



#5 Lesson Plan	
Subject: Media	Length of lesson: 1 hour
Level: Intermediate	Resources needed: Computers or tablets with Internet connection, whiteboard & pens, SignDNA website link: www.signdna.org
Topic: Deaf in the Media – Creating Perceptions	
Expectations	
<p>Expectation(s): By the end of this lesson students should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how Deaf people were typically portrayed by the media in various time periods. 2. Identify the language used to describe Deaf people in different time periods. 3. Discuss the impact of these aspects on the perceptions of Deaf people. 	
Content	
<p>What do I want the learners to know and/or be able to do?</p> <p>Today learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how Deaf have historically been portrayed in the media, and the language used to describe them. • Search for examples of media coverage of Deaf people from various time periods and discuss how the portrayal can affect society's perception of them as a group. 	
Learning context	
10 mins	<p>Background:</p> <p>Even though we often know lots of people, it is unlikely we know people from all groups, such as ethnicities, religious beliefs, nationalities, etc.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Instruct the students to list the groups of people they do not know</p>

	<p>members of personally. This is best via a brainstorming session – the main point is to demonstrate there are often gaps in our own experiences.</p> <p>How do we learn about people from those gaps in our own knowledge? We rely on the stories of others.</p> <p>How are those stories created? Either by those with lived experience (people telling stories about their own lives), or stories reported about other people (such as the news, documentaries about others, etc). We often rely on the storytellers in the media to give us insight into different groups we are not personally familiar with, and to help us understand those groups of people.</p>
<p>25 mins</p>	<p>Activity</p> <p>Search the SignDNA archive for media coverage of Deaf people from four different decades.</p> <p>For each example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the decade of the video 2. Briefly, what is the media story about? 3. Who is doing the talking? Who is “telling the story”? 4. How are Deaf people described in the video? (What are the adjectives used to describe being Deaf or Deaf people?) <p><i>Note: depending on time and resources, you can assign a decade to each student or group, and give them more time to explore that decade before feeding back. Or give them two decades to cover, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Tip: Click on the “Documentary/TV” button to isolate news related videos from the main collection. This will make it easier to find suitable videos.</i></p> <p><i>Avoid the “News Review” videos as these are general news items that happen to be presented in NZSL alongside the news reader.</i></p>
<p>15 mins</p>	<p>Group Feedback</p> <p>Elicit feedback from students. You might like to go through a decade at a time as this will make the progression more marked. Start with the 1950’s/ For each decade seek at least one video:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly, what is the media story about? 2. Who is doing the talking? Who is “telling the story”? 3. How are Deaf people described in the video? (What are the adjectives used to describe being Deaf or Deaf people?) <p>Aspects to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you noticed a change in the words used to describe

	<p>Deaf people over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the focus of each news story change over the decades? • When was the first time a Deaf person was directly interviewed or told their own story? <p>Summary:</p> <p>Typically older films tended to focus on the education of Deaf people (“deaf-mutes” or “deaf and dumb” people). It usually told one side of the story, that being that Oral education (teaching through speech and lip-reading) was a solely positive practice, and they tended to focus on the speech therapy sessions, there was little mention of academic success or failure beyond the child learning to speak and lip-read. Deaf adults were virtually invisible during these early decades. Language used was typically dramatic and negative towards being Deaf.</p> <p>Clips from the 1970s and 1980s started moving towards alternative teaching approaches, such as Signed English and Total Communication (refer to Lesson Plans 1 and 2 for more information about this). Those telling their stories were typically educators, and parents of Deaf children. Language used was typically negative (“silent world” etc)</p> <p>Films from the 1990s and 2000s started to allow Deaf people themselves to tell their stories rather than hearing people telling their stories for them. This is partly due to the new availability of interpreters, a few of whom graduated in 1985 and then in 1992 there was regular cohort of qualified graduates. Language use started to include concepts of Deaf pride, normalcy and the naturalness of being Deaf.</p>
<p>5 mins</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Viewing media stories from each decade, how did that make you feel towards the Deaf people from that time period? (ie what qualities did you feel towards Deaf people from the news stories?). This may elicit responses such as “Early films made me feel sorry for Deaf people” or “ Deaf people looked like they needed help” etc.</p> <p>How did that perception or feeling change through the decades of news stories? Or did it change?</p> <p>If you have time, you could ask how the media currently creates perceptions of other groups. Students may have some ideas about this, especially if they themselves are from minority cultures and have experienced stereotyping for convenience in the media. This can reinforce Deaf culture as equivalent to students’ own experiences etc.</p> <p>Note: This lesson joins with Lesson 5 which looks at media discussion of Deaf issues in more detail.</p>

Resources/further reading

- Watch Us - www.watchus.nz
- *Talking Hands, Listening Eyes* - Dr Pat Dugdale – this is a written history of the Deaf community in NZ including its cultural and political development. Suitable for older readers only.