

A CALL TO ACTION IN DEAF EDUCATION: TOWARDS
INCREASINGLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING
AND A NEW MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

A THESIS

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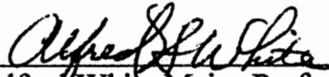
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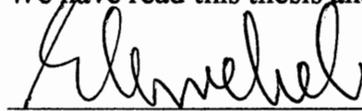
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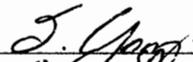
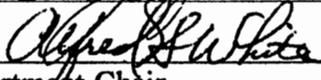


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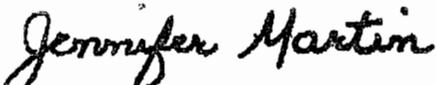




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ABSTRACT

ELIZABETH J. CROFT

A CALL TO ACTION IN DEAF EDUCATION: TOWARDS INCREASINGLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING AND A NEW MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

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Service delivery models within the field of Deaf Education have been somewhat controversial in the past in regards to parental involvement, the provision of appropriate supports and services, accessibility, and scope. Current models often seek to address these issues; however, research shows that professionals in the field are still seeking more effective strategies of best practice when it comes to selecting, modifying, and creating service delivery models that will contribute to increasingly successful educational program design and delivery. A review of the literature provides insight into the future path Deaf Education professionals may embark upon based on an integrative approach of combining service delivery model components with business analyst models from other fields, which are discussed throughout. A culturally and linguistically sensitive framework for innovative and holistic practices within a new model of service delivery is presented and a call to action is made.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The background of how this thesis paper came to be initially finds its place in firsthand classroom teaching experience and system-level administrative experience in primary and secondary Deaf Education programs in Western Canada. It then extends towards considering observations of phenomenological events that appear to occur within public Deaf Education systems in North America, and specifically, in Western Canada. Finally, it examines and integrates the current literature base and begs the question of why those research findings have not yet resulted in a large-scale success-story for kindergarten to grade twelve (K-12) Deaf Education programs and d/Deaf¹ learners in North America. A psychological and phenomenological systems approach is integrated with an education and policy perspective in order to arrive at the major discussions contained herein and the call to action that is made.

In response to the chronicity of specific problems, issues, and educational gaps that seem to span across time and space in many Deaf Education programs, such as the extremely low reading levels of high school graduates and the related low achievement of academic outcomes for this population, this paper attempts to examine the systemic root causes of those issues, identify ways in which those issues could be addressed systemically in K-12 education, and make a call to action which would see professionals implement ideas, some old and some new, which could affect large scale changes in

¹ The spelling “d/Deaf” will be used throughout this thesis to refer to both persons with a physical hearing loss (deaf) and persons whom identify themselves as a member of Deaf culture (Deaf).

programming effectiveness. This paper aims not to assign judgement or blame for the challenges that have faced Deaf Education over the past several decades; it does not attempt to argue for or against any one methodology, philosophy, practice, or piece of legislation that is common to Deaf Education or d/Deaf rights in society today. Rather, this paper argues that each existing approach or technique in Deaf Education has its own place when an overarching system perspective is taken. Each is thus seen as a valid and useful tool which can then be used in any combination, depending on the needs of the individual child, in order to arrive at increased success. It argues that by taking a system approach to Deaf Education and rooting it within a new model of service delivery that is both culturally and linguistically sensitive to all of the languages and cultures to which d/Deaf students belong, a number of the more superficial issues will be inherently addressed and cease to exist. In this way, many of the finer issues that appear so chronic are seen as existing simply as a symptom of a larger systemic gap in the foundation of Deaf Education programming and service delivery. Similar to how building a house on a faulty foundation will result in structural *and* cosmetic problems down the road, the seemingly cosmetic issues facing Deaf Education today may be attributable to an insufficiently strong and stable structural foundation on which our practices are built.

An examination of service delivery models currently used in Early Intervention programs provides a foundation for which changes in Deaf Education can be made in order to affect both systemic change for Deaf Education itself, as well as allowing Deaf Education to align itself with what is being done during the pre-educational years in which Early Intervention programs are utilized. By aligning the service delivery models

of both Early Intervention and Deaf Education programming, it is possible to create a much more comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses the early systemic and later systemic issues in a way that is congruent. This allows for a whole-child approach to be taken in which we view the child in terms of all early and later developmental, educational, social, psychological, physical, and emotional needs. It also allows for increased transfer of early education outcomes to later educational outcomes and essentially positions Early Intervention programs to contribute much more seamlessly to addressing the phenomenological issues and needs of d/Deaf children that are commonly seen in the later educational years. This prepares the entire system for increased effectiveness, focus, and intention on providing all of the necessary supports and services for these children and their families so that resources are compounded and linked for synergy, rather than fragmented and detached from one another.

Finally, it is argued that a new model of service delivery that is rooted in sound teaching pedagogy and which integrates basic principles of program development, business marketing and branding, and the sociological and psychological needs of students could in fact trigger a “ripple effect” whereby a new model for Deaf Education becomes transferrable to other types of special and “regular” education programming. If this occurs, a new category of educational branding may in fact bolster the effectiveness of Deaf Education, support concurrent programming for students with other identified needs, and elicit a more cohesive and collaborative approach to general education delivery which spans across disciplines and sub-disciplines, such as Early Intervention and K-12 general, special, and Deaf education programs.

CHAPTER II

SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS:

Where We Have Been and Where We Need To Go

A number of past and present service delivery models exist to provide educational intervention supports and services to d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing populations (see Andrews & Covell, 2007; Kassani, 2008; Luetke-Stahlman, 1998, 1999; Mayer, Akamatsu, & Stewart, 2002; Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995; Pribanić, 2006; Simms & Thumann, 2007; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). These service delivery models, however, do not always align with each other and are not always viewed as contributing to professional best practice. Various professional arenas often have different service delivery models; similarly, the models within one discipline may vary greatly. For example, an early intervention model for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing children may differ greatly from a Deaf Education model. Likewise, the models found in Deaf Education programs that are housed within Special Education programs will likely have profound differences from Deaf Education programs that are housed within literacy-based programs or are structured as stand-alone entities. Further, each model is often influenced by the history of d/Deaf people and various perspectives of d/Deaf and hearing people, such as the medical and cultural views of deafness. While family support services have now become more widely accepted in many subfields of d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing services, “professionals continue to search for the most effective support models” (Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995, ¶1); the field of Deaf Education is no

exception. While searching out best practice, professionals in Deaf Education have a profound responsibility to examine the foundational elements of service delivery and thereby consider new paradigms that might better serve their clientele. By broadening their perspectives and questioning the efficacy of current practice, more effective programming can be created and delivered. Further to this, by examining and adopting current service delivery model components from the area of Early Intervention, Deaf Education can better align itself with Early Intervention programming.

A Review of the Literature

Models Related to General Service Delivery

Meadow-Orlans and Sass-Lehrer (1995) as well as Dunst, Trivette, Boyd, and Brookfield (1994) examine a variety of general models of service delivery which Dunst et al. (1994) term "help-giving models." They propose three broad categories to describe professional helping relationships with families. Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer (1995) explore these three categories and describe them, as follows:

The "professional as expert" model assumes that parents/caregivers lack knowledge and skills. Families are encouraged to rely on professionals for information and decisions. The "direct guidance" perspective views parents/caregivers as somewhat knowledgeable, but needing skills and services that the professional will determine and provide. In the "partnership model," the professional accepts family members as equal partners. This family-centered approach assumes that families themselves are capable of acquiring the information, resources, and support that will

enable them to solve their own problems and to make choices to meet their family's needs. This view emerges from an empowerment perspective and has potential for long-term benefits (Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995, ¶18).

Models and Considerations Related to Early Intervention Programs

Similar to the “partnership model” presented by Meadow-Orlans and Sass-Lehrer (1995), DesJardin (2003, 2006), McWilliam & Scott (2001), Turnbull, Turbiville, and Turnbull (2000), as well as Turnbull & Turnbull (2001) discuss the Empowerment Model, which posits that parents and professionals play collaborative and equal roles in order to best support the d/Deaf or hard-of-hearing child’s language development. This type of model may also be extended to other types of educational arenas, not solely those pertaining to language development. DesJardin (2003) emphasizes that this model focuses on family and parental strengths rather than deficits. DesJardin (2006) discusses the importance of parental self-efficacy and involvement in this type of model, which centers on the parent’s knowledge and abilities related to successfully carrying out daily parenting tasks. In many respects, the role of the early intervention professional is not to merely *provide* a service, but rather to *support* parents as they gain confidence, self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills that will allow them to support their own child’s development (Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995; DesJardin, 2003, 2006; McWilliam & Scott, 2001; Turnbull, Turbiville, & Turnbull, 2000; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001).

