In this book, the author describes a personal journey from deaf child, to student, to academic and provides an analysis of the narratives of participants in a study of Deaf people who had similarly been placed by past policies “alone” in public school systems in the United States. She uses the term “solitaires” to describe such students.

In addition describing the formative experiences of her life and her development as a Deaf person, the book engages in debate about the relative meanings of inclusion. As such it is a valuable, if more personal, perspective on this ongoing debate. So often policies and discourses about inclusion focus on the features of “minority groups” and neglect the fact that inclusion is also a very personal issue. Inclusion as it is perceived by one person may, in similar circumstances, not be perceived as so by another from the same “group.” So often in research we examine the policy-to-practice transition by analyzing the views and experiences of teachers, the academic outcomes of students, and the perspectives of parents. But, who asked the students? If it does not work for them, it does not work. Well this book attempts to engage this critical last dimension.

The author describes her school experiences, her “best” and “worst” teachers, and the viewpoints of a range of participants in a study that she reports. She is honest in detailing the limitations of her study methods and of its related conclusions, but nonetheless, she presents some valuable perspectives that could well be incorporated into subsequent qualitative and quantitative studies.

Although the book is not a particularly penetrating theoretical analysis of inclusion (its focus is more on integration and mainstreaming and systems’ models of school placement), its main contribution is that it links with current evidence and debate about the social and cultural impact of declining numbers of deaf people, fewer hearing children of Deaf parents, and ever higher rates of cochlear implantation (between 80% and 90% in many countries) and of general class placement of deaf students (between 65% and 85% in studies by this reviewer). It highlights for parents, educators, and Deaf people important personal perspectives and the satisfaction that can be embodied in developing and living a “Deaf life,” while being effectively engaged in a largely hearing world.

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