

ASL NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 2

Winter 2012

BCC News Round Up

As this issue is being readied for distribution, enrollment for the spring semester has begun. If you have not thought yet about your plan for next semester, the ASL department encourages you to do so soon and enroll at your earliest opportunity.

Priority enrollment takes place November 5-7 for students in EOPS, PSSD, the military, athletes, TRIO, etc.

Enrollment for all other continuing students begins on November 8 and continues through December 2. Check your student center in Passport to find when your specific appointment time is to begin enrolling. Not all continuing students begin on November 8. The days and times are staggered so that everyone isn't trying to enroll at the same time.

Enrollment for new students and high school students (even those who are continuing) begins on December 3. Reminder, high school students cannot enroll online. Enrollment is via the concurrent enrollment form that must be submitted to the admissions office.

Enroll as early as possible to ensure that you have a place in the class(es) of your choice.

The first day of the spring semester is Tuesday, January 22. The campus will be closed on Monday, January 21 for the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday observance. Plan to be in attendance the first day your class(es) meet or you may be dropped from the class.

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Unlocking the Mysteries of the Deaf Brain

By Greg Livadas, Research at Rochester Institute of Technology

Although studied for centuries, much remains unknown about the human brain. The deaf brain in particular is still a mystery in part because this population often uses different cognitive and communication processes than hearing people. Rochester Institute of Technology's Peter Hauser is a leader in analyzing the deaf brain, how it differs from the hearing brain, and the effect of sign language on cognition.

The Deaf Brain vs. The Hearing Brain

Hauser, a deaf clinical neuropsychologist and associate professor in the American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, is investigating how the brain adapts and takes on different functions based on new parameters. In other words, how does deafness change how the brain operates?

"We really understand so little about the human brain," Hauser says. "Through my research, I am seeking to uncover which cognitive processes are hardwired, which are plastic, and how deafness or sign language may impact them."



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Events & Announcements

Three Free Places to Park Your Bicycle in Downtown Berkeley.

1. BCC Bike Room. Enter the building through the main doors and take the elevator on your left down to the ground floor. Do not bring bikes up or down on the stairs. 2. Across the street from BCC at the City Garage. **Also FREE vehicle parking for people with disabilities available here.** 3. At the Downtown Berkeley Bike Station at 2208 Shattuck Avenue, just beyond the intersection of Shattuck and Allston Way. Minimal fees may apply for night parking. (510) 548-7433 or bartbikestation.com.

Information about local Deaf events is available at DCARA's web site, dcara.org and click on "events". One-time and on-going events are listed as well as a captioned movie finder.

ASL COFFEE SOCIALS

Antioch. 1st Friday of the month 7-11 pm. Starbucks, 5779 Lone Tree Way #G in the Slatten Ranch Shopping Center (across from Target). For more information: melissachildcare@gmail.com.

Berkeley. 2nd Friday of the month, 7-10 pm. Royal Grounds Coffee & Tea, 2409 Shattuck Avenue. For more information: Daniel at pah_daniel@aol.com or Pam at pmbrawl@aol.com.

Livermore. Every Thursday, 5-6 pm at Panama Bay Coffee, 2115 1st Street. For more information: Elizabeth at eglaux@pacbell.net or check their facebook page.

San Francisco #1. 1st & 3rd Fridays of the month, 6:05-9:05 pm. Starbucks at 2727 Mariposa Street, near KQED. For more information: sanfranasclub@gmail.com.

San Francisco #2. Every Thursday 6-9:00 pm. ASL Cafe by Project Insight. West Portal Clubhouse, 131 Lenox Way at Ulloa. For more information, including changes, cancellations, moves, etc.: contactpi@sfgov.org or <http://sfrecpark.org/Rec-ProjectInsightProgram.aspx>

San Francisco #3. Deaf LGBT. 1st Friday of the month, 6-8 pm. Cafe Flore, 2298 Market Street, San Francisco (across from LookOut). For more information go to <http://sites.google.com/site/rlsdbayarea/calendar>. All hearing and deaf LGBTIQ and straight folks are welcome.

Santa Rosa. Meets every Sunday at 10 am at Aroma Roasters at Railroad Square on 4th Street.

Vallejo. 1st Wednesday of the month, 7-11 pm. Starbucks at 400 Lincoln Road East. Contact: tatobud@sbcglobal.net

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Hauser argues that the difference between deaf and hearing brains can have significant clinical impacts that can affect diagnosis and treatment of numerous diseases.

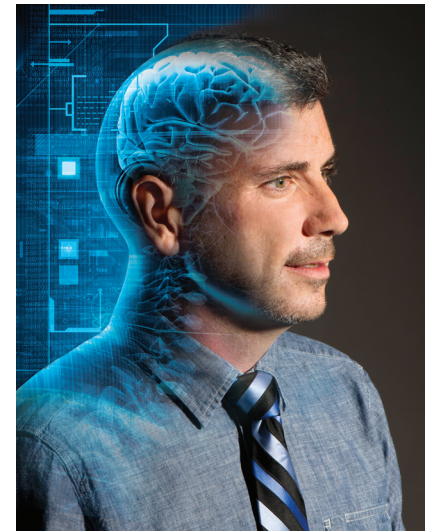
"Suppose a deaf person has a stroke, which impacts his or her communication functions," Hauser says. "Because deaf people communicate differently, and use different parts of the brain in that process, you can't assume he or she will have the same symptoms or respond to the same therapies as a person who is hearing."

