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Examining the influence of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity

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EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

EXPERIENCE ON DEAF IDENTITY

by

Frederick Douglass Staten

<u>An Abstract</u>

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in
Rehabilitation and Counselor Education
in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

December 2011

Thesis Supervisor: Assistant Professor Noel Estrada Hernandez

ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity development. The researcher utilized qualitative methodology, constant comparative analysis, and semi-structured interviews with 5 current students and 5 alumni from the Oregon School for the Deaf. The triangulation of participant interviews collectively yielded 67 textural codes and 8 structural categories in response to the four research questions:

1. Were there experiential factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf?

2. What, if any, is the impact of the residential school for the deaf on the identities of those who experience it?

3. How do the participants perceive their experience at the residential school for the deaf as preparation for life after graduation?

4. Based on participants' experiences with helping professionals, are there competencies, from their perspective, that helping professionals need in order to best serve individuals who are deaf?

The data in the form of participant responses revealed that the immersive nature of the residential school for the deaf experience led to unfettered communication and comfort through sign language, thus making their educational experience more comfortable; increased personal and social Deaf cultural identification; and perceived readiness for life after graduation. In reference to helping professional competencies, participants reported professionals need to know the language and culture of the individuals who are being served.

Abstract Approved: _____
                                    Thesis Supervisor

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                                    Date

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Frederick Douglass Staten

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Rehabilitation and Counselor Education at the December
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To the Staten, Booker, Tyson, and Worth families. Thank you for helping me to shape my identity and being the catalyst for wanting to understand the identities of others.

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

Frederick Douglass

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Identity development research has evolved considerably since the publication of Erik Erickson's 1968 model of psychosocial development. In conjunction with general research related to identity development, researchers have also conducted studies specifically on the formation of deaf identity. Although theories of deaf identity development vary, one common finding is that identity can be influenced by factors that are socially constructed (Hadjikakou & Nikolaraizi, 2006). One foundational, socially constructed deaf identity factor is the way in which deaf individuals are educated.

Residential schools for the deaf have been influential in the formation of deaf identity (Hadjikakou & Nikolaraizi, 2006). Given deaf identity formation is an individual process, the extent to which attending a residential school for the deaf influences identity development is relative to the experiences of the individual. Thus, the researcher chose a qualitative format to examine the perceptions of individuals who attended a residential school for the deaf. The purpose of using a qualitative format to collect the data was to explore the influences of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity formation from the perspective of individual students and alumni so insight could be gained from the direct feedback of those who had participated in the experience. The researcher hoped that the triangulation of feedback from both current students and alumni of a residential school for the deaf would provide unique data regarding deaf identity development.

This inquiry had four distinct goals:

1. To identify factors that contributed to a student's decision to attend a residential school for the deaf.

2. To examine the impact of attending a residential school for the deaf on the identities of the students who experience it.

3. To investigate if attendance at a residential school for the deaf prepares individuals for life after graduation.

4. To determine, based on participants' experiences with helping professionals, if there are competencies helping professionals need to possess to best serve individuals who are deaf.

Chapter I provides the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the study, including (a) an introduction to deafness and deaf identity formation, (b) a description of schools for the deaf and their significance, (c) a discussion of the helping professionals' role in the service delivery process, (d) the purpose of the study, (e) research questions, (f) the need for the study, (g) the definition of terms, and (h) a chapter summary.

<u>What is Deafness?</u>

"The term 'deaf' is vague, or rather, is so general that it impedes consideration of the vastly differing degrees of deafness, degrees that are of qualitative, and even 'existential,' significance" (Sacks, 1989, p. 4).

Multiple theoretical frameworks in the available literature have addressed how deaf identity is formed. These identity models are divided into two distinct perspectives according to how deafness is classified: the medical or disability model, and the social or cultural model.

In the medical or disability-based model, the focus is on the condition of being audiologically deaf, hard of hearing, or other terms that describe deafness as an impairment. This model may support the use of resources such as audiologists, hearing aids, or other methods that attempt to assist individuals to maximize their residual hearing (Rogers, 2009). Identification with this model may result in the perception of deafness as an infirmity that needs to be "cured" by means of a hearing aid, cochlear implant, or other assistive devices to recoup residual hearing. Within the medical model of deafness, there are three categories.

The first category is known as conductive hearing loss. Attenuation is a decrease in the strength of sound that results from a conductive hearing loss. When a barrier to sound is present in the outer ear or middle ear, some loss of hearing will occur. An individual's sensitivity to sounds that are introduced by air conduction is impaired by such a blockage (Clark & Martin, 2003). This blockage characterizes conductive hearing loss.

The second category is sensorineural hearing loss. If the disturbance producing the hearing loss is situated in some portion of the sensorineural mechanism, such as the inner ear and related cranial nerve, a hearing loss by air conduction will result. When a hearing loss has the same amount of attenuation for both air conduction and bone conduction, the conductive mechanism is eliminated as a possible cause of difficulty. With these characteristics present, a diagnosis of sensorineural hearing loss can then be made (Clark & Martin, 2003).

The third category is mixed hearing loss. This type of hearing loss can occur when sound traveling on the bone-conduction pathway is attenuated only by the defect in the inner ear, but sound traveling on the air conduction pathway is attenuated by both middle- and inner-ear problems (Clark & Martin, 2003). In other words, impairments in the outer and middle ear (which are represented by conductive hearing loss) combined with impairments in the inner ear (which are represented by sensorineural hearing loss) cause a mixed hearing loss. Individuals receiving one of these diagnoses are not only diagnosed as either deaf or hard of hearing but are often labeled as "disabled" in the medical model.

The social or cultural model, in contrast, focuses on deafness more as a multicultural characteristic and source of empowerment and less as an impairment or disability (Leigh, 2003). In the world of deafness, there are distinctions among members of the Deaf community who identify with Deaf culture and those who identify with a medical model of deafness or with hearing culture. The capital D refers to individuals

who align themselves with the language, attitudes, behaviors, and traditions of Deaf culture. To this end, members of Deaf culture prefer to be identified as a linguistic minority that shares a common culture as opposed to individuals who share a medical condition (Falvo, 2005). According to the beliefs and values of Deaf culture, being deaf is not an impairment, handicap, or disability, but is rather a characteristic of membership in a cultural community (Lane, 1995).

<u>Deaf versus deaf</u>

The development of a healthy identity and the ability to integrate fully into society is contingent on the way individuals relate to their environment and vice versa. As individuals express ideas and thoughts and share them with members of their community, they receive feedback that is influential in determining how they perceive themselves. As a result of communication barriers and the attitudes of the "nondisabled" population as they respond to those who are considered "disabled," this avenue can be restricted, thus affecting the development of a healthy personality. This is not to say identity development cannot take place when these attitudes are present, but the attempts to establish one's identity may become more difficult with these perceptual barriers in place. In order for individuals to explore their identity without restrictions, they must have the opportunity to be accepted as whole persons first, enabling those around them to focus on their unique characteristics (Scheetz, 2001).

Deaf (with a capital D) refers to a culture of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. Membership in the Deaf community is based on several factors. First, an individual must choose to be identified with Deaf culture; second, an individual must be able to relate to experiences that are shared by other members of the Deaf community; and third, an individual must share a common communication modality to facilitate the interchange of ideas.

Many Deaf people, particularly whose who are prelingually deaf, do not view themselves as "disabled" and argue that deafness is just another aspect of normality; they

consider themselves as normal individuals who do not communicate by hearing or speaking. "While they may have a 'biophysical maladaptation,' any 'disability' that they have is 'socially constructed' and a result of the physical and attitudinal barriers that non-comprehending society imposes on them" (Beattie, 2001, p. 36). The diagnosis of a hearing loss is only part of the deaf experience. The diagnosis of deafness coupled with the attitudes of both the society and the individual who is diagnosed with deafness help to collectively define deafness based on the perspective of each individual.

If an individual has a hearing loss and is considered "deaf" or hard of hearing via an audiological examination, this does not guarantee acceptance into the Deaf community; the individual must first subscribe to Deaf culture. Subscription includes shared experiences and behaviors, participation in Deaf events, and support of political advocacy within the Deaf community. In addition to shared beliefs, experiences, and behaviors, there must be a shared language. Using American Sign Language (ASL) allows members of the Deaf community in the United States to converse with ease, share intimate thoughts, exchange humorous anecdotes, and enjoy everyday discourse. Even though some individuals may not master sign language until adulthood, learning ASL opens up a new arena of shared experiences (Scheetz, 2001).

American Sign Language (also referred to as ASL or Ameslan) is a visually gesture-rich language that was created by and for deaf individuals living in the United States. It has become the language of between 250,000 and 500,000 Americans of all ages. Although the system is utilized in the United States and referred to as American Sign, approximately 60% of its signs are of French origin (Scheetz, 2001).

The use of ASL, among other characteristics, makes the Deaf community a unique culture. Within this culture, members establish individual identities while creating a voice for those who do not have one. Given that counselors must recognize the support systems and influences of the individuals they serve, recognizing the characteristics of Deaf culture is a critical part of any assessment of a deaf or hard of

hearing client. Therefore, it is important for counselors to understand the role of Deaf culture in the lives of individuals they serve who are members of the Deaf community.

There are significant philosophical differences between the perceptions of deafness as a medical condition and as a linguistic minority based on a review of available literature. This writer is not attempting to imply that the two philosophical differences related to perceptions of deafness keep either group from interacting with each other, or the society in which they live. It simply speaks to the individualized conceptualization of the way in which they choose to categorize their deafness. These concepts have been addressed here and will continue to be addressed throughout this study. The next section will introduce the pervasiveness of deafness in the United States.

Pervasiveness of Deafness

According to statistics reported by synthesizing the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP):

> About 2 to 4 of every 1,000 people in the United States are 'functionally deaf,' though more than half became deaf late in life; fewer than 1 out of every 1,000 people in the United States became deaf before 18 years of age. However, if people with a severe hearing impairment are included with those who are deaf, then the number is 4 to 10 times higher. That is, anywhere from 9 to 22 out of every 1,000 people have a severe hearing impairment or are deaf. Again, at least half of these people reported their hearing loss after 65 years of age. Finally, if everyone who has any kind of 'trouble' with their hearing is included, then anywhere from 37 to 140 out of every 1,000 people in the United States have some kind of hearing loss, with a large share being at least 65 years old. (Gallaudet Research Institute Website)

Approximately 5 to 10% of deaf children are born to deaf parents, which mean that 90 to 95% of deaf children are born to hearing parents (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004). Given the pervasiveness of deafness and the variability related to age of onset, identity can be understood as a characteristic that is not necessarily innate in nature; thus, how deaf identity is formulated is a phenomenon that may not be linear. The next section introduces the concept of deaf identity and ways that it may be constructed.

Introduction to Deaf Identity Development

The majority of people who are deaf do not originate from families in which deafness is the norm (Holcomb, 1993). In fact, over 90% of deaf children are born into hearing families (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004). Based on this statistic, how do individuals who are deaf acquire a deaf identity despite a vast hearing influence? Israelite, Ower, and Goldstein (2002) stated, "identity represents the intersection of the individual and society" (p. 134). This process can be viewed as societal exposure influencing the fabric of identity formation.

The development of identity is a socially constructed process that emerges through experiences and interactions between the self and the surrounding social environment (Baumeister, 1997; Grotevant, 1992; Harter, 1997; Kent & Smith, 2006; Stinson & Whitmire, 2000). According to the literature, children and adolescents who ultimately self-identify as members of the Deaf community tend to be raised within a family that practices deaf traditions, to be educated in a school environment where they interact with deaf adults and deaf peers, and to communicate in sign language (Hadjikakou & Nikolaraizi, 2006).

If identity indeed is socially constructed, then the definition of cultural identity among people who are deaf could be based on how they perceive themselves in terms of personal identity, language identity, and social identity, and how strongly these three aspects of identity are interrelated (Hadjikakou & Nikolaraizi, 2007). From the available literature related to deaf identity development, five deaf identity studies containing deaf identity models were reviewed and will be described in more detail in Chapter II.

Weinberg and Sterritt (1986) developed the Deaf Identity Scale (DIS) that included subscales to measure Hearing Identification, Deaf Identification, and Dual Identification.

Stinson and Kluwin (1996) administered the Social Activity Scale (SAS) to mainstreamed students with hearing loss. The authors presented a social orientation

paradigm that examined how group functioning with peers affected deaf identity. Essentially, the interactions with peers, both deaf and hearing, affected the concept of self and cultural identification.

Glickman (1996) researched and developed the Deaf Identity Development Scale (DIDS), which was based on racial and ethnic identity scales. In this model, Glickman described four distinct stages of deaf identity development: Culturally Hearing, Culturally Marginal, Immersion in the Deaf World, and Bicultural (Glickman, 1993).

Bat-Chava (2000) conducted a study using the Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) to measure deaf identity, and focused on three culturally related categories: culturally hearing, culturally deaf, and a mixture of the two known as bicultural. Bat-Chava's research on deaf identity focused on communication and socialization as intrinsic to the formation of identity.

Maxwell-McCaw (2001) developed the Deaf Acculturation Scale (DAS) in which four acculturation categories were identified: Hearing Acculturation (geared more toward hearing acculturation and less toward deaf acculturation), Marginal Acculturation (low hearing and deaf acculturation), Deaf Acculturation (geared more toward deaf acculturation and less toward hearing acculturation); and Bicultural Acculturation (high identification with both deaf and hearing acculturation) (Leigh, 2010).

In addition to research utilizing deaf identity scales, this researcher also reviews literature that has directly studied the influence of educational experiences on identity formation. Those studies are Sari (2005), Nikolaraizi and Hadjikakou (2006), Nikolaraizi and Hadjikakou (2007), and McIlroy and Storbeck (2011). All of these studies specifically examined the influence of deaf on identity development, and are a part of the review of literature in Chapter II,

The preliminary assumption for this study related to identity, based on previous literature, was that culture and socialization are mechanisms that influence identity

development. It is the true extent of the impact of these experiences that this study seeks to understand from the direct responses from participants.

One of the venues in which this socialization takes place is the educational setting. A common yet pivotal influence in the lives of individuals who are deaf is education, and for some, residential schools for the deaf are the places where their identities are formed. The next section will introduce residential schools for the deaf.

<p style="text-align:center">Introduction to the Residential School for the Deaf</p>

Imagine sitting in a classroom where everyone else speaks a language that you do not understand and have never spoken aloud. Now think about how you are going to follow what is being taught, pass the tests that are given, socialize with peers, and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve desired outcomes. These are some of the potential challenges facing students who are deaf and are educated in classrooms made up of predominately hearing peers (Bradley, 2004).

Approximately 2 to 3 out of every 1000 children are born deaf or hard of hearing according to statistics from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (2008). As it relates to individuals who are 18 years and under, the prevalence of deafness and hearing loss is approximately 1,055,000 (Broussard & Mathos, 2005). There are numerous school placement options for children with hearing loss. Some children who have hearing loss attend residential schools designed exclusively for them. These schools commonly employ teachers who also have hearing loss, and ASL is typically the primary communication modality. ASL is a highly visual-spatial, linguistically complete, and natural language utilized as the primary mode of communication among individuals who are deaf (Leu & Oz, 2007). A sense of unity and a cultural identity usually are associated with hearing loss, and the use of ASL typically is adopted by those who attend schools for the deaf.

The first school for deaf students was established on April 15, 1817, in Hartford, Connecticut. The purpose of the school was to give deaf students the opportunity to

pursue academic studies in an environment that was more knowledgeable about the deaf experience (Hadjikakou & Nikolaraizi, 2006).

In schools for the deaf, unique teaching perspectives are utilized. These include teaching and learning in an environment that is more discussion based as opposed to didactic, classrooms that are constructed in a least restrictive manner to ensure that all students are able to communicate and interpret information freely, and direct communication of students with their peers and teachers through a common language that enables a greater quantity and quality of fluid interaction. These characteristics assist in improving students' academic achievement and self-efficacy (Garay, 2003) and contribute to their identity formation.

It is important for this writer to communicate that the school for the deaf provides two distinct options for attendance as a student. The first attendance option is as a day student. Day students come to the school in the morning, attend classes, and go home at the end of the school day. The second option is as a residential student. Residential students attend classes at the school as day students do, but remain on campus after their academic day is complete, and live in the dorms located on the school for the deaf campus. The residential school for the deaf experience is often chosen by students either who are are seeking an immersive educational experience, or for those who live some distance from the school in which they attend. The residential student and their experiences will be the focus of this work exploring how it affects identity development.

In the next section, the author will discuss why it is important for helping professionals to understand the influence of the residential school for the deaf experience on identity formation.

Role of Helping Professionals

As the counseling profession grows and changes, practices and standards for the profession change as well. Professionals who work with individuals who are deaf have expanded from a relatively small group of service providers to a diverse group of

specialists in multiple concentrations of service delivery. This expansion of service delivery calls for continued efforts by professionals in the field of rehabilitation to obtain and maintain the knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitudes necessary to provide ethical and competent services (CORE, 2001).

Changes in service delivery systems and practice are only part of the ongoing challenges that face the profession and practice of helping professionals (Shaw, Leahy, Chan, & Catalano, 2006). Leahy, Chan, and Saunders (2003) outlined seven major job functions of helping professionals in the field of rehabilitation: (a) vocational counseling and consultation, (b) counseling intervention, (c) community-based rehabilitation service activities, (d) case management, (e) applied research, (f) assessment, and (g) professional advocacy. Included in these competencies and job functions are six knowledge domains: career counseling; assessment and consultation; counseling theories, techniques, and applications; rehabilitation services and resources; case and caseload management; health care and disability systems; and medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability (Leahy, Muenzen, Saunders, & Strauser, 2009, p. 96).

In light of the competencies and knowledge domains listed above, understanding the process of deaf identity formation will assist counselors in providing effective services to individuals who are deaf and to meet the individuals where they are in relation to their identity. For helping professionals to adequately serve individuals who are deaf and who have had the residential schools for the deaf experience, they must also understand the impact of this experience on deaf identity formation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of the residential school for the deaf experience in deaf identity formation. Specifically, this study examined how being immersed in the residential school for the deaf experience affected individuals' personal, social, linguistic, and cultural identity development from the perspectives of the individuals who have had this experience. To achieve this purpose, the author utilized

qualitative semi-structured interviews, and Constant Comparative Analysis to collect and analyze participant responses to the following research questions:

1. Were there experiential factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the decision to attend a residential school for the deaf?

2. What, if any, is the impact of the residential school for the deaf on the identities of those who experience it?

3. How do the participants perceive their experience at the residential school for the deaf as preparation for life after graduation?

4. Based on participants' experiences with helping professionals, are there competencies, from their perspective, that helping professionals need in order to best serve individuals who are deaf?

Now that the purpose of the study has been noted, the next section will introduce the need for the study.

<div align="center">Need for the Study</div>

First, this study is needed because the author, after reviewing available literature, found no existing studies that utilized qualitative semi-structured interviews to triangulate participant responses from both current students and alumni who attended the same residential school for the deaf. The richness of these semi-structured interviews provided insight for both hearing culture and deaf culture regarding the influence of the residential school for the deaf experience on identity formation per participant responses.

The second reason that this study is needed is related to the challenges facing residential schools for the deaf. Because of significant efforts to make mainstream education less restrictive to deaf and hard of hearing students coupled with state budget cuts, residential schools for the deaf have experienced reductions in enrollment. In addition, residential schools for the deaf face budget challenges that have adversely affected some schools' ability to purchase school supplies and maintain staff, and in some cases, have caused the merging or closing of schools. The concerns facing residential

schools for the deaf and the study's potential contribution to a gap in the literature support the need for this study.

Researcher Disclosure

The primary researcher in this work has previously worked with individuals from the deaf community in a professional capacity. In addition, in the summer of 2003, this writer attended a 6-week immersion program called the Orientation to Deafness Program located at the University of Tennessee. That experience facilitated this author gaining specific coursework in the areas of audiology, Deaf culture, and American Sign Language. These experiences influenced not only this researcher, but also the choosing of this particular topic.

To combat the potential bias this experience and enthusiasm related to this topic may produce, safeguards in relation to data collection and analysis were implemented. These safeguards took place in the forms of triangulation, peer debriefing and member checks to control for the presence of any researcher bias potentially affecting results. These concepts are elaborated upon in Chapter III.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used for the purposes of this study:

Auditory/Oral/Oralist Programs: programs based on the philosophy that most deaf and hard of hearing children can be taught to learn and speak with early educational intervention using verbal methods of teaching.

