

**EST305 – Assignment One**

S320094, S326012, & S960187 – Summer Semester, 2021

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# Introduction.

In a perfect world, everyone would have the same access to education and an equal opportunity to achieve personal and professional goals. In a perfect world, people with disabilities would be afforded the same chance to communicate, participate, learn, and develop, as those without. In line with the proclamations detailed in the 1994 Salamanca Statement (Ministry of Education and Science & United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1994), The 2019 Mparntwe Education Declaration was drafted with the aim to identify and address individual needs and barriers to help empower young learners to overcome challenges and provide all young Australians with inclusive education free from discrimination (Education Services Australia, 2019).

This assignment will analyse and evaluate inclusive mainstream educational practices in relation to the Deaf community through three different pieces of media. The critique will touch on how deficit, normalisation, neoliberalism, social and cultural capital are viewed within the selected media and current education context. For the definitions this assignment will be working with, please refer to the appendix section of the document.

# Description and summary of media items.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Area of education:** Middle and Secondary School. | |
| **Issue of inclusion:** Deafness. | |
| **Film:** The Silent Child (Network Ireland Television, 2020)  **Reviewed by:** Dainah Howard (S320094) | |
| Description of media:  A six-year-old girl, Libby, who is deaf in a hearing family, is unable to use language as she nor her family know sign language, only relying on ‘lip reading’. After being taught sign language by a social worker to be ‘prepared for school’, Libby's parents decide they do not want her using sign language. Libby is placed in a mainstream class without an interpreter or any extra support. Without access to language, she cannot understand or follow the teacher’s instruction. | How item addresses deficit knowledge:  The film addresses the adverse effects of deficit knowledge and its impact on the access to sign language received by children who are deaf within families and education. |
| **Book/Literature:** TBC  [Falling on Deaf Ears](https://limpingchicken.com/2016/08/01/read-falling-on-deaf-ears-a-short-story-written-by-sign-language-interpreter-maxine-sinclair/)  **Reviewed by:** Alan Hubbard (S326012) | |
| Description of media:  A short story about a person with hearing impairment whose father has recently passed away. Notably there is no description of age, gender or level of impairment of the primary character, from the perspective of the narrator. | **How item addresses normalisation:**  Highlights the issues surrounding how, even families, do not make reasonable accommodations to deaf people.  Within the short story, the narrator describes, repeatedly how their family and some others make no effort to facilitate their inclusion in the family, especially during an emotionally impactful family event. |
| **Multimedia:** I’m deaf, but we can still talk (Afari, 2018).  **Reviewed by:** Tony Jongue (S960187) | |
| **Description of media:**  Through her TEDx Talk, Rebekah Afari shares her experiences and addresses challenges of growing up deaf. | **How item addresses neoliberalism and social and cultural capital**  Rebekah speaks about her personal journey, addressing the barriers she has faced as a person who is deaf whilst also challenging society to break down these boundaries of exclusion. Barriers erected by a world that does not cater for those who are deaf. |

# Film.

# Book.

Summary

Falling on Deaf Ears.

Discusses a person with hearing impairment whose father has recently passed away.

Notably there is no description of age, gender or level of impairment of the primary character, from the perspective that this short story is written.

The narrator describes how for, likely, years, her family have left them on the outside and has never really been part of the family. They have become accustomed to being excluded from their own family.

However, in a slight turn, at the reading of the will, the narrator’s father left the house to the mother and all other assets have been given to The British Sign Language Society. This may give readers some hope that the father has some acknowledgement or regret for the way the narrator was mistreated.

Other siblings are disappointed with the decision and complain, but again without clear communication to their deaf sibling.

Deficit view – Deaf people belong to a minority language culture.

Signing was banned in American schools. Belief that if students were allowed to sign, they would not learn to speak. Allowing sign language in schools was treated as a last resort.

The belief that students that are deaf would learn to speak fails to understand their diversity of communication ability and, rather, focus on their inability and a method to fix their deficiency. Better identifying ways students “can learn” rather than “can’t”, allows educators a better ability to enhance student development, instead of fixing a perceived deficiency. (Dinishak, 2016).

This deficit view that student who are deaf, lack the ability to communicate effectively, is a poor assessment of their social capital. Whilst these students may not be able to communicate in the same way other students can, that is verbally, they are able to interpret the world in a diverse method, not a worse one. For example, (at 9:37 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Q7axl4oXY>) the presenter provides an example about how he used sign language to interpret for two people that spoke different spoken languages but could not understand each other.

The family appear to have

Consistent with the first view of Normalisation, it seems that the family has not made any effort to accommodate the narrator, by learning sign language or even learning how best to speak to them when they are using lip reading. It is likely they have been treated as would any other person with no hearing impairment. The narrator has been treated as if they had no disability and have been expected to interact with the world as if this was the case. Even though a Sign Language Interpreter was arranged for the funeral service, when it was evident that they were going to be late, there was no adjustment to the schedule to accommodate this.