Analyzing the Cognitive Process

"Peter is regarded nationally as one of the foremost experts in studies comparing deaf and hearing people's brains and function," says Daphne Bavelier, a professor of brain and cognitive sciences at the University of Rochester, who has collaborated with Hauser for close to a decade. "In particular, he is leading the way in characterizing how growing up deaf or hard of hearing impacts executive functions — a set of skills that is central to academic achievements."

Much of the previous clinical research involving deaf individuals focused on restoring hearing or adjusting learning style to mirror hearing peers. Instead, Hauser focuses on deaf individuals themselves, how they learn, how they think, and how deaf brains process and use information.

Through partnerships with Gallaudet University's National Science Foundation Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) and the University of Rochester's Brain and Vision Laboratory, he has developed comprehensive testing



A photo illustration of Peter Hauser, deaf clinical neuropsychologist and associate professor in the American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

Image created by Elizabeth LaMark & Jeff Arbogast, RIT

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ASL MEETUP GROUPS

Berkeley/Oakland. meetup.com/Berkeley-Oakland-ASL-Meet/

San Francisco. meetup.com/asl-204/

Vallejo Bible Church of the Deaf. Sunday and Friday services. 1640 Broadway Street, Vallejo. For more information: vallejodeafchurch@yahoo.com; vallejodeafchurch.org

Hands On Travel tours. Small group tours in ASL. Locations include: Thailand, Japan, Italy, Honduras, Morocco, France & Spain, Costa Rica, China, Russia, Finland and the Baltics, and Peru. Hands On Travel has partnered with Aqua Hands to offer scuba tours! For more information and a listing of all tours go to handsontvl.com

The **UC San Francisco Center on Deafness** has changed its name to **UCSF Deaf Community Counseling Services**. For now, you can still find them at uccd.org. For more than 35 years, DCCS has provided a range of quality outpatient mental health services for individuals who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and their families. They also offer substance abuse services and school-based mental health services, as well as a range of other specialized programs.

Mozzeria. A San Francisco Italian restaurant and pizzeria owned by a Deaf couple opened on December 9. Restaurant features a huge wood-fired oven imported from Italy. Deaf and hearing diners welcome. 3228 16th Street (near Guerrero), SF. Dinner Tuesday-Sunday; brunch Saturday-Sunday. (415) 489-0963, mozzeria.com. See article at <http://blogs.kqed.org/bayareabites/2011/11/28/deaf-owned-mozzeria-shows-signs-of-great-pizza-coming-to-the-mission/>

Jack “Jax” Levesque passed away October 12, 2012. He was an advocate, administrator, and teacher. He worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, co-founded the Massachusetts State Association of the Deaf, and was the director of several deaf-related agencies before becoming the executive director of DCARA, 1981-1998. You can read more about Levesque's accomplishments with DCARA at dcara.org.

Deaf Hope announces new executive director Stacy Gainok.

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procedures designed to analyze cognition in hearing and deaf individuals. His research includes studies of visual attention, the act of focusing on an object, and executive function, the part of the brain associated with behavior regulation and metacognition.



Hauser's team, which includes students and faculty through NTID's Deaf Studies Laboratory, as well as faculty and students at Gallaudet and the University of Rochester, collects data on research participants from all over the world and conducts assessments in multiple written and sign languages. More than 1,000 people have participated in this testing so far.

“We conduct tests when we go to schools and camps for deaf children and academic conferences all over the world-Israel, Turkey, Germany,” Hauser says.

“Seeing” Differently

Results garnered through the research, which has been funded primarily by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, show clear differences between deaf and hearing individuals in how information is processed.

In one project, Hauser's team studied spatial visual attention in elementary school-age children and adults to compare differences between populations. They found that elementary-age deaf children perform similarly to their hearing peers. However, as people age, differences in attention grow wider — deaf adolescents and young adults were more attentive to peripheral events. Hauser explains, “This seems to be an important adaptive ability that makes deaf individuals more aware of what is happening around them, to increase their incidental learning and to prevent them from dangers.”

Hauser says it has been generally understood that deaf people learn to pick up visual cues of what is happening peripherally quicker than hearing individuals because they have at least one fewer sense to rely on.

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ASL Tour of Girl with a Pearl Earring Exhibit. February 23, 2013, 9 am. de Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, San Francisco 94118 (inside Golden Gate Park). For more information: Rebecca Bradley, Accessibility/ADA Coordinator, (415) 750-7645 voice or rbradley@famsf.org.

