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# Perceptions of Cultural and Linguistic Preparedness: Deaf and Hard of Hearing College Students' Beliefs About Their K-12 School Setting

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PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PREPAREDNESS: DEAF AND  
HARD OF HEARING COLLEGE STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR K-12  
SCHOOL SETTING

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Cultural practices, customs, language, and beliefs are typically passed down from one generation to the next. Parents find joy in watching their children say their first words and learn language, and in instilling cultural values in the lives of their children. The language and culture of culturally Deaf individuals, however, is unique in how it is transferred between generations. With over 90% of deaf children being born to hearing parents and into hearing families (Kyle & Pullen, 1988; Sparrow, 2005), it is difficult to pass along the ideals of Deaf culture and Deaf empowerment from parent to child if neither parent personally identifies as a culturally Deaf individual. To clarify, there is a distinct differentiation between being deaf (someone who cannot hear) and being Deaf (someone who identifies as a member of the culturally Deaf community). In the absence of a parental figure able to serve as the cultural and linguistic model, Deaf cultural values and language are often taught to children by biologically unrelated members of the culturally Deaf community, typically in a setting such as a school for the deaf and hard of hearing. With most hearing parents being unfamiliar with the deaf world, they may be unaware of the linguistic and cultural opportunities available to their children in a variety of educational settings.

A person can be both deaf and Deaf, but not all deaf people are Deaf. Both terms will be used in this research, with “deaf” referring to a physical description, and “Deaf”

referring to a cultural identity that requires additional components of membership, such as the use of American Sign Language, and a sociocultural perspective on deafness.

Since most parents of deaf children are themselves hearing, American Sign Language is typically not the language taught to deaf infants by their parents (Desselle & Pearlmutter, 1997). Parents may make an effort to incorporate “baby sign” into the lives of their children, but American Sign Language (ASL) is a full and complex language different from English. Without having a native language model of ASL early in their lives, deaf and hard of hearing children born to hearing parents may not learn ASL as well as deaf or hard of hearing children born to deaf or signing parents. Studies have shown that age of exposure to a language has a significant impact on the individual’s eventual mastery of language (Gheitury, Ashraf, & Hashemi, 2014; Grenana & Long, 2013; Huang, 2014; Shaw & Roberson, 2015). This finding extends to ASL and its users (Berk, 2003). It is for this reason that the education of deaf and hard of hearing students in their particularly formative years (K-12 education) can have an enormous impact on the development of their linguistic identity, as well as their Deaf cultural identity. It is also why new parents of deaf and hard of hearing children need resources available in order to educate themselves about the various educational opportunities available to their children.

There are a wide variety of settings in which deaf and hard of hearing students can be educated. At one end of the spectrum, there is the residential school for the deaf and hard of hearing option, where students live at a school specifically designed to educate deaf and hard of hearing students. At the other end is traditional education, where deaf and hard of hearing students are matriculated in classes with their hearing

peers in public schools, sometimes with additional assistance in various forms. There are varying options between the two extremes, including a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, as well as an isolated classroom for the deaf and hard of hearing in a mainstream public school (Hairston, 1995; Moores, 1987). The various types of educational settings available to deaf and hard of hearing students have their strengths and weaknesses. The focus of this research was to examine the different settings' role in the cultural and linguistic identity development of students.

### Understanding Deafness

The Deaf community has a unique culture that embraces its members' deafness, and requires different components of true membership beyond simply having hearing loss. When referring to the Deaf community and when referencing Deaf culture these terms are distinctly written with a capital letter "D" (Tucker, 1998). Going along with the Deaf community is the term Deaf, also written with a capital "D," and signifies belonging or membership to the cultural aspect of hearing loss (Pagliaro, 2001; Reagan, 1995; Tucker, 1998). The term deaf, written with a lowercase "d" is not to be confused with Deaf, as deaf refers to the physical condition of hearing loss (Reagan, 1995). It is important to note that individuals who are Deaf and those who are deaf often maintain distinctly different cultural and linguistic identities.

There are individuals who maintain a limited amount of hearing who are referred to as hard of hearing. An individual may be Deaf and hard of hearing, but cannot be deaf and hard of hearing, as hard of hearing simply refers to the physical level of hearing. Another topic covered in this research and necessary to highlight is American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is a full and complete visual language used by many deaf and

hard of hearing individuals in North America (Linderman, 1993; Pagliaro, 2001; Shaw & Roberson, 2015; Tucker, 1998).

There are designated schools for the deaf and hard of hearing, which are educational settings designed specifically to educate students with limited to no hearing abilities. Although the settings of these schools vary, two common options within schools for the deaf and hard of hearing are residential programs, in which students generally board on campus during the week and return home on weekends, and day programs, where the students return to their homes after classes each day (Hairston, 1994; Moores, 1987). Other types of education available to the deaf and hard of hearing are located in mainstream public schools. These settings can also vary, from a secluded classroom for the deaf and hard of hearing, to classrooms which have deaf and hard of hearing students participating with hearing peers (Hairston, 1994; Moores, 1987).

#### Role of Researcher

As a child, I was always fascinated by world cultures, languages, and the idea that people could understand each other in ways that were unintelligible to me. I had a particular interest in ASL and Deaf culture. From a young age I was intrigued by media which included ASL, such as the children's shows *Sesame Street* and *Lamb Chop*, and the drama *Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye*. I began taking ASL classes at the local community college in elementary school, and have continued taking classes when available over the years. I often wondered what it would be like to be deaf myself, or to have someone in my family who could not hear. The mainstream public high school I attended happened to have a representation of deaf and hard of hearing students, many of whom I befriended. All were born to hearing parents, who had no knowledge of a history of

deafness in their family. As a result, all of these parents had research and work to do when it came to making decisions about their children's education.

Currently, I am taking an ASL class where many of the other students are taking the class because there is a new addition to their family who was born deaf or hard of hearing. Many stay after class to talk with the teacher about their children, and often have numerous questions to which they need help finding the answers. There are many resources available containing testimonies of students supporting varying types of school settings for themselves and other deaf or hard of hearing children (DeWalt, 1998; Shaw & Roberson, 2015; Stern, 2008), but in my research there was not much available that investigates how deaf and hard of hearing young adults themselves feel their K-12 educational setting prepared them for life after high school. The research presented in this paper can serve new parents of deaf and hard of hearing children who are exploring the educational options available for their children. It also allows parents to see what a sampling of deaf and hard of hearing college students have to say regarding how their K-12 educational setting prepared them for life in both the Deaf community and in the hearing world.

My role in this study was that of a researcher. I did not meet any of the participants in person, nor did I observe them in a specific type of educational setting. I asked them to respond to a survey, which asked for their opinions and responses to questions relating to their K-12 educational experience.

#### Guiding Questions

With different types of educational settings in mind, my research asked deaf and hard of hearing young adults to reflect on their K-12 educational experience and assess

how they felt the school setting prepared them linguistically and culturally for life post high school graduation. Specifically, I collected and analyzed responses from deaf and hard of hearing students at the world's only university designed with the programs and services needed to best serve deaf and hard of hearing students. The participants' experiences ranged from primarily attending schools for the deaf and hard of hearing to those who were primarily enrolled in public schools for their K-12 educational experience. I asked them questions pertaining to their linguistic and cultural identity, and the role they think their K-12 educational setting played in the formation of those identities. By way of an online survey with a specific population of college students, I answered the following questions:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' cultural self-affiliation?

What this research did not intend to do was to make a case for one type of educational setting over the other. All deaf and hard of hearing children are different, and the type of setting that may work well with one student may not be the ideal situation for another; there is no "magic school" that is the perfect fit for all deaf and hard of hearing children. Additionally, families have many other variables to consider when choosing a school and schooling setting for their children, and this research does not explore those variables as they relate to preference or choice for schooling types.

## Summary

In this study, I focused on asking deaf and hard of hearing college students to reflect on their K-12 educational setting, and to make generalizations as to whether or not their schooling setting equipped them and prepared them for life after high school graduation. Recognizing that the deaf and hearing communities are quite different, this study asks the students these questions with regards to involvement in and preparation for both communities.

Since most parents of deaf and hard of hearing children are themselves hearing (Kyle & Pullen, 1988), they generally do not have personal experience or knowledge about the differing educational settings available to their children. This study highlights the personal opinions of students regarding their schools, in order to provide an insider's perspective for new parents of deaf and hard of hearing students. These findings are to be a useful resource to these new parents as they are tasked with making difficult decisions on behalf of their deaf or hard of hearing children regarding type of schooling.

## Chapter Overviews

The contents of this paper occur in five chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the topic and to highlight what will follow. A review of the current and existing literature and research around the concepts of Deaf culture, the history of the debate for educating deaf and hard of hearing students, and the acquisition of language by deaf and hard of hearing individuals comprises chapter two. Chapter three gives detail surrounding the research methods and how the results to the research questions were obtained. The results of the research conducted are presented in chapter four, and chapter

five summarizes the results and identifies how the results provide important evidence to answer the above research questions.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to identify how deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 educational setting prepared them to succeed culturally and linguistically in both the adult hearing and Deaf communities. My specific research questions are as follows:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and cultural self-affiliation?

This chapter explores the concept of Deaf culture and the Deaf community, as well as the community's use of American Sign Language. In addition, the long history of debate surrounding the education of deaf and hard of hearing individuals is examined. I focus on the varying opinions in the current literature and research, and present multiple perspectives regarding how deaf and hard of hearing students should be educated.

### Deaf Culture

Encountering another culture can be a challenging experience, as it calls one's own into question. Beliefs, opinions, even things one takes as absolute fact are all seen through a socially constructed worldview. One culture's worldview can vary enormously

from another's, as people are consciously or subconsciously trained to see, think, and speak in certain ways, generally appropriate in their culture; this unconscious bias can be difficult to acknowledge (Linderman, 1993). As a distinct cultural group, Deaf individuals maintain a cultural identity distinct from their hearing neighbors with regards to cultural practices and language.

To reiterate, there is a difference between the words "Deaf" and "deaf." "Deaf," with a capital "D," represents the concept of a cultural identity. Individuals who describe themselves as Deaf are saying more than that they do not hear. They are claiming membership in the culturally Deaf community, a culture different than that of the hearing world. The word "deaf" with a lowercase "d" refers to the physical inability to hear. An individual who describes him or herself as "deaf" is saying that he or she does not hear, but is not making a claim to membership in the culturally Deaf community (Pagliaro, 2001).

Where the deaf are distinguishing themselves from their hearing counterparts by their level of hearing loss, Deaf people are saying much more. Deaf culture incorporates linguistic, social, and political aspects that differ from mainstream hearing culture. The language, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared among the Deaf are different from those of hearing people; they are based on common experiences that shape them as a culture (Pagliaro, 2001). A key component of Deaf culture is the community's perspective on deafness. The majority hearing community tends to view deafness as a medical condition, specifically, an auditory deficit. This has been labeled the "pathological" view of deafness, and as such, leads to efforts to "fix the problem" (Reagan, 1995, p. 241), spearheaded by the majority (hearing) community. The alternative perspective, the

culturally Deaf perspective, has been termed the “sociocultural” perspective on deafness, which makes the case for deafness not existing as a handicapping condition, but rather as an essentially cultural condition (Lane, 1984; Neisser, 1983; Padden & Humphries, 2006). Individuals belonging to the culturally Deaf community will hold this sociocultural perspective on deafness, whereas deaf individuals as well as the majority of the hearing community are more likely to view deafness through the pathological lens.

