leadership, provide sound instruction that addresses the needs and capabilities of diverse populations of students, and have access to the resources needed to adequately support instruction.

At the Clerc Center Success Means Establishing Outcomes

In general, successful schools provide an integrated approach to education in which teaching leads students from what they

already know to what they need to know. At Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) of the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University, this begins by establishing major educational outcomes—results that students are expected to attain by graduation as a result of participation in a specific educational program.



The educators then established more detailed standards based on national standards in the content areas—interim steps for attaining outcomes measured at the completion of the third, fifth, eighth, and twelfth grades—and benchmarks—more detailed interim steps for attaining the standards—to be measured and assessed annually. This hierarchy of outcomes, standards, and benchmarks provides a framework for curriculum development.

Given this framework of learning expectations, the instructional teams at KDES and the departments at MSSD develop curriculum to ensure that students engage in learning activities that promote their attainment of the standards and benchmarks. Teachers and staff use curriculum mapping, a technique for documenting instruction, to facilitate the alignment of the instruction that takes place in

classrooms with the standards, and they identify instructional areas that need further development. When teachers and staff map what they have taught during the year, they document essential learning questions, related content and skills, assessments used, and learning activities. This helps ensure that students have systematic opportunities to learn the knowledge and skills and to develop the attitudes embodied in the outcomes, standards, and benchmarks.

Putting Together Assessments Integrating Portfolios and Standardized Tests

There is another way that curriculum and instruction have been designed to move students toward attainment of the standards and outcomes. Student portfolios are becoming an integral part of the MSSD high school program,

particularly as a way for students to work toward the communication, thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and life planning objectives and outcomes. A unique aspect of portfolio use at MSSD is that students themselves are responsible for developing their portfolios and for choosing the work they will include. Their portfolios provide evidence of their accomplishment of the educational objectives outcomes that are vital for successful transition to work, postsecondary education, and independent living. Portfolio development is as much process as it is product. An important part of that process is ongoing assessment. Assessment occurs as feedback from teachers and peers, but also as self-assessment as students become skilled in reflection about their own goals and what they need to do to accomplish them. In portfolio assessment, teachers sit beside students to coach, students sit beside peers to offer feedback, and students take a step back as they “sit beside” themselves to reflect on what and how they are learning. This type of criterion-referenced assessment is closely integrated with the instructional process, providing immediate, personalized feedback to students about what they have accomplished and what they need to continue working on.

Other types of assessment are less immediate, but nonetheless can provide important information about individuals and groups of students. Annual schoolwide assessments, like the Stanford Achievement Test, sample students’ academic learning on questions that reflect the scope of nationally



accepted curricula in reading, mathematics, and other academic subjects. To the extent that the instructional objectives on the Stanford reflect the content and cognitive processes included in the KDES and MSSD standards and the learning experiences to which students are exposed, this standardized norm-referenced achievement test provides another perspective on the progress students are making.

Focus On the Student Using Assessment to Adjust Curriculum

The KDES principal and instructional team leaders have been engaging in a different type of assessment. They have been sitting down together to review the results of student assessments. In team meetings, teachers and support services staff have been evaluating multiple year assessment data on the students on their teams to determine who is meeting expectations and making academic progress and who is not. They also look at the assessment tools, such as the Stanford, to better understand the content and processes the test is intended to assess and how this relates to the school's outcomes, standards, and benchmarks.

Digging deeper, they examine item analyses to assess the types of content, questions, and test taking skills that students do well on and those which are problematic. This type of professional engagement among educators captures another sense of "sitting beside" as assessment—teachers, staff, and principals taking the time to sit down together, discuss, and reflect upon what the body of assessment information about students can tell them about individuals and groups of students. Is everyone making progress? Are there any disparities among groups of students? What seem to be the strengths of the curriculum? What areas need improvement?

Using assessment information to answer these types of questions is

encouraged in an educational system that establishes standards for student achievement and designs and implements curriculum and instruction that gives all students sufficient opportunities to attain those standards. In addition, a combination of continuous individual

assessment that is closely tied to instruction and periodic group and schoolwide assessments that are aligned with standards provide feedback on the extent to which individual students and groups of students are meeting expectations. Expected outcomes and standards shape the curriculum and assessments are designed to reflect the objectives outcomes and standards; assessment data can then inform curriculum and instruction decisions that promote student progress.

With today's national focus on standards, assessment plays a key role. We need assessments to tell us not only about each student but about each school. Looking at scores on a school-by-school basis, we want to know if our schools are meeting standards. However, whole schools can only meet standards if there are high and appropriate



expectations for each child and effective instruction is differentiated so that each child can succeed.

Assessments, aligned with outcomes, standards, and benchmarks, and integrated with curriculum and instruction, provide educators with ways to continue sitting beside their students and understanding what helps them learn.

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For information about the standards at MSSD:

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/dess/standards/about.html>

For information about the curriculum at MSSD:

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/dess/curriculum/curriculum-mapping.html>

For information about the priorities at MSSD:

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/priorities/PSG-guide.html>

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how to help your students get the most out of the Stanford Achievement Test

By Eileen O'Toole

With a new 10th edition of the Stanford Achievement Test issued this year, including the set of statistical information that describes the performance of students who are deaf and hard of hearing (Gallaudet University, 2005), the author reflects on ways that teachers can assist deaf and hard of hearing students in improving their test results. A standardized test, the Stanford provides the same sets of questions in the same setting to students throughout the country and aligns with the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act.



At the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD), we have discovered how to effectively relate our students' educational experience to assessment while enriching and affirming content in the curriculum. No test is valid if it doesn't measure what students are learning. And no curriculum is useful if it doesn't teach students concepts on which they're going to be tested. The experience of MSSD shows a practical method for enabling students to get the most from their Stanford.

But it wasn't always this way. In fact, it began with an experience of disappointment and perplexity. It was a September morning in 1998, when my hopes rose as I looked at a set of student test scores in my mailbox. The scores, the result of the previous spring's testing, showed how our students had achieved on

Photography by John T. Consoli



the ninth edition of the Stanford Achievement Test. We—the teachers, the students, and myself, our school psychologist—had worked hard that year and I felt sure that we would see the results of our work reflected in our students’ test scores.

Twenty minutes later, anyone walking into my office would have sensed my disappointment.

While many eleventh graders had made impressive gains in reading comprehension, most ninth and tenth graders had not. Just as frustrating, the math results showed that approximately one-fourth of all students had taken an inappropriate level of the test. Their scores were either too high or too low; the test had been either too difficult or too easy. To obtain meaningful scores, the students would need to be retested.

Coordinators of schoolwide testing like myself dread seeing results like this. Some respond by disparaging the process of testing. At MSSD, we responded by raising scores. Here’s how we did it.

The Stanford Achievement Test All the Students, Most of the Time

The Stanford Achievement Test, first published in 1923, is a standardized, norm-referenced test designed to measure the academic skills of hearing school-age children and adolescents throughout the U.S. The term *standardized* means that all students are asked the same questions under the same conditions, conditions that include time limits for specific tests.

The term *norm-referenced* means that each student's score can be compared to those of his or her classmates and the scores of other students across the country.

The Stanford measures skill areas, including vocabulary, reading, math problem solving, math procedures, language, spelling, study skills, listening, science, and social studies. It has been developed to measure these skills at specific grade levels.

Primary 1	Grades 1.5 to 2.5
Primary 2	Grades 2.5 to 3.5
Primary 3	Grades 3.5 to 4.5
Intermediate 1	Grades 4.5 to 5.5
Intermediate 2	Grades 5.5 to 6.5
Intermediate 3	Grades 6.5 to 7.5
Advanced 1	Grades 7.5 to 8.5
Advanced 2	Grades 8.5 to 9.9

Although teachers of deaf students sometimes refer to the "SAT-HI," there has never been a separate test published for deaf and hard of hearing students. Deaf students take the same test as hearing students. The "SAT-HI" refers instead to the norms established for deaf and hard of hearing students. These norms were established in 1996 by the Gallaudet Research Institute (GRI) after conducting a national survey of deaf students' performance. The normative data include scaled scores, grade equivalent scores, and percentile scores for deaf and hard of hearing students, ages 8 to 18.

Still, there are some important differences in procedure in using the Stanford with deaf students and interpreting their scores.

- Deaf and hard of hearing students may take a short screening test to determine which of the eight difficulty levels applies to them.
- Percentile scores for deaf and hard of hearing students are based on the students' ages—while percentile scores for hearing students are based on their grade in school.
- Percentile scores for deaf students are available for six of the 10



subtests, e.g., reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, math problem solving, math procedures, spelling, and language. Only general grade equivalent scores are available for other subtests.

Selecting the Test Level Team Up with the Teacher!

While the test level is self-evident for hearing test takers—third grade students take the third grade test—deaf students may be assigned to different levels of the test depending on their skill level.

The GRI has developed screening tests. Each screening test includes approximately 20 test items—10 reading comprehension items and 10 math items—and a list of instructional objectives for each level. After the screening test is administered and hand scored, the examiner uses a table to assign a test level for each student (*Stanford Achievement Test, 9th edition, Screening Procedures for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, 1996*).

At MSSD, we used the screening tests in spring 1998 to place students on the appropriate level, but the large number

of inaccurate math scores suggested that the test either underestimated or overestimated the students' math skills. Partly for this reason, MSSD no longer uses the screening tests. Instead, teachers collaborate with the school psychologist to determine a student's placement level.

How does this happen? First, the teacher and the school psychologist review the student's prior Stanford performance. Did the student correctly answer 50 to 70 percent of the math or reading comprehension test items? If so, the student is a good candidate to move up to the next level. Many teachers, familiar with an 80 percent mastery criteria on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), are surprised to learn that the bar for moving up on the Stanford levels is set so low. However, using the scoring tables in *Norms Booklet for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students* (1996), teachers quickly realize that holding a student to 80 percent mastery on the Stanford puts the student's raw score at the top of the test—two or three points within the "above the measurable range" measure at which the test is no longer accurate.

Next, the teacher/psychologist team

reviews the student's class performance. The team looks at the number and kind of novels that the student reads, the student's written language skills, quiz and test results, math class placement, homework, and attendance. Did the student struggle with *To Kill a Mocking Bird*? Can the student add and subtract mixed numbers? How did the student perform on a recent biography assignment?

Finally, the teachers examine the Stanford, the test booklets and corresponding multiple-choice test questions, carefully assessing the match between instruction in their classrooms and the test questions. Ultimately, the teacher, not the psychologist, determines which Stanford level best fits each student.

Test Administration **One Question at a Time**

Once the reading and math levels are assigned, students are ready to take the test. This they do in their respective classes—students take the math Stanford in their math classroom, they take the reading Stanford in their English class. Testing should not occur in large groups clustered in the school cafeteria or multipurpose room. Working in the classroom environment increases students' familiarity with the material, and teacher commitment to the testing procedures.

A subcategory within a test is administered first. Teachers hand-score the completed questions, and if the results are within the measurable range, the remaining subtests—vocabulary, language, spelling, and math problem solving—are administered.