American Sign Language (ASL): method of sign language that is used as a primary mode of communication in the Deaf community. The word order and grammatical rules are different from English, which makes it a unique language.

Culture: the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.

Deaf (with a capital D): refers to members of Deaf culture. Being deaf is not sufficient to be a part of Deaf culture; members must identify with the culture's values, share experiences and traditions, and communicate using a shared language.

Deaf or deafness: In scientific and medical terms, deafness generally refers to a physical characteristic in which a lack of sensitivity to sound is present. Notated as deaf with a lowercase d, this word refers to the audiological experience of someone who partially or wholly lacks hearing. To be included in this study, participants reported having either profound deafness (90 dB - 120 dB) or severe hearing loss (60 dB - 90 dB).

Deaf Culture: a minority group of individuals who culturally identify with the shared experiences of those who are deaf and who participate in the Deaf community's activities, traditions, language, and values.

Deaf Identity Development Model: a variant of cultural and racial identity development theories that describes the process by which some deaf people acquire a culturally Deaf identity.

Hard of Hearing: refers to a degree of hearing loss with some residual range of hearing.

Language Identity: participation in a systematic form of communication that enables an individual, according to a learned and internalized system of grammatical rules, to convey thoughts, feelings, or emotions in a manner consistent with linguistic cultural practices.

Mainstreaming: when deaf students are placed in educational environments that are primarily populated with individuals without significant hearing loss. When deaf students are mainstreamed, their primary method of communication is verbal, although sign language services can be available. Other terms are inclusion and integration.

Personal Identity: global understanding of the self.

Residential Schools for the Deaf: state-funded residential schools that are primarily if not fully populated by individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and in which sign language is the primary method of communication.

Social Identity: interpersonal understanding of the self in social contexts.

<u>Summary</u>

In this chapter, the researcher briefly introduced and defined deaf identity formation, introduced residential schools for the deaf and their importance, discussed the role of helping professionals in the service delivery process, outlined the current study and why it is needed, presented the research questions, and provided definitions of relevant terms used in the study. In Chapter II, the author will review the relevant literature related to (a) the construct of self-identity; (b) contemporary research in identity formation, particularly among diverse populations and persons who live in deaf educational settings; and (c) the place this study has in existing literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explored how the residential school for the deaf experience defines or contributes to the development of deaf self-identity. Self-identity refers to personal, linguistic, and social factors that cumulatively comprise an individual's sense of self. Before this phenomenon can be adequately addressed, salient background information is needed.

In Chapter I, the researcher introduced the significance of self-identity, the Deaf community and Deaf culture, and identified the focus of this research. In Chapter II, the researcher will (a) introduce the concept of self-identity; (b) provide a history of Deaf education; (c) introduce the research site from which participants were chosen, the Oregon School for the Deaf; (d) describe factors necessary for academic achievement for individuals who are deaf; (e) review research literature related to deaf identity development; and (g) provide a chapter summary.

The researcher believes that it is important to explore the history of deaf education and the environment in which deaf identity is formed. Without this background information, it would be difficult to understand the true impact, if any, of the school for the deaf experience on identity development. This information, coupled with understanding the research literature related to identity development, will provide the foundation for this study.

<u>What is Self-identity?</u>

In the available identity research, there are myriad definitions for identity. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines self as "the union of elements (e.g., emotions and thoughts) that constitute the individual of the person," and identity as "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual: individuality." Ball (1972) defined identity as the public label that is applied to the person and self as the ideas each

of us has about who and what we are (as cited in Albrecht, Seelman, & Bury, 2001, p.

402).

According to Israelite et al. (2002):

Identity represents the intersection of the individual and society. In framing
identity, the individual simultaneously joins the self to society and society to self.
As a result, identity comes to serve not only as a guardian of the integration and
continuity of self-experience, but also as a mechanism for shared meaning-
making that embeds the individual with those with whom life will be lived. (p.
134)

Despite the plethora of definitions in the literature related to the concept of self-

identity, Leigh (2009) explained that there are essentially two specific categories of

identity: primordialism or essentialism, and constructivism or nonessentialism.

According to Leigh:

Within the essentialist perspective, identity is conceived of as essential,
relatively fixed, predetermined, or 'natural,' based on specific 'authentic'
characteristics that clearly define an overarching identity construct and create a
related sense of belongingness, shared historical truth, and stability. In contrast,
the nonessentialist perspective is based on a social constructivist framework.
Specifically, identities are not inherently in the self or created by the
individual's surroundings. Rather, the self as an ongoing process constructs
itself and is constructed by the social environment in the guise of political,
economic, and sociocultural forces that contribute to shared meaning systems or
cultural contexts that evolve over time. (2009, p. 4)

Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi (2007) reported in their study of deaf identity in

Cyprus that the type of school that individuals attend does affect their identity formation.

Before examining the impact of residential schools for the deaf on deaf identity, the

researcher will summarize the history of deaf education to promote an enhanced

understanding of the traditions of schools for the deaf.

<u>History of Deaf Education</u>

The first documented usage of a manual alphabet to teach students who were deaf

took place in Madrid and was spearheaded by Juan Pablo Bonet (Zaragoza Aragon). It

was his advocacy that encouraged the use of a one-handed manual alphabet to teach both

speech and writing to deaf students. Bonet's (Zaragoza Aragon) manual one-handed

alphabet, only slightly augmented, was the foundation for one-handed alphabets used

today in countries such as the United States, France, and Brazil. It also forms the genesis of the Russian Manual Alphabet (Moores, 2001).

In the United States, the first schools for the deaf adopted a teaching style that was geared toward students who were deaf and hard of hearing. To this end, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was sent to Europe in 1815 to study both manual (sign language) and oral approaches to teaching the deaf and to bring back to the United States the approach that would be the most effective. The Braidwoods, who established the first school for the deaf in Great Britain, were responsible for teaching Gallaudet an oral style of communication to use with students who were deaf, but they did not support his plan to learn this style within a few months versus the 4 years they believed were necessary. As a result, Gallaudet elected to focus on manual communication rather than oral communication (Moores, 2010). During the year that Gallaudet spent learning manual communication in Paris, he met a teacher, Laurent Clerc, who was deaf, and invited him to return with him to the United States to teach at a school that he was hoping to found in New England (Lou, 1988).

On April 15, 1817, a group of 12 deaf students entered what was known at that time as the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, later named the American School for the Deaf. The students who attended this first school of its kind in the United States ranged from 12 to 51 years of age, and ranged in socioeconomic status from the affluent in New England to the less affluent from Martha's Vineyard. The establishment of the school by Gallaudet and Clerc, coupled with the attendance of these 12 students, marked the genesis of deaf education in the United States (Cerney, 2007; Moores, 2009).

The egalitarian partnership between Gallaudet and Clerc in addition to the success of the school led to the founding of additional schools for the deaf in the United States. The schools focused on language and education, but an unplanned phenomenon occurred. After a long period of time in which individuals who were deaf were socially and

geographically isolated, schools for the deaf began to be the launching point for both social acceptance and cultural cultivation (Cerney, 2007).

Sign language became a prominent part of educating individuals who were deaf, and in 1835, the language that was used to communicate and educate deaf individuals was American Sign Language, not signed English (Lou, 1998). Students who excelled in the early deaf schools were recruited to become teachers. By 1858, deaf teachers comprised approximately 40.8% of teachers at the schools for the deaf (Gannon, 1981). Although the use of sign language increased in the early part of the 19th century, competition was introduced in the form of oralism later in the century.

The first attempt to educate hearing and deaf students together took place in 1852. A teacher at the Hartford school was concerned with the education of young deaf children between the ages of 4 and 7, and elected to educate them along with their hearing peers. This initiative began with the goal of encouraging deaf students to speak in order to communicate and hearing students to learn sign to improve interpretive skills. However, it became the foundation of an oralist movement that would eventually threaten deaf education and Deaf culture as the Deaf community knew it.

Oral education in the United States began in 1867 with the establishment of both the New York Institution for the Impaired (now known as the Lexington School for the Deaf), and the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts. The Clarke School had been supported financially and philosophically by Alexander Graham Bell who, tangentially, also was given credit for inventing the telephone. Bell was a strong opponent of sign language, and an even stronger proponent of oralist communication methodologies (Moores, 2010). "Bell believed that a move away from residential schooling, combined with hiring only hearing teachers and repressing the use of sign language, would reduce intermarriages of deaf individuals and reduce the incidence of deafness" (Moores, 2010, p. 26). From approximately 1870 to 1900, Bell continued his

mission to establish oralism as the recommended method of communication for individuals who were deaf.

As a result of the influence of Bell and other proponents of oralism, the turn of the century and the height of oralism in 1927 was witness to significant numbers of day schools, class programs, and residential schools for the deaf not only becoming exclusively oral, but also discouraging sign language use. This philosophical shift not only resulted in sign language's decreased use in educational settings, but also adversely affected the number of deaf teachers. "By 1917 only 14.5% of teachers for the deaf were deaf themselves—a drop from 22% in 1895 and from the 42.5% peak reported in 1870. The figure remained at about 16% between World Wars I and II and then declined again to 11.7% by 1961" (Lou, 1998, p. 87).

During the first six decades of the 20th century, not only did the oralist movement gained momentum, but so did the movement to create technology to combat deafness. Hearing aids and other assistive technological devices were engineered to improve hearing for individuals who were deaf, and many elected to utilize them to improve their hearing. Until the 1960s, oral methods dominated educational settings. Evidence of this can be found in consistent attempts to ban sign language use in schools. The only perceived utility for sign language was either as a supplement for students who had previously embraced oralism or for those who were deemed unable to grasp oral communication approaches (Lou, 1988). Despite this opposition to sign language, individuals who were deaf kept their language and culture alive by continuing to sign outside of the classroom, both at home and in their communities.

Changes were made to deaf education during the 1960s. Although ASL had met with firm opposition by oralists during the previous eight decades, advocacy on behalf of the Deaf community, sparked by the civil rights movement and coupled with research in the area of sign language, allowed ASL to regain the ground that it had previously lost.

Notable researchers during this time were Quigley and Frisina (1961), Struckless and Birch (1966), Meadow (1968), and Vernon and Koh (1970). Each of these researchers reported that deaf children of deaf parents who signed at home either demonstrated superior academic achievement or showed no significant differences from their oralist counterparts. Hearing and deaf people alike were beginning to acknowledge both the importance and the effectiveness of sign language for the education of students who were deaf (Moores, 2010).

Although sign language was still practiced at schools for the deaf and in deaf communities, advocacy by the Deaf community and research had brought sign language back to the forefront as an acceptable educational practice. ASL had avoided extinction, but soon a new variable would be introduced into deaf education: the federal government.

The 1954, the United States Supreme Court decision in Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, was one of this country's most significant judicial decisions. The ruling regarding "separate but equal" was a turning point not only for the civil rights movement, but also for the disability rights movement (United States Courts Website).

With the seeds of equality sown by the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, many considered the roots of advocacy related to special education in America to be associated with Congressional approval of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) (Public Law 94-142) on November 29, 1975. The aim of the law was to support states in "protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving the results for infants, toddlers, children and youths with disabilities and their families." After the adoption of enabling regulations, PL 94-142 went into effect in October 1977 and became the foundation for federal funding of special education.

PL 94-142 became the cornerstone of special education, requiring public schools to provide "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to students with a wide range of disabilities, including physical handicaps; mental retardation; speech, vision, and

language difficulties; emotional and behavioral problems; and other learning disorders. It also mandated that school districts provide such schooling in the least restrictive environment possible. Least restrictive environment implied that students were to be placed in the appropriate continuum of education including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in a hospital or institution, all of which would take place in the setting that was deemed most appropriate for the individual student (Yell, 1995).

It was interpreted by some administrators that this mandate was meant to encourage interactions, both education and social, between age-appropriate individuals with and without disabilities. Although all academic planning was originally facilitated through an Individual Education Plan (IEP), many administrators in the government and field of education viewed "least restrictive environment" (LRE) as meaning a mainstream educational environment (Cerney, 2002).

In 1983, the law was extended to include parent training and information centers at the state level. In 1986, early intervention programs for infants and education services for preschoolers were added. In 1990, services and eligibility were again expanded and the law was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA was reauthorized and expanded in 1997 and 2004 (ADA Website).

With the trend toward mainstream education, attendance at schools for the deaf fluctuated. Although the traditions of Deaf culture and education were maintained at the schools for the deaf, mainstream education was encouraged. Further evidence of this could be found in a special report by the Secretary of Education in 1992:

> The disability of deafness often results in significant and unique educational needs for the individual child. The major barriers to learning associated with deafness relate to language and communication, which, in turn, profoundly affect most aspects of the educational process. For example, acquiring basic English language skills is a tremendous challenge for most students who are deaf. While the Department and others are supporting research activities in the area of language acquisition for children who are deaf, effective methods of instruction that can be implemented in a variety of educational settings are still not available.

The reading skills of deaf children reflect perhaps the most momentous and dismal effects of the disability and of the education system's struggle to effectively teach deaf children and hearing impaired students who "level off" in their reading comprehension achievement at about the third grade level. Any setting which does not meet the communication and related needs of a child who is deaf, and therefore does not allow for the provision of FAPE, cannot be considered the LRE for that child. The provision of FAPE is paramount, and the individual placement determination about LRE is to be considered within the context of FAPE. (U.S. Department of Education, 1992)

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 had a major impact on the education of the deaf and in many ways has taken on an importance as it relates to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which has been rapidly changing since 1975. Congress has appropriated less money for both laws than it did for other authorizations. NCLB has 10 titles, and of these titles, none specifically addresses the education of children with disabilities, although almost 7 million students with disabilities are identified as attending public schools.

Three components of NCLB have major implications for all children, including those who are deaf: assessment, demonstrated annual yearly progress, and the mandate for highly qualified teachers. The implications for deaf children, many of whom are not identified in the present statewide assessment system, are perceived to be negative. Many deaf advocates believe that the education of deaf students first began to lose its independence 30 years before with the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Since deaf education has been subsumed within general education, the goal for deaf students has been success in the general curriculum. Although the process has achieved some undeniable benefits, it can contribute to perpetuating low expectations for deaf students.

NCLB was designed for 50 million school-aged children with one criterion of success, the passing of standardized state-level criterion-referenced tests. Any effort on such a massive scale, despite the best intentions, assumes a one size-fits-all form and rarely addresses individual and small group variation. Deaf children in general have unique characteristics that NCLB and IDEA do not and cannot accommodate. In addition,

large numbers of deaf children have secondary disabilities that have implications for learning and teaching. It is up to educators of the deaf to ensure that the needs of these children are met and not neglected (Moores, 2005).

Residential schools for the deaf are attempting to address those areas that are believed to be missing in the mainstream education of deaf children. Schools for the deaf across the United States, however, have experienced recent financial difficulties stemming from budget cuts that range from being mild to debilitating. As of March 2011, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming no longer supported schools for the deaf, and Utah along with Nevada were in danger of closing their doors. Many schools for the deaf, including the Oregon School for the Deaf attended by the participants in this study, continue to struggle to keep Deaf culture thriving despite formidable challenges such as budget cuts and lower enrollments (Deaf Times Website, 2011).

Although this is an abridged history of deaf education, the foundation and the characteristics of the schools for the deaf and their challenges over time have been addressed. Despite the opposition of oralism, schools for the deaf have continued to fight to maintain the structural integrity of Deaf culture. The next section will provide a history of the Oregon School for the Deaf, which was attended by the participants in this study.

<u>History of the Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD)</u>

In 1870, the census of the state of Oregon reflected the presence of at least 30 deaf children residing within the state. As a result of the deaf population reflected by the census, the state legislature allocated $2000 for the establishment of the Oregon Institute for Deaf-Mutes to provide free education to children who were deaf. The first principal of the school, William S. Smith, was an individual who was deaf, and received his education at Gallaudet College in Washington, DC. The school initially opened on November 15, 1870.

Classes were suspended in April of 1872 due to a lack of funding, but the school reopened in a new location in downtown Salem, OR, following a two-year appropriation voted in by the Oregon Legislature. The institute remained at this location until 1894, until bids were solicited for available properties in the area on which to construct a new Oregon Institute for Deaf-Mutes.

Of the eighteen area proposals received, the proposal by Z. F. Moody for a 321-acre farm six miles east of the city was accepted, and construction of the Institute for Deaf-Mutes began in the spring of 1894. During this time, printing, carpentry, and orchards shops were set up, and not only provided opportunities to train students, but also supplied the school with resources and supplemental income as a result. Concerns related to a location that possessed both population that required reforming, coupled with the isolation of the location, led supporters of the school to lobby for a new site for the school.

The support for the new school solidified, and in the fall of 1919, the new school plan was completed. The new school was constructed on 100 acres of farmland, and featured such amenities as a gymnasium, laundry, carpentry shop, printing office, shoe shop, industrial department, and domestic science department. This location and the resources that it yielded not only were well suited to the time in which the school was established, but the location was also maintained, and still serves as the site for what is now known as the Oregon School for the Deaf (Oregon School for the Deaf Website).

The history of deaf education has been both met with challenges and steeped in tradition. As a part of the charge of schools for the deaf and education in general, the aim is to best equip the students who attend with the tools necessary to be successful after graduation. To that end, it is important to explore the factors that influence academic achievement for students who are deaf, and that exploration will take place in the next section.

Factors Influencing Academic Achievement

Research in the 1970s and 1980s reported that deaf children of deaf parents achieved at a higher level than those with hearing parents. This finding suggested that deaf children of hearing parents might likewise benefit from the use of sign language, which was usually a form of English-like signing and not ASL. However, this explanation was contested because not all deaf parents signed to their children (Jensema & Trybus, 1978).

A number of other factors might be involved in this finding regarding academic achievement. First is the cause of deafness; deafness in children with deaf parents is often genetically caused, whereas deafness in children of hearing parents may be due to a range of factors, some of which could adversely affect development in several areas (Jensema & Mullins, 1974). The second factor is the greater acceptance of deafness by deaf parents (Corson, 1973, as cited in Quigley & Paul, 1986). A third factor is the greater skill in establishing basic paralinguistic skills necessary for later language development that deaf parents may provide.

Zwiebel (1987) reported evidence that genetic factors are not the cause of the superior academic achievement of deaf children of deaf parents. In a study of 243 children with deaf family members, including parents and siblings, Zwiebel found that deaf children from a signing family environment with heredity as the cause of deafness scored higher on measures of intelligence than deaf children from a "partial manual" environment with heredity as the cause of deafness. However, the picture is complicated further by the different forms of signing used within families. Studies that have attempted to specify the language used within families that have a deaf member have shown many combinations and permutations (Kluwin & Gaustad, 1994; Moores, Kluwin, & Mertens, 1985).

In summary, although research has reported a higher level of academic achievement of deaf students of deaf parents compared to deaf students of hearing

parents, the underlying causes are not clear. Greater self-esteem has also been associated with deaf children of deaf parents (Koelle & Convey, 1982), which has usually been attributed to greater acceptance of deafness within the family and possibly the better language skills of deaf children of deaf parents.

Regarding family influences in general, in a review of the literature, Ritter-Brinton (1993) found the two most commonly cited factors associated with achievement of deaf students were parental expectations and the fluency of communication in the home. The hearing status of parents did not emerge as a major factor in achievement. In a 1986 study based on interviews of parents of deaf children aimed at identifying family social-psychological factors associated with high achievement, Bodner-Johnson found only two factors significantly linked to achievement. The first she called adaptation to deafness, which included acceptance of the deaf child and a positive orientation to the Deaf community, and the second factor she called press for achievement, which included high educational and occupational expectations (as cited in Powers, 2003).

The next sections will present a review of literature that explores contemporary research in identity development at a macro level and research literature that specifically assesses deaf identity at a micro level.

<center>Contemporary Research in Identity Formation</center>

When identity formation research began over 20 years ago, no intentional practical applications, apart from sound theory, were anticipated as a result of the research (Marcia, 1989). Despite its unintentional nature, it has sparked theorists in the field of identity formation as well as well over 300 empirical studies utilizing identity development status models (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001).

Erikson's work in 1968 is seminal as it relates to identity formation. Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory cited psychosocial interactions (e.g., school and work) as contributing factors in the formation of identity. According to Erikson, although biological development and life circumstances may change over time, the adolescent

years are the most significant period of identity conflict (as cited in Schwartz, Mullins, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000).

