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Commentary on Sim-Com and Anti-Intellectualism

Research over the last couple of decades has proven that sim-com is an ineffective mode of communication. This is now an undisputed fact, and just to emphasize this fact, we only have to keep in mind that even Jane Fernandes herself wrote in a recent article that sim-com is inefficient and undesirable for educational purposes, because students who are subjected to sim-com miss out on what is being communicated.

We are now in the Twenty-First Century – the Third Millennium of this common era of human history(!) – and there is simply no longer any excuse for promoting sim-com. As a personal method of communication, it is extremely problematic and is only useful in tricky and occasional circumstances where there is no other alternative. As an educational method it belongs in the dust bin of history, along with the pure-oral method which, after centuries of being promoted, was abandoned by the Alexander Graham Bell Association in December 2006 [when they switched](#) to promoting Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT), which was originally designed for hard-of-hearing people, not deaf people. In effect, the "Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf" has now actually become the Alexander Graham Bell Association *for the Hard of Hearing*.

This being the case, with research showing the ineffectiveness of sim-com – with AGBell itself changing their mission and leaving Deaf education to the Deaf – with the person whose flawed educational philosophy caused the entire Deaf community rise up in protest in 2006 now conceding that sim-com is an ineffective mode of communication for instruction – with all these factors present, and at this late date in human history, it would simply be unthinkable, inexcusable, anti-intellectual and incomprehensible for the Board of Trustees to choose another Gallaudet president who promotes sim-com.

A jaw in motion does not represent intelligence. It is only a jaw, nothing more and nothing less. Intelligence resides in the mind, and is expressed via whatever natural language it is communicated. There is nothing rational

or reasonable about attempting to direct sound to people who cannot hear those sounds. To attempt such is to participate in a charade, and represents not just a plain level of anti-intellectualism, but actually represents *a cataclysmic level of anti-intellectualism* that runs counter at its core to the mission and purpose of a university.

So called "eclecticism" in communication of this type is not a virtue, it is a vice. It is an admission that something has gone wrong and things are not in a copasetic state. On May 1, 2006, Gallaudet entered a period of emergency, and in emergencies priorities must be made and all efforts have to be put toward the top priorities at hand. This being the case, no one has complained when a prominent representative of our alma mater used sim-com in a public fashion. However, we have now successfully survived the emergency state and there simply is no longer any rational reason or any excuse for the promotion of sim-com. The lid to the metaphorical historical dust bin has now closed, and it must remain closed – forever.

There's no turning back. It's time to move forward and promote ASL and *natural* visual communication – and most importantly, it's time to hire people who understand and support this philosophy. Starting on January 1, 2010, the idea of having a president of Gallaudet who routinely promotes sim-com, is unthinkable, and such a misguided idea should be regarded as being a contradiction in terms.