

Myths and Misunderstandings in Educating Deaf Students

Let's face it: we have not done a very good job in improving academic outcomes for deaf children. Some progress certainly has been made, but it has been minimal, and deaf children continue to lag behind hearing peers across the curriculum. Why? Contradictory findings and a lack of high-quality research in some areas no doubt contribute to this state of affairs, but there are also myths and misunderstandings in the field that have led to (well-intentioned) misdirection. This presentation will focus on what we know, what we don't know, and what we think we know (but really don't) about deaf learners and deaf education will be explored to determine where they come from and what we really know. Special attention will be given to the traditional hot topic of "the language of instruction" and the recently merged hot topic of cochlear implants. It turns out that we know more than we think we do – and also less. That is, some common assumptions about development and education of deaf children turn out not to be correct, and yet new findings are emerging that point to exciting opportunities for practice and future research.