10th Annual Glimmer of Hope. February 23, 2013, 5 pm. Marines Memorial Club & Hotel, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco. Gala "Dynamic Decade" benefits Deaf Hope. Dinner and show tickets: \$125/person or \$225/couple. Show tickets only: \$50/person. (Layaway plan available.) Information: deaf-hope.org or DeafHope@Deaf-Hope.org

California Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Annual Conference. March 8-10, 2013, Marina Del Rey, California. Open to teachers, paraprofessionals, interpreters, and families with Deaf/Hard of Hearing children from across California. Information: <http://cal-ed.org/pages/2013conference.html>

Douglas Tilden 5K/10K for Deaf Humanity. April 27, 2013 (tentative). Peacock Meadows in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Organized by DCARA, San Francisco Deaf Club, California Association of the Deaf, Alliance for Deaf Bilingual Children & Deafhood Foundation.

Jewish Deaf Congress. May 30-June 2, 2013. Washington, D.C. "Reenergizing the Jewish Deaf Community." Information: <http://jewishdeafcongress.org>

National Deaf People of Color Conference III. June 13-16, 2013. Gallaudet University hosts triennial conference, Washington, DC. All interested people welcome. Information: ndpc2013.com or NDPC@gallaudet.edu

American Society for Deaf Children Biennial Conference. June 26-29, 2013, Tucson, Arizona. Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind. Provides families with five days of information and fun! Daytime workshops for parents while children participate in educational and recreational activities. Evening events bring families together, providing the opportunity to form new friendships and peer support. ASDC is a nonprofit parent-helping-parent organization promoting a positive attitude toward signing and Deaf culture. Information: Kelly Birmingham, conference chair, at kelly.birmingham@asdb.az.gov or

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"Attention is a key psychological indicator of how information is transmitted from the senses to the brain. By showing how this works differently in deaf people, we can assist in developing techniques that foster visual learning."

Hauser has further examined differences in visual processing by comparing reading comprehension between hearing and deaf people. His team tested children ages 8 to 16 from four countries (with five languages) on letter recognition, word recognition and semantics and sentence processing. Participants included deaf children of deaf parents, deaf children with hearing parents, hearing children, and hearing children with dyslexia.

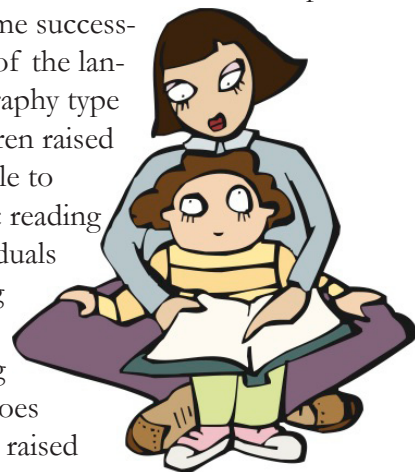
The preliminary findings appear to suggest that early sign language acquisition and deaf parents' indigenous knowledge on how to raise deaf children prepare students to become successful readers regardless of the language, written orthography type or region. Deaf children raised by deaf parents are able to achieve the same basic reading skills as hearing individuals early in life, suggesting that deafness per se does not cause reading challenges, but what does have an effect is being raised in improvised visual language environments that do not foster visual learning.

Hauser's neuroimaging research also suggests that skilled deaf readers use different parts of their brains for processing reading.

"Traditional methods for teaching reading and assessing comprehension are based on how hearing people learn and do not generally take into account the visual needs of deaf learners," Hauser says. "Our research shows that deaf students do not necessarily learn to read more slowly than hearing students — just differently."

Understanding Executive Function

"Attention control, emotional control, impulse control, memory, organizing your thoughts, planning your thoughts — these are all components of executive



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http://test.sweetwatermedia.com/asd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=660:23rd-biennial-asdc-conference&catid=91&Itemid=590

Hearing Loss Association of America Convention. June 27-30, 2013. Portland, Oregon. Information: hearingloss.org/content/convention.

National Black Deaf Advocates Conference. July 30-August 4, 2013. New Orleans, Louisiana. 26th national conference. Information: nbda.org/events/2013-nbda-conference-new-orleans-la

Deaf World Cruise 2013. August, 2013. From Rome, Italy to Athens, Greece. Contact: Mark Morales, Deaf World Cruise Director 2013 at cruisedirector@deafcruise.com. DeafWorldCruise.com

Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf Conference. August 6-11, 2013. Montreal, Quebec, Canada. rad.org/conference.shtml

12th Biennial Deaf Seniors of America Conference. August 22-27, 2013. dsa2013baltimore.org

is delayed.”

Hauser argues that inefficient executive function development can have a negative impact on learning and academic achievement. His team is conducting a series of experiments, using deaf and hearing participants, to investigate the impact of language learning on executive development.

“The problem we encountered when beginning this research was that there are no standardized tests available to measure individuals’ sign language fluency,” he says. Given this, the team developed a highly sensitive test of competency in American Sign Language that can easily be administered in a short period of time. Hauser developed a Web-based administration protocol so the test can be administered remotely, with participant responses sent to his laboratory for analysis.

The test is being used in a number of psychological, linguistic and cognitive neuroscience research studies at universities all over the country.

“The creation of this test has finally enabled researchers to test research questions related to the effect of sign language skills on learning and cognition,” Hauser says.

The test has already been adapted to measure German and British sign languages, and Hauser hopes to further expand its use in the future.