Humphries, T. (2013). Schooling in American Sign Language: A paradigm shift from a deficit model to a bilingual model in deaf education. *Berkeley Review of Education*, *4*(1).

Children that are deaf from families that are also deaf were generally more successful writers and readers, as well as more socially and culturally knowledgeable than children that are deaf with families with no hearing impairment (Dinishak, 2016). This fact, and others, could be used to guide a discussion or investigate toward identifying strengths of people living with disabilities, that would otherwise be unknown. The ability to refocus our attention to strengths in diversity rather than the deficiencies is critical to inclusive practice and creating a rewarding environment for students with additional needs and those without.

How to use Falling on Deaf Ears in the classroom.

Major family events, such as the passing of a loved one, are stressful for everyone involved; this can be compounded through a lack of communication and understanding between family members. It is likely that one or more students have first-hand experience in in loss of a family member, therefore will be able to relate to the situation. They can then expand their experience to understand how the exclusion of an individual family member, due to the inability to mutually communicate, would exponentially exacerbate the situation.

Notes – critic/analysis of inclusive practice

“Professional practice – our educators and leaders are equipped to respond effectively to the needs of all children and students. We harness expertise within the system and through our partners to grow a skilled and capable workforce. This focus area aligns with the Education NT Strategy focus on Quality Teaching and School Leadership.” How is professional practice developed in teaching and school staff? (Department of Education, 2019).

# TEDx Talk: I’m deaf, but we can still talk – Rebekah Afari.

# Summary.

# References.

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# Appendix.

## Definitions.

### Deficit.

Deficit knowledge or deficit discourse refers to the discouraging and disempowering views, language, and practice that focuses on the perceived deficiency and limitations of a person or a group. In particular, deficit discourse draws attention to the discriminative mode of thinking that places the person or group at fault, rather than the environment or circumstance that create barriers. An example of deficit knowledge is how the Australian government indirectly represents First Nations people and their culture in a negative, failing, and deficient manner throughout many policies and legislation by framing Aboriginality as the ‘deficit’ (Fforde et al., 2013; Fogarty et al., 2018; Freeman & Staley, 2018).

### Normalisation.

(or *Normalization* – used interchangeably).

Largely based on the concepts of Danish reformer and intellectual disabilities advocate, Niels Erik Bank-Mikkelsen and physician and educator for persons with disabilities, Bengt Nirje, the principles of normalisation refer to how persons with disabilities should be able to live their lives as close as possible to the norms of society. In 1985, Nirje rephrased his initial workings to “The normalization principle means making available to all persons with disabilities or other handicaps, pattern of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to or indeed the same as the regular circumstances and ways of life of society” (Nirje, 1985, p. 67).

Obtaining its origin from The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), the other perspective of normalisation was framed as an inclusive education design process that aimed to facilitate and accommodate the diverse needs, characteristics, and abilities of every child. The framework included establishing specialised schools and making reasonable adjustments to mainstream education facilities to include, encourage, and support children with disabilities to help achieve their full learning potential. In this instance, the principle of normalisation aimed to make meaningful adjustments to the educational environment to prevent disadvantage from any real or perceived disability or difference.

### Neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism or new-liberalism, centres around a political and economic ideology that promotes deregulation of the economy in favour of a self-regulating free market (Steger & Roy, 2010). It is important to note that whilst neoliberalist thinking does not advocate for the complete replacement of the state’s role, for example, providing defence, policing and legal functions or establishing health care, education, and social security (Harvey, 2007), it does encourage privatisation and marketisation of government-owned assets and services (Kandiko, 2010; Savage, 2017; Steger & Roy, 2010) and has driven policy to frame and justify education as “primarily a site for building human capital and contributing to economic productivity” (Savage, 2010, p.150). In basic (and neoliberalist) terms, economic health drives education policy.

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### Social and Cultural Capital.

The concept of social and cultural capital, in its most basic form, is *who you know* and *what you know*.

Social capital has been described as a person’s actual and potential networks and interaction (Baker, 1990; Bourdieu, 1986; Monkman et al.,2005) and refers to what those relationships and group-memberships can be used to achieve (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). A hierarchical form of human capital that can be measured by strength of ties and include such functions as social control, family support, or benefits through extra familial network (Monkman et al.,2005).

In terms of cultural capital, Bourdieu (1986) believed it existed in an embodied, objectified, and institutionalised form that represented the practices, resources and knowledge of a culture. Whilst the embodied state included styles, manners, and cultural preferences and affiliations, the objectified state encompassed literature, dance, music, and art, and the institutionalised state consisted of academia and qualifications.