Attitude Planning:
Constructing A Language Planning Framework Towards Empowerment In Deaf Education

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Attitude Planning: Constructing A Language Planning Framework Toward Empowerment In Deaf Education

By Anita Small, M.Sc., Ed.D., and Joanne Cripps, CYW

For Deaf[i] educators of Deaf students -
"You have come here to find what you already have"
<div align="right">- Buddhist Aphorism</div>

For hearing educators of Deaf students -
"Grow into your ideals so that life cannot rob you of them"
<div align="right">- Albert Schweitzer</div>

Introduction

This article reviews the history of language planning as it pertains to the education of Deaf students. It identifies the crucial role of attitude planning as it impacts language planning and contrasts the education system in Saskatchewan and Alberta as they reflect contrasting language attitudes towards American Sign Language (ASL)[ii] in Canada. We offer a framework to examine attitude shift systemically. Most importantly, we provide a model to examine personal attitude shift as individual educators. We conclude with international studies and propose an evolutionary model to promote attitude shift for educators, health professionals, civil servants and service organization personnel who work with Deaf students. A questionnaire examining systemic and personal attitudes is provided to facilitate an environment that promotes an empowering education for Deaf students in Ontario.

Audism and its Role in Language Planning

In this article the authors posit the assumption that audism exists in our society and that it has a profound impact on language planning as pertains to ASL. We must therefore begin with a definition of audism. Audism is the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in a manner of one who hears (Humphries 1977,12). Audism is a set of practices that elevates English and other spoken languages and devalues ASL and other signed languages. When we make a decision that a Deaf child should go to a public school with spoken English because they have some "residual hearing", we automatically elevate English and display a lack of value for ASL. We also deny the contribution that ASL can make in that child's life. The term "audism" lay dormant until Lane revived it 15 years later in 1992. Tom Humphries originally applied audism to individual attitudes and behaviors, but Lane and others have broadened its scope to include institutional and group attitudes and practices that demean Deaf people. "It is the corporate and social institution that makes statements about Deaf people, governing where they go to school, teaching about them, authorizing views about them; audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring and exercising authority over the Deaf community" (Lane, 1992, 43). It may be conscious or unconscious, but in both cases it has an inherent and pervasive impact on language planning.

Deafhood and Its Role in Language Planning

The term Deafhood was developed by British Deaf Ph.D, Paddy Ladd, in 1990 "in order to begin the process of defining an existential state of Deaf 'being in the world' " (Ladd, 2003). Ladd defines Deafhood "not as a finite state but as a process by which Deaf individuals come to actualize their Deaf identity" (Ladd, 2003). He posits this as a contrast to the medical term "deafness". Deafness assumes a loss and has been broadly applied to all Deaf people as in the term "hearing impaired" which initially referred primarily to "hard of hearing" elderly adults and rendered the true nature of Deaf collective existence invisible. As Deaf individuals (from birth or later in life) construct their identity as Deaf people, Deaf collective existence - Deafhood – emerges as a resource for the individual and society. Anti-audist attitudes would not only stop the devaluing of Deaf individuals and their signed language but would encourage environments that promote Deafhood.

Deafhood dimension

- Collective culture
- Collective history
- Collective arts
- Collective spiritual issues

Linguistic minority dimension

- Linguistic oppression
- Genocide/Ethnocide
- Bilingualism

Human rights dimension

- Equal opportunities
- Disability discrimination legislation

Social welfare dimensions

- Problems of deafness
- Client/charity status

Medical dimension
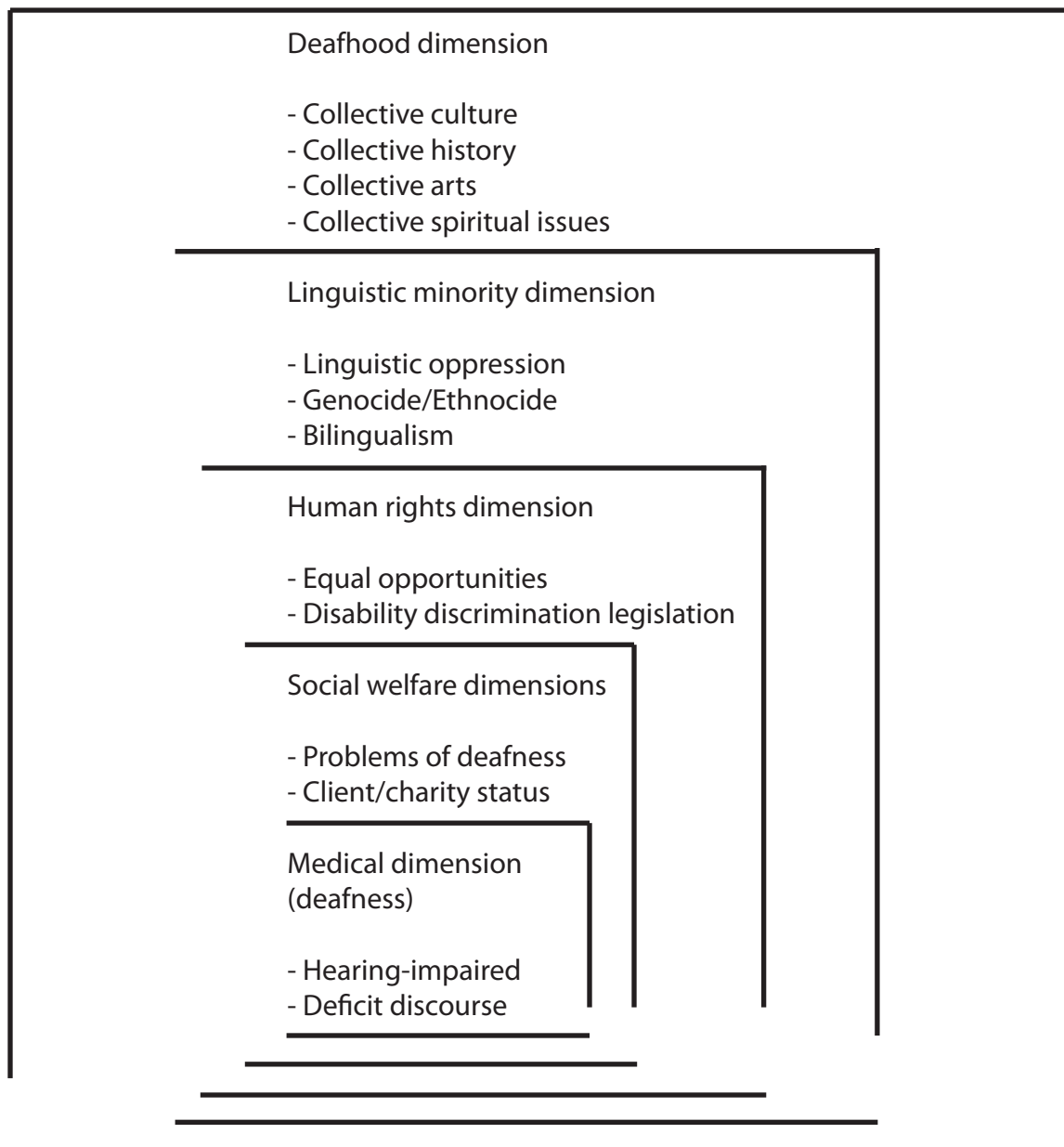(deafness)