Using this process, the accuracy of MSSD's Stanford math results increased from around 75 to 98 percent.

Understanding the Scores **Comparison with Others**

Many teachers and school administrators don't realize that a deaf student's Stanford score can be meaningfully compared to a hearing student's score—

and that this comparison can be critical in student placement.

For example, Joe, an academically talented deaf seventh grader, was considered for a rigorous middle school literature class. Using GRI norms developed for deaf students, Joe earned a Stanford reading comprehension score at the 98th percentile. His grade equivalent reading comprehension score was 8.4. The Stanford scores of the hearing students in the select class were well above the 50th percentile in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and language. Using percentile scores for seventh graders found in the *Stanford Fall and Spring Norms* (1995), Joe's reading percentile score—quickly calculated by the IEP team's learning consultant—was at the 58th percentile when compared to the hearing seventh graders, confirming that he would be a good fit for the rigorous literature class.



In addition to enabling school staff to compare the performance of deaf and hard of hearing students to each other, percentile scores help school administrators identify students with special needs. For example, a careful review of Stanford test data might show that an advanced math program should be initiated. Similarly, students scoring in the below average range—at the 10th or 15th percentile—might benefit from functional academics and specialized transition activities.

THE MSSD **LITERACY PROJECT**

First: The Investigation **Comparing Curriculum and Test**

For years, the Stanford reading comprehension scores of MSSD ninth graders lagged behind those of other MSSD students. At the same time, MSSD eleventh graders earned consistently the highest reading comprehension scores. Knowing that use of any achievement test implies a match between curriculum, instruction, and assessment, I decided to look for the elusive match between the demands of the Stanford and classroom instruction. I would observe classes, interview teachers, review required texts, and examine students' reading-related assignments.

Two facts quickly emerged. First, because eleventh graders are required to complete monthly independent reading projects, they read more. The students not only read multiple genres—biographies, historical fiction, fables, myths, legends—but they are required to identify and explain specific literary elements. In addition, before administering the test, eleventh grade teachers provide students with practice activities.

An examination of the ninth grade literature curriculum indicated that ninth graders read realistic fiction, science fiction, and fantasy. But other genres—biographies, historical fiction, functional reading activities, and folktales included in Stanford reading test passages—were not part of the curriculum.

Designing Practice Materials **Collaborating with Teachers**

My intervention plan took shape. The two ninth grade English teachers, perplexed by their students' relatively low scores, were pleased to cooperate. They said that if I provided the genre-driven practice activities, they would

assign and monitor monthly independent reading projects.

I selected several 300- to 400-word passages from texts in different genres and designed six to eight Stanford-like multiple-choice questions for each passage. The biography unit included five selections—one each on Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King, Sitting Bull, Charles Lindbergh, and Anne Frank. Reading grade equivalents spanned from third grade and a book about Jackie Robinson to ninth grade and a book about Anne Frank. Some practice activities were completed in class and others were assigned as homework.

After they completed the biography unit, students practiced functional reading, e.g., figuring out schedules, advertisements, posters, and the back of cereal boxes. Each month the teachers and I introduced new genre-related practice activities that covered realistic fiction, historical fiction, fables, myths, folktales, and legends.

Identifying Weaknesses Looking at Questions

I regularly scored and analyzed student responses to the Stanford-like practice questions. When a large number of students incorrectly answered the same question, the teacher provided a mini-lesson on the material or on the grammar in which it was presented. For

The results were amazing—even better than expected. In one school year, the reading comprehension scores of 28 ninth graders increased from the grade equivalent average of 4.2 to 5.2.

example, only a few students correctly answered a question that read: “This article discussed all of the information below *except* _____. Circle a, b, c, or d.”

Students answered incorrectly, we realized, not because they did not understand the content that was demanded, but because they were unsure of the grammar in the question. The problem hinged on the interpretation of

the word *except*.

To help students understand this question, I offered examples of other questions that used the same structure, but used familiar information, e.g., the names of classmates and the names of familiar fruit. Examples of these questions included:

All of these students are ninth grade girls *except* _____.

All of these students are ninth grade boys *except* _____.

All of these are fruit *except* _____.

All of these are red fruit *except* _____.

Reshaping test questions to draw on students’ well-organized prior knowledge increased student accuracy on this type of question by 85 percent.

Ready? Set? Test!

Eight months later, in June 2000, each MSSD ninth grader had completed more than 100 practice questions, read approximately six novels outside of class, and designed a poster using key information from a favorite book. All the students were ready to tackle the Stanford. Teachers assigned students to one of the eight levels, passed out newly sharpened pencils, and held their breath.

The results were amazing—even better than expected. In one school year, the reading comprehension scores of 28 ninth graders increased from the grade equivalent average of 4.2 to 5.2. The reading gains of three ninth graders of limited English proficiency were even greater, from grade equivalent 1.2 to 3.5.

Enriching the Curriculum Refining an Intervention

At MSSD no teacher wants or tries to “teach a test.” Our teachers understand that the goal of education is not encompassed by success on standardized tests, or encompassed in any single assessment device. At the same time, our teachers understand that if focusing on specific vocabulary and sentence construction increases students’ access to the test and to the knowledge they have,





**Test preparation
has come to be
seen as a way
to improve
and enrich
instruction.**

it can be an essential part of test preparation. As a result, MSSD ninth graders have practiced test questions, continued to expand their understanding of genres and test questions, and ultimately earned higher Stanford reading test scores.

I found commercially available practice material—*Taking the T(E)rror Out of the SAT-9*, a series of consumable reading and math workbooks for grades one through nine published by the American Guidance Service (1999). These materials provide excellent vocabulary reviews and organize reading activities around higher-level thinking skills, e.g., drawing conclusions, identifying cause and effect relationships, finding the main idea, recognizing the author’s purpose, identifying inferences. This year, for the

first time, several MSSD math teachers used the “T(E)rror” math workbook activities to help align math instruction with the demands of the Stanford math procedures and math problem-solving tests.

Test preparation has come to be seen as a way to improve and enrich instruction. Recently, an MSSD science teacher said she wants to classify all Stanford science test items by content (biology, physical science) and grade so they can be more easily incorporated into the school’s science curricula. Many teachers ask to look at the students’ error patterns, a request unheard of before 1999. Teachers who once dreaded reviewing their students’ Stanford scores now can’t wait to examine their students’ performance.

A new edition of the Stanford is on

the way. But even as educators working with deaf and hard of hearing children skeptically await the arrival of normative data for the next version of the Stanford—the Stanford-10—many of us, including my MSSD colleagues and me, are ready for the new assessment challenge.

We have discovered how to effectively relate our students’ educational experience to assessment while enriching and affirming content in the curriculum. No test is valid if it doesn’t measure what students are learning. And no curriculum is useful if it doesn’t teach students concepts on which they’re going to be tested. Our experience shows a practical and practicable method for relating curriculum to testing.

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LITERACY PROJECT

SAT READING RESULTS FOR MSSD NINTH GRADERS

PRE-TEST (Fall 1999)	4.9	PRE-TEST (Fall 2001)	4.5
POST-TEST (Spring 2000)	7.6	POST-TEST (Spring 2002)	5.4
Change:	+2.7	Change:	+0.9
PRE-TEST (Fall 2002)	4.0	PRE-TEST (Fall 2003)	4.4
POST-TEST (Spring 2003)	5.1	POST-TEST (Spring 2004)	6.1
Change:	+1.1	Change:	+1.7

literacy portfolios for classroom assessment

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

By Jane F. Nickerson

While a few states have portfolios as part of their statewide requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act, portfolio assessment has declined in the effort to prepare students for statewide standardized testing (Matthews, 2005). But as an instrument for measuring an individual student's growth, portfolios remain a valuable tool. While teachers prepare their students to take their state's test, the importance of looking at individual students—at their challenges, their growth, and their futures—does not change. Here is one teacher's experience.

Matt was intelligent and dedicated. He enjoyed maintaining his literacy portfolio as he had the ability to see the changes he made in his own work. For reading, Matt learned to reflect on what he read and relate his ideas to his own experiences. For writing, he saw the progress he had made as he compared first and last drafts of his own papers. Matt's ability to self-assess was strengthened throughout the year as he worked on his portfolio, and he developed confidence in his own reading and writing skills.

Gina was bright and creative. She worked hard on her literacy portfolio. Unsure of her strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of the academic year, Gina learned how to assess her work and evaluate her own skills. At the end of the year, Gina explained how creating her literacy portfolio helped her learn to analyze her reading and writing skills. She noted that she was able to use reading and writing strategies more appropriately than she had earlier in the year. She also developed confidence in her reading and writing abilities.

Roger was interesting and funny. He loved creating his literacy portfolio. He had used one prior to entering my class and he understood why self-assessment is important. The most motivated student in creating and maintaining his portfolio, Roger was eager to learn more about his own abilities. He enjoyed writing reaction papers to what he had read and discussed in class.

Maria was what many teachers call "average." She was not excited about creating and maintaining her literacy portfolio. She felt it was too much work. Nevertheless, her experience with the portfolio enabled her to analyze what she read more carefully. As the year went on, she had a breakthrough as she realized that she could write coherent summaries about her reactions to reading selections.

Photography by Michael Walton





Jane F. Nickerson, Ph.D., a professor in the English Department at Gallaudet University, has taught reading, composition, and literature and film to deaf students for 21 years. Her research has targeted literacy portfolios and reading strategies. The author would like to thank Dr. Peter Afflerbach and Ms. Dianne Falvo for their suggestions about literacy portfolios.

These students, the names of whom have been changed to protect their privacy, are typical of students who enter my English classes at Gallaudet University. I ask my students to create and maintain literacy portfolios in most of the English classes I teach because I believe that assessment should be multidimensional, longitudinal, and ongoing (Nickerson, 2003). I want students in my classes to work on a variety of tasks over one semester or year, to receive immediate feedback from their peers and teacher, and to learn from and reflect on their work.

For my classes, literacy portfolios are purposeful collections of the students' work in reading and writing that reflect their efforts, progress, and achievements during

an academic semester or year (Nickerson, 1996; 2003). Self-assessment and reflection are important components of assessment since they enable students to become more independent learners. I ask my students to engage in metacognition, which means they reflect on their own thought processes while they read and write. Becoming aware of what they do as they read and write can help them improve their reading and writing abilities (Baker & Brown, 1984; Flavell, 1981).

When I started asking students to create literacy portfolios in my classes, I realized that not much had been written about the use of them with deaf students (Albertini, 1994; French, 1999; Nickerson, 1996). This is one of the reasons why I decided to do it.

Left: Jane Nickerson and one of her students explore portfolio text together.



Items to Include in Literacy Portfolios

Students and teachers can help each other decide what should be placed in their literacy portfolios. In my classes, I focus on a variety of tasks that enable students to learn reading strategies that help them to comprehend more fully the texts they read.

