

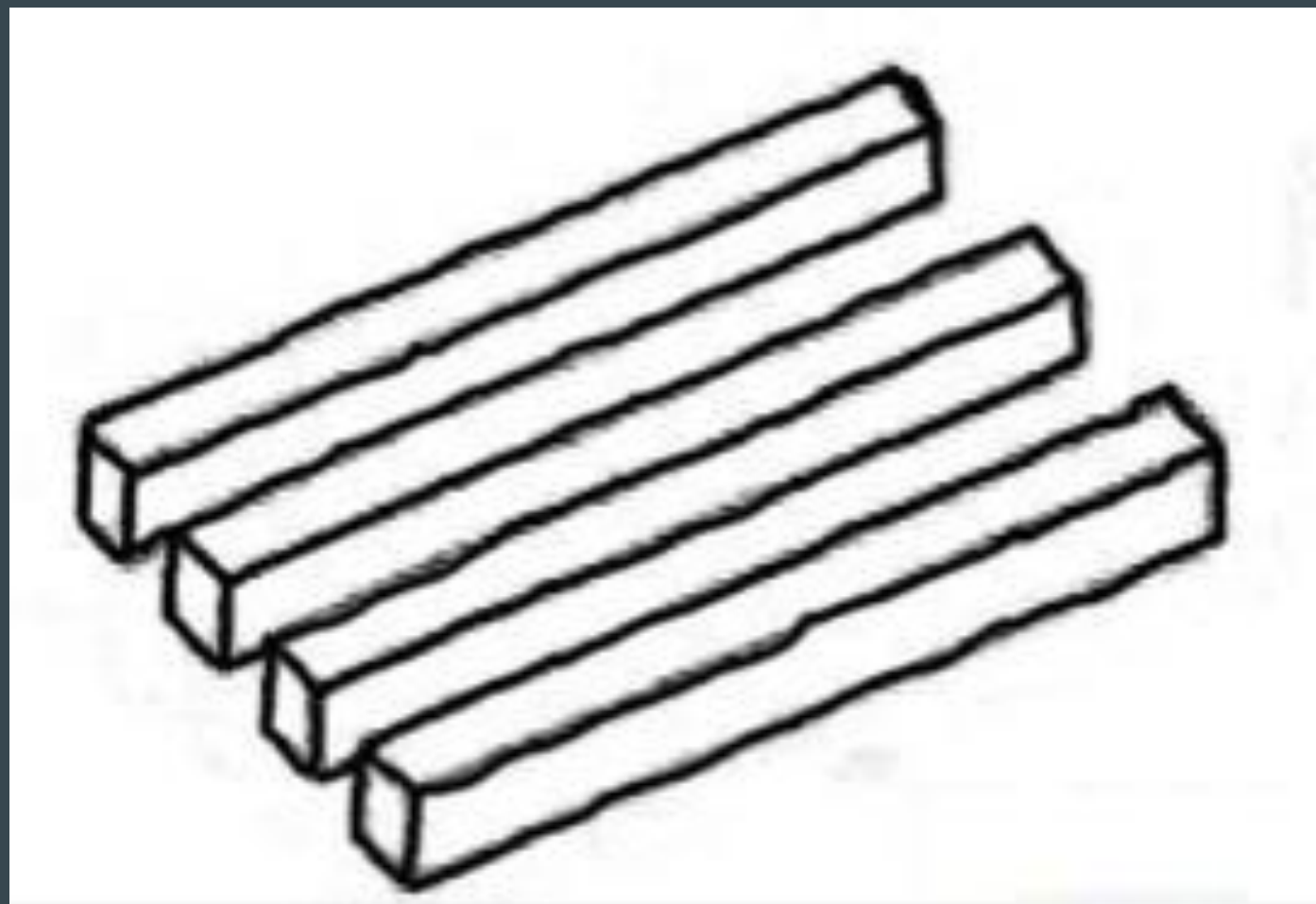
# A “Radical” Trend for Change in Deaf Education: The Art of Being an Expert



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I am The Radical Middle: Unity not Uniformity in Deaf Education

