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SOCIAL ISSUES FACING DEAF STUDENTS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Master's Capstone Project Proposal

Submitted to the Faculty
Of the Master of Science Program in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or
Hard of Hearing

National Technical Institute for the Deaf
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

By
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Abstract

This review examined the serious impact social isolation can have for the mainstreamed deaf student. When considering a successful high school experience, one must consider both the academic and social components. It is proposed here that the isolation a deaf student typically experiences will greatly impact their identity and self-esteem.

Additionally, this review examined the role of the unwritten curriculum, the issue of a least restrictive environment, identity and socialization/isolation factors, and teaching strategies as they relate to mainstream education. Deaf students face barriers in the mainstream that are often overlooked by teachers and parents. This review consolidates and highlights the key issues that deaf students experience socially, as well as the consequences of social isolation. Since social isolation impacts so heavily on the adolescent deaf student, it is in the hands of educators to recognize and improve this inequity in an educational system that claims to provide equality for all students.

Social Issues Facing Deaf Students In Mainstream Education

Since 1817, the history of Deaf Education in America has been replete with varied methodologies for communication, controversies and educational philosophies. Over the last 50 years there has been a movement to include deaf students in the mainstream school setting (Marschark, et al., 2002). "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), formally known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) of 1975 and Public Law 94-142, guarantees all students with disabilities a free appropriate public education" (Luckner & Miller, 1994). Horne defines the six principles of IDEA to be: Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Individualized Education program, Least Restrictive Environment, Parent and Student Participation in Decision Making, and Procedural Safeguards. These principles are in place in order to guarantee educational instruction and have individual education needs addressed (Horne, 1996). However, there are inequities not addressed for some deaf students in the mainstream setting.

A continuing debate exists regarding the Least Restrictive Environment and deaf students (Luckner & Miller, 1994) pertinent to specific cultural, communicative, and learning differences. The issue at hand is the barrier that the deaf student faces socially in the mainstream environment as well as how this awareness might improve the social aspect of an isolated deaf student. Brown and Foster (1991) suggest that while deaf students can be successfully placed on an integrated campus in education settings, social integration is less likely to occur. "One of the issues now is whether such placement is in

the best interest of many deaf students, especially when the need for social interaction among students is taken into account" (Brown & Foster, 1991, p. 21). It is important for schools to be attentive to the barriers that a deaf student faces that can hinder normal development and impact school functioning (Stinson & Leigh, 1995). The current direction of education focuses on equal education for all. It is important to address whether the mainstreamed deaf student is receiving that equal education.

The challenges deaf and hard of hearing students face in the mainstream are vast. As Kent (2003) observes, mainstreamed deaf student numbers are increasing in the United States due in part to legislative change but also because students with less severe hearing losses are increasing. Consequently, there are many students in the mainstream that face both academic and social barriers due to hearing loss. The social development of the hearing impaired student differs greatly from that of hearing peers in the amount of social practice and skill development that is available (Sanders, 1988).

Special Education Legislative history impacts the current education options available to deaf students. From Public Law 89-10 (1965) to Public Law 94-142 (1975) to Public Law 101-476 IDEA (1990) deaf children have been increasingly served in public schools (Horne, 1996). The move from separate residential schools to an increase in enrollment and access to education in mainstream schools has impacted the social, cultural, and identity development of deaf students (Stinson & Leigh, 1995). Improving the access a deaf student has to the social arena of high school will move the deaf student closer to successful education (Luckner & Muir, 2001). The students in a study by Israelite, Ower, and Goldstein (2002) indicate that an adolescent develops identity based on their status of being different from that of their hearing peers. Their marginalized

status due to deafness isolates them from the majority hearing culture. If a child feels that everything is related to their hearing loss, their self-concept will be heavily affected by that point of view (Green, 1976).

The major statement of this thesis is that there is a need to focus in on the multitude of social issues that deaf students face in a mainstream environment. "While full-time mainstreaming of deaf students provides opportunities for interaction between them and their hearing counterparts, it offers no guarantee regarding their socialization" (Cambra, 2002, p. 38). Deaf students face language and cultural issues that are not always addressed or identified in the mainstream. Both mainstream and residential programs have a long-term as well as an immediate impact on deaf students in the areas of academic and social development (Foster, 1989b).

Deaf students are most often isolated in the mainstream. "In mainstream placements, deaf students might never meet another deaf person, or they may be relegated to a devalued status within the dominant hearing culture of the student body" (Foster & Emerton, 1991, p. 63). It is often observed that deaf students would be more likely to identify with other deaf students who share common struggles and challenges (Stinson & Leigh, 1995). Clearly, deaf students in the mainstream have varied experiences. Consequently, the social adjustment can be affected and it is often observed that Deaf students' personal and social adjustment suffers (Foster, 1989b).

As noted in Kent (2003) the study of identity issues show evidence that hard-of-hearing students are more prone to be lonely than are their hearing counterparts. Studies of social processes and outcomes of the placement of deaf students with hearing peers cannot be easily summarized, but can be grouped into at least four major categories of

focus: 1) social skills, 2) interaction and participation, 3) sociometric status, and 4) acceptance and affective functioning (Kluwin, Stinson, & Colarossi, 2002). When a deaf student differs from the norm by using a visual rather than a spoken cue, this deviation impacts their acceptance (Brown & Foster, 1991). Clearly, social skills, interaction, participation, and acceptance can be deeply affected by hearing status. However, it is noted in the study by Kluwin et al. (2002) that hearing students were more socially mature than deaf students in public schools, that deaf students interacted with deaf classmates more than hearing ones, that deaf students were somewhat accepted by their hearing classmates, and that self-esteem was not related to extent of mainstreaming.

In Deaf Education, a sense of an underlying need to address the limitations that deaf students face in social opportunities and development is often observed. "Mainstream settings were perceived as having a better level of education than separate residential programmes, while the latter offered more opportunities for peer interaction and friendship" (Foster, 1989a, p. 78). Gaps and trade-offs within the philosophies of deaf education exist that require further development, especially in regard to social issues in the mainstream. It is noted in Foster (1989b) that a deaf student felt that they missed a lot of information, especially the fun, shared jokes and informal communication in a regular school setting. This kind of informal learning is a major aspect of a high school student's life.