- Hearing-impaired
- Deficit discourse

Figure 1. Dimensional stages from deafness to Deafhood, including terminology associated with each stage (Ladd, 2003, p.170).

We are now ready to explore how audist attitudes have impacted language planning and disempowerment of Deaf individuals in their own education and the potential for Deafhood as an essential resource to elevate Deaf individuals and their signed language in an empowering education of Deaf children.

Language Planning History

Language planning has played a significant role in the education of Deaf students for more than two centuries. Nover (1992) has demonstrated evidence of language planning, beginning with the implementation of manually-coded French by De l'Epee in the 1760s and initiation of signing systems such as-SEE 1, LOVE, and SEE 2 that were put into practice in North America during the 1970s. These were in fact "methods" of instructional planning rather than actual language planning, since they are not naturally evolving languages. Over time they were treated as if they were de facto languages. During the 1970s, the provincial schools for Deaf students in Ontario experienced the introduction of the Rochester Method (fingerspelling), followed by Total Communication, based on the erroneous assumption that these methods would enable Deaf students to acquire English skills the way hearing and speaking enable hearing students to acquire English skills. They were designed to make English accessible on the hands. Although there is no evidence that emphasis on one or another variation of such methods, is even a partial factor in contributing to basic language proficiency, the focus of language planning continues to be on the acquisition of English rather than on the acquisition of a signed language in its own right, with its own integrity, structure and knowledge base.

Total Communication once again is seeing a resurgence in this decade as educators have not been trained to use fluent ASL in teacher training programs and educators who are not fluent in ASL propose that it is only by way of putting English on the hands that Deaf students can become literate in English.

The stranglehold of imposing one or another variation of these "communication methods" on future teachers and their Deaf students interferes with students' opportunity and ability to become empowered by their language and linguistically versatile with one or more languages such as ASL and English. Educators consistently have held a monolingual perspective that values English, devalues ASL and ignores evidence of the value of ASL in the development of English as well as its value in its own right. Research carried out during the past decade shows clear, consistent and significant findings that children who develop strong ASL proficiency develop better English literacy skills than those whose ASL abilities are weaker or non-existent (Strong and Prinz, 1997; Cummins, 2007). Despite these findings, government policies in Ontario continue to provide little support for the development of ASL proficiency in the early years or for the implementation of bilingual bicultural education for Deaf students. A case

in point is our government policies that discourage children who receive cochlear implants from developing fluency in ASL based on the empirically unsupported assumption that ASL will interfere with the acquisition of oral English. In contrast, Scadinavian research specifically suggests a positive relationship between sign language and oral skills among children who received cochlear implants (Preisler, Tvingstedt and Ahlströhm, 2002).

Small and Mason (2008) point out that governments in general, engage in language planning to control language use among different social groups and populations in the interests of maintaining national, societal, and linguistic cohesion. In contrast, governments can engage in language planning to preserve and maintain the language and to use it as a resource in society (Cummins, 2005). Small and Mason (2008) identify how language planning can serve to enrich the population with the knowledge of a variety of languages and the cultural richness that comes with it. Thus, language planning has a profound impact on every aspect of society and is conducted in four arenas - attitude planning, status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning.