Reading Assignments. I ask my students to write reaction papers to what they read for class. After students read an article or short story, they write down their reactions. My student, Gina, wrote how she felt about Zlata, a young girl who described what she and her family went through during the war in Bosnia whose diary we discussed in class, in her reaction paper:

[It] makes me feel so bad! I can't imagine if I were in their shoes, I would panic and I would stay with my family, pets, and my boyfriend. I was glad that Zlata and her family are alive. [I know] one student who is a refugee from Bosnia. I asked her directly why she and her family fled from Bosnia. She explained that it was all about the war. She thanks God that her family is ok and living in Illinois now.

Gina and a few of the other students in

Setting Up Portfolios

At the beginning of the course, teachers and students will want to decide what their literacy portfolios are for. They may wish to develop a showcase portfolio in which they place only their best work. The more educationally meaningful portfolio, however, may be the kind developed by my students in which they place many items to show their individual progress throughout the semester or year. Explanation is essential. I tell my students that their portfolios will contain many of the pieces of writing they create for class and will help them focus on their strengths as well as their weaknesses in reading and writing. Students can store all of the products they do for class in their portfolios. They may want to have dividers to organize their portfolios into several areas—such as reading assignments, writing assignments, and self-assessment.

Self-assessment is an important component to include in the process of developing portfolios (Burch, 1999; Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991). I try to weave self-assessment directly into questions and assignments. For example, after they write several drafts of an essay, I ask students to look at their first draft,

compare it with their last draft, and explain how they improved their essay. Self-assessment questions can be done frequently to help students remember to reflect on what they are doing. All of the students mentioned earlier in this article explained that they felt their literacy portfolios kept them more organized and they were able to see the progress they had made throughout the academic year.



class were able to relate what they were reading about the war in Bosnia, a country many of them had never heard of prior to class, to experiences in their own lives. Many of the students noted that Anne Frank was similar to Zlata as each wrote a diary about her experiences during wartime. Students even compared what happened to Anne Frank and Zlata and compared World War II and wars that are fought today. When students can compare and contrast several of the selections they are reading, I feel successful.

In *And Sarah Laughed*, a short story by Joanne Greenberg that includes several deaf characters, many of my students wrote about the impact that Janice, a deaf character who teaches the family members to use sign language, had on Sarah, who had not learned sign language even though her husband and four sons were deaf. We discussed Sarah's feelings about sign language and, since this story was set in the 1950s, how feelings about sign language were different then. When Sarah learned sign language and finally was able to communicate with her family, she began to laugh and feel better about the changes she would make in the future. Many students commented that Janice was their favorite character in the short story as she was the one who made Sarah learn signs in order to communicate with her family. Roger, typical of the students who have discussed this story in my class, stated in his reaction paper:

This story is very wonderful and can impact hearing people with those kinds of experiences. Later they will realize what they should do and will want to learn sign language.

Writing Assignments. Students include samples of writing in their literacy portfolios, including essays, summaries, letters, and short research papers. When students analyze their work, comparing their first draft to their last, they realize the progress they have made. Many of my students have improved their writing skills and been

able to reflect on what they have written. Matt, for example, enjoyed writing several drafts of his essays as he could go back and reflect on them. He explained that when he looked at draft one and compared it to draft four, he "learned how to think about my ideas and add more information" (Matt's self-assessment form). He noted that his essay writing had improved during the year he maintained his portfolio. A lot of my students explain that when they write several drafts, they are able to look back at their ideas, organization, and grammar in order to see what they have improved in each draft.

Students have also enjoyed writing

their autobiographies in my classes. I provide my students with a list of questions that they need to answer when they tell about their backgrounds and future goals. I also give my students questions related to their own lives, encouraging them to write their life stories related to their own literacy development. Kathleen Wood has written extensively about deaf students telling stories about their experiences while learning English. Her work

Opposite page and Below: Pages from students' portfolios reflect the progress they made throughout the school year. Names are deleted for privacy.

Good

READING LOG

Name _____ 10/22/97

DATE	MATERIALS READ	AMOUNT OF TIME
10/23/97	Jet (October 1997)	32 mins
10/24/97	Metro (newspapers) "Crime"	10 mins
10/25/97	Cosmopolitan (Nov. 97)	18 mins
10/25/97	"ABC" language for my son ^(book)	20 mins
10/27/97	"Sesame Street Parents' magazine" Nov 97	35 mins
10/28/97	Metro (newspapers) about accident	12 mins
10/28/97	Disney (children) textbook	15 mins
10/29/97	Dumbo ^{child} book	10 mins (not)
10/30/97	Buff and the blue ^{child} newspaper	25 mins
11/1/97	Dumbo ^{child} book	abt 25 mins
11/1/97	Cosmopolitan (Nov. 97)	32 mins
11/2/97	"Me and We" articles	20 mins
11/2/97	Franklin J. (4 Jummy)	11 mins
11/3/97	Bambi ^{child} book	abt 10 mins
11/4/97	All Summer Time article	30 mins
11/4/97	Phi/His of dance book	16 mins
11/5/97	Phi/His of dance book	28 mins
11/5/97	The Three Little Pigs ^{child} book	15 mins
11/6/97	Friendship & Living longer ^{articles}	10 mins

involves asking students a question such as, “What was it like growing up learning to read and write?” (Wood, 2004, p. 193). I also ask my students to answer this question: “Who influenced you while you were learning to read and write?” When students explore their own backgrounds, they learn about themselves and provide readers with an account of their literacy development (Cambridge & Williams, 1998).

Teachers can also ask students to write their autobiographies and include ideas about themselves as writers. Students can look back at some of the pieces of writing they have completed during class, decide what they have learned, reflect on what they have written, and learn more about their own writing

process (Elbow & Belanoff, 2000). One example of this reflection can be seen in Gina’s response to a question about her own writing process. Wrote Gina:

[Making a portfolio] helps me because I can look at several drafts of my work. I can see the progress that I have made. I also feel confident when I discuss my beliefs or opinions. I have a lot of background information for many topics. It's important that ideas make sense and that they relate to the topic. The paper has to be coherent.

Surveys and Interviews. A third area teachers and students may want to include in their literacy portfolios is that of surveys or interviews about students’ attitudes towards reading and writing

(Nickerson, 1996; 2003). When I ask students to complete a questionnaire about their reading and writing attitudes at the beginning of the year and then again at the end of the year, most of the time I find that their attitudes have become more positive over time. This is not surprising to me since they are in a class that encourages them to read and write often as well as discuss what they read with their classmates. I think when students see that their classmates and teacher enjoy reading and writing, it helps all of us become more positive and confident about our reading and writing abilities. When I interview students about self-assessment and creating their literacy portfolios, they tell me that they have

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learned more about their strengths and weaknesses related to their reading and writing abilities, and their portfolios have enabled them to become more organized and more reflective learners. Thus they demonstrate enormous leaps to becoming independent learners.

Benefits of Using Literacy Portfolios

Self-assessment in reading and writing, a common purpose for many teachers who use literacy portfolios with their students (Baker, 1993; French, 1999; Valencia & Place, 1994), is the first of several benefits in using literacy portfolios with students (Nickerson, 2003).

My students have explained that as they create their portfolios, they learn new reading strategies, express their reactions about what they read, incorporate new information with their background knowledge on a variety of topics, and feel more confident about their reading in general. It helped their writing, they explained, as they developed more confidence as writers, learned how to reflect more carefully on their writing processes, learned how to make their ideas clearer, and learned how to focus on their organization and grammar.

Another benefit of literacy portfolios is that students can use the portfolios to document their learning. Then, as their assignments show their progress over time, students are able to go back and reflect on what they have done throughout the semester or year. This reflective learning is the third benefit of using literacy portfolios and it enables students to focus on their own reading and writing processes.

Matt, Gina, Roger, and Maria agreed that developing their literacy portfolios helped them become reflective learners and that they were more aware of their own learning processes. These benefits—documenting their work, noting their progress, and reflecting on the reading and writing process—are important as my students continue to become more independent learners.



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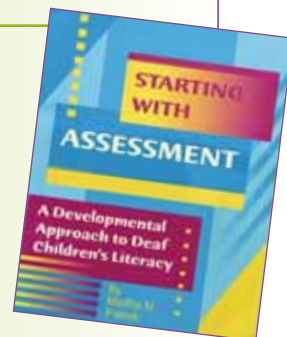
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portfolios

at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf

ADOPTING A NEW WAY OF ASSESSING STUDENT GROWTH

AN ODYSSEY INTERVIEW

Seven years ago, Matt Goedecke, now curriculum coordinator at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) on the Gallaudet University campus in Washington, D.C., along with teachers and staff of the senior class, asked students to assemble portfolios. These seniors became the first at MSSD to create portfolios to document their growth and learning. Today all students at MSSD develop portfolios and annually present their work before a panel of judges. In addition, Goedecke and Jacoby are assisting the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, one of the few schools that has incorporated portfolios as a possibility in its No Child Left Behind response, in developing a process for portfolio assessment. Here, Goedecke and Jacoby discuss how students develop their portfolios at MSSD, a process they call "Portfolios for Student Growth."

Far right: Sue Jacoby and Matt Goedecke reflect on the advantages of the portfolio process.



ODYSSEY: Why portfolios?

GOEDECKE: I was looking for a way to document and measure student growth. There was a lot written about portfolios as a learning tool. It seemed to be the perfect fit.

JACOBY: The portfolio process provided an opportunity for students to collect evidence about themselves over an extended period of time and to review and reflect on it.

Photography by John T. Consoli



ODYSSEY: How does portfolio assessment fit with the other forms of assessment?

JACOBY: They have different purposes. Standardized tests provide a snapshot that puts students in a framework of comparison with their peers. The portfolio is more like a family album, a way for each student to look at his or her individual growth over time.

GOEDECKE: Standardized test results are a part of students' portfolios. Students consider what the results mean in terms of their academic growth and their future goals.

JACOBY: In today's climate, with the bar set on external measures, we have to be careful as educators to keep in mind that our students must find a way not only to achieve good grades but also to manage their lives. The skills that students need to complete their portfolios are the same ones that we, as adults, use every day. Communicating, thinking, deciding, and persevering are the cornerstones of personal and professional success and satisfaction.

GOEDECKE: Portfolios are a tool for independence and knowledge of self.

ODYSSEY: Why did you call the process “Portfolios for Student Growth”?

JACOBY: We wanted a holistic experience that incorporated a process that enabled the students to produce a product that demonstrated their progress on our school’s outcomes. The students actively collect and manage information about themselves. They think about their work and what it means for them today and in the future.

GOEDECKE: There are really three parts to Portfolios for Student Growth. These are the professional process—an ongoing collaboration among teachers and staff members, the student process—what the students do in assembling and discussing their portfolios, and the student product.

JACOBY: The student product is what most people are familiar with—the book itself.

GOEDECKE: We put the emphasis on the process—how students plan, manage, and complete their portfolios.

ODYSSEY: Why is the process so important?

GOEDECKE: So many of the skills we use in our daily lives are process skills: time management, planning, and problem solving.