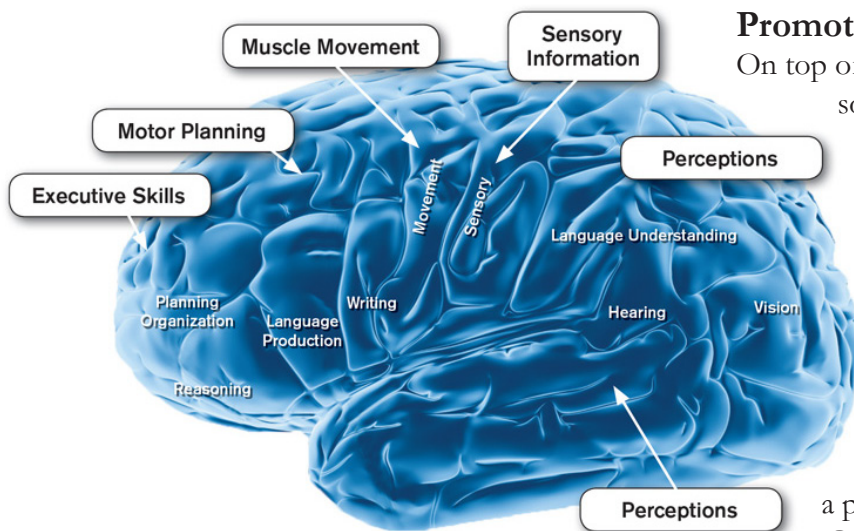
Promoting the Deaf Learner

On top of his basic research efforts, Hauser has sought to enhance understanding of deaf learners and promote educational and outreach opportunities in the deaf community. This includes efforts to disseminate information on deaf cognition to the broader scientific and education community, as well as supporting the next generation of researchers.

Hauser has presented his research at numerous international conferences, served as a presenter/mentor for the Youth Leadership Conference of the National Association of the Deaf, and served as a delegate to the Test Equity Summit, which sought to ensure that educational testing better accounted for deaf learners. He also co-edited, with NTID Professor Marc Marschark, the 2008 book *Deaf Cognition: Foundations and Outcomes*, and the 2011 book *How Deaf Children*

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Map of the brain, including executive function Image provided by NTID

function that continue to develop in the brain until early adulthood,” Hauser says. “And language appears to be a necessary component of executive function development. But for the majority of deaf people growing up in hearing families, language development

Learn: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know, both published by Oxford University Press.

Hauser has also worked with numerous students at RIT, NTID and his partner institutions to promote their research efforts and enhance enthusiasm for the topic as a whole.

Erin Spurgeon, who enjoyed Hauser's enthusiasm for his subject matter when he taught a psychology class she was enrolled in as an RIT/NTID master's student, ended up working as his research associate in the Deaf Studies Laboratory. She worked on several cognition projects and traveled with Hauser to the University of Haifa in Israel in 2009 and to Turkey in 2010 for his international research team meetings. Spurgeon is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in language and communicative disorders in a joint program at the University of California at San Diego and San Diego State University.

"The opportunity to work with Professor Hauser as a research associate was one of the most valuable experiences I had in preparation for this doctoral program," she says. "Students who are interested in deaf research are fortunate to work with a knowledgeable and respected member of the scientific community."

With continued research at RIT/NTID, Hauser believes a legacy is being built for deaf cognition, education and outreach in deaf studies and sign language research.

"My hope is to bring more people into research, have junior faculty involved more, mentor them, create a deaf-friendly lab environment where people can come in and learn how to conduct research," Hauser says. 🙌🙌



Hauser and members of his research team Photo provided by NTID

Interested students can join the ASL listserv by sending an e-mail message containing your name, class that you are enrolled in, and instructor's name to bcc_vistaaslgroupp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you join, you will receive information about Deaf events, articles of interest, job announcements, etc. You can also post information, find other students to form a study group, have discussions, to name just a few options. Membership is limited to current and previous Vista/BCC ASL

Updates from Previous Students

Iris Miller Stetson (a 2008 graduate of the ASL program at BCC) started writing about her experience of being 'voiceless' after she was finally diagnosed with a severe speech disability in 1999. Her goal is to share everything she has learned and via her blog at <http://princessfrogspeaks.blogspot.com/>. Feel free to share the link below with anyone you know who is speech disabled, or otherwise, looking for hope and support, and/or who may just want to learn about coping and even becoming empowered by difficult life challenges.

Alex Sing, who received both an ASL and a Liberal Arts AA degrees in 2009, transferred to Holy Names University in Oakland. He graduated last spring with a bachelor's degree in Multimedia Arts and Communications. He's considering continuing in graduate school in art at Mills College or going straight to work in his field.

For the update on **Megan Hicks**, see the article on the [next page](#). 🙌🙌

Former Student Was Peace Corps Volunteer

By Megan Hicks

For two years I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Jamaica, working at St. Christopher's School for the Deaf in Brown's Town, St. Ann. As an alum of Berkeley City College (then called Vista), I knew my love for the language and culture of the Deaf was something I would always incorporate into my life.

After completing my bachelor's degree at U.C. Berkeley, majoring in American Studies with an emphasis in Disability Studies, I knew I wanted to learn American Sign Language more in depth (I had taken a few classes here and there). It was a "no-brainer" for me to then go to Vista and enroll in its ASL program. I took all the required classes, including ASL, Classifiers, Fingerspelling and Deaf Culture.