The Role of Attitude Planning

While attitude planning is the least studied and written about, it has the most profound impact on all other areas of language planning. Attitude planning is carried, consciously or unconsciously, into all other arenas of language planning (refer to Figure 2). It is therefore powerful and insidious, and exerts the greatest influence over either maintaining the status quo, creating destructive change by devaluing a minority language or generating constructive change by promoting minority languages in education.
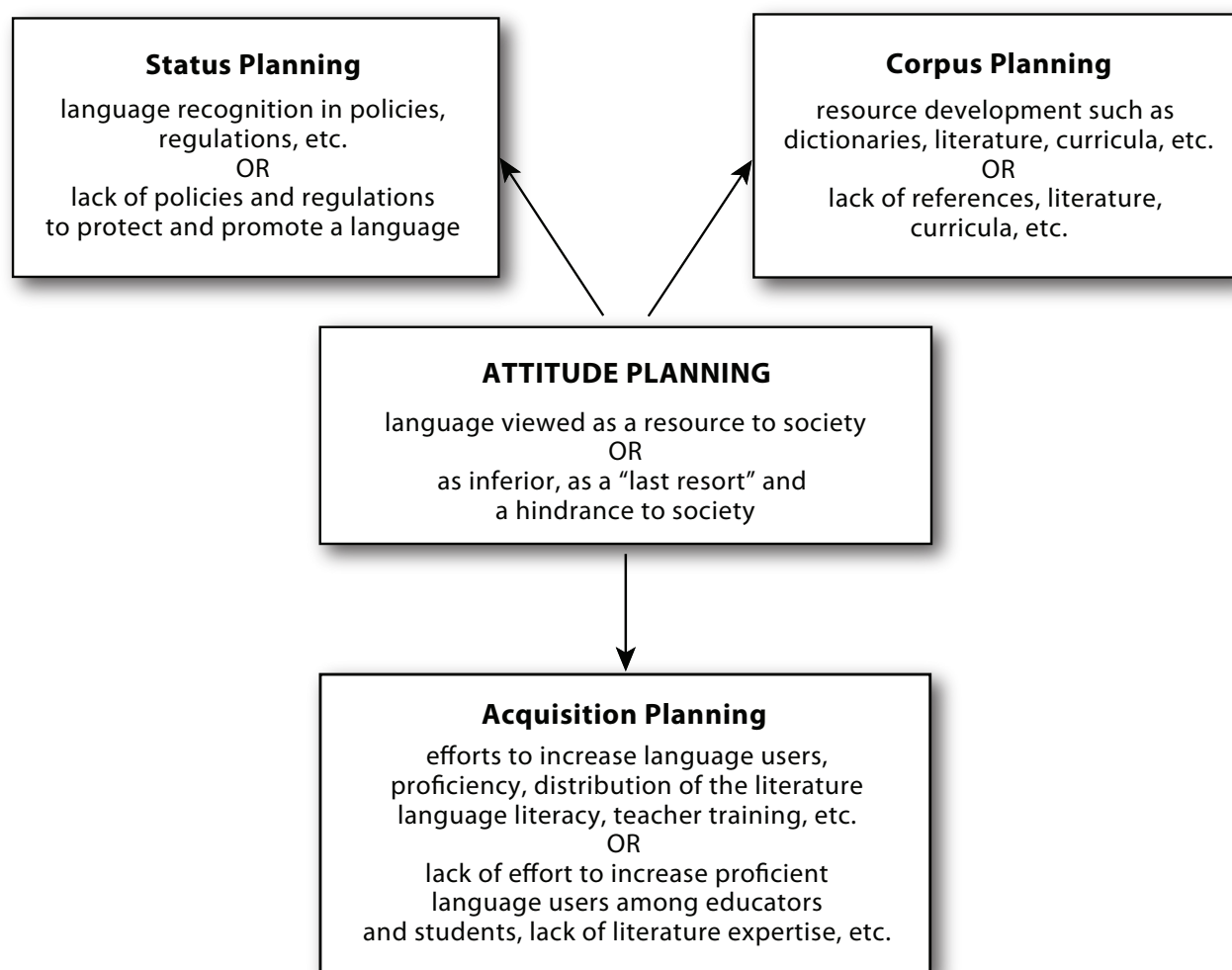
Status Planning language recognition in policies, regulations, etc. OR lack of policies and regulations to protect and promote a language		**Corpus Planning** resource development such as dictionaries, literature, curricula, etc. OR lack of references, literature, curricula, etc.

ATTITUDE PLANNING

language viewed as a resource to society
OR
as inferior, as a "last resort" and
a hindrance to society

Acquisition Planning

efforts to increase language users,
proficiency, distribution of the literature
language literacy, teacher training, etc.
OR
lack of effort to increase proficient
language users among educators
and students, lack of literature expertise, etc.

Figure 2. Attitude planning impact on each language planning arena.

Despite the acceptance of Bill 4 in 1993 in Ontario recognizing ASL and LSQ as languages of instruction, it is important to note the reluctance to accept regulations to accompany Bill 4 which would ensure the implementation of ASL in the schools (status planning), the lack of ASL curriculum acceptance and ASL literature resources outside of the provincial schools for Deaf students (corpus planning) and the lack of teacher training programs to insist on a level of excellence in ASL skill for those who would teach any Deaf child (acquisition planning).

Despite the nearly unchallenged recognition that ASL meets the criteria of a language, many administrators and educators continue to resist use of ASL in Ontario. Small and Mason (2008) continue to point out that despite the long and rich history of ASL in North America, and the fact that scholarly research on ASL is in its fourth decade, ASL has been slow to gain status amongst hearing academics (Wilcox and Wilcox, 1992, Mayer and Wells, 1996). Such resistance to accept ASL as an academic language likely is attributed to the attitude that English is superior and ASL is inferior even though both are equally sophisticated. The negative attitudes to ASL and other sign languages can be attributed to pervasive audism in our society, whether conscious or unconscious. Policy decisions are primarily made by

politicians and educators who do not know ASL or are somewhat familiar with it and take that as license to make decisions about its academic use or lack thereof based on partial information and misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the language. In contrast to North America, in many parts of Europe, language planning efforts encourage multi-sign language use just as hearing children are encouraged to use many spoken languages (Mahshie, 1995). This is in contrast with Canada and the United States which tend to value English above all other languages; The majority of Deaf children in Canada and the US are mainstreamed[iii] with hearing children and raised without ASL because of the false assumption that intellectual pursuit and high academic achievement are not possible without spoken language and that spoken language and human communication are one and the same. Inherent in this approach is the belief that Deaf children are better served if they can assimilate into the mainstream by being as much like hearing children as possible. This attitude has huge implications for language planning for Deaf children in educational systems such as in Ontario, that have accepted ASL education to some extent. Attitudes towards ASL place a cap on how much implementation ASL education will have in the system as a whole. As such it is worth studying two contrasting provincial education systems in Canada as they reflect drastically different attitudes towards ASL.

