

Communication: current ideas and new research

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What are we thinking about today?

- What are the most recent developments to influence communication practice for learners with deafblindness?
 - How do children with deafblindness communicate?
 - How we describe tactile sign language?
 - What are the barriers to developing tactile sign language?
 - What are the recent developments in the emerge of, and transition to tactile sign language?
- How can we keep up to date with emerging research?

How to go about this?

- Drew on my working practice with learners with deafblindness
- Drew on research undertaken when writing about tactile sign language including:
 - Deuce, G. & Rose, S. (in press) 'Sign Acquisition in children who are deafblind'. In Grove, N. & Launonen, K. (Eds.) 'Manual Sign Acquisition in children with Developmental Disabilities'. Nova Publishers: USA.
 - Rose, S. M. (2018). *Thinking about tactile sign languages*. Retrieved October 24, 2018, from RNIB - See differently website.
- Asked what inspires other leaders in the field? sought recommendations about research which had been most influential on their practice in the last few years

(Deuce & Rose, in press; Rose, 2018)

So what does this tell us?

- How do children with deafblindness communicate?
- How we describe tactile sign language?
- What are the barriers to developing tactile sign language?
- What are the recent developments in the emerge of, and transition to tactile sign language?

How do children with deafblindness communicate?

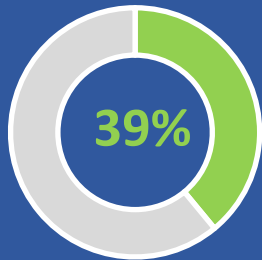
Alternative and Augmentative Communication

1. People who need an alternative language
2. People who need support with expression
3. People who need linguistic support

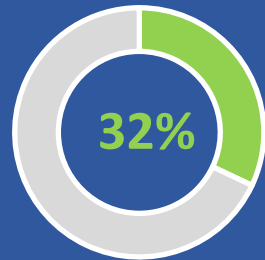
(von Tetzener and Martinsen, 2002 cited in Costain Schou et al, 2018)

How do children with deafblindness communicate?

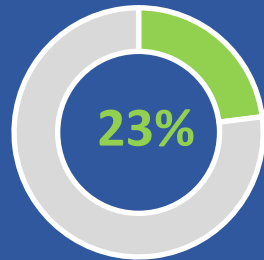
Visual sign language



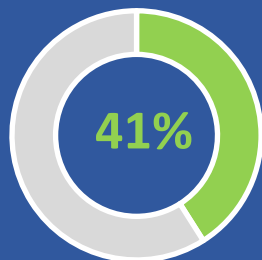
Oral language



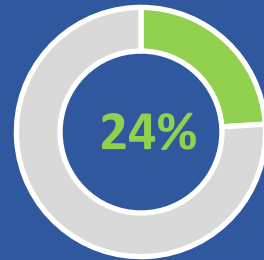
Tactile language



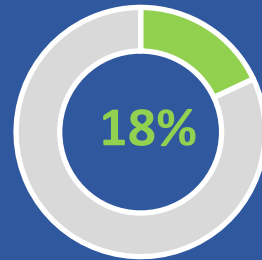
Pre-verbal com



Alternative systems



Self made signs



“As technology evolves and software develops, the opportunities to use Assistive Technology with children and young people with complex learning needs, including those with multi-sensory impairments increase”





“It is still a learning process for all of us, but it’s an exciting one!”

(Dammeyer & Ask Larsen, 2016)