### Validity of Deaf Culture

Whether or not Deaf culture truly qualifies as a distinct culture is a topic of debate between majority and minority populations. Some argue that “deaf (sic) culture was not discovered; it was created for political purposes” (Tucker, 1998, p. 7); Deaf individuals cannot simultaneously assert that they are not handicapped, yet lobby for the Americans with Disabilities Act and other legislation. Members of Deaf culture have equated their cultural membership as akin to that of being a member of a racial or tribal minority, but many deaf individuals do not support the notion (Tucker, 1998).

A characteristic commonly found within established minority cultures is a shared language that differs from the dominant culture; in the case of American Deaf culture, the language is ASL (Hafer & Richmond, 1988; Keogh, 2013). This language is something most deaf children are not immersed in from infancy, with 90% of parents of deaf and hard of hearing children being hearing individuals (Kyle & Pullen, 1988; Sparrow, 2005). As a result, many deaf and hard of hearing children first truly begin learning a full and complex language, rather than individual words or signs to express their needs, once they begin school, which is also where they tend to first be exposed to the idea of cultural Deafness. There is a strong backing for educating hearing parents of deaf and hard of

hearing children to adopt a sociocultural perspective of deafness, and to recognize deafness as a cultural identity rather than a disability. Sparrow points out this may better allow hearing parents to see the rich and satisfying life their children can lead because of, not in spite of, being Deaf (2005).

### Common Practices and Beliefs of Deaf Culture

There are many behaviors, beliefs, and practices that are commonly found and shared by members of the Deaf community that would seem odd or strange to deaf and hearing individuals who identify as members of the mainstream culture. In addition to holding a sociocultural perspective view of deafness and utilizing American Sign Language, some additional behaviors as described by Linderman (1993) are valuing extended periods of face-to-face communication, asking those who speak their language if the person is hearing or [d]eaf, highly valuing steady employment, requiring adequate lighting for conversations, and maintaining open office doors in the workplace, so that permission to enter the workspace of another can be granted visually. Further, Deaf individuals inform others of their destination, give detailed instructions, and assign everyone a “name sign” (Harris, 2014).

Highlighting the above behaviors as distinct from common practices in the hearing community is not meant to further separate these cultures into “us” and “them.” It is not to say that hearing individuals do not also value face-to-face communication. Rather, this is identified as a common behavior of Deaf individuals due to the shared language between them being a visual language. Conversational exchanges occur in their most natural setting in person between Deaf individuals rather than via written letters or email

correspondence; when Deaf individuals exchange written communication, the written English syntax and grammar is not like that of their natural signed language.

When considering how this relates to education, there are varying viewpoints related to which type(s) of educational settings best prepare deaf and hard of hearing individuals to learn the intricacies and nuances of Deaf culture. Additionally, there is the question of whether or not deaf and hard of hearing individuals even should identify with the Deaf culture, or if this “crutch” prevents them from fully succeeding in the majority hearing community.

There is the concept of status within the Deaf community. Individuals exemplifying behaviors and beliefs seen as contributing to the Deaf community, which work towards Deaf advocacy and empowerment are given a higher “status” in the community (DeWalt, 1998; Linderman, 1993). The status of an individual can be impacted by their language use. As mentioned, American Sign Language is a full and complex language different from that of American English. Here are forms of signing that are less respected in the Deaf community, with Signed Exact English being the least respected in the Deaf community, as it is simply English on the hands. For example, as described by Linderman (1993), deaf individuals who do not use Pidgin Signed English (PSE) at a minimum, and rather communicate using more Signed Exact English (SEE) or English are not viewed as linguistically or culturally contributing to the Deaf community, and are often viewed as working against the community. There is still a measure of respect awarded to those Deaf individuals who interact with the hearing world through use of their speaking abilities (Linderman, 1993). However, if these abilities are used to “show off,” other Deaf people will not view that behavior in a positive light (Linderman, 1993).

A deaf person born to Deaf parents generally receives a higher status level in the Deaf community. Deaf and hard of hearing people often do not have deaf or hard of hearing children of their own, despite most wishing they had deaf or hard of hearing children (Linderman, 1993). Having Deaf siblings is also valued, and having multiple generations of Deaf people in a family is exceptionally valued (Linderman, 1993). Hearing children are also valued, in light of how they often help their deaf or hard of hearing parents engage with the hearing world by providing occasional interpreting. However, (hearing) children of deaf adults (CODAs) will not attain the same status in the Deaf community as a deaf person. Students who were educated in a system for the deaf and hard of hearing generally are seen at a higher status than those who attended a mainstream school (DeWalt, 1998). Linderman (1993) identified Gallaudet University students and graduates as having the highest education status of all. As it relates to new hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, it is vital that these points be considered, as deaf and hard of hearing children educated in a school for the deaf and hard of hearing are often most easily accepted into the Deaf community.

### American Sign Language and Deaf Culture

American Sign Language (ASL) is the language used by members of the North American Deaf community. There are several misconceptions about ASL, such as it is simply miming spoken English, it is easy to learn, and it is the same signed language that is used everywhere in the world. These misconceptions can lead to varying and passionate opinions as to whether or not deaf and hard of children should be educated through ASL or English, and in which type of setting. Another important consideration is to think about how children typically learn a language. Often, the children's first

language is that of one or both of the parents. As discussed in Kyle and Pullen (1988) and Linderman (1993), the situation is therefore complicated when one considers that most deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents, whose first language is generally English or another spoken language. School, therefore, typically becomes the first place where deaf and hard of hearing students begin learning a language that they can readily use and understand, and this experience is going to be different if they are in a designated school for the deaf and hard of hearing or a mainstream public education classroom.

Structure of ASL. A common misconception surrounding ASL is that ASL is a pantomime or structurally the same as English (Tucker, 1998). Neither of these claims is accurate (Pagliaro, 2001). As described by Baker-Shenk, Cokely and Lane, and Hoffmeister and Bahan, ASL has been determined by linguists to be a proper language in and of itself, equal to any spoken language with regards to linguistic organization (as cited in Pagliaro, 2001, p. 174). Sacks claimed ASL to be one of the world's most complex and difficult languages (as cited in Linderman, 1993, p. 35).

ASL is visual rather than spoken, and has syntax and grammar unlike that of English. Nevertheless, its structure and properties are quite like that of other spoken languages (Gee & Ong, 1983; Pelletier, 2005). ASL is not to be confused with "signed language," which in fact is not the name of an actual language, but a term used to generally encompass many forms of expression using the hands (such as Signed Exact English (SEE), where the speaker is actually signing English on the hands, or Pidgin Signed English (which is a mixture of SEE and ASL)). Different schools may teach different methods of signing, ranging from the full form of ASL through SEE, and this is

an important factor for parents to consider when choosing an educational setting for their children.

### The Education Debate

The earliest schools for deaf and hard of hearing children are believed to have originated in the late eighteenth century, although what constituted a school for the deaf and hard of hearing at the time bears little resemblance to those today. The concept of separate education for the deaf and hard of hearing expanded during the nineteenth century, with the primary goal of these schools being to prepare the students for equal employment opportunities (Kyle & Pullen, 1988; Lochbaum Janovetz, 2008; Sisia, 2012). What should be considered the primary purpose, as well as the best type of setting for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children has continued to be a matter of debate throughout the years. There are various types of educational settings available to the deaf and hard of hearing, all possessing strengths and weaknesses, which will be discussed below. The type of schooling serving as the predominant setting has shifted, often as a result of US federal legislation.

Those tasked with determining the best setting for deaf and hard of hearing children most often include the children's parents, who are likely to be unfamiliar with the available opportunities. Parents have a wide assortment of opinions regarding what their children are capable of, and if educated about the available options, may view different types of settings as being the best fit for their children. Additionally, the teachers and students themselves have differing opinions regarding the academic potential of deaf students, all of which will be explored below.

### Importance of Early Exposure to ASL

As discussed in Linderman (1993), no spoken language will ever be the first full language of any generation of deaf people. As 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents (Kyle & Pullen, 1988; Sparrow, 2005), ASL is generally not learned in the home. The first language deaf and hard of hearing children often begin learning in a fragmented, limited way is the spoken language of their parents and family. There are often efforts made to include signs in the family, some of which may be signs used in ASL and others more home-grown. If families are simply signing some words as they talk, they are not teaching their children ASL since ASL is a full language with a linguistic structure entirely different from that of English and other spoken languages.

Studies have supported that early exposure to any language is important to children's ability to learn that language fluently (Conboy & Kuhl, 2011; Huang, 2013; Newport, 1990). Hard of hearing and deaf children generally begin learning ASL once they begin attending school (Kyle & Pullen, 1988), rather than from infancy at home. As a result of their late exposure to their language, there are several ramifications. Galvan (1989) and Newport (1990) found late exposure to ASL to have an impact on the morphological complexity of verbs of the user, as well as on formal syntactic features such as verb agreement, word order, and null referents (Berk, 2003). As discussed in Linderman (1993), these children often experience significant communicative and cognitive disabilities. Additionally, in a study of Iranian deaf students, age of exposure was found to correlate negatively with correct syntax usage (Gheitury, Ashraf, & Hashemi, 2004). The ideal time frame to expose deaf and hard of students to ASL closes before most students enter school, where they typically begin learning ASL. By the age

of three, Marschark and Knoors (2012) found that most deaf children are already behind their hearing peers with regards to language development. Linderman (1993) claimed that profoundly deaf individuals show no innate disposition to speak, but do indeed show an “immediate and powerful” disposition to sign, indicating that deaf and hard of hearing individuals should be taught full signed languages, such as ASL, to reach their full linguistic potential.

Beyond basic language development, Padden and Ramsey (1993) discussed how if youths fail to learn to read and write, it negatively impacts their ability to acquire basic literacy skills. To reiterate, deaf and hard of hearing children typically begin school with much lower language proficiency than their hearing peers. Furth (1963) found that these deaf and hard of hearing students also consistently have significantly lower reading scores than their hearing classmates, as they are learning to read in a language which they have not yet mastered (Furth, 1964). Hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children therefore are tasked with determining which type of educational setting will best fit their child linguistically, and must choose at an early age on behalf of their children if that language will be ASL, a spoken language such as English, or something in between. Different educational settings for the deaf and hard of hearing vary in the language of instruction as well as other languages taught.

#### Types of Educational Settings for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Possible settings in which deaf and hard of hearing children can be educated differ greatly. At one end of the continuum, there are residential schools for the deaf and hard of hearing, where both boarding and commuting deaf and hard of hearing students are taught. At the opposite end is a mainstream setting where the deaf and hard of

hearing students attend all classes with hearing classmates, but may receive support services. In between, there are three additional main categories, which are day schools for the deaf and hard of hearing (often found in large, metropolitan areas); day classes for the deaf and hard of hearing located in public schools where the majority of the study body is hearing; and finally an approach in which deaf and hard of hearing students spend some of their time in resource rooms with other deaf and hard of hearing students and some in classes with hearing students (Moore, 1987; Slobodzin, 2004).

### Legislation

Over the years, with different laws being passed, opinions have ranged from the best practice for the education of the deaf and hard of hearing to be in a culturally Deaf setting to the idea of the least restrictive setting being that of a public school setting. At the advent of school for the deaf and hard of hearing in the United States in 1817, it was in this culturally Deaf setting where these students were educated (Sisia, 2011). An educational shift began in 1973 when Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 of the Act prohibited students with special needs (including students with hearing loss) from being excluded from mainstream academic settings (Sisia, 2011). Two years later, Public Law 94-142, better known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, triggered a great change in the placement patterns of deaf and hard of hearing students as it extended equal educational opportunities to students with disabilities (Marschark, Lang, & Albertini, 2002).