JACOBY: These are the skills students practice and refine through portfolio development.

GOEDECKE: An essential element of the student process is reflection—students thinking about their work and then stepping back and thinking about their thinking.

JACOBY: This process, metacognition through reflection, is a primary mechanism for self-awareness.

GOEDECKE: Right. And self-awareness leads to self-determination.

ODYSSEY: You mentioned school outcomes? What are they and why are they important to the portfolio process?

GOEDECKE: As a school community, we identified five areas critical for lifelong success: essential knowledge (academic content areas, technology, and deaf studies), communication (skills and strategies to effectively interact with a variety of people in different environments and situations), thinking skills (critical and creative thinking, decision making and problem solving, and metacognition), emotional

intelligence (awareness of self in managing emotions, motivation, empathy, and social skills), and life planning (knowledge and skills to plan for, pursue, and achieve life goals).

JACOBY: The outcomes serve as a framework for organizing portfolios. And students learn about themselves in each of the five areas.

ODYSSEY: How do students feel about portfolios?

GOEDECKE: The first few years students would ask, “Why?” They didn’t see the value. But by the time they had developed their first portfolios, they got it. They learned so much about themselves by collecting evidence and reflecting on it.

JACOBY: They saw how the process would help them make better decisions about their future and they were very proud of what they had accomplished.

ODYSSEY: What do teachers think about portfolios?

JACOBY: Our portfolio process grew out of the work of teachers and staff. They developed the initial design and have been involved ever since. They create materials, provide feedback on the student process and product, and make adaptations to meet individual student needs.

GOEDECKE: Serving as portfolio advisors, teachers are in a different role. They are advisors and facilitators who guide students. This can be a challenge, at least initially, but when they see the pay-off in terms of student growth, they realize it’s worth it.

ODYSSEY: How do you assess portfolios and student learning?

GOEDECKE: Portfolio advisors evaluate both the student’s process and the product using a rubric. Students are assessed not only on the contents of their portfolios but on how they use their time, manage resources, and solve problems, and on the quality of their reflections.

JACOBY: Students receive a grade every quarter and successful portfolio completion is required for promotion and graduation.

GOEDECKE: But one of the most important portfolio assessments is the end-of-the-year presentation. Students discuss their learning and growth using evidence from their portfolios.



ODYSSEY: Tell us more about the student presentations.

GOEDECKE: It is where students synthesize all of the information and explain it to a panel of judges, some of whom they know. It is where we get to see what matters to the students and how they apply what they have learned to their lives.

JACOBY: Students do presentations every year so they become very adept at analyzing and explaining their own evolution.



ODYSSEY: What happens if a student fails his or her presentation?

GOEDECKE: We provide more guidance and the student does it again.

JACOBY: Students present until they pass.

ODYSSEY: Students must complete a portfolio every year?

GOEDECKE: Yes, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors have portfolio class twice a week. For the seniors, it is a regular course because they also have to complete a senior project.

JACOBY: Students need to engage in portfolio work on a regular basis in order to develop process skills and a deeper understanding of themselves. This takes time and repetition.

GOEDECKE: Students see this when they compare work from an earlier portfolio—they see their growth. If evidence looks the same, they know they haven't grown.

JACOBY: The analogy is with sports. No matter how good you are, you still must practice to build up your skills. Students build portfolio skills over time.

ODYSSEY: Do students really learn about themselves?

JACOBY: Oh, yes. They learn things that we can't tell them.

GOEDECKE: One student, for example, was resistant to feedback. Whenever a teacher tried to tell him something, he reacted by saying, "Don't tell me that! I know that." During his presentation, the same student made some very powerful statements. He said that when he looked at his portfolio, he realized that what his advisor said was true. He learned how to consider and accept feedback.

JACOBY: We couldn't have told him that. He had to learn it for himself.

ODYSSEY: Does the student portfolio process benefit some students more than others?

GOEDECKE: It benefits students differently. The portfolio looks at students from all perspectives—it allows them to explore areas of strength and areas they need to develop.

JACOBY: Just because a student achieves academically doesn't mean he or she has the organizational, decision-making, or other skills to succeed in college or in a work setting. And students who are emerging readers and writers may already know this but they rarely have the opportunity to identify strengths in other areas and have those recognized and valued.

JACOBY: All students are involved in developing their portfolios and all students can improve their understanding of themselves. They can get better at creating and explaining their evidence and develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

GOEDECKE: Through portfolios, students gather evidence about what they can do and where they are going—this is important for all students.

ODYSSEY: Why do you think portfolios work?

JACOBY: Everyone has gained through our Portfolios for Student Growth process. Students are more aware and self-confident, teachers and staff members know students holistically, and the school community has a way to document individual student growth as it relates to critical lifelong skills.

GOEDECKE: Everyone is involved. Students, teachers, and staff members consider portfolios important work—challenging and complex, but critically important.

JACOBY: And we see the results every year for every student in ways that we might otherwise miss.

GOEDECKE: Using portfolios as a way to measure student growth is part of our school culture now.

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TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING

Magazine Awards Top Marks to Clerc Center Staffer

By Susan M. Flanigan

Rosemary Stifter, instructional technology specialist for the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, has been named Ed Tech Leader of the Year by *Technology & Learning*, the leading publication in K-12 educational technology. The "Ed Tech Leader of the Year" program, in its 17th year, recognizes the "best of the best" in technology leadership in an education setting.



As part of her work, Stifter has collaborated with teachers, staff, and students at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) to create the Digital Video Project, an on-line resource that includes three American Sign Language (ASL) dictionaries, math stories, and ASL poetry and other stories. She has also conducted training in educational technology for educators of deaf and hard of hearing students locally and across the country and helped students produce the KDES Tech Fair in which students showed their families how technology is used in their classrooms.

"The idea for the Digital Video Project came from a need identified by KDES teacher/researcher Francisca Rangel for a resource for her students to help them with sight word vocabulary," said Stifter. "We decided to create a PowerPoint dictionary with English words and pictures, as well as digital videos of the students signing and fingerspelling the words.

"Later we included ASL sentences with English translations, reinforcing that ASL and English are two separate yet equally important languages. The project was very successful. We saw the students begin to make the connection between sign and print and a decrease in their anxiety toward reading and writing.

"I think it is extremely important to empower the students when integrating technology in the classroom. The motivation is there, the technology is there. We just need to allow student access to technology so they can learn, be creative, and develop critical thinking skills."

The magazine hailed Stifter and the three runners-up in the program as visionaries. All four winners were guests of *Technology & Learning* and PLATO Learning at the National School Boards Association's Technology and Leadership conference in Denver, Colorado, from October 27-29. They were profiled in the magazine's December issue.

Check out the Rangel/Stifter project at:
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/dv/>.

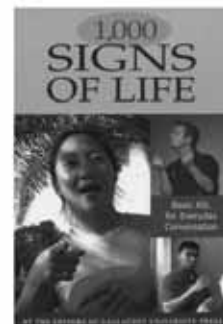
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A MOTHER'S REFLECTION

my daughter and standardized tests futility and disaster?

Nancy Braus and her family live in Brattleboro, Vermont, where they own a bookstore.

By Nancy Braus

High-stakes standardized tests are often a centerpiece of the appealingly named No Child Left Behind Act. These tests, mandated for all children in grades three through eight, present unique challenges for deaf children—and I feel that the testing policies that have resulted are inappropriate, poorly conceived, and counterproductive.

I don't write this as an educator, but as the mother of a deaf child. My daughter, Laura, was first tested in compliance with the federal education policy three years ago when she was 8 years old. I was shocked at the results. The battery of tests showed Laura to be barely average in some categories and in the bottom 20th percentile in other categories.

This is a child who, all her life, impressed people with her intelligence. Again and again, Laura has demonstrated an ability to think critically and deeply, an amazing memory, and a general analytical ability. She is alert and curious about all areas of life, knows everything publicly available about the latest pop stars and other figures from popular culture, and is a speed-user of instant messaging.

Far right: Nancy Braus and her family in a relaxed moment several years ago. Laura, the youngest of the three girls, is in the center.

Below: Laura and her sister. Photos courtesy of Nancy Braus





As I looked at the test results, I wondered: Is this not the child we have known since infancy? How do I reconcile my daughter with the portrait her test scores suggest? Even with my intellectual understanding that tests are often biased and always problematic for some children, I was jolted.

Concerned with what use her school would make of these test scores, I made an appointment with the school's education director. There I learned that some states provide

accommodations for deaf children in the testing environment, such as signing the instructions. Under the federal No Child Left Behind law, the standards are the same for every child in each grade, except those who are the most seriously delayed. The educator said that only 10 percent of the deaf children in the school would excel in state tests.

Laura currently reads almost on grade level. We adopted her from Colombia when she was a baby. Her sisters—our daughters, then 11 and

13 years old—were thrilled. At four months old, Laura was developmentally on target.

As she began to grow, she did not talk as quickly as they did, but she was smart and responded to us as any infant would. We would say, "Give Daddy the ball," and she would do it. I think now that was maybe because parents gesture a lot when talking with babies. When she was a year and a half old, Laura still was not talking, not even babbling, and we took her to get her hearing tested. There was



Above: Laura (left), today, with a friend.

nothing else it could have been.

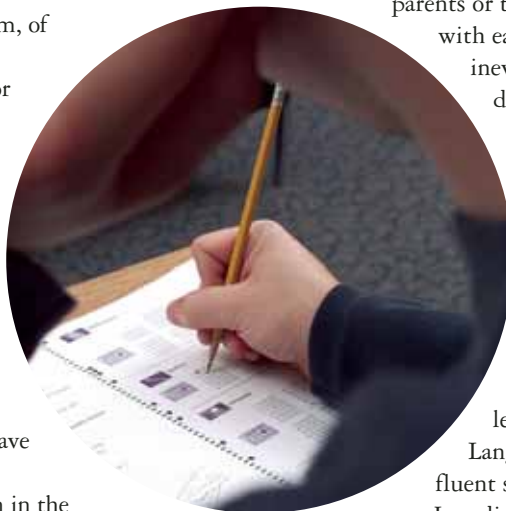
Once Laura was diagnosed, I immediately read everything I could find on deaf education. Laura immediately enrolled in special education programs. She went to the Austine School for the Deaf in Vermont, and then to the Learning Center for Deaf Children in Framingham, Massachusetts. Now she is a student at the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut.

I have a close relationship and excellent communication with Laura. My husband and I continue to learn American Sign Language and we can communicate with deaf people one-on-one when we converse. My older daughters learned sign language and became fluent.

There may be many reasons for deaf students doing poorly on standardized tests. These tests present a variety of linguistic and experiential nuance that is not part of the everyday world for most deaf students—as it is for most of their hearing peers. For example, a recent essay question on the Connecticut

Mastery Test asked children to describe how music made them feel. Then there is the subtle barrier comprised of confusing usages of English, especially English idioms. Arithmetic testing uses words with multiple meanings in the word problems, confusing many deaf students.

