



#6 Lesson Plan	
<b>Subject:</b> Media	<b>Length of lesson:</b> 1 hour
<b>Level:</b> Advanced	<b>Resources needed:</b> Large screen that all student can watch simultaneously, SignDNA website link: <a href="http://www.signdna.org">www.signdna.org</a>
<b>Topic:</b> Deaf in the Media – Emerging Deaf Pride	
Expectations	
<p><b>Expectation(s):</b> By the end of this lesson students should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate critical analysis of media representation of Deaf people.</li> <li>2. Note the development of Deaf cultural awareness among Deaf people and related issues of language choice and Deaf identity.</li> <li>3. Identify why certain comments can be seen as controversial, and discuss their potential impact if not handled correctly.</li> </ol>	
Content	
<p><b>What do I want the learners to know and/or be able to do?</b></p> <p><b>Today learners will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch a TV media article from 1994 “A Deafening Silence” that attempts to portray a range of Deaf issues during a time of Deaf cultural change. Students will discuss the issues raised while also critically analysing the media depiction of those issues</li> </ul>	
Learning context	
<b>5 mins</b>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The 1990s were a time of great change for the Deaf community. There was a growing self-awareness amongst many Deaf people that they had a valid language and culture, and that they had been denied free use of it by 100 years of oral education that did not recognise their natural abilities, and that low expectations of what Deaf children could achieve led to decades of government indifference towards low academic achievement.</p> <p>The early 1990s saw several significant breakthroughs such as the modern NZSL Interpreter programme being established (mid 1992) and this created more access than</p>

	<p>ever, and with it, more expectation that Deaf people COULD be involved in management and governance roles. This video was taken during the time of emerging cultural self awareness in the Deaf community, when Deaf people had to try and channel frustration of the past into positive action for future change.</p> <p>This particular article was broadcast as part of the ‘Frontline’ news and current affairs show screened Sunday nights on TV1 from 1988 to 1994. ‘Frontline’ was seen as being quite “hard-hitting”; often trying to uncover new stories or approach well-known issues from a new angle.</p> <p>This article focused on Deaf people, and others, highlighting that the historical ‘oral’ method of education had failed Deaf people, resulting in dependency and underemployment. They were also raising concern that the current system of education was still not what Deaf children required to reach their potential.</p>
<p><b>20 mins</b></p>	<p>Activity Part 1: Begin watching the article “A Deafening Silence” (<a href="https://signdna.org/video/a-deafening-silence/">https://signdna.org/video/a-deafening-silence/</a> )</p> <p><u>Timecode: 8:45 pause.</u> Summarise the proposition so far.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> What are the main points of the article so far?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deaf people say ‘oral’ education has failed Deaf children and left them unfit to pursue their potential.</li> <li>• The introduction of Total Communication (TC) in the 1980s was a false dawn for improving Deaf children’s access to instruction and education. TC is based on English.</li> <li>• Mainstreaming (placing Deaf students in their local school with resource assistance) is also unsatisfactory, with limited resource assistance only available for very limited hours. It also can be isolating for the Deaf child to be a classroom full of non-signing classmates and teachers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question:</b> Do you think ‘Frontline’ has been effective so far in presenting these arguments?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Have you noticed anything unusual about the filming of the young Deaf group from Palmerston North? The camera work has strongly focused on the faces of the Deaf people, like they were hearing people) rather than their upper bodies and arms, meaning you cannot see the NZSL being used in most cases.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> What do you think should come next in investigating these issues? Who could ‘Frontline’ ask, what else do they need to find out in order to try and answer this issue? Who would you talk to?</p>
<p><b>20 mins</b></p>	<p><b>Activity Part 2:</b> Continue watching the article (approx 5 mins)</p>

	<p><u>Timecode: 13:27 Pause.</u></p> <p>This segment focuses on the argument of sign language versus oral education.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> What are the arguments for using sign language in Deaf education? Who is advocating for this?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Conversely what are the arguments for focusing on speech and lipreading as a priority for Deaf children? Who is advocating for this?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> What do you think about this argument? If you were a Deaf child, which option do you think you would prefer? If you were a parent of a Deaf child what would be your priorities for your child?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Do you think the article has clearly explained both sides of this issue? What other questions do you have that they have not yet asked?</p>
<p><b>15 mins</b></p>	<p><b>Activity Part 2:</b> Continue watching the article (approx 4 mins)</p> <p>This section focuses on Deaf identity, and differing perspectives on what it means to be Deaf.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Lisa Sinclair (University student) - how does she communicate? How does she think Deaf people view her because of this? When asked if she wanted to be hearing how did she respond?</p> <p><b>Question:</b> At 15:00, Steve Hooker (young man in red T-shirt) is asked “If he had a baby would he want it to be hearing or Deaf?” What was Steve’s answer? What was his reason for this? What do you think of his answer? Do you think his answer is controversial? If so, why?</p> <p>Stevens comments about preferring to have Deaf child were very controversial at the time, with many seeing the comments as cruel (wishing a disability on a child) and very few understood the cultural reasons for his claim, that in most cases parents want their children to be like them, to experience the world in a similar way and to use the same language and have the same culture at their parents.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Do you think this section on identity was well handled by the producers? Why/why not?</p> <p>Some believe that the article was too brief to conclude with such a complex cultural viewpoint. Being able to safely explain why a Deaf person might prefer to have a Deaf child is a complex task that would take far longer than this format allows, and so to end the article with that view, with very little chance of the audience fully understanding it, put perceptions of Deaf at risk of them being labelled as radical or obsessed.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Do you agree the article took an unacceptable risk</p>

	here or do you think they handled it adequately? Why do you think that? What are the risks involved of people's perception of Deaf people because of this article?
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**Resources/further reading**

- SignDNA section on *Deaf Education*
- *One News article on Deaf Bilingual Education (1996)*  
<https://signdna.org/video/bilingual-approach-at-kdec/>