

3. Speechreading: a window into modality issues in language and deafness

Speechreading is one means whereby deaf people can access the spoken language of the community they inhabit. Most deaf people who use a signed language are also excellent speechreaders, often outperforming their hearing peers. This presentation will (a) provide evidence for this assertion in adults, (b) indicate some of the factors related to speechreading skill in deaf and hearing children and (c) clarify the brain regions that are specifically involved in speechreading skill in deaf people. It will also consider how the deaf speech/sign bilingual brain may process speech patterns in and out of sign language, thus casting light on a topic that cannot be addressed in explorations of a spoken language. This is the extent to which the cortical bases for language processing reflect the processing of articulatory gestures (manual and/or oral).