The Deaf-World:
Audiologic Considerations

Tracy White, Ph.D. student University of Colorado, Boulder Department of Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences May, 2008

Ethnic Group/Language Minority vs. Disabled:

Many members of the Deaf community reject the label *disabled* and consider themselves to be members of a cultural group, better viewed as an ethnic group or language minority than as a disability group. This perspective differs dramatically from the pathological perspective of deafness espoused by many hearing individuals.

What makes a group an ethnic group?

Harlan Lane (2005) uses the following properties from social scientists to characterize a social group as an ethnic group:

- Collective name
- Feeling of community
- Norms for behavior
- Values
- Knowledge
- Kinship
- Customs
- Social structure
- Language
- Art forms
- History

Is the Deaf community an ethnic group?

According to Lane and others, the Deaf community possesses all of the above properties, and therefore qualifies as an ethnic group.
Collective name:
a. In English, the Deaf community calls itself the Deaf-World.
b. The Deaf-World also has a name for itself in ASL, the native language of the Deaf-World in the US.

Feeling of community; within the Deaf-World, members have:
a. Easy communication
b. A positive identity
c. A surrogate family
d. A high percentage – 90% – of endogamous marriages to other community members)

Norms for behavior and customs:
.a. Acting in ways that make clear communication easier
.b. Maintaining visual contact

Marriages of community members
- Forgoing private conversations in a group setting
- Announcing departures

Introductions tend to follow the following general pattern: the introducer
a. States, “I’ll introduce you”

Fingerspells names
a. Provides name signs, although name signs are not used when someone is present
b. Provides info about the two parties relevant to the Deaf-World, such as the Deaf school attended, relatives, school colleagues, etc.

Saying goodbye is done in stages and takes time!
.a. Frank talk
.b. Giving of name signs
.c. Values

a. Deaf identity
b. Allegiance to the culture
c. Culture as family
d. Group decision-making
e. Mutual aid & reciprocity
f. Deference to older Deaf people & achievements
g. Informality
h. Physical contact
Residential school ties
Deaf children
ASL
Frank talk

Knowledge
Importance of sharing information
Culture specific
Deaf leaders
Concerns of members of the Deaf community
Important events in Deaf history
How to interact with hearing people

Kinship

Although there is no “land of the ancestors,” there are lands that the Deaf feel a connection to:
Residential schools
Gallaudet (especially since the “Gallaudet revolution”)
In 1988, a student protest led to the selection of Gallaudet University’s first deaf president


Deaf clubs
Desire for a “utopia,” “a land of our own,” where everyone speaks ASL
Strong sense of solidarity
Link to the past, socialization, even though it is typically not done from parent to child
Deaf adults
Peer socialization, especially at residential schools
Biological similarity
Distinct boundary from the Hearing world

Social Structure
Organizations and activities
National Association of the Deaf (NAD)
http://www.nad.org – includes:
Advocacy issues
Biennial conference
http://www.deafmall.net/events/
. Events around the country, including:
  a. Open captioned movies
  b. Coffee chat
  c. Theatre
    . Colorado Deaf
      . Includes a calendar of local activities
    . Silent Athletic Club (SAC) of Denver
Deaf Way, 1989 – 5000 people, Deaf Way II, 2002 – 10,000 people
  . International conferences
  . Presentations of scholarly works