Marcia (1966), influenced by previous ego-analytic writings of Erikson, created the ego identity status paradigm. In this identity formation tool, two specific dimensions of identity formation were explored: First was exploration, in which the individual seeks to establish a more rounded sense of self; and the second was commitment, in which the individual seeks to maintain fidelity to goals, values and beliefs, whether established by self or learned from others (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2000). Also within Marcia's paradigm were four identity statuses: diffusion (low exploration, low commitment), foreclosure (low exploration, high commitment), moratorium (high exploration, low commitment), and achievement (high exploration, high commitment) (as cited in Schwartz, Coté, & Arnett, 2005).

Berzonsky (1989, 1990) developed an identity formation paradigm based on a constructivist perspective. In this theory of identity formation, individuals conduct a parallel process by which they construct a sense of who they believe themselves to be as well as a "reality-based" identity that helps to guide the manner in which they behave (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2005). This paradigm is described in three distinct style categories related to cognitive functioning: (a) informational style, in which the individual seeks information from various perspectives prior to reaching a decision; (b) normative style, in which to the individual observes and complies with established norms; and (c) diffuse or avoidant style, in which the individual makes decisions on case-by-case basis and is not guided by previous experiences (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2000).

Waterman (1990, 1992, 1993) developed the Expressive Identity model. In this model, individuals utilize previous information or teachings related to ethics and values to live life as they believe their true self is supposed to. Waterman reported that often the difference between personally expressive and instrumental identity lies in the choices of

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. He stated that extrinsic motivation is generally recognized as the more acceptable way to function from a societal perspective (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2000).

In summary, a definitive model of identity development may not exist based on past, present, and future research in this topic area. Identity paradigms often are dependent on the perspective of both the researcher and the individual conducting the identity development research. In the next section, a racial/cultural identity development model will be presented to expand on identity development awareness.

<div align="center">Racial/Cultural Identity Developmental Model</div>

Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1993) developed the Racial/Cultural Identity Development (R/CID) model. This model identifies five stages that people experience in their attempt to understand their culture, the dominant culture, and the hierarchical relationship between the two cultures. Each stage reflects the changes in how individuals view the self, others within the same cultural group, members of other cultural groups, and members of the dominant cultural group.

Stage 1: Conformity. This stage is characterized by individuals possessing both a positive regard for the dominant culture and a depreciated regard for their own culture.

Stage 2: Dissonance. This stage is marked by both confusion and conflict about individuals' own culture, others within their culture, and others outside of their culture.

Stage 3: Resistance and Immersion. This stage is characterized by rejection of the dominant culture and appreciation for self, the culture of self, and the individuals within the culture.

Stage 4: Introspection. Individuals in this stage often exhibit a level of rigidity of the beliefs originally held in Stage 3, as well as conflict between feeling a sense of loyalty to the culture and a desire to be autonomous.

Stage 5: Integrative Awareness. In this stage, individuals often feel a sense of fulfillment within their culture and no longer feel a need to suppress either their culture or their investment in their culture (Atkinson et al., 1993).

Cultural and racial models like that the R/CID influenced the work of Glickman (1993), which will be explored in the Studies Assessing Deaf Identity section.

<u>Acculturation and Paradigms of Identity</u>

Two considerations that may be important to an understanding of the concept of identity are acculturation status and cultural affiliation. Acculturation is the degree to which members of a culturally diverse group both accept and adhere to the values, attitudes, behaviors, and practices of their group and the dominant culture (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Four categories of acculturation were proposed by Berry et al. (1987):

1. *Integration*: individuals maintain their own culture while simultaneously incorporating aspects of the dominant culture. This is often referred to as biculturalism.

2. *Assimilation*: individuals relinquish their original culture and accept the dominant culture as their own.

3. *Separation*: individuals accept their own culture and withdraw from the dominant culture.

4. *Marginalization*: individuals do not identity with either their culture or the dominant culture.

This concept of acculturation helps to measure identity and the cultural identification that accompanies it. Three major theoretical approaches related to identity have been utilized in measuring and analyzing the concept: evolutionary psychology, symbolic interactionism, and ecology (Forgas & Williams, 2003).

Evolutionary psychology models itself after the Darwinian perspective that views an individual's sense of self as evolving from programmed responses influenced by interactions with both people and situations. The second theoretical perspective,

symbolic interactionism, focuses on the concept of self emerging out of cognitive, symbolic, interpersonal, and collective systems. The final theoretical perspective is ecology. This perspective focuses on the environment as it relates to intergroup, collective, and cultural aspects of self (Leigh, 2009). These collective perspectives are found within the social constructionism framework, and represents a preliminary approach this study will conceptually view identity from.

"A fundamental implication of social constructionism is the recognition that knowledge is social, intersubjective, and language based" (Guterman & Rudes, 2008, p. 138). Social Constructionism proposes that different environments give different messages to the individual, and these messages can influence self-perceptions and identity (Leigh, 2009). Although this perspective identifies messages inherent to socialization, language and environmental factors, it also acknowledges that influences give way to internal acceptance and rejection of the influences. Given that this study examines the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity, this macro theoretical model appears to be an ideal preliminary tool to conceptualize identity for this research.

The next section will narrow the scope of identity development research and examine research specific to deaf identity development.

<u>Studies Utilizing Scales to Assess Deaf Identity</u>

Of the studies on deaf identity that measured culture and identity, some included variables such as self-esteem, self-image, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities in addition to deafness. For this study, the researcher reviewed the following studies that used deaf identity scales to measure deaf identity development and identification: Weinberg and Sterritt (1986), Glickman (1993), Stinson and Kluwin (1996), Bat-Chava (2000), Cornell and Lyness (2004), Ohno (2004), Hintermair (2007), and Maxwell-McCaw and Zea (2011). These studies focused on the construct of identity development within the Deaf population and best represent the focus of the present

section. The purpose of reviewing studies spanning from 1986 to present was to show the lineage of deaf identity development scales, as well as to showcase the diversity of the studies previously conducted.

Weinberg and Sterritt (1986) conducted a study in which they sought to measure positive and negative regard in relation to "able-bodied identity (hearing), disability identity (deaf), or dual identity" (p. 96). Participants were 111 students with hearing loss who attended a state residential school for the deaf. The authors reported that the participants were between the ages of 15 and 19 years, and their levels of hearing loss ranged from mild to profound. Based on this study, the authors developed the Deaf Identity Scale (DIS) that included sub-scales measuring Hearing Identification, Deaf Identification, and Dual Identification. Each scale contained five statements to which the participants answered true or false, and based on these responses, individuals were placed in the corresponding categories. In addition to the DIS, a 16-item Social Relationship Satisfaction Scale and a 4-item Evaluation of Self as a Deaf Person Scale were administered.

The results of Weinberg and Sterritt's (1986) study showed that 58% of participants identified with a dual identity, 24% identified with a disability identity (for this study, disability and deaf are synonymous), and 18% identified as having a hearing identity. In terms of positive peer relationships, results showed that 57.8% of dual identification, 33.3% of deaf identification, and 25% of hearing identification participants expressed self-efficacy regarding their relationships. These results indicated that the majority of participants from this school for the deaf identified with having both a hearing identity and a disability (or deaf in this study) identity. These results do not show a relationship between the residential school for the deaf experience and the identity of the participants who attended the school.

Weinberg and Sterritt's (1986) study sought to research participants' hearing, Deaf, and dual identifications. This researcher noted that not only were the questions not

uniformed (e.g., did not measure the same variables) in some cases, but the language of the questions may have impacted the responses. For example, here is a statement seeking the participants' identification in regards to having friends that impacts deaf, hearing, or dual identification results: "Hearing Identification: I would rather have hearing friends. Deaf Identification: I would rather only have deaf friends. Dual Identification: It's important to have both hearing and deaf friends" (p. 98). Statements such as these not only had the potential to influence participants to choose statements leaning more toward dual identification, but such statements could have skewed the results of this study and affected the desired accuracy.

In 1993, Neil Glickman, in his dissertation work while attending The University of Massachusetts, developed the Deaf Identity Development Scale (DIDS). This scale was based on other models of minority identity development, more specifically, the Black Identity Development Model established by Helms in 1990. The goal of the DIDS was to measure cultural identities in individuals who were deaf through four specific identifications: Culturally Hearing, Marginally Hearing, Culturally Immersed, and Bi-Cultural (e.g., identified with both hearing and deaf culture). This 60-item scale tested 13 individual hypotheses specifically related to instrument construction and identity theory with 105 Deaf students from Gallaudet University and 56 other members of the Deaf community. The results of Glickman's (1993) study confirmed the four distinct cultural identifications of Hearing, Marginal, Immersion, and Bi-cultural. Of those identities, the two that were most affiliated with cultural Deaf identity were Immersion and Bi-cultural. Glickman (1993) noted that Deaf students who attended a signing residential school scored lower on the hearing identification scale; on the immersion scale, deaf students who attended signing residential schools scored higher than those attending deaf classes and no deaf program. Other factors he identified as contributing to Deaf culture identification were becoming deaf early in life, having other socialization experiences in which sign language was prominent, and preferring to sign in ASL.

The results of Glickman's study confirmed that the environment in which individuals are educated has an effect on their cultural identification: "This suggests that attendance at a residential school per se, regardless of its communication philosophy, is an important correlate of cultural Deafness" (1993, p. 168). Glickman recommended changes to the DIDS to improve the accuracy and reliability of the results, including adding language to some items to increase clarity, subtracting language from other items, and general revisions to the scale to improve its reliability for future testing. Two independent follow-ups to Glickman's 1993 study were conducted. In 1998, Leigh, Marcus, Dobosh, and Allen conducted a study in which they modified the DIDS to include hearing children of Deaf adults (CODAs) who affiliated with Deaf culture. They modified three Hearing items, four Marginal items, one Immersion item, and five Bi-cultural items for a total of 13 modified items. The modified measure was utilized with 244 participants, and results of their study indicated compromised reliability related to the Bi-cultural scale. This compromised reliability stemmed from the Bi-Cultural scale not being able to reflect CODAs, or those with dual Deaf and Hearing competencies.

As a follow-up to this finding, Fischer and McWhirter (2001) created a revision to the DIDS based on the suggestions of Glickman (1983) and tested the revised measure on 323 participants: 113 prelingually deaf individuals, 100 postlingually deaf individuals, and 110 hard of hearing individuals. The results clarified the relationship of the Marginal identification and the Immersion scale and strengthened the relationship between the Immersion and Bi-cultural identifications. This revision and reapplication of the DIDS also strengthened the compromised reliability reported by Leigh et al. (1998).

Glickman (1993), who adapted the Black Development Model to develop the Deaf Identity Development Scale (DIDS), reported that using a measure in the preliminary stages has inherent limitations. This disclosure is a reminder that despite the significance of the measure developed, there were still concerns related to the quantitative accuracy of the results reported.

In 1996, Stinson and Kluwin administered the Social Activity Scale (SAS) to 220 mainstreamed adolescent students with hearing loss from 15 public school programs. Each public school program had between 70 and 540 students; all but one of the schools were located in the United States, with the one exception being in Canada. Inclusion criteria for this study were that students attended public schools and who were reported to be deaf or hard of hearing. If students reported that they did not have mainstream experiences, their participation in the study was discontinued.

The SAS consisted of 47 items that focused on three specific dimensions: perceived participation in classroom and peer interactions, perceived emotional security in relation to the participants' deafness, and perceived social competence with peers (Stinson & Kluwin, 1996). The results from the study were the following: Participants perceived that they participated more when peers with hearing loss were present in the classroom or in school-based activities; perceptions of increased emotional security were reported by participants when other students with hearing loss were present; and although the participants were surrounded by more hearing peers, the quality of those interactions were perceived as not being as rewarding as interactions with individuals who also had hearing loss (Stinson & Kluwin, 1996).

Stinson and Kluwin (1996) administered the Social Activity Scale (SAS) to mainstreamed students with hearing loss in their study, and two concerns resulted in relation to the results that were reported. First, the administration of the measure lacked consistency. Although the researchers asked the participants if they wanted assistance with the interview questions (e.g., having them read aloud), there was no uniformity in the administration of the study. Second, this study featured deaf participants in predominantly hearing environments, and tested identification and comfort with hearing and deaf peer groups. The limitation lies in the participants' identification being heavily weighted toward social adaptability, specifically in hearing environments with mainly hearing peers, and not based more on the holistic experience of the individual influencing

their identification. Bat-Chava (2000) conducted a study based on Social Identity Theory that included 267 initial participants who completed an identity questionnaire. Of those initial participants, a subset of 56 participants engaged in semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interview questions covered the following domains: "family and school histories, current involvement with deaf individuals and organizations, and attitudes toward the self, deafness, and other deaf people" (Bat-Chava, 2000, p. 423). The aim of Bat-Chava's study was to assess the perceived importance of sign language, verbalized speech, group identity, and overall conceptualizations of deafness (Leigh, 2010), and to promote understanding regarding the impact of socialization on identity identification.

Bat-Chava's (2000) study classified participants in one of three categories: culturally deaf, culturally hearing, and bi-cultural (i.e., identifying as both culturally deaf and culturally hearing). Out of the total sample, the findings indicated that 81 or 33% identified with having a culturally deaf identity, 58 or 24% identified with having a culturally hearing identity, 82 or 34% identified having a bi-cultural identity, and 22 or 9% identified with having a below-average level of positive regard and identification with groups that were deaf. Because of missing data, results were reported for 243 out of the 267 participants (Bat-Chava, 2000).

Bat-Chava's (2000) results supported Social Identity Theory, which essentially stated that members of the non-dominant culture, in this case individuals who are deaf, can have their identities influenced by social stimuli. If an individual is able to culturally identify and build self-efficacy, the outcome can and often does lead to improved self-esteem and comfort with the cultural affiliation.

Bat-Chava (2000) conducted a study applying Social Identity Theory and used a quantitative questionnaire (in the initial stages of the research), followed by semi-structured interviews (after quantitative data had been collected) to research cultural hearing, deaf, and bi-cultural identities. Of the 267 participants who answered the questionnaire portion of the quantitative study, 56 were able to participate in the semi-

structured portion of the study. A rationale was not given regarding inclusion or exclusion criteria for the 56 participants; thus, the limitation of this study was in the findings in relation to level of completeness and objectivity of reported results. Cornell and Lyness (2004) conducted a study seeking to identify the interrelationship between Deaf identity and self-concept. The authors reported that "very little research has explored Deaf Identity and none has explored how perceptions of fit with Deaf culture and Hearing culture influence self-concept" (p. 31), which led them to conduct their study specific to measuring the potential influence of culture on self-concept. Participants were 46 students (21 males and 25 females) enrolled in a transition program for individuals who were deaf named the Program for the Hearing Impaired (PHI). This program was located at Northern Illinois University (NIU), and the participants who attended NIU accessed the program through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CAAR) on campus. All of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, but only 9 (20%) were enrolled in a college.

Cornell and Lyness (2004) used the DIDS constructed by Glickman (1993) to understand self-concept in their study. Two distinct categories for this measure were identification with Deaf culture and identification with Hearing (or majority) culture. Of these two categories, four sub-scales were measured: Culturally Hearing (culturally hearing and identifies with deafness as being a disability), Culturally Marginal (does not identify with Deaf or hearing cultures), Immersion (immersed in Deaf culture and does not identify with hearing culture), and Bi-cultural (identifying with both Deaf and hearing cultures). The results of the study showed a positive correlation between bi-cultural identification and improved self-concept (e.g., social and personal), and a negative correlation between marginal identification and self-concept (e.g., social and personal). In addition, the researchers reported that there was no significant correlation with either hearing or immersion identification and self-concept. Cornell and Lyness (2004) explained the lack of significance of the hearing and immersion identification as follows:

The non-significant results from the hearing subscale may be due to the low reliability coefficient. The results may also be because these students are involved in programs that promote a positive view of deafness. The non-significant results of the immersed subscale could be due to the overall low scores on the scale. Both hypotheses were tentative due to the lack of literature to support or explain either identity. (p. 43)

Cornell and Lyness (2004) used Glickman's (1993) Deaf Identity Development Scale (DIDS) with college-aged transition students who were deaf and were being educated in a hearing environment. The results of this quantitative study reflected that the most significant identification was in the bi-cultural identification. Limitations of this study stemmed from "low reliability coefficients" and students being enrolled in programs "that promote a positive view of deafness" (Cornell & Lyness, 2004, p. 43). These limitations could have and possibly did affect the final results that were obtained.

Ohna (2004) conducted a study in Norway that utilized phenomenological methods (grounded theory) and unstructured interviews (e.g., conversations) to examine if and how self-identity was related to interactions with Deaf and hearing people independently. The research question was: "What does it mean to grow up and handle interactions with both hearing and deaf persons, under conditions which are associated with the tension between a compensatory policy (e.g., perspective of deafness as a audiological disability to be treated with hearing aids) and a deaf cultural policy" (p. 21)?

Ohna's (2004) study was conducted with 22 Norwegians who were deaf, and the interviews were conducted in Norwegian Sign Language (NSL). Of the 22 participants, 13 were between the ages of 18 and 22, and 9 were between the ages of 40 and 45. The interviews with participants lasted from 1 to 3.5 hours and were conducted at the university, at schools for the deaf, or in private homes. Collectively, 48 hours of interview videotapes were compiled by the interviewers.

A combination of hermeneutic interpretation and structural text analysis were utilized in two separate phases to synthesize the interview data. In the first phase of analyzing the interview data, Ohna (2004) identified several categorical themes including

communication-interaction, self-deafness, independence-dependence, and inclusion-exclusion). The second phase of analyzing the interview data entailed developing four independent themes: (a) interactions between parents and children, (b) interactions with hearing persons that break down, (c) interactions with deaf persons contrasting encounters with hearing persons, and (d) adult narratives reflecting the previous themes.

Ohna (2004) reported that identity development could be conceptualized in four independent phases, "from a taken for granted phase, to an alienation phase, an affiliation phase, and finally, to what the author will call "deaf in my own way" (p. 33). The author reported the following observations about the interview data and its interactions with the four phases:

First, it was noted that persons who are deaf interacting with other persons who are deaf with hearing parents were not outlier occurrences. The reason for this is that persons who are deaf often interact with other persons who are deaf during pre-school (in Norwegian context). This early exposure allows the individuals who are deaf not to look at their deafness as being something different from what a hearing person may consider baseline. It is only when communication barriers arise that the individuals who are deaf realize their differences from their hearing counterparts.

Second, persons who are deaf who have either hearing parents or deaf parents will fall differently on the alienation and affiliation phases. Persons who are deaf who are born to hearing parents may be more apt to be self-reflective about their deafness, and as a result, possess more of a possibility for feeling alienation. Those with deaf parents may feel less alienated because of their deafness, and therefore may be more apt to be both more accepting and more comfortable with their deafness.

Third, although conventional identity is anchored in a collective, the discursive construction "deaf in my own way" presupposes that the individual shows his or her true colors. The process of constructing identity takes place in the social environment.

Ohna's (2004) study used qualitative Grounded Narrative Theory and was conducted using unstructured interviews with 22 signing Norwegian participants. A limitation that this researcher noted is that the interviews were conducted at a university, at a school for the deaf, or in private homes. Given that the interviews lasted from 1 to 3 hours, the settings in which participants were interviewed could have affected the results of the study.

Hintermair (2007) conducted a study that included 629 deaf and hard of hearing participants from Germany. The purpose of this study was to explore if inter-relations existed within acculturation, psychological resources, self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and identity. To measure these items, the Deaf Acculturation Scale (DAS; Maxwell-McCaw, 2001) was used. To recruit participants, three of the most prominent websites for the deaf and hard of hearing were contacted and asked to link information of the study to their websites. After four weeks, 859 deaf and hard of hearing individuals completed the questionnaire, and of those, 629 met the inclusion criteria.

In Hintermair's (2007) study, the specific domains of the measure were acculturation (hearing versus deaf), personal resources, psychosocial well-being, and socio-demographic characteristics. The results of the study in relation to acculturation identity were:

Marginal Acculturation: In relation to time of hearing loss, individuals who identified as marginal acculturation (e.g., not identifying with either hearing or deaf) tended to be people who either were older or became deaf after the age of 3 years or had progressive hearing loss. Parents were more often hearing, and individuals with this acculturation were more often educated in mainstream (e.g., oral or verbal) settings.