"School placement decisions, in combination with the experience of success or failure to access information through formal or informal communications, greatly impacts opportunities for interactions of deaf and hard of hearing students with peers" (Stinson & Foster, 2000, p.199). Foster, Long and Snell (1999) agree that there is limited access to

informal learning for deaf students. Schloss (1990) observes that often educators assume deaf students will acquire social skills incidentally as other children do. The limited informal learning that actually takes place suggests this assumption is mistaken.

Deaf students share basic human needs: to be educated, to make friends, to reach a sense of self-identity and esteem, to be actively engaged, to belong. They bring to school not so much a handicap as an alternate world view, along with a novel mode of communication, and unfamiliar objects and patterns of behavior (Gaustad, 1999, pp. 176-177).

Regardless of sufficient evidence supporting both pro and con for mainstream education, it is important to note specific and current socialization gaps for deaf students in the mainstream, avoiding any opinion as to which is the accurate placement, as this differs for each individual deaf student. "All students should have the opportunity for academic *and* personal/social development to the fullest extent possible; nobody should have to give up one to get the other" (Foster, 1989a, p. 79). Regardless of the debate within deaf education, it is nonetheless a factor of reality that many parents will decide to mainstream their deaf child. In doing so, the typical deaf student will face gaps and barriers in informal learning, social development and peer interaction (or lack thereof).

The question remains: What are the best ways to improve access, resolve hindrances, and produce a more constructive environment for all deaf adolescents in a mainstream setting? Addressing the issues at hand for teachers, students, and parents who choose to participate in a school system that incorporates mainstream classes is an important component in ensuring a fair and equal education for deaf students. In isolation, it is difficult for any student to learn. Marchark et al. (2002) observed that

when a deaf student is isolated, limits are superimposed onto academic confidence. In mainstreaming, the dispersal of deaf students in the public school systems is often distributed widely. Not only are deaf students different and isolated, teachers are untrained in their needs (culturally and communicatively) and there are communication and interaction barriers with peers. Deaf students are facing a battle and are unable to fully participate equally with hearing peers. Looking at the social elements for a deaf student is important for many reasons. It is essential to reduce any gaps in social development for deaf students. In a study of successful deaf mainstream students by Luckner and Muir (2001) the general education teachers understood that deaf students experience the same needs and desires as their hearing peers. By treating the deaf students the same as any other student they made sure the deaf students felt comfortable and an equal part of the class. By eliminating the feeling of "other", deaf students were able to participate successfully in a supportive environment as an equal to hearing peers.

High school students face issues of self-concept, self-awareness, and self-identity. "A reclusive teenager makes peers uneasy; they make fun of him; they suspect him of being a weirdo, a maladjusted outcast" (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 179). Teenagers who internalize this attitude will subsequently feel uneasy about themselves. For mainstreamed deaf students, these issues are of major concern. With respect to cultural deaf identity formations, Glickman (1996) observes that the rise of mainstreaming threatens Deaf culture. To many culturally Deaf individuals, mainstreaming can be viewed as an infringement of the Deaf child's right to signed communication and Deaf peer interaction (Glickman, 1996). Isolated deaf students feel disconnected, missing out on the informal learning that his/her peers are actively

involved in (Luetke-Stahlman, 1998). A mainstreamed deaf student often is torn, not fitting into either deaf or hearing culture. Deaf students face adolescent changes in addition to communication and linguistic barriers. By bringing the issue of the social limits faced by deaf students into focus for teachers, students, and parents it will facilitate awareness and possibly improve social and educational access in mainstream settings for deaf students.

The major themes this review considers are as follows: 1) The Unwritten Curriculum; 2) LRE (Least Restrictive Environment); 3) Identity; Isolation/Socialization; and 4) Teaching Strategies. Each theme will explore the literature pertaining said theme as it relates to the deaf student within a mainstream classroom environment. The information provided will supply those involved with a deaf student in a mainstream setting with a review of literature that has focused on social issues. This thesis is designed primarily to provide information for mainstream participants to improve the education and social access for deaf students. In developing a positive and challenging learning environment for deaf students in the mainstream it is essential to consider the effects of isolation. What is right and equal access for one deaf individual may not be the same for another. However, with the rise in students being educated in the mainstream, it is essential to ask what is happening and what can be done to address the social issues for deaf students.

Demographics show that an increasing number of deaf students are being placed in mainstream settings throughout the country (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003). The numbers reflect the trends in deaf education towards inclusion with hearing peers as opposed to residential school placements nationally. In the national survey by Karchmer

and Mitchell (2003) students in the mainstream from 1988-1989 counted for 26.9%. A decade later, the national number of deaf students in the mainstream jumped to 39.6%. Consequently, in residential schools the enrollments decreased (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003).

Unwritten Curriculum

From the unwritten curriculum, access to social codes and attitudes, health habits, games, mores are obtained. Stinson and Leigh (1995) note the effect communication restrictions have on the 'unwritten curriculum'; "...in the mainstream setting, the deaf student has difficulty accessing this unwritten curriculum, even with the aid of an interpreter" (p. 156). Garretson (2001) calculates the amount of time that is actually within the written and the unwritten curriculum. "The fact that only 8% of a school-age child's total hours in any given year is actually spent in a classroom, which suggest that the unwritten curriculum may well be the missing link in the continuing educational handicap of hearing impairment" (Garretson, 2001, p. 97). Furthermore, Garretson (2001) notes that education is much more than simply academics. There are social, psychomotor, self-help, and communication skills developing during the formative school years.

Stinson and Foster (2000) contend that students develop relationships and friendships through informal conversations based on common beliefs and interests. These "grapevines" and casual interactions characterize peer interactions. Components of the unwritten curriculum include extracurricular activities, hallway banter and passing notes in class, all activities which the deaf student has difficulty acknowledging and/or accessing. A lot of learning occurs in high school during these moments of informal

communications. Students share information and learn to interact with peers during the informal moments. "Through informal conversations, they (students) learn how to interpret their feelings, get along with others, lead or follow, set goals, and how to think about themselves" (Stinson & Foster, 2000, p. 194).