Social organization within the Deaf-World
  . Higgins, 1980
  . Sociological research from the Chicago area
  • Members of the Deaf-World associated with each other based upon
    a. Race, education, age
    b. Less by social class, gender, religion Lane et al, 1996
  • Horizontal diversity: race, gender, sexual orientation
    o National Black Deaf Advocates
    . National Council of Hispano Deaf and Hard of Hearing
    . Deaf Women United, Inc.
    a. Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf
    . Despite diversity, all are bound together by the commonality of being Deaf
    . Stratification
      a. Related to horizontal diversity – similar to the hearing world
      b. Ways to earn respect within the Deaf-World:
         . Storytelling
         . Miss Deaf America (through the NAD)
    • Leaders:
      a. Born to hearing parents & became Deaf after learning English: intercultural leaders who interact with the hearing world
      b. Born to Deaf parents: culturally centered leaders
• Deaf: those who belong to the Deaf community
• Hearing/“hearies”: those who can hear and therefore don’t belong to the Deaf community
• Hard of hearing: deviating from the “norm” of Deaf – the more hard of hearing, the less Deaf; the less hard of hearing, the more Deaf
• “Exceptional” Deaf: highly educated
• “Average” Deaf: victimized by poor education
• ORAL: one having characteristics like hearing people, resulting from having made wrong choices in life; a powerful symbol in fantasy storytelling of one in need of being rescued
  a. MIND RICH: deaf children from rich families that rigidly embrace oralism
  b. ALWAYS PLAN: deaf who are careful, “always planning,” to pass in the hearing world, “cozying up”
  c. THINK-HEARING: can go beyond ORAL to include those Deaf who oppose ASL or insist upon English sign systems among themselves
• ORAL FAIL: product of oppressive education, can become . . .
• #EX ORAL: someone who comes of age and makes his or her own choice to join the Deaf-World and learn ASL
• Deaf children of Deaf parents: both respected, because they are fluent in ASL and the Deaf culture, and stigmatized, because the Deaf community had internalized some of the perspectives of the hearing world, including, somewhat, the perspective that it is not completely ok to give birth to a child knowing that he or she might be deaf
• CODAs: (hearing) children of Deaf adults; CODAs have a difficult role because they are very knowledgeable about ASL and Deaf culture, but can never fully be members because they have normal hearing
• Peddlers: itinerant deaf vendors who would make a living by selling ASL alphabet cards and tokens for donations; often looked down upon – strongly – by the rest of the Deaf-World
• Disabled: a label applied by outsiders that a Deaf person may borrow, guiltily, to receive some benefits (e.g., reduced subway fare, disability income, advocacy), but a label that the Deaf do not apply to themselves

Language – ASL
Lane et al, 1996
• Plays a HUGE role in Deaf culture!!
• Spoken by an estimated 500,000 – 2,000,000 people in America, plus speakers in Canada
It is not just a language, but is also:
• A symbol of identity
• A medium of social interaction
A repository of cultural knowledge

Something to be treasured and protected against all who assail it

ASL is a full rich language in its own right, not just a gestural/iconic system or a manual version of English

Has the same stages of development and order of acquisition of structures, at same ages, as all other natural languages

b. Lane et al, 1996; Padden & Humphries, 1988

Manually coded languages as opposed to ASL:

“unwieldy,” “cumbersome,” “a dead weight”

“strain both one’s eyesight and one’s mentality”

ASL and other natural sign languages are much more efficient than manually coded languages because they take advantage of spatial relationships to help encode grammar, as opposed to unnaturally inserted manual grammatical symbols

Although some educators have recently revived manually coded languages, their inefficiency caused them to fall into disuse in the past:

a. After 1822, manually coded French rapidly fell into disuse in France
b. American schools stopped using manually coded English in the 1830’s

http://www.deafbilingualcoalition.com/

Advocates for ASL for all Deaf & hard of hearing children

Art Forms

Visual arts

National Touring Exhibit of Deaf Culture Art

Deaf Artists’ Exhibits of 1993, 1995 and 1999

http://www.deafart.org/

Susan Dupor, artist’s website: http://www.geocities.com/duporart/

F-I-X, the new eugenics, Susan Dupor, 2000
Butterfly Pudding, Susan Dupor, 2004

Milan, Italy, 1880, Mary Thornley, 1994
oASL storytelling, poetry, word play, humor, etc.

- Rich literary tradition
- Important role in bonding
- Transmission of heritage

b. oTheatre

- National Theatre of the Deaf

- http://www.ntd.org/

- My Third Eye
  a. An original company piece
  b. A play in 5 parts about ASL & Deaf people
  c. A scene from My Third Eye as described in Padden & Humphries, 1988:

  “The scene opens and we are introduced to a dimly lit stage. In a spotlight, we see a young woman held fast by two strong attendants. Behind her rises a stern and ominous figure, perhaps eight feet high, in a dark flowing robe. The attendants look at the figure as if awaiting instructions. The figure pronounces a word which the young woman is forced to repeat, but she cannot pronounce it correctly. The figure coldly gives a signal; the attendants tighten their grip and dunk her face into an unseen bowl of water. She struggles but cannot escape the strong arms of her attendants.

  They again dunk her in water, releasing her only when she is nearly drowned. Again the figure pronounces the word. Weakened from repeated dunkings and helpless to escape, she tries once again but again fails, again the signal and..."
again the dunking. In the background, we see the other actors standing silently by, watching a nearly drowned woman. The scene ends with the woman near death.”