Hearing Acculturation: In relation to time of hearing loss, individuals who identified as hearing were also older, lost hearing after the age of 3, had progressive hearing loss, or had a cochlear implant. The parents were more often hearing and did not

practice sign language at home, and individuals with this acculturation were more often educated in mainstream environments.

Deaf Acculturation: In relation to time of hearing loss, deafness was generally experienced prior to the age of 3, and the participants had higher degrees of hearing loss. In addition, participants did not utilize cochlear implants. The parents were more often deaf themselves or were hearing parents who communicated in sign language at home, and individuals with this acculturation more often attended schools for the deaf.

Bi-cultural Acculturation: In relation to time of hearing loss, individuals who were younger participants reflected "a slight tendency" to bi-cultural acculturation (Hintermair, 2007, p. 293). Individuals who identified as being bi-cultural were more likely to attend schools that were geared more to individuals who were hard of hearing as opposed to deaf (or Deaf). Communication preferences tended more towards utilizing multiple communication methods, such as speech and sign language, as opposed to using one method exclusively.

Hintermair (2007) utilized the Deaf Acculturation Scale (DAS) to measure Deaf, hearing, and bi-cultural identification with 629 participants. Two specific limitations of this study were pointed out by Hintermair: First, the questionnaire was completed on the internet by participants. It was reported that using the internet to collect data impacted the educational and socio-economic demographics of the participants, thus excluding participants with less education and those from lower socio-economic statuses. Second, Hintermair reported that "a serious problem with cross-sectional studies like this one is their inability to identify the development and course of self-discovery and cultural affiliation process" (2007, p. 298). In addition, "the comments written by some participants give us reason to suspect that the methodology of the DIDS and the DAS is insufficient and unsatisfactory when it comes to describing and detailing the social networks of the hard of hearing and their significance for psychosocial development.

Here, in particular, qualitative approaches would be appropriate" (Hintermair, 2007, p. 298).

Recently, Maxwell-McCaw and Zea (2011) conducted a study that was intended to develop and validate their 58-item measure, the Deaf Acculturation Scale (DAS). The aim of the study in relation to the DAS was fourfold: "(a) develop an acculturation measure for the deaf and hard of hearing populations that are both multidimensional and bilinear; (b) to examine the structure of the DAS to ensure that it can measure a specific construct; (c) ascertain if the DAS can maintain an adequate internal consistency; and (d) to determine if the DAS can establish a construct validity vis-à-vis parental hearing status, school background, and the individual's use of self-labels" (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011, p. 4).

The DAS is an adaptation of the Birman and Zea Acculturation Scale to apply specifically to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The DAS is composed of two distinctive acculturation scales: Acculturation to Deaf Culture (DASd) and the Acculturation to Hearing Culture (DASh), each composed of five parallel subscales that measure acculturation across five domains: cultural identification, cultural involvement, cultural preferences, cultural knowledge, and language competence (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011).

Emails were sent to professionals who worked actively with deaf and hard of hearing individuals, who then sent invitations to participate to other deaf individuals who met the inclusion criteria to participate in the study. The DAS, which is meant to be a cultural identity measure, was utilized with a sample of 3,070 deaf and hard of hearing participants recruited from various ethnic, racial, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011).

The results of the study were reflected in four acculturations: Deaf Acculturation, Hearing Acculturation, Marginal Acculturation (e.g., not affiliating with either Deaf or Hearing Acculturation), and Bi-cultural Acculturation (e.g., identification with both Deaf

and Hearing Acculturation). These acculturations were identified by participants choosing "self-labels" to characterize their perceptions of their deafness. "Placement into one of four categories were conducted by mathematically looking at combinations of the two scores, where those who are high on the DASh and low on the DASd are hearing acculturated, those who are low in both are marginal, those who are high DADd and low DASh are deaf acculturated, and those who are high in both are bi-cultural" (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011, p. 15). The results from this study reflected the following acculturation identifications:

Deaf Acculturation: 74.2% identified as Deaf (e.g., Deaf Culture); 18.6% identified as deaf (with a lower case d); 3% hearing impaired; 2.3% hard of hearing; and 1.6% bicultural.

Hearing Acculturation: 35.4% hearing impaired; 26.8.1% hard of hearing; 26.2% deaf (with a lowercase d); 5.5% Deaf; and 4.3% bi-cultural.

Marginal Acculturation: 57.1% deaf (with a lowercase d); 19% Deaf (with a capitol D); 19% hearing impaired; and 4.9% hard of hearing.

Bi-Cultural Acculturation: 46.2% identified as Deaf (with a capitol D); 25.8% deaf (with a lowercase d); 9.6% hearing impaired; and 10.3% hard of hearing.

Maxwell-McCaw and Zea (2011) sought to adapt Birman and Zea's DAS specifically for deaf and hard of hearing populations in an attempt to measure acculturation to both Deaf and hearing cultures. The limitations of this study coincide with two limitations mentioned in previous studies. First, Glickman (1993) noted in his study that measures that have merit in their development and validation stage do not always yield optimum results. The second limitation mirrors that of Hintermair (2007) in relation to the measure being taken by participants online. This practice limits the participant pool to participants with higher socio-economic statuses as well as those with more advanced educational backgrounds.

All of the studies reviewed in relation to identity formation reflected a nod to social constructionism. Taken all together, the reviewed research suggested that identity is influenced by observing and interpreting the people, places, attitudes, and language around the individual, both past and present, and the responses that are received because of that exposure (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). The next section will review studies that looked specifically at the role of educational environments on identity development.

<u>Educational Environments Influencing Identity Formation</u>

Sari (2005) conducted a study that sought to examine that relationship between identity patterns and modes of communication of deaf adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 in Turkey. Weinberg and Sterritt's Deaf Identity Scale (DIS), originally developed in 1986 was translated into Turkish, and administered to 90 students at three residential state schools for the deaf. The three schools were: Deaf Children's School in Ankara, Deaf Children's School in Eskisehir, and Deaf Children's School in Konya. The method of communication used to administer the scale was Total Communication, which essentially was a mixture of both speech and Turkish Sign Language.

The results of this study were broken down by the responses of the three schools in which participants responded to the DIS. The results of the study reflected that both the Deaf School in Ankara and the Deaf School in Konya's participants identified with a majority Culturally Bicultural/Dual Identity (e.g. Hearing and Deaf) at a rate of 68% and 80% respectfully. The Deaf Children's School in Eskisehir by contrast had participants that identified with a majority Culturally Hearing Identity at a rate of 67% of participants making this identification. It was noted by Sari that in the case of the school in Eskisehir, oral methods were primary used in the education of their students, and may explain the reason participants reported a Hearing Identification.

The main limitations in this study as noted by Sari was the sample size. Sari says, "the size of the population under investigation and the individual cell sizes in the tables do not lend themselves to inferential statistical analysis" (Sari, 2005, p.214). Given this

study is one quantitative in nature, the difficulty of the analysis not being able to give a clear nod to a significance makes it difficult to confirm the results. Having said that, this study does effectively draw correlations between language and cultural identification.

Nikolaraizi and Hadjikakou (2006) conducted a qualitative analysis which sought to examine the education experiences of 25 deaf adults ranging in age from 22 to 47 years of age. Semi-structured interviews were developed for participants, and were administered in Greek Sign Language or GSL.

Of the 25 participants in this study, 11 were educated in general or mainstream schools, 4 were educated in schools for the deaf, and 10 had both a mainstream and school for the deaf educational experience. The purpose of this study was to examine if one's educational environment effects hearing, deaf of bicultural identities. Results of their study were reported by the three categories being measured.

Seven participants with a hearing identity were identified in the reporting of the results for this study. All of these participants attended general or mainstream schools. Twelve participants identified themselves as having a deaf identity. These participants attended either schools for the deaf, or both schools for the deaf and mainstream schools. In either case, the participants who identified with having a deaf identity spent more time being educated in a deaf educational environment. Six participants reported having a bicultural identification in this study. These participants reported either having spent time being educated in either general or mainstream schools or both mainstream schools and schools for the deaf. In either case, the participants who reported having a bicultural identification experienced most of these education in a general or mainstream environment.

There were two main limitations noted by Nikolaraizi and Hadjikakou (2006) in this study. First, they noted that this was the first study of its type in Greece. It was pointed out that that 25 participants in a population of approximately 13 million may not necessarily be completely representational. The suggestion was for future work to be

done to study the deaf population in Greece. The second limitation of this study communicated by these researchers were the retrospective nature of the study. "Although past experiences are quite important for the development of one's identity, such a study entails some risks because the participants have to recall their experiences, which might have also been affected by the passage of time (p. 490).

Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi (2007) conducted another study examining the impact of educational experiences on 24 participants in Cyprus between the ages of 19-54. This study used qualitative ethnographic semi-structured interviews to explore how individuals who graduated from a variety of school settings affected identity development. Identifications in their study were broken down in to Deaf Identity, Bicultural Identity and Hearing Identity.

Results of this study reflected that 10 of 24 participants reported a culturally deaf identification, and spent more time with other individuals who were deaf, both in educational settings as well as socializing. Ten of 24 participants reported having a culturally hearing identification, and spent more time with hearing peers both socially, as well as in educational settings. Four of the 24 participants reported having a bicultural identification, and these participants reported a shared socialization in the hearing and deaf worlds.

Limitations of this study as reported by these researchers were twofold. First, Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi mentioned the results of this study came from only one method, and noted that implementing triangulation in future works may contribute to more diverse data being collected. The second limitation they reported was similar to the one noted in their 2006 study in which they cautioned using retrospective educational data as the sole measure for identity development.

The final study in this section and chapter that will be reviewed is the research conducted by McIlroy and Storbeck (2011). In their study, they sought to explore identity development of 9 deaf participants through ethnographic narratives of their

educational experiences spanning both mainstream and schools for the deaf in South Africa.

The results of this study yielded three thematic categories of being deaf, school impact, and deaf identity. In relation to being deaf, there were noticeable differences in narratives of participants who identified as deaf audiologically and Deaf culturally. The participants who identified as Deaf (with a capitol D) responded with narratives supporting pro-Deaf culture, usage of South African Sign Language (SASL), and "Deaf identity rhetoric" (McIlroy and Storbeck, 2011, p.502). By contrast, participants who reported mainstream experiences reported despite having exposure to Deaf culture and sign language, deafness did not play a significant role in the development of their identities.

The second category measured was school impact. Of the 6 participants who attended mainstream schools, all participants held the belief that their mainstream education both provided them with a superior academic foundations, as well as improved opportunities in preparation for transition into a world predominantly hearing. The 3 participants who attended the school for the deaf two messages were communicated. First, there was a concern about the quality of the education at the school for the deaf being erratic and the expectations of the instructors not being as high as it should be. Participants who attend schools for the deaf did state that academic concerns aside, a strong sense of pride was identified, and increased self-efficacy was reached.

The third category measured in this study was deaf identity development. The results of this category were reported as four identifications: culturally hearing, culturally Deaf, negative identity renamed in this study as ambivalent identity, and bicultural. The identity development of participants in this study were impacted by socialization, language, and perceived acceptance and opportunity within the environment in which they chose to remain.

The sole limitation expressed by McIlroy and Storbeck was similar to that of the study by Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi in Greece, it is the first of its type in South Africa. This study being the first of its kind, as well as the collection of 9 narratives being collected suggests, by the researchers, more work in this area needs to be completed to better understand the impact of the school for the deaf experience on deaf identity development.

<u>The Role of this Study in Existing Literature</u>

The literature reviewed in this chapter outline many of the pivotal research conducted in the area of identity measurement and development related to deafness, while also outlining areas needed to be pursued. In the review of the literature that reviewed scales measuring identity, many of the recurrent themes reflected that one's environment and the perceptions of that environment can and does affect identity development. In addition, self-concept, age of onset of deafness, and language also contribute to one's sense of self. This perception can impact self-efficacy, both personally and socially, as well as influence acculturation. Since the extent to which is individualized, this process is best understood from the perspectives of those who have lived them.

In reviewing literature examining the impact of the educational experience on identity development, there were a lack of studies conducted in the United States, as well as no studies this writer was able to find that compared current students with alumni participants. Limitations that arose from the Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi study pointed out that retrospective reporting of experiences could potentially detract from the richness of the responses given to responses. This study, by utilizing current students and alumni significantly reduces this concern, while also providing the triangulation of responses that gives of depth to participant responses in reference to the residential school for the deaf experience. Specific aspects of this study are discussed in Chapter III.

Summary

In this chapter, the author presented a history of deaf education, a history of the Oregon School for the Deaf, and relevant research in the area of identity formation, and how it can be affected by socio-environmental factors such as educational experiences. Through reviewing previous research in this chapter, further justification for this study was given.

In addition to further justification being given for this study, this writer, in providing history and research related to deaf education and identity development, has provided a cultural introduction to the context of deafness that was studied in this work. In qualitative work, researchers strive to suspend pre-existing worldviews to learn about the socially constructed worldview of others. This suspension of pre-existing beliefs is conducted in preparation for becoming a cultural learner (Ponterotto, 2002). To best support this process, this writer needed to provide a minimal cultural foundation for the reader to be able to have a general framework for this study.

In Chapter III, this writer will build on this foundation by presenting the methodological framework, research context, participants, data collection, analysis, and steps taken to mitigate bias in the present study.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO METHODS

In this study, the researcher examined the lived experiences of current students and alumni of a residential school for the deaf. This inquiry was aimed at understanding the experiences of the individual who is deaf and is consistently educated at a deaf secondary institution for at least 3 years. The researcher focused on personal, language, and social identity formation in an attempt to understand how identities that were established affected cultural formation and perceptions about readiness for life after graduation

This research was qualitative in nature and was categorized by semi-structured interviews and constant comparative analysis. The focus of this study was on the experience of individuals who were deaf in a post-secondary education setting. Literature reflects that identity is socially constructed and is formed through interaction in various social and educational environments (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006). Thus, does attending a residential school for the deaf affect self-identity, and if so, does this experience at a residential school for the deaf adequately prepare these individuals for life after graduation? Participants answered these questions through sharing their experiences.

This study is unique for two reasons: First, after an exhaustive review of available research, the author was unable to find another study on current students and alumni of residential schools for the deaf in a qualitative format that focused on the questions asked in this study. Although current students and alumni may have had different perspectives about the residential school for the deaf experience (e.g., retrospective versus current experience), their responses added a necessary depth and breadth to the literature that is currently not available. By conducting semi-structured interviews with the current students and utilizing reports by alumni, the researcher created triangulation of the lived experiences of those who attended a residential school for the deaf.

Second, the participants and the triangulation of the interviews provided unique feedback about the residential school for the deaf experience. Given that both current students and alumni were interviewed, the perceptions were less about the students at a particular time and more about the residential school for the deaf experience.

The goals of this study were twofold: The first goal was to examine, through participant feedback, the impact that the residential school for the deaf experience had on participants' personal, language, and social identity, all of which comprise self-identity. The second goal was for the hearing world and the deaf world to obtain insight regarding the meaning of the residential school for the deaf experience to those who attended the school from both a pre- and post-graduation perspective.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the focus of the study, the method for selecting participants, and the data collection and analysis procedures; describe the rationale for using qualitative approaches; provide an overview of the study; address the importance of trustworthiness in the study; revisit the researcher disclosure of potential bias that could have influenced the reporting and analysis of this study; and provide a chapter summary.

<u>Methodological Framework</u>

"Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, p.5, 2009). To adequately appreciate what is happening in a particular setting, it is important to know what things mean to participants (Charmaz, 2004). Patton (1985), as referenced in Merriam's (2009) text elaborated on the aim of qualitative research by stating the following:

> [Qualitative research] is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting-what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what the world looks like in that particular setting-and in the analysis to be able to communicate that

faithfully to others who are interested in that setting…The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (p.1)

To this end, this researcher conducted a basic qualitative research study in this work. "Qualitative researchers conducting a basic qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their words, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Since this research was interested in how meaning of the participants' experiences were constructed, it fit well with the primary goals of a basic qualitative study.

<u>Research Context</u>

The setting in which this research took place was the Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD). OSD is currently in its 141st year of deaf education, and its mission is the development of their students in the areas of academic achievement, vocational placement, personal and social identification, and community involvement.

"The Oregon School for the Deaf is a community that fosters lifelong learning, encouraging individuals to become self-fulfilled, productive citizens" (http://www.osd.k12.or.us). Academically, the OSD is composed of three specific programs: elementary school, middle school and high school. The elementary school provides educational programs for students ages 5 through 10. Because this program is "non-graded," students are groups by developmental skill.

Middle school at OSD is composed of Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8. In Grades 5 and 6, students take two English language classes daily: one that focuses on written expression and one that concentrates on grammar. They also take classes in reading, math, science, social studies, physical education, and study skills. Grades 7 and 8 have the same core classes but are more advanced; the main difference is that an elective is required. Available electives include but are not limited to computer technology, cooking, arts and crafts, media, shop, and general work experience.

Students in the high school at OSD are given the option of selecting three respective diplomas at graduation: Standard Diploma, Modified Diploma, or Vocational

Diploma. To qualify for a standard diploma, students must read at least at a 9th-grade level. According the Oregon School for the Deaf website, the expectations of the high school students are:

> Recognize he/she has a choice to behave respectfully.
> Recognize and respect own value as a person.
> Respect each other as individuals: their feelings, their property, their differences, and their uniqueness.
> Use respectful language.
> Respect school rules and property.
> Complete schoolwork with good effort.
> Responsible behavior in all places, at all times.
> Consistent respectful behavior, positive attitude.
> Participate in activities, classes.
> Be involved in service activities. (http://www.osd.k12.or.us)

<u>Research Participants</u>

Participants for this study were five current students and five alumni from the Oregon School for the Deaf. Participants were drawn via the following criteria: (a) must have severe or profoundly deafness per participant report, (b) must have attended the residential school for the deaf for 3 consecutive years, (c) must be 18 years old or older, and (d) must not have significant reported disabilities in addition to their deafness.

This criterion was applied to the selection of participants for this study as a result of the unfettered impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity development being examined. First, this researcher in an attempt to study this phenomenon, sought participants to be profoundly deaf by report, thus, a representation of the students of the Oregon School for the Deaf. Secondly, by having attended the school for three consecutive years and being at least 18 years of age, participants had experienced the residential school for the deaf experience during pivotal developmental stages of their lives. Lastly, by utilizing the responses of individuals without the presence of significant disabilities in addition to deafness, the focus of the residential school for the deaf experience can be given from the sole perspective of deafness, not other factors not examined in this study.

Participants were purposefully selected according to the researcher's focus in this study. Given that this study focused on identity and its impact on socialization and general preparedness for life after graduation, participants' feedback should reflect the experiences that speak to these areas of focus. Participants who were deaf, had attended OSD for 3 years during the formative years of development, and were preparing to graduate were in a unique position to give salient feedback related to the research questions in this study. Because there is an alumni association affiliated with OSD, participants matching these criteria who attended the school were selected in consultation with the Educational Support Supervisor/Community Relations staff at OSD.

The researcher selected individuals who met the criteria for the study and who were representative of the OSD population. This was also done in consultation with the Educational Support Supervisor/Community Relations staff member from OSD, who agreed to assist the researcher with identifying participants for the study. When recommendations had been made and received, she assisted the researcher in obtaining contact information for the perspective participants, which was either a video phone number or email address. Approval to conduct the study at the school was given by the OSD Director. To protect the anonymity of the individuals who participated in this study, pseudonyms were assigned to each of the current students and alumni participants.

<div align="center">Current Students</div>

Melissa Davies: An 18 year old white female who was attending the Oregon School for the Deaf at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools, and was the only person who is deaf in her family.

Jane Martinez: An 18 year old Hispanic American female who was attending the Oregon School for the Deaf at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools, and was the only person who is deaf in her family.

Maria Perez: An 18 year old Hispanic American female who was attending the Oregon School for the Deaf at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools, and was the only person who is deaf in her family.

Jessica Robbins: An 18 year old white female who was attending the Oregon School for the Deaf at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing school, and reported that she is 1 of 4 people who are deaf in her family. Other members of her family who are deaf are her brother, mother and grandfather.

Amy Rogers: An 18 year old white female who was attending the Oregon School for the Deaf at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools, and was the only person who is deaf in her family.

Alumni Participants

Lesley Brown: A 46 year old white female who was a deaf educator at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf, and stated that she was 1 of 2 people who were deaf in her family. The other person who was deaf in her family was her brother.

Christian James: A 44 year old white male who was a deaf educator at the time of this study. He reported that he had previously attended mainstream hearing schools prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf, and stated that he was the only deaf person in his family.