Prior to the passage of the law, fewer than 25% of deaf and hard of hearing students were being educated in a public school setting; most deaf and hard of hearing

students were attending residential schools which promoted cultural Deaf development (Marschark, Lang, & Albertini, 2002). However, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 mandated that students be educated in the least restrictive setting: not ten years later, approximately 70% of deaf and hard of hearing children were enrolled in public school programs (Slobodzian, 2004). The Act called for children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children as much as possible.

The Act permitted disabled children to be removed from traditional classes only when their education, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, could not be provided satisfactorily (Loftin, 1995). The consistent trend in education continues to educate the deaf and hard of hearing in the most “normal” setting possible (Hairston, 1994; Sisia, 2011). The Supreme Court later ruled that the Act was established in order to ensure that handicapped children received a “meaningful” education, which Linderman (1993) pointed out is not necessarily the same thing as the best possible education. These changes not only impacted the location where deaf and hard of hearing children were being educated, but also the manner in which they were being educated. Most deaf and hard of hearing students were now being educated in “hearing” settings, where the goal was to make them as “normal” (i.e. “hearing”) as possible, rather than in an setting that would encourage the development of Deaf cultural identity, pride, and American Sign Language fluency (Sisia, 2011).

### Parental Pressures

The choices then, became increasingly difficult for parents of deaf and hard of hearing children to make. While their children were still young, these parents were (and continue to be) made to choose the path for their children; they have to decide if they

should be educated in an setting with deaf and hard of hearing peers that would encourage them to embrace their deafness and develop a strong sense of Deaf pride and Deaf cultural identity, or should they be educated in an setting which legislation indicates is a less restrictive setting and better prepares their children for success? With over 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children being born to hearing parents (Kyle & Pullen, 1988; Sparrow, 2005), these parents and guardians in particular find themselves tasked with making decisions on behalf of their children who are too young to make the decision on their own, while they themselves have little to no experience or prior knowledge of the variables at play and the available options (Shaw & Roberson, 2014). Parents of deaf and hard of hearing children have to choose not only the school in which to begin their children's education, but may also be choosing a cultural identity for their children that could reduce or improve the opportunities available to their children later in life (Sparrow, 2005). Parents must consider which setting will maximize their children's linguistic development, social engagement, cultural identity development, sense of belonging, and ultimate societal contribution of their children (Shaw & Roberson, 2015).

Parents have to determine with whom they want their children to interact: with other deaf and hard of hearing students, or with hearing students. They must consider if there is a way the children can interact with both. They have to determine how their children should learn to communicate, and through which mode or language. These decisions impact the type of adult life for which their children will be prepared. These are all circumstances parents of deaf and hard of hearing children need to consider (Loftin, 1995).

### Various Expectations for Educating the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

In addition to the social and academic considerations given to selecting an educational setting, students, parents, and educators all have expectations regarding the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. Deaf and hard of hearing students have expectations regarding the type of education they anticipate receiving, and the level of education they expect to receive can vary based on the instructor's expectations of the students' performance. Different teachers have different expectations for the level of academic performance they expect from their deaf and hard of hearing students. This holds true for both hearing, deaf, and hard of hearing teachers, as well as at mainstream schools and schools for the deaf and hard of hearing (Loftin, 1995; Smith, 2013).

Deaf students generally consider Deaf teachers to have higher expectations for their academic success, and to provide better settings for effective communication with the students in educational settings (Smith, 2013). When asked about how their teachers treated them, the participants in Smith's study agreed that their Deaf teachers were more empathetic to their needs based on their shared experience. Smith's study found that in general, deaf students appreciated being given more challenging work and learning opportunities (2013).

There are documented instances of low expectations in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. There is evidence of teachers giving deaf and hard of hearing students simplified instruction and easy, repetitive work, and teachers openly admitted they have lower expectations for the deaf and hard of hearing students and treat those students differently (Vaille & Patterson, 1996; Jameison, Zaidman-Zait & Poon, 2011). Certain required classes are systemically being waived for deaf and hard of hearing

students, despite the students' interest and desire to take the classes (typically foreign language or music) (Smith, 2013).

### Support for Mainstream Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

With all these variables to be considered, the two opposing viewpoints in this conversation are whether deaf and hard of hearing students should be educated in a designated school for the deaf and hard of hearing, or should deaf and hard of hearing students should be educated via mainstream education. There is a considerable amount of research available showing support for educating the deaf and hard of hearing in a mainstream setting, and these studies show support for the argument that mainstream settings tend to do a better job preparing deaf and hard of hearing students for academic success (Angelides & Aravi, 2006; Foster, 1989; Loftin, 1995; Wilson, 1996). Foster (1989) found that deaf students in mainstream settings have been found to have higher levels of academic achievement than their counterparts in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing.

When asked to describe their mainstreamed peers, terms used by deaf and hard of hearing students include: good education/advanced, learns fast, high thinking level, advanced conversation, better English, knows how to talk/speech, more serious, focused, and mature, understand hearing world ways, more polite like hearing people (Wilson, 1996). Deaf and hard of hearing students who have been educated primarily in mainstream settings have been found to have distinct opinions on the type and level of students in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing, often believing that they receive a better education and learn more in a mainstreamed environment. These impressions were

constructed based on input from friends, parents, and personal experiences and encounters with students from schools for the deaf and hard of hearing (Wilson, 1996).

Case studies looking at perspectives from mainstreamed deaf and hard of hearing students shed some additional light on perspectives of support for mainstream education of the deaf and hard of hearing. Comments show first-hand accounts of students who believe the academic rigor at their local schools for the deaf and hard of hearing to be sub-par compared to their mainstreamed settings (Loftin, 1995).

Not only have mainstream educated deaf students been critical of the academic rigor at schools for the deaf and hard of hearing, Loftin (1995) also found mainstream educated deaf students to dislike the language, whether ASL, Sign Supported English, or any other signed communication other than Signed Exact English, used by students coming from schools for the deaf and hard of hearing.

In general, while there were often feelings of isolation expressed by deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream settings, there was a sense of accomplishment present in their descriptions of their lives in mainstream schools. As discussed in Foster (1989), they were often proud to have not only survived but to have thrived in their setting in spite of their challenges. The students acknowledged that mainstream education provided a good education and knowledge of the ways of the hearing world (Wilson, 1996). In essence, supporters of mainstreaming deaf and hard of hearing students argue that deaf and hard of hearing students educated in these settings are more advanced academically, develop a sense of pride in overcoming the challenges in being educated in a predominantly hearing setting, and are generally more enculturated into the hearing

community, thereby being better prepared to succeed as adults in the larger hearing community.

### Support for Schools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

For every deaf or hard of hearing student and family who is happy with and supportive of mainstream education, there is one who feels the same way about schools designated for the deaf and hard of hearing. While the main support for mainstream education is the achievement of higher academic levels and preparedness for being a successful member of the hearing, majority community, the draw of schools for the deaf and hard of hearing is the greater opportunity for social engagement with peers and exposure to Deaf culture. Students educated in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing are more likely to develop deeper social relationships, have greater access to leadership opportunities and other non-academic experiences, feel less like an outsider, report less loneliness, feel more competent in their abilities, and have a higher self concept (Kersting, 1997; Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Stern, 2008; van Gurp, 2001). These case studies have demonstrated that deaf and hard of hearing students often do not feel like they truly belong in mainstream settings: they are always on the outside. Several participants in a recent study commented on the value of attending a residential school for the deaf and hard of hearing where they were not the only deaf and hard of hearing children in the school, and the sentiment resonated among the other participants who had at one point or another attended a residential school (Shaw & Roberson, 2015).

One of the most convincing arguments in support for schools of the deaf and hard of hearing are first-hand accounts of deaf and hard of hearing students suffering through

unsupported mainstream classroom experiences. Growing up in a setting without any true peers can lead to deaf and hard of hearing students not having a real sense of belonging to any community, deaf or hearing (Slobodzian, 2004). There are studies in which deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream settings reported realizing that the more they passed as, or led their day as a hearing student, the more rewarded they were in class, going so far as refusing to wear visible auditory aids that helped them understand what was going on in the classroom. In a case study of deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstream setting, the students were found to be welcomed members of the community only to the point at which they impeded the true purpose of the school, which was educating the majority (hearing) population (Slobodzian, 2004). In a setting such as a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, these students are the exact type of learners the school was designed for.

Succeeding academically in school is considerably easier for students when they can communicate fluently with instructors and administrators. When deaf and hard of hearing students find themselves in a classroom with a teacher who doesn't sign (as is almost always the case in a mainstream setting), the communication becomes one-sided (DeWalt, 1998; Shaw & Roberson, 2015; Smith, 2013). Even when interpretation services are provided, deaf students have claimed that interpreted communication is inferior to direct communication (Stern, 2008). Particularly when students are likely to have limited communication and discourse in their home settings, it is essential for them to experience full linguistic immersion and development of a language in another setting (Slobodzian, 2004; Stern, 2008). While deaf and hard of hearing students may not be fluent in ASL when they arrive at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, the setting

and instruction are structured in a way that permits them to learn a language that is fully accessible to them.

From a cultural perspective, many Deaf adults vehemently oppose mainstream education for deaf and hard of hearing children. Deaf culture is something that is not typically passed from parent to children, since more often than not, the parents are not members of this minority community. A primary location in which Deaf culture is taught and passed on is in the residential and day schools for the deaf and hard of hearing (Pagliaro, 2001). Fearing the death of the culture they love, Deaf adults who fully identify as members of the Deaf community generally stand in full support of residential deaf education. In a quote from Jack Levesque in Deaf Counseling Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA) News:

Everyday hearing people push a little harder to get mainstreaming as the one and only option for deaf kids. Everyday our deaf schools come a little closer to being closed down. And when the schools go, we deaf people will find our wonderful deaf culture weakening. We will have to work hard to keep it, and our language alive (as cited in Loftin, 1995, p. 21).

With a firm Deaf cultural affiliation often comes a strong sense of self. Two additional components of support for schools for the deaf and hard of hearing from a social perspective are the matters of self-esteem and self-concept. Studies by Farrugia and Austin (1980) and Macha (2007) found that deaf mainstreamed students appeared to demonstrate lower levels of self-esteem than other students. "Institutionalized" deaf rated their self-acceptance higher than both hearing and deaf mainstreamed students as well (Hairston, 1994). The development of social skills and self-esteem is heightened

when the deaf and hard of hearing students find themselves in a learning setting that fosters interaction and acceptance of deafness (Stern, 2008). While certain deaf or hard of hearing students who were mainstreamed reported high levels of self-esteem from having succeeded in an adverse situation, Hairston (1994) found significant differences in self-concept measures between deaf students in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing and mainstreamed students.

### The Gap

Based on the research that I've reviewed, there is a need for updated research around the cultural and linguistic identity development of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. While reviewing the existing literature, I was hard pressed to find narrative accounts of deaf and hard of hearing college students on their linguistic and cultural identity development. Many of the studies reviewed above looked into how deaf and hard of hearing individuals liked their primary and secondary schooling settings, but the primary participants were almost always students in grades K-12, or significantly older adults. Additionally, many of these studies examined the ideas of "fitting in" and "feeling like an insider," as opposed to whether or not they felt prepared for life on their own after high school, and many did not look both at linguistic as well as cultural preparedness for both the hearing and deaf communities. My research on this topic is by no means exhaustive, but with the apparent gap in the research being a lack of current voices on the topic of identity development from college-age students, as well as cultural and linguistic preparedness of the students as a product of their schooling settings, that is what this research investigates.