Deaf West Theatre

• *Big River* on Broadway

• Tony nominated Deaf, hearing, hard of hearing actors

• [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdqwdLu-coQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdqwdLu-coQ&feature=related)

• [http://www.deafmall.net/events/](http://www.deafmall.net/events/)

• Lists Deaf activities, including theatre, by state

*Who is Deaf (“big D Deaf”) and who is deaf (“little d deaf”)?*

• In the US, there are approximately 30 million Deaf, deaf, and hard of hearing individuals

• Little d deaf has an audiological definition:

  • Individuals with a hearing loss of 90 dB or more, or individuals whose hearing is such that, even with the benefit of a hearing aid, they are unable to process speech primarily through hearing, are deaf

• Big D Deaf has a cultural definition:

  a. Individuals with a hearing loss who know ASL and identify with the Deaf-World are Deaf

  b. Estimated population of one million

• The Deaf-World does not include those adults with hearing loss who do not self-identify with the Deaf-World, which typically includes:

  a. Oral deaf adults

  b. Late-deafened adults

  c. Those who consider themselves to have a disability (hearing impaired) and use a spoken language

• Note, however, that some Deaf individuals may consider themselves to be members of the Deaf community, but do not view the Deaf-World as a distinct culture


*Is the Deaf-World also a disability group?*

Lane, 2005, considers this question, and what follows is a summary of his perspective. First of all, it is important to recognize that the term “disability” is a social
construct, not a matter of fact. To recognize this, we can consider the fluidity of the term in such matters as alcoholism, homosexuality, and height. At one time, alcoholism was considered to be a voluntary behavior, but it later came to be viewed as an illness or disability. Homosexuality was considered to be a moral flaw, then an illness or disability, and now is considered to be a characteristic of a minority group. In Central Africa, the forest dwellers (pygmies) and the Bantu villagers view their own height and the height of members of the other group as being an advantage or a disability from their own unique perspective; the pygmies consider their short stature to be an advantage whereas the Bantu villagers view shortness as a disability, and vice-versa. Therefore, one cannot state that it is an obvious fact that those who cannot hear are disabled, because “disabled” means different things to different people.

Some argue that even though members of the Deaf-World do not consider themselves to be members of a disability group, there is a significant advantage to adopting the label. By joining with others who are discriminated against because the larger society does not accommodate their bodies, Deaf individuals can take advantage of the combined numbers of all who can be considered to have a disability in advocacy and the struggle for human rights. However, it should be possible for Deaf individuals to gain access to language – the main area of discrimination for the Deaf-World – as a language minority as opposed to a disability group.

And the Deaf-World has much to lose by accepting the disability label. The main argument against accepting the disability label is that it doesn’t fit the Deaf-World. Members do not view themselves as disabled, and so it is inappropriate to adopt a label that is inaccurate and misrepresents the group. In addition, by accepting the disability label, the Deaf-World would in effect be turning over the power to address the problems faced by Deaf individuals to those who subscribe to a disability perspective. The danger of this is apparent in a quote attributed to Meniere, a French physician: “The Deaf believe that they are our equals in all respects. We should be generous and not destroy that illusion. But whatever they believe, deafness is an infirmity and we should repair it whether the person who has it is disturbed by it or not” (Meniere, 1853).

This means that those who view deafness as a disability would be in charge of deaf education (which in the past has led to elimination of sign language, the deaf child’s natural language, from the schools and the subsequent deficiency in education that comes from forcing a child to use a language he/she can only partially access), legislation (which in the past has led to bans against driver’s licenses for deaf individuals and sterilization laws, as opposed to requirements for ASL interpreters), research (which in the past has led to research into medical and genetic means of eliminating deafness as opposed to research into an understanding of ASL and Deaf culture), and training. This causes undue risk to deaf children, as is seen in cochlear implant surgery, and could eventually lead to the ethnocide and/or genocide of the Deaf-World through eugenics, particularly genetic testing and therapy.
What have been some consequences of the disability label?