Stanley Jordan: A 42 year old white male who was a deaf educator at the time of this study. He reported that he had previously attended mainstream hearing schools prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf, and stated that he was the only deaf person in his family.

Nikki Stevenson: A 19 year old white female who continued to reside on the Oregon School for the Deaf campus after graduation, continued to take classes, and planned to stay on the campus until she turned 21. She reported that she previously attended mainstream hearing schools prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf, and stated that she was the only person who is deaf in her family.

Katherine Thomas: A 21 year old white female who was both a college student and substitute teacher at the time of this study. She reported that she had previously attended mainstream hearing schools prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf, and stated that she was the only person who was deaf in her family.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

In this study, the primary method of data collection took place in the form of semi-structured interviews with five current students and five alumni of OSD. Semi-structured interviews fall in the continuum of structured and unstructured interview types. This type of interview was ideally suited for this study since it both provided a structure for research areas of interest, as well as allow for emergent themes not covered in the interview questions to be addressed by participants that were related to their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

In relation to the five current students, three formal interviews were conducted that addressed the initial questions proposed in this study. Each interview with the current students covered five interview topic areas, and the purpose for the three interviews being conducted was to give ample time and opportunity for the current students to elaborate on their current experiences. The author conducted one formal interview with each of the five alumni selected to participate in the study. The purpose of these interviews was to triangulate the responses received from the five current students and to seek common themes from current students and alumni. Triangulation refers to gathering and analyzing data in more than one way (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). In relation to the gathering of data, the responses from both current students and alumni provided a

richness and depth to the data. These semi-structured interviews were conducted using video relay services.

The interview procedures that took place with participants are as follows:

1. This researcher dialed the contact number previously received by the participant. As soon as the participants' contact number was dialed, a digital recorder began recording the interview.

2. Since the contact number for participants coincided with a video relay service, the participant number was routed to a video relay service with a sign language interpreter who was also the operator for the call. The interpreter/operator identified themselves with their Operator # (e.g. "I am interpreter number 3576), and said they would connect the call.

3. When the participants' phone rang, the interpreter/operator said, "the phone is ringing."

4. When the participant answers the phone, the operator's tasks shift mainly to being the sign language interpreter. A connected call consisted of:

   a. This researcher's cell phone being on speaker phone recording the interview. This writer was able to communicate with the participants in this study by using communication through verbal means.

   b. Participants sitting in front of a video phone to using sign language to give responses. A video phone call is likened to a video call using Skype. An individual with a video phone is able to sit or stand in front of a video device and able to sign to another individual who is deaf, or communicate with a sign language interpreter.

   c. The interpreter was also positioned in front of a video phone during the call to sign to participants who utilize sign language, as well as communicate verbally with those who primarily use speech like the primary researcher.

d. As the researcher asked questions during this semi-structured interview process, the interpreter would listen to the researcher. Once a question was posed, the interpreter would take the question asked by the researcher in English, and both translate it in American Sign Language which has a different syntax as English, and ask the question to the participant in American Sign Language.

e. A brief pause would take place between the time the interpreter signed the question to the participant, the participant took a moment to think about their respective responses. The participant would sign their responses to the interpreter; the interpreter would take the sign language received from the participants, and verbalize the participants' responses to the primary researcher.

f. This was the interview process for each of the 20 interviews conducted during the data collection phase of this study.

For a list of interview questions, please consult Appendix C for the Current Student Protocol, and Appendix D for the Alumni Protocol. Also, for a brief summary of the interview process, please see Appendix G.

Interview Protocol: Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher send a copy of the interview protocol to the participants (see Appendix C for current student participants in Appendix D for alumni participants). This allowed the participants to become familiar with the initial questions they were asked during the interview process and also gave them time to think about additional information that they would like to convey. Although these were the initial questions, the researcher and the participants were able to address other salient topics that arose during the interview process. This helped to (a) make the best use of the limited time allotted for the interview by providing general interview direction, (b) synthesize the responses in the direction of common

themes, and (c) allow the emergent nature of the interview to be intact for expansion on a particular topic or transition into a related topic (Patton, 2002).

OSD was consulted about the best way to conduct the interviews for this study, and utilizing video relay was suggested; therefore, participants were notified that interviews would be conducted using video relay. The five current students were notified that they would participate in three formal interviews during the inquiry process. They were informed that any questions, comments, concerns, or clarifications related to the information that they conveyed would be welcome at any time via email. Alumni were notified that they would participate in one formal interview, and an invitation to follow up after the interview and during the data collection process would be extended.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Within the basic qualitative study approach, the current study was ideally suited for a constant comparative analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) initially introduced the concept of the constant comparative analysis as a part of Grounded Theory in qualitative research design. It is important for this writer to note that although this analysis was applied in this study, it was not used in conjunction with Grounded Theory, or any other study approach outside of the context of a basic qualitative study.

The constant comparative method of data analysis is meant to do what the name alludes to, which is namely to compare data (Merriam, 1998). Essentially, the constant comparative method involves comparing groups of data to determine similarities and differences via participant responses. Data representing various dimensions are groups together, and as a result, become a category. The overall purpose of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data (Merriam, 2009).

The steps that were taken to analyze the data were as follows:

1. *Factor out bias*: Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested "first, literally ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to

different areas" (p.37). To be consistent with this suggestion from Glaser and Strauss, bias was identified and communicated at the outset of the study, and safeguards such as peer debriefing and member checks were implemented, which will be talked about more in the Trustworthiness section.

2. *Compared responses applicable to category formation*: The interview data was individually coded into as many categories as possible. In this step, this writer reviewed each interview a minimum of three times, and highlighted feedback appearing thematic. Once all of the interviews were reviewed on at least three occasions, preliminary coding and categorizing by language and apparent thematic similarities. For example, when looking at participant feedback for why the decision was made to attend the Oregon School for the Deaf, participants used descriptors such as: "Deaf teachers", "Deaf staff" and "classroom". These descriptors were converted in to codes. Since all of these codes were referring to "Deaf Education", "Deaf Education" was identified as a categorical rationale, as presented by participants, for reasons they attended the residential school for the deaf experience.

3. *Integration of the categories*: In this step, the constant comparative aspect of the analysis became active. Current student and alumni participants' responses were compared, and the integration of compared responses led to categories forming themes or theories about the shared experience coming to light. An example of this took place when participants were asked about competencies they felt helping professionals should have. Some codes that were identified were: "learn how to use sign language", "should take a sign language course" and "compatibility of sign", these codes comprised the category of "Communication". The combination of these codes and the category of "Communication" created the theme that helping professionals working with individuals who are deaf need to know how to use adequate

communication skills, preferably sign language, to interface with the individuals who professionals are serving.

4. *Solidifying of the theory*: The theories related to the reported experiences became more evident in this step, as the constant comparison of categories speak to similarities and differences in the shared reported experiences. This researcher was able to limit less substantial aspects of the categories as deemed by participant responses, and achieve more categorical clarity. An example of limiting less substantial aspects took place when a participant would say, "I just like the school." A second question would be asked such as, "what is it that you like about the school." The participate would say, "I feel more comfortable when everyone is signing." In this example, "like" would not be used, and thus would be eliminated out of the codes. What would be included as a code was "comfortable when everyone is signing." It is important to note that the although some content was limited, essence of the experiences were not. Also, the reviewing of this analysis was peer reviewed by two independent researchers on two occasions respectfully.

5. *Writing the Theory*: The codes and categories formulated by participant responses allowed this researcher to answer the research questions, as well as formulate theories. Since the researcher in qualitative inquiries are both the primary data collection and analyzing sources, the unfettered reporting of the data took place in Chapter IV, and the reporting of the theories attained is reported in Chapter V. The theories reported were from the direct result of participant responses in that formulated both the codes and categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

An example of the coding that took place in this study can be seen below:

I'm really comfortable obviously when everyone is signing. I feel very confident with that. I am very proud with sign language and the visual language that it is. It

is hard when people are talking and I'm unable to be a part of the conversation (A. Rogers, current student interview, January 11, 2011).

With this participant's response, the researcher identified "comfortable" would represent a code in relation to the experience. This code coupled with other responses (e.g. sign language and difficulty communicating with hearing people) were similar thematically to "communication," collectively, they comprised an overarching category.

The goal of describing the phenomena in sufficient detail is to accurately compare common themes and/or experiences without significant researcher commentary (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). By conducting five in-depth semi-structured interviews with current students and triangulating interviews with alumni, the researcher hoped that the interview data yield comparative data and assist in identifying codes which formulate categories.

Table E1 (see Appendix E) shows how the researcher analyzed participant data in reference to the overarching research questions and interview questions in Chapter IV. To the right of each research question in the table is the corresponding interview question numbers that address that particular research question.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) reported the following regarding trustworthiness:

> In qualitative research, trustworthiness features consist of any efforts by the researcher to address the more traditional quantitative issues of validity (the degree to which something measures what it purports to measure) and reliability (the consistency with which it measures it over time). In seeking to establish trustworthiness within qualitative studies, the terms credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (or fittingness) are sometimes used. (p. 85)

According to Patton (2002), there are three specific elements to credibility: rigorous methods for doing fieldwork that result in high-quality data collection and analysis (which will be expanded in the rigor section), preparedness of the researcher (e.g., experience), and philosophical belief in the value of qualitative research. In an attempt to achieve credibility, the researcher pursued triangulation, which will be further discussed in the rigor section.

Dependability or reliability in the traditional sense of quantitative research refers to the ability of findings to be replicated in similar future studies. As it relates to qualitative research, the aim is not to completely eliminate inconsistencies that arise, but more so to detail them when they occur (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). To this end, the researcher documented any variations that took place during the study and will note them accordingly in Chapters IV and V.

Confirmability in quantitative research refers to the objectivity of the research that is being conducted. In qualitative research, there are ways to incorporate checks and balances associated with a study. To ensure objectivity, three individuals reviewed this study. The first person who reviewed this study was a professor at the University of Iowa who possesses a PhD in Science Education from the University of Georgia and a graduate certification in Interdisciplinary Qualitative Research; the second individual was possesses a PhD in Counseling Psychology and conducted her dissertation using a qualitative phenomenological format. In addition to these professionals outside the field of rehabilitation, a researcher from the Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Program at the doctoral level also reviewed the analysis from a rehabilitation counselor perspective. This created the triangulation, also known as peer debriefing, necessary to ensure the objectivity of this study. During the peer debriefing process, the complete analysis of the study was shared. During that time, the peer debriefing consisted of reviewing the analysis, asking clarifying questions, and giving honest feedback about the transparency, accuracy and objectivity of that analysis. This was done on two separate occasions with both the Counseling Psychology and Rehabilitation Counseling researchers respectively. There were no significant concerns related to the reporting or analysis of the responses that were made by participants in this study.

Transferability or generalizability in the quantitative methodological sense refers to the extent to which one phenomenon can be transferred to another context. In relation to qualitative research, the goal is to address transferability or fittingness through vivid

description of the participants and their responses. This method works to achieve the

final characteristic of trustworthiness as described by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) while

giving the specialized attention that the participants and their stories deserve. This was

achieved by rigor and triangulation, as discussed further in the next section.

<u>Rigor</u>

"Qualitative rigor has to do with the quality of the observations made by the

researcher" (Patton, 2002, p. 575). In an attempt to obtain and maintain the level of rigor

necessary to ensure the trustworthiness mentioned in the previous section, the researcher

implemented investigator triangulation. Investigator triangulation takes place when at

least two researchers, evaluators, or other points of reference review a study in an attempt

to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation of participant responses and general

researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This process of triangulation can be viewed

as a methodological technique that leads to a more diverse understanding of a particular

research issue while also acting as an instrument of validation (Steinke, 2004). This

triangulation, also known as Peer Debriefing, sought to limit, if not eliminate any existing

researcher bias that may impact the results of this study.

In addition to incorporating the above measures, the researcher took an additional

step to ensure trustworthiness in the form of conducting member checks. Member checks

include "taking data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived,

and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Upon completion

of the interviews, participants were sent via US mail a transcribed copy of their

individual interviews along with a brief interpretive summary. Participant feedback was

solicited in relation to their review them for accuracy and to report any concerns.

Although no questions, comments or concerns were expressed in relation to their

interviews or interpretations, each participant had the opportunity to give feedback via

US mail or email prior to the conclusion of this study.

Ethical Considerations

In any type of research that is conducted with human subjects, ethical concerns related to overarching participant safety are of the utmost importance. To ensure that participants' health, safety, respect, and fidelity were upheld, the researcher took the following steps: (a) provided full disclosure of all research practices to The University of Iowa's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the beginning of the study, (b) explained the purpose of the study to the participants, (c) explained the difference between confidentiality and anonymity to the participants (e.g., informed them that their responses would be reported without an specific identifying information), (d) received informed consent from the participants throughout the process, (e) informed participants regarding who would have access to the information in the study and explained the purpose of each person having the information (e.g., dissertation committee members), and (f) communicated with the participants' advisors during the course of this study and revealed the researcher's relationship with the participants.

Revisiting Potential Researcher Bias

As mentioned in Chapter I, the author attended a 6-week Orientation to Deafness immersion training at the University of Tennessee and previously worked with individuals who were deaf. These experiences influenced the researcher's selection of the topic and participants for this study.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the researcher utilized triangulation in the form of peer debriefing and member checks to ensure objectivity. This researcher would like to note that after engaging in both peer debriefing and member checks, no concerns were raised by participants or peers during debriefing in relation to subjectivity in the coding, categories, or analysis of the participant responses. An expanded list of researcher frameworks that may have affected this study can be found in Appendix F.

<u>Summary</u>

Chapter I introduced the importance of identity, the Deaf community, Deaf culture, and residential schools for the deaf. Chapter II reviewed the available literature related to deafness, Deaf culture, and deaf education. Chapter III addressed the focus of the study and described the participants, the method of data collection and analysis, and the design and methodology. In Chapter IV, the researcher will report the responses received from the five current students and five alumni of the residential school for the deaf who participated in this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity formation. This chapter will present the coding of textural and structural themes stemming from the 20 semi-structured interviews conducted during this qualitative study and the answers to the primary research questions. In the process of translating the transcripts into the coded data, the researcher incorporated feedback from the participants in the form of member checks.

Participants

Participants for this study were accessed through the Oregon School for the Deaf. The researcher used a purposeful sampling approach for this study in consultation with staff from OSD with the goal of capturing the experiences of participants from different viewpoints. A total of 10 individuals participated in this qualitative study: five current students and five alumni. Of the five current students, five were females, three were from the dominant culture, and two were of Hispanic American origin. Of the five alumni participants, three were female, two were male, and all were from the dominant culture. Of the five alumni participants, one participant still resided at the Oregon School for the Deaf (and planned to stay until she was 21), one was enrolled in college, and the other three were educators of individuals who are deaf. For additional demographic information, please consult Appendix H for current student participants, and Appendix I for alumni participants.

Data Collection

The goal of this qualitative study was to explore deaf identity formation from the perspective of the participants' experiences at a residential school for the deaf. Individual interviews were conducted with each participant. Three interviews were conducted per current student covering 5 topical areas per interview, and ranged from 15 to 60 minutes

for each interview session. One interview was conducted with each alumni participant and sessions ranged from 45 to 65 minutes.

Interviews were conducted using Video Relay Services (VRS). VRS is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables persons with hearing loss who primarily use sign language to communicate with voice telephone users. This process utilizes video, telephones (both landlines and cell phones), and sign language interpreters to facilitate communication between deaf and hearing individuals. For a summary of step-by-step procedures, please consult Appendix G.

Research Questions and Participant Responses

In the next sections, the author will review the research questions and the corresponding responses to the interview questions that yielded codes and categories per constant comparative analytic approaches. For participant coding purposes, the current student and alumni participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure participant anonymity. Pseudonyms assigned to participants were in the form of first and last names, to make it easier for the reader to know who is giving the responses with the American Psychological Association (APA) formatting of the quotations reported in this chapter.

Results Reporting

In the following sections, the results of this study are reported. The researcher elected to present responses in the form of quotations from participants to support the textural codes and to provide descriptors for each of the structural categories. For tables related to the codes and categories, please see Appendix E.

Research Question 1

Were there experiential factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the decision to attend a residential school for the deaf?

To answer this research question, the researcher utilized the feedback from interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 13 to identify one major category (containing two

inter-related sub-themes) and 18 codes as shown in Table E2 in Appendix E. The overarching category was Communication.

<u>Communication</u>

Although Communication was identified by participants as the overarching structural category for Research Question 1, there were two inter-related themes, specifically, Deaf Education and Language. Communication refers to the least restrictive method of exchanging thoughts and ideas as identified by participant responses. For the purposes of this study, communication refers specifically to the use of sign language facilitating the communicative exchanges between individuals. The category of Communication was the culmination of the codes identified by participants, and was the primary motivator for seeking education at the residential school for the deaf.

A majority of participants (4 of 5 or 80% of current students and 4 of 5 or 80% of alumni) were the only people who were deaf in their respective families. Jane reported, "My dad is hearing, my mom is hearing, my brother is hearing, my sister is hearing, and then I'm deaf. That's my family, no one else is deaf" (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 11, 2011). Although this was the case, all of the participants reported that whether or not they were the only deaf family member, their families supported their attendance at the residential school for the deaf.

> My family was really supportive. You know they saw that I was happier being involved in the deaf community, and they really supported sign language. I think they've been happy that I came here, and been able to be in the deaf community (C. James, alumni interview, April 29, 2011).

All of the current students and alumni reported that their families supported their attendance at the residential school for the deaf and gave various reasons. Jessica stated:

> My mother, she decided after she looked the different issues, and wanted me to socialize with other deaf people. She realized it was difficult for me to communicate with hearing people, and I would be more isolated that way. Therefore, I had an opportunity to make friends, get an education, and have teachers that used sign language. Therefore, that's the reason why I decided to come here (J. Robbins, current student interview, January 11, 2011).

Stanley, one of the alumni participants shared a situation that occurred when he attended a hearing/mainstream school and desired to communicate directly with teaching staff prior to attending the Oregon School for the Deaf:

> I remember one time in sixth grade in math class, the teacher had asked a question and I knew the answer, so I was excited to give the answer. The interpreter misunderstood my answer and gave the wrong answer to the teacher. That really deflated my ego and it was embarrassing to me because of the interpreter's mistake. That just wasn't right. Therefore, after that time on, I didn't raise my hand in class any more. I thought I don't want to have them give the wrong answer because they didn't understand what I was signing. Therefore, I thought if I was going to talk to the teacher, I would talk to the teacher directly. I like the fact that at OSD, the teachers can understand sign language, and I can talk to them directly without being misinterpreted through the interpreter (S. Jordan, alumni interview, April 15, 2011).

Lesley noted the following about her mainstream experience:

> Our mom wanted to see more than me just placed in a deaf program. She wanted to see a program better designed for my needs, and they were not satisfied with what the mainstream program was offering me (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

Stanley presented a personal perspective while addressing the mainstream experience:

> I guess my decision to come here was a personal decision because of my loneliness that I had at (mainstream) school. That's why I wanted to go to and become involved in the deaf school, or the deaf program. I was able to build my self-confidence again (S. Jordan, alumni participant interview, April 15, 2011).

> Amy mentioned communication as one of the main factors in her decision to

attend the residential school for the deaf:

> I'm really comfortable obviously when everyone is signing. I feel very confident with that. I am very proud with sign language and the visual language that it is. It is hard when people are talking and I'm unable to be a part of the conversation (A. Rogers, current student interview, January 11, 2011).

Both Nikki and Katherine remarked:

> I was able to meet kids like me. I was learning fast, and was learning in a fun way, and having a good time while I was learning. (N. Stevenson, alumni interview, January 20, 2011).

> I decided to go there because I was wanting to experience it. I liked being around the children, teachers and the mentoring there. (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).

During two separate interviews, Maria alluded to culture being a factor in making the

decision to attend the residential school for the deaf by saying:

> Well I guess that it has a lot to do with deaf culture, and growing up wanting an education in a deaf culture. I could communicate in sign language and wouldn't have as many problems with communication and communication failure (M. Perez, current student interview, January 11, 2011).

> I think that it is a lot about learning. I think it is a lot about activities involved with it. There is a lot of visual grammar. It's a very visual language (M. Perez, current student interview, January 25, 2011).

<div align="center">Research Question 2</div>

What, if any, is the impact of the residential school for the deaf on the identities of

those who experience it?