The problem, of course, is compounded for deaf children who come from different countries or who arrive at school with few language skills. It is also especially difficult for children who have little or no communication in the home and children whose parents do not have sufficient interest, time, or energy to support intellectual exploration through library or computer work.



Unless the deaf children come from a deaf family, even parents who try hard to include deaf children find that there are always gaps in family communication. The deaf children do not hear their parents or their siblings talking with each other. They inevitably miss discussions of current events, money, religion, family gossip, planning of summer vacations, and so many other subjects. Many hearing parents, including some who struggle for years to learn American Sign Language, never become fluent signers.

I studied sign language for years, as did my husband. Yet Laura, unlike my other daughters, has never loved having her father or me read to

her. With her fluent sisters, it was different. I could see Laura's pleasure as her sisters or other fluent signers read or told her a story. Despite my desire to learn sign language, my intense effort, and my love for my daughter and reading, I could never achieve this.

I thank my daughter's school daily for helping her to become literate. I am also grateful for the information and guidance her school provides in areas from social interaction, to body development, to current affairs. Strong reading skills are the best gift we can give our deaf kids. Standardized tests have no role in measuring the reading skills of many deaf kids and no test ever helped a child learn to love reading.

During a recent family gathering at my daughter's school, two mothers of children with special needs spoke. One described her daughter crying through the entire test. Another told me that her

**I would much
prefer my daughter
have a teacher who
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problem-solving
skills than a teacher
who teaches her
how to improve
her score on
state tests.**

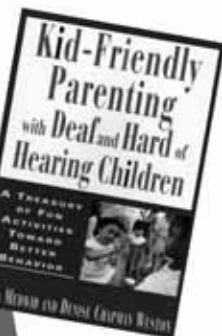
daughter did not understand anything about the test she was sitting through—not why she was taking it, not any of the questions. What meaning can a test carry when the content intimidates, upsets, or excludes children? How does this exercise benefit the children? The school? The state?

Education derives from sound teaching, hard work, high expectations, and solid financial resources. The essence of education is to create an environment where all children are learning and achieving. I would much prefer my daughter have a teacher who helps her develop a broad range of problem-solving skills than a teacher who teaches her how to improve her score on state tests. As parents, we need to be part of a movement with educators that explores how we can promote the very best in education and assessment for our children.

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Kendall Students and U.S. Marine Correspond

Iraq Comes to a Kendall Classroom



When Sgt. Earl (Jay) Beatty arrived in Fallujah, the first messages from home came from students at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School. The students—part of a class taught by Phil Bogdan and Kathy Pongor—corresponded digitally with Beatty as part of a project on Visual Literacy.

Bogdan had students search the web and learn all they could about the conflict in Iraq. Then with the assistance of Rosemary Stifter, instructional technology specialist, they set up a blog—an on-line diary—so that students and soldiers could exchange thoughts and feelings via words and pictures.

The first communication began before Beatty shipped out. The students clicked and saw Beatty and his wife, Donna, and their son, Nico, a toddler, as they posed in the family living room. Beatty was tan, his

head shaved, and his brows dark. All of them were smiling.

During his first month in Iraq, Beatty was shipped to so many locations that he was unable to receive regular mail. Thus his first communications were from the Kendall students. The first message he sent to the students arrived the following month. Beatty noted that he had been “very busy lately,” but promised he would send some photos. Then he wrote of his first experience in combat, which had occurred earlier the same day.

“Today we were fired upon by the insurgents,” Beatty wrote. “We returned fire hard. I personally got into a struggle with one of them....I’m just outside Fallujah now and it is extremely dangerous.”

The message included a photo of the American flag and Beatty in his uniform. His smile was gone.

The students wrote back, telling Beatty about themselves and their school and asking Beatty questions: “I looked at the picture he sent and wondered—What happened before it was taken? What happened after?” said Joe Conard, 14.

Joe told Beatty about his cousin stationed in Afghanistan. “I wish war would never happen,” he wrote.

They wrote to Beatty’s wife, Donna, too. “I will pray for your husband with you,” wrote Timothy Martin.

Andrew Duncan said that he had been building a tent of peace after the 9/11 terror attacks, but now he planned to change the tent to that of the U.S. Army.

Donna Beatty answered that she was receiving letters from Beatty regularly, “three in an envelope.” He missed home, she said. He missed her and Nico.

As the days continued, Beatty’s letters remained tense. “It is pretty scary here,” he wrote on September 19. “I’m okay.” On September 26, the students sent Donna Beatty a birthday card—and she sent them a website for Beatty’s unit. Beatty was transferred to the Abu Ghraib prison, where abuses of Iraqis had made headlines only weeks before. Beatty didn’t comment on the abuse, writing instead about an Iraqi woman who refused to take





cover during a mortar attack, remaining in line to enter the prison and check on a relative while bombs exploded around her.

In October, Donna Beatty wrote that a car bomb had killed several of Beatty's friends and that she had not been able to hear all of his last phone conversation because of low flying aircraft. She forwarded more photos—worried Iraqis in an outside gathering, and smiling Iraqi children mugging for the camera. Photos of Beatty appeared, too, sometimes with comrades. The smile had returned to his face.

The students made pictures, too, and Bogdan posted their art. They drew tanks with exploding mortars overhead and legless figures. In Anthony Steele's *Fallujah*, it is hard to know if the vibrant pinks and reds are parts of a flower or parts of an explosion.

On November 1, Beatty apologized for not writing. "I am trying to keep my Marines alive," he wrote.

The students continued to produce images. *Soldier Looking Through Binoculars At Insurgents*, a virtual oil pastel by Cody Kornkven, shows exaggerated goggles and a dehumanized black and white presence. Tiffany VanBoxlaere drew *Boy Loses His Legs*. Chris Kiskinis-Warmack and Cody Kornkven smeared red paint on their cheeks and took turns photographing each other.

"Watching them create the images, the students and I felt like it was just play until we saw their work," Bogdan said. "Then we realized Chris and Cody had produced a uniquely personal response to the war."

Serina Arellano wrote the word "war," drew a line through it, and then wrote "peace—that's what we ask for."

As Thanksgiving approached, Beatty continued to apologize for not being able to write more often. He noted he and "his Marines" were enduring constant mortar attacks

and "hellacious firefights."

"I hope to God that none of our children have to see what I have seen, or what any of my Marines have seen," Beatty wrote to the students. "I want to be part of the more beautiful things in life."

Bogdan acknowledged the sensitivity of the subject.

"Through the Internet, the students were, in a sense, at the front line with Jay," said Bogdan. "As we responded to each other, we began to realize that there was an extraordinary reciprocity occurring. Jay and his wife, Donna, became trusted friends of the children. Conversely, the students became fans and a loving support system for the Beatty family."

Further, the students were reading "voraciously," he noted, "and writing with great relish."

In March, Beatty returned home. Bogdan greeted him at Andrews Air Force Base with his camera. The students welcomed him to their school.

"This is all about war," said Zsameelah Baten, trying to sum up what she learned in the class. "Jay was there to protect us, but I'm sad that the war continues."

For more on the blog: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu> and click on the link under the New & Notable column.



A Student's Letter to a Soldier

Dear Jay,

Hey, how are you doing in Iraq? I am doing fine in school and home. I think you are brave in Iraq. I will be praying for you. You have to be careful in Iraq. How are you feeling in Iraq? I feel you are bored and hot in Iraq. Are you scared to guard prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison?

Take care of yourself!

Tim



Honors Program Enrolls 65 Students

By Susan M. Flanigan

Last fall, 65 students at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center's Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) enrolled in at least one honors course as part of the new MSSD Honors Program. Courses offered at the honors level include: English, Biology, Chemistry, Earth System Science, Physics, Government, World History, Social Issues, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry. In addition, MSSD offered three Advanced Placement (AP) courses in English Language and Composition, U.S. History, and Biology.

"The Honors Program offers students a way to prep for exams like the SAT and the ACT. If students pass the end-of-course College Board AP exam, then they earn college credit for their accomplishment," said Daniel Dukes, who coordinates the program.

Open to all students, including transfer students and incoming freshmen, the Honors Program embodies the philosophy of giving every student who wants to take on



challenging and rigorous coursework the opportunity to do so. Although the majority of honors students are those who have performed well academically, students who have never been placed in honors courses before are encouraged to enroll.

"We are really trying to create a program that reaches all students," said Dukes. "We understand that not every student can be an honor student in every subject. We want to find a way to encourage students who have talents in specific areas to be able to participate in courses where they, too, can shine."

For more information on the MSSD Honors Program, contact: Daniel.Dukes@gallaudet.edu.



Clerc Center Offers Summer Academic and Leadership Camp

This summer, the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center's Honors Program will host "Summit 2005: An Academic and Leadership Development Camp for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students." The camp, which runs from June 20-July 1, will offer students challenging learning experiences in the areas of higher-level academics and leadership skills.

Open to students in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, the leadership camp offers a wide variety of activities, including Advanced Placement preview classes in English, Biology, and U.S. History, leadership discussions and simulations, a journey through deaf history, and a weekend tour of Washington, D.C.

"We are excited to be offering a challenging and fun leadership program this

summer for students from around the country," said Daniel Dukes, coordinator of the Clerc Center's Honors Program. "Our goal for the summer program is to help students reach their full potential academically and as leaders. It's a great summer opportunity."

Registration for the program is \$100 per student; meals and dorm accommodation will be provided. The students will be responsible for providing their own transportation.

Enrollment is limited to 30 students. To access the application form go directly to: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Honors/2005-SummitApplication.pdf>.

For additional information, contact: Daniel.Dukes@gallaudet.edu or visit the Honors Program website at: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Honors/index.html>.

Learning to Listen with a Cochlear Implant

NEW DOCUMENT OFFERED ONLINE

By Jennifer Hinger

The process of making sense of sound will differ for each child with a cochlear implant and "Training the Ear to Listen," now posted online by the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, will highlight and discuss issues for consideration in this process.

Developed in English and in Spanish as part of a KidsWorld Deaf Net e-document, *Cochlear Implants: Navigating a Forest of Information...One Tree at a Time*, "Training the Ear to

Listen" includes sections on equipment troubleshooting, the stages of listening and speaking development, the role of sign language in listening development, auditory-verbal therapy, and other topics.

Cochlear Implants: Navigating a Forest of Information, by Debra Nussbaum, coordinator of the Clerc Center's Cochlear Implant Education Center, also provides information about a variety of other topics related to cochlear



implants, including evaluation for implant candidacy, the decision-making process, considerations for the use of

sign language for children with implants, and resources. The documents are designed to assist parents and educators.

For Training the Ear to Listen (English version):

<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/CI/ModuleM.html>.

For Training the Ear to Listen (Spanish version):

<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/CI-S/ModuleM.html>.

For more information about cochlear implants at the Clerc Center:

<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/edocs/CI/index.html>.

For more information about KidsWorld Deaf Net:

<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/index.html>.

The path to a bright future starts with you.