There are two methods of gaining information within school. Informal and formal learning takes place at every level of learning. Unfortunately, "even when informal conversations do occur, they are often halting and awkward-phrases must be repeated or written out, and misunderstandings abound" (Foster & Emerton, 1991, p. 65). Often, the casual interactions that are a crucial part of an adolescent's high school experience, when occurring between deaf and hearing students are superficial and awkward. Brown and Foster (1991) found that integrated college students experienced casual acquaintanceships that were temporary and minimal. Long lasting, close friendships rarely occurred. Missed are the informal "subtle, unspoken feedback that teachers give to students with a look or quick gesture -- all missed when one must focus attention on the interpreter" (Foster & Emerton, 1991, p. 65). In the classroom, when a deaf student focuses on an interpreter and/or visual cues, the subtle informal learning is missed. This gap contributes greatly to the increased isolation that distances a deaf student from his/her hearing peers.

Least Restrictive Environment

"Historically, public policy and educational services for people with disabilities have been formulated, implemented and evaluated with little or no client or student involvement" (Foster, 1989b, p. 40). In the reflection of deaf adults by Foster (1989b) regarding the reflections of deaf adults, it is observed that often opinions and ideas of

people with disabilities are frequently ignored by those who design and implement the services of which they are clients. When a deaf student is placed in the mainstream, special attention needs to be given, via educators and counselors, to the impact the educational setting will have on the academic, communication, and social development of deaf children (Stinson & Foster, 2000). A key concern for culturally Deaf individuals is to be able to maintain "a basic belief in the rights and abilities of Deaf people to control their own lives" (Glickman, 1996, p. 127)

Inclusion has impacted deaf students greatly. "When it comes to the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the United States, school composition has undergone a major transformation" (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003, p. 22). In addition, Karchmer and Mitchell (2003) completed a study on the demographic and achievement characteristics of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. In this study they gathered information that emphasizes the radical issues of importance for deaf education services. Educational placements have shifted from isolated, residential settings to integrating deaf students with instructional settings with their hearing peers (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003). This shift does not often account for communication and/or cultural barriers.

Stinson and Leigh (1995) state that "inclusion" often lumps all children with disabilities into the regular classroom. They further note that this may work for some students with special needs; however "inclusion" can have serious psychosocial impacts for deaf adolescents. This is reiterated in Garretson (2001) when it is stated that the least restrictive environment provisions combines all students in a classroom and treats them as if they all share similar needs, problems, and interests. However, Garretson (2001) argues that deaf students have unique communication needs that differ substantially from

other handicapped children. "Without adequate communication, there can be only minimal learning or none at all" (Garretson, 2001, p. 90).

"No longer are deaf and hard-of-hearing children predominantly receiving their schooling in isolated settings primarily with specially trained personnel" (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003, p. 22). Furthermore, from studying student demographics and achievement, they found the following information.

Four patterns account for 96.5% of the student placements (n=35,955):

- 1) regular school settings that do not involve the use of resource rooms (31.7% of the total)
- 2) regular education settings that also include a resource room assignment (12.6%)
- 3) self-contained classrooms in regular schools (28.5%)
- 4) special schools or centers, such as residential or day schools for deaf students (24.7%).

75.3% of the students in the 2000-2001 Annual Survey can be said to be educated in a mainstream facility.

In comparison, as per Karchmer and Mitchell (2003), prior to the passing of P.L. 94-142, the 1975-1976 Annual Survey reported 49% of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students were enrolled in residential schools. It is also important to note that Karchmer and Mitchell found that in the regular school placements the primary communication mode for instruction is speech only at 79.7%, whereas 1.3% of instruction was done in sign only. This alteration in the primary mode of communication is important to consider the impact of language and culture on socialization and identity development. "This

practice does not facilitate the identification of limited English proficiency that is relevant to performance on standardized assessments for those students who use non-standard English dialects or who use signed languages” (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003, p. 29).

Identity and Isolation/Socialization

How do we pass on a culture? Clearly, as per Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984), interactions between already socialized individuals and those who are not yet socialized aid in the learning of habits, language, norms and values. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) note that a social system is maintained by others within that system. When adolescents are beginning to understand the world in their own terms, being alone is often devastating “Solitude is a threat to the existence of social systems” (p. 179). It represents isolation, without support or compassion from others.

The research of Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984), found that teenagers report feeling the lowest when they are alone. “Teenagers who spend more time alone rate themselves significantly less friendly, sociable, open, and self-conscious” (p. 194). The insecurities within a young adult are often confounded by solitude. Those who do not have support have difficulty adjusting solitude and isolation. Regardless of being deaf or hearing an adolescent can be severely impacted by isolation. “For people in the Deaf community, deafness has a social rather than an audiological meaning” (Glickman, 1996, p. 127). The isolated deaf student in the mainstream is limited in the interaction they have with other deaf peers and adults (Foster & Emerton, 1991).

Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, (1984) discuss the impact of having an isolated self-image. “And as we look inward, the image we see reflected is that of a person isolated from the world, impotent to attract the attention of others. The result is that we

feel even worse” (p. 196). Unfortunately, most teenagers experience difficulty in filling solitude with a productive activity. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson suggest this may be a result of never acquiring the necessary social skills. Glickman (1996) observes that “culturally marginal deaf people do not, by definition, have a well-formed prior identity” (Glickman, 1996, p. 133). Furthermore, culturally marginal deaf people subsist “in a state of identity confusion and cultural marginality from the beginning” (p. 133).

During adolescence, peers are often guides. Foster (1989b) notes that deaf adults agree that contact with other deaf students was important in the mainstream environment. This bond of shared experience and communication was a wonderful way for an isolated deaf student to connect intimately with another peer. Since over 90% of deaf students come from a hearing family, the connection to other deaf peers is an important piece of adolescent social development (Foster & Emerton, 1991). When discussing Deaf identity development, Glickman (1996) notes that deaf mainstreamed students interact with hearing individuals both at home and at school. This results in the deaf student feeling both identity confusion and a “sense of fitting in nowhere, being between worlds, and nowhere at home” (Glickman, 1996, p. 138).