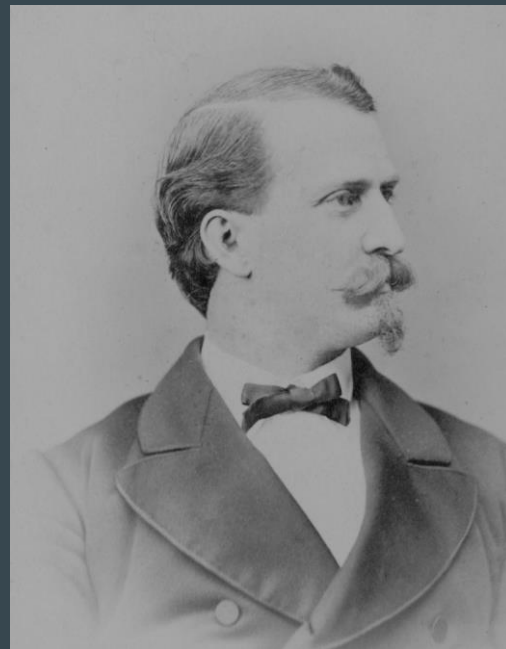
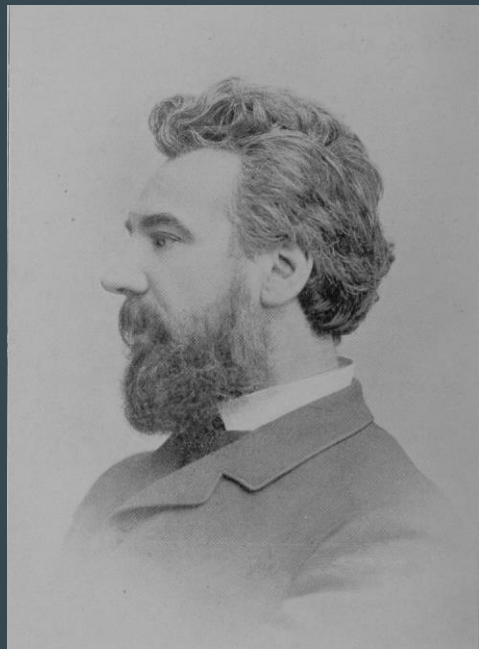


Unifying the field is not a novel concept in  
deaf education.

That Time When We Missed The Opportunity  
to Unify: A Lesson From History

# Flint Michigan, 1895

## AG Bell and Edward Miner Gallaudet



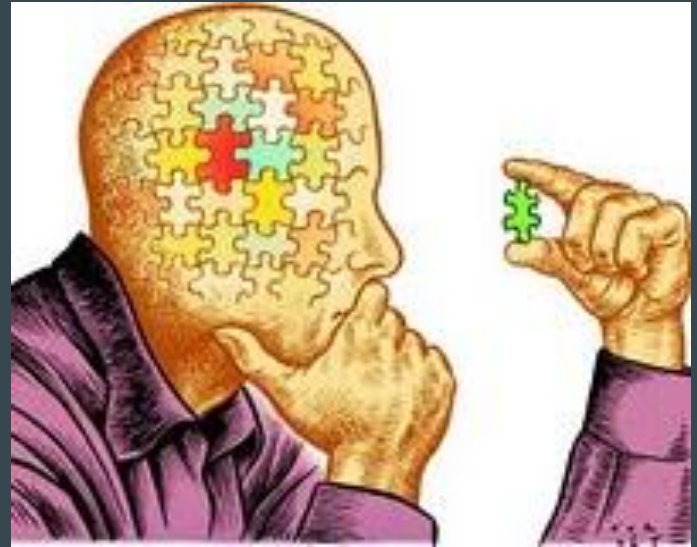
# How the “Communication Wars” Influence us as Professionals

# Take a Moment to Reflect

How have the “communication wars” affected you/shaped you as a professional?

How do they shape the way we interact with parents?

How to they shape our decision making for our students?



# My Story A Difficult and Uncomfortable Journey Towards Unity



# Changing to a Discipline of Respect

Those who conceptualize communication and education differently are not my adversaries. They are practitioners with a select area of specialization within the same field.



We are two pieces of  
the same puzzle.



# By Continuing This Debate, We Fail Our Children

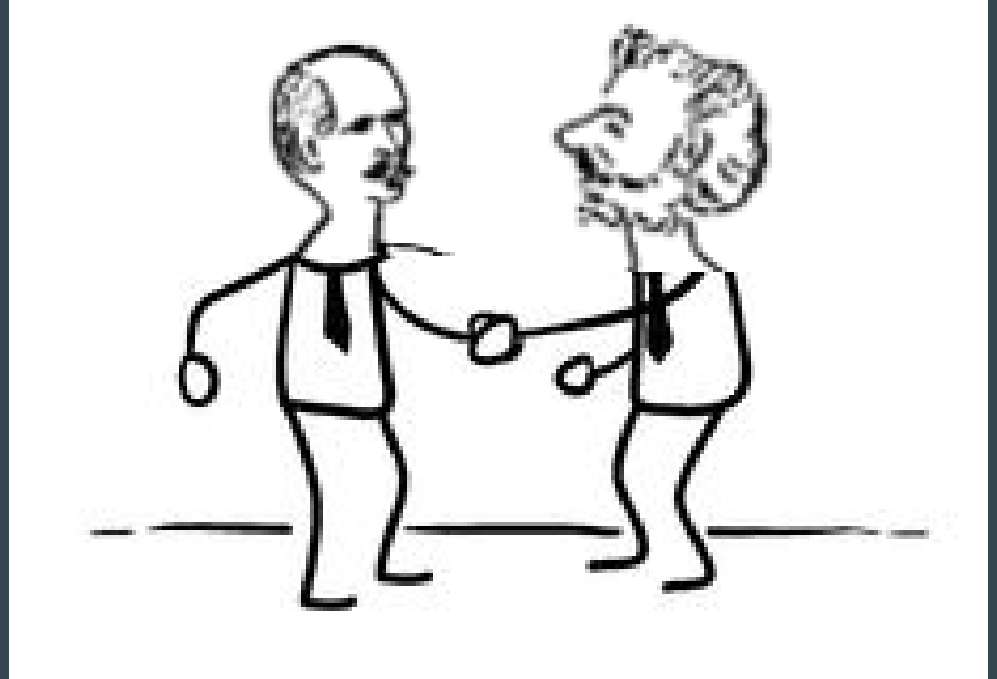
“We’ve been arguing about this question for hundreds of years now, and we’re at the point in the argument, I’m afraid to say, where evidence isn’t changing people’s minds at all.” - Malcolm Gladwell