## Research Questions

I conducted my research via an online survey tool, and looked to answer the following questions:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and cultural self-affiliation?

By seeing the answers from deaf and hard of hearing participants to these questions, new hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children have more insight on values and results of the differing types of educational settings- informed by deaf and hard of hearing students themselves- available to their children, in order to make an informed decision about what type of setting to choose on behalf of their children.

## Summary

Deaf culture is a culture and identity distinct from that of the mainstream American hearing culture. Deaf culture is often passed down through the generations not from parent to child, but by other Deaf individuals such as teachers, coaches, mentors, and older peers, as parents often are not a member of the Deaf community themselves. A component of Deaf culture is the use of American Sign Language, and the early exposure to and continued use of ASL has been shown to have significant impacts on the social and academic lives of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

There is a continuum of educational settings available to deaf and hard of hearing children, and it is challenging for hearing parents with little to no knowledge of the options to choose one for their child. There are a wide variety of opinions as to whether deaf and hard of hearing children should be educated in a residential school for the deaf and hard of hearing, in a mainstream public classroom with hearing peers, or some combination of the two. Little research has been done asking college deaf and hard of hearing students to give insight on how their K-12 educational experience prepared them for success in adult life, and that is what the research will set out to discover. The following chapter will discuss the methods used to elicit the data required for this research.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Overview

This chapter presents the methods used to conduct the research for this study. With a variety of educational settings available, hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children are often overwhelmed about where to begin with making the decision of the proper setting in which to educate their child. This research highlights patterns or relationships based on the opinions of deaf and hard of hearing college students at a university for the deaf and hard of hearing regarding how their K-12 educational setting did or did not prepare them linguistically and culturally for success in both the hearing and Deaf communities. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach to research via an online survey, I looked to answer the following research questions:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and cultural self-affiliation?

### Research Paradigm

I implemented a mixed methods research paradigm by collecting and reporting both quantitative and qualitative data in this study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). There are certain elements of this topic that were best collected and reported qualitatively, such as

the participant's explanations of their educational setting, or their reasoning for choosing a specific type of educational setting for their hypothetical children. These elements are subjective, descriptive, and un-generalizable, which are all components of qualitative research (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Other research points, such as what percentage of the survey respondents who attended a school for the deaf and hard of hearing feel it prepared them linguistically to succeed in the hearing world, and how many participants attended each type of school setting, are objective and replicable results, and were best represented quantitatively (Mackey & Gass, 2005). As a result, both types of research were used in this mixed-methods approach.

### Methodology

For the purposes of this study, survey-based research was collected in the form of a questionnaire. As described by Brown, written questionnaires present participants with a series of questions or statements that elicit either closed or open ended responses (as cited in Mackey & Gass, 2005). Since one of the primary goals of this study is to examine self-reported attitudes regarding the students' K-12 educational settings (rather than opinions of the other stakeholders or the results of assessed performance), this questionnaire allowed the researcher to gather this type of information, which would not be feasible with production data exclusively.

The survey featured some closed-item questions, where the participants were required to select one of the provided responses. This allowed for a greater uniformity of measurement, which results in greater reliability (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Certain questions were open-item questions, where participants were asked to write or sign their created response to the question, which permitted them to convey their personal thoughts

and ideas in their own way (Mackey & Gass, 2005). All closed-item questions included an area for an option open-ended response if the participant wanted to give additional information regarding their response.

## Data Collection

### Participants

This study solicited the input of deaf and hard of hearing college students at a university for the deaf and hard of hearing. The survey was made available to any student at the university over the age of 18 who self-identified as deaf or hard of hearing via mass email. Both graduate and undergraduate students were welcomed to participate. Since these students chose to pursue higher education specifically at a university for the deaf and hard of hearing, a sampling bias may be present in their opinions surrounding education of the deaf and hard of hearing. Additionally, as the participants are all university students, it can be argued that the participants represent an academically high achieving sub-group of the deaf and hard of hearing population. In order to collect as many responses as possible to analyze possible relationships between Deaf identity and opinions on educational setting, this survey did not limit the number of responses it was able to receive.

### Setting

This survey was administered online to students attending university at an institution of higher education designed for the particular needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. This university is a primarily residential campus located in a metropolitan area of the United States. Serving both graduate and undergraduate

students, it has a total graduate and undergraduate study body of approximately 1,700 students.

#### Data Collection Technique: Survey

The questions and format chosen for this survey were modeled after the studies done by Kersting (1997), van Gorp (2001), and Stern (2008). Following van Gorp's lead, the entire survey (Appendix A), including the informed consent, was available in video form in ASL for the students to watch if they were more comfortable doing so than reading the English text. The question themes were composed based on the questions asked in Kersting's interviews and Stern's questionnaire.

An online questionnaire was designed, which allowed students to complete the survey from the location of their choosing, wherever Internet connection was available. The students received a link and invitation to the survey from the university's mass email system. When the students clicked the link to the survey, it brought them to a landing page, where the informed consent was obtained.

This survey was administered using the online data collection service, SurveyMonkey®. The survey was presented simultaneously in two languages. Each question and possible responses were given both in written English, as well as through a video clip in American Sign Language. The English questions were written by the researcher, and the videos featured an adult interpreter asking the question in ASL. This interpreter was a child of deaf adults, and as a CODA, this interpreter's first language was ASL, and I was therefore very confident in her ASL signing abilities. For each question, students had the option of only reading the question and response options, only watching the question and response options, or doing both. The goal of presenting the

content in both languages was to alleviate concerns about inaccurate or incomplete survey responses from students completing the survey in a second language (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Each question required a single response, and each question contained a “comments” option if the students wanted to give more detail than the structured response choices allowed. Some questions did not have set responses to choose from. Rather, participants responded in the provided text box with their answer to the question, or were invited to film their response in ASL and submit it to the researcher.

### Procedure

#### Participants

Students at the university were invited electronically to participate in this online survey. Those who were interested in doing so clicked the appropriate link, which led them to the informed consent page at the beginning of the survey. After reading the text or watching the informed consent video, the 12 individuals who chose to begin this survey clicked the button to do so. The participants then proceeded to answer 16 questions in total. Some questions had closed responses, where the participant was forced to choose one of the provided responses, and others were open-ended. In all instances, the participants were invited to leave comments for each individual question to elaborate on their response. One participant answered only the first few survey questions before withdrawing, so that individual’s responses were discarded from the results.

#### Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study of my research after receiving approval from Hamline’s Human Subjects Committee and the Institutional Review Board at the university for the

deaf and hard of hearing. My pilot study was an exact replica of the survey I intended to administer to students at this university, with the added instructions to participants that they could participate if they were hearing, and the added question at the end of the survey asking for feedback. I received nine survey responses from friends and colleagues working in the fields of higher education and/or linguistics.

In reviewing the responses, I gained valuable insight on how to view and interpret the survey responses using the SurveyMonkey® platform. The platform allowed me to view total responses to each question, as well as view the responses from an individual participant for all of the questions. I was able to read the comments (if any had been left) on each question. I discovered that SurveyMonkey® has several levels of participation, and if I chose to subscribe to the next level, I would have the pro-feature of text analysis available to me, which would search and categorize responses, as well as see frequently-used words and phrases. Due to the small size of expected participants in my survey, I simply completed the text analysis personally in conjunction with a colleague with credentials in linguistic analysis and research, but in the event that I received many more participants than expected, it was beneficial for me to know that this feature would be available to me.

I received helpful feedback from the participants in my study. They assisted me in locating a spelling error (“of” in the place of “or’), and offered opinions about the phrasing of certain survey questions. For Question 7 (“In which schooling setting did you spend the most amount of time?”), two of my pilot study respondents chose one of the four given responses, then in the comments box clarified that they were actually homeschooled, so none of the choices applied to them. In light of this realization, I

elected to add a fifth option to this question of “Other.” One participant suggested that in Questions 8 and 9 I more clearly define the concepts of “positive things” and “negative things,” and in Questions 12-15 I define “succeed.” After consideration, I decided to leave the wording to the questions as they were to leave the question open for interpretation by the participant; in doing so, I was not guiding their answer in a certain direction (socially, academically, etc.).

A pilot study participant commented on Questions 10 and 11 that perhaps a student could be equally comfortable in two or more of the languages listed as options. While this may be a possibility, it was my hope than in a forced response question such as this, students will choose one that they are slightly more comfortable with or drawn to. Additionally, the comments section of the question allowed for participants to clarify their response if desired, so I elected to maintain the wording of this question. Lastly, two pilot study participants suggested making Question 16 (“If you ever have a deaf or hard of hearing child of your own, which type of educational setting would you choose for him/her? Why?”) multiple choice with room for an open ended explanation. I decided against including a multiple choice option here, as I did not want to limit the survey participants to the choices I have provided; perhaps they had an idea for a type of setting that is not discussed in this research or maybe isn’t even readily practiced yet in society. I found the open format of this question allowed for that freedom.

### Materials

Students were invited to participate in the study from a mass email sent by me to the university student body. A short paragraph invited them to click the provided link to the survey if they were interested in sharing their opinions of their K-12 educational

experience in order to help new hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children make informed decisions on behalf of their deaf and hard of hearing children.

Clicking the link provided in the email directed the student to the landing page of the survey on the SurveyMonkey® website. Here, the student was able to read and watch the informed consent information, which was available in written English as well as through a video in ASL. If the student chose to participate, they were instructed to click the button to begin the survey and respond to the survey question (Appendix A). The survey included closed and open-item questions, as well as provided the opportunity for the participants to leave additional comments on their responses.

#### Data Analysis

When analyzing my data, I looked for trends between the primary type of school setting the student attended and their linguistic and cultural identity. I looked for qualitative themes that emerged as well as quantitative results such as the percentage of students who self identified as Deaf attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, and what percentage attended a residential school for the deaf. I identified trends, such as students who considered themselves a member of the Deaf community possibly being more likely to have attended a school for the deaf, and if there was a relationship between primary educational setting and preferred language.

#### Verification of Data

To identify common themes, qualitative descriptors that were used by the respondents were independently analyzed by both myself and a colleague with credentials in linguistic analysis and research. As a mixed-methods study, this qualitative data was also supported by the quantitative data collected, resulting in triangulation of

data, which utilizes multiple research methods independently in order to substantiate the research findings (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

### Ethics

Safeguards were in place to ensure that the rights of all survey participants were protected. The purposes and procedures of this research were shared with all participants in two languages, as well as potential risks and benefits. Participants were required to provide informed consent before they were able to access the survey. Respondents were made aware that their participation in this survey was completely voluntary, and that they were able to stop the survey at any point without ramifications. These participants were not students of mine and therefore had no reason to fear repercussions from providing me with their responses. No identifying information such as name or email address was collected, and the survey results were stored in my password protected SurveyMonkey® account and on my password protected personal computer.

### Conclusion

I surveyed deaf and hard of hearing college students attending a university for the deaf and hard of hearing via an online survey. The survey asked the students questions related to their linguistic and cultural identity, and how they thought their K-12 educational setting prepared them for participation in different linguistic and cultural communities.

In surveying deaf and hard of hearing students at a university for the deaf and hard of hearing, I identified relationships between the type of educational setting experienced and linguistic and cultural identities. Chapter Four presents the results of this survey.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to provide hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children with insight and reflections from college-aged deaf and hard of hearing children on the role their K-12 educational setting played in their linguistic and cultural identity formation. Through the collection of these data, I sought to find the answers to following research questions:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' cultural self-affiliation?