Children use more than one mode of communication

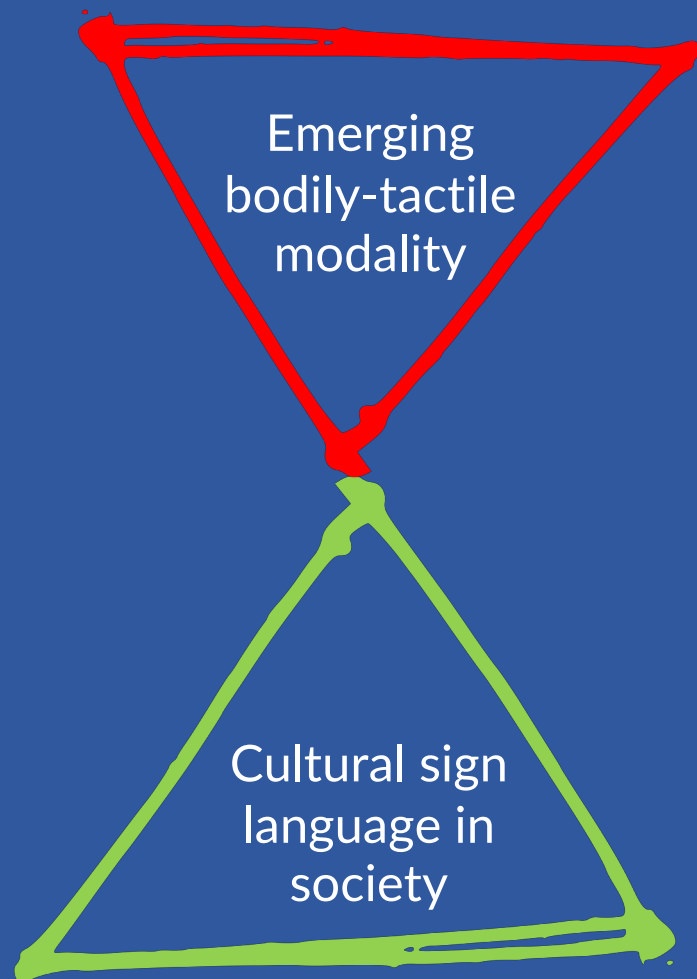
Reinforces the importance of an inclusive communication approach.

How we describe tactile sign language

Four-handed communication Monologue-Dialogue positions	Hand-under-hand Hand-over-hand Talking-Listening hands	One or Two handed reception	ProTactile (ASL)
(Mesch, 1998; Rannes, 2006 cited in Lindström, 2019, (Cecchetto, Geraci, Cecchetto, & Zucchi, 2018))	(Miles, 2003; Nafstad & Rødbroe, 2013 cited in Lindström, 2019)	(Napier, McKee & Goswell, 2010 cited in Willoughby, Manns, Shimako, & Bartlett, 2014)	(granda & Nuccio, 2018)
			

In the UK, the NatSIP discussion paper suggests that we adopt the term '*tactile sign language*' (NatSIP, 2015)

How we describe tactile sign language

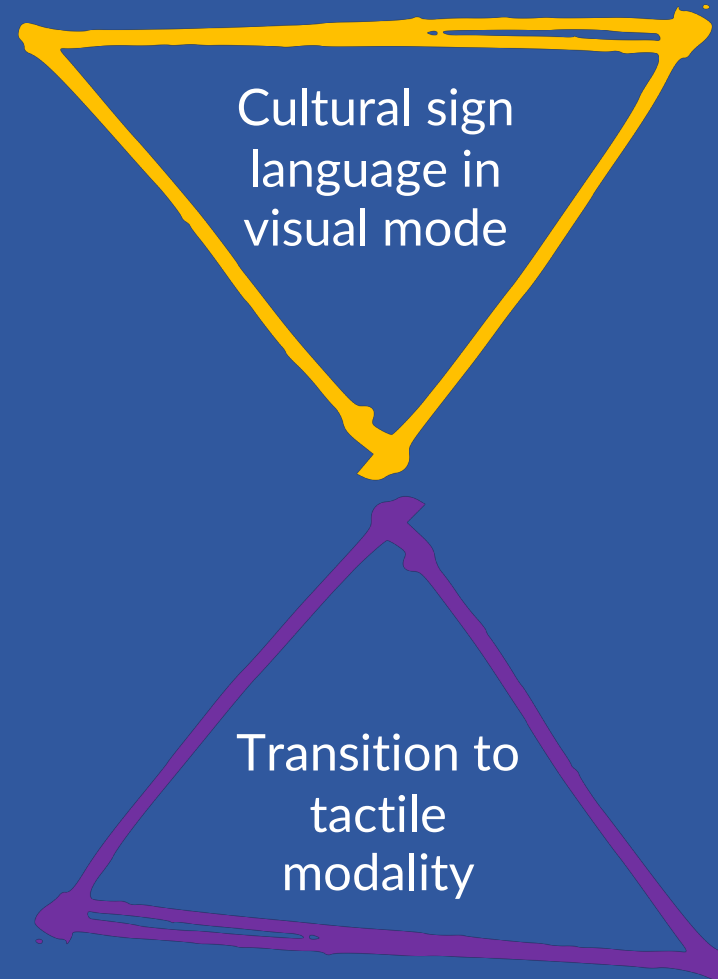


(Forsgren, et al, 2018)