Several informants in Foster (1989b) reflected on the long-term impact of experiences of being educated with hearing peers. Interaction with deaf peers can be seen as a key to personal and social development. Deaf adults in Foster (1989b) expressed regret at the lack of opportunity to meet other deaf students during high school. One woman noted “I did not have many friends. I was the only deaf there. And not having met any other deaf people, I did not really understand myself either” (Foster, 1989b, p. 47). In the study by Kent (2003) the concept of hard of hearing students

utilizing other hard of hearing peers to identify and support each other is noted. Having a shared emotional connection with other hard of hearing students is an important component for them.

Perceptions of society impact greatly on the deaf student's ability to succeed socially in the mainstream. In Foster (1989b) this observation is made when students are handicapped in ways separate from their hearing impairment. "Self-confidence, a sense of community and acceptance within a peer group, and pride in one's education are not a function of one's hearing level" (Foster, 1989b, p. 54). The acceptance deaf students may experience in the mainstream relies on the activities and attitudes that occur within the school community (Cambra, 2002). Imposed upon the deaf student are barriers put in place by the interpretation of deafness by teacher, students, and peers. "The hearing impaired child must not only struggle with learning social routines and accepted behavior, but he or she also must deal with the misconceptions, stereotyping, and prejudices of society" (Sanders, 1988, p. 9). The negative views that the hearing impaired individual experiences are a direct result of the regard in which he or she is held by their community (Green, 1976).

The students interviewed in Israelite et al. (2002) felt that identifying themselves as hard of hearing automatically relegated them to a group different than that of hearing classmates. "The students were aware of their marginalized status due to the power differentials between themselves and the dominant hearing culture. They described situations in which they were "othered" by members of the hearing community, both peers and teachers" (Israelite, et al., 2002, p. 144). As Brown and Foster (1991) observed

“it is clear that deaf students were being evaluated with reference to a hearing norm” (p. 25).

With minimal education and/or understanding of deafness, it is difficult for hearing adolescents to accept a peer with such different communicative and cultural needs. “Very little “integration” is taking place: The hearing students tend to look down on or patronize the deaf children because they need help or special support” (Garretson, 2001, p. 92). Kent (2003) also supports the idea that perceptions of hearing peers are integral to the social development of the deaf or hard of hearing student. “...identifying oneself as hard of hearing continues to be socially undesirable for mainstream adolescents” (Kent, 2003, p. 322). Often, reactions to hearing impaired individuals from a hearing person’s point of view are one of difference, fostering feelings of pity or sympathy. This is typically a reflection of that which is beyond the hearing persons’ understanding (Green, 1976). Schloss (1990) notes that hearing impaired children, given that they experience weaker exposure to social skills building and feedback, might not be expected to maintain the appropriate levels of social norms.

Nevertheless, in the collaboration study by Gaustad (1999), a group of deaf and hearing students participated in a cooperative learning environment. Hearing students were provided with sign language instruction and basic deaf culture information. In the cooperative environment, deaf students were informed of the joint instruction. Integrated lessons were used in this collaboration endeavor. “With the exception of one of the D/HH class, the responses of students to the collaborative units were broadly positive” (Gaustad, 1999, p. 180). This study collaborated to improve the interactions and understanding between deaf and hearing students. The hearing students reported that

they enjoyed the opportunity to learn about deafness and work with deaf peers. The deaf students however, felt overwhelmed and scared in the hearing classroom. It was also noted in this study that “differences between the students frequently resulted in exclusion of the deaf/hard of hearing students” (Gaustaud, 1999, p. 181). Brown and Foster (1991) interviewed hearing college students who interact with deaf students on an integrated college campus. Informants felt that though academically no difference existed, the classroom was not supportive of social interactions between hearing and deaf students. In addition, there were limited opportunities to learn how to overcome discomfort associated with deaf individuals and deafness.

Due to the extensive preparation for the hearing students and the limited instruction for the deaf/hard of hearing students in the study by Gaustad (1999), teachers agreed that deaf students need training to enable them to approach communication with hearing peers. “Teachers concluded that more frequent contact between the groups of students was necessary and that opportunities for ongoing informal contact needed to be available” (Gaustad, 1999, p. 182).

Young adults often feel the need to ‘fit in’. When a deaf student is isolated in the mainstream, they are typically social outsiders. Stinson and Foster (2000) discuss the negative impact of being an outsider. They note that those who remain on the outside of the norm, who are never included in informal communications, or who have limited friendships and feel lonely, are more likely to have lower levels of confidence and esteem. “The hearing view of mainstreaming is that it facilitates integration of deaf children into hearing society. The culturally Deaf view of mainstreaming is that it

constitutes isolation for deaf children and a serious threat to Deaf culture” (Glickman, 1996, p. 137).

Young adults begin to understand that they are capable of forming a unique identity for themselves, looking to peers for opinions and insight. In the study by Gaustad (1999), where deaf and hearing students were involved in a cooperative, collaborative learning environment, teachers observed that more opportunities for student contact, especially informal interactions need to be available to deaf students.

Marschark et al. (2002) observed many deaf students’ mainstream settings do not often support an environment that aids in developing normal, healthy socialization skills. More importantly, Marschark et al. (2002) go on to say that communication barriers impede social relationships and set deaf students apart from their hearing peers as being inherently different. Glickman (1996) concurs, observing that without a comfortable language system, a child lacks the tools to relate to family and social situations. “The child also lacks the major tool needed to think about himself or herself abstractly and therefore to form an identity. This child is both socially and psychologically marginal” (Glickman, 1996, p. 134). Deaf students tend to lead a lonely life in the mainstream environment. “Deaf students ... are leading a rather lonely social life without an interactive, communicating peer group” (Garretson, 2001, p. 92).

Forming social and individual identities is an awkward journey that all adolescents will experience, deaf or hearing. Stinson and Leigh (1995) discuss this difficult journey as deaf students have social adjustment impediments, “less understanding of what is going on and how others are reacting to their behaviors results in less accurate self-image and, possibly, low self-esteem” (Stinson & Leigh, 1995, p.

154). According to Stinson and Foster (2000), social connection to peers is essential to developing individual and cultural identity. When a deaf student is culturally marginal it may manifest in the absence of valuable and comfortable membership in the social group they interact (Glickman, 1996).