The Congress of Milan, 1880
a. An event that almost destroyed sign language, the natural language of deaf individuals
b. An international conference
c. All attendees were hearing
d. All delegates but the Americans voted to teach deaf children using only oral methods, banning sign languages
e. In Europe, Deaf teachers were fired, students “contaminated” with sign were quarantined, and sign use was severely punished
f. Well-remembered in Deaf history, and emblematic of evil in the Deaf-World

Promotion of oralism in the US (Lane et al, 1996)
Samuel Gridley Howe
In 1867 supported the establishment of the first oral school in the US as a way of reducing deaf interaction
Wanted to prevent the intermarriage of deaf individuals in hopes of preventing the effects of their “infirmity”

Alexander Graham Bell
Founded the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf
Founded in 1890
Now the Alexander Graham Bell Association
Still strongly promotes oralism
Head of the Eugenics Section of the American Breeders Association
Wrote Memoire Upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race in 1883
Warned that the congenitally deaf of the country were reproducing at an alarming rate
 Despite his own statistics which showed that even completely eliminating deaf reproduction would only insignificantly decrease the deaf population:
a. The large majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents
b. Deaf parents are only slightly, if at all, more likely to have deaf children than hearing children
Prepared a model sterilization law – of feebleminded, insane, criminalistic, deaf, and other socially unfit
Advocated for laws to prevent deaf marriages
Promoted day schools over residential schools as a means of preventing deaf marriages
Promoted banning of ASL for the same reason
http://jimspoliticalthoughts.blogspot.com/2008/02/understanding-ag-bell-and-why-deaf.html --a blog discussing why many Deaf still do not approve of AG Bell
German sterilization law, 1934 (Lane et al, 1996)
a. Of 45,000 “deaf and dumb” persons, 17,000, one third of whom were minors, were sterilized.
b. 9% of sterilizations were accompanied by forced abortion.
c. 1600 Deaf were exterminated in concentration camps as “useless eaters” with lives not worth being lived.

Driving and the deaf
a. The World Federation of the Deaf is cited as saying that in at least 26 countries, the deaf cannot hold driver’s licenses.
   http://www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=foINKQMBF&b=184439
b. Posting to the NAD from a deaf driver whose car insurance was cancelled, in 2003, because he was deaf.

Regarding UPS’s policy to refuse to allow deaf employees to drive its smaller trucks, and the court’s ruling against the policy.

   http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/10/11/BAG2ULMNCV1.DTL

Cochlear implants in deaf children (Lane, 2005; Lane et al, 1996; Hyde & Power, 2006)
a. It is unethical to perform surgery on a healthy child, but because deaf children have been labeled as “disabled,” not “healthy,” cochlear implant surgery is frequently performed.
b. By the end of 1990, approximately 600 children had been implanted, and an estimated 2000 had been implanted by 1996.
c. Rates of implantation may be as high as 50-60% of profoundly deaf children in the US.

Medical & surgical risks of cochlear implantation:

   Bacterial meningitis (30x more likely than in an unimplanted child)
   Anesthesia
   Loss of vestibular function
   CSF leak
   Facial nerve injury
   Damage to the carotid artery
   Death

Language risks:

   No guarantee of fluency in spoken language

   Oral language (with no sign) is often encouraged; just last year (2007), I learned of a cochlear implant physician who required that parents sign a contract that their child would only be taught orally, no sign, if he received a cochlear implant.

   Children who receive cochlear implants may have no experience with spoken English.
   Receiving a cochlear implant does not immediately teach these children...
spoken English
.
• If these children are not allowed to use the language they had learned prior to implantation, which is typically some form of sign, they have absolutely no access to language until (if) they learn spoken English, which will not happen immediately, if it happens at all
.

Unrealistic expectations – not all children have oral language success with cochlear implants, yet many parents are led to believe their child is almost guaranteed this form of success
b. o Implantation has been performed on children without adequate research: because deaf children are labeled disabled, is it societally acceptable to experiment upon deaf children
.
o Research that still needs to be done:
.

Language benefit
.

Comparison studies to children learning ASL, not just to children with hearing aids being taught orally
.

Educational achievement, social identity, psychological adjustment
b. o Without adequate research, there can be no true informed consent
c. o Parents are placed under time pressure and only given medical risks
d. o Parents are not always the most appropriate individuals to provide surrogate consent for cochlear implant surgery upon their children because they are not like the deaf child; Deaf adults can provide better informed choices, because they are more like the deaf child and can therefore better gauge what the child would choose if he or she were old enough to decide
e. o Can the law deny services to children whose parents choose not to have them implanted?
f. o Can providers refuse implants to children whose parents insist upon it against advice?
g. o Cochlear implantation is considered by some Deaf individuals to be a form of ethnocide
.
.

Video blog/vlog of children and adults
.

The main message: “I love my CI and I’m Deaf and love ASL!”
.