L1

vs

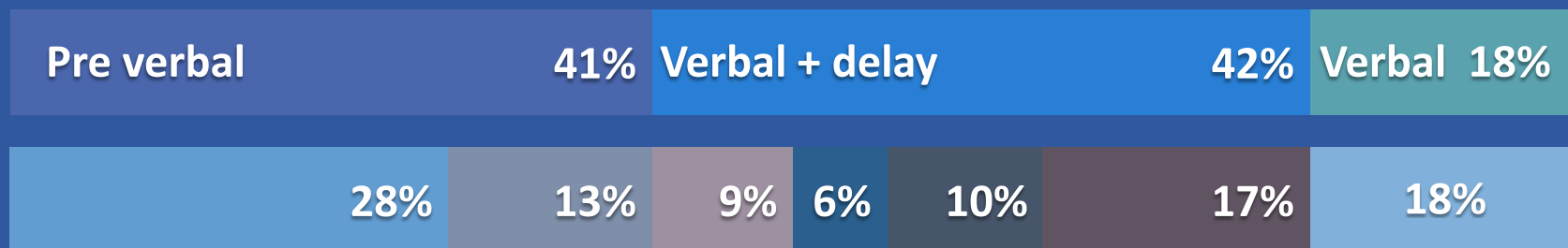
L2



(Checchetto et al., 2018; Willoughby et al., 2014)

What are the barriers to developing tactile sign language?

Levels of language development – establishing communicative competence



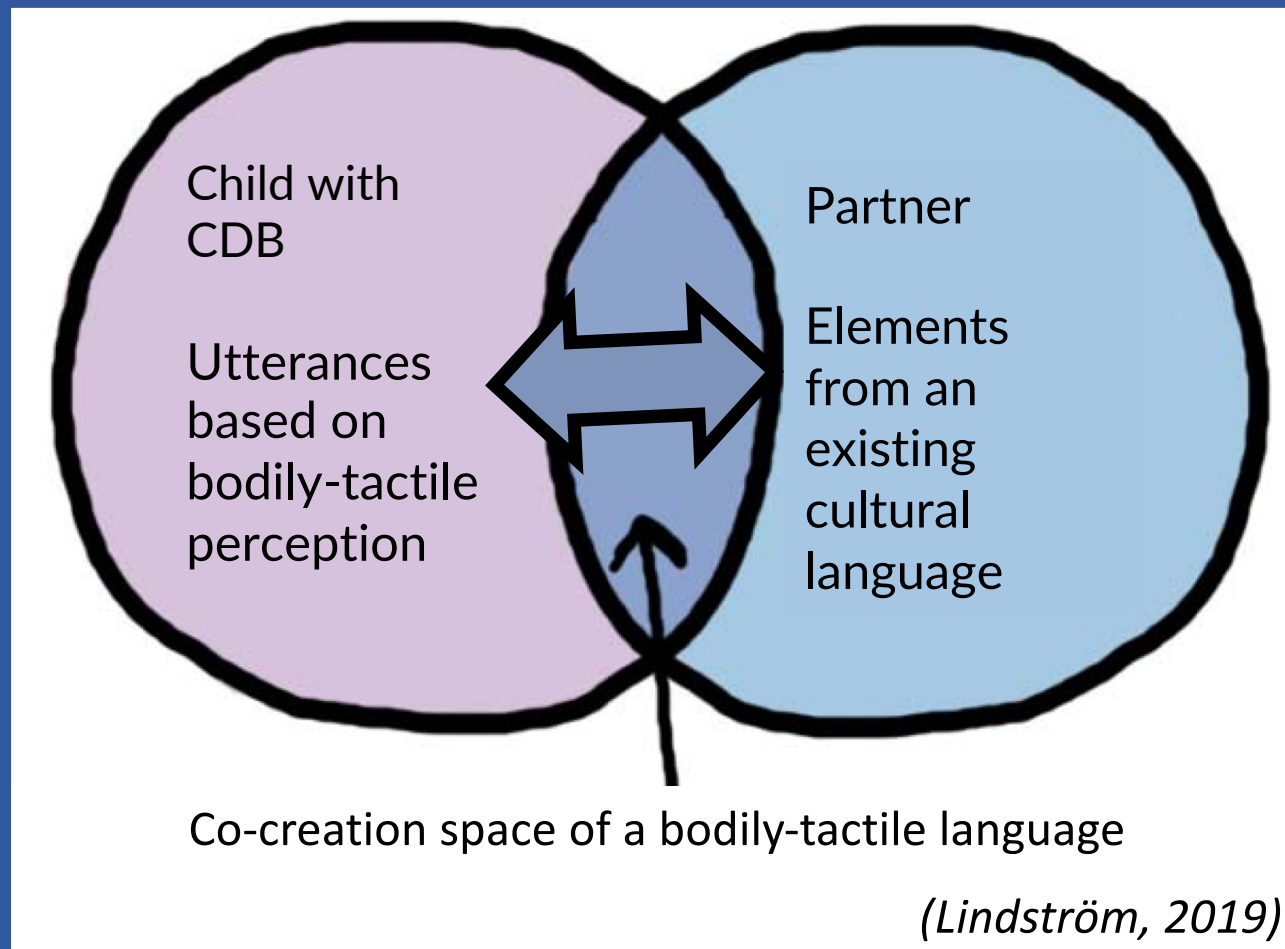
Level of language development:

- | 20 (28%) communicated using preverbal/ symbolic social interaction
- | 9 (13%) using gestures
- | 6 (9%) by using single words/signs
- | 4 (6%) using two words/ sign combinations
- | 7 (10%) by three or more words/ sign combinations
- | 12 (17%) by conventional sentences
- | 13 (18%) used language without any delay in relation to their age

(Dammeyer & Ask Larsen, 2016)

What are the barriers to developing tactile sign language?

The mismatch between tactile and auditory/ visual perspectives



What are the barriers to developing tactile sign language?

Language deprivation

“Larsen demonstrated that this lack of symbolic communication and language was not related to the seriousness or degree of sensory or intellectual disability, but rather to a “lack of access to language” (2016 c. in Janssen, 2018)

*“Despite the barriers of acquiring language in tactile modality, children with congenital deafblindness still need to be supported in progressing as far as possible in acquiring language in a modality that they are able to perceive.”
(Dammeyer, et al., 2015)*

What are the recent developments in the emerge of, and transition to tactile sign language?

What makes it a sign?



Constructions [signs] mapped in this analysis have all the linguistic elements of a sign:

Handshape Movement Location

(Forsgren et al., 2018)

What are the recent developments in the emerge of, and transition to tactile sign language?

The linguistic elements of bodily tactile modality

- **Tactile Phonology:** Speed, acceleration, position relative to other body parts, muscle tension and pressure.
- **Tactile Morphology:** Semantic categories for manner/ degree, time, duration, frequency, purpose, place/ position/ direction.
- **Tactile Syntax:** placement on the body and position in relation to the body may be used to represent grammatical relations.
- **Tactile sign language 'space' of communication**
partners remain in tactile contact. Use of kinaesthesia, balance, temperature and other senses role in the tactile space.

(Dammeyer et al. 2015, Lindström, 2019)

What are the recent developments in the emerge of, and transition to tactile sign language?