A number of studies have highlighted the importance of both parental self-efficacy and involvement (Bandura, 1997; DesJardin, 2003, 2006; DesJardin &

Eisenberg, 2007); however, few self-efficacy measurement tools have been created for families with hearing loss. DesJardin (2003) created one such tool: the Scale of Parental Involvement and Self-Efficacy (SPISE). This five page questionnaire, which looks at demographic information, self-efficacy, and involvement, aims to inform professionals about how the parent perceives their role in the early intervention process and therefore indicate how the professional may proceed to further support the parent in developing self-efficacy and involvement. When used over time, this type of scale can inform the professional about the degree of success the early intervention and support services are having on the family and indicate additional areas where support may be needed, for example, in relation to speech development, amplification, and language development.

DesJardin (2003) suggests that early intervention services may be able to be tailored to individual families based on a number of individual factors such as language preference (for example, English, American Sign Language, Spanish, etc), modality preference (oral only, total communication, sign only, etc), type of amplification (hearing aids, cochlear implants, etc), and cultural differences. By tailoring the supports and services that are provided, DesJardin (2003) suggests that specific knowledge and competence can be developed in relation to the most relevant skills that are needed by each individual family. These specific, help-giving practices work within the empowerment model to increase the abilities of the family to become successful in supporting the child's success through the early intervention process.

In another study, DesJardin and Eisenberg (2007) studied the relationship between maternal contributions and children's language skills. The study involved children who

had received cochlear implants. DesJardin and Eisenberg (2007) found that maternal involvement and self-efficacy scores related to children's speech-language development and were positively correlated to the quantity and quality of overall maternal language input that was provided. Implications from these findings for professionals may involve enhancing parent and caregiver self-efficacy, active involvement, and linguistic input so as to better support language development in young children following cochlear implantation (DesJardin & Eisenberg, 2007). This further supports the idea that building parental involvement and efficacy is a key factor in providing meaningful and effective support for both the d/Deaf child and the family of the d/Deaf child.

Snoddon (2008) comments on the need to consider American Sign Language exposure and instruction during early intervention. She provides specific examples of studies conducted in Ontario, Canada whereby children whom have received a cochlear implant have frequently been provided with less than adequate support for learning American Sign Language despite evidence that this type of language learning actually confers on oral and written English language development (Snoddon, 2008). Snodden (2008) goes on to discuss an applied linguistics perspective that may further inform the development of early intervention program models for d/Deaf children. She makes insights which also present profound implications for the field of Deaf Education. In doing so, she presents compelling statistics regarding the drastic decline of enrolment that occurs for students who are initially enrolled in oral-only programs. She suggests that approximately 62% of students that are enrolled in oral-only programs during the early pre-school years then switch to an American Sign Language or sign-supported

environment by adolescence (Snoddon, 2008). Snoddon (2008) suggests that these statistics are indicative of the language deprivation that occurs when children enter school and accounts for why they continue to fall steadily behind their peers throughout each grade level. She explains the ‘critical period hypothesis’ of language development (Snodden, 2008; See also Hoff, 2009; Mayberry, 1993; Newport, 1990, 1991) and how this type of delay in first language acquisition has increasingly detrimental effects than learning a second language late in childhood has (Snoddon, 2008). A number of other studies have shown that learning sign language has a positive effect on the development of spoken language development in young d/Deaf children (Preisler, Tvingstedt, & Ahlstrom, 2002; Schlesinger & Meadow, 1972, as cited by Snodden, 2008; Yoshinaga-Itano & Sedey, 2000). As such, Snodden (2008) supports the use of sign language during early intervention program and service delivery.

Snoddon (2008) suggests that the growing concerns regarding the limited information and inadequate ranges of options for parents that are provided through early intervention programs (see also Anderson, 2006; Arehart & Yoshinaga-Itano, 1999; Sass-Lehrer & Bodner-Johnson, 2003) merits the need to create overlap between the educational system and early intervention programs. This is partially because early intervention professionals often have no formal training in Deaf Culture, American Sign Language or other areas of development that are specifically related to Deaf Education. She suggests that educators whom are skilled in signed languages, educators whom are knowledgeable about auditory and speech skill development, and educators whom are aware of the impact the hearing loss has on speech, language, and socio-emotional

development need to become increasingly involved as integral parts of the intervention systems that are used (Snodden, 2008). Snodden (2008) goes on to discuss the implications of early intervention, early language development, the often limited training backgrounds of professionals in the field, and the effects of collaborative efforts that consider linguistic, cultural, and educational perspectives in addition to current medical-model views. Together, the many issues addressed in her paper provide a culturally and professionally relevant framework of considerations that could be used to inform the development of a more effective service delivery model for Deaf Education, which then may also be able to form a collaborative model that extends synergistically to other sub-fields, such as early intervention, in order to provide wrap-around services that are sustainable and comprehensive.

Models and Considerations Related to Deaf Education

A number of the findings related to general service delivery and early intervention models can be generalized to the field of Deaf Education and/or be combined with components of current Deaf Education models. The Empowerment model (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001) or the Direct Guidance model (Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995) are two current models in Deaf Education that involve the school-teacher-parent relationship in a way that parallels that of the various early intervention and general service delivery models that were previously discussed. In the past, a number of parental reports indicate that parents have often felt excluded in the decision-making processes and have been less than satisfied with the service delivery models and results available in Deaf Education (see Luetke-Stahlman, 1996; Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995). Therefore, it is

important to consider the findings related to parental involvement and self-efficacy, as presented by Meadow-Orlans and Sass-Lehrer (1995). It is likely that parental involvement and home-school partnerships play an equal role in Deaf Education from kindergarten onwards as they do in the early intervention and pre-school years. In fact, schools can and ought to play a large role in the development of parental involvement and self-efficacy.

Teachers themselves also require a high degree of involvement and self-efficacy in order to successfully adapt instruction for d/Deaf learners. Teacher training and experience are two additional factors that ought to be considered when seeking out the most important components of Deaf Education models (Simms & Thumann, 2007). Andrews and Covell (2007) suggest that teaching and leadership in Deaf Education needs to center on three challenges:

- (a) understanding the *changing demographic composition* of the student, teacher, and leadership populations; (b) *developing an evolving curriculum* founded on *research-based practices*; (c) continuing to enlarge the knowledge base through *applied research in the social sciences*"
- (p. 464).

Andrews and Covell (2007) go on to discuss a number of pressing issues in Deaf Education today, such as the hiring of staff who are untrained and inexperienced in Deaf Education, appropriate assessment of d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the political and overwhelming nature of teaching and leadership positions, and the lack of qualified and interested staff to take on these roles (Andrews and Covell, 2007). These issues all

need to be thoroughly considered and addressed in order to develop a model of Deaf Education that is both effective and efficient at delivering a quality education to students in a sustainable way.

Simms and Thumann (2007) propose that teachers and professionals need to seriously consider rethinking the commonly held views of deaf people and the methodologies that are often used in deaf education. As such, they suggest that a linguistically and culturally sensitive paradigm be adopted whereby Deaf Education can be looked at from what they term an ‘emic,’ or insider’s, view (for example, from a Deaf cultural perspective) rather than from an ‘etic,’ or outsider’s, view (for example, from a purely hearing or medical model perspective) (Simms and Thumann, 2007). They go on to describe how a number of factors and considerations have led to the development of a teacher preparation program at Gallaudet University called the *Master of Arts in Teaching: ASL/English Bilingual Deaf Education*, which addresses these paradigm and methodology shifts (Simms and Thumann, 2007). Some of the considerations mentioned include the characteristics of teachers and the impact on the Deaf community, including the presence or absence of low expectations, poor signing skills, and knowledge about ASL/English bilingualism. However, the main issue stems from the overarching ‘outsiders’ perspective versus the ‘insiders’ perspective; an approach that informs the methodologies, competencies, and training backgrounds that contribute to the successes and/or failures of various Deaf Education programs (Simms and Thumann, 2007). Simms and Thumann (2007) suggest that by taking a Deaf perspective, the success of Deaf Education programs can be cultivated from the grass-roots level of Deaf culture. A

shift of this nature would likely revolutionize the current service delivery models and various considerations used in association with Deaf Education programs in North America, when balanced with other cultural and educational perspectives that are relevant to the d/Deaf learners served by these programs.