The data for this research was collected via the online survey collection tool Survey Monkey®. The survey was made available to students at the university who were over the age of 18 and identified as deaf or hard of hearing, and remained open for a period of two weeks. Repeat invitations were sent to the university student body four times over the period of two weeks, inviting them to participate in the survey. At the close of the two week period, 12 individuals had responded to the survey. Of those 12 participants, one participant chose to respond only to the first few questions related to collection of biographical information on the respondents. For this reason, this

individual's responses were not included in the results below. Of the remaining 11 participants, one participant elected to skip one question, and another participant elected to skip three questions. Their responses were included in the results below, but it is noted where the number of responses is not equal to the total of 11 participants.

As the responses to the questions will be examined through the lens of which type of school the participants attended, the school setting of the participants will be presented first. The data will then be presented in the order in which the questions were asked in the survey, starting with background information on the students, before moving into their cultural and linguistic preferences, and finally their perceptions of preparedness for linguistic and cultural success.

When identifying themes in qualitative responses, I worked in conjunction with a colleague who is a professional in the field of linguistic analysis. We analyzed the participants' responses individually for all the qualitative responses to this survey, at which point I combined our work.

All the charts will utilize the following shorthand when referring to the types of school settings referenced in Chapter 2:

MCMS= Mainstream classes in a mainstream school

DCMS= Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school

DPSD = Day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing

RPSD = Residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing

OTHR = Other

## Results of Survey Responses

### School setting

Participants in this survey represented each of the four major categories of school setting presented on the survey, with two participants selecting the fifth option of “other.” The school settings provided on the survey and listed below are those referenced earlier from Moores (1987) and Slobodzian (2004).

Table 1

### *School Setting*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Number of participants	5	1	1	2	2
N = 11					

The majority of the participants (five students) attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, and two of these participants added clarifying comments to their response:

“I was the only Deaf student in a class of hearing students from K-12”

“I started out with self contained classes then transferred to mainstream classes but I was never alone. My school had a deaf program and I had several deaf kids in the same classes with me (with hearing peers) and had a good amount of deaf people (in self contained classes) at my school due to the deaf program”

There was one student each representing the designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school option and the day program at a school for the deaf and hard of

hearing setting. A third participant who attended a residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing clarified:

“Elementary school & half of middle school were spent at deaf charter school, all of middle & high school I went to main stream school half day”

Two participants indicated their school setting was best reflected in the choice “other,” although only one participant gave any clarification to their choice:

“I went to a hearing school in Mexico, from elementary school thorough College in Mexico, depending on my lip reading skills in Spanish. No interpreters”

Based on additional comments given throughout the survey of the two participants who indicated their school setting was best reflected in the choice “other,” it is believed that these two participants were also primarily educated in a mainstream environment. When we add these two participants to the total number of participants who attended mainstream schools, the percentage of participants from this survey who were educated in a mainstream environment supports Slobodzian’s (2004) claim that after the passage of IDEA, approximately 70% of deaf and hard of hearing children were enrolled in public school programs.

#### Self-Identification: Hearing Level

The participants were asked to consider their hearing level and identify themselves as either deaf or hard of hearing. All five students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school self-identified as deaf, as did the student from a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school, the two students from a residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and one of the “other”

students. The student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing and one of the “other” students self-identified as hard of hearing.

Table 2

*School Setting and Self-Identification*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
deaf	5	1	0	2	1
hard of hearing	0	0	1	0	1
N = 11					

One of the students who self-identified as deaf clarified:

“Was HOH all of my life; now both ears are profound.”

Age of Participants

This survey was made available to any student at the university who self-identified as either deaf or hard of hearing and was over the age of 18. Both graduate and undergraduate students are represented in the participants.

Table 3

*School Setting and Age*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Age < 22	0	0	1	0	0
Age 22-25	1	1	0	1	0
Age > 26	4	0	0	1	2
N = 11					

Of the students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, one participant was between the ages of 22-25, while the other four were over the age of 26. The participant from the designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was 22-25. The student from a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was under the age of 22. Of the two participants from residential programs at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, one was 22-25, and the other over the age of 26. Both “other” participants were over the age of 26.

#### Gender of Participants

Both males and females were among the participants. Of the students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, one student was male and the other four female. The student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was male, and the student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was female. The residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing and “other” categories each had one male and one female student represented.

Table 4

#### *School Setting and Gender*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Male	1	1	0	1	1
Female	4	0	1	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0
N = 11					

### Racial/Ethnic Identity of Participants

The participants in this study represented diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Participants were able to identify membership in multiple categories. Within the students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, there were students who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and White. The student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school did not claim membership in any of the provided categories.

Table 5

#### *School Setting and Group Identification (A)*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	1	0	1
Am. Indian/AK Native	1	0	0	0	0
Asian	1	0	0	0	0
Black/Af. Am.	0	0	0	0	0
Native HI / Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
White	4	0	1	2	1
Total	6	0	2	2	2

The student from the day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing identified as Hispanic or Latino and White. The students from the residential schools for the deaf and hard of hearing both identified as White, and from the “other” category, one student identified as Hispanic or Latino and one identified as White.

#### Group Identity of Participants

Two of the students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school self-identified as belonging to the culturally Deaf community, as did the student from the designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school, day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Table 6

#### *School Setting and Group Identification (B)*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
LGBT	0	0	1	1	1
Hearing	0	0	0	0	0
Deaf	2	1	1	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	2	3	1

The student from the day program at a school for the deaf also claimed membership in the LGBT community, as did one of participants from a residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing and one of the students from the “other” category.

### Hearing Abilities of Parents

Kyle and Pullen (1988) and Sparrow (2005) were referenced earlier in this work as having stated that approximately 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. The participants in this study did not quite reach 90% referred to by these authors, but approximately 73% of the total respondents were born to two hearing parents.

Table 7

#### *School Setting and Parents' Hearing Abilities*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Both parents deaf	1	0	1	1	0
One parent deaf, one parent hearing	0	0	0	0	0
Both parents deaf	4	1	0	1	2
N = 11					

None of the participants had one parent who was deaf and one who was hearing. One student from the mainstream classes in a mainstream school, the student from the day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and one of the students from a residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing came from families with two deaf parents. The rest of the participants had two hearing parents.

### Cultural Deaf Identity

Participants were explicitly asked if they identified themselves as culturally Deaf or not culturally Deaf, to examine how many identified with Pagliaro's (2001) distinction between deaf and Deaf.

Table 8

#### *School Setting and Deaf Identity*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Culturally Deaf	4	1	1	2	0
Not Culturally Deaf	1	0	0	0	2
N = 11					

Four of the students who were mainstreamed in mainstream schools, the student from a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school, the student from a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and the two students from residential programs at schools for the deaf and hard of hearing identified as culturally Deaf. One student who was in mainstream classes in a mainstream school and the two participants from the "other" category identified as not culturally Deaf.

### Preferred Language to Use

Participants were asked to identify which language they themselves are most comfortable using to communicate: spoken English, American Sign Language, or signed communication of some sort such as Signed Exact English or Pidgin. As stated by Hafer and Richmond (1988) and Keogh (2013), ASL is a significant part of Deaf culture. Linderman (1993) mentioned that lesser forms of signing such as SEE and Pidgin are seen as working against the Deaf community.

Table 9

#### *School Setting and Preferred Language Use (Outgoing)*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Spoken English	1	0	0	0	1
American Sign Language	3	1	1	2	1
Signed Communication (SEE, Pidgin, etc.)	1	0	0	0	0
N = 11					

Eight of the participants chose American Sign Language, with only two participants choosing spoken English (one from mainstream classes in a mainstream school and one from the other category), and one participant who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school selected signed communication.

### Preferred Language to Receive

Participants were also asked, with the same choices provided, which language they preferred others using when communicating with them. None of the participants chose signed communication.

Table 10

#### *School Setting and Preferred Language Use (Incoming)*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Spoken English	2	0	1	0	1
American Sign Language	3	1	0	2	1
Signed Communication (SEE, Pidgin, etc.)	0	0	0	0	0
N = 11					

Two of the students who attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, the student who attended the day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and one of the students from the other category chose spoken English as their preferred language to receive. The remaining seven participants selected American Sign Language.

### Positive Occurrences in School

Participants were asked the broad question of “What positive things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?” A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix B – Responses to Question 8. This question sought to examine any relationships to claims by Foster (1989), Wilson (1996), and Loftin (1995) that mainstreamed students believe they have received a better academic education, as well as those by Kersting (1997), Nikolarazi and Hadjikakou (2006), Padden and Humphries (2006), Stern (2008), and van Gorp (2001) that students educated in schools for the deaf and hard of hearing develop deeper social relationships and feel more like they belong to a community. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The themes of the positive experiences of the individual responses are described below, organized by school setting. In describing their positive experiences, some participants included contrasting examples of negative experiences. These comments are included in the next section regarding negative experiences. Similarly, when responding to the next survey question regarding negative experiences, some included positive occurrences that were not initially included as a response to this question, but have been merged below.

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: selective empowerment by the teachers, hard work, diligence, and perseverance made the transition to university easier,

having the best of both worlds, bilingual, bicultural, equal exposure to Deaf and hearing communities, popularity, receiving good grades, and nothing much positive.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was found to exhibit the following themes: transparency, understanding, direct communication.

The response of the student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was found to exhibit the following theme: being able to receive an education.

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf and hard of hearing were found to exhibit the following themes: complete access to language with both teachers and peers, improvement of reading and writing skills.

The responses of the students who attended “other” schooling environments were found to exhibit the following themes: supportive network/community, received a great education and graduated salutatorian, made friends, prepared for real life, had clear educational advantages.

### Negative Occurrences in School

Participants were asked the broad questions of “What negative things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?” This was part of the survey due to comments of Jameison, Zaidman-Zait and Poon (2011), Loftin (1995), Smith (2013), and Vaille and Patterson (1996) that teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students have different expectations for them and from Shaw and Roberson (2015) that deaf and hard of hearing students report not feeling as though they belong in their environment. A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by

school setting, can be found in Appendix C – Responses to Question 9. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, two professionals in the field my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The themes of the negative experiences of the individual responses are described below, filtered by school setting. In describing their negative experiences, some participants included contrasting examples of positive experiences. These comments are included in the previous section regarding positive experiences. Similarly, when responding to the previous survey question regarding positive experiences, some included negative occurrences that were not initially included as a response to this question, but have been merged below.

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: left out, lack of understanding, lip reading, aural method, working 10 times harder than hearing classmates, had to self-advocate, difficult journey, lonely, isolation from hearing peers, negative impact on social life, lack of ASL club, lack of interest in sign language from hearing people, ignorance in mainstream 1970s education, public embarrassment, bullying.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was simply “N/A.”

The response of the student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was found to exhibit the following theme: many unspecified negative experiences.

The responses of students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: favoritism, big “D” Deaf attitude, lack

of direct communication with mainstreamed students, lack of access to counseling services.

The responses of the student who attended “other” schooling environments were found to exhibit the following themes: isolation, challenges with lip reading, communication barriers, impatient classmates, difficult social life.

### Linguistic Preparedness for the Hearing World

In an effort to examine if students who attended schools for the deaf and hard of hearing felt less prepared than their mainstreamed counterparts for using English, participants were asked the question “Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.” Wilson’s (1996) research showed that deaf and hard of hearing students who attended schools for the deaf and hard of hearing believed their mainstream peers to have a better level of English than themselves. A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix D – Responses to Question12. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The participants’ comments are classified below into three categories: Yes, Uncertain, and No. The themes of the individual responses are described below the chart, filtered by school setting.