Emerging language in the bodily-tactile mode



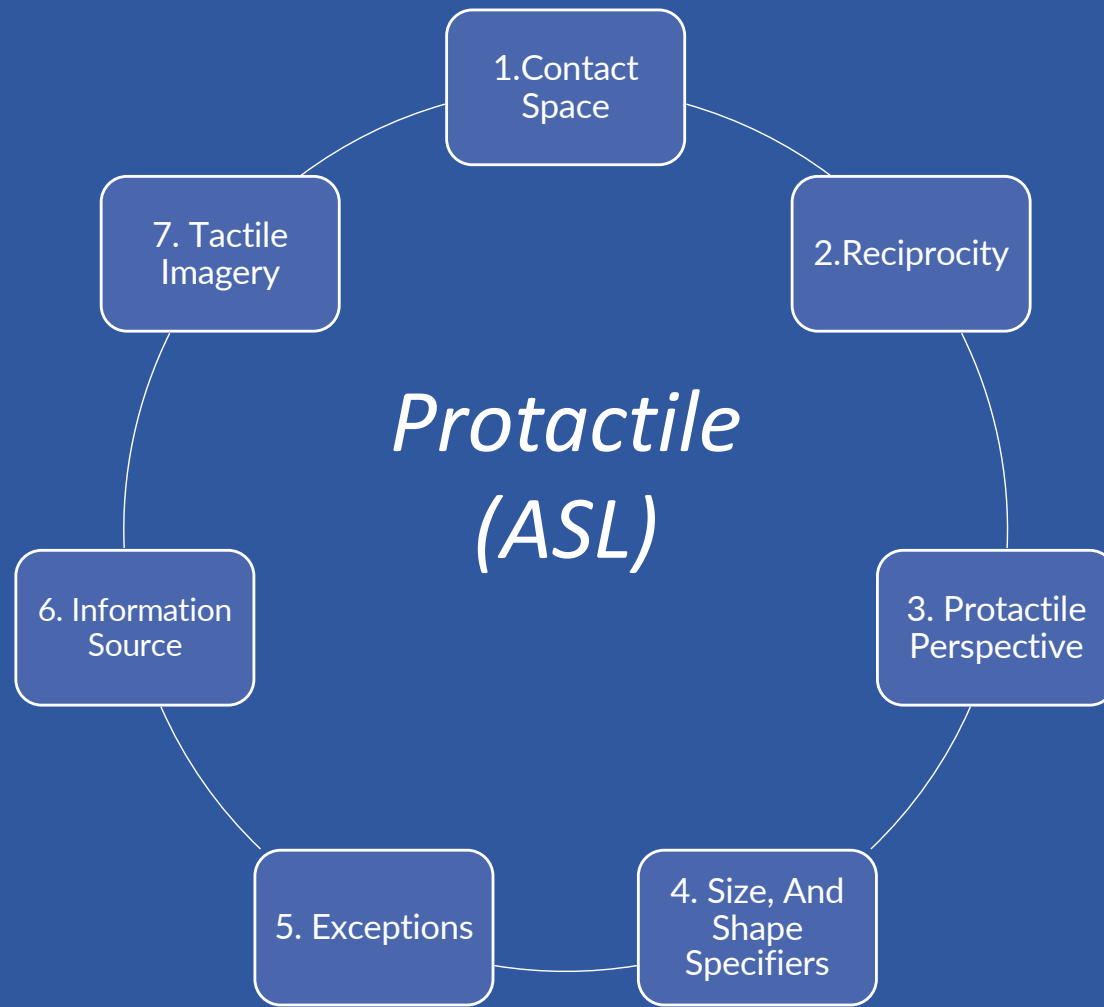
An example:

'The-WALL'

- 1) Child's tactile perception
- 2) Presented with cultural linguistic sign
- 3) Child expresses perception of cultural linguistic sign

(Forsgren et al., 2018)

Principles of Protactile ASL



*(aj granda &
Jelica Nuccio, 2018)*

Reflections

- We use a broad range of overlapping terminology and techniques around the world, does this impact on our knowledge base?
- It's about more than vocabulary – signs or words
- Be explicit about the child's L1 & L2 – there are differences.
- Focus on shared meaning and successful interactions – the end goal may not always be a replica of a cultural sign language
- What can we learn from emergence of tactile signing vs adaptation of a visual sign mode to expedite the evidence base?
- What is the role of echolalia in the development of spoken and signed language?

Take home messages:

- Communication for deafblind children, especially those who are accessing the world in a bodily-tactile modality continues to develop and our understanding is increasing
- Single case studies continue to play a key role in explaining working hypotheses
- Bodily-Tactile modality increasingly recognized as a distinct mode of communication available for children with deafblindness – don't underestimate idiosyncratic expressions – look for and describe the linguistic features in expressions.