The issue is too complex to be seen as a “fight” between right and wrong.



# Imagine ...

Had Bell and  
Gallaudet made a  
decision to unify on  
that day in Flint, MI,  
how would our field  
be different today?



# Building a Professional Community of Common-Unity

# Heather Artinian: “The Heather World”

“What world do you belong to?”

“You should build bridges between the worlds of your own lives”



(captioned video 0:35)

# Unity in Diversity: Planting a Seed of Understanding

When you want others to see/understand your point of view.  
Meet the person where they are and accept them where they are. That is where you start.



# Changing the Narrative

“One need not be a proponent of any one system to understand that no system is best for all children” (Winefield, 1987).

“I did not try to change his mind, I just listened to him” - Celeste Headlee



Building Bridges: Parents -- Stronger than AG  
Bell and Gallaudet

# What the Research Tells Us

“... it is true that for many professionals, parents, and DHH adults, their philosophical stance, rather than characteristics on an individual child, drive decisions” (Lederberg, Schick, & Spencer, 2013, p.16)

“Parents frequently complain that the professionals they first encountered were biased towards a particular communication method or did not fully explain all the communication options available” (Hajek & Slaughter, 2014).





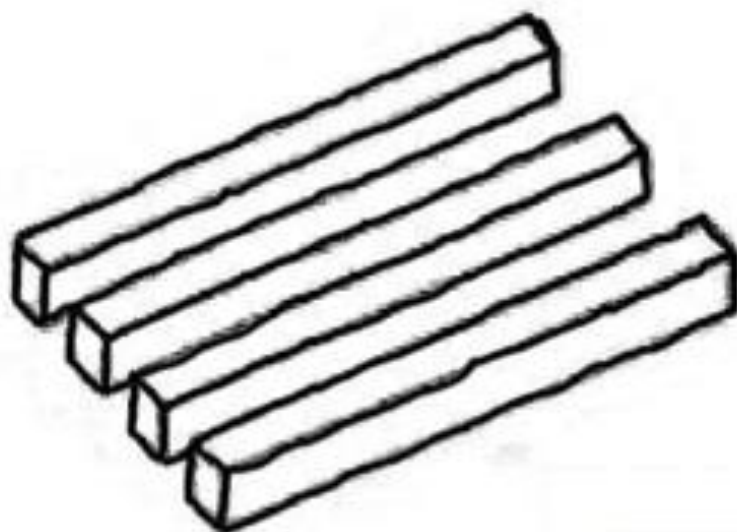
Moving Forward: It starts with fostering trust.

“I’ve been attacked and ridiculed for my choices with my son and I am on the defence with people I don’t know”

---Parent of a Deaf Child



Four



No  
Three



Building trust is HARD. To build trust, we  
must listen.

# There is Room for More Than One Truth

Very little in life is “black and white”

Your experience can be completely opposite of someone else’s experience and you can both be “100% right”

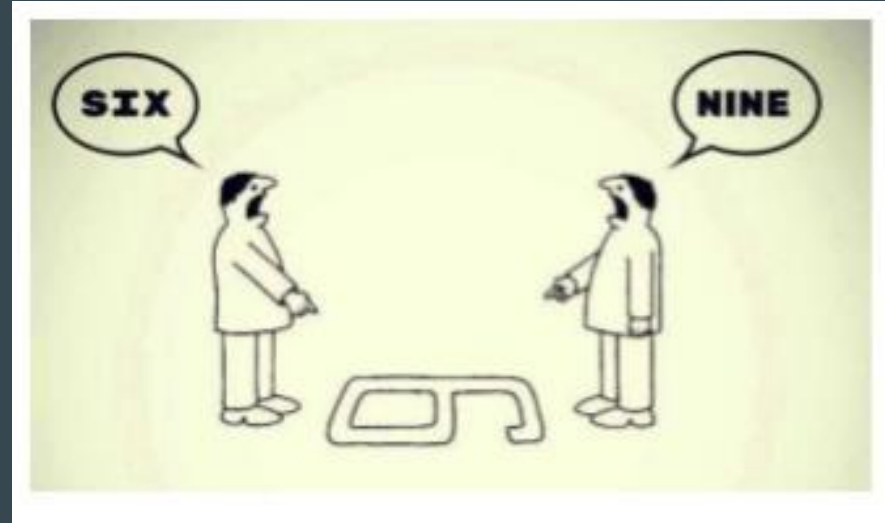
If you pose your experience as the only right experience, then you are “100% wrong”