I absolutely fell in love with this visual language and those who "spoke" it. After graduating from Vista in 2005, I then attended the Interpreter Preparation Program at Ohlone College in Fremont. Upon graduating from the program, I became a freelance sign language interpreter in the Bay Area, but I knew there was something more I wanted out of life. This brings me to my Peace Corps service.

I had heard about the Peace Corps from a previous college roommate and then learned more about it in my interpreting program when we had a teacher who had joined the Peace Corps and worked with the Deaf community. That's what really started the wheels to turn, and I began to more seriously consider joining the Peace Corps. I've always thought of it as an honorable

thing — giving two years of my life to help others is something that really interested me. I have always felt so lucky to have grown up in South Lake Tahoe with my amazing family and friends, that I thought it was time to give back. And the Peace Corps was the best way to do that.

In March 2010, I moved to Jamaica to become a Peace Corps Volunteer. Initially, when first arriving on this beautiful island, I was unsure of my placement, and whether I would be able to use my specialized skills of signing. After two arduous months of training, I finally learned I would be placed near the North Coast of the island, at St. Christopher's School for the Deaf. As you can imagine, I was thrilled to learn I would be working at a Deaf school and would be able to make my life's dream a reality.



Megan Hicks and a student from St. Christopher's school.

Upon meeting the Deaf community in Jamaica, I quickly realized the sign language used is not American Sign Language, but rather Jamaican Sign Language. Luckily, there is about a 60 percent intelligibility rate between the two languages, meaning that when I was using ASL, my Deaf counterparts were more or less able to understand me. However, I knew I would need to quickly learn JSL in order to not allow my use of ASL to influence the native sign language. Maintaining the integrity of JSL meant that when I learned a new sign in JSL, I would continue to use that sign and that sign only, no matter how much I wanted to use the ASL sign.

I not only learned JSL by spending time with my Deaf counterparts, but after a while, I moved in with one of the Deaf teachers, Yulanda. Having a Deaf Jamaican roommate allowed me to become deeply aware of not only Deaf culture, but also Jamaican culture, which made my time there that much more rewarding.

Yulanda works at the Deaf school with me as a Deaf Cultural Facilitator. A DCF is teamed with a hearing, certified teacher in each classroom and assists in everyday activities. They are, more or less, Deaf teachers and are an invaluable resource in the classroom.

St. Christopher's, like the California School for the

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Deaf in Fremont, is a residential school — the students live in dorms and go home for the holidays, but they stay at school on the weekends. St. Christopher's is one of 13 Deaf schools on the island. However only eight of those schools are governed by the Ministry of Education (similar to the Department of Education in the U.S.) and are also under the Jamaican Association for the Deaf. These schools implement the bilingual (English and JSL) bicultural method of teaching Deaf children and follow the ministry's curriculum.

The other Deaf schools on the island are mostly governed by missionaries from the U.S. and use a mix of regional signs and ASL. These schools focus mostly on Christianity and do not follow the Ministry of Education's curriculum. I feel lucky to have been placed by Peace Corps at St. Christopher's, as I strongly believe in the Bi-Bi method and think the country should maintain and promote its own sign language.

After arriving, my first priority was establishing a much needed school library. I revamped the school's library space by sorting through the books, giving the room a fresh coat of paint, and hiring an artist from the community, who is also Deaf, to paint a beautiful mural depicting the alphabet in sign language. The school has also received donations from various organizations, including the Moose Lodge of South Lake Tahoe, which donated library related items such as bookends, DVDs and books, as well as the U.S.-based Boston JUMP (Jamaica United Mission for Progress), which donated three barrels of school supplies and more than 1,000 books. These generous donations allow students to read books at school and at home and to participate in other reading-related activities during "Library Time" sessions.

As the ability to read and to comprehend is such an invaluable skill, I endeavored to use my training, also garnered through the Peace Corps, to help inspire a

love for reading among Deaf students. To this end, I assisted in the implementation of a reading competition where the students receive incentives, and students in grades 4, 5 and 6 participate in a penpal program with a school in San Ramon, California. The students not only learn about another culture, but they improve their writing skills through the penpal program. Through a partnership with United States Agency for International Development, St. Christopher's has also become involved in the Junior Achievement program,

which teaches students financial literacy, along with other valuable life skills.

In addition to my librarian-related responsibilities, I also teamed with one of the Deaf teachers at the school to teach a weekly sign language class to some ancillary staff members who work in the

dorms of the school, as well as to community members. I also helped interpret any meetings at my school, and occasionally for the Jamaican Association for the Deaf in Kingston.

Another personal mission I had while being in Jamaica was to educate people that being deaf does not mean being impaired in anyway. I often had to remind people that the only thing Deaf people can't do is hear. I heard the phrase "deaf and dumb" on a daily basis, and it made me cringe. I constantly let people know that that phrase is outdated and calling them just Deaf is acceptable. These ideas are slowly being accepted there, not unlike the deaf community's experience in the United States some years ago.

I also worked with those at Jamaican Association for the Deaf to help promote equal access. Jamaica does not have the same laws regarding accessibility as the



Alphabet mural in St. Christopher's library.