Without these social connections and skills they will consistently feel disconnected from their school community and carry that disconnection to the outside world. "By working out difficult relationships, they (students) learn how to advocate for themselves in later life, discover the line between assertiveness and aggressiveness, and develop collaborative work skills" (Stinson & Foster, 2000, p. 195). When deaf or hard of hearing children leave school with minimal social interaction experience, they are less able to meet the social environment demands of their adult lives (Sanders, 1988).

Positive, informal peer feedback and interactions are essential. Deaf students need to have equal opportunity to communicate with peers. Without peer feedback and modeling, a deaf adolescent may have a more difficult time coming to understand who they are. Feedback is essential in the development and maintenance of social skills. Sanders (1988) observes that with limited communication avenues, deaf or hard of hearing children often act out. If they do not receive valid feedback regarding inappropriate behaviors, negative behaviors are reinforced.

In a study by Garrison, Long and Stinson (1994), a questionnaire was completed by deaf students in the mainstream setting. Questions ask students about positive and negative communication experiences in the classroom. "...deaf students expressed considerable *comfort* communicating with other *deaf* students" (Garrison, et al., 1994, p. 137). Conversely, deaf student's responses towards hearing students report that they

experience a lack of comfort communicating. "...feeling comfortable communicating with *hearing* students is the most difficult aspect of classroom communication" (Garrison, et al., 1994, p. 137).

Peer networks are essential for identity development. Included in the reflections study by Foster (1989b) it is noted that "peer support programs for deaf students are helpful in promoting a sense of self-worth and identity which is otherwise unattainable "...within the larger hearing culture; the deaf community is a natural form of such peer support" (Foster, 1989b, p. 53). Stinson and Leigh (1995) also found that, for deaf students, peer interactions with other deaf students provide more satisfaction than do interactions with hearing peers. Garrison et al. (1994) agree that "mainstream students felt most comfortable communicating with other deaf students, least comfortable communicating with hearing students and moderately comfortable communicating with teachers" (p. 137).

It is important to ask: How important *is* effectively communicating with hearing peers and teachers in a mainstream setting? Garrison et al. (1994) found that "nervousness and frustration levels rise in communication between respondents and teachers. Maximal discomfort occurs when the deaf respondents communicate with hearing students in classroom settings" (p. 139). These findings indicate the importance of deaf to deaf peer interactions in a mainstream setting. This is supported by Marschark, et. al (2002) when they observe that a possible mainstreaming dilemma is that the dispersal of deaf children in general education classrooms often is only one deaf student in a classroom and/or school.

For a deaf student who is isolated in the mainstream, contacts are most often with hearing individuals (Stinson & Leigh, 1995). Stinson and Leigh go on to explain that for a deaf student, communication and connection with a deaf individual is easier because of shared experiences. "Deaf children are more likely to identify with other deaf people and are generally more emotionally secure and feel more accepted in relationships with deaf peers than in those with hearing peers" (p. 157).

Stinson and Leigh (1995) discuss the multitude of challenges that can occur to avert access to the norms of hearing society. This lack of access hinders, and may even block, the child's normal development. The deaf adolescent may ask: "Am I Deaf, hard-of-hearing, or hearing? Where do I belong?" (Glickman, 1996, p. 136). The hearing world is often unprepared to facilitate appropriate deaf cultural identity for the deaf adolescent (Glickman, 1996).

It has been observed that deaf students are faced with an educational dilemma. Data from Foster (1989b) demonstrates that in interviews with graduates from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute for Technology feel that there is a 'trading' of academic for social opportunity in the mainstream. Another important observation in the Reflections study by Foster (1989b) is that despite the fact that successful integration is an acknowledged goal, meaningful social interactions and friendships between deaf and hearing students are difficult to achieve. Importantly, the Foster findings show that deaf adults reflect on experiences most often from high school, indicating that this was a time of great social difficulty and identity struggles.

A deaf adult looking back on high school experience states that it wasn't easy in school with many frustrations and the need to work harder than hearing peers to keep up

(Foster, 1989b). However, in a study of Itinerant Teachers by Luckner and Miller (1994) 73% of the students who are served in regular classes have good social skills. However, it is important to remember that 77% of the students in the same study have intelligible speech and 62% are good speech readers. Another important issue is that itinerant teaching generally means that they typically observe the deaf student in isolation. "Only with an on-site visit (to the general education classroom) can the itinerant teacher observe all aspects of academic, social and communication demands as they interact in a spontaneous situation" (Luckner & Miller, 1994, p. 116). Teachers of the deaf have to be accountable for increasing their skills and knowledge to provide a foundation to aid mainstream deaf students with a classroom centered environment. By facilitating a more active and interactive learning environment, teachers of the deaf can facilitate an environment of mutual trust and respect (Bateman, 2001).

In Foster (1989b) most deaf adults agreed that they had less time to devote to social activities because they were struggling to maintain academics and needed to seek out additional help with school work. This, in addition to communication gaps, contributes to deaf isolation in the mainstream. The multitude of factors contributes to the isolated feelings a deaf student experiences. "The general acceptance of deaf students in academic settings did not extend into the social domain of campus groups and activities such as parties and clubs and general social interaction" (Brown & Foster, 1991, p. 24). On the other hand with appropriate and conscious effort and intervention the acceptance of deaf students in the classroom can be improved upon. Cambra (2002) states that the greater the level of acceptance in the classroom, the greater the frequency of social interactions will take place.

A deaf adult remembers in Foster (1989b) "...high school, bad experience...I'm the only one deaf there, and it's hard for me to get along with people...they'd pick on me...and they didn't understand what I was saying" (p. 44). This role as an outsider contributed to minimal quality friendships in high school. Another deaf adult noted that they had casual interactions but no real personal friendships. Stinson and Leigh (1995) support this when they state "For many deaf students, the social consequence of a full inclusion approach to placement is isolation" (p. 154).

Informants in Foster (1989b) felt like outsiders in high school. With embarrassment and communication barriers, isolation as described by the informants was a critical part of their mainstream experiences. Students who feel unaccepted by their peers in the social realm are less likely to participate in classroom discussions and activities. Groups of hearing (66%) and deaf (44%) college students reported participation in class is an essential part of feeling like an equal member of a class (Foster et al., 1999).