Concern over in vitro fertilization
.
o http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closeup/the_right_to_be_deaf.shtml
.

Interview with Tomato Lichy, deaf activist and parent
.

Re: a bill going through Parliament that could mean that embryos used in IVF would be screened out if the child would be born deaf
.

"Persons or embryos that are known to have a gene, chromosome or mitochondrion abnormality involving a significant risk that a person with the abnormality will have or develop (a) a serious physical or mental disability, (b) a serious illness, or (c) any other serious medical condition, must not be preferred to those that are not known to
have such an abnormality."

. Tomato Lichy wants the opportunity to choose an embryo that would lead to a deaf child, as opposed to saying that an embryo for a hearing child has a more valid right to life than that for a deaf child

. Interviewer: "... you have a disability. Surely that's simply a fact?"


*Cochlear implants seem to be an extremely controversial subjects. What is the “official” Deaf position on cochlear implants?*


a. NAD Position Statement on Cochlear Implants, 2000
b. Welcomes all individuals regardless of use of technologies
c. Respects the choice of parents to use cochlear implants
d. However, wants parents to make fully informed choices
e. Cochlear implantation is not a cure for deafness
f. Subscribes to the wellness model & challenges the pathological view of deafness
g. Advocates for greater exposure of media, parents, and medical professionals to successful deaf and hard of hearing individuals
h. Advocates for parent referrals to qualified experts in deafness
i. Strongly supports development of the whole child, language, and literacy
j. Cochlear implants do not reduce the benefits of visual language
k. Lack of visual language opportunities can result in difficult to reverse developmental delays
l. Concurrent acquisition of visual and written language skills should be stressed

. Provides specific recommendations in the following areas:
  . Professional training
  . Early assessment of hearing aid benefit
  . Cochlear implant team
  . Habilitation
  . Insurance coverage
  . Media
  . Research
  . Parents
  . Support services
Where can I go to learn more about the Deaf-World?

References for this website:


Some additional resources:

- http://www.deaflibrary.org/

  Great general info website
  Deaf websites
  Schools & universities for the Deaf
  Provides a bibliography of “the top 10 reads” – from the deaflibrary website:

  *This is a good introductory book for grades 9-12 and early college, it talks about Ms. Cohen's experiences as the daughter of the principal for Lexington School for the Deaf and as a member of the Deaf community.*

  Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

  *This is a fascinating study of an island off the shore of Massachusetts where there was a strong strain of hereditary deafness that caused a large percentage of islanders to be born deaf. Unexpectedly, this meant that since everyone knew someone who was deaf, everyone spoke sign language and there wasn't much social differentiation between the deaf and non-deaf. A must-read.*

  **Harlan Lane (1976)** When the mind hears: a history of the deaf. New
York: Random House.
This was one of the first real histories of the founding of the Deaf community in the United States, tracing its roots back to France. It's written in the first person which is a bit odd, but definitely a good read. The only problem is that it's quite big and heavy, might be a bit too much for a grade school child to handle.

This is Harlan Lane's most famous book and was widely acclaimed when it came out as a manifesto of the Deaf community. It brings up the topic of oralism and the history of oppression the Deaf community has suffered. Its pitfalls are perhaps that it doesn't account for the hard of hearing perspective or talk about differences within the Deaf community, but as a whole, it's an excellent book to read and discuss.

If you're gay or lesbian or deaf or just curious, this book is absolutely wonderful. It's collection of short autobiographical stories by gay and lesbian Deaf individuals and gives good insight into this minority within a minority.

This book, along with Harlan Lane's, stresses the cultural aspects of the Deaf community in the United States. It's a good way to understand the cultural position and one of the best texts out there.

•Paul Michael Preston (1994) Mother father deaf : living between sound and silence. This book is about CODAs --children of deaf adults. If you're a CODA, it's a must read. Even if you're not, it's a good way to understand the difficulties faced when Deaf people meet and mingle with hearing people; and how we can overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers between the two.

This is perhaps by far the best children's book on the deaf. It's designed for grade-school kids to get a better understanding of what the deaf community is about.

•John Vickrey Van Cleve and Barry A. Crouch (1989) A place
of their own:
creating the deaf community in america.

This was also one of the leading books on the deaf community
and still remains a major text on the topic.