Contrasting Cases

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness . . .
                                        - Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

Attitudes Towards ASL in Saskatchewan

Lack of government commitment to supporting ASL is most evident in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan School for the Deaf closed in 1996. In 2005 Saskatchewan held a now infamous court case dealing with a nine year old boy with a cochlear implant who could not read or write and had virtually no language since ASL ceased to be an option in that province. In his closing remarks, the presiding judge stated that "in my eighteen years on the bench, I have seldom if ever heard of a situation which engaged my concern more than this one" (ORR,P.C.J., 2005). The judge concluded that it would be of great benefit for those "outside the legal system including educators, civil servants, politicians and other citizens" to read the judgment in response to the disastrous consequences when a child is denied full access to a strong first language. The court ordered the province to provide a massive commitment to teach the boy and his single mother ASL with a qualified instructor, that he be placed in a signing school for Deaf students outside of the province or that he be provided with a full time ASL interpreter at a school within Saskatchewan. (Small and Mason, 2008). The judge acknowledged that all professionals involved "acted in strict accordance with the policies, directives and mandates of

the governmental or other bodies for which they work. Unfortunately, the best efforts if these fine people have failed to avert a terrible disaster in the life of this little deaf boy" (ORR,P.C.J., 2005). At the heart of this case is systemic audism that led to this horrific outcome.

Attitudes Towards ASL in Alberta

In contrast, one could look to Edmonton, Alberta for a significantly different attitude towards ASL. The bilingual Alberta School for the Deaf is no longer a provincial school. It is now under the Edmonton Public School Board that recognizes the merits of the bilingual education model. It provides English/ASL bilingual educational programming for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students ages 5–19 years with widely varying speech and hearing abilities and follows the Alberta Education curriculum (Duffy, 2004). In contrast to the young boy in Saskatchewan, a young child in Edmonton, Alberta receives systemic support for ASL. As the Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy article (Duffy, 2004) points out, Edmonton's ASL bilingual program is part of the most extensive bilingual public school programming in the country. The Edmonton Public School Board offers full bilingual programs in seven languages: ASL, Arabic, Mandarin, German, Hebrew, Spanish and Ukranian (Duffy, 2004). It is based on the premise that supporting the child's first language (for immigrant children) and ASL (for Deaf children) will enhance their learning of English in the long term as it establishes a strong language base for concept development and content in academic areas (Cummins, 2005). The overall Alberta Learning Achievement Test results confirm this supposition as the students in the bilingual programs, including the ASL students, all performed substantially better than the other Alberta students by grade 6 and continued this lead through grade 9 (Duffy, 2004). It is worth examining a conceptual framework to understand what underlies these two different public school systems.

Access versus System Change

There is a huge difference between access and change. What we gain from access may not be good for us. We must ask ourselves, what do we need to change in order to create true empowerment.

Adapted from woman activist, Gloria Steinem, June, 2000
Author of "Revolution from Within"

Many school boards across Canada work to provide access for Deaf students with an eye towards inclusion and universal design. One cannot deny the importance of access as it begins to provide a level playing field for Deaf students. However it is simply not enough. A Jewish individual may gain full access to a church service in English, but it still is not their place of worship and community and they have the right to express themselves in a synagogue reflecting their values, language, culture and beliefs. So too, a Deaf student may gain access to the curriculum with an interpreter present, but the curriculum and

environment still does not reflect Deaf role models, Deaf literature created by great ASL poets, Deaf historical figures who impacted society, and endless opportunity for social participation and leadership. An "inclusive" environment that provides access is still one in which Deaf students are constantly expelling energy in attempt to penetrate the core of the school system. For Deaf children, true "inclusion means: they feel secure, loved and included in all areas of family life; they have relationships with peers to help gain a knowledge of self; they are provided by the Deaf community with role models, values and heritage thus ensuring a natural social development within a minority; and they are able to interact with hearing society on a daily basis."(Cripps, 2000, p.3).

In a truly empowering system that is based in ASL and Deaf culture, students are already in the core of the system both in academic studies as well as in the social arena where much of our learning takes place.