To answer this research question, the author utilized the feedback from interview

questions 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13 to identify two overarching categories and 19 codes

as shown in Table E3 in Appendix E. The two categories identified by participants were

Personal and Social/Cultural.

<u>Personal</u>

In relation to the personal impact on the identity of those who attend the

residential school for the deaf, participants reported varied personal experiences. The

category of Personal referred to the catalyst identified by participants as being of an

internal and individual nature. Many, in regard to personal identity, first identified

themselves as people who are deaf: "Well, first off, I'm deaf. That's a large part of my

identity" (C. James, alumni interview, April 29, 2011).

> Amy reported:

> I have developed an identity and pride in who I was. You know, I became more involved in deaf culture, and…and I felt not as oppressed I guess. And more, you know you able to do whatever I wanted (A. Rogers, current student interview, January, 13, 2011).

> Katherine reflected on the personal and social effects on her experience:

> If it hadn't been for OSD, I would've definitely gone downhill in my life. I would say that when I was the only deaf kid in public school where I was mainstreamed, I was really out there in a corner by myself. I didn't socialize at all. I was left

out, and that was pretty much from the ages of 4 to 10, and I dealt with it every single day. Until I had the opportunity to go to OSD, and it changed my life (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).

Stanley stated: "At the Oregon School for the Deaf, that's where I grew my self-confidence and myself. My self-esteem. That was very important to me" (S. Jordan, alumni interview, April 15, 2011). The effects of meaningful relationships were highlighted Melissa: "I've developed relationships that I don't think I would have, and I feel good about myself here" (M. Davies, current student interview, January 13, 2011). In reference to learning from another deaf person's perspective, Katherine stated: "I was partnered with other deaf people and I was able to see how they functioned, and learn life through a deaf person's eyes. It made all the difference" (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).

Lesley spoke about the support that her family showed as a result of her attending the residential school for the deaf and her immersion in deaf education:

> My parents, my grandparents, and cousins, they're very big advocates of American Sign Language. They advocate signing around me at the dinner table for example to keep me in the loop. So if I stand next to someone, they will say 'we are talking about X, Y or Z' to make sure I know what's going on. As my counsins got older, they learn to sign a bit, and finally when we got in the school, my cousins said that I wanted ASL class or deaf studies program at the college. They said we don't have it, so they kept on over and over again, so they had one, and two years later and it was accredited. I think that's partly because of our unique background and my brother and I (who is also deaf) (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

The second category was the social/cultural impact of the residential school for the deaf experience.

Social/Cultural

The structural category of Social/Cultural refers to the catalyst identified by participants as being of an external and collective nature. A majority of participants (5 of 5 or 100% of current students and 4 of 5 or 80% of alumni) identified American Sign Language (ASL) as the preferred way to communicate with others (with one alumni member reporting that he preferred Pidgin, or signed English). All participants reported

that they preferred to communicate using sign language, and they agreed that sign

language, specifically ASL, was the foundation of Deaf culture:

> It's definitely the language that is an important part of deaf culture. Even in the context of America, you can see that language is an important part of culture. Everybody's from different places and speaks a different language; but the culture means that people can understand each other and their humor. At the hearing school, they couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand them. At the school for the deaf, there's a lot of socialization and interactions with the other students. We can communicate and sign in ASL (M. Perez, current student interview, January 25, 2011).

Sign language was consistently reported as a way for the participants to

communicate and socially interact with their peers. Jane remarked, "At a deaf school,

there's just better ways to make friends. It's easier to make friends" (J. Martinez, current

student interview, January, 20, 2011). Stanley stated, "Deaf culture is language. Deaf

culture is language. Kind of a sense of belonging" (S. Jordan, alumni interview, April 15,

2011). Jessica added, "I feel comfortable being around deaf people, when everyone is

signing and being able to make friends" (J. Robbins, current student interview, January

18, 2011).

Nikki, Amy, and Lesley reported the following in relation to socialization and

identity:

> Everyone is allowed to have their own identity here, and everyone has their own, and they can share it (N. Stevenson, alumni interview, January 20, 2011).

> There's a cultural aspect of being there. Hanging out with the people that are communicating in sign language. I think socially I am more active, I'm more involved (A. Rogers, current student interview, January 27, 2011).

> I would say that 90% of the people that I would be spending time with knew sign language. So there would only be a small percentage of time where I was alone or didn't have people to interact with (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

One characteristic that helped to form a social identity was related to the visual

nature of ASL. The beauty of the language and culture was a bi-product of having a

visual language:

> There's no secrets in Deaf culture. People just talk, talk, talk, and people can just look around and see everyone's conversation. So, you know,

everyone…everyone kind of knows everyone's business (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).

When signing and they're having a conversation, everyone can see it, and there's no privacy. You know it's not like they can whisper, so they can't keep things private. You have to sit in the bathroom and sign or something like that. People say, 'stop looking at me, you know, and people will say, 'my eyes are free.' Then the person would say, 'why are you looking at me?' They say, well, you know, you can't control my eyes (M. Davies, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

Given that all of the participants equated sign language, specifically ASL, as the cornerstone of Deaf culture, it is possible to make the correlation of a language without secrets being a culture without secrets. Although this idea will be expanded further in the results of Research Question 4, the open nature of the culture as expressed by the participants was an aspect of social identity formation.

Pride was a characteristic often alluded to in the practice of both Deaf culture and sign language as it related to interview questions specifically addressing identity. Consistent with the concept of pride was the manner in which participants, both individually and collectively, related to deafness as a characteristic rather than as a disabling condition. When they were asked how they perceived deafness and if it was associated with a disability, Amy, Jane and Christian reported:

People think that we have a disability, but I don't think I have a disability. I don't think other deaf people think they have a disability. I don't think deafness is a disability. I think the only thing that's different is we can't hear sounds, so the way we communicate is different (A. Rogers, current student interview, January 27, 2011).

I would say it's a different way of communicating in a nutshell. Deaf people can't hear, there's really no other option. Hearing people may view us as different because of a disability. But honestly, hearing people can't understand that we view this so-called disability as a culture itself. So I suspect that it depends on who you ask (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

From the hearing perspective on deaf people, yes. If we need to get a job, like with accommodations. Do I consider myself disabled? No. I know that there are limitations, but I don't have a disability. That's kind of what the hearing world has labeled us. Some deaf people are very, very offended being called disabled. But I'm just kind of going by the law. That doesn't mean that we need handicap parking, or anything like that. That's not what we are talking about. That's the way that the hearing world has labeled us and written the laws. That's fine. If people want to label us as disabled, then hopefully that will give people more

jobs, and more advocacy in the hearing world. That's fine. But I don't consider myself disabled (C. James, alumni interview, April 29, 2011).

<div align="center">Research Question 3</div>

How do the participants perceive their experience at the residential school for the deaf as preparation for life after graduation?

To answer this research question, the researcher utilized the feedback from interview questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 to identify two overarching categories and 13 codes as shown in Table E4 in Appendix E. The two categories were Academic Experience and Independence.

<u>Academic Experience</u>

The Academic Experience structural category referred to participants' perceptions of the classroom education they received at the residential school for the deaf. In relation to academic preparedness for life after graduation, Maria, Melissa and Jane remarked:

> I would say that growing up here, I got a great education (M. Perez, current student interview, January 11, 2011).
>
> OSD has helped me prepare for college because I am graduating this year (M. Davies, current student interview, January 13, 2011).
>
> I would have to say that it helped me with sentence structure, and my grammar. I also think that it's helped me to learn communication. So after I graduate, when graduation is over, I would plan to transfer to another school, and I feel prepared for that (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 13, 2011).

Nikki, Katherine, and Lesley reported:

> It was really good. I worked really hard on education and I understood a lot more. I learned better and the teachers were great (N. Stevenson, alumni interview, January 20, 2011).
>
> I would say I feel more prepared having gone to OSD (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).
>
> Deaf educators doing science…reading. Deaf teachers in very academic fields. Those are the one's that changed my life. I see a big difference in the beginning part of my education, when it was mostly hearing (teachers), to the latter part. Math, Biology….It wasn't until in high school, when they changed the teachers, that my skills really improved. I think it's because I think its because they were able to explain things to me in comparison to the example and that was better for me, and I think deaf educators had more patience. They would help me how to figure out how to write a paper by being able to see it visually. Those things

really helped my language skills to improve (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

Participants noted that the effectiveness of the academic experience at the school for the deaf was based on the visual and direct communication that ASL provides. In addition, the fact that the school for the deaf is able to educate "different levels of deafness in terms of intelligence" (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011), and in the views of participants, allows the academic services found at schools for the deaf to be more versatile than those found in mainstream school environments. Feedback received by participants also reflected that students who received their academic foundation at the school for the deaf reported confidence that their experience academically prepared them for life after graduation.

The current student participants all reported that they felt that they received an adequate academic experience, and three of five were actively pursuing a college education during the time of the interviews. Of the alumni participants, three were educators of individuals who are deaf, one had graduated but was exercising her option to remain at the school to continue to learn supplemental academic skills, and one was enrolled in college at the time of the interview.

Independence

The second overarching category identified with perceived preparedness for life after graduation was Independence. The Independence category referred to participants' feeling that they learned the skills necessary for self-sufficiency and had confidence in their ability to be successful after completing their residential school for the deaf experience. Stanley said, "I could interact with staff, the dorm person, and I was able to get feedback that was beneficial. I learned things that would help me in the world" (S. Jordan, alumni interview, April 15, 2011).

Christian gave examples of experiential learning that helped him to learn skills that fostered independence after graduation:

One teacher, I remember I was taking a photography class and we were in the darkroom. I had one of those problems that I just couldn't solve. So I asked the teacher, 'can you help me with this'? The teacher said, 'tell me the problem.' I said, 'okay, hold on a second." I went over and looked at the problem, and I described it to the teacher. The teacher described the answer and how to figure it out. And that's when it hit me, at that very moment, I have an issue and I don't understand. Before that, I would just ask my mom, and I would say, 'look at this,' and she would fix it for me. So that's the way it had gone. But when I came here, in that moment, it was different. The teacher just didn't come over and look at it. You have to explain, and use your language. At first, I had to go back and look at the problem, and that's when I understood that I couldn't do that with my mom. I couldn't just call any willing adult over and ask them to fix it. It was up to me from then on to really solve my issues. Take a deeper look at it, and explain it when I had a problem. That was the first time that I've experienced that (C. James, alumni interview, April 29, 2011).

Jane remarked:

I feel prepared to transfer into another environment and become adapted into different social groups. I also feel prepared with life skills. Things like cooking, cleaning. Just different things involved with life skills. I feel after graduation, you know, when I turn 21,and graduate everything, I should be ready to get a job, or work. I think I will be prepared for whatever happens (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 13, 2011).

Participants' perspectives reflected that the residential school for the deaf

experience allowed them to feel adequately prepared not only from an academic

perspective but also from the standpoint of independence.

It is important that we have the schools for the deaf because we have a certain level of compassion for deaf people of any type, or any intellectual level. We can support and advocate for the ones that need assistance and help. You can continue to encourage them, and they can be able to succeed. I am not so sure that you would be as supported in a mainstream environment (L. Brown, alumni interview, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

Here, I learned how to mature and develop and be ready for the world (K. Thomas, alumni interview, February 11, 2011).

Research Question 4

Based on participants' experiences with hearing professionals, are there

competencies, from their perspective, that hearing professionals need in order to best

serve individuals who are deaf?

To ascertain the answers to this research question, the author utilized the feedback

from interview questions 11, 14, and 15 to identify two overarching categories and 17

codes as shown in Table E5 in Appendix E. The two categories identified by participants

were Communication Competency and Cultural Competency.

<u>Communication Competency</u>

The first category that participants reported was important for helping

professionals serving deaf individuals was Communication Competency. The

identification of the Communication Competency category alludes to professionals being

able to facilitate effective communication with individuals whom they serve as well as

with referral resources. Maria remarked:

> I would say learn how to communicate with deaf people. That there are different options that are available. That there are written (options) and interpreters available. They can communicate by writing back and forth, but if they don't have sign skills, that's where they can bring in interpreters to provide effective communication when the communication becomes non-basic. When it gets more intense, they need to have someone so that both people can understand each other's language and culture. Also, professionals need to realize that they need to hire interpreters in advance. They can't wait until its time for the appointment, and then try to make a phone call at the last minute. You need to make sure that the interpreter is right for the appointment (M. Perez, current student interview, January 25, 2011).

Jessica and Melissa added:

> Learn how to use sign language, gesture, or bring a sign language interpreter in (J. Robbins, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

> You should take some sign language classes. I think that would help a lot for professionals, but there is an ability match, whether that professional hearing person signing skills are compatible with the deaf person. For example, say that there is a professional counselor that is signing, and I am watching them, but I don't understand. That means that there's not a compatibility. It's not there. Just signing is not enough to make me understand what is being said. If they were completely fluent, and I did understand, the compatibility would be there (M. Davies, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

In relation to using technology to facilitate communication, Christian recommended the

following:

> Be familiar with technology. You and I are communicating right now with an interpreter over the videophone. We can set up teleconferences with a deaf person using the videophone just like we are using right now. So we are using an interpreter, and it's not costing us anything (C. James, alumni interview, April 29, 2011),

Cultural Competency

Participants reported that helping professionals should also have a level of

Cultural Competency. In relation to helping professionals' perception of individuals who

are deaf, Amy said:

> I wish that hearing people would understand that deaf people are just people.
> They are not stupid. They don't have a problem with their brain. A lot of hearing
> people think deaf people are handicapped, or that they are developmentally
> delayed, or that they have other issues going on with them. The only issue that I
> wish hearing people would get is that our ears don't work, but everything else is
> intact. Everything else works absolutely perfect. We are just human beings, and I
> wish hearing people would get that (A. Rogers, current student interview, January
> 27, 2011).

Although there are individuals who may have disabilities in addition to being

deaf, Jane and Maria remarked:

> Deaf people can do anything, you know? Hearing people need to understand that
> (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

> Deaf people can go out and have a job and be successful, and enjoy themselves in
> the community. I think there's a lot of misconceptions on behalf of hearing
> people in relation to what deaf people can do (M. Perez, current student interview,
> January 25, 2011).

One of the ways that Jessica suggested hearing professionals become educated

about the deaf is through education:

> I think it's important for people to know the history. Like Gallaudet University,
> and where people learn sign language. Like who established the residential
> school for the deaf. About finding ways to take ASL classes. About inventors
> that were deaf. I think history is key (J. Robbins, current student interview,
> January 20, 2011).

Jane, Stanley, and Lesley reported that both education and social involvement were key

elements to competency:

> Its better for people who understand deaf culture to be working with deaf people
> (J. Martinez, current student interview, January 20, 2011).

> Get to know deaf people. The diversity of deaf people. They've got to
> understand the whole person, and I would recommend that they get to know the
> deaf adult. Get to know a little bit about their background. That would really
> benefit them, it would benefit the deaf community as well. You've got to put
> yourself in the shoes of a deaf person, and see what it feels like. It's a big wake
> up. Anytime you encourage professionals to get involved in the deaf community

where they can learn, see and watch, I think its wonderful (S. Jordan, alumni interview, April 15, 2011).

Helping professionals who want to work with the deaf? Take a deaf education class…take sign classes. That's what I think they should do. I would also say be involved in some aspect of deaf culture. Go to events. There is coffee night at Starbucks, or go to a fundraiser. Be involved (L. Brown, alumni interview, April 19, 2011).

In response to Research Question 2, interview feedback reflected that the cornerstone of Deaf culture was sign language, specifically, ASL.

Summary

This chapter presented the feedback collected from participants during qualitative semi-structured interviews with current student and alumni participants from the Oregon School for the Deaf. The responses were organized by the four research questions and the interview questions that corresponded to those research questions. Using the participants' own words allowed the perspectives and voices of the deaf community to be heard directly.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. The process of data collection requires the primary researcher to not analyze data prematurely, but to report participant responses in as pure a fashion as possible (Merriam, 2009). This writer, being true to the edicts of qualitative research methods, provided unfettered participant responses for the reader to understand the perceived impact of the residential school for the deaf experience.

Another characteristic of qualitative research is for the researcher, in addition to being the primary instrument of data collection, is to also be the primary instrument of data analysis. In Chapter V, the researcher will analyze the feedback from the participants, what this study means in the context of previous research, discuss the implications for professionals who work with deaf individuals, present limitations of the study, and suggest areas for future research in deaf identity development.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to explore the influences of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity formation. The conclusions from this study follow the research questions and the findings of the study, and are divided into four parts: (a) factors contributing to participants making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf, (b) the impact of the residential school for the deaf on identity development, (c) the residential school for the deaf experience preparing participants for life after graduation, and (d) the competencies needed by hearing professionals who work with individuals who are deaf. Following the discussion of each research question, the researcher will make recommendations for future research, and share final researcher reflections and a summary related to this study.

Discussion of the Research Questions

Factors Contributing to Attendance

The first research question explored factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf. The first major finding of research was that the most significant factor for participants making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf was communication. Although 18 total textural codes (which included self-esteem, self-confidence, and culture) were identified from the interviews, those themes fell into the sub-themes of deaf education and language, both of which encompassed a shared communication. Ninety percent of all participants reported that ASL was their preferred method of communicating, with one participant (10%) reporting that he preferred Pidgin (or signed English). Despite the marginal difference in the preference of ASL, all participants identified a desire to be able to communicate with peers and staff directly using sign language and to be educated in an environment that had a Deaf culture focus.

Participants often reported that their families supported their education in a setting where sign language was present and that family support was a factor in their decision to attend OSD. Eighty percent (4 of 5) of the current student participants and 80% (4 of 5) of alumni participants reported that they were the only deaf members in their families. Of those participants, all reported that their families supported the residential school for the deaf experience to facilitate their engagement in both education and socialization that featured sign language. Of the 10% of both current students and alumni participants who did have other deaf individuals in their families, a family member visited the residential school for the deaf prior to the student's enrollment, and the participant's attendance was fully supported by the family.

The opportunity to communicate in a manner that was unfettered by interpreters or other language barriers allowed participants to pursue their desire for both shared language and educational experiences at OSD.   The way that this researcher conceptualized communication in relation to deaf education and language is that if deaf education is the structural integrity of the house, language represents the warmth that makes the house a home. Stinson and Kluwin (1996) reported that students in their study perceived that they participated more when other peers with hearing loss were present in the classroom or in school-based activities. In addition, perceptions of increased emotional security were reported by participants when other students with hearing loss were present. This reinforces that participation in education and related events with peers that also have hearing loss was the reason that individuals elected to pursue residential school for the deaf experiences such as those at OSD. This coincides with the feedback received from participants in this study and strengthens the case that acceptance on a personal and social basis are influential factors in making the decision to attend a residential school for the deaf.

Hintermair (2007) reported that there is a correlation between an individuals' acculturation, and the age of onset related to deafness. One of the inclusion criteria for

this study was for participants to be severely or profoundly deaf by reported. The participants during the interview process reported being either born deaf, or having their deafness confirmed at a very early age. Hintermair (2007) reports "people who became deaf before the age of three, as well as those with a higher degree of hearing loss and anyone not using a cochlear implant are more deaf acculturated" (p. 292).

Stinson and Kluwin's 1996 finding of activities being more fulfilling when other individuals with hearing loss are present, coupled with Hintermair's (2007) position on age of onset coincides with reasons the participants mention for making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf. Desiring the presence of peers like themselves, coupled with the ability to culturally and linguistically be comfortable represent the position of the participants who were interviewed during this study.

Impact of the Residential School for the Deaf on Identity

The second research question investigated the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on identity. Out of the 19 textural codes that were identified, the two structural categories that were identified as being affected by the residential school for the deaf experience were personal and social/cultural identities. All of the participants reported that their immersive experience at the school contributed to improved overall comfort with self as well as a stronger identification with a Deaf identity. This was reportedly accomplished by an environment that was least restrictive in relation to facilitating personal, social, academic, and cultural growth and development.

In relation to personal impact, participants reported that they felt less isolated. This resulted in an increased feeling of comfort, which in turn promoted a heightened sense of pride in the personal identity that was formed. Pride, self-efficacy, and peceived support were the recurrent personal themes that were identified by the participants as the impact associated with the residential school for the deaf experience.

