

mentor's introduction

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Paula Eubanks Smith has chosen to examine critical issues related to the "use of art as an alternative avenue for learning for the hearing-impaired." She speaks from her heart as the mother of two hearing-impaired sons as well as her experience as an artist and educator. Her experience in these roles informs the direction of this research as she identifies the importance of curricula that is directly related to goals of self-expression, creativity, and communication skills.

Paula examines the developmental processes of spoken language development and visual language in reference to the attainment of complex systems of symbols that serve as codes for the representation of meaning. She examines these issues through the lens of the OPTION school program by means of teacher surveys and interviews. She draws a provocative picture of the status of art experiences and their use in the education of this special group of learners. I am certain that her findings will provide a clearer picture of the possible connections related to the attainment of verbal and visual communication skills for these students.