Regarding classroom-based service delivery models, Luetke-Stahlman (1998) suggests that appropriate placement and program- and curriculum-level adaptations may be needed in order to ensure social and academic progress (see also Luetke-Stahlman, 1999). She goes on to outline specific programmatic modifications that may merit consideration: communication, linguistic issues, grading issues, listening environment, and physical settings (Luetke-Stahlman, 1998). She also outlines curricular modifications that may be required: classroom structure, rapport, affect, instructional format, language of instruction, lesson format and materials, comprehension monitoring, activity and assignment completion, and placement choices (Luetke-Stahlman, 1998). Luetke-Stahlman (1998) adds that professionals should work within a cooperative model with other professionals and paraprofessionals to make and monitor changes.

Kassani (2008) addresses the various models related to the cooperation of professionals and coordination of their related services. The models that she presents relate to the designations of *multidisciplinary teams*, *interdisciplinary teams*, and *transdisciplinary teams* (Kassani, 2008). Multidisciplinary teams are characterized by a minimal level of interaction between service providers and parents (Kassani, 2008). In other words, according to Kassani (2008), the professionals or service providers present their individual findings to parents, provide isolated treatments and interventions, and do

not often communicate with each other. Parents, meeting with service providers individually, are often passive recipients of the information and services and are not often integral participants (Kassani, 2008).

Interdisciplinary teams are characterized by a higher level of interaction between participants, such as deaf educators, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, elementary educators, and other service providers as they share their separate plans, discuss the results, and develop intervention plans through joint efforts (Kassani, 2008). Kassani (2008) goes on to state that while this may allow for complimentary services to be provided and for the exchange of information between different service providers to occur, this style of approach may reduce the efficiency and lead to the experience of inflexibility during service delivery.

Transdisciplinary teams are characterized by the sharing of not only information but also of roles (Kassani, 2008). The team members assess, plan, and intervene in each individual child's situation in collaboration with one another (Kassani, 2008). Kassani (2008) notes that this approach often leads to the crossing of disciplinary boundaries so that the various service providers can learn about other disciplines, practice new techniques, and expand their skills. At the same time, the ambiguity of roles and the demands of time restrictions may cause problems to arise (Kassani, 2008). As such, both service providers and parents are often skeptical about whether this type of team provides maximum benefits to children (Kassani, 2008).

There are a number of pros and cons to cooperation and coordination models in Deaf Education. Professional autonomy, professional roles and responsibilities, and

boundaries are often put in jeopardy; however, at the same time, a holistic view of the child may be achieved, allowing for integrated services that better address the needs of the whole child (Kassani, 2008). A number of other pros and cons can set the stage for a more effective and efficient provision of services, or, it can set the stage for hostile, inflexible relationships that are counterproductive to service delivery (Kassani, 2008). Kassani (2008) highlights the idea that professionals' attitudes play an integral role in the success or failure of such coordination and cooperation attempts. She states that these efforts are possible and productive if the definition of professionalism is understood not in terms of barriers of demarcation and professional exclusivity or elitism, but rather in terms of promoting inclusivity, democratic process, and collaborative efforts (Kassani, 2008). Finally, she acknowledges that "it is definitely a challenge to everyone involved in deaf education practices to provide the research community and society with a pioneering coexistence model between professionalism and coordination for the benefit of the children" (Kassani, 2008, p. 313).

CHAPTER III

FROM SERVICE DELIVERY TO PROGRAM DESIGN

Towards Effective Programming Considerations in Deaf Education

A preliminary review of the literature reveals that shifting paradigms in the education of children who are d/Deaf have occurred and continue to occur. The trend toward increased parental involvement, self-efficacy, and self-sufficiency is evident, as is the shift toward supporting the family rather than merely providing services. The need for professionals to help build parental involvement, self-efficacy, and self-sufficiency is supported by research (Meadow-Orlans & Sass-Lehrer, 1995) and can be generalized across early intervention and later educational models. The description of and research supporting a number of help-giving and collaboration models suggests that it is possible to provide support in a way that is empowering, builds the capacity of all involved stakeholders or service providers, and focuses on the family and child's individual needs. Although it is likely that much work is yet to be done in order to better facilitate the effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness of these types of service provisions, it appears that a number of models and considerations have been identified and examined. This information can guide the development of Deaf Education service delivery models as well as the various components of each, such as educational program development, design, and delivery, program flexibility, and service accessibility. Ultimately, if done in a holistic and comprehensive manner, these service delivery models can also merge with the models used in related fields, such as early intervention, in order to create a more

comprehensive and sustainable wrap-around service that truly meets the diverse and often complex needs of these learners over time.

A Social-Constructionist View of Educational Programming

A further review of the literature supports a call to action for relevant and appropriate programming changes to occur in the area of Deaf Education, alongside the necessary changes in service delivery frameworks. Mayer, Akamatsu, and Stewart (2002) revisit the definition of effective pedagogy in Deaf Education classrooms and support the need to make corresponding adjustments to service delivery and program design. Specifically, they explore the need to balance the overemphasis on prescribing specific types of signed languages or modalities that are used in the classroom with the very real issues that face teachers on a daily basis related to meeting diverse learners' needs, being accountable to common curriculums, and the achieving standard sets of outcomes. They propose a vision for education that contrasts traditional, top-down models of direct instruction whereby information is transmitted from teacher to student (Mayer et al., 2002). They suggest that the use of collaborative enterprise can result in effective teaching practice that reflects a fundamentally different view of what knowledge is and how learning that knowledge occurs (Mayer et al., 2002). This approach recognizes that children learn best when they are able to construct meaning and interpret their environments through active mediation with others, thereby reinforcing the idea that educational programs ought to be founded on the premises of social constructivist theory, such as:

(a) that psychological processes can only be understood in terms of their origins and the mechanisms by which they change; (b) that the development of all higher psychological processes have their origins in interaction among individuals; and (c) that it is through communication using symbols and signs that individuals eventually become capable of regulating their own behaviour (Mayer, et al., 2002, p. 486).

In order to meet the needs of students, address the issues facing teachers, and capitalize on strategically addressing the factors for success that are required for d/Deaf learners, Mayer et al. (2002) recommend that educational programming and instruction be reconceptualised with the following understandings integrated throughout:

First, that learning is a social, interactive enterprise in which the teacher and the learner interdependently co-construct meaning. Second, that this joint meaning is mediated through language, through classroom conversations that occur within the context of meaningful, purposeful activity. And third, that the interaction is dependent on the ability of the teacher to work in a contingently responsive manner with the student (p. 487).

They also go on to state that although the quality of Deaf Education is often measured in terms of the sign language choice and quality of usage, measures of effective practice also need to include the overall quality of interaction and the ability of the teacher to engage students in meaningful discourse. This suggests that although linguistic, cultural, and socio-political issues are important considerations in Deaf Education, successful

teaching and learning also relies heavily on the type, quantity, and quality of interactions that occur. These considerations must therefore be reflected in the service delivery frameworks and program designs that are used.

The Socio-Cultural Landscape of Educational Programming

Pribanić (2006) explores another important factor in the design, implementation, and delivery of educational programs. He investigates the socio-cultural landscape against which success is defined, measured, and idealized for d/Deaf learners. While exploring the specific intricacies of educational issues in Croatia, Pribanić (2006) recognizes that ultimately d/Deaf students' main problem is not the deafness itself, but rather the literacy, reading, and writing that is required for linguistic competence in the dominating spoken language environment that surrounds them, and the associated levels of educational attainment that rest on such spoken-language factors. He agrees with other researchers that the literacy issues facing d/Deaf students result primarily from:

- (a) reduced input due to the hearing loss; (b) inadequate teaching methods due to concerns over communication modality and lack of appreciation of the complexities of language acquisition; and (c) teachers' focus on sentence structure to the exclusion of other aspects of language use (Wilbur 2000; Wilbur & 1989, as cited by Pribanić, 2006, p. 238).

Towards a Bilingual-Bicultural Approach

Pribanić (2006) discusses the importance of considering a cultural approach to Deaf Education and examines two existing d/Deaf bilingual-bicultural systems that are currently used in Sweden and the Netherlands. These two educational systems have

experienced a great deal of success in providing solutions to the above noted issues as a result of the cultural and linguistic approach that is taken. He identifies three necessary components of this type of educational approach: first, that early communication through the use of natural language and interaction with the Deaf community will create the foundations of language that are required for later linguistic success; second, that bilingual/bicultural education programs are a necessary and appropriate way of facilitating success through a culturally sensitive and relevant approach to education; and third, that the d/Deaf person's rights need to be accounted for, through provisions such as access to highly qualified interpreters (Pribanić, 2006). One of the most profound insights that arises from this type of exploration of appropriate programming in Deaf Education is the phenomenological realization that “the *environment needs to be changed in order to meet the deaf person's needs*, not the contrary” (Pribanić, 2006, p. 243).