While access is palliative, system change is preventive; while access provides opportunities to engage with parts of the educational environment, system change is wholistic and permeates the entire educational environment. System change that creates an empowering environment is generated through ongoing interactions. "The more empowered an individual or group becomes, the more is generated for others to share, as is the case when two people love each other or when we really connect with children we are teaching" (Cummins, 2003). In this context, *empowerment* is the *collaborative creation of power*. In an empowering environment, students' sense of identity is affirmed and extended in their interactions with educators and fellow students. The school nurtures the child's spirit and in turn, the child's spirit is enhanced and acts upon the system (Cummins, 2003). As pertains to Deaf children, the educational system amplifies "who they are", rather than focusing on amplifying their hearing.
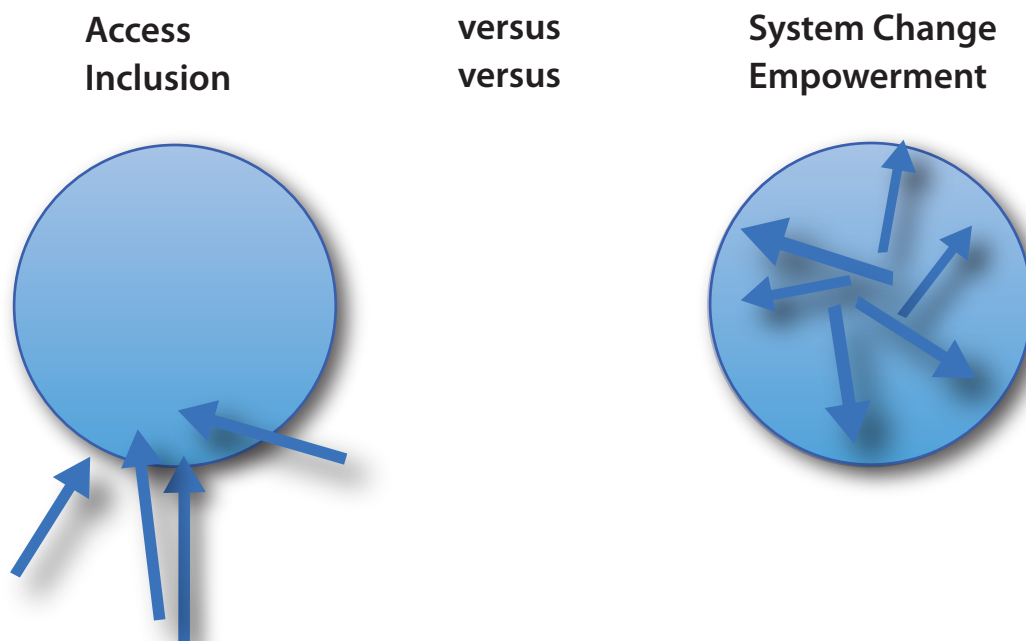
| **Access** | **versus** | **System Change** |
| **Inclusion** | **versus** | **Empowerment** |

Figure 3. Access versus System Change (Small, 2000).

Deaf Cultural Space and Attitudes towards ASL in Ontario

"'The D'ream, 'D'esire, 'D'etermination, and 'D'edication all made the Deaf Culture Centre a reality"

> - Helen Pizzacalla, Educator and President, Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, *Signature* Newsletter, Vol.2, Issue 1, Fall, 2007.

School systems that are to be truly empowering for Deaf students must have ASL in its core and therefore necessarily Deaf culture, since language and culture are inseparable. Attitude planning must therefore take into account acceptance, appreciation and promotion of Deaf culture simultaneous to acceptance, appreciation and promotion of ASL. Deaf cultural space celebrates Deaf life and features the Deaf contributions to society in all fields through time. In a Deaf cultural space, ASL permeates the space in real time (ie in all interactions, not only in planned presentations or DVD demonstrations). Snoddon (2009) provides a good discussion of the importance of Deaf cultural space in the early education of Deaf children. She contrasts the creation of Deaf cultural space in Ontario's ASL Parent-Child Mother Goose Program while it is overwhelmingly shunned by Ontario's early intervention systems that support auditory verbal therapy to the exclusion of ASL and Deaf culture.

Ontario boasts a clear model of Deaf cultural space with the Deaf Culture Centre, established in 2006 by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf at the historic culture, arts and entertainment Distillery District in the heart of Old Town Toronto, (www.ccsdeaf.com). It features a museum, art gallery, gift shop, research and archives, state-of-the-art visually rich technology highlighting Deaf historical artifacts, sports, ASL/LSQ literature, ASL/LSQ interactive website, television and multimedia production studio.

The first of its kind internationally, the Deaf Culture Centre is a symbol of the Deaf community celebrating Deaf life. A public forum both historical and forward-looking, it is open to the public and rooted in the Deaf community. It provides education, language, literature, culture, visual and performing arts. It holds summer and winter institutes, workshops, school tours, classes, performances, permanent exhibits, special and travelling exhibits. The centre houses treasured historical, literary and linguistic documents, De'VIA (Deaf View Image Art created by Deaf individuals that incorporates Deaf experience and language) and ASL literary experts who serve as mentors for students and adults learning ASL. The centre promises to play a significant role in attitude planning as it is rooted in the Deaf community, fosters new creative expression in the Deaf community and is open to different spoken language individuals and to different sign language individuals around the world to be enriched by the beauty, language and sense of place created by the Deaf community in Canada and internationally (Small and Mason, 2008). It is a model of Deaf cultural space where some of the 90 volunteers are skilled signers and some are not but ALL use ASL to the best of their ability. It is not a place of judgment but rather education and culture in the broadest sense. It has over 10,000 Deaf and hearing international visitors annually and has been named the "welcome wagon" by Deaf visitors with all different backgrounds from mainstream programs with cochlear implants to provincial school programs with fluent ASL. There is no fear of failure or lack of acceptance so it is a space to grow in.

Ontario provides a unique opportunity as it also is home to the development and implementation of the American Sign Language Curriculum, one of the most significant works in progress in an educational academic program in North America. Growth strands, instructional strategies, ASL assessment, expectations, student activities and teaching techniques are being implemented in the provincial schools. Mini-workshops and training are regularly provided to build a common vision, knowledge and understanding of the ASL curriculum among staff.

Intensive in-service training must be provided to focus on pedagogical approaches for using ASL as the language of instruction and for the study of language (on conversational and academic levels). Training includes the study and analysis of ASL curriculum design, research perspectives, and language acquisition evaluation. Data on student learning has been gathered regularly, with ASL Proficiency Assessment used to establish measurable first language progress. The ASL curriculum provides learning benchmarks for students' development, ASL and ASL literacy skills expectations. To date, results indicate that the ASL curriculum has been on track, as its expectations align well with ASL grade-level learning skills. (Small and Mason, 2008). What remains to be seen in this province is adoption of the ASL curriculum by Public School Board programs.