The social/cultural impact of the experience led to interesting results in both conceptualization and practice. Conceptually, all of the participants' responses reflected

that their deafness was not a disability but was in fact a different way of communicating. Given that this belief is prominent in Deaf culture, and Deaf culture permeates the residential school for the deaf experience, it appears that this experience does have a social/cultural impact in relation to the conceptualization of deafness.

From a practice perspective, the residential school for the deaf experience appears to impact social/cultural identities through shared language and socialization. All participants reported that being able to engage in unimpeded communication (e.g., without an interpreter) with both students and staff gave them a feeling of community and culture. It is within this community and culture that participants reported feeling a sense of belonging, identification with the Deaf community, and overall comfort with their social/cultural identification within Deaf culture.

The individual and collective position of the participants was that deafness is not a disability. This position endorsed the literature's identification of the Deaf community as a linguistic minority while simultaneously separating Deaf culture from disability culture. This may explain the results in Weinberg and Sterritt's (1986) study not showing a correlation between the school for the deaf experience and deaf identity formation. As mentioned in Chapter II, the wording of the measure used in that study equated a deaf identity to that of a disability identity. If subscription to Deaf culture and Deaf identity means that one does not look at deafness as a disability per participant responses, then it is possible the participants in the Weinberg and Sterritt's study may have also shared this view, thus skewing results.

By contrast, the results of the study in this work reflecting the residential school for the deaf experience positively impacting Deaf identity are consistent with the results from other studies reviewed in this work. Glickman (1993) reported in Hypothesis 12 of his dissertation: "Deaf students who attended signing residential schools will score higher on the immersion and bicultural scales than those who attended oral residential schools, deaf classes within public schools or no deaf school programs" (p. 185). Glickman's

results were reflected not only in participants' responses regarding a sense of belonging and shared experience as factors in making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf, but also in a feeling of unity being an important component of the deaf educational experience.

In addition to Glickman's (1993) study, Ohna (2004) also reflected that the process of identity construction is one that takes place in a social environment. These two studies both point to social environmental factors influencing the identities of individuals, and in the case of the study in this work, the residential school for the deaf impacting deaf identity development.

Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi's (2007) study examining the impact of educational experiences of Deaf identity in Cyprus noted a correlation of education and identity. They reported that "participants who had attended the school for the deaf identified themselves as Deaf, and they expressed a strong pride in their Deaf culture" (p. 404). The authors also noted that "the construction of identity is influenced by practices and experiences within educational settings…For some of the participants, the residential school became a kind of family...Studies by other researchers support these conclusions" (p. 409). The conclusion of the current study that the residential school for the deaf experience influences the formation of a strong Deaf identity confirmed the results of the Hadjikakou and Nikolaraizi's 2006 and 2007 studies.

<center>Preparing Participants for Life After Graduation</center>

The third research question addressed the participants' perceptions of readiness for life after graduation from the school for the deaf. Out of the 13 textural codes that were identified, the two structural categories that best represented the textural codes were the academic experience and preparation for independence. Although there was a continuum in relation to the confidence level of the participants, all participants reported that the school for the deaf experience prepared them for life after graduation. Participants referred to the teaching they received at the residential school for the deaf as

primarily responsible for their confidence level regarding their preparedness for life after graduation. The culmination of in and out of classroom (e.g., in the classroom and in the dorms) learning was responsible for participants not only feeling prepared for life after graduation but also being able to receive an ideal educational experience per their report.

Due to variability in participant experiences before, during, and after the residential school for the experience, perceived preparedness seemed to fall on a continuum. That notwithstanding, the perceptual consensus was that the experience did prepare participants for life after graduation.

The parallel process of learning both academics and independent living skills was reported as beneficial not only for reinforcing knowledge but also for building confidence in participants per their report. Participants added parenthetically that the parallel process of teaching was an approach that they felt was unique to experiences such as those found at the OSD.

Participants remarked that their educational experience at the residential school for the deaf helped them to gain self-efficacy as they moved (as alumni) and are moving (as current students) from being students to being graduates. Many participants remarked that the parallel process of experiential learning made the difference for them. Whether ensuring that language and communication skills were infused in each subject that was being taught, or that education took place in the classroom as well as in the dorm, participants felt adequately prepared for life after graduation following the residential school for the deaf experience.

In Chapter II, factors influencing academic achievement for individuals who are deaf were reviewed. Among the factors reported in Powers' (2003) work were one's adaptation to their deafness, positive orientation to the Deaf community, and high educational and occupational expectations. Bat-Chava's (2000) study made correlations between a well-established cultural identification, and the building of self-efficacy. With participants' responses reflecting a parallel process of learning that was effective for

them, coupled with a strong cultural identification, the residential school for the deaf experience proved to effectively prepare participants for life after graduation.

Competencies of Helping Professionals

The fourth research question asked participants about the competencies of helping professionals who work with deaf individuals. Out of the 17 textural codes that were identified, the two structural categories that best represented the textural codes were communication and cultural competency. All of the participants reported that effective service delivery had to include effective communication between the helping professional and deaf individuals, as well as helping professionals' adequate knowledge, skills, and awareness regarding Deaf culture.

The importance of multiculturalism was noted in participant feedback. In relation to professional edicts, the ACA Code of Ethics and the multicultural competency literature have also emphasized the importance of cultural competency. "Being In (which involves immersing oneself in another's world), Being For (involves taking a stand in support of another person), and Being With (bringing one's knowledge and experience to the relationship)" (Patton, 2002, p. 8) is a process that takes place in qualitative research and that should ultimately be exhibited in multiculturally competent service delivery. To better define cultural competency in this context, this researcher used three specific criteria as noted by Sue (2006):

1. Cultural awareness and beliefs: Providers' sensitivity to her and his personal values and biases and how these may influence perceptions of the client, client's problem, and the counseling relationship.

2. Cultural knowledge: Counselor's knowledge of the client's culture, worldview, and expectations for the counseling relationship.

3. Cultural skills: Counselor's ability to intervene in a manner that is culturally sensitive and relevant. (p. 238)

Participants reported that it was important for helping professionals to not only know sign language, but also to be able to identify ways to communicate in more intricate conversations.

Knowing, understanding, and providing adequate mutual communication seemed to be one of the areas of competency about which the participants felt most strongly. Understanding the importance of both communication and cultural characteristics within groups is essential not only for the working alliance but also for professional integrity.

An example of this was given when a participant talked about arranging an appointment of a helping professional with an individual who was deaf. Participants reported that it is not enough to wait until the last minute to make arrangements (e.g., scheduling an interpreter), but there needs to be advance planning for communication compatibility. In addition to communication that included sign language was the need to understand how technology can contribute to the communication process. Participants, reflecting on the way their interviews were conducted in this study, stated that video relay, along with other technologies, should be familiar to helping professionals serving individuals who are deaf to foster improved communication.

During the interviews, participants did not provide negative feedback in relation to helping professionals not knowing how to communicate with them; however, the importance of clear communication, such as that found in the residential school for the deaf experience, was noted. Participant feedback indicated that the residential school for the deaf experience allowed them to understand and be understood through sign language. Thus, to ensure that service delivery provided by helping professionals such as Rehabilitation Counselors is adequate, establishing open, honest, and effective communication with those whom they serve is paramount.

Cultural competency in relation to understanding the diversity of the Deaf community was also a competency that participants reported as necessary for helping professionals. Participants reported the embodiment of a quote from I. King Jordan, namely, "deaf people can do anything, except hear" (Washingtonian, 2006). Interview data reflected that it is important for helping professionals not to limit opportunities or expectations of individuals who are deaf simply because they are deaf. Instead, it is

important for helping professionals to get to know the individuals whom they serve, and provide support to them based on their individual strengths and needs and not on their perceived limitations or projected stigma.

The principle of cultural competency is prominently reflected in the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics. In reviewing the ACA Code of ethics, this researcher identified over 40 references to either culture, cultural, or multicultural sensitivity, awareness, or competency. The quantity of references to this area suggest that cultural competency is not only a characteristic that has been identified as important by the participants in this study, but is also a standard that is mandated by helping professions such as Rehabilitation Counseling.

Participant responses in this study mirrored the observations reported by participants who were deaf and were receiving rehabilitation services in a qualitative study conducted by Aguayo and Coady (2001). Describing the participants dissatisfaction with rehabilitation services, the researchers reported that "participants complained about shortcomings in professional knowledge and skill, including the inability to provide correct diagnosis and the lack of knowledge about appropriate services and resources" (Aguayo & Coady, 2001, p. 273). Other need areas that were identified were "poor professional manner and interpersonal sensitivity, and lack of attention to emotional, psychological, and social effects of deafness" (Aguayo & Coady, 2001, p.274). "Although some respondents had more positive experiences with rehabilitative services than others, overall the rehabilitation that was provided was woefully inadequate" (Aguayo & Coady, 2001, p. 274). The feedback from participants from studies such as this one and from those who participated in the current study must be acknowledged when hearing professionals adapt their services to adequately serve the needs of those who are deaf.

The next section will address the roles and responsibilities of helping professionals who serve individuals who are deaf.

Responsibilities of Helping Professionals

"Rehabilitation counseling can be viewed as a process in which the counselor and client work together to understand existing problems and potentials and to facilitate the client's effective use of personal and environmental resources for vocational, personal, and social adjustment" (Leahy & Szymanski, 1995, p. 163). Currently, "there are few qualified psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health therapists, and employment counselors who are both knowledgeable of deaf culture and fluent in their clients' preferred modalities of communication" (Fusick, 2008, p. 104), it is incumbent for helping professionals to be competent in the areas of service delivery in which other disciplines may not be competent to adequately serve individuals who are deaf.

The first professional responsibility for helping professionals in providing services to individuals who are deaf is to adhere to the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics in relation to scope of practice.

> In accordance with Standards A.11.b. and C.2.a. of the ACA Code of Ethics (2005), counselors must recognize their limitations of expertise and refer clients with hearing loss when beneficial to more qualified clinicians. Counseling Professionals are also recommended to seek out additional training, experience and supervision prior to and throughout treatment when choosing to accept clients with hearing loss (ACA, 2005, Standards C.2.b., C.2.c., C.2.d., and C.2.f.). (Fusick, 2008, p. 102)

The second professional responsibility for helping professionals in providing services to individuals who are deaf is to engage in adequate training.

> Appropriate training involves understanding and knowledge of development, historical, educational, social, cultural, linguistic, vocational, economic, and demographic aspects of deafness. Relevant training experiences require specific principals, practices, and approaches in psychotherapy; psychological evaluation; and diagnosis with clients who are deaf. (Fusick, 2008, p. 105)

Training should be supervised by a psychotherapist, counselor, or educator who is experienced in deaf culture and service delivery (Sussman & Brauer, 1999).

The third step in professional responsibility for helping professionals in providing services to individuals who are deaf is to become familiar with the different domains of rehabilitation counseling and to understand how to serve individuals who are deaf within

those domains. Leahy et al. (2003) outlined the seven essential job functions and six

knowledge domains of Rehabilitation Counselors. The seven job functions were:

1. Vocational counseling and consultation.
2. Counseling intervention.
3. Community-based rehabilitation service activities.
4. Case management.
5. Applied research.
6. Assessment.
7. Professional advocacy.

The six knowledge domains were:

1. Career counseling, assessment, and consultation.
2. Counseling theories, techniques, and applications.
3. Rehabilitation services and resources.
4. Case and Caseload management.
5. Health care and disability systems.
6. Medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability. (Leahy, Chan, & Saunders, 2003, p. 95)

Helping professionals are charged to obtain and maintain a competent foundation

and to receive continuing education in the aforementioned job functions and domains to

ensure that individuals who are deaf are served adequately. Failure to do so could

potentially lead to educational, therapeutic, and vocational outcomes that are not

commensurate with the individuals who are being served or the potentials they could

reach. In addition, the therapeutic alliance and client involvement in the rehabilitation

process increases the likelihood of successful outcomes (Lustig, Strauser, Rice, &

Rucker, 2002), but the lack of competence of functions and domains of the professional

can damage the therapeutic alliance, compromise client involvement, and further

compromise outcomes.

The final step in professional responsibility for helping professionals in providing

services to individuals who are deaf is to engage in continuing education and research in

the area of deafness. In relation to education, immersion programs such as the

Orientation to Deafness (OTD) Program at the University of Tennessee have been

successful in training practitioners in the language and culture of individuals who are deaf. For those who do not have 6 weeks to engage in an immersion experience, classes and training related to deaf culture, ASL, audiology, and Deaf identity provide a good introduction to deafness and may assist counselors in meeting the needs of their clients.

Regarding future research in deafness, it is important for helping professionals to continue to explore deafness and Deaf culture. Issues related to the multicultural competencies of rehabilitation counselors stem from continued discussions of social justice, equal access, and how to best serve diverse populations seeking services from rehabilitation systems and organizations (Leahy & Matrone, 2005). As the population served by helping professionals continues to diversify, so do within-group dynamics. To this end, it is important for continued studies to be conducted by the field of rehabilitation to better educate those within the profession regarding personal, professional, and cultural issues specifically related to the Deaf community.

The next sections will offer recommendations for future research based on the findings, analysis, and limitations of this research, and provide a summary with researcher reflections of the study that was conducted.

<u>Limitations and Recommendations</u>

As noted in Chapter II, "all research has limitations" (Eve, 2008, p. 24), and from these limitations and findings from the research, recommendations for further research are formed. This researcher recommends further study of the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on deaf identity in an attempt to continue to expand the research knowledge base in this area. To promote further research focused in this area in respect to the results and limitations of this study, the following should be considered:

A future study should be conducted that is similar in focus and methodology to this research but that includes a larger sample size. One of the potential and perceived limitations of qualitative research is "it focuses on relatively small samples" (Patton, 2002, p. 46); thus, reviewers of research results may question the transferability of the

outcomes. Follow-up studies that utilize more participants will strengthen the generalizability of the results reported in this study.

The second suggestion for future research is to incorporate multiple schools for the deaf. A potential limitation of the current study is whether 10 participants who had relatively the same educational experience are representational of the deaf experience. Alumni participant 104 suggested that it night be interesting to have participants from both small and large schools for the deaf. Increasing the diversity of the sample would add richness to future studies that examine the residential school for the deaf experience.

A third suggestion is to consider making changes to the method by which interviews are conducted. This researcher conducted the interviews via video relay. Although member checks were conducted and participants received transcribed copies of their interviews, the transcribed interviews were based on the words of the interpreters. Professionals who perform video relay services are licensed interpreters; however, the potential for variability exists based on the interpretation of responses and experiences. If one interpreter is not being used consistently throughout the interview process, this could compromise the accuracy and consistency of the responses reported and could be considered a limitation. Thus, it is recommended that future research on deaf identity continue to use ASL and either a researcher fluent in ASL or a consistent interpreter during the interview process.

The fourth suggestion is to video record interviews as was done in Ohna's (2004) study and use those recorded interviews a part of the member check process. Given that ASL is a language with different grammar and syntax than English, transcribed interviews in English via video relay may not give participants the best opportunity to review interviews for accuracy. Video recorded interviews would give participants the best opportunity to review the interview process for accuracy in both content and response intent.

Summary

When is it appropriate to use qualitative research? We conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored. This exploration is needed, in turn, because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that can then be measured, or hear silenced voices. These are all good reasons to explore a problem rather than to use predetermined information from the literature or rely on results from other research studies. (Creswell, 2007, p. 40).

We also conduct qualitative research because we need a *complex,* detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature. We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between researcher and the participants in a study. (Creswell, 2007, p. 40)

This study outlined important lessons for the worlds of the deaf and the hearing .In relation to individuals who are deaf or who identify with Deaf culture, insights into the residential school for the deaf experience were outlined in three specific domains: (a) factors contributing to making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf, (b) the impact of the experience on deaf identity, and (c) perceived participant preparedness for life after graduation following the residential school for the deaf experience.

The results of the study in relation to the residential school for the deaf experience revolved around immersion in Deaf culture, which was based on a shared language in the form of ASL. Interview data in the form of textural and structural themes suggested that the common language of sign facilitated not only Deaf education, but also personal and social comfort and identity, and perceived academic and independence efficacy. Thus, through common language, specifically ASL, attending a residential school for the deaf influenced the personal, social, and language identities of these participants who experienced it.

The results of the study through interview data also suggested that there are important messages that need to be understood in relation to the importance of the

residential school for the deaf experience. In relation to professionals (e.g., rehabilitation counselors) who work with individuals who are deaf, participants reported specific items:

First, classification of deafness, whether it is a characteristic of a linguistic minority or a disability, is an identification that the individual with hearing loss makes, not the professional. To this end, it is important for professionals to understand how individuals view their deafness prior to being able to adequately serve them.

Second, understanding how the individual feels most comfortable communicating is a crucial part of serving those who are deaf. Communication with individuals with hearing loss is not a one size fits all proposition. Consequently, whether it is using written notes, video relay service, or interpreters, it is important to access the least restrictive communication methods to most appropriately communicate with individuals who are deaf.

Third, in light of budgetary cuts that schools for the deaf are experiencing, it is important to understand their historical and practical influence. Schools for the deaf have been pillars of the Deaf community since their establishment in 1817, but during difficult economic times, they have experienced challenges that threaten their longevity. Reductions in funding have adversely affected staff and resources that are necessary to continue the tradition of the residential school for the deaf experience. To prevent continued budget cuts, it is important for the world of the hearing to understand the importance of the residential school for the deaf experience to those who attend these schools.

 "Identity is a complex and developing cognitive and social construction encompassing an array of characteristics or identity components that connect the person to specific social groups" (Leigh, 2009, p. 4). This process, though it is subjective to the individual, is one that is influenced by personal insights and social construction as evidenced by this study.

The genesis of this work took place in the summer of 2003 when the researcher attended the Orientation to Deafness Program at the University of Tennessee. The 6 weeks of immersion while being housed at the Tennessee School for the Deaf provided the opportunity to be exposed to ASL, audiology, and Deaf culture. Although this experience was a powerful one, the true impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on those who are deaf was yet to be understood by the researcher prior to this study.

Previous research in deaf identity development has focused on development taking place in various educational and social environments, and it is this researcher's hope that this study will be a practical addition to identity development research. Prior to conducting this study, the researcher was not able to locate existing studies that utilized the triangulation of current student and alumni participants to explore the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience on identity development. This work, along with all past, present, and future research in the area of identity development, will continue to give researchers insight regarding the process of identity formation for those who are deaf.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are invited to participant in a research study which will be conducted by Frederick Staten. Mr. Staten is a doctoral candidate in the Rehabilitation Counselor Education at The University of Iowa. This study seeks to examine the lived experiences of current students and alumni who have attended the Oregon School for the Deaf.

The purpose of this study is to allow the voices of individuals who have attended residential schools for the deaf to tell their stories. The hope is that in allowing the stories to be heard, it will allow people in the world of the hearing and the world of the deaf to understand the impact of the residential school for the deaf experience from firsthand accounts.

Interviews will be conducted at a time convenient to you. All interviews will be conducted in person using a communication aid to facilitate the interview (e.g. assistive technology or chat). Any names or specific personal information will not be included in any written reports resulting from this study. By this approach, it will lend the necessary anonymity to you to facilitate honest and open feedback without having to worry about being identified.

Your experiences will add to the limited but growing body of resources available to individuals making the decision to attend residential schools for the deaf, and educators and service providers about the experiences individuals can have at residential schools for the deaf.

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects please contact the Human Subjects Office, 300 College of Medicine Administration Building, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail irb@uiowa.edu. To offer input about your experiences as a research subject or to speak to someone other than the research staff, call the Human Subjects Office at the number above.

If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to call or text me at (503) 686-3847. In signing this consent form, you agree to allow the information you have provided during the interview to be used as a part of this study. Thank you for your consideration of this important research.

I have read and understand the above information, and I agree to allow the information from the interview to be used as a part of this research study.

Participant's Signature_____   Date_____
Researcher's Signature_____   Date_____

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Eligible participants for this study will meet the following criteria:

- Must be between severely or profoundly deaf per participant report.

- Must have attended the residential school for the deaf for 3 consecutive years.

- Must be 18 years old or older.

If you meet these criteria, please answer the following demographic questions:

1. Name _____

2. Gender_____

3. Date of Birth_____

4. Who diagnosed your hearing

    loss?_____

5. How old were you when your hearing loss was

    diagnosed?_____

6. How far away does your family live from the Oregon School for the

    Deaf?_____

7. Can you be contacted through email?

    a. If yes, please provide your email address

    _____

    b. If you do not have email, please let me know the best way to contact

    you_____

APPENDIX C

CURRENT STUDENTS' INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello,

I want to thank you for being willing to participate in this study.