A Matter of Cultural Context

A first step in fully realizing a new paradigm that seeks to integrate the social-constructivist perspective and the need to alter the environment rather than altering the person is to examine and redefine the conceptual understandings that are commonly held by the larger society, consciously or unconsciously, about d/Deaf persons and about disability. One such reflection of the commonly held beliefs and definitions that are used can be found in popular dictionaries that are used by lay people. Linguistic and cultural understandings evolve at fast rates, yet often have residual effects on presently held connotations and associated meanings. Therefore, it is important to take a look at both past and present definitions of the related terminology used in Deaf Education. The term

deaf is defined in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as someone who is “lacking or deficient in the sense of hearing” (deaf, 2010). The terminology used in this definition leads us towards a deeper understanding of the underlying philosophical roots of the associated connotations that are attributed to d/Deaf persons. The mention of “lack” and “deficiency” in the very definition of deafness foreshadows a major philosophical underpinning of what influential connotations may be rooted within Deaf Education programming and philosophies. According to the 1982 version of Webster’s New World Thesaurus (as cited in Mullins, 2009), disability was at that time viewed as synonymous with the following words:

a. crippled, helpless, useless, wrecked, stalled, maimed, wounded, mangled, lame, mutilated, run-down, worn-out, weakened, impotent, castrated, paralyzed, handicapped, senile, decrepit, *laid up, *done up, *done for, *done in, *cracked up, *counted out; see also hurt, useless, weak. Ant. Healthy, strong, capable.

The updated entry in the 2009 version of the same thesaurus provides this current list of synonyms, in which deafness can be seen as directly linked to the term disability:

Entry word: Disabled

Function: adjective

Blind, deaf, mute; halt, lame, paralyzed, quadriplegic; immobile, immobilized; ailing, diseased, ill, sick, unfit, unhealthy, unsound, unwell.

Near Ant. Bouncing, chipper, fit, hale, healthy, hearty, robust, sound, well,

whole, wholesome. *Ant.* Able-bodied, nondisabled (Merriam-Webster Thesaurus, 2009, as cited in Mullins, 2009).

Further to this, the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary adds the following descriptions of disability:

1 a: the condition of being disabled b: inability to pursue an occupation because of a physical or mental impairment; ...

2: lack of legal qualification to do something

3: a disqualification, restriction, or disadvantage (disability, 2010)

Using these definitions, it becomes strikingly obvious why deficit-model approaches to educational programming are likely to experience great disparity in their ability to empower, educate, and inspire struggling learners to become as proficient and successful in school and life as their typical hearing peers. That is, the culturally constructed definition of d/Deaf students in a deficit model disables them by mere virtue of the past and present cultural contexts in which they are viewed. This connotation is therefore likely to give rise to an environment that is largely constructed around the creation and perpetuation of “truths” that hinge on those underlying definitions, rather than taking a culturally, linguistically, and phenomenologically sensitive approach to recognizing the strengths and abilities of those students within the context of strength-based models and definitions. As Mullins (2009) states, “It’s not just about the words. It’s what we believe about people when we name them with these words. It’s about the values behind the words and how we construct those values.” She goes on to state that “Our language affects our thinking and how we view the world and how we view other people”

(Mullins, 2009), thus having a direct impact on the realities that we create by mere virtue of the words that we speak.

Therefore, in order to adopt a culturally and linguistically sensitive framework in Deaf Education, we must first examine the nature of the limitations and restrictions imposed upon the d/Deaf student who is viewed as disabled in some way, understand the extensive potential effects of such a definition, and then seek to take decisive and intentional action to correct the debilitating effects that this view can have, and potentially already has had, on the child's potential. We must begin to apply the understanding that "when adults believe in children and say they can, then they will" (Sethi, 2009). We must realize and respect that "for a ... deaf child ... deafness represent[s] normality, not a condition of illness. He senses the 'handicap' [emphasis added] in question only indirectly or secondarily, as a result of his social experiences" (Vygotsky, 1993, as cited in Hardy, n.d., p.1; see also Gindis, 1995, 1999). We must then ask ourselves, "What then does a hearing loss mean, in and of itself?" (Vygotsky, 1993, as cited in Hardy, n.d., p.1) and respond to that question in two parts: First, with an acceptance that "deafness indicate[s] nothing other than the mere absence of one means of forming conditional links with the environment" (Vygotsky, 1993, as cited in Hardy, n.d., p.1); and, second, with an innovative, boundary-breaking (Robertson, 2005) approach to educational reform (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1994) which creates alternative ways of forming links with the environment and constructing language, meaning and understanding.

Positive Differential Approaches and Transactional Theory

Positive Differential Approach

The main objective of Deaf Education programming needs to hinge on the positive differential approach that was proposed by Vygotsky (n.d., as cited in Gindis, 1995, 1999). The use of lowered expectations, watered down curriculum, and social isolation must be avoided. Instead, the system must operate from a strength-based model and must employ both instruction and assessment that reduces cultural underdevelopment and the related implications of such (Vygotsky, n.d., as cited in Gindis, 1995). The focus needs to be on preventing and correcting the secondary effects of the hearing loss, which occur primarily through the psychological and pedagogical means of the socio-cultural context in which education occurs (Vygotsky, n.d., as cited in Gindis, 1995).

Development of the student's higher psychological skills (those which are achieved through cultural exposure and language learning) and overall personality need to be provided for through the creation of a learning environment which would supply students with the necessary and appropriate means of communication that matches their linguistic input and output needs (Gindis, 1995; Rayman, 2009).

By viewing disability as merely a matter of cultural context, we can see that “without the culture that makes it a disability, it is just a physical condition” (S. Young, personal communication, January 28, 2010). That is, it is the interaction between a barrier-ridden environment and the cultural values of society that leads to a perception of disability in the presence of a physical condition (Vygotsky, 1983, as cited in Gindis, 1995, 1999); it is *not* the interaction between the physical condition itself and the

naturally occurring environmental factors in the absence of cultural perceptions. As such, it has been said that the only real and consistent disability that is in fact experienced by these persons is “the world ever thinking that [they] can be described by those definitions [and synonyms of the term ‘disability’]” (Mullins, 2009).

Transactional Theory

In response to the view of disability as culturally and contextually based, let us turn to transactional theory for direction on how to view d/Deaf students in the future of Deaf Education. “Transactional theory represents actors and their environments as part of one another, making it impossible to consider an organism’s actions and behaviours without also looking at the context in which those actions and behaviours evolve, develop, or otherwise function” (Heron-Hruby, Hagood, & Alvermann, 2008, p. 314). Therefore, each time we identify an area of a d/Deaf student’s behaviour, thought, or action as being deficient or lacking in some respect, we must look at the environment and question how the environment fostered the development of such deficiencies or lacks (Vygotsky, 1983, as cited in Gindis, 1995). We must then alter the environment to produce radically different results and realize that the deficiencies lie not in the person but in the social constructs that surround them. Learner centred environments can be employed for this purpose, providing effective instruction which begins with:

what learners bring to the setting; this includes cultural practices and beliefs, as well as knowledge of academic content. A focus on the degree to which environments are learner centered is consistent with evidence showing that learners use their current knowledge to construct new

knowledge and that what they know and believe at the moment affects how they interpret new information. Sometimes learners' current knowledge supports new learning; sometimes it hampers it (Brandsford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, p. XVI).

In light of this, it is important to focus not on changing the student by virtue of instructional methodology, but rather on changing the environment, based on student needs, in order to affect greater opportunity for the student to learn. This approach presupposes a shift from viewing d/Deaf people as having a biological impairment that requires intervention in order to change the person or the medical condition, which itself carries with it psychological consequences, towards a view of deafness as a socio-cultural developmental phenomenon (Vygotsky, n.d., as cited in Gindis, 1999) that requires appropriate provisions of environmental, linguistic, and cultural components that may be different from those required by the typical hearing population. It is also important to consider that these two are not mutually exclusive, but that within a socio-cultural perspective the student can be encouraged to access whichever medical or technological tools they desire. In this way, all of the existing technologies, methodologies, and supports available become tools that are able to be used in collaboration rather than as mutually exclusive conventions which must be used in isolation from one another.

Transactional theory denotes *context* as an evolving and dynamic product of the interrelationship between an organism and the environment rather than as a fixed entity that determines the actions, behaviours, and functions of that organism (Heron-Hruby, Hagood, & Alvermann, 2008). As such, the context can be altered on an ongoing basis

by manipulating the environment into a more appropriate, productive, and responsive match for the student's needs. From this perspective, we can begin to see how changing the environment to match the needs of the student allows for greater flexibility, accessibility, and productivity in the Deaf Education classroom.