•Henry Kisor (1990) What's that pig outdoors: a
Kisor's book on his experiences as a deaf person from the oral
perspective is a good counterbalance to the cultural Deaf
position. Read it with Padden and Humphrey and compare.

http://www.deafread.com/

- General blog site
- “best of deaf blogs & vlogs”

If I am a hearing care professional, such as an audiologist, what are some
recommendations for working with a Deaf client?

These recommendations are from Robert Baldwin, Ph.D., University of Colorado Health
Sciences Center:

1. Work with a Deaf client as you would a client from any other ethnic or
linguistic minority
2. Don’t be intimidated
3. Understand that there is a large variation in the backgrounds of Deaf
individuals
4. Recognize that there is a large variation in placement along the cultural
(Deaf – Hearing) continuum
5. If possible (and appropriate), learn about your client’s background and how far
along the cultural continuum he or she is
6. How much the Deaf individual uses sign is a good indicator (i.e., does he or she
primarily communicate orally or by sign?)
7. Don’t assume you can predict the audiogram just from knowing someone
is Deaf
8. Go forward with recommendations
9. Be respectful, but don’t get distraught if someone gets upset at your
recommendations, e.g., for a hearing aid
10. Explore how the implant, hearing aid, etc, is going to fit in with the client’s
culture and lifestyle
11. Be aware of small size of the community
a. Everybody knows everybody!
b. Interpreters: a particular interpreter may have a personal conflict or issue with your client
   a. Communicating by writing
      a. Don’t assume your client will understand everything you write
      b. Writing may create a power differential: many Deaf individuals received a less-than-optimal education and may be uncomfortable with a possible lack of higher level written English skills
      i. Ask if your client would like an interpreter
      i. Don’t misinterpret facial expression, e.g., don’t assume someone is mad when he or she may just be being emphatic

Newsletter of the ASHA Special Interest Division 14: Perspectives on Communication Disorders and Sciences in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations, 10(1).

Some recent media portrayals:

Cold Case – Andy in C Minor, Season 5 Episode 14, aired 3/30/08
a. “After traces of blood linked back to a missing teen are found, the team re-investigates the 2006 case of a boy who disappeared from a high school for deaf children.”
   o Blogs in response to the above episode:
      i. http://blog.deafread.com/mishkazena/2008/03/31/the-cold-case-thumb-down/

Law & Order: Criminal Intent – Silencer, Season 6 Episode, aired 4/03/07
a. “ESTEEMED EAR SURGEON KILLED AFTER TESTIFYING AGAINST COLLEAGUE -When esteemed ear surgeon, Dr. Jack Mallory (guest star Jack MacGruder) is found murdered in his office, Detectives Goren (Vincent D’Onofrio) and Eames (Kathryn Erbe) suspect a prescription pusher. After further investigation, the detectives learn the doctor had testified in a controversial case involving another doctor -- Dr. Strauss (guest star Timothy Carhart) --who had performed a cochlear implant on a baby. The baby got an infection and died as a result of the surgery, leaving the deaf community with strong opinions about the procedure. Detectives Goren and Eames race to uncover a tangled web of beliefs in a community they’re not members of.”
   o Responses to the above episode:
      i. http://blog.deafread.com/egbertpress/2007/04/05/deaf-power/

Sweet Nothing in My Ear – Aired 4/20/08
a. “Multiple Golden Globe Award winner Jeff Daniels and Academy Award and Golden Globe Award winner Marlee Matlin star in Sweet Nothing In My Ear, a new
"Hallmark Hall of Fame" presentation about a married couple dealing with separate realities when their only child loses his ability to hear. Multiple Emmy Award-winner Joseph Sargent ("Miss Rose White," "Caroline" "Love Is Never Silent" all "Hallmark Hall of Fame" presentations) is the director. Laura and Dan Miller (Matlin, Daniels) have been happily married, as well as best friends, for many years, but their relationship begins to change when their only son, Adam (Noah Valencia), loses his hearing at the age of four. Laura, who is deaf herself, sees this occurrence as a minor problem, something that she has dealt with her whole life. Dan, on the other hand, at first agrees with her but starts to realize that, with surgery, his son could regain his hearing and live a more normal life. Tempers flare and frustrations mount as Dan investigates the surgery and its pros and cons. Laura is dead set against it and makes that very clear, even as Dan begins to favor the procedure for his child. Locked in their own worlds, the couple must find a way to mend their differences and make the best decision for Adam's future.”

Responses to the above movie:
- http://cochlearimplantonline.com/blog/?p=124