Naturally, language attitudes towards ASL will drive the decision about acceptance or non-acceptance of the ASL curricula in public school board programs across Ontario and creating "Deaf cultural space" in the schools. Pragmatic reasons are given in Ontario as to why bilingual programming is not adopted in other jurisdictions outside of Alberta and Manitoba despite the overwhelming research demonstrating its efficacy for language minority students. Cummins points out in Duffy (2004) that "Canada's big city school boards, particularly those in Ontario, have used fear of ghettoization as a 'cop-out to stop any kind of imaginative thinking' on the issue . . . We haven't looked creatively at any of the possibilities."

Ontario is uniquely situated to implement ASL widely in the public school boards for all Deaf students in those programs. It is home to Bill 4, recognizing ASL and LSQ as languages of instruction; it is home to the renowned international bilingual education researcher, Jim Cummins, Professor, OISE/U of T, it is home to the ASL Parent-Child Mother Goose Program; it is home to the ASL Curriculum, grades K-12 and it is home to the Deaf Culture Centre. Given the enormous creative energy, program development and expertise in Ontario in particular, why is there not widespread implementation of ASL in the public school board programs? One must look again at attitudes and attitude shift systemically and on an individual level for the answer.

A Framework for Complex System Change

VISION	SKILLS	INCENTIVE	RESOURCES	ACTION PLAN	CHANGE
	SKILLS	INCENTIVE	RESOURCES	ACTION PLAN	CONFUSION
VISION		INCENTIVE	RESOURCES	ACTION PLAN	ANXIETY
VISION	SKILLS		RESOURCES	ACTION PLAN	GRADUAL CHANGE
VISION	SKILLS	INCENTIVE		ACTION PLAN	FRUSTRA-TION
VISION	SKILLS	INCENTIVE	RESOURCES		FALSE START

Figure 4. Managing Complex System Change (Ambrose, 1987)

This framework can be most helpful in implementing change including attitude change, by identifying areas of support needed to ensure that educators involved do not get "stuck" in one arena. The framework outlines areas in need of attention. These include: the development of a common vision (e.g. bilingual education), the skills necessary (e.g. staff ASL expertise), incentive (e.g. increased pay with increased levels of ASL), resources (e.g. curricula, ASL literature on DVDs), action plan (e.g. free ASL classes for teachers and implementing ASL environments where it is understood that ASL is used to the best of everyone's ability at all times). Business professionals teach this framework (e.g. Rotman School of Management, U of T) and hospitals educate their administrators on its design with an eye to improving their system (e.g. Hospital for Sick Children). This in and of itself does not promise change in attitude. We must first examine our individual attitudes.

A Framework for Individual Attitude Change

In the early 1990's Helms described majority identity development and Cross described minority identity development as it impacted race relations among Caucasian and African-American students (Tatum, 1992). These frameworks were examined and found to be extremely useful when applied to cross cultural interaction among Deaf and hearing educators in the first bilingual schools for Deaf students in the United States (Philip and Small, 1992). They were later adapted by Small for bilingual bicultural education teacher training at York University. The frameworks are most helpful and intended to be used introspectively – to examine our own attitudes and behaviors rather than others. We cycle through these stages and sometimes re-cycle through them. It is important to note likely scenarios that may occur as the frameworks for majority and minority identity development interact with each other. For example, a hearing individual in the Pseudo-independent stage will be inclined to want to be with Deaf individuals while perhaps still unintentionally perpetuating audism. If that person interacts with a Deaf individual in the Immersion/Emersion stage who is inclined to wish to be with Deaf individuals, the two will in all probability, clash. However, both are progressing along in their identity development and at some future time could collaborate beautifully with one another to eradicate audism and promote an empowering educational environment for Deaf students.

Minority Identity Development

STAGES	VALUES	STRATEGIES
Pre-Encounter	Think majority is better	Think minority has nothing to do with his personal life
Encounter	Events force him to confront audism	Forced to focus on his identity as member of minority
Immersion/ Emersion	Denigrate majority and glorify minority	Surround with symbols of Deaf identity and avoid symbols of majority
Internalization	Secure in Deaf identity	Build relation with majority who respect
Internalization/ Commitment	Commitment-proactively recognize and go past oppression	Point of departure to discover universe

Figure 5. Minority Identity development adapted by Small, A. (Cross, 1992)

Majority Identity Development

STAGES	VALUES	STRATEGIES
Contact	Lack of awareness of cultural and institutional audism and own privilege	Stereotypes
Disintegration	Awareness and guilt, shame, anger, cognitive dissonance	Denial or attempt to change significant other's attitudes, of minority group withdrawal
Reintegration	Pressure to accept status quo	Guilt and anxiety redirected as fear and anger at minority-blame minority for discomfort
Pseudo-independent	Abandon beliefs but may still unintentionally perpetuate system	Actively affiliate with Deaf and/or alienated from hearing who haven't begun to examine their own audism
Immersion/ Emersion	Uncomfortable with being hearing, can't be anything else	Seek to learn from hearing anti-audists
Autonomy	Newly defined sense of self	Energized to confront audism/ oppression; can forge alliances because more consistent anti-audist behaviour

Figure 6. Majority identity development adapted by Small, A. (Helms, 1992)

We are the Text[iv]
"Tell someone a fact and you reach their minds. Give them a story and you touch their souls."
                                    - Hassidic proverb (Ladd, 2003, p. 332)

The authors offer a segment of their personal stories for insight into attitude shift.

Personal Story 1 - Minority Attitude Shift

"Cripps was born Deaf to a hearing family and virtually had no language until almost six years of age. Her situation changed when she attended a school for Deaf children in Belleville, Ontario and was first exposed to sign language." (MacQuarrie, 2004).