This perspective presents a profound opportunity to shift our current paradigms, and, if pursued, reposition Deaf Education for increased success. By viewing d/Deaf people as persons who have a physical characteristic that pre-designs them for success in specific kinds of environments that allow for optimal levels of access, interaction, and communication, according to their individual strengths, needs, and preferences, we can gain some valuable insights into what Deaf Education ought to look like. We can apply transactional theory in order to redesign the current structure and setup of the environments in which Deaf Education occurs – particularly at the systemic and programmatic levels. We can begin to look at Deaf Education not as a vehicle for changing disabled children, but rather look to the d/Deaf children as the vehicle to change the currently disabled Deaf Education system. This is not to say that the hearing loss itself does not pose some degree of disability in comparison to persons who do not have a hearing loss, especially when a culturally-constructed disability model is used, however, it is to suggest that our outlook and preconceived notions about what that disability looks like and means can have a drastic influence over the kinds of educational opportunities that we provide. It is also to state that by adopting this view of the d/Deaf learner, we may be able to create a system that affords them increased opportunity and empowerment rather than creating secondary disabilities which are culturally constructed and are

additional to the physical condition that they experience. By focusing on what our students can do and how to change the environments to enable students to do more (Vygotsky, 1983, as cited in Gindis, 1995), we can begin to change the cultural context in which we situate educational experiences and thus inspire learning and provide the d/Deaf students with what they really need in terms of a long-term, sustainable, and quality approach to education. We need to shift our approach toward “work[ing] on our strengths to the point where we crowd out the weaknesses, rather than working on the weaknesses and expecting people to be inspired” (Secretan, n.d.). This means that it is time to shift from a Piagetian approach of child development towards a more holistic and balanced framework that also considers the interaction between culture/environment and the individual as an effective agent for learning and achievement (Gindis, 1999); from a disability or deficit model to a strength-based model (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007b; Rayman, 2009). It is time to stop trying to oblige Deaf Education into alignment with current hearing education programs (our weakness) and begin to allow the strengths and characteristics inherent to d/Deaf children direct the establishment of appropriate supports, services, and programming through the development of new program design, delivery, and branding options.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN, BRANDING AND POSITIONING

The Structure of Deaf Education Programs: Design Considerations

In order to be increasingly successful, a program must embody a number of programmatic structures and characteristics that are common to all program frameworks. If clear and strong program structures are not present in educational settings, it is likely that the purpose, objectives, and success of the program will be lacking. When this happens, it is more likely that a series of somewhat random educational activities, rather than consistent educational programming, will be seen and that the quality of the activities will be largely dependent upon the proficiency, training, and personal characteristics of the people who fill each teaching and support staff position in the program. This can have disastrous effects on the results, sustainability, and quality of Deaf Education programs, especially considering the sheer lack of sufficiently qualified professionals that are available within the field of Deaf Education (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007a; Johnson, 2004).

So, just what should a program look like? How should a program be structured and established?² “Typically, organizations work from their mission to identify several overall goals which must be reached ... each of these goals often becomes a program” (McNamara, as cited by Authenticity Consulting, 2010). That is, “programs are organized methods to provide certain related services to constituents” (McNamara, as

² For a complete discussion of program design, marketing and evaluation, see McNamara, 2006.

cited by Authenticity Consulting, 2010). It could be said that establishing a clear and purposeful mission statement is the first requirement of building a successful program structure that is aligned with and organized to successfully provide the services needed by d/Deaf students. At this point, however, it may also be important to consider the underlying assumptions made by mission statements, and consider an alternative form of this concept. Although mission statements have long been used as the basis for motivation in organizations, corporations, and businesses across the world, Secretan (n.d.) suggests that mission statements and the very definition of motivation are counterproductive in today's world. He suggests that motivation can be likened to providing a motive; inducing, inciting and impelling; and ultimately bribery, exploitation, manipulation and control. Mission statements, he advises, ought to be replaced with dream statements which inspire rather than motivate. Inspiration, he argues, is the opposite of motivation; it is to breathe and to give life. "When we're inspired, we love something, we love the people we do it with, and we love the reason for doing it. Love is what powers inspiration" (Secretan, n.d.). So, perhaps adopting a dream statement (which also draws parallels to underlying premise of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech entitled *I Have a Dream*) (see Luther King, 1963) aligns more seamlessly with the other innovative approaches suggested in this paper and will facilitate a greater shift in paradigm, programming structure, and systemic success by inspiring the future of Deaf Education with a dream, rather than flogging it with continued attempts at failed motivation, as we have seen it done so far.

Once a mission statement, or more preferably, a dream statement has been created, we must begin to consider developing a program theory. Hosley & Wilder Research (2005) suggests that while some human service programs initially sound promising, they may not always result in the desired changes that they promise participants. They suggest that this could be because a good theory is not carried out well or, in some cases, that the problem may actually be the theory itself (Hosley & Wilder Research, 2005). As such, it is critical that Deaf Education programs begin to develop and successfully implement sound program theories, which are explanations of what will be done in order to accomplish the dream statement that has been set, and why those actions will support the realization of the dream (Hosley & Wilder Research, 2005). The program theory needs to provide logical, reasonable, and clear descriptions of the purpose of the program, the services that will be provided, and the outcomes that will be measured as a way of identifying whether the program was successful or not (Hosley & Wilder Research, 2005).

The purpose of our Deaf Education programs, or any other educational programs for that matter, cannot and should not revolve around the acquisition of a high school diploma, certificate of achievement, or other representation of mere course completion, nor around the instructional techniques, assistive technologies, or staffing resources that will be used. These are important considerations in the delivery of a program, however they do not form the basis of the program theory on which they ultimately rest. Instead, we need to consider the skills, knowledge, and attributes that will allow students to be successful in school and in life, and match the services we

provide to those outcomes. *Backwards Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, n.d.) can be employed for this purpose so as to ensure that the end goal is reflected throughout the basic program components and the results are aligned with the program purposes. As Stephen Covey (n.d.) suggests, we need to simply begin with the end in mind. Essentially, the question to be asked when using Backwards Design is: *Which enduring understandings must students be able to demonstrate at the end of the program?* In other words, we must state that, “If our outcomes are _____ (insert dream statement and outcomes), then it follows that we will need to do _____ (insert planned program components, services, and activities) to achieve them” (S. Young, Personal Communication, February 18, 2010). Statements may include general outcomes and directives, such as: *The goal of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing program is to educate d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in a manner that is consistent with the quality of education that each Canadian citizen has a right to, without discrimination. Instruction will focus on the development of proficient language skills in English and American Sign Language in order to allow the student to achieve literacy in reading, writing, and expressive communication, according to the specific characteristics of each student.* Specific outcomes related to a mission statement, ends statement, or dream statement would also be included, such as:

E-1: Mega End

Each student, in keeping with his or her individual abilities and gifts, will complete high school with a foundation of learning to function effectively in life, work and continued learning.

E-2: Academic Success

Each student will possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for academic success and be effectively prepared for life, work and further learning.

E-3: Citizenship

Each student will be a responsible citizen by being an informed and involved member in his or her local, national and global communities.

E-4: Personal Development

Each student will acquire the skills, attitudes and knowledge to achieve personal highest potential.

E-5: Character

Each student will possess the character to do what is right, act morally with wisdom, and balance individual concerns with the rights and needs of others (Calgary Board of Education, 2010).

Other statements may relate to specific areas of need, such as *Students will learn appropriate socialization skills, living skills, and self advocacy skills which will equip them for daily interactions and enable them to lead independent, productive lives.* Dr Alfred White (1987a) also provides some good examples of educational objectives that tie into program theory and the construction of dream or ends statements, such as:

Deaf children will develop a positive self-image and feeling of self-worth;
Deaf children will develop a positive identification with both deaf and hearing people and their respective language and culture;

Deaf children will be allowed to identify with, and be a part of, that culture which best suits their individual needs;

Deaf children will develop the ability to use American Sign Language and develop the ability to read and write English and where possible speak it;

Deaf children will develop a functional understanding of the world and community in which they live and acquire sufficient skills to live and compete effectively within it (pp. 1-2)

Dr White (1987a) goes on to comment that surely if d/Deaf children were able to reach these objectives, the educational system that brought about those achievements would be viewed as a success.