In Kent (2003) it is noted that hard of hearing students experience the perception of feeling "left out" or being undesirable when describing their social relationships. Students in Israelite et al. (2002) noted the difficulties fitting in with hearing students. One student observed "When you are in the mainstream class, you keep things private because you're afraid of what other people will think or do to you" (Israelite, et al., p. 141). The consensus of the hard of hearing students interviewed in Israelite et al. was that there was a feeling of wanting to be included but feeling "anxious and mistrustful about their encounters with hearing peers..." (p. 141).

In order to take full advantage of the range of formal and informal classroom experience students must be able to connect within the classroom to the social network. "When communication access is limited, effective participation in the classroom...is hindered, and the growth of healthy social relationships is blocked" (Stinson & Leigh, 1995, p. 155). "The comprehension dimension of communication ease is concerned with the amount and quality of information that an individual receives and sends. Affective responses to communication may be positive or negative" (Garrison et al., 1994, p. 133).

Foster (1989b) noted that if the goal of mainstreaming is normalization, then the success of mainstream school programs must be measured in terms of the ability of all graduates to pursue full and satisfying lives within the larger mainstream of American culture. Deaf adolescents experience obstacles to social success in an isolated environment. Foster and Emerton (1991) reported that "over 75% of the schools in this country having deaf pupils report that they have three or fewer deaf students in their system" (p. 67). The deaf child in the mainstream lacks a community of culturally similar peers. Deaf children are able to mask their deafness, making it more difficult to pinpoint the areas of need. Garretson (2001) pointed out that because deafness is invisible, people often are unable to recognize the deficits and holes the deaf student experiences in the general education classroom. Peer support programs for deaf people of different ages and in a variety of situations may be helpful in promoting a sense of self-worth and identity which is otherwise unattainable or very difficult to achieve within the larger hearing culture (Foster, 1989b).

Facing social challenges is a complex and in-depth issue. Marschark et al. (2002) establish that involvement in school activities decrease academic areas for deaf students.

Often deaf students will have to trade-off one for the other (Foster, 1989b). With social challenges, it is difficult for the deaf student to be successful in either venue. Whether it is developing identity, maintaining valuable interactions with peers, or simply having equal access to the unwritten curriculum (informal education), deaf students face social challenges. The need to either apply oneself to academics *or* choose to partake in a social life is often a reality for deaf students. Stinson and Leigh (1995) discuss the communication difficulties in the mainstream classroom and note that such strained and laborious communication is unlikely to result in healthy peer relationships.

Deaf students in the mainstream experience isolation and oftentimes have trouble gaining access to a social life. Kent (2003) hypothesized that when comparing hearing with hard of hearing student behaviors, hard of hearing students might be more likely to report negative experiences than their hearing peers. Students, ages 11, 13, or 15, who identified themselves as having a hearing loss, reported statistically significant levels of feeling lonely or experiencing being alone" (Kent, 2003, p. 320). Kent concludes that hard of hearing students who identify themselves as having a hearing loss may experience a psychological risk.

As noted in Stinson and Leigh (1995), schools need to be aware of the psychosocial needs of students in addition to the educational responsibilities. Communication barriers tend to complicate social relationships. Luckner and Miller (1994) noted that one-to-one work that is done by itinerant teachers could be done by the profession in the general education classroom with the student and some of the student's peers who also could benefit from the additional attention and assistance.

Isolating the student to work one-on-one with an itinerant teacher of the deaf can be beneficial. However, when one deaf student is isolated in the mainstream, it might be helpful to provide services to the student in the general classroom, modeling appropriate communication. It may also be beneficial "providing services to the student in the general education classroom" (Luckner & Miller, 1994, p. 116) as this will provide increased opportunity to interact with classmates in a normal setting. The concept of isolating a deaf student with a teacher of the deaf is further explored by Marschark et al. (2002) who state that students who are partially separated may experience stigmatization. Thus reiterating the point that those who are receiving partial segregation may have more difficulty with socialization and "fitting in".

Beyond the significant social-emotional consequences of being different and often unable to communicate with peers during the school years, teachers may be unfamiliar with the needs of deaf students and ill-prepared to ensure that they are able to fully participate equally with hearing students of the same age (Marschark et al., 2002, p. 58).

Teaching Strategies

Teachers who have deaf students in the general classroom need to be aware of the behavioral and social issues the student will face in the mainstream. Teachers of the Deaf must be able to share this information and consult with teachers in the mainstream with deaf students. In the study by Luckner and Miller (1994), the perceptions of itinerant teachers and the characteristics of the students served was compiled. Only 27% of itinerant teachers are certified by the Council of Education of the Deaf.

As noted by Rider (2000), special needs students are often victims, emotionally neglected, and have difficulty relating to peers. In order to address this issue Rider (2000) established a study testing the "buddying system" where an older student consistently mentors a younger student. The older student must connect with and make a commitment to the younger student. This would aid the deaf student in feeling more secure as well as helping them connect to their school community. The concept of establishing a hearing peer tutor is also suggested as a support for deaf students by Luetke-Stahlman (1998).

"Schools help students become aware of the rules, norms, and expectations of society and help students move toward eventual economic self-sufficiency" (Stinson & Foster, 2000, p. 191). By encouraging openness to diversity, especially by teaching all students, deaf or hearing about deaf culture, a deaf student isolated in the hearing majority would be better able to feel comfortable and more accepted socially. Another method to foster positive integration is to supply teachers and students with tools to better interact with deaf students. "Mainstream schools may consider offering both deaf and hearing students courses in sign language and deaf culture" (Stinson & Foster, 2000, p. 206). This is consistent with Gaustad (1999) who noted that hearing teachers need to have educational support in order to successfully interact with deaf students. Brown and Foster (1991) agree that when hearing college students who interact in integrated classrooms with deaf peers they felt that courses in deaf awareness and sign language instruction might facilitate smoother interactions.