"We all go through stages but I think for me as a Deaf person it is different. We are invisible. It is easy for everyone to say, that is life and you have to resonate with the hearing people. Their needs come before ours. Sure it is life, but no one has the right to deny us our language and culture. We are human beings and have needs. I was glad to have attended Deaf school even though I was only five years old. Think...no language until I was five years old. I had thoughts in my head and wanted to ask questions but I did not have the means to express them until I attended the Deaf residential school. This changed my life. When I graduated from school, there were many barriers that were not necessary in the first place. More so for Deaf children and where it concerns them, it is very hard for me to be so forgiving."

"I could not understand why it is so hard to grant those rights and still am. I worked as an Advocate for the Ministry of Ontario at the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy. It was my experience there that influenced me to finish my book 'Quiet Journey: Understanding the Rights of Deaf Children". This process took me ten years. By writing this book, it helped me re-examine my attitudes and the language approaches used. People do not like to be "told". They need to be nurtured before they would accept feedback which was very hard given the kind of treatment I had and continue to receive. By building my relationship with a majority member who respects helps shape up my attitude with a different approach and go past the oppression stage. I am secure in my identity. By recognizing audism, I use strategies rather than blame to help breach this gap."

Personal Story 2 - Majority Attitude Shift

"Small was raised in a bilingual Hebrew day school where she came to know her Hebrew language, literature and history. She was first exposed to ASL as a child when her cousin became a Rabbi of a Deaf congregation. As an adult, Small is motivated to ensure that Deaf children have the same opportunity to know their own language, literature and history." (MacQuarrie, 2004).

"The transition for me was not quick or simple. It came in stages. Yet, I knew from my own experience the importance of knowing who you are, having your own minority language and heritage valued as a Jewish person. I couldn't deny that others deserved that same right.

I first studied to become a speech and language clinician and of course was trained with a medical perspective of Deaf students. I simultaneously had a marvelous mentor on language acquisition. As a speech and language clinician I could see that joyful conversations in ASL amongst the young children with whom I worked, far outstripped any interaction I could

have with them through spoken language and so I did my doctorate in sociolinguistics to follow that "truth". Through rigorous observation and research, my doctorate gave me an appreciation of how Deaf children develop language through natural interactions.

I became bilingual bicultural coordinator for the first bilingual school for Deaf students in North America in 1988, just when the "Deaf President Now" student revolution took place at Gallaudet University, awakening Deaf educators to their own attitudes in the US. Deaf adults soon became my mentors and through them I learned a perspective that was different from my medically oriented background. Thus began the next stage in the evolution of my own attitudes. I found it painful to bear witness to the injustices they experienced, to see my role in it and to feel recipient of the anger of Deaf colleagues. I grieved as I let go of my medically oriented background. Along with my Deaf counterpart, we established and went through cross cultural interaction and mediation training with a focus on teacher attitudes and interactions. I simultaneously established and took part in an Arab Jewish dialogue for 11 years. Today, my soul is enriched as I team with members of the Deaf community. We are authentic with one another – neither has to give up our identity –it is the strength of our work as we create change.

While I am academic in nature, some of my most profound learning has come from the stories of Deaf adults and children. My experience tells me that individuals often don't understand through political debate but one can never argue with a person's story."

Our own evolution teaches us that we must be humble. We must step back and examine what we value and what we are doing when we make a decision that affects a Deaf child's life so profoundly. Our individual roles in the education of Deaf children have an enormous impact on their lives.

International Studies

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

                              Article 30, Convention on the Rights of the Child (2007)

Snoddon (2009) points out the difficulty with Nigerian-American anthropoligist, John Ogbu's discussion of involuntary-minority adaptation to their educational experience based on their ambivalent or oppositional social or collective identity vis-a-vis White American social identity (Ogbu, 1992, p.9). She points out that Ogbu's theories "blame the victim" and contrasts them with Canadian educator and researcher of multi-literacies, Cummins' (1997) important framework of power relations in schooling where educators and students of diverse cultural backgrounds negotiate identities. Snoddon (2009) goes on to apply the perspective of

Brazilian educator and theorist of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire, stating that students who use their own ASL discourse and master ASL literacy can use it to "intervene critically in the situation which surrounds them and whose mark they bear" (Freire, 2000, p.67).

De Bres (2008), New Zealand researcher, focuses instead on the promotion of positive attitudes among non–Maori New Zealanders and its role in minority language regeneration. A process model is introduced for 'planning for tolerability' targeting the attitudes and behaviors of majority language speakers. This model posits five essential components: recognizing the problem; defining the target audience of majority language speakers; developing messages and desired behaviours; selecting policy techniques; and evaluating success. International comparisons are drawn together in order to consider the future of planning for language tolerability in New Zealand. However what is most striking in this paper is the term "tolerability". Majority language users ought not become merely "tolerant" of the minority language. Attitude shift must have as its objective the appreciation, embracing and promotion of the minority language in the education system.

Bilingual from birth in Finnish and Swedish, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Danish researcher in linguistic human rights and multi-lingual education, articulated the importance of viewing minority languages as resources to be cherished in society and of preserving the wealth of knowledge they contain. Her research has demonstrated the devastating effects of language planning on many minority languages including the death of languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002). With this perspective, minority languages are viewed as resources to be nurtured for the contributions to our collective future (Ruiz, 1984).