There will be a total of three formal interviews that will take place during the course of this study. I wanted you to be able to be familiar with the content of the questions that will be asked during the study, so here are the questions that I am planning to ask you during the interview process:

1. Were there factors that contributed to your making the decision to attend the Oregon School for the Deaf? If so, what were they?

2. Does your family play a role in who you are? If so, how?

3. How would you describe yourself?

4. How would you describe your language and how you feel most comfortable communicating with people?

5. How would you describe your social life?

6. How would you describe your experience at the Oregon School for the Deaf?

7. Did your experience at the Oregon School for the Deaf impact the person that you became? If so, how?

8. Does the residential school for the deaf experience prepare those who attend it for life after graduation? If so, how?

9. Have you seen any changes in the residential school for the deaf experience since you have been attending? If so, what were those changes?

10. Are there things about the residential school for the deaf that both hearing and deaf people should know about how it impacts those who attend it?

11. How would you define Deaf culture?

12. How would you describe the classroom experience at the residential school for the deaf?

13. What advice would you give to someone trying to make the decision to attend either a hearing school, or a school for the deaf?

14. Are there things that are important for hearing people to know about Deaf culture?

15. Are there things that hearing professionals (e.g. rehabilitation counselors) should

know about how to serve individuals who are deaf?

There will be three formal interviews in which these questions and topical areas will be discussed. Each interview may last an hour, but will depend on your level of comfort and the content area that is discussed.

Since this format is semi-structured, I welcome your input as it relates to discussing salient areas that I am not addressing in relation to the residential school for the deaf experience.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me and let me know.

Thank you again for you participation, and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Frederick D. Staten
Doctoral Candidate
Rehabilitation Counselor Education
The University of Iowa
(503) 686-3847
frederick-staten@uiowa.edu

APPENDIX D

ALUMNI INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello,

I want to thank you for being willing to participate in this study.

There will be a single formal interview for each alumnus during this study. I wanted you to be able to be familiar with the content of the questions that will be asked during the study, so here are the questions that I am planning to ask you during the interview process:

1. Were there factors that contributed to your making the decision to attend the Oregon School for the Deaf? If so, what were they?

2. Does your family play a role in who you are? If so, how?

3. How would you describe yourself?

4. How would you describe your language and how you feel most comfortable communicating with people?

5. How would you describe your social life?

6. How would you describe your experience at the Oregon School for the Deaf?

7. Did your experience at the Oregon School for the Deaf impact the person that you became? If so, how?

8. Does the residential school for the deaf prepare those who attend it for life after graduation? If so, how?

9. Have you seen any changes in the residential school for the deaf experience since you have been attending? If so, what were those changes?

10. Are there things about the residential school for the deaf that both hearing and deaf people should know about how it impacts those who attend it?

11. How would you define Deaf culture?

12. How would you describe the classroom experience at the residential school for the deaf?

13. What advice would you give to someone trying to make the decision to attend either a hearing school or a school for the deaf?

14. Are there things that are important for hearing people to know about Deaf culture?

15. Are there things that hearing professionals (e.g. rehabilitation counselors) should

know about how to serve individuals who are deaf?

During the interview, these questions and topical areas will be discussed. The interview may last an hour, but will depend on your level of comfort and the content area that is discussed.

Since this format is semi-structured, I welcome your input as it relates to discussing salient areas that I am not addressing in relation to the residential school for the deaf experience.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me and let me know.

Thank you again for your participation and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Frederick D. Staten
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APPENDIX E

TABLES

Table E1

Research Questions in Relation to Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. Were there experiential factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the decision to attend the residential school for the deaf?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 13
2. What, if any, is the impact of the residential school for the deaf on the identities of those who experience it?	4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, & 13
3. How do the participants perceive their experience at the residential school for the deaf as preparation for life after graduation?	6, 7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
4. Based on participants' experiences with hearing professionals, are there competencies, from their perspective, that hearing professionals need in order to best serve individuals who are deaf?	11, 14, 15

Table E2

Code Mapping for Research Question (RQ) 1

RQ 1: Were there experiential factors that contributed to current students and alumni making the

decision to attend the residential school for the deaf?

Structural Categories (1)

Communication (that contains 2 inter-related sub-themes)

1A. Deaf Education (10)	1B. Language (8)

Textural Codes (18)

1a. Deaf Staff	1a. Classroom	1b. Comfortable	1b. Loneliness
1a. Previous Mainstreaming	1a. Mentoring	1b. Family Supporting Sign	1b. Happiness
1a. Visual	1a. Culture	1b. Sign Language	1b. Only Deaf Person in Their
1a. Able to Meet People Like Me	1a. Education	1b. Self-Confidence	Family
1a. IEP	1a. Deaf Teachers	1b. Difficulty Communicating with Hearing People	

Table E3

Code Mapping for Research Question (RQ) 2

RQ 2: What, if any, is the impact of the residential school for the deaf on the identities of
those who experience it?

Structural Categories (2)

2A. Personal (8)		Social/ Cultural (11)		

Textual Codes (19)

2a. Not Feeling Isolated	2a. Pride	2b.ASL	2b. Ability to Share Identities	2b. No Secrets
2a. Have Their Own Identity	2a. Being Deaf	2b. Living in the dorm	2b. Comfortble When Everyone is Signing	2b. Shared Language
2a. Family Support	2a. Comfortable	2b. Most Friends Attended the Deaf School	2b. Socialization	
2a. Learning through a Deaf Person's Eyes	2a. Self-Confidence	2b. Belonging	2b. More Active	
		2b. Deafness not a disability		

Table E4

Code Mapping for Research Question (RQ) 3

RQ 3: How do the participants perceive their experience at the residential school for the deaf as preparation for life after graduation?

Structural Categories (2)

3A. Academic (6)	3B. Independence (7)

Textural Codes (13)

3a. Parallel Process of Teaching	3a. Different Levels of Deafness and Intelligence	3b. Support and Assistance	3b. Feeling Prepared
3a. Improved Communication		3b. Encouragement	3b. Different levels of deafness and different vocational skills needed
3a. Helped Me Improve My Language	3a. Great Education	3b. Experiential Learning	
3a. Prepared Me For College		3b. Mature and Develop	
		3b. Ready for the World	

Table E5

Code Mapping for Research Question (RQ) 4

RQ 4: Based on participants' experiences with hearing professionals, are there

competencies, from their perspective, that hearing professionals need in order to best

serve individuals who are deaf?

Structural Categories (2)

4A. Communication (7)	4B. Cultural Competency (10)

Textural Codes (17)

4a.Learn How to Use Sign Language	4b. Know Some Deaf History	4b. No Problems With Our Brain
4a. Should Take a Sign Language Class	4b. Understand Deaf Culture	4b. Deaf People Can Have Jobs
4a. Plan for Appointments	4b. Take a Deaf Class	4b. Don't Need Assistance With Everything
4a. Appropriate Interpreters	4b. Not All Deaf People Are the Same	4b. Deaf People Can Do Anything
4a. Compatability of Sign (Communication)	4b. Learn How to Communicate with Deaf People	4b. Misconceptions
4a. Technology		
4a. Written Notes		

Table E6

Current Student Demographic Information

Participants (by pseudonym)	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	# of people who are deaf in family (including self)
Amy Rogers	18	White	Student	1
Maria Perez	18	Hispanic American	Student	1
Jane Martinez	18	Hispanic American	Student	1
Melissa Davies	18	White	Student	1
Jessica Robbins	18	White	Student	4 (mother, brother, grandfather, and self)

Table E7

Alumni Demographic Information

Participants (by pseudonym)	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	# of people who are deaf in family (including self)
Nikki Stevenson	19	White	Graduate/ Resides on campus and receiving additional education until she turns 21	1
Katherine Thomas	21	White	College Student/ Substitute Teacher	1
Stanley Jordan	42	White	Teacher/ Educator	1
Lesley Brown	46	White	Teacher/ Educator	2 (brother and self)
Christian James	44	White	Teacher/ Educator	1

APPENDIX F

INTRODUCTION TO FRAMEWORKS

In traditional qualitative research, it is the goal of the researcher to be aware of bias that may affect trustworthiness of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). It is within this context that this researcher seeks to disclose any perspectives that may directly or indirectly be reason for ethical concerns. In the following sections, the researcher will review professional frameworks that introduce professional experiences salient to the author; personal frameworks that describe the researcher's experiences related to the study; cultural frameworks that disclose the researcher's view of cultural formation; and practitioner frameworks that will discuss the school-to-work transition.

It is the researcher's hope that these frameworks will reveal any views that the researcher may have that may affect any aspect of the study.

Professional Frameworks

In 2002, the author was employed in a work training center as a Production Coordinator at Vocational Rehabilitation. The purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to assist individuals with "disabilities" to obtain and maintain gainful employment. During this time, the opportunity to work with diverse populations including the deaf and hard of hearing was presented.

Although there were limited numbers of clients who were deaf and hard of hearing in the work training center, the need to communicate with them daily still existed. As a result of there being no staff members in the work training center who knew enough sign language to communicate with the clients, the researcher began to question the effectiveness of service delivery to those who could not be adequately communicated with. Not having had previous experience with deaf culture or sign language, service delivery by the researcher was compromised.

In 2003, the opportunity was offered to the researcher to attend an Orientation to Deafness (OTD) training at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. The

OTD program has a long history with rehabilitation specialists (e.g., Vocational

Rehabilitation) and the University of Tennessee. In this collaboration between the

University and the OTD program, staff members seek to introduce and reinforce cultural

competencies for the deaf and hard of hearing in a 6-week intensive immersion format

during which housing takes place at the Tennessee School for the Deaf. The goals for

this initiative were:

1. Return to work with knowledge and skills they can put into action immediately
2. Return to work with a tools and strategies that work specifically with deaf and hard of hearing clients
3. Learn about the effects of hearing loss from an audiological perspective
4. Be able to describe and search for appropriate assistive devices
5. Learn about the cultural aspects so strong in Deaf culture
6. Develop a basic knowledge of American Sign Language or improve their sign skills
7. Learn special assessment strategies designed for deaf and hard of hearing individuals
8. Develop team-building strategies
9. Develop effective caseload management strategies
10. Establish a professional network of professionals in the field of deafness and rehabilitation. (Orientation to Deafness Website at the University of Tennessee)

After completion of the OTD experience, the researcher returned to work with

improved knowledge, skills, and awareness about the deaf and hard of hearing

population. The clients in the work training center seemed to appreciate the enhanced

level of communication between them and staff, and the researcher was able to more

effectively serve the clients.

<center>Personal Frameworks</center>

During the OTD experience, the researcher was immersed in the language and

culture of the deaf and hard of hearing in their environment. Throughout this occurrence,

the increased level of comfort of the students who were deaf was observed and the

researcher's decreased level of comfort was noted. The researcher believed that the

perceived comfort level of the students stemmed from being in an environment in which

they were able to have their culture and language both practiced and respected. The

author's discomfort was related to being immersed in a culture and language unfamiliar to him, which initiated feelings of anxiety, isolation, and conciliation of self-efficacy.

This experience is one that has personally affected the researcher since it took place. A 6-week immersion at the time felt significant, but upon further reflection, what if the immersion was 1 year? Five years? Ten years? Then the researcher thought about what it would be like to be educated and socialized in a culture that was not his own. The thought of this experience was overwhelming when considering communicating in an unfamiliar language, trying to learn in environments that may not be ideally conducive to his strengths, and experiencing this with a global decreased self-efficacy.

Literature reflects that one of the factors that can influence an individual's decision to attend a residential school for the deaf is a desire for immersion in the Deaf culture experience. In this immersion, it is believed that a level of acceptance by peers and competency of educators about what deafness is and what it means is infused. It is with this idea that the researcher became interested in conducting this study.

Immersion at the residential school for the deaf raised feelings of inadequacy for the researcher, but he also observed the strength and increased self-efficacy of the students who were deaf who attended the school. Were these observations by the researcher accurate or a result of making an assumption based on limited observation and information?

It is important to note that the research for this study was not only predicated by perspectives not yet explored in the literature, but also by the researcher's experiences. It is believed that understanding the experiences of pre and post graduates not only gives unique insight to the individual viewpoints of individuals who are deaf, but it may also contribute to a broader understanding of the potential short- and long-term influences of residential education.

Cultural Frameworks

As the service delivery field seeks increased levels of multicultural competencies, supplemental research concerning various diverse populations necessitates inquiry. This study has the potential to give the deaf a voice in relation to their culture while also assisting practitioners in understanding this culture. The researcher believes that having a clearer understanding of the impact of deaf culture and deaf education can potentially make for more competent educational consultation and assist in the facilitation of more comprehensive deaf cultural competencies. Before this can occur, one must first understand the cultural frameworks associated with residential schools for the deaf.

Residential schools for students who are deaf attempt to provide inclusive academic, vocational, and socialization programs that include dormitory living equipped for students who are deaf. Most programs serve preschool ages through Grade 12. In addition, some schools offer parent-child, vocational, and community outreach services.

Dormitories are divided according to age groups to promote congruent socialization. The expectations for staff members are to be competent and facilitate learning in the following areas: academic achievement, recreation, sports, leisure, educational field trips, and general issues related to residential life. Next to coming from a deaf family or a family with some fluent sign communication skills, students have reported that residential life is an ideal opportunity for students who are deaf to become familiar with and acculturated into the Deaf community (Pagliaro, 2001).

In activities, every attempt by educators and staff is to make the environment inclusive for students and their peers. Given that no interpreter is necessary for peer interaction, direct communication among peers is seamless. This characteristic that is absent from mainstream education provides an ideal environment for self-efficacy in regard to self-image and self-identity.

If a culture is defined as values, language, and social norms, then Deaf vulture as a construct qualifies as a culture all its own. Members of Deaf vulture are a group of

individuals who have a common heritage (e.g., historical events, art, literature), a common language (American Sign Language), and a set of norms and values. This practice is passed on from one generation to another and is often facilitated via the residential schools. Cultural Immersion in Deaf Culture is the cornerstone of the residential school for the deaf experience (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

The researcher believes that culture is socially constructed and therefore coincides with what literature reflects in regards to cultural formation for individuals who are deaf. This study provided firsthand accounts of cultural formation for the individuals who are deaf by individuals who are deaf. The next section will discuss the importance of firsthand accounts by discussing practitioner frameworks related to transition services for students who are deaf.

<div align="center">Practitioner Frameworks</div>

The transition from school to work can be a complex conversion for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2003). Deaf and hard-of-hearing students face the following realities: concerns about adequate accommodations while working in a hearing environment and the potential for isolation in the workplace and stigma related to hearing loss equaling a deficiency in job readiness or upward mobility potential.

When students who are deaf graduate from high school, many systems of support that were initially provided may no longer be readily available to them; therefore, self-efficacy and proactive requests for these services may be necessary (Luckner & Muir, 2002). Failure to understand this need may result in marginal career success due to factors not directly related to the ability to meet job tasks and lead to chronic underemployment for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing (Punch, Creed, & Hyde, 2006).

These vocational concerns have led to the emerging career barrier constructs with an increasing interest in contextualism (e.g., emphasizing the importance of factors such

as disability or socioeconomic status) in the career development field (Punch et al., 2006). It is important for career counselors and general rehabilitation professionals to understand how reported vocational preparedness for graduation translates into vocational outcomes. This information per direct report on behalf of the individuals who have been educated in residential schools for the deaf has the potential to more effectively support alumni who are currently seeking career guidance and also to better prepare current students for potential barriers they may face after graduation.

The researcher believes that school-to-work transition is a pivotal part of the developmental process of the student. If work transition is not effectively implemented with students, there is a chance that they may not be as adequately prepared for life after school. Viewing this as an important part of the self-efficacy process, the researcher chose to make this a part of the study, and therefore views it as an important framework.

APPENDIX G

VIDEO RELAY INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

The following methods were used to collect data for this study:

1. The primary researcher first called the participant utilizing video relay services (for more information about video relay services, please consult page 2).

2. A digital voice recorder began recording once the call was connected by the operator/interpreter.

3. When the call was connected, the primary researcher greeted the participant, and proceeded to ask the questions on the interview protocol.

4. As the interpreter was relaying information to the participant, the primary researcher continued to record the call and noted the times in which questions were asked to participants.

5. Once the call concluded, the primary researcher thanked the participant, and concluded the call.

6. After each interview, the primary researcher transcribed the interviews that were conducted.

7. This took place for all 20 interviews (3 interviews for each of the 5 current students and 1 interview for each of the 5 alumni participants).

APPENDIX H

DISCLOSURE REGARDING ALUMNI PARTICIPANT

LETTER

During the course of the interview process, one of the alumni participants who believes in political advocacy mentioned that she had written a letter to the State of Oregon Legislature Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee of Education. She stated that the purpose of this letter was to relay her thoughts about education, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and students who are deaf.

Although coding interviews is meant to give the participants a degree of anonymity, Lesley Brown, one of the alumni participants, offered a copy of a letter that she wrote to the legislature, and gave this researcher permission to place it in the appendix section. As a result of this letter addressing deaf education, this researcher thought that he would be remiss if he did not include a deaf education perspective directly from a person who had attended a residential school for the deaf. Although this is not the original letter that was received by the legislature, it is the document that she sent to them. I want to thank Ms. Brown for being willing to share this with me and to allow me to include this in Appendix I.

APPENDIX I

ALUMNI LETTER TO THE OREGON LEGISLATURE

Thursday, March 3, 2011

State of Oregon Legislature

Joint Ways and Means Sub Committee of Education

Rep Dembrow
Rep Garrard
Rep Komp
Rep Sprenger
Sen Edwards
Sen Monroe
Sen Girod

As an alumnus of Oregon School for the Deaf, my name is Lesley Brown. I was diagnosed profoundly deaf in both ears at the age of ten months. I enrolled at Oregon School for the Deaf in 1986, I was five years old. I am now employee by the Salem Keizer school district as Special Instructional Assistant. I work with the student at Oregon School for the Deaf who also has Asperger Syndrome. My brother who is also deaf and is an alumnus of Oregon School for the Deaf and recently graduated from National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.

What is LRE "Least Restrictive Environment"? How is LRE applied at Oregon School for the Deaf?

Oregon School for the Deaf has inclusive education. The education environment at the school is richly in using sign language directly between peer to peer and peer to faculty. No third party known as interpreter.

Oregon School for the Deaf has social or behavior support, staff support, instructional strategies: teaching to a student's learning style, differentiating instruction- teaching to meet the needs of all children in the classroom. In the classrooms, the teachers provide hands-on activities, use technology to support teaching and learning, provide face to face instruction and execute a positive behavioral/learning intervention plan which includes providing counseling, modifying learning expectations for student.

Modifying the environment to ease stimuli that are known to cause the student's behavioral problem; when isolating a deaf student to mainstreaming, this student may get frustrated when come to lacking of direct communicate, restrict ability to express, loneliness, suicide, segregation, classroom situation are usually common with group discussions and the interpreters are not educators. Deaf school is an option and will

always be available to provide deaf and hard of hearing students a proper education in Least Restrictive Environment.

The natural of usage of language in a proper environment, building friendship, learning, participating and self-esteem growth are most important in every child's lives. Our school, the classrooms are better able to meet the needs of all students as a result of additional instructional resources, adapted system to suit student's needs. Students are better prepared for adult life in an inclusive society which also known as Least Restrictive Environment at Oregon School for the Deaf.

The settings at Oregon School for the Deaf: classrooms, playgrounds, lunchroom, dormitory, infirmary, meetings and events. They are all where the proper learning and experience occur in students' daily lives. That is Least Restrictive Environment.

Our educators: Degrees of Bachelor's and Master's from Lewis and Clark College, Portland State University, Western Oregon University, Willamette University, Gallaudet University, Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, George Fox University, Linfield College, California State University of Northridge and many more. Our educators are fluent in American Sign Language and they provide Least Restrictive Environment.

The student must be taught the use of the different parts of the entry and given guided practice in its use. Student mainstreaming at public school is not adequate to provide what a deaf or hard of hearing student needs in order to acquire the ability to gain essential knowledge and skills.

Considering closing the Oregon School for the Deaf is like neglecting the student's rights to have a viable option to choose Special Education. Forcing student to mainstream is not an option.

Thank you for hearing this letter as my testimony for the continuing existence of education at Oregon School for the Deaf.

Lesley Brown

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