Keeping up with research

- *Journal of Deafblind Studies and Communication*

<https://jdbsc.rug.nl/>

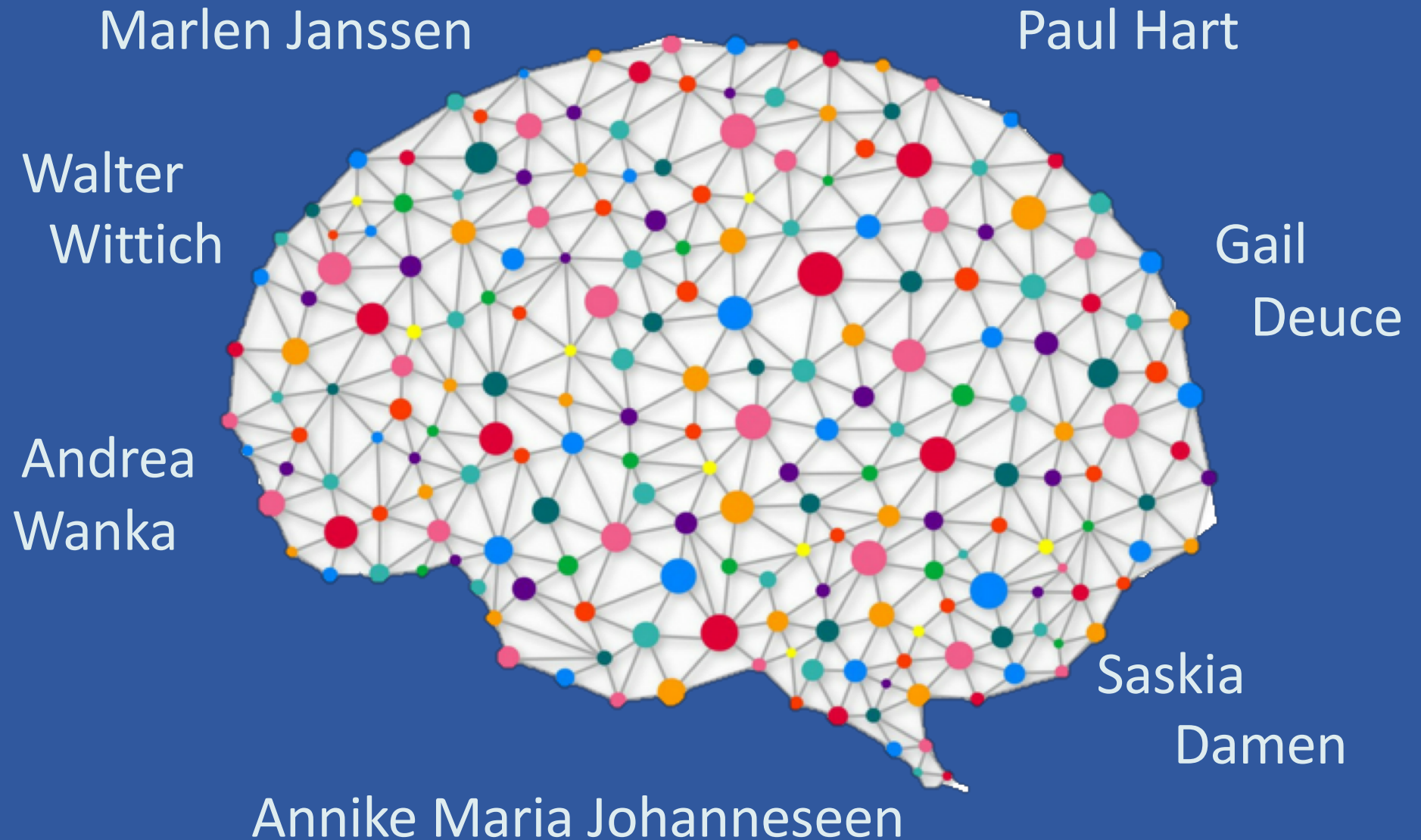
- *Nationellt Kunskapscenter för dövblindfrågor*

<http://nkcdb.se/research-overview/>

- *Research gate*

<https://www.researchgate.net/>

The 'Hive mind'



Keeping up with research – references

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Keeping up with research – references

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