A Model for Ontario: Attitudinal Evolution

We are in charge of our attitudes. Attitudes evolve and are dynamic –we are not bad or good; audist or not audist – we evolve. Therefore, attitude planning must assume evolution. Ladd (2003, pp 409) points out that the beauty of Deafhood is that it offers the chance for the "community to find out what it might become when the weight of oppression is lifted. [It] not only permits a belief in cultural change that promotes the collective but [also] suggests directions towards which that change might orient itself". Similarly, anti-audist attitudinal evolution not only permits an escape from a constrained pathological perspective of Deaf students but also suggests a collaborative liberating role to co-promote empowerment. Ladd (2003) challenges us not to view attitudes as dichotomies contrasting bad and good. Similarly the model presented in this article provides an alternative that is evolutionary in nature. We can, in fact, create accepting, additive educational environments that reflect "Deaf cultural space" and then grow into it.

Language is at the heart of language attitude planning. An evolutionary educational context can create a change that is totally transformative and empowering for Deaf students in Ontario. We refrain from providing recommendations for language planning outcomes as that is the purview of another article. There is much that must be examined for proper

implementation of empowering language planning. Instead, we conclude with two reflective questionnaires for all personnel in the Deaf students' environment including teaching staff, support staff and administrators. The Personal Attitude Shift (PAS) Questionnaire (Appendix A) and the System Attitude Shift (SAS) Questionnaire can be used (Appendix B) to begin the reflective process toward constructing empowering school environments for Deaf students.

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Endnotes

[i] We use capital "D" when referring to all Deaf individuals. This is not to place a particular identity on particular individuals. Rather it is to indicate that ASL and Deaf culture are the birthright of every Deaf individual by virtue of their having been born Deaf or become Deaf in childhood, whether or not they have been exposed to it. This is in keeping with how authors refer to individuals from other cultural groups such as Black or Jewish individuals regardless of the strength of their identity. We do not make assumptions about each individual's identity for them by determining whether they should have a capital or not. (Pizzacalla and Cripps, 1997).
[ii] The authors do not address attitude planning regarding Language des signes québécoise (LSQ) or other sign languages in Canada as we do not operate in these communities or education systems. Our focus is on ASL in the Ontario education system. It is worth noting however that both ASL and LSQ are recognized as languages of instruction in Ontario. The LSQ community and educators will determine the relevance of the ideas put forth in this article as they may or may not pertain to their attitude planning needs.

[iii] Ladd (2003, pp.xix-xx) points out that "mainstreaming" is the most enduring term used in the Deaf community to refer to the practice of "integrating" Deaf children into hearing schools. He suggests that this is likely because it's signed translation "visually represent[s] the suppression of [an] individual Deaf child by" a majority of others.

[iv] Sybil Belmont, a Ramallah born Palestinian, made this statement in the context of Arab-Jewish Dialogue shared with the first author. It highlights the need to examine and share our own lives and attitudes in attempt to expand our view across cultures. When we come to see the impact of a personal story on the life of someone we know, it can free us from our perspective. With our humanity, our heart and soul, we can understand their truth even when it is different from our own. "What's important is not getting out our positions, but the humanity . . ."(Belmont, 1988)

APPENDIX A

Personal Attitude Shift (PAS) Questionnaire
Developed by Anita Small, M.Sc., Ed.D. and Joanne Cripps, CYW

1. What is my "story"? How have I been educated and what has impacted my values? When I look at the Minority/ Majority Identity Development chart what values do I hold and what strategies do I use? What stage do I think I am at right now?

2. What situations push my buttons? How do I respond? How could I respond differently?

3. Ask yourself this . . . what is my role in this situation, what is my role in general with Deaf children?

4. Am I practicing audism? I did not know this, but I am ready to change. What can I do to change?

5. What prevents me from signing all the time?

6. I feel strange as a hearing person signing to another hearing person signing. When is the appropriate time to sign or talk?

7. We are in a position of POWER. Children do not have the power per se. We do. We make decisions where they should be placed by the level of their hearing loss. By doing so, we take away the power of language and natural interaction from them thereby making them dependent on the system.

    - If my position is neutral, are children victims of my decision by remaining neutral?

    - No one is ever neutral. By using this term, does this prevent me from confronting the real issues?

    - If my position is CHOICES, what do I see my role with regards to children's rights?

    - Isolation for any child is the worst thing. For a Deaf child mainstreamed, it is more so. What is my role in this?

8. Have I bothered to understand the Deaf history and learn from it in order to prevent a cycle and strengthen relationships? Or do I prefer to rely on "experts" involved in "Special Needs" Education who have not walked in Deaf shoes?

9. I have something to learn in order to support an empowering environment for Deaf students. What is it? Be specific. How can I best learn it?

10. I have something to contribute to an empowering environment for Deaf students. How can I contribute?

APPENDIX B

System Attitude Shift (SAS) Questionnaire
Developed by Anita Small, M.Sc., Ed.D. and Joanne Cripps, CYW

1. Do we sign at all times?

2. What prevents us from signing all the time?

3. Are we afraid to make mistakes?

4. Do we have fun improving our ASL skills?

5. Does our system have mentorship for learning/interacting in ASL?

6. Do we have an environment where we are paired with each other?

7. Is there an audism free policy in our school?

8. Identify what you have right now in the language planning areas:
   - Status Planning
   - Corpus Planning
   - Acquisition Planning

9. Identify what you want to have in the language planning areas:
   - Status Planning
   - Corpus Planning
   - Acquisition Planning
Then work out a plan to achieve those.

10. Identify how your school system is doing in the following areas:
   - Do we have a shared vision for creating an empowering environment/ Deaf cultural space for our students? What is it? Why not? What stops us?
   - What skills do we have as a staff?
   - What incentives do we have?
   - What resources do we have?

11. Identify what you feel you need in each area:
   - How can we create an empowering environment that truly reflects "Deaf cultural space"?
   - What skills do we need as a staff?
   - What incentives do we need?
   - What resources do we need?

12. What action plan do we need to develop for each of these? Who will be responsible for each part of the plan, what is the timeline for each component of the plan? How will we all know we are making progress?