A path leads through "Flo's Corner" to the Student Academic Center, which opened in the summer of 2002.

Dedicated to the memory and generous contributions of Florence Foerderer, Flo's Corner is a tribute to her generous bequest, which helped to construct the state-of-the-art facility and support the building's technologically-enriched classrooms.

YOU CAN HELP deaf and hard of hearing students take the first step toward success. There are many ways to support today's deserving students that will also benefit you and future generations.

For more information, contact Lynne Murray, assistant executive director of development.

Mr./Miss Deaf Teen America Pageant a Success

SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED

By Susan M. Flanigan

The seventh annual Mr./Miss Deaf Teen America Pageant has been held at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf on the campus of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. The winners were identified as *Odyssey* went to press. See the next *Odyssey* for pageant results.

The winners receive a \$2,000 college scholarship for either Gallaudet University or the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. First runners-up receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

"One purpose of the pageant is to promote young emerging leaders who are deaf," said Roberta Gage, pageant coordinator and family educator at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. The pageant focuses on developing leadership qualities and self-esteem, building on teamwork and social skills,



Above: Participants in the pageant learned presentation and leadership skills. Photo by Michael Coffey at Lifetime Photography.

Laurent Clerc Painter Visits KDES

By Rosalinda Ricasa

If you notice a portrait of Laurent Clerc, along with paintings of three other individuals who had a strong impact on deaf education, hanging in the front office of Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES), you have deaf artist Jean Boutcher to thank. Boutcher donated her paintings to Gallaudet University and was delighted to see them displayed.

Boutcher visited Gallaudet University last winter and came to KDES to see the display. She also met with program manager Don Mahoney, KDES students, and teacher/researcher Lisa Pershan. Together, artist, educators, and students enjoyed lunch and talked about Boutcher's paintings.

Boutcher was an English teacher who decided to paint full time several years ago when the Northwest Campus of Gallaudet University closed. Her oil paintings of Clerc, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and L'Abbe Charles Michael de L'Epee were inspired by *When the Mind Hears*, a book by Harlan Lane. She was fascinated by deaf people's history through the personal experiences of Clerc, whom she highly regards. She went to the Gallaudet University Archives to search for pictures that would become the basis for her paintings.

She found lithographs of these great men and painted her own rendition of the lithographs in color using oil paint as the art medium. For Clerc's portrait, instead of the black background, she showed him at sea to draw attention to the important voyage he undertook for American deaf people.



and gaining a further understanding of diversity.

Teenagers, ages 13-19, enrolled in mainstream programs and schools for the deaf are eligible to apply. Participants must have fluent receptive and expressive sign communication skills, i.e., American Sign Language or Signed English.

The Mr./Miss DTA Pageant was co-founded in 1999 by Gage and Carol Nemecek with the support of the Model Secondary School for the Deaf's Student Life Office (now the Residential Education Program).

"Carol and I felt that by establishing the Mr./Miss Deaf Teen America Pageant, it would give young deaf people an additional option to compete in an event other than sports and the Academic Bowl," said Gage.

For more information, e-mail Gage at Roberta.Gage@gallaudet.edu.

"Life Turning Point"

Hundreds of Students Enter National Contests

By Susan M. Flanigan

Judges for the sixth annual Gallaudet National Essay Contest and a concurrent art contest faced a special challenge: 250 essays and 64 drawings and paintings were submitted to the contests on the theme of "Life Turning Point."

"This is the most entries we've received in the years I've worked here," said Tim Worthylake, publications specialist in the Clerc Center and contest co-coordinator. "We received entries from 37 states and Canada in the essay contest. In years past, most of our entries were from students in mainstream schools, but this year we received many entries from 23 schools for deaf students as well."

The Clerc Center sponsors the essay contest yearly in conjunction with the Office of Enrollment Services. The art contest has been conducted for two years in conjunction with the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technologies. "The goal of the contests is to give deaf and hard of hearing students an incentive to explore their feelings through writing and art—and to assure them recognition and a forum for expression," said Worthylake.

"Gallaudet University's offer of scholarship money to winners has proven a real incentive," he added. "Our system of informing people about the contests through e-mail was also important in increasing the number of entries."

The art contest began out of the concern of Dr. Jane Nickerson and Dr. Karen Kimmel when both were teaching English at Gallaudet University. Kimmel, who is now dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Technologies, and Nickerson wanted to provide students with an opportunity for expression through visual media, including pen and ink, pastel, watercolor, mixed media, acrylic, crayon, or pencil. Entries in the art contest more than doubled this year.

"We are grateful to all our judges," said Worthylake. "They are busy professionals, each of whom has published his or her own work. We appreciate that they volunteered their time, expertise, and skills to help us make the contest a success."

Judges for the essay contest were:

Dr. Gina Oliva, who has worked at Gallaudet for more than 30 years, is a professor in the Department of Physical Education and Recreation and author of *Alone in the Mainstream: A Deaf Woman Remembers Public School*;

Dr. Madan Vasishta, adjunct professor in the Department of Administration and Supervision, was superintendent of several schools for deaf



students, and has published four books and scores of articles; **Chris Heuer**, poet and instructor in the English Department, is a regular contributor to Tactile Mind Press.

Judges for the art contest were:

Andre Pellerin, painter, potter, and lab and special collection assistant in the Art Department;

Philip Bogdan, photographer and teacher/researcher for Kendall Demonstration Elementary School; and **Lori Lutz**, evaluation

associate with the Office of Exemplary Programs and Research at the Clerc Center.

"One of the most important parts of the contest is that all participants are recognized," noted Worthylake. "Each contest participant receives a certificate of meritorious entry, and all art entries will be displayed in a gallery on our website. We hope to include as many essays as possible, too."

Essay contest place winners receive scholarship money for the college or postsecondary training of their choice: \$1,000 first place, \$500 second place, \$300 third place, and \$100 each for two honorable mentions. Awards are doubled for winners who choose to attend Gallaudet University. The first place winner also receives a scholarship to Gallaudet's Young Scholars' Program.

The first place art contest winner will receive \$100. In addition, art contest place winners and their school libraries will receive a copy of *Douglas Tilden: The Man and His Legacy*, by Mildred Albronda. This coffee table book with photographs of the sculptures and life of Douglas Tilden, the deaf artist whose statues stand in public places throughout San Francisco, Calif., was donated generously by the Mildred Albronda Memorial Trust. Winners will be announced and winning entries will be printed in the summer issue of *World Around You*.

Enjoy the contest website with all of the art and much of the writing from our contest participants: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/worldaroundyou/2005artandessay/>.



Encyclopedic and Adventurous

New Book on Deaf Artists

Deaf Artists in America: Colonial to Contemporary

By Deborah M. Sonnenstrahl (2002, DawnSignPress, 448 pages)

Review by Margaret (Peggy) Reichard

Margaret (Peggy) Reichard, an associate professor of art at Gallaudet University, has a B.A. in German, an M.A. in guidance and counseling, and an M.F.A. in ceramics.

Dr. Deborah Sonnenstrahl has written an encyclopedic text illuminating the lives of 63 deaf artists born between the years of 1765 and 1969. It should be noted that

Sonnenstrahl was a beloved professor of Art History and Museum Studies at Gallaudet University for 32 years and retired as professor emeritus in 1996. Her book, *Deaf Artists*

in America: Colonial to Contemporary, is organized chronologically, which leads to startling juxtapositions of disparate artists every five to six pages. The page-by-page reading of this book becomes an adventure—the reader wants to see “who’s around the next corner.” To amplify this feeling of anticipation, Sonnenstrahl introduces each artist with three to five pages of dense text, leaving the reader eager to finally see the artist’s work in full color at the end of each individual biographical piece.

The artists selected run the gamut from Maggie Sayre, a shanty boat dweller on the Tennessee River, to David Hockney, an internationally known painter residing in Los Angeles. The author describes her 10 criteria for selecting the artists in the introduction. Three of the criteria, and perhaps the most interesting and important, are: the artist “causes an emotional response in the viewer with his or her work”; the artist “changes our view of the world”; and the artist was “deaf, hard of hearing, or late-deafened.”

The book focuses on painters, but also includes a few sculptors and photographers.

There are five chapters with succinct introductions that carry the reader from the 1700s to the 21st century.

Art history is woven adroitly throughout the book with explanations of major art movements, all of which are clear and accessible to a casual reader with little or no background in art. Frequent comparisons of deaf artists to better known artists, e.g., Shawn Richardson to Jacob Lawrence and Louis Frisino to John James Audubon, put each artist’s work into the broader art world context.

Deaf history is likewise one of the book’s connecting threads. For example, in the introduction to the first chapter, the author states: “Early American artists prior to 1817 were not aware of their potential to be members of a minority group.”

In the final chapter, entitled “Art Imitates Deaf Life,” Sonnenstrahl identifies the major advantages contemporary deaf artists enjoy, such as the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the lessening of communication barriers by advancing technology.

The book is replete with intriguing anecdotes about individual artists, including:

- Mary Allen and Frances Allen, photographers and sisters who devised a clever method to contend with Frances’s advancing blindness. Frances wore a glove with the alphabet written in each section of its palm and Mary would read newspapers to her by pressing individual letters on her hand.



REVIEWS

- Granville Redmond was a famous California landscape painter who is considered one of the first Southern California impressionists. He taught Charlie Chaplin pantomime and fingerspelling.
- Conrad Frederick Haeseler, artist and painter, was able to render a remarkable portrait of famed artist Thomas Eakins because Eakins knew sign language. Thus communication between the two was effortless and a bond was established.
- Will J. Quinlan, a New York artist of the 20th century known for his delicate etchings of bridges and buildings, was arrested while sketching on a bridge because he couldn't explain his purpose and was mistakenly thought to be a spy or a traitor.
- Regina Hughes, illustrator and painter, started her own art career at the age of 74 and continued for 17 more years, becoming the only deaf artist to have a solo exhibition at the Smithsonian. [Reviewer's note: In 2002 during Deaf Way II, Eiichi Mitsui became the second deaf artist so honored with his exhibit of ceramics at the Sackler Gallery of Asian Art.]

Deafness as an advantage to an artist is mentioned several times throughout the book. Native Americans felt a special kinship with painters George Catlin and Joseph Henry Sharp because of their deafness. This trust enabled the artists to depict the Native Americans with touching poignancy. N. Hillis Arnold is credited with the remark, "Deafness has made my work better because I'm not distracted." Due to their deafness, many artists

turned to drawing at a very early age as a means for communicating with family members. For example, a 4-year-old Charles Wildbank astonished his family by expressing his desire for a Snickers bar with a remarkably accurate drawing. At the same age, Robert Behnke used drawings as "his way of telling stories" and sculptor Gary Mayers was painting to communicate his desires and needs by age 4.

The last chapter of the book, "Art Imitates Life," is a stand out. Sonnenstrahl presents 13 contemporary artists who incorporate their deaf cultural lives, that is their lives as deaf individuals participating in a community of people who were deaf as well as communities and settings where people were hearing, in their art. "Imagery of signing, handshapes, and eyes...cultural issues like oppression, or the beauty and value of a world that relies in great part on vision" form the backbone of the work of these artists.