Next, one must consider the underlying assumptions and preconceived notions about why it is believed that the activity will lead to the result (Hosley & Wilder Research, 2005). Clearly outlining the reasons why the service is expected to be successful, and why one thing leads to another, is a very important aspect of program theory and is in essence a defining characteristic of this approach to program development. Finally, the evidence that will support this claim, such as current research, past results, and/or consistent feedback from participants, needs to be provided (Hosley & Wilder Research, 2005). This ensures that the program's dream statement and theory are aligned and kept accountable for supporting one another.

Human Needs Psychology: Implications for Program Design and Implementation

Human Needs Psychology also presents some profound considerations for program design and implementation. According to Robbins (2006) and Madanes (n.d.),

“there are six universal human needs that can be satisfied in positive or negative ways. They are: Security (Consistency), Variety (Inconsistency), Love and Connection, Significance, Growth, and Contribution. The first four are essential to human survival. The last two are essential to human fulfillment” (Madanes, n.d., para. 3). Since these needs are universal, they are arguably non-negotiable, apply to everyone, and will be met in either positive and productive or negative and destructive ways (Madanes, n.d., para. 3; Robbins, 2006). A Human Needs Psychology approach to educational programming that combines theory with practice in such a way that a clear, systematic, and purposeful program emerges that meets the basic needs of the children served by the program has implications for both program design and program implementation. When utilized, this approach forms the basis for programming decisions, details, and rationales. A conscious effort needs to be made to account for the provision of meeting these needs in positive ways so that the remaining instructional decisions and techniques can be effective in delivering content-area instruction. Without meeting these six needs in positive ways, learning is not able to flow at optimal levels and educational gains are likely to be inhibited.

In order to provide security to our students, the programming structures used may aim to focus on the development of consistent and appropriate objectives. When the dream statement, program theory, and resulting behaviours of the professionals delivering the services are consistent, students know what to expect, what is expected of them, and they are likely to develop a sense of safety and security in the learning environment.

Learning becomes a natural, interesting, and enjoyable process when all of these factors are accounted for.

Although consistency and security are important, too much predictability and sameness in an educational program may lead to student boredom when the learning environment, program, and services become overly similar, conventional, and scripted. Variety is also required in order to ensure that the consistent, secure nature of the program is also balanced with sufficient variety, choice, and diversity. Program development should include sufficient variety, which may be built into the structure of the program by ensuring that the outcomes presuppose the existence of diverse teaching and learning practices in order to meet diverse educational goals and objectives.

Love and connection may initially seem incongruent with program development; however, paradoxically, it provides a deep rooted approach to integrating the cultural values and beliefs of the Deaf, hearing, and hard-of-hearing cultures in which the students are a part. Love in this respect can be viewed as the humanistic approach to respecting d/Deaf learners as human beings whose birth right is to be treated in a respectful, fair, and equitable way, comparable to how others are treated, rather than through a disability model that seeks to fix some inadequacy or fallacy that makes them appear less than non-d/Deaf or hearing persons. Connection can be viewed as the need to connect humans to one another as well as the need to connect specific needs of students with appropriate educational solutions. In this regard, programming must ensure that the human connection is made possible through appropriate language and communication, socialization, and human interaction outcomes. The educational needs that are specific to

d/Deaf individuals need to be reflected in the established learning outcomes and the (multi)cultural beliefs, values, and ideals of the student need to be highly regarded within the program structure.

In a similar vein, the need for significance must be reflected through the development of culturally and linguistically sensitive goals and objectives (Simms & Thumann, 2007). It is critical that d/Deaf learners experience their own significance as people through the provision of open-ended, accessible, and purposeful goals that are meaningful and relevant to their lives. By allowing the views of the students, Deaf culture, hearing culture, hard-of-hearing culture, and the students' other cultural affiliations, as well as the physiological needs of the d/Deaf learner, to direct the perspectives that are reflected in the development of these outcomes, Deaf Education programming will encapsulate a sense of significance that will then be communicated to and felt by the students that are served by the programs. To do this effectively, Deaf Education programs need to be built from the ground up and designed specifically for the students they serve rather than being adapted and modified solely from existing programs that have been created for non-d/Deaf (hearing) students.

While the first four needs relate to survival and are absolutely critical to address before learning can occur, the final two relate to the need to be fulfilled and can be seen as equally important, although not mutually exclusive, when considering the effectiveness of our programs. If d/Deaf children are merely surviving our programs, we are not doing them justice. By integrating the need for growth and contribution into our programs, we can ensure that d/Deaf students leave the programs with amplified capacity,

purpose, and fulfilment. It is the provision of outcomes that are tied to these two needs that take programs from barely acceptable to excellent, and this is where the important lifelong learning attributes are picked up, honed, and polished by our students. When students meet outcomes that are related to growth, they experience what it means to live. All living organisms must experience growth in order to continue living and it is absolutely necessary for our programming structures to ensure that sufficient amounts and types of growth opportunities are provided. When diverse opportunities for growth are matched slightly above the current level of performance, but do not evoke frustration or become overwhelming, our students are able to feel their true potential and they begin to believe in themselves. They become inspired, intrinsically driven, and they want to pursue outward contributions. When we also integrate outcomes that provide opportunities for multifaceted contributions to the self and others, students feel successful, accomplished, connected, and fulfilled. They begin to give back to both the Deaf and hearing worlds as mature, independent citizens and they are able to find their place as members of their communities, families, and schools/workplaces. In order to sufficiently assess the degree to which all of these needs are met through Deaf Education programming, it is also necessary to establish an objective assessment that is based on specific evaluation criteria that will objectively critique the success of the program in meeting these needs.

Branding and Positioning Deaf Education Programs

In business marketing and public relations (PR), the concept of branding and positioning is a key factor in the success of many organizations once effective business

models, or in this case educational programs, are in place. The concept of positioning is everywhere – it means putting the right people in the right places at the right time, positioning the product in relation to the consumer, and situating the brand within a framework of effective PR and advertising. When considering the realm of education, although often considered taboo by some educators, it can be argued that it is no less important to consider the proper branding and positioning of the products and services that public education seeks to provide as it is when considering the same strategies used by major corporations. When the wrong people are in the wrong positions at the wrong times, educational institutions experience pitfalls, stumbling blocks, and inhibited growth and progress. When the right people are in the right positions at the right times, however, learning flows, employees enjoy what they are doing and innovative, forward progress is rampant. Similarly, when programming is positioned in relation to student needs, achievement is apparent, learners are engaged, and systems operate with a sense of harmony and alignment between program goals and outcomes. Likewise, when programs are properly established, branded, and publicized, they tend to receive increased funding, time, and consideration, and support from school boards, professional and government regulating bodies, as well as the communities that they serve. In terms of Deaf Education, a strong program with a good reputation is likely to attract students and their families, whom have had to fight the system just to get minimal supports in place and appropriately qualified personnel to provide a quality education. With increased registration, the program will likely have an increased flow of resources to provide high quality services on an ongoing basis. It is no wonder then that Deaf Education could use

a little bit of innovative branding and positioning after a new program structure is designed upon a solid philosophical foundation. This is not to be confused with repackaging a deficient program by providing the illusion of supports and services, nor masking any of the weaknesses in program design that are in need of being reworked. Rather, this entails first tearing down what is not working, rebuilding programs upon the strengths of what does work, as previously discussed, and then branding and positioning it for *sustainable* success.

Reis and Reis (2002) discuss the importance of properly branding and positioning organizations for success. They highlight a number of strategies that have been shown to create highly powerful products and services in the marketplace and which ultimately build brands that soar above the competition. Specifically, they discuss the tendency for companies that create new categories of products, rather than simply expanding existing categories of products, to dominate the marketplace. Examples include:

- Band-Aid, the first adhesive bandage
- CNN, the first cable news network
- Jell-O, the first gelatine dessert
- Kentucky Fried Chicken, the first fast-food chicken chain
- Q-Tips, the first cotton swab
- Rollerblade, the first in-line skate (Reis & Reis, 2002, pp. 14-15)

Each of these examples represents a company that was the leader in creating a new *category* of product. Second to this, each company's new category was represented by

high quality products (Collins, 2001) that were in demand, or that at least became in demand after the appropriate publicity positioned it within the marketplace (Reis & Reis, 2002). It might be said that these companies represented the innovative thought and creativity of their time as they forged the way for a new category of product or service to emerge in the marketplace. Further, Reis and Reis (2002) discuss the importance of PR versus advertising. They outline the numerous companies, especially in the “high-tech” field, that have had their starts in the arena of publicity, not advertising, and have then soared to the top of their respective markets as a result. They state that advertising a product is a maintenance strategy for well-established brands; however, publicity is the brand-developing tool that can create those well-established brands in the first place. Publicity, they argue, is best done through the media, which reports on that which is new, not necessarily better. Therefore, companies who really achieve long-standing and sustainable success often catch the attention of the public through the creation of some *new* category of product rather than through the development of “new” products that are simply extensions of those which already exist. They claim that “A leader needs to promote the category, not the brand” (Reis & Reis, 2002, p. 17).