Table 11

*Role of School Setting in Developing Linguistic Preparedness for the Hearing World*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Yes	3	1	1	1	2
Uncertain	0	0	0	1	0
No	2	0	0	0	0
N = 11					

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: access to both ASL and English, successful communication with the hearing world, self-taught skills to survive in the hearing world, low English level but after years of practice and acquiring ASL during first year of college it improved, had early exposure to sign language, was able to communicate with family, had deaf peers, upsetting activities, pointless exercises, lack of methodology in pedagogy, frustration, self-taught, reclusive, lots of alone time.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was simply, "Yes."

The response of the student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was found to exhibit the following themes: bilingual, fluency.

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: fortunate, attended student conferences, interacted with hearing students, developed appropriate language skills needed, skills not

fostered correctly in school, lack of feedback from teachers about reading and writing skills, lack of comfortable communication with parents.

The responses of the students who attended “other” schooling environments were found to exhibit the following themes: patience from teachers, felt included, optimism, fluent in written and spoken English, published in academic journals and magazines.

#### Cultural Preparedness for the Hearing World

Wilson’s research also showed that deaf and hard of hearing students who attended schools for the deaf and hard of hearing believed their mainstreamed peers to better understanding the ways of the hearing world, and to be more polite as hearing people are perceived to be (1996). Participants were therefore asked the question “Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.” A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix E – Responses to Question 13. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The participants’ comments are classified below into three categories: Yes, Uncertain, and No. The themes of the individual responses are described below the chart, filtered by school setting.

Table 12

*Role of School Setting in Developing Cultural Preparedness for the Hearing World*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Yes	2	1	0	1	2
Uncertain	1	0	1	1	0
No	2	0	0	0	0
N = 11					

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: cultural appropriation, received insight not taught in schools for the deaf, linguistic separation from family, missing piece of identity and culture, learned to survive in the hearing world, needed to prove self worth, fell in love with deaf culture after learning ASL, felt culturally prepared for the hearing world due to being in the deaf program, lack of involvement from hearing parents, hard work, self-taught, not much deaf exposure, unfulfilled cultural experiences.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was simply, “Yes.”

The response of the student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing was simply, “Not sure.”

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: Deaf Power teachers, cautioned about the cruel hearing world and how they wouldn’t be accepted in it, found hearing world to actually be quite accepting, diverse students, exposure to various cultures.

The responses of the students who attended “other” school settings were found to exhibit the following themes: made me into an independent world traveler, received experiences in the hearing world, figured out the skills needed to thrive that wouldn’t have happened in a deaf classroom.

#### Linguistic Preparedness for the Deaf Community

Since most deaf and hard of hearing children will not be using ASL when they begin school, participants were asked the question “Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation” in order to examine if one type of educational setting seemed to better prepare students for interacting with the Deaf community using ASL. Slobodzian (2004) and Stern (2008) indicate that it is essential for students to experience full linguistic immersion and development in a setting other than their home environment, where they are likely to have limited communication and discourse. A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix F – Responses to Question 14. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The participants’ comments are classified below into three categories: Yes, Uncertain, and No. The themes of the individual responses are described below the chart, filtered by school setting. Only 10 participants responded to this question.

Table 13

*Role of School Setting in Developing Linguistic Preparedness for the Deaf Community*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Yes	1	1	0	1	0
Uncertain	1	0	0	0	0
No	3	0	0	1	2
N = 10					

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: not ASL enough, criticism of ASL skills, able to acquire ASL as an adult more easily due to good foundation in English, lead to connectedness in the Deaf community, available resources, NO, lack of exposure to deaf community, bullied by Deaf for not being Deaf enough.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was simply, “Yes.”

The student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing chose not to respond to this question.

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: superb ASL skills, comes from a deaf family, struggled with favoritism from teachers, left behind, resilient.

The responses of the students who attended “other” school settings were found to exhibit the following themes: lack of exposure to ASL, no knowledge of sign language during K-12 education, not exposed to ASL but ok with that fact.

### Cultural Preparedness for the Deaf Community

Pagliari (2001) states that a primary location in which Deaf culture is taught and passed on is in schools for the deaf. To examine if participants in certain environments felt better prepared by their school setting for cultural success in the Deaf community, participants were asked the question “Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation.” A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix G – Responses to Question 15. To identify themes in the participants’ responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant’s comments belonged to. The participants’ comments are classified below into three categories: Yes, Uncertain, and No. The themes of the individual responses are described below the chart, filtered by school setting. Only 10 participants responded to this question.

Table 14

#### *Role of School Setting in Developing Cultural Preparedness for the Deaf Community*

<u>School setting</u>	<u>MCMS</u>	<u>DCMS</u>	<u>DPSD</u>	<u>RPSD</u>	<u>OTHR</u>
Yes	1	1	0	1	1
Uncertain	0	0	0	1	0
No	4	0	0	0	1
N = 10					

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: not Deaf enough despite dedication to the Deaf world, no exposure to Deaf culture, although now feel at home in the Deaf

community as an independent learner and self starter, no looking back, received information about universities with deaf programs, no, lack of exposure to Deaf community, bullied by Deaf for not being Deaf enough.

The response of the student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school was simply, “Yes.”

The student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing chose not to respond to this question.

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: encouraged to attend Gallaudet, discovered backlash of Deaf elitism and favoritism, outsider, big “D” Deaf identity, at the time witness discrimination against those with cochlear implants identifying as Deaf.

The responses of the students who attended “other” school settings were found to exhibit the following themes: role model, moral support, not exposed to Deaf norms but ok with this fact.

#### Educational Setting Preference

Participants were asked the question “If you ever have a deaf or hard of hearing child of your own, which type of educational setting would you choose for him/her? Why?” A full record of all the responses given to this question, sorted by school setting, can be found in Appendix H – Responses to Question 16. The impetus for posing this question to participants stems from Shaw and Roberson’s (2015) comment stated earlier that parents must consider which setting will maximize their children’s linguistic development, social engagement, cultural identity development, sense of belonging, and ultimate societal contribution of their children. To identify themes in the participants’

responses, my colleague and I analyzed these comments without knowing which school setting each participant's comments belonged to. The themes of the individual responses are described below, filtered by school setting. Only nine participants responded to this question.

The responses of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools were found to exhibit the following themes: a combination of both, would use ASL with child since communication is the key to understanding, would look for a school with a good education that also provided social opportunities and activities, mainstreaming would ensure the accessibility of support services (ASL interpreters, note takers, other Deaf students) but would not want child to be the only deaf student, would send child to a good Deaf school that provided a strong education that also provided sports and activities, mainstream if there is a good Deaf program in the mainstream school, fear of child being isolated, would teach ASL first and English second although both are needed to succeed in the hearing world, the value of feeling a sense of belonging to a group is underestimated, would raise the child to not bully or pass judgment on others due to how they communicate, unlike what the Deaf community has done to me.

The student who attended a designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school simply responded, "Deaf school."

The student who attended a day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing chose not to respond to this question.

The responses of the students who attended residential programs at schools for the deaf were found to exhibit the following themes: bilingual setting since both languages are essential, initial placement in a deaf institution for socialization until around 1<sup>st</sup> grade,

at which point would then possibly transfer to a mainstream setting, would take additional action as a parent to ensure child was reaching the appropriate level of education, to avoid the frustration I experienced with my reading and writing levels.

One of the students who attended an “other” schooling environment chose not to respond to this question. The response of the other student was found to exhibit the following themes: prefer a dual setting: mainstream with an interpreter and a deaf setting- each 50% of the time.

### Conclusion

The participants in this study represented a diverse group of students, with representation present in all of the types of educational setting, hearing levels, and age groups provided as options in the survey. Participants in this study represented both students who had two hearing parents and those who had two deaf parents, and represented a variety of different cultural/ethnic/group identities. The majority of the participants considered themselves culturally Deaf and preferred communicating using ASL.

The participants provided a variety of positive and negative experiences that they encountered during their K-12 education. The majority of participants felt that their K-12 education had prepared them linguistically to succeed in the hearing world, but the participants were split about their cultural preparedness for the hearing world, linguistic preparedness for the Deaf community, and cultural preparedness for the Deaf community. The participants’ responses to the question about what type of school setting they would choose for a child of their own who was deaf or hard of hearing represented a variety of opinions and settings.

This chapter presented the results of my data collection. Chapter Five will discuss the major findings, their implications, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this study I attempted to answer the research questions:

Do deaf and hard of hearing college students think their K-12 setting prepared them to succeed linguistically and culturally in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

- a. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' preferred language use?
- b. What relationships exist between the type of K-12 educational setting experienced and students' cultural self-affiliation?

The results of this study were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter will address the study's major findings, limitations, and implications for stakeholders, and offer suggestions for further research.

Through this research, the following trends were identified. First, the majority of participants found their school setting to help prepare them linguistically and culturally for the hearing world. Next, the majority of students from mainstream settings did not feel their school prepared them linguistically or culturally for the Deaf community. Finally, the majority of participants preferred using ASL in communication with others, and considered themselves culturally Deaf, although students who were mainstreamed were less likely to consider themselves culturally Deaf.

## Major Findings

### Preparedness for Linguistic Success in the Hearing World

Participants were asked if they thought their K-12 education prepared them linguistically for success in the hearing world. No trends were identified based on the participants' K-12 school setting and perceived linguistic preparedness for the hearing world. However, it is noteworthy that the two individuals who said “no” and the one individual who was “uncertain” fell into the over 26 years old age group, potentially signifying a change in pedagogy between their age group and the younger participants. Additionally, these same three participants had two hearing parents, and the two participants who said “no” also identified their preferred language to use as either spoken English or signed communication, rather than ASL. This could indicate that they feel that their K-12 school setting did not prepare them linguistically for success in the hearing world due to having an unstable linguistic foundation in any language. This refers back to claims discussed earlier in this research that early exposure to any language is important to children's ability to learn that language fluently (Conboy & Kuhl, 2011; Huang, 2013; Newport, 1990).

### Preparedness for Linguistic Success in the Deaf Community

Participants were asked if they thought their K-12 education prepared them linguistically for success in the Deaf community. Of the students who attended mainstream classrooms in mainstream schools, six found their school did not prepare them linguistically for success in the Deaf community. This is the most important trend to be taken from the responses to this question. The majority of the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools did not feel their K-12 education

prepared them linguistically for success in the Deaf community. Additionally, the two students who identified themselves to have been educated in an “other” environment are believed to have been mainstreamed as well, based on the comments they left with their responses to some survey questions. Both of these students also said they did not think their “other” schooling environment prepared them linguistically for success in the Deaf community. This supports the comments of Pagliaro (2001), that a primary location in which Deaf culture is taught and passed on is in the residential and day schools for the deaf; perhaps the students who attended school in mainstream settings were not presented with the same opportunity to learn about Deaf culture.

All six of the participants who said “no” to this question, as well as the participant who was “uncertain” came from the over 26 year old age group, potentially indicating a change in pedagogy between their educational experience and the younger participants’ or possibly indicating an age-related difference, as the younger respondents may feel similarly later in life when they reach the age of the older participants.

#### Preparedness for Cultural Success in the Hearing Community

Participants were asked if they thought their K-12 education prepared them culturally for success in the hearing world. Overall, the majority of the participants found their K-12 education did prepare them culturally for the hearing world. The two respondents who said “no” both attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools. No trends were identified based on the participants’ K-12 school setting and perceived cultural preparedness for the hearing world.