Betty G. Miller's "angry art," for example, is noteworthy, as is her bravery in the face of harsh criticism from some of the deaf community at the time. There were those who felt that her work was too negative and too raw. Susan Dupor's *Family Dog* is a hauntingly powerful expression of the isolation felt by deaf children in hearing families. Positive representations of deafness are also present. I was enchanted by Betty Miller's *Deaf Dancers*, which features the dancers "listening with their eyes...with colorful square

beads floating in front of the eyes," and also with Chuck Baird's *All American Breakfast*, involving a Log Cabin syrup bottle morphed into the handshape for a pitcher.

I have only a couple of very minor criticisms of this book. At times the author ends artists' descriptions with lackluster, obvious, or overly stark phrases. For example, the unfortunate very last phrase of this rich and compelling book

is: "—a metaphor for death."

I also found the sections entitled "A Closer Look," which are included to highlight some intriguing facts about the artists, not warranting a separate category. The idea of a "closer look" is good, but the information contained under these headings did not seem to expand significantly upon the facts presented in the opening paragraphs for each artist.

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Preferred: Experience providing or supporting deaf education in regular education environments. Cross-cultural experience.

Position is open until filled.

Highly Readable

A Deaf Artist in Early America: The Worlds of John Brewster Jr.

By Harlan Lane (2004, Beacon Press, 208 pages)
Available through DawnSignPress.

Review by Raymond Luczak

Raymond Luczak, a deaf filmmaker and playwright, is the author of six books, including *Silence is a Four-Letter Word: On Art & Deafness* (The Tactile Mind Press, 2002) and *Sylvia Plath Made Me Do It: A Story in Verse* (Immediate Sensation Books, 2005). His website is www.raymondluczak.com.

Many people assume that because deaf people are visual, many of them would become successful artists working with the mediums associated with the eye. Unfortunately, there aren't enough books on this important topic because the work of our deaf artists hasn't been recognized often enough, especially in an historical sense.

Harlan Lane, best known for his groundbreaking historical overview of the Deaf community, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf*, and the provocative book *The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community*, turns his considerable research expertise to a deaf artist who will no doubt become better known as a direct result of this book.

Given how important that John Brewster, Jr., was to early American portraiture, it is surprising that Brewster was never before the focus of a book of his own, even though he was well-known to curators, dealers, and historians of early American art. But *A Deaf Artist in Early America* was well worth the wait because anyone daring to undertake a study of Brewster

would need to be familiar with the deaf community, both past and present, in addition to the post-Revolutionary War period and the social nuances involved in being a painter living from commission to commission in those days.

Lane's approach to his subject matter, John Brewster, Jr., is summed up here: "Art is a privileged view of any culture, as well as an aesthetic experience, but it is particularly apt for understanding Deaf culture since, as I will show, Deaf people are visual people."

The book explores the four worlds of which Brewster (1766-1854) was a member. He was a seventh-generation descendant of Elder William Brewster, who led the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* to America. As part of the Federalist elite who were part of the post-Revolutionary class of merchants, clergy, and professional men, he painted their portraits. He was also a Deaf man. And finally, he was an artist who didn't follow the traditional styles practiced by European painters.

It is to Lane's credit that

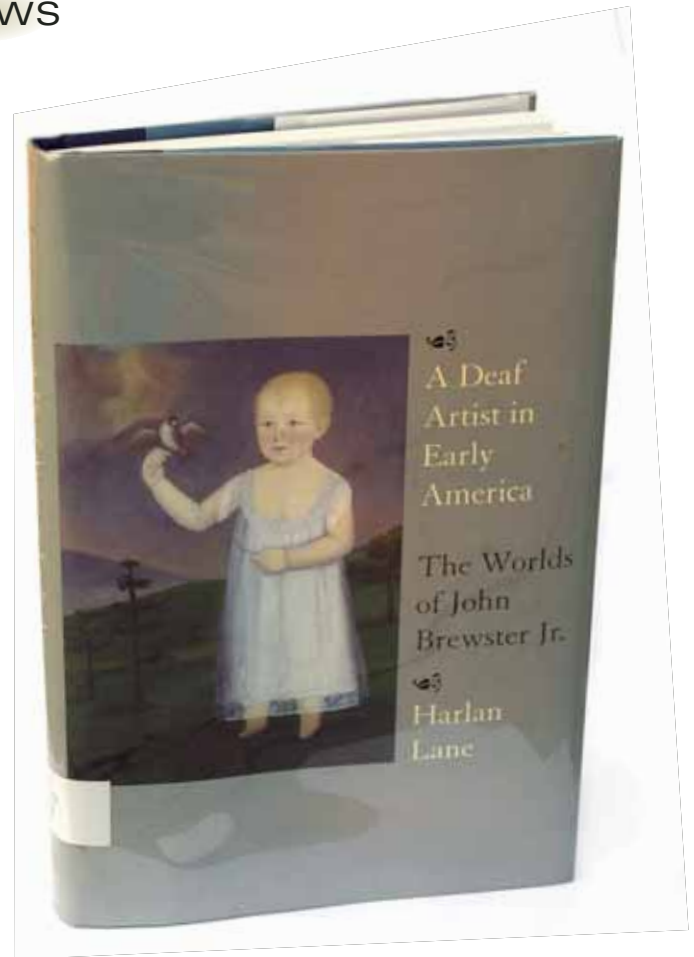
what could have been a dull exercise in academia and art history turns out to be engagingly readable. First, he starts off with an exploration of Brewster's genealogy, life, and social relationships that enabled him to make a living as an itinerant portrait painter, otherwise known as a "limner."

Brewster came at the right time when commissioned portraits were considered status symbols, especially in a country that was starting to define its own national identity. He was often in demand and, as Lane points out in his book, about 250 portraits attributed to him have been found, but the missing gaps found over the course of his research on Brewster indicate that there have to be more portraits, most of which Lane feels might be rotting away in

people's attics.

Lane lays out the hardships and demands of a typical limner's life, which required traveling by foot and stagecoach all over the New England region. Instead of going into details over the hundreds of sitters with whom Brewster worked, Lane wisely chooses to focus on four representative sitters if only to convey the breadth and depth of the Federalist society that he painted.

These sitters are not only handily summarized without losing a sense of their lives but are also conjoined with a set of plates that show Brewster's accomplishments as a painter in full color without compromising the full impact of his artistry short of seeing the actual works in person. Lane refers to these paintings throughout the book, and



REVIEWS

however representative they are of Brewster's work, they are well-chosen, particularly in the chapter delineating the commissioned painting as a status symbol. For instance, I found myself going back and forth from Lane's acute analysis on the importance of showing a carpet in the painting. It turns out that in those days, woven carpets and curtains were prohibitively expensive, so naturally in commissioned portraits, such items were often integrated into the painting. It may seem like a small detail, but the book is rife with revealing details that add up to a wider appreciation of Brewster's work as a limner and a historical and social document of his times.

Because he was living on commission, he must have had to play the political game of appeasement by conveying his subjects in a flattering yet honest light. Lane gives an intriguing explanation of why children in Brewster's paintings don't necessarily look like *children* but like adults in miniature by way of the historian Martin Zuckerman, who said bluntly that there weren't any children in 18th century New England. Lane explores why this was so: The mortality rates for children and adults were high, mainly due to disease, and child labor was to be expected in primarily agricultural societies. The concept of "childhood" as we know it now did not become institutionalized until the second half of the 19th century.

Due to his expertise in Deaf history, Lane is able to give thorough but quick portrayals of how a deaf person born to an

esteemed family might be educated compared to the changing trends in what was considered the best way to educate the deaf, starting in Europe where it was eventually decreed that sign language was perhaps the best approach. Most readers of this periodical are probably familiar with the oft-told story of how Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet brought Laurent Clerc, a Deaf Frenchman who became America's first Deaf teacher, to the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, which was established in 1817. (The school is now known as the American School for the Deaf.) As a Deaf person who has been fortunate to

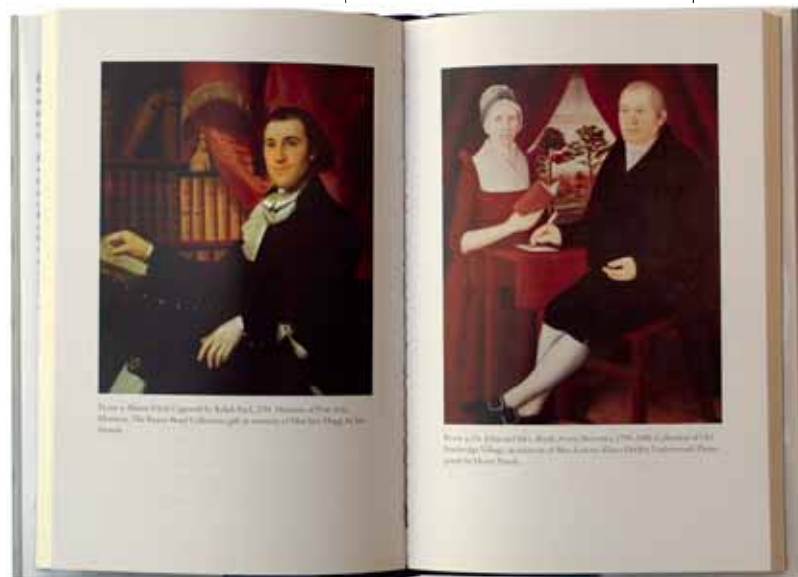
"It seems certain that in a mere matter of months Brewster was experiencing fluent conversation, real social and intellectual exchange, for the first time in 51 years." Those three years, presumably spent polishing his understanding of English and being a part of the Deaf-World, would explain why there was no record of his painting. But why did Brewster come away from that experience? Lane surmises that because he was raised among hearing people and worked with them for so long, Brewster went back to his trade as a limner: "The Deaf-World was too young and he was too old when they came together."

person. The book also explores the evolution of Deaf art in both America and France since then, and how Deaf artists today have contributed to our understanding of what it means to be Deaf. Lane provides the fascinating results of research on American Sign Language as well as on being Deaf and on how those factors have shaped the user's perceptions of facial and visual information. Even though Brewster chose not to stay a part of the Deaf-World, Lane applies the definitions provided by those who created the Deaf View/Image Art (De'VIA) manifesto to Brewster's work and finds that the artist's immaculate rendering of the sitter's facial

features and gazes to be most salient.