In terms of Deaf Education, the application of the idea that the leader needs to promote the category, not the brand, leads us towards a holistic and comprehensive framework of service and program delivery. It transcends the numerous “philosophies,” “instructional strategies,” and “methods” that are used and instead seeks to create a new framework and educational category through which all of these “products” or “services” are delivered as a cohesive and comprehensive whole. This perspective opens up the

possibility of creating an overarching category of education and service delivery which positions each of the current methods and philosophies that have been used in Deaf Education classrooms and related fields, such as early intervention programs, within a much larger framework – a systemic framework. Deaf Education, if it were to adopt such a framework, could ultimately purport an entirely different foundation from which a variety of “brands” of education operate. Early Intervention could also be housed within that framework and be more closely tied to the goals and directions that later educational pursuits take for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This could create a trend toward identifying, implementing, and realizing the potential of a variety of educational programs for a variety of students, and building upon the needs of those students, rather than trying to fit the needs of the students into them. For these sorts of programs, this could mean recreating the processes, rules, and environments in which educational programs are positioned; perhaps by creating increasingly rich linguistic environments that offer students access to bilingual education resources, highly-trained professionals who truly understand and respect their needs, and cooperative learning environments in which their learning pursuits are personalized based on their individual characteristics. In other areas of special education, it could mean adopting essentially the same constructs that look different in their output, depending on the profiles of the students that will be served in those programs. Either way, the foundation on which the program sits, and the service delivery framework in which it is positioned, can allow these types of programs to finally realize the potential for which they were initially created.

CHAPTER V

A CALL TO ACTION:

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

A Theoretical Basis for Branding a New Educational and Service Delivery Category

There are traditional approaches to education and alternative approaches to education. There are outcome based approaches and there are character based approaches. There is what is termed “regular education” and what is termed “special education.” There is public, private, and religiously affiliated education as well. Each of these represents a distinct category of education in which a number of programs are rooted and share common threads. Deaf Education often falls within the category of special education, although sometimes it more appropriately functions under a literacy and language-based category. When housed within a special education framework, a deficit or disability model is often attached to the philosophical underpinnings that are used. Most educational programs that are embodied within the special education umbrella are commonly viewed as serving a deficient or disabled population in some way, as compared to non-special education programs (or “regular education” programs) that are designed for “able-bodied” students. The positioning of Deaf Education within special education thus causes a significant misalignment with the commonly held cultural views of d/Deaf people and many d/Deaf educators, and with the goals of a Deaf Education program that seeks to separate itself from the historically held disability model on which it is often built at present. As long as it is positioned within this category of

education, it will continue to exude the long-standing philosophies and value systems that underlie most special education programs and thus fail at its attempt to achieve the outcomes associated with strength-based programs. The dream of seeing Deaf Education operate from a strength-based approach has not often been realized when housed under this category of education because special education systems themselves are not set up to recognize Deaf Education as a distinct field unto itself, nor to recognize the inherent strengths of the d/Deaf population. These types of programs do not aim to normalize the Deaf experience, but rather to pathologize it and treat it in more clinical than culturally and humanistically appropriate ways. It is therefore time to establish a new category of education in which Deaf Education could become a natural leader while separating itself from the extremely limiting assumptions and philosophical underpinnings that often prevent it from moving forward. Deaf Education must break away from the umbrella of special education in order to establish the foundational framework in which it must eventually rest. Once sitting within this new framework, as discussed below, Deaf Education could then purport a new category of education in which other programs could begin to operate.

This new framework and category of education would need to be built upon the constructs, outcomes, and goals of what Deaf Education would look like if it were to soar to new levels of success. It would need to be based on the reality of the d/Deaf learners' strengths, the requisite factors required to empower, inspire, and enable achievement, accomplishment, and success for its students, and the foundational belief that d/Deaf persons are equally as capable as any other human being on the planet, given the right

environmental conditions and cultural contexts. A term for this type of educational category needs to reflect a devotion to the truths of these learners, a power of conveying or perceiving these truths, and an accurate conformity to these truths and facts. These constructs are embodied by the term *veracity* (2010). Random House Dictionary defines veracity as:

1. habitual observance of truth in speech or statement; truthfulness: He was not noted for his veracity.
2. conformity to truth or fact; accuracy: to question the veracity of his account.
3. correctness or accuracy, as of the senses or of a scientific instrument.
4. something veracious; a truth (veracity, n.d.).

Webster's Online Dictionary adds to this definition an "unwillingness to tell lies" (veracity, 2001). Synonymous with veracity are the following additional terms:

be honourable ... deal honourably, deal squarely, deal impartially, deal fairly; speak the truth; ... draw a straight furrow; tell the truth ... show a proper spirit, make a point of; do one's duty; (virtue). Trustworthiness; ... truth, candour, singleness of heart; ... tender conscience; (sense of duty). ... fact, reality; (existence); plain fact, plain matter of fact; nature; (principle); truth, verity; ... orthodoxy; ... authenticity; ... correctness, correctitude ... verily, indeed, really, in reality; with truth; ... certainly; (certain); actually; (existence); in effect; (intrinsically). ... truthfulness,

frankness; ... sincerity, ... unreserve, honesty, fidelity; plain dealing, bona fides; love of truth; probity; ingenuousness (veracity, 2001).

Veracity-based Deaf Education would identify and create a separate, distinct, and respected arena of environmentally appropriate, linguistically and culturally sensitive, and accessibility-based education which observes the truths of the learning needs of d/Deaf children. It would not only identify the truths that need to be recognized about d/Deaf learners, but would form a habitual commitment and adherence to upholding those truths in all areas of service creation, implementation, and delivery.

Practical Implications for Veracity-Based Deaf Education and Service Delivery

Veracity-based Deaf Education, in practice, may look different depending on the demographic makeup of the school, the program structure, and the individual characteristics of the d/Deaf students. Lev Vygotsky's ideas related to the synthesis of societal and technological changes that will create an equally accessible society would appear in all levels of the education system (Hardy, n.d.). This would include the development and implementation of appropriate programming based on culturally sensitive definitions and connotations related to d/Deaf persons, the language preferences of d/Deaf persons, the removal of societal barriers that hinder the social and psychological growth and health of these students, and the development of a systematic approach towards the educational and psychological methodologies of research and evaluation (Hardy, n.d.). The theoretical and practical questions related to coordination and structural composition at the various stages of learning (Vygotsky, 1993, as cited by Hardy, n.d.) must be considered and woven throughout. The use of *universal design for*

learning (Centre for Applied Special Technology (CAST), 2010; Michael & Trezek, 2006; Rose & Meyer, 2002) and Backwards Design (Wiggins & McTighe, n.d.) principles will infuse these considerations into all aspects of teaching and learning to ensure efficiency, accessibility, and appropriateness.

Unit and course design would reflect a coherent structure that is aligned with differentiated assessment and scaffolded instructional activities (McTighe & Seif, n.d). Clear distinctions between the various elements of inquiry based learning would be evident and the six facets of understanding (explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self assess) would be utilized effectively (McTighe & Seif, n.d) within knowledge centered and learner centered environments (Brandsford, et al., 1999). Authentic performance tasks would allow the demonstration of understanding, knowledge, and skills while enabling students to revisit and rethink important concepts (McTighe & Seif, n.d). A variety of *fully* accessible resources, available in multi-lingual formats including American Sign Language and English, would be used throughout instruction and would serve as complementary to the textbook (McTighe & Seif, n.d).

The veracity-based Teacher of the Deaf would engage, empower, and inspire students in meaningful ways while weaving together his or her own skills related to the art of teaching, his or her pedagogical knowledge of teaching, and his or her content-specific expertise (Brandsford, et al., 1999). High expectations would be set and then clearly communicated to students (McTighe & Seif, n.d). Students would be provided with sufficient support to achieve each expectation in the most independent way possible. Student interest would be piqued through the examination and exploration of

main ideas and essential questions that guide the learning activities (McTighe & Seif, n.d). A variety of relevant strategies, instructional techniques, and methodologies would be used in order to facilitate active participation, active construction of understanding, and utilization of the six facets of understanding (McTighe & Seif, n.d). Questioning, probing, and providing feedback would stimulate student reflection and supply the basis for one type of formative assessment (McTighe & Seif, n.d). Adjustment cycles would ensure that planning, instruction, and assessment work as a cohesive and interdependent whole that supports learning (Brandsford, et al.). Many of the current best practices that are used by great teachers would continue to be implemented, and additional best practices would be added to their repertoire of skills.