U.S., so they have been fighting to get TV stations to provide closed-captioning, get major political events to include interpreters, and having qualified interpreters at the U.S. Embassy for Deaf visa applicants. These are all slowly but surely coming to fruition.

Volunteering in Jamaica was enormously rewarding.



Jamaica Association for the Deaf office.

Everyday I was rewarded by seeing my students' beautiful faces light up when they picked out a book. Or when they ran to give me a hug first thing in the morning. Knowing that I have helped the students increase their motivation to read is extremely gratifying. My Peace Corps service has encouraged the love of books and has encouraged me to continue in the work that I do.

Editor's note: Megan Hicks completed her Peace Corps service and returned to California in April. After a brief break she began the Masters of Art in ASL/English Bilingual Education program at U.C. San Diego in June. The degree also includes three different credentials: multi-subject teaching, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and Bilingual Authorization. 🙌🙌

Beating Test Anxiety

By Nina C. Kindblad. Originally written for the Fall 2007 newsletter. Kindblad retired from her position as Learning Disabilities Specialist at Berkeley City College at the end of May 2012.

You're sweating, dizzy, sick to your stomach — oh no, what could it be? Yep, it's the dreaded day! You have a test or a presentation to face, and your anxiety is kicking in big time. Many of us suffer from test anxiety, but it doesn't have to control us; we can learn to control it.

Test anxiety can cause distraction and mental blocks. This is the last thing we need when taking a test — we need our brains to be clear and functioning at their best.

Often the cause of anxiety over assignments, quizzes, tests, or presentations, is a fear of failure. We feel that if we do poorly, we ourselves are failures.

Remember, it is only one test or assignment, and you don't need to put your whole future on it. You need to believe in yourself and learn some "positive self talk." Tell yourself that you will be successful; picture yourself walking into the classroom and giving your presentation or taking your exam and doing great. Here are a few strategies that may help:



- Know your material. If it's a presentation, practice, practice, practice! Have a friend be your audience and tell them to give you feedback. If it's a test or quiz, start preparing weeks in advance by reviewing the material daily.
- Attend all classes. Skipping classes can add to your anxiety since so much is learned during class time.
- Make sure you get enough sleep the night before so you feel well-rested and ready to put your best foot forward.
- Start your exam or presentation with positive self talk: picture yourself succeeding and tell yourself that you did study, are prepared, and you are going to do your best.
- If your mind becomes blocked, close your eyes and take a long, deep breath. Let it out slowly. Concentrate on your breathing — actually feel or hear yourself breathe.
- If you still feel anxious and stressed, just write down or say anything you remember about the subject. Keep in mind, it's only one test/assignment and it is unlikely that it will "make or break" your chances of passing the class.
- At the end of test/assignment, once you got everything you possibly

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could out of your brain, remember this, “Do your best and let it rest.” Let go of the anxiety, the test is over now. This will help you manage some of the anxiety at the end of the day.

Good Luck!

Resources on this topic:

You can get a copy of the excellent booklet “About Test Anxiety” from Nancy in room 562 or Maricela Becerra, the current Learning Disabilities Specialist at Berkeley City College, in Room 265.



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Note that if you wish to drop a fall class, the deadline to do so is November 17. You will receive a “W” on your transcript and no refund is available. November 17 is a Saturday. If you wish to drop on that date, you must do so online; the admissions and records office is closed on the weekends.

Other important dates to note between now and the beginning of the new semester: the last day of the fall semester is Friday, December 14. Although no classes will meet the following week, the campus is open for business, although some offices will have reduced hours. If you plan to come to campus during the week of December 17, contact the office or individual you plan to meet with to determine their hours. BCC and all Peralta facilities are closed December 22-January 1. Enrollment continues online during that time. All campuses will reopen January 2, but some offices may have reduced hours until classes are in session. Note that the library is only open when classes are in session.

Proposition 30 passed in the election on November 6. As a result, millions of dollars of cuts to schools and other public services have been avoided. BCC is breathing a sigh of relief and looks forward to restoring some classes and services in the future.

Jose Ortiz, Peralta’s chancellor, shares the following information about the passage of prop 30: “With approximately seven months remaining in the fiscal year, we have a better understanding of how much we will receive from the State for serving students. Proposition 30’s passage means that we can expect no cuts to our funding compared to the prior fiscal year. The Peralta Colleges can expect to be funded to serve 17,992

Important dates for fall and spring terms

Nov. 17—Last day to withdraw from regular session fall classes.

Nov. 22-25—Thanksgiving holidays. College closed.

Dec. 10-14—final exams & fall semester end.

Campus closed 12/22-1/1.

Jan. 1—New Year’s Day holiday.

Jan. 21—Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday observance holiday. College closed.

Jan. 22—Spring semester begins

Feb. 3—Last day to drop regular session classes with refund and without “W” on transcript. Last day to add regular session classes.

Feb. 15-18—Lincoln & Washington birthday observance holidays. College closed.

March 25-31—Spring break. No classes but campus open 3/25-3/28.

April 27—Last day to withdraw from regular session classes.

May 17—Malcolm X birthday observance holiday. College closed.

May 18-24—Final exams and semester end.

