The Second Half of the Story


This book is the second in a series of two, but not necessarily unrelated, edited volumes. The other book published in 2005 was *Advances in the Sign Language Development of Deaf Children* (Marschark & Spencer), and it may be seen as complementary to the volume reviewed here. Indeed, both can be seen as following the contributions of the *Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies, Language and Education* (Marschark & Spencer, 2003).

*Advances in the Spoken Language Development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children* attempts to tell a big story. It encompasses the history, progress, and current research in the field and the methods and approaches that utilize or promote the use of spoken language with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This, as the authors acknowledge, is a challenging task given the scope and depth of the field. It is also a moving target, particularly given the pace of current research and technological development. It is of note that almost every chapter has some mention of cochlear implants.

The fact that there are two books separately addressing in their titles the spoken and the sign language development of deaf children is indicative of the fields of research and practice that continue to focus and report on one dimension or the other. Few studies or books attempt to address the spoken and the sign language development of deaf children in a composite manner that reflects the essential linkages among cognitive development, communication development, and the functional uses of languages. This makes the task of the authors more difficult, as they acknowledge.

The chapters in the book broadly reflect the fields of research and practice and, in a Western context at least, describe the traditions, foundations, and research findings to date. Chapter authors come from several countries with varying traditions in the field. The review of research is a strong feature of the book, and it never descends into the context of belief not supported by forms of research evidence. Where evidence is lacking, this is recognized. Chapters are well chosen and reflect the authors’ intentions in designing the text. In addition to coverage of the foundations of communication development, speech development, early identification of hearing loss, audiology, and speech perception, there are chapters examining family-centered practices and reviews of alternative technologies and developments in amplification.

It represents an extremely effective and up-to-date compilation of research and practice in the field and can be considered as an excellent resource for those interested in current research, further research, or the development or review of programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Although the book may not please every reader as it attempts to scope this extremely broad field, it presents a highly positive perspective for most readers and makes a valuable contribution to further research and development. It is highly recommended.

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