This highly readable book is an important contribution to the understanding of how deafness can influence and shape an artist's work even though he may not have been part of the Deaf-World for very long. It is my hope that this vital document will be regarded as an example of exemplary

scholarship (with unobtrusive endnotes, sources, and a comprehensive inventory of Brewster's paintings) for future analysis and research into the works of other Deaf artists who deserve recognition.



experience the cultural transformation of his own identity from a person with a hearing problem to a Deaf person who has found "home" among those who sign yet are strangers, it was quite moving to imagine how a middle-aged Brewster must have felt on his first day at the school in 1817:

In addition to recounting the role of genetics in the infamous Martha's Vineyard signing community, Lane offers a contrast with another sort of Deaf community in Henniker, New Hampshire, in the same era to give us a sense of ethnic identities that were available to a signing Deaf



TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2006

The Clerc Center develops and conducts training programs related to its national mission priorities of literacy, family involvement, and transition from school to postsecondary education and employment. Clerc Center Training and Professional Development Opportunities are offered around the country, coordinated through the Gallaudet University Regional Centers (GURCs). The following is a brief description of the programs currently available through the GURCs. You may also contact the Office of Training and Professional Development at (202) 651-5855 (V/TTY) or via e-mail: training.clerccenter@gallaudet.edu.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment)

GLOBE is a worldwide science and education program that coordinates investigations by students, teachers, and scientists involved in studying and understanding the global environment. This five-day workshop qualifies teachers and their schools for full participation in the GLOBE program.

Summer Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic Region

Summer Literacy Institute

The Clerc Center combines the best of its literacy workshops in one high-impact week! Designed especially for parents and caregivers, educators, and other professionals who work with deaf and hard of hearing students, the Literacy Institute provides instruction in the following:

- **Literacy—It All Connects**
- **Reading to Deaf Children: Learning from Deaf Adults**
- **Read It Again and Again**
- **Leading from Behind: Language Experience in Action**

June 26 - 30. Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic Region

TRAINING 2006

Shared Reading Project: Keys to Success

This five-day training program, designed to prepare site coordinators to establish a Shared Reading Project in their own schools or programs, will be offered only once in 2006. For educators, administrators, and parent leaders, this workshop is based on the highly acclaimed program where deaf tutors teach parents and caregivers effective strategies for reading books with their children during home visits.

March 13 - 17 Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic Region

WORKSHOPS

See the Sound: Visual Phonics

This workshop provides instruction in using Visual Phonics, a system that utilizes a combination of tactile, kinesthetic, visual, and auditory feedback to assist in developing phonemic awareness, speech production, and reading skills with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Summer Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic Region

Spoken Language & Sign: Optimizing Learning for Children with Cochlear Implants

This workshop is designed for teachers, school-based speech-language pathologists, and other habilitation specialists working with students with cochlear implants in signing environments. Mary Koch, auditory education consultant and author of *Bringing Sound to Life*, will provide a framework for developing spoken language skills for students with cochlear implants. Koch and other Clerc Center professionals will share information on considerations, resources, and strategies for effectively meeting the needs of children with cochlear implants who use sign language.

Summer Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic Region

Call (202) 448-6940 or e-mail Susanne.Scott@gallaudet.edu to obtain registration information and confirm space.

TRAINING

SPONSORING AN EXTENSION COURSE

Gallaudet resources and expertise are available through on-site extension courses. The courses provide a unique opportunity to study at a location close to you with recognized experts in such fields as American Sign Language Linguistics, Deaf Studies, Deaf Education, and Interpreting.

Extension courses are offered at the request of sponsors or sponsoring agencies. A menu of potential courses is available for review.

- **Sponsors** - For a listing of all potential course offerings, visit <http://gspp.gallaudet.edu/shapes/extension/menu.html>.
- **Students** - For a listing of our currently scheduled course offerings, visit <http://gspp.gallaudet.edu/shapes/extension/extensioncoursebyregion.html> webpage.

For more information about Gallaudet University's extension programs, e-mail extension@gallaudet.edu or call (202) 651-5093 (V/TTY).



PHOTO BY JOHN T. CONSOLI

Regional workshops are offered around the country. In addition, if you are interested in hosting a workshop at your location, please contact the Clerc Center Office of Training and Professional Development or the Gallaudet University Regional Center in your respective region.

For more information

CONTACT EITHER THE CLERC CENTER AT THE ADDRESS BELOW OR THE GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY REGIONAL CENTERS AT THE ADDRESSES THAT FOLLOW.

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(202) 651-5857 (FAX)
training.clerccenter@gallaudet.edu

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Regional Center
Johnson County
Community College
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(913) 469-4416 (FAX)
mwhittaker1@jccc.net

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E-MAIL: training.clerccenter@gallaudet.edu

WEBSITE: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

Upcoming Conferences and Exhibits



July 1-4
California Association of the Deaf 2005 Conference, Walnut Creek, Calif. To be held at the Marriot Hotel. For more information: cadconf2005@aol.com; <http://www.cad1906.org/>.

July 3-10
2005 Jewish Deaf Congress Conference: "Oy! Treasures of Judaism Oy!" Tampa Bay, Fla. For more information: <http://jdc2005.com/>.

July 9-13
American Society for Deaf Children 19th Biennial Convention, Pittsburgh, Pa. To be held at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Contact: Jessica Wells, (412) 371-7000; jwells@wpsd.org; <http://www.deafchildren.org>.

July 14-17
Arkansas Association of the Deaf Conference:

"Preserving Our Future," Little Rock, Ark. For more information: <http://www.arkad.org/index.html>.

July 27-31
Intertribal Deaf Council 2nd Biennial Spiritual Gathering, Madison, S.D. To be held at Camp Lakodia. Contact: LeRoy Eagle Bear, Chair, (605) 367-5759; fax: (605) 362-2806; leaglebear@cs-d.org.

July 31-August 4
Annual International CODA conference, Las Vegas, Nev. For more information: <http://coda-international.org/>.

August 26-28
Abilities Expo, Novi, Mich. To be held at the Novi Expo Center. For more information: <http://abilitiesexpo.com>.

September 10-11
Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss 2005

Conference, Washington, D.C. Contact: Kim Dodge: kadodge@frontiernet.net, AMPHL, 3709 Waterbridge Lane, Miamisburg, OH 45342; <http://www.amphl.org>.

September 16-18
Abilities Expo, Rosemont, Ill. To be held at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. For more information: <http://abilitiesexpo.com>.

September 17
DeafNation Expo, Seattle, Wash. To be held at the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall. For more information: <http://www.deafnation.com/>.

September 24
DeafNation Expo, Gaithersburg, Md. To be held at the Montgomery County Ag. Fair. For more information: <http://www.deafnation.com/>.

September 26-27
Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Conference, San Francisco, Calif. For more information: <http://conference.jan.wvu.edu/>.

October 1
Arizona Association of the Deaf Conference, Phoenix, Ariz. For more information: <http://www.azad-online.org/conference.htm>.

October 8
DeafNation Expo, Hoffman Estates, Ill. To be held at the Prairie Stone Sports & Wellness Center. For more information: <http://www.deafnation.com/>.

October 20-21
26th Annual Fall Conference on Mainstreaming Students with Hearing Loss, Springfield, Mass. To be held at the Sheraton Hotel. Contact: Barbara Rochon, (413) 587-7313 (V/TTY); fax: (413) 586-6654; brochon@clarkeschool.org.

October 29
DeafNation Expo, Pleasanton, Calif. To be held at the Alameda County Fair, in the Young California Building. For more information: <http://www.deafnation.com/>.

November 5
DeafNation Expo, Henrietta, N.Y. To be held at The Dome Center. For more information: <http://www.deafnation.com/>.

November 18-20
Abilities Expo, Northern Calif. For more information: <http://abilitiesexpo.com>.

December 9-11
Abilities Expo, Houston, Tex. To be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center. For more information: <http://abilitiesexpo.com>.

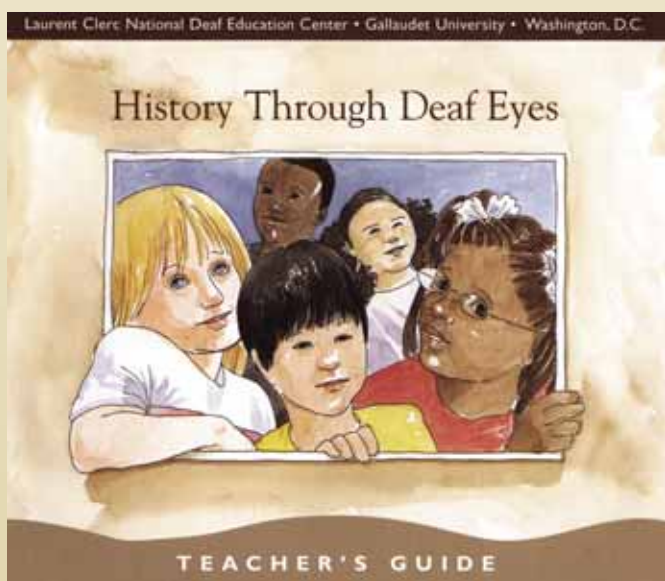
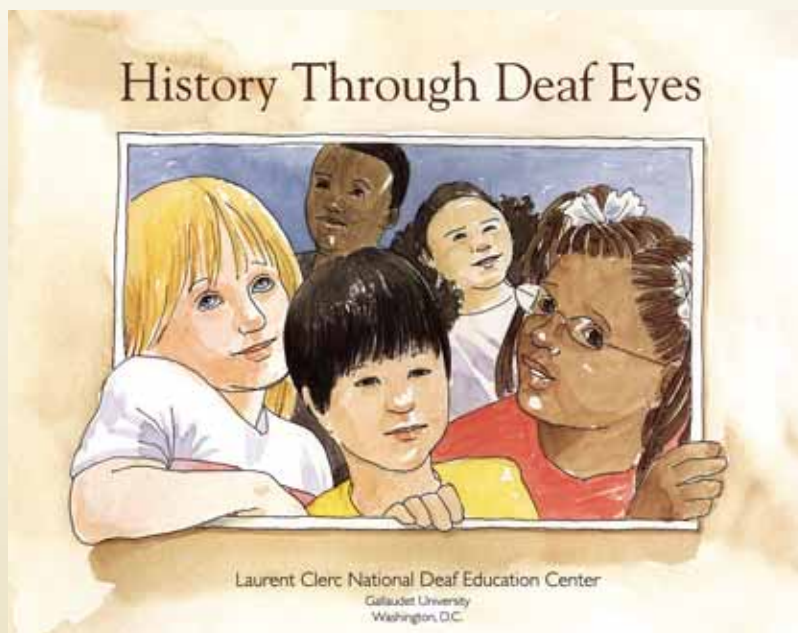
2006

April 6-8
Deaf Studies Today! (Academic Conference), Orem, Utah. To be held at the Utah Valley State College. Contact: Dr. Bryan Eldredge, (801) 863-8529 (V), eldredbr@uvsc.edu; <http://www.uvsc.edu/asl/deafstudies/>.

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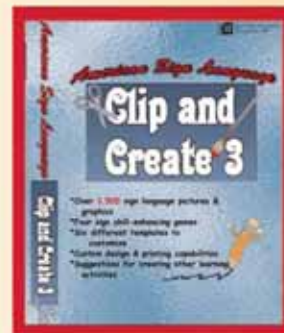


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