

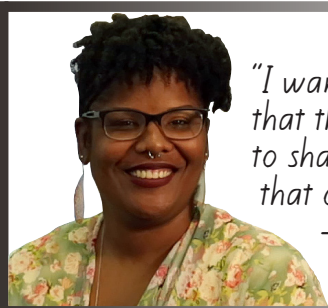
This section looks towards the future and discusses how the Black Deaf community would like to see Black ASL understood and treated.



KEY CONCEPTS

Embracing Black ASL

As has been mentioned multiple times in the film, Black ASL has historically been characterized as “less than” White ASL. Newer narratives, however, have begun to characterize Black ASL as “hip” or “cool,” a cultural object of value. While it is heartening to see that positive perceptions of Black ASL are emerging, it is important to embrace Black ASL for more than just its “coolness.” More education and greater public awareness regarding Black ASL will allow people to understand it better and embrace it as a valuable, systematic, legitimate, culturally and historically grounded language variety.



“I want people to recognize this, that this is what we live for ... to share our story and to show that our experience is valid.”
-Felicia Williams, educator

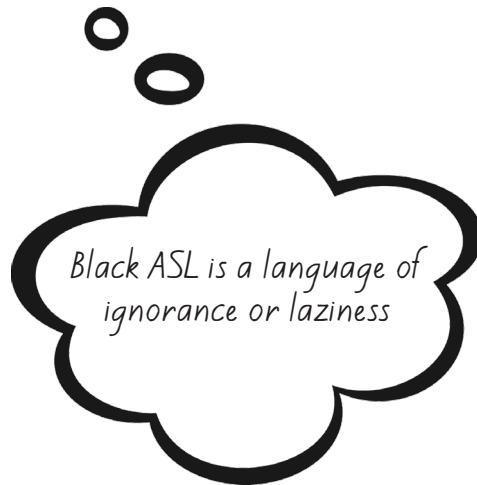
“It’s soul; it’s unity; there’s history; there’s culture. All of that is encapsulated into this thing we call ‘Black ASL’....when you understand Black ASL, you see us.”

-Shentara Cobb, student

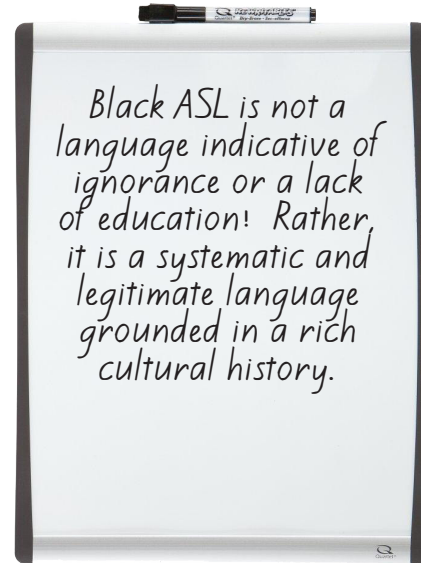


COMMON MISCONCEPTION

people may think

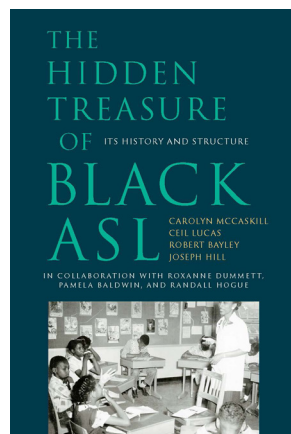


the truth is



LINGUISTIC CONSENSUS: Black ASL should be understood not as something that is "less than" White ASL but as something that has a rich history and culture--something that is valued.

FUN STUFF



Seminal research on Black ASL was shared with the public in 2011 in a book called *The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL*. The authors of this book were involved in the production of *Signing Black in America*. The book can be found [here](#) or [here](#)!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-VIEWING

1. One of the overarching themes of the film is that language is intrinsically related to both culture and identity. How, or why, do you think that is? Try to think of some examples with your own language, culture, and identity.
2. If you regularly use more than one language or dialect, do you think that the way you act shifts, depending on the language you are using at the time?

ACTIVE VIEWING

1. What are some of the reasons provided that explain the importance of Black ASL to the Black Deaf community?

POST-VIEWING

1. Has your initial impression or opinion of Black ASL changed since watching the film? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think it is important to learn about the history and structure of different language varieties?

Additional Resources

For more information about Deaf culture and ASL, [SignDuo](#) on YouTube (Ryan, who is Deaf, and Ellen, who is hearing) posts videos pertaining to Deaf/hearing relationships, learning ASL, and much more.

Rikki Poynter is a Deaf YouTuber who makes content about d/Deaf awareness, accessibility, closed captioning, etc. Watch her videos [here](#).

Nyle DiMarco, a Deaf model, actor, and activist, has a YouTube channel, which can be found [here](#). (Nyle DiMarco was also a contestant on *Dancing with the Stars*. One of his performances can be seen [here](#). Watch until at least the 1:09 mark for a glimpse into how DiMarco might experience the performances.)

Jessica Kellgren-Fozard is a Deaf YouTuber who makes videos about deafness, disability, LGBTQ+ awareness, and vintage fashion. Her videos can be found [here](#). (Note that Jessica uses British Sign Language, not American Sign Language.)

Switched at Birth, a show that aired on Freeform from 2011-2017, revolves around two teenage girls who were accidentally switched at birth. One of the girls, Daphne, is Deaf. The show involves many Deaf actors and brings awareness to Deaf culture. Find out more [here](#).

Marlee Matlin, a Deaf actress (who also appeared in *Switched at Birth*), discusses cochlear implants, ASL, and Deaf culture in a video that can be found [here](#).