Teachers can be positive role models for deaf and hearing students. As observed in Gaustad (1999), "one noteworthy response included the observation that the

teachers' ability to demonstrate the possibilities for working successfully together could serve as a model for their students' cooperation" (p. 185). One of the students interviewed in the study by Israelite et al. (2002) felt that when teacher's attitudes towards deaf student integration are negative, it is more difficult to make mainstream friends. Students also pointed to the need to educate mainstream teachers and hearing peers about hard of hearing issues.

In high school, the social system becomes more complex. Younger children are more accepting of differences. In a study of acceptance of deaf students in a regular classroom, Cambra (2002) finds that "...the older the hearing adolescent, the less acceptance there is for deaf students in the classroom" (p. 42). A deaf child may experience positive social experiences in the younger grades (Green, 1976). However, as a child matures the social environment changes dramatically. Teachers need to be aware of this environment and aid all students to be aware of abilities rather than *disabilities* (Green, 1976). Learning experiences must be tailored by educators to cognitive, physical, social and emotional levels (Sanders, 1988).

If hearing students and/or teachers continue to accept stereotypes about deafness the deaf student will remain isolated. Foster and Emerton (1991) state that those hearing students who never interact or learn the truths about deaf culture never develop the skills to deal with diversity. Not only will you foster growth in the classroom but this openness will be more likely to continue into adult life. The students will be more likely to interact well with all kinds of people of diverse language, cultural, and personal backgrounds. "Integration and multicultural education are not only for the minority student but also for the majority. Segregation in the schools can only lead to

segregation in the neighborhoods, churches, social clubs and corporations” (Foster & Emerton, 1991, p. 69). Mainstreaming, with proper support and implementation, can foster positive attitudes towards diversity. Jaussi, (1991) observed that ideas regarding segregation and stereotypes often exist prior to school and before any interactions with deaf students can take place. This attitude of “outsider” can influence how a deaf student interacts with hearing peers. “Classroom integration should emphasize the similarities among students, rather than the one point of difference” (p. 7).

Although the “buddying study” by Rider (2000) was not done specifically with deaf students it does show how positive support from a peer can influence behavior and self-esteem. Children need considerable social and emotionally support. The “buddying system” (Rider, 2000) had a positive effect on a child’s school life and it is easy to establish and monitor. This “buddying system” utilizes resources while presenting a positive connection between peers. It might be inferred that a hearing student and a deaf student might be linked in order to facilitate a social connection thereby decreasing the deaf student chances of isolation.

In addition to fostering an increased acceptance of diversity, the teacher who is able to adapt and modify for the deaf student is, in essence, aiding all students. Teachers often need to modify teaching to accommodate various types of learners

(<http://www.cast.org/ncac/TheMainstreamCurriculum2834.cfm>). Cambra (2002) suggests there is hope that mainstream deaf students can become more accepted in the general classroom with modifications. By introducing cooperative learning activities and building strong social relations for all students, the attitude of the class can change (Cambra, 2002). An added bonus of modifications in the classroom can be increased

understanding for all students (Foster et al., 1999). "It is important to identify teaching practices that both meet deaf students' needs and are beneficial to all students" (p. 234).

Another way to meet the learning needs of all students, deaf and hearing is to apply the principle of multiple intelligences. By utilizing the principles of multiple intelligences, a teacher will touch upon a variety of learning needs not only for the deaf student but for all students in the general education classroom. Silver, Strong and Perini (2000) suggest the following strategies for promoting social interactions and group learning: using reciprocal learning where students work together as peer partners, team games tournaments where students work together in teams to practice learned material, using a circle formation to share information and draw conclusions, role playing in which students assume the roles of others and reflect on other points of view, improving empathy toward the position of others, and finally, teaching groups where students learn information then rotate groups to teach about their topic and learn about another group's topic. (Silver et al., 2000, p. 111).

Garretson (2001) proposed that the important characteristics for an appropriate mainstream environment need to incorporate:

...the use of clear and understandable communication in both instruction and peer interaction; relevance and excellence of both the educational program itself and its support services; responsiveness to and from the social environment within which the educational program occurs; inclusion of adult deaf role modes in all aspects of the program; and awareness and appreciation among the staff and students for the cultural roots of the deaf person (pp. 95-96).

Israelite et al. (2002) emphasized the value of having a teacher facilitate a classroom community that supports meaningful and significant social interactions among peers. Lang, McKee and Conner (1993) surveyed college teachers with both deaf and hearing students. Deaf college students registered in their courses were asked to respond to questions relative to teacher characteristics. Rated highly by teachers and students was the need to understand deafness, deaf people and deaf culture" (Lang et al., p. 254). Also it was noted that teachers might connect with students by establishing what expectations of effective teaching are and how the class might cooperate to learn most effectively. Accordingly, deaf students in the study by Lang, Dowaliby and Anderson (1994) identified critical teaching incidents ... "incorporate a variety of communication skills and teaching strategies and subtly infuse them into a teaching style that establishes rapport" (p. 127).

Despite the barriers deaf students face in the mainstream it can be a positive and rewarding experience. Foster (1989b) noted in the study of reflections from deaf adults that given the isolation, one might expect regret. To the contrary, this experience often developed pride in the ability to overcome obstacles. Stinson and Leigh (1995) conclude that every deaf child has varied needs and inclusion may not be the best placement for all deaf students. "A continuum of education options is essential to ensure that isolation remains at a minimum and that students have optimal opportunities for psychosocial development" (p. 158).

It is essential and difficult to establish appropriate educational programs for deaf students. Factors to be considered are vast: academic, social, emotional, communicative, linguistic, and cultural. (Luckner & Miller, 1994). "Given the time, energy, and finances

that have been invested in implementing mainstreaming, it is disturbing to realize that we are still relatively uninformed about how to make it work effectively” (p. 118). Proper and cautious implementation is essential. Foster and Emerton (1991) noted that teachers, counselors, and school administrators should be required to learn at least the basics of deaf culture and sign language. By showing an effort to integrate the deaf student into a positive and supportive environment, the deaf student is more likely to feel welcomed and understood. Jaussi (1991) discusses the negative impact teachers can have if they are not able to gain access to professional deaf education consultation. Teachers, without knowledge, can overlook the potential of deaf students. Deaf students who are ignored or pitied by teachers tend to be inhibited in the classroom. This attitude perpetuates the social isolation of the deaf student.