May 27—Memorial Day holiday. College closed.

For more detailed information, check the [academic calendar](#) online or in the printed schedules.

FTES [full-time equivalent students] compared to the approximately 16,600 FTES if Proposition 30 had failed. This difference equates to approximately \$5.5 million that will be restored to the unrestricted general fund budget.

In addition to restoring \$5.5 million to Peralta’s base budget, Proposition 30 also calls for approximately \$210 million in new funds statewide. Of these new funds, \$160 million will be used to buy down existing deferrals and the remaining \$50 million is to be used to provide additional access to students. These new dollars are not expected to be allocated to districts until June 2013.

While the passage of Proposition 30 is good news overall, it represents only a partial restoration for

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Interview with *Wonderstruck* author Brian Selznick

By Sharon Pajka. Originally written for [Pajka's blog](#) *Deaf Characters in Adolescent Literature* in January 2012. Reprinted with permission.

I'm so 2011! September 2011, to be precise. I didn't stumble upon this book myself and I wasn't the first to announce to the world how much I actually enjoyed it. Basically, when I posted about Brian Selznick's *Wonderstruck* in October 2011, it

was already old news. I mean, the *New York Times* had already reviewed it.

Nevertheless, I decided that I needed to at least read it and added it to my pile of "fun" reads that never get read when you're a professor teaching at a univer-

Wonderstruck, a novel in words and pictures by Brian Selznick
637 pages

For ages 9 to 12

Interest level: grade 3 - grade 5

Lexile® measure: 830L

Publisher: Scholastic Press
(September 13, 2011)

ISBN-10: 0545027896

ISBN-13: 9780545027892

sity in hard economic times. *Wonderstruck* is not light reading. I mean, the book itself weighs (pauses, goes into the bathroom scale to weigh the book) 4.5 pounds! I've mentioned that I'm a commuter and a 4.5 pound book is not something I want to lug about on the train. AND, while it is available for my Kindle, I actually wanted to hold this book and read it from non-e-ink.

When I finally heard from Mr. Selznick (I actually had to stalk him, I mean, contact him the old fashioned way... wow, he really locked down his email address fast!) in November, it was nearing the end of the semester and I was preparing to go to London for a conference so I had to put him on hold (I know, can you believe I had the nerve to do that! I wasn't trying to be too self-important, I just knew I couldn't take on anything else at the moment... especially not with the focus that I would need for *Wonderstruck*).

So, here I am at the start of the year talking about last year's book. If you haven't read *Wonderstruck*, you

should. It's a charming story with Deaf Characters. It's visual. It includes American Sign Language. It's a book that the masses will see and apply to real life Deaf people (i.e. that was a great deal of pressure on Mr. Selznick). Fortunately for us, he did his research and created a beautiful book that I hope to include in one of my future courses.

He's down to Earth, incredibly cool, and I believe he is having the time of his life! He actually responded to one of my emails from Paris during the *Hugo* premiere. This was after being in London and meeting Prince Charles about which he wrote, "holy cow!!" See, I told you he was cool.

Sharon Pajka: I have my own interpretation, but I'm curious if you could discuss your decisions to use words for Ben's story and pictures for Rose's.

Brian Selznick: The structure of the book actually came before the plot and the story. After I finished *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* I was trying to figure out what to do next, and how to use what I'd learned in *Hugo* without repeating myself. I remembered a puppet show that a friend of mine made in which two separate stories were told, one wordlessly with Japanese Bunraku style puppets and another with only spoken language, told by a storyteller sitting on the side of the stage (this show, "Hiroshima Maiden", was made by Dan Hurlin and based on a book written by my boyfriend David Serlin).

The idea of two stories told simultaneously but with completely different modes intrigued me and I wondered if I could separate the words from the pictures and tell two different interlocking stories. The goal with *Hugo* was to tell one single narrative, with words

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Selznick at the *Panorama of the City of New York*, Queens Museum of Art.
Photo courtesy of Sharon Pajka

and pictures alternating, and this new idea seemed like a logical, if difficult, next step.

Once I had this idea I had to figure out WHY I would be telling one story just with pictures. In *Hugo* the story is about the cinema so telling the story “like a movie” made sense (and of course I had no idea at the time that an actual movie of *Hugo* would ever be made, but that’s another story!). But what would make sense for this new book?

I then remembered a documentary I saw on PBS called *Through Deaf Eyes* and remembered a quote from a Deaf educator who said that the Deaf are the “people of the eye.” I took this to mean that when you can’t hear, what you see becomes even more important, and sign language is a language that you look at to understand, so suddenly I thought it might be interesting to tell the story of a Deaf person just with pictures so we experience her story in a way that reflects how she might experience her own life. That’s when my research into the Deaf community began.

The other story, the one in text, is about a boy who becomes completely deaf at age twelve. He begins his life deaf in one ear but identifies as hearing. The text in his story is sometimes reflected in the pictures in the other story, and vice versa until the two stories eventually come together at the end. Much of the story is about the difficulty of communication and finding one’s place in the world and one’s community, so the use of different ways of communicating to tell the stories seemed to make sense.