# It is ok to be “wrong”

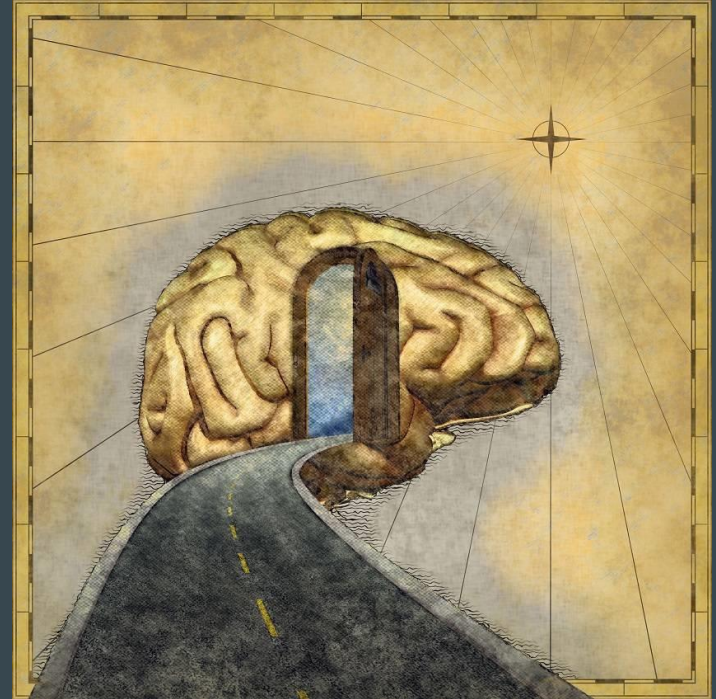
When we speak definitively, we put our credibility on the table, and when you are “challenged” by an opposing statement or view, the natural reaction is to react in some way.



(Oluo, 2016)

# Do You Want to Be Right or Better?

When you set out to be better, you see challenges to your “rightness” as opportunities to learn and engage people with an open mind.



(Oluo, 2016)



# Building Bridges: A Radical Approach



# Be Radical! :)

Today, I challenge each and every one of you to be a little more “Radical” than you were when you came into this room this morning..



## How to be “Radical”\*

- Open an honest and judgment free dialogue with someone who is your professional/philosophical counterpart.
- Make an honest attempt to recognize your own personal biases and how those biases may impact your interactions with parents, students, and other professionals.
- Avoid making definitive statements. Remember, it is possible for there to be more than one truth.
- View the field from different perspectives and experiences without compromising your knowledge base or belief system.
- Make a pact to work together for the sake of the students.

\*Being “Radical” is **not** easy! This is a hard place to be in our field and you will need to challenge yourself to think in this way. Visit [www.radicalmiddledhh.org](http://www.radicalmiddledhh.org) for more information.

Extend a hand, build a bridge.

**MISSION:**  
**POSSIBLE**

Your mission (should you chose to accept it ) 🤔

1. Find at least one person in this room who has a different approach/perspective/area of expertise than your own.
2. Create a visual representation that identifies at least three ways to bring positive change to the field of deaf education through philosophical partnership.

© The Radical Middle: Unity not Uniformity in  
Deaf Education





# Learning Objectives- Presentation

1. Participants will reflect on their own philosophical beliefs with regards to language and education of children who are deaf and hard of hearing and how philosophical leanings impact their interactions with parents, students, and other professionals.
2. Participants will learn ways to collaborate and connect with professionals and members of the D/deaf community with different philosophical leanings with regards to language and education of children who are deaf and hard of hearing in proactive ways.
3. Participants will learn about organizations for parents, professionals, and the D/deaf community that support and encourage philosophical bridging.

# Learning Objectives- Break Out

1. Participants will discuss, in small groups, the challenges faced in deaf education with regards to language and education. During these discussions, participants will apply concepts and ideas from the keynote presentation, “Finding the Middle: A Move towards Unity and Partnership in Deaf Education”.
2. Participants will create a visual representation of their learning and discussion that identifies at least three ways to bring positive change to the field of deaf education through philosophical partnership.