### Preparedness for Cultural Success in the Deaf Community

As discussed earlier, Pagliaro (2001) states that a primary location in which Deaf culture is taught and passed on is the residential and day schools for the deaf. As a result, participants were asked if they thought their K-12 education prepared them culturally for success in the Deaf community. While there are not enough participants from the other types of school settings to make generalizations about them, these responses indicate that mainstream classes in mainstream schools do not prepare students for cultural success in the Deaf community. All five of the participants who were classified as having said “no” to this question came from the over 26 years old age group, potentially indicating a change in pedagogy between their educational experience and the younger participants’, or possibly indicating an age-related difference, as the younger respondents may feel similarly when they reach the age of the older participants.

### Preferred Language to Use

Participants were asked what language they prefer to use when communicating with others, and were given the three choices of spoken English, American Sign Language, or Signed Communication of some sort such as SEE or Pidgin. Eight of the total participants indicated they preferred communicating using American Sign Language, two preferred using spoken English, and one preferred Signed Communication. Within the students who attended mainstream classes in mainstream schools, three preferred ASL, while one preferred spoken English and one Signed Communication. One of the students educated in an “other” environment also preferred spoken English.

This data indicates that the majority of the participants preferred using ASL to communicate with others. It is possible that as these participants are attending a university for the deaf and hard of hearing, which utilizes ASL as its preferred method of communication, that the majority of students at this university, regardless of K-12 school setting would prefer using ASL when communicating with others.

#### Preferred Language to Receive

Participants were asked what language they prefer to receive from others when communicating, and were given the three choices of spoken English, American Sign Language, or Signed Communication of some sort such as SEE or Pidgin. These results were similar to the results in the last question, with seven preferring to receive American Sign Language and four preferring to receive spoken English. This data indicates that the majority of the participants preferred others using ASL when communicating with them. It is possible that as these participants are attending a university for the deaf and hard of hearing, which utilizes ASL as its preferred method of communication, that the majority of students at this university, regardless of K-12 school setting would prefer others using ASL when communicating with them.

#### Cultural Self-Affiliation

Participants were explicitly asked if they considered themselves culturally Deaf or not. 8 of 11 participants indicated they do consider themselves culturally Deaf, while three did not. Of the three who did not indicate they consider themselves culturally deaf, one participant attended mainstream classes in a mainstream school, and the other two were educated in an “other” setting, but are both believed to have been mainstreamed based on comments they left in their responses. This data indicates that students who

attend a school for the deaf and hard of hearing in some form (day program or residential program) will likely consider themselves culturally Deaf, while students who are mainstreamed in some form may or may not consider themselves culturally Deaf. This again supports Pagliaro's (2001) claims that residential and day schools for the deaf are primary locations where Deaf culture is taught and passed on. With less exposure to Deaf culture, the students who were mainstreamed may identify less strongly as culturally Deaf individuals.

### Summary of Findings

The results of this survey indicate that the majority of the participants felt their K-12 school setting helped prepare them linguistically and culturally for the hearing world. The majority of the students who attended school in a mainstream setting did not feel that their school prepared them linguistically or culturally to succeed in the Deaf community. The majority of the participants preferred using ASL in communication with others, and the majority of participants considered themselves culturally Deaf. However, participants were less likely to consider themselves culturally Deaf if they attended a mainstream setting for their K-12 education than the other participants.

### Limitations

#### Limitations of Survey Questions

Even in light of completing a full pilot study, some limitations of the survey questions were found when analyzing the research of the actual study. For example, in the question about the age of the participants, it would have been difficult for someone who was 26 years old to answer the question, as they would have fallen in between the categories of "22-25" and "over 26." This did not appear to be an issue with these participants as no

clarifying comments were left, but is something to edit if the survey is repeated in the future.

A second example is that of question 11: “What language are you most comfortable listening to/watching?” The reasoning behind selecting this wording for the question was to be inclusive and not guide the participants’ responses in any way, and by including listening to as well as watching, leaving the interpretation open to any mode of communication. However, a couple of the participants seemed to have interpreted “watching” as in “watching television,” as in their comments they made reference to needed to have closed-captioning on at all times.

The survey was constructed with deaf and hard of hearing students with American cultural and English language backgrounds in mind. However, one of the participants grew up in Mexico, with her oral language being Spanish rather than English. She was still able to complete the survey, but always clarified that when she was selecting “spoken English” that for her, the real answer was “spoken Spanish.” This is not believed to have impacted the results, but the questions and responses could have been written in a more inclusive way.

Lastly, the survey platform utilized in this study was limited in terms of accessibility to deaf and hard of hearing students. While the survey could be designed to include video, which it did in the informed consent as well as in each survey questions, the platform was not designed in such a way that allowed participants to answer the questions by uploading their own videos. Some of the questions required the participants to provide their own response, some of which were several sentences long. I did provide the participants with the option of either typing in their responses or filming their

responses in ASL and emailing them to me, but none of the participants took the second option, all choosing to type in their responses. It is possible that due to the extra step required for filming their responses, the participants were responding in a language other than that which was most comfortable to them, potentially having an impact on their responses.

### Limitations of Participants

As this study was conducted via an online survey tool, the results of the survey were limited to the information that the participants provided. In the analysis of the results, it must be assumed that the participants gave accurate responses, as the researcher was not present, nor met with the participants to learn more about them. As such, even when it appeared that a participant may have answered a question incorrectly based on his or her response to a previous question, the original responses had to be considered. To illustrate, two participants, for the question regarding the school setting in which they spent the most amount of their time during their K-12 years, selected “other.” However, the comments to other questions from these participants seemed to indicate that both of these participants had in fact been mainstreamed. Had this research been conducted in person or via interviews, the researcher would have been able to clarify this apparent discrepancy.

There was a self-selection bias present in this survey. Not all individuals pursue higher education, and not all deaf and hard of hearing students interested in attending college choose to do so at a university for the deaf and hard of hearing. It is likely that the students who participated in the survey were supported for academic success beyond the role of their K-12 education (such as parental support, academic aptitude, independent

resilience, etc.), since they all made it to a very well respected university for the deaf and hard of hearing. Additionally, there was no incentive to the participants of this survey. Participants were not compensated with gifts or money, and so only those individuals who saw and read the announcement inviting them to participate, and who then chose to do so, are represented in the results. It is understandable that students who are more passionate about the issue of K-12 education of the deaf and hard of hearing would be more likely to respond to such a survey. Perhaps due to their own academic pursuits in the field of deaf education, or perhaps due to very pleasant or unpleasant experiences of their own to draw upon, these students may have had had strong feelings about the topic of the survey.

The majority of the participants in this study attended mainstream schools – most in mainstream classes within a mainstream school. This number is even higher when it is considered that the two “other” students may have also been drawing from similar experiences as these participants. This did allow for patterns to be more noticeable among this population, but with a small number of participants the other school settings had limited representation. It is not feasible to make generalizations about a school setting based on the experiences of one individual, or even 12.

#### Implications

The results of this study suggest that there is no one school setting that is the best environment for all deaf and hard of hearing children. Each individual is unique, and different school settings may be better suited for some students, while very different settings may be the best fit for others. Parents of deaf and hard of hearing students who are making the important decision about where to educate their children will undoubtedly

feel a significant amount of pressure, but can feel more confident about whichever school setting they choose when considering the following takeaways from this research.

### Linguistic, Social, and Cultural Development

The results of this survey indicate that while students who are mainstreamed may not feel as prepared to succeed culturally as an adult in the Deaf community, students can thrive in a mainstream environment when they are provided with support and are able to make friends. Due to the language barrier, deaf and hard of hearing students who were mainstreamed indicated that making friends is one of the largest hurdles to overcome. To support their children in this effort, parents can work with their children to increase their confidence in their lip reading/English and ASL abilities. Whether the children are educated in a mainstream environment or a school for the deaf and hard of hearing, the participants indicated that deaf and hard of hearing students benefit from being around other deaf and hard of hearing people for socialization and exposure to the Deaf community, but also benefit from being around hearing people to learn how to self-advocate and succeed in the hearing world.

Parents should feel reassured that once a decision is made about where to educate their children, that decision is not necessarily a permanent one. Parents and children should continually reevaluate the school setting to examine whether or not the family's needs have changed, and if there is perhaps a different school that could be a better fit. Many of the participants in this study indicated they had attended a variety of schools, both mainstreamed and schools for the deaf and hard of hearing. Additionally, when asked about what type of school setting the participants would choose if they were to have to make the decision for deaf or hard of hearing children of their own, many of their comments indicated they would ideally choose a combination of environments. Some

participants favored attending a school for the deaf and hard of hearing early on to build a strong linguistic base in ASL and develop socialization skills in their children, then transferring to a mainstream setting when the child was older to develop the child's ability to succeed in the hearing world. Others were in favor of environments where the students participated in both environments throughout the school day. Parents should consider what options are available to them in their area, and will have to evaluate whether what is currently available is the best fit for their family, or if a better fit can be found elsewhere.

#### Further Research

This study's main focus was looking at the impact of the participants' K-12 school setting on their perceptions of their cultural and linguistic preparedness to succeed in the hearing and Deaf communities. In further research, it would be of interest to more closely examine other variables that could also play a role in students' perceptions of their cultural and linguistic preparedness. Some of these other variables could be parents' hearing abilities, length of time spent in different school settings, geographic region, cultural and ethnic affiliations, and age.

It would also be of interest to perform a similar study, but a more selective one. There would be a lot to learn from a similar study that was conducted via interviews with the participants rather than a survey, with more participants and a more even distribution of the types of school setting attended. An additional change could be interviewing participants from a variety of different places, not just one university for the deaf and hard of hearing.

I will be following up with the university where this research was conducted to see if the information found in this study could be of use to them. It is my hope that with the backing of this university, the results of this survey may more quickly and easily find themselves in the hands of new parents of deaf and hard of hearing children.

### Conclusion

I hope that the findings of this study will provide useful information to hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, who find themselves faced with the extremely difficult task of choosing the best educational setting for their child. New parents of deaf and hard of hearing children certainly have many variables to consider when deciding which type of educational setting to choose for their child. The results of this research will hopefully lift some of the weight off their shoulders, as the results indicate that deaf and hard of hearing children can feel prepared to succeed linguistically and culturally in different types of settings. Families with deaf and hard of hearing children should continually evaluate their needs and the needs of their children, and do not need to feel that once a choice has been made that their children must always remain in that type of school. As the children grow, they can have a more prominent voice in the type of school setting that would be best for their educational needs, whether that be a residential school for the deaf and hard of hearing, mainstream classes in a mainstream school, or something in between.

## APPENDIX A

### Data Collection Instrument

Data Collection Instrument

1. How do you describe yourself?
  - a. deaf (lowercase “d”)
  - b. Hard of hearing
2. What is your age?
  - a. Under 22
  - b. 22-25
  - c. Over 26
3. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Other
4. With which of these groups do you identify (select all that apply)?
  - a. Hispanic or Latino
  - b. American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - c. Asian
  - d. Black or African American
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - f. White
  - g. LGBT
  - h. Hearing
  - i. Deaf (capital “D”)
  - j. Other (please explain)

5. Which of the following best describes your parents/guardians?
  - a. Both deaf/ hard of hearing
  - b. One deaf/ hard of hearing, one hearing
  - c. Both hearing
6. Do you consider yourself culturally Deaf?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. In which schooling setting did you spend the most amount of time?
  - a. Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - b. Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - c. Day program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing
  - d. Residential program at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing
  - e. Other
8. What positive things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?
9. What negative things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?
10. What language are you most comfortable using to communicate?
  - a. Spoken English
  - b. American Sign Language
  - c. Signed communication such as Signed Exact English (SEE), Pidgin, etc.
11. What language are you most comfortable listening to/watching?
  - a. Spoken English

b. American Sign Language

c. Signed communication such as Signed Exact English (SEE), Pidgin, etc.

12. Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.

13. Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.

14. Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation.

15. Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation.

16. If you ever have deaf or hard of hearing children of your own, which type of educational setting would you choose for him/her? Why?

## APPENDIX B

### Responses to Question 8

Question 8 - What positive things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “recognition by SOME hearing teachers that Deaf can do anything- middle school/ early HS”
  - “I attended a public school, as the only Deaf student, from K-12. It was not my favorite time, as I was lonely and felt left out among my hearing peers (with communication, which affected my social life) but I worked hard and received a good education.”
  - “I had the best of both worlds. I grew up going to mainstream school with a deaf program so everybody was exposed to deaf culture and deaf people.”
  - “Pretty popular in school because I was a good athlete and received good grades. Public school K-12.”
  - “K-12. Nothing much positive. I choose to not dwell on my past.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Direct communication”
- Day program at a school for the deaf
  - “Many positive stuff happened. I got my education. I went to Jean Massieu School (deaf day school) Oquirrh Hills Middle School (hearing middle school mainstreamed) Kansas School for the Deaf Olathe North High School”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “direct access to language 100% of the time both teachers & peers, had high quality ASL interpreters while mainstreamed.”
  - “Positive thing happened in school was I recognized my improvement in writing English and reading by reading any personal book for classes. Deaf institution and 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade”
- Other
  - Great support from my parents, teacher, classmates, and my grades were from K-12 and College ( B.A)”
  - I got a great education in my mainstream classroom, graduated #2 in my class of over 600 students, and eventually went on to get a PhD from an Ivy League university. I made friends that I’m still in touch with. Mainstreaming was very good for me.”

## APPENDIX C

### Responses to Question 9

Question 9 - What negative things happened in school? What type(s) of school were they at and what grade(s) were you in?

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “being left out of conversations during high school”
  - “I attended a public school from K-12. Since I was taught to speak and lipread, I only had a notetaker. I wished I was taught ASL to make communication easier. Lipreading in classes was a difficult chore. I had to work ten times harder to lipread teachers/peers and do extra reading (besides the notes) to know what was class was about. I had to advocate for myself and tell schools (elementary and secondary) what I needed in the classroom. It was not an easy journey but my perseverance and hard work made adjusting to university easier”
  - “My high school didn’t have an ASL club.. that was disappointing considering that the deaf program there had a good number of deaf students. I do wish more hearing people were more interested in sign language but other than that, I didn’t experience anything negative.”
  - “Principal called me out during an entire school meeting yelling “Turn up your hearing aids!”, 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The 1970’s and education in particular do not hold fond memories.”
  - “Bullying throughout school years”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Na”
- Day program at a school for the deaf
  - “Many negative things happened at all schools and during all grades.”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “favoritism, deaf elites, big ‘D’ deaf attitude at the deaf school. Not direct access to communication with hearing students at mainstream schools.”
  - “Negative thing happened in school was not enough access to the counseling service for my grievance situation. Deaf institution and 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade”
- Other
  - “Sometimes I had challenges in lip reading the professors, or I sometimes felt isolated in the k-9 grade recess, due to communications barriers, and patience from my classmates.”
  - “Socially, things weren’t always easy in a mainstream program. But I think that prepared me for real life, and the educational advantages were clear.”

## APPENDIX D

### Responses to Question 12

Question 12 – Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “yes- I had the best world of both access to ASL and English to successfully communicate with the hearing world”
  - “Yes, I received a good education and taught myself skills and knowledge to survive in the “hearing” world and teach others how to communicate with Deaf people. I did not feel that I had good English during my K-12 school years but after years of practice with reading and writing, and acquiring ASL during my first year at NTID, my English improved.”
  - “Yes. Again, I was exposed to sign language ever since I was a baby and grew up learning how to speak and sign. My family and I were able to communicate and I had deaf peers so I think that helped.”
  - “No- the “special” training I received until 4<sup>th</sup> grade consisted of someone putting a piece of paper in front of their mouth, and I had to guess what they were saying. I got in a lot of trouble because I was always upset at having to do this and (still don’t) didn’t see the point of this.
  - “not really. I learned much more on my own. I was very reclusive and spent a lot of time reading and writing.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Yes”
- Day program at a school for the deaf
  - “Yes, I am fluent in both languages and I am able to navigate through life with my bilingual experience.”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “Yes, it did. I was fortunate to attend various leadership and political conferences throughout middle and high school where I interacted with hearing students professionally and developed appropriate language skills needed for the hearing world.”
  - “Hard question to answer but I would say yes and no because I had been stuck in reading/writing in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level until I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and it improved to 6 grade level. I was kind of wish that teachers would say something about my writing skills and reading skills that need improving and would let my parents to know about different techniques for my reading/writing skills to improve, even though, we didn’t communicate in same language that I am comfortable with.”

- Other
  - “Yes, I went to a hearing private school in Mexico . My professors were so patient with me. I was the only deaf in the whole school. I did not feel excluded in the classroom. If I have succeeded in the Spanish Speaking hearing world, I can succeed in the American culture.
  - “Yes, definitely. I can’t speak for other deaf and hard of hearing students at other programs, but I am fluent on written and spoken English and have published articles in academic journals and magazines.”

APPENDIX E

Responses to Question 13

Question 13 – Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the hearing world? Please give an explanation.

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “yes—it taught me to navigate through the hearing world dealing with cultural appropriations and idiosyncrasies that are not taught in schools for the Deaf”
  - “Yes and no. I was raised in a hearing family who did not use ASL and had no knowledge about Deaf people and Deaf culture. I felt that there was a big piece missing from my life and that was my Deaf identity and Deaf culture. However, I learned to survive in the “hearing” world because I was an independent learner and felt the need to prove to hearing people that I could do anything but hear. When I learned ASL, I fell in love with Deaf culture, which changed my life and opened up many opportunities for me, culturally and linguistically.”
  - “Yes, because I was in the deaf program-however most of them had hearing parents so looking back, it would’ve been nice if hearing parents were taught more about our culture and try to get more involved”
  - “No – the credit would have to go to me. I worked my butt off – every day after school I would take a nap, and then transcribe notes form the school book to my notepad –this has proven to me to be the best way for me to remember things.”
  - “No, not much exposure to deaf, therefore not getting a good cultural experience.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Yes”
- Day program at a school for the deaf
  - “Not sure”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “Kind of, deaf schools i went to had a lot of Deaf Power teachers were I was always told that the hearing world was cruel and I wouldnt fit in anywhere whereas I found to be untrue because not all hearing people are cruel.”
  - “Yes, I believe there were many diverse students that I was hang out with. I was able to learn many different things about cultures from individuals.”

- Other
  - “yes, I grew up in a hearing setting in Mexico, my love for geography and Mexican and world history class, led me to travel along for three months in Europe after getting my college degree, for three months, that was before I learned ASL.”
  - “Yes. Mainstreaming gave me experience in the hearing world from a young age. I gradually figured out the skills I needed to thrive. I don’t think that would have happened in a deaf classroom. But that’s just me.”

APPENDIX F

Responses to Question 14

Question 14 – Do you think you K-12 education prepared you (linguistically) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation. (*NOTE: N=10*)

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “nope I was not ASL enough and got criticized for it until I mastered ASL”
  - “Yes and no. Since I had good English, I was able to acquire a second language, ASL, quickly at NTID, as an adult. I mastered it in such a short time that I was able to immerse myself in the Deaf community and feel connected with other Deaf people who used ASL.”
  - “Yes. Grew up in a mainstream school with a deaf program so I had all of the resources available for me.”
  - “NO”
  - “No, because again not much exposure to deaf community, and when I was, I was even bullied by Deaf who thought they were better than me. I was bullied because I spelled too much, therefore not DEAF enough.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Yes”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “yes, my ASL skills are superb although I think in English. Weird coming from a deaf family I’d think.”
  - “No, Some of them have favoritism of which students they like and teach them in linguistic to succeed in deaf community. I was kind of left behind and had to fight to get what I want to be succeed.”
- Other
  - “No, again I grew up in a hearing school, I did not know about the exposure and existence of sign language until after college.”
  - “No, I wasn’t exposed to ASL. But I can live with that.”

APPENDIX G

Responses to Question 15

Question 15 – Do you think your K-12 education prepared you (culturally) to succeed as an adult in the Deaf community? Please give an explanation. (*NOTE: N=10*)

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “Not really... I still don’t feel Deaf enough even though I am dedicated to the Deaf world”
  - “No, like I mentioned earlier, I did not have any exposure to Deaf culture until I attended NTID. However, as an independent learner and self starter, I quickly immersed myself with ASL and Deaf culture. I truly felt at home, as an adult. I have not looked back since then.”
  - “Yes, they taught about RIT/CSUN/Gallaudet and other schools that had deaf programs.
  - “No”
  - “No, same reason as #14.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Yes”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “Yes and No. They all told me to go to Gallaudet and that’s where I went and experienced the backlash of Deaf elitism and favoritism. You have to be “in” to know where and whom to network with.”
  - “yes, As we know we were in deaf institution, we strongly believe that we are big D deaf, but there are some oppression around us such as CIs which refers as a robot. However, today’s in deaf community is more acceptable for students with CIs to refer themselves as big D deaf.”
- Other
  - “I can say, my skills and my success in school in Mexico, some deaf people in my local community in California, have seen me as their role model. I sit down with these deaf people, often to give them moral support for their struggle in school.”
  - “No, Mainstreaming didn’t expose me to Deaf norms. But I can live with that.”

APPENDIX H

Responses to Question 16

Question 16 – If you ever have a deaf or hard of hearing child of your own, which type of educational setting would you choose for him/her? Why? (NOTE: N=9)

- Mainstream classes in a mainstream school
  - “a combination of both”
  - “First, I would use ASL with my Deaf or hard-of-hearing child because communication is the key to understand others. I would want my child to have a good education, as well as social opportunities with sports and activities. If mainstreaming was an option, I would ensure that there were support services available such as ASL interpreters, notetakers, and other Deaf students. I would not want my Deaf child to be the only Deaf student in the whole school like my experience. If there was a good Deaf school with a strong education (e.g. certified bilingual teachers) that also provided sports and activities, I would send my Deaf child there. This question is really a “what if and what is available” but I would know better how to provide a much positive learning experience because of what I experienced.”
  - “Well times are changing now. I’d love to put him/her in a mainstream school if there is a good deaf program but that is changing now so I’m not sure. I always think about this question because it makes me nervous. I feel like more kids are being isolated and being the only deaf kid at their school and I don’t think that’s a good idea.”
  - “For both deaf and HoH children, I would emphasize ASL first and English second – but both have to be mastered if you want to venture into the hearing world. People underestimate the value of belonging to a group – something I don’t think I really will ever know.”
  - “I would want to raise a child who was not into bullying others, not passing judgement on people because of the way they communicate, as the Deaf community has with me.”
- Designated deaf/hard of hearing classroom in a mainstream school
  - “Deaf school”
- Residential program at a school for the deaf
  - “I would chose a bilingual setting because both languages are essential in navigating the world.”
  - “Depend where I would be at, I will place my child to deaf institution for socialize with other deaf/HOH children until they are in 1<sup>st</sup> grade or so, possible transfer to mainstream school until high school. But since I experienced my frustration with level of writing and reading, I would as a parent take action to make sure I educate my children in the level where they should be.”

- Other
  - “This is a difficult question, I feel more comfortable in the deaf setting. My parents do not sign with me. I would prefer a dual setting. a mainstream (with interpreter) and a deaf setting (where all sign, and deaf people) 50 % and 50 %.”

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