Above and beyond the issues; be they cultural, social, linguistic, or academic, it is important to remember that deaf students are individuals. As noted by Stinson and Foster (2000), mainstream programs must recognize the need to address limitations of placing an isolated deaf student in a majority of hearing peers. Deaf students need the opportunity to interact with deaf culture and both deaf and hearing peers in a positive environment. Israelite et al. (2002) observed that “...hard of hearing students find social support and validation of their identities through interactions with hard of hearing peers (p. 146). Wilson (1997) noted that additional interactions with deaf peers are important in adolescence. Mainstream students might become involved in Deaf summer camps and/or Deaf club activities after school. A goal of mainstreaming is not only to help hearing and deaf students interact with ease but to make deaf students aware of the fact

that they do not have to be outsiders... “always on the other side of the wall, looking in” (Jaussi, 1991, p. 9).

The findings by Gaustad (1999) established that deaf students can benefit from mainstream education, given that peer social interaction is improved and facilitated. “Hearing students, if they are to approach interactions with deaf/hard of hearing students with feelings other than trepidation, must have their questions and misgivings addressed” (Gaustad, 1999, p. 177). Gaustad also encouraged working toward inclusion in a positive way, promoting opportunities for students and teachers to utilize their unique skills. “Respect and friendship come with knowledge, and real knowledge derives from interaction, not coexistence” (p. 188).

In the controversies that have raged for centuries and in the more recent ones ongoing today, the tendency is to polarize educators, parents, and other gatekeepers whose philosophical views rarely or adequately recognize the universal truth that no one method or educational environment is suitable for all students (Marschark et al., 2002).

Further studies might take into consideration the perception of stigma in the United States and how this can influence adolescents’ social groups. Also it is important to remember the vast differences in the levels of hearing loss experienced. Another issue is early identification and intervention as this may contribute to “one wonders how many more unidentified hard of hearing students are ‘hidden’ ” (Kent, 2003, p. 322). There have been observations about hard of hearing status being linked to socioeconomic groupings (Kent, 2003). It might also be helpful to differentiate between “speech only” vs. “sign only” with interpreter as socialization might be different for those who

speechread and have understandable speech vs. sign only with minimal speech or speechreading skills.

Above all, deaf educators, regardless of education philosophy, must remember that deaf students are students first, and should be given the same opportunities to develop a sense of identity and socialize as any student. "As there is no one psychology of the deaf, hearing impaired children given the opportunity will reflect the adjustments, the problems, the feelings of all children" (Green, 1976, p. 85).

Conclusion

This review investigated the existing social aspects for deaf students participating in mainstream learning environments. The unwritten curriculum is a piece of high school that is often overlooked. Mainstream teachers are typically unaware of the needs of deaf students. This lack of knowledge contributes to a teacher opting to ignore the issues and allow the student to 'get away' with behaviors that are unacceptable for hearing peers. When there are communication barriers, as observed by this author, teachers may not feel comfortable working with deaf students. This can lead to an unequal education where deaf students will not only miss out on both the unwritten curriculum and social interactions, but will struggle to access the academic components as well.

This author has worked with mainstream deaf students as well as discussed concerns about the socialization for the isolated student with varied professionals in education. Teachers often express the desire to aid the student in increasing social interactions. It is often difficult for educators to watch a deaf mainstream student struggle to acquire friendships and normal teenage interactions. However, when the issue of socialization is not a priority, it is often overlooked.

Awareness of inequities may help educators have an improved starting point to help the mainstreamed deaf student achieve typical school socialization. The trade-off between academics and socialization that is noted in this review is sometimes an unfortunate consequence of mainstream education. Deaf students who reflect on their experiences often highlight the social barriers they faced.

If educators are able to bring this issue to the forefront, it may be a strong beginning to eliminate the trade off. Granted, there will always be challenges when issues of communication, culture, and linguistics are involved, but there is a chance to recognize the problem and strive to make it better. In speaking with Deaf adults it has been noted that the recent availability to include American Sign Language as a foreign language option in high school can be is a wonderful way to improve socialization. By somewhat breaking down the communication barrier, there is increased access to socialization. In addition, by investigating positive teaching strategies, both as mentioned in this review and by consulting with Deaf professionals, there exists the opportunity for those in Deaf Education to work together as a team to improve the socialization issues faced by deaf students in the mainstream.

There are numerous challenges in a mainstream high school for Deaf students. They are missing the unwritten curriculum, driving them towards "outsider status". The limits faced by a deaf student who is unaware that he or she may be missing huge aspects of interactions in school has severe consequences. The lack of access to the unwritten curriculum, when coupled with communication limits, can be a disastrous combination.

The environment deaf students' face in a mainstream high school can not truly be described as the Least Restrictive Environment. They are set apart from their peers and

are unable to gain the information transactions both socially and academically in the same way as their hearing counterparts. Communication strategies vary but, most often, either the deaf student gains information through the intermediary interpreter or is able to speech read. Both of these communication methodologies have their downfalls. Above and beyond any other is the fact that the deaf student receives information either with a lag time and/or is able to speechread only a certain percentage of the relayed information. This barrier adds another factor towards the disadvantage of being "different". Only by working with deaf students directly can we aid them in increasing their socialization.

Clearly identity formation and interaction with peers is key for a deaf student in the mainstream. This author has seen mainstream deaf students who are unable to partake in a normal teenage social life due to extreme isolation. This isolated status undoubtedly impacts self-esteem and self-worth. Many deaf students cope well in a mainstream environment and are able to accommodate for socialization limits. However, wherever there is a deaf student isolated within a hearing majority, there will be some barriers. It is the job of the teachers to note the barriers and strive to overcome them. With education and consultation, it is possible to decrease the social isolation the deaf student faces in a mainstream school system. This paper addresses the social issues at hand for deaf students. Positive benefits exist when a teacher modifies the environment for deaf students. All adolescents face social barriers, by reducing the barrier for one, others will benefit. Peer relations present obstacles for all teenagers. Deaf adults, teachers of the deaf, general curriculum teachers, and all those actively involved in making a mainstream environment a better and more enriching place for deaf adolescents need to be aware and promote self-identity and social development.

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