SP: Several of the illustrations include signs of the ASL alphabet. You mentioned in your Acknowledgments that you learned this when you were younger. Since your work on *Wonderstruck*, have you learned more American Sign Language?

BS: I first learned the sign language alphabet from Remy Charlip’s book *Handtalk*, which I loved as a kid. I memorized the letters and thought of it as a kind of secret language. When I was on tour for *Wonderstruck*

most of my presentations had sign interpreters and I asked each of them to teach me a few words. By the end of the tour I was able to sign a rudimentary welcome to the Deaf audience members in the room. Since the tour ended I’ve been practicing very hard to learn sign. I’m teaching myself right now, mostly by looking at websites like Signing Savvy and watching people sign to pop songs on YouTube, which is oddly helpful. My favorite is: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmKnQjBf8wM>



Selnick hosting a presentation and discussion about Wonderstruck at the San Diego Museum of Natural History.
Photo courtesy of Sharon Pajka

Everything by this guy, Stephen Torrence, is amazing. I know that a lot of times the signers of songs on YouTube are using Signed Exact English, but I think I’ve heard this guy does a good job, plus even SEE is helpful for a beginning to learn vocabulary, which is basically what I’m building right now.

I don’t have any idea yet about ASL grammar. Once I have more of a vocabulary I’ll look into actually hiring a teacher, although that’s hard because I travel a lot. My cousin teaches Deaf kids so she’s

been helping me and I’ve become friends with some Deaf folks I met on tour and I’ve signed with them which is most helpful. Also, my boyfriend teaches with Carol Padden and Tom Humphries at UCSD. They are two of the leading Deaf scholars in the country and we are friends with them (they also helped a huge amount with *Wonderstruck*), but I haven’t seen them since I started to learn sign. It’ll be very fun to sign with them though when we get together in the new year.

One thing I really have to practice though is finger-spelling. Because even though I’ve known the alphabet my whole life practically I find it really difficult to spell fluidly and quickly. And my receptive skills are terrible! It’s much easier for me to sign myself than to understand what someone is signing to me!

SP: Would you discuss a bit of your process. Did you create Rose’s story first and then Ben’s story, or did the

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stories grow simultaneously? Did you sketch out the story or did your art and story flow organically?

BS: Once I knew I was going to have two stories, one in words and one in pictures, I began by writing BOTH stories in outline, present tense. I built the plots for both stories together and once I had the basic arc of the stories I then translated the story meant in pictures INTO pictures.

The plot of each story changed a lot depending on what was happening in the other story. For instance, in the boy's story, which is all text, he's in a lightning storm. I really wanted to draw lightning, but there were no drawings in his story. So I thought, maybe I can just put some lighting in the girl's story. But why would there be lightning in her story? I decided to have the lighting appear on a movie screen in her story. But why would she go to the movie theater? I then invented a silent movie star named Lillian Mayhew for the girl to be obsessed with, and suddenly THAT became the central thing in the girl's story. And it all happened because I wanted to draw lightning.

SP: Do you have any plans for a follow-up?

BS: There won't be a direct follow up or sequel to *Wonderstruck*, but I'm working on my next book which will also use words and pictures in some experimental way that I haven't quite settled on yet. Each of my books are designed to stand on their own so I usually don't think about sequels.

SP: What do you hope that readers will learn or take away from the book?

BS: My goals are always very basic when I'm making a book. I want readers to like the story and care about the characters. I hope people get caught up in the emotional lives of the characters. I always write about things that are interesting and important to me (in *Hugo* it was the cinema, machines and Paris, in *Wonderstruck* it was museums, Deaf culture and New York), so if readers are intrigued by these subjects and want to follow up on their own afterwards to learn more, that would make me very happy!

SP: What advice would you give to young people who are reading your books for the first time?

BS: I once heard the author M.T. Anderson say that books teach you how to read them. I thought this was a really interesting thing. Once you have a book in your hands, you are holding an entire universe, and you are the only person who can bring it to life. If you don't open the cover the book will just sit there. But once you open the cover and start turning the pages, well, you could end up anywhere in the world, with all sorts of interesting, strange, dangerous, loving characters.

Hugo and *Wonderstruck* are BIG books, over 500 pages long, but of course much of the books are pictures.



Selznick and Pajka at Gallaudet University during the summer.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Pajka

Once you start turning the pages, the book will tell you what to do next. It'll ask you to think in a new way, to go places you otherwise wouldn't go, to try to make connections you otherwise wouldn't make.

I try to leave space in my books for the

reader to interpret the story. I don't want to tell every single thing to the reader. I want the reader to have to work a little! But "work" in a good way hopefully, not in a way that feels like work. I want people to understand that you have to read pictures the same way you read words. Each reader will interpret them slightly differently, and that's exciting. And I've built in all sorts of connections to the plot of each book, little clues and hints that reveal themselves if you read closely. So don't be afraid of diving in and discovering what's there waiting for you.

Editor's note: Pajka's blog is a listing of books for children and adolescents with deaf characters, website links, author interviews, book reviews, and more. pajka.blogspot.com



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Peralta to our 2010-11 level, when we were funded for serving 19,512 FTES. Nonetheless, thanks to Proposition 30, we will now be able to provide classes to more of our community's students." 🙌🙌