Learning outcomes would focus on students demonstrating an understanding of the main ideas and essential questions, the performance requirements of the course or unit, and the six facets of understanding (McTighe & Seif, n.d). Students should be able to explain what they are doing, why they are doing it, and demonstrate consistent engagement in the activities. Students ought to have time to generate related questions, answers, and conclusions (McTighe & Seif, n.d), and be engaged in cooperative learning groups (Brandsford, et al., 1999). Self and/or peer-assessments that are based on pre-established criteria and standards would occur as part of the learning process (McTighe & Seif, n.d). All students and their ideas would be treated with dignity and respect and samples of student work would be made visible (McTighe & Seif, n.d) and celebrated.

Veracity-based Deaf Education would embrace the concept of multiple literacies (Michael & Trezek, 2006; Tierney, Bond, & Bresler, n.d.; Paul & Wang, 2006) through universal design for learning (CAST, 2010; Rose & Meyer, 2002) and universal accessibility design (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007c). It would embrace the idea of providing multiple pathways, multiple languages, and multiple technologies within each area of literacy (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Michael & Trezek, 2006; Tierney, Bond, & Bresler, n.d.; Paul & Wang, 2006) by overlapping the constructs of representation, action and expression, and engagement (CAST, 2010). This approach presents all individuals with equal opportunities to learn, is grounded in research of individual learner differences and best teaching practice, and creates highly effective learning environments (CAST, 2010) which provide two-way inclusion for both d/Deaf and non-deaf/hearing students (Rayman, 2009). The curriculum is transformed into a flexible and customizable tool that encourages student learning (CAST, 2010). Textbooks would become readily available in a bilingual digital format, providing textual information in written English, visual information in the form of pictures, diagrams and images, American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation via video clips, voice-over and closed captioning features, and interactive multimedia representations and simulations (Croft, 2010; Croft, Smyth, Ogilvie, Pilz, & Young, 2010). Assignments would be available in differentiated formats that are fully supported in terms of language preference, accessibility, and student choice related to the ways that knowledge, skills, and attributes are demonstrated (Croft, 2010; Croft, et al., 2010). Tests and assignments would be made available in traditional ways as well as innovative and interactive formats,

which include the ability to be viewed and responded to through auditory/oral, visual/signed, and written mediums, or in combination, as so desired by each individual student (Croft, 2010; Croft, et al.).

School environments would become more d/Deaf accessible by providing technological resources such as videophones, visual alarms and announcement devices, and interactive communication devices. Television screens that display the daily announcements and convert any auditory announcements into textual displays will enable full accessibility for the d/Deaf students who may not otherwise hear auditory announcements. Flashing fire alarms, warning signals for emergency procedures, visual door knockers, and visual class bells in *every* classroom and hallway will enable students to visually access the important information that is currently communicated to students throughout the day in an auditory manner (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007c). Interactive communication devices can enable students to communicate with one another regardless of differing language preferences and hearing/deaf status. These devices may include videophones with video relay service connection for interpretation, or may include computer platforms that enable visual, written, and/or spoken communication to be translated into another form that is understood by both parties. Attention to the classroom and building acoustics (Anderson, 2001; Crandell & Smaldino, 2001; School Noise Action Group, 2009) would permeate decisions related to the location of classes that include d/Deaf students, the location of common activities, and the desired impact of the sounds associated with these activities (see Treasure, 2009). Classrooms would make use of traditional assistive technologies (Anderson, 2001; School Noise Action Group,

2009; Rubin, Flagg-Williams, & Aquino-Russell, 2007), such as sound field systems, personal frequency modulation (FM) systems, and listening devices, as well as innovative learning technologies, including interactive white boards, interactive computer software programs, and related hardware and software created (and/or modified) specifically for use with this population.

Opportunities would be abundant for all staff, students, parents, and related stakeholders to learn American Sign Language, elements of Deaf Culture, and become well versed in the commonly used methodologies, strategies, and techniques of Deaf Education. Cooperative learning communities would be formed amongst the stakeholders to support student learning opportunities and common initiatives. Students, teachers, and parents might work together in order to build these learning opportunities, affect real change in people's lives, and contribute mutually to the development of critical thinking, interpretation of information, and the use of higher level thinking skills (Robertson, 2005). Highly proficient interpreters and education assistants would provide in-class support; highly qualified and proficient tutors would be provided for extra support, as needed, for outside-of-school purposes (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007a). Professional development opportunities would center on the topics and issues that are most intimately tied to the learning needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing program staff and students in the local community, rather than centering solely on the commonly addressed topics for the hearing education programs of the school (Bruce, DiNatale, & Ford, 2008). Specialists, researchers, and experts in the field would be solicited to provide in-services and meaningful consultation that supports the learning pursuits of

these programs, with a specific emphasis on the issues that are directly related to the demographics and academic profiles of the students in those programs.

Policies and procedures would be established for d/Deaf students so that externally imposed accountability requirements, government-mandated high-stakes testing, and standardized exams (Nichols, 2004) could be readily administered in the language of choice of the student, with accommodations such as ASL-English interpretation and exam video recording, as needed. Alternative forms of diagnostic assessments that are normed on d/Deaf children, such as the Structural Assessment of Written Language (SAWL) and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10, or most current), would also be employed in order to distinguish between what a student has already obtained and his/her potential ability to learn (Vygotsky, n.d., as cited in Gindis, 1995) and these would be made available in the preferred language of the student. Other accommodations, such as additional time to write exams, a test-reader, a scribe, or assistive technology use would be provided (Cawthorn, Nichols, & Collier, 2009). Integrated and congregated classroom environments would automatically provide all of these as “normal” extensions of the instruction that is provided to the hearing students in the class, thereby providing true inclusion for all students by enabling each student to access a variety of means of information input, output, and reinforcement regardless of hearing or d/Deaf status (Angelides & Aravi, 2007).

All of these program components, combined with elements of the predominant corporate marketing, branding, and positioning techniques, would allow educators to boldly change the face of Deaf Education and greatly affect, or even reverse, the ongoing

trends related to low achievement for this population. As Dr Alfred White (1987b) so elegantly put it, just as many brilliant inventors failed at creating the first flying machine until the Wright brothers recognized that the basic principles of flight that birds used was not the rapid flapping motion of their wings, but rather the shape of those wings that then allow the flapping action to translate into the aerodynamic properties required for flight, Deaf Education continues to wait for it's monumental "first flight" that will come from implementing an appropriate structural program design. The structural design proposed herein will give each philosophy, methodology, and technique its own place within the overarching system perspective that is taken so that increased success may be created for all learners. It is hoped that this thesis may act as a blueprint and roadmap for the implementation of truly successful Deaf Education programs, just as Dr White's writings seem to have predicted when he stated that:

Someday, probably way off in the future (this paper was written in 1987), there will be a day of awareness come, when it will be recognized that the primary failures of deaf education have not been the failures of the deaf, not the failures of the communication systems used to communicate with and instruct the deaf; but rather the failures of the model of education which has been employed. It will be recognized that the existing educational model, the one that has been used for over 150 years and which reflects in form and substance the educational model used for hearing children, stands as the most blatant denial of deafness that has ever been exhibited since deaf education began. ... [There will be] a cry

asking for new educational models, new ways to overcome a lifetime of faulty educational habits which stand without merit (White, 1987b, p.1).

This current framework is by no means complete in its scope and detailed applications because each individual program will need to examine the unique combination of student needs, changing student demographics, resource and staffing allocations, and professional training levels and examine what this means in terms of the finer details of implementation. However, it does provide a general framework upon which further research, experimentation, and implementation can occur. When Dr White wrote his papers in 1987, he stated that

Indeed, it is hoped that somewhere some educator, or group of educators will be bold enough, courageous enough and insightful enough to take the ideas nested within [his] paper and make them operational by designing a school that is truly designed to facilitate the acquisition of the English language (White, 1987b, p.1)

In much the same way, this paper concludes with a call to action that is long overdue and would answer both Dr White's cry for educational reform in Deaf Education and this author's passionate call for implementation and action. It is time to really take a look at the issues, identify the systemic causes, and address any and all needed changes by simply removing the barriers to success and constructing more effective programming for these students. It is time to finally realize the true potential that can exist for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students everywhere – and the real call to action lies in the laps of teachers, parents, administrators, advocates, and policy makers.

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