

Spring 2016

Hearing and Deaf Teachers' Lived Experiences at a Residential School for the Deaf: A Phenomenological Study

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HEARING AND DEAF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES AT A RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Meena Mann

May 2016

HEARING AND DEAF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES AT A RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God for renewing my strength in order to complete the work. Philippians 4:13 is a reminder that I need to depend on the Lord daily as He gives me the strength. I would also like to say thanks to the Deaf Ministry at First Baptist Church (FBC) for faithfully praying for me. I must acknowledge that Deaf Ministry coordinator Beth Driver sacrificed her time to listen to my frustrations while she was in the middle of her mother's passing. I shall not forget you for being a true friend.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Kuljit Dheensaw, who has beaten cancer while encouraging me to stay focused in school regardless of her health condition. Without her support and love, I would not have made it this far and I would not have seen this entire process through to completion. Her strength has kept me going!

I want to give my wholehearted thanks to my roommate and best friend, Angel Hill, for being supportive. She lends her helping hands around the house and puts up with piles of papers all over the dining room table as I sat at the laptop for many hours. Thank you for encouraging and believing in me.

Last, I want to say thanks to my Deaf friends, co-workers, and colleagues for being there for me and I had many doubts and I did not know if I could do it. And, I did it!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank my professor and mentor, Dr. Stephen Miller, who willingly took me under his wing and spent many hours helping me to get started with my dissertation. I am forever indebted to him for his knowledge and wisdom.

I also want to thank my dissertation members, Dr. Ashley Fox, Dr. Kristin Wilson, and Dr. Tony Norman, for their feedback and encouragement. I am also thankful to Dr. Wilson for opening up the qualitative world and preparing me as a researcher in the future. Thank you for inspiring me to become a member of scholars in the community.

Last, I would like to thank my participants who took the time to provide me with the insights into the way in which they perceive the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf. I am forever indebted to them for allowing me to listen to their inspirational stories.

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HEARING AND DEAF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES AT A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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May 2016

110 Pages

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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This study provides reflections on a topic that has received surprising attention on cultural challenges at a residential school for the Deaf. Deaf education in residential schools for the Deaf has changed dramatically over the years. Recent research has shown the number of hearing teachers employed at residential schools for the Deaf has increased in the United States (Amos, 2000; Marlatt, 2004). Most hearing teachers who are certified in Special Education and hold teaching positions at a residential school for the Deaf. Deaf teachers proficient in ASL struggle with passing the written Praxis state certification in the content areas due to English as their second language and are forced to change their career choice (Amos, 2000; Luckner, Goodwin, Howell, Sebald, & Young, 2005; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000). Despite these efforts, little research conducted with qualitative methods exists on the perceptions of Deaf and hearing teachers on learning culture at a residential school for the Deaf.

This phenomenological study is focused on lived experience of teachers to gain a better understanding of the school learning culture, specifically the way relationships among Deaf and hearing teachers and the Deaf students at a residential school for the Deaf may affect student outcomes. The open-ended questions allowed for freedom to explore and discover themes from the participants' stories. The findings of this study have revealed some significant information regarding the Deaf residential school culture.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1977) defined and supported laws to hold state, local, and other schools accountable for being equipped to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in a rich language environment. For several decades, residential schools for the Deaf have provided appropriate free education and social opportunities for Deaf adults and Deaf children in order to communicate in an enriched language and learning environment (Cleve & Crouch, 1989). Recent studies have shown that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students too often arrive at school with essentially no or minimal language skills, which could affect their self-esteem and success in adult life. This is an alarming issue concerning students who can graduate from high school with a reading level as low as the fourth grade (Allen, 1994; Easterbrooks, 1999; Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Traxler, 2000).

From a linguistic perspective, it is crucial that Deaf children gain competence in their primary language, American Sign Language (ASL), at an early age; unfortunately, the more likely possibility exists that they have limited access to their first language. The Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) (2007) articulated the value of a student's education in early language development:

Schools then are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the child develops appropriate language and learns grade level material at the standard of proficiency established by their state in accordance with NCLB. (p. 1)

Arguably, hearing teachers may not be fully immersed in Deaf culture and may develop perceptions and attitudes toward Deaf teachers and Deaf students that are not

only antithetical to the school's mission, but also may be damaging to the educational experiences of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Wilcox (1992) affirmed that hearing and Deaf teachers have different ideas about the cultural interactions between teachers and students. Communication breakdowns can occur between hearing and Deaf teachers in their attitudes toward residential schools for the Deaf, which may affect the educational experiences of the teachers (both hearing and Deaf) and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students (Farmer, 2011).

Deaf Culture

Stokoe (2005) proposed the following definition of Deaf:

The Deaf may be defined therefore as a group composed of those persons who cannot hear human speech under any circumstances and consequently must find substitutes (in speech reading, language of signs, etc.) for normal interpersonal communication. (p. 11)

According to Baker and Padden (1978), *attitudinal deafness* refers to an individual who has self-identified as a member of the community and who is socially accepted by the Deaf community members. Generally, the term for *Deaf* is capitalized to represent the social, cultural, and political affiliation with the Deaf community.

Culturally Deaf refers to an individual from the dominant culture who interacts with Deaf people and shares similar beliefs, values, and attitudes toward the Deaf community (Glickman & Carey, 1993; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Wilcox, 1992). Four characteristics that define the Deaf community include those who (a) identify the Deaf world as their primary identity; (b) share experiences with others regarding a similar hearing loss; (c) socialize with others in the Deaf community (e.g., Deaf clubs, residential

school for the Deaf, etc.); and (d) use American Sign Language (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Baker & Padden, 1978; Woodward, 1982). The Deaf Identity Development Scale (DIDS) was developed to measure identities as a means of providing “an operational measure of Deaf people’s orientation to and connect with the Deaf community” (Glickman & Carey, 1993, p. 280) and residential schools for the Deaf (Glickman & Carey, 1993). The four stages of cultural identity development are included in the following list:

1. *Culturally hearing* -- a person who acts and talks like a hearing person
(Glickman, 1993, p. 67)
2. *Culturally marginal* -- a person who mingles in both two worlds (hearing and Deaf) and does not have identity of both (Glickman, 1993, p.75)
3. *Immersion* -- a person who is fully immersed in the Deaf world using American Sign Language (Glickman, 1993, p. 93)
4. *Bicultural* -- balance of both worlds (Glickman, 1993, p. 100)

This information relating to Deaf cultural identity can assist teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in becoming fully aware of cultural interactions between teachers and students. In addition, teachers’ attitudes toward communication and interaction may influence and shape the development of a student’s Deaf cultural identity in residential schools for the Deaf.

Residential Schools for the Deaf

Residential schools for the Deaf have served a major role in maintaining the Deaf communities that are closely tied to these schools. For these students, residential school life becomes their reality identity. American Sign Language (ASL) is the central focus of

the Deaf community, and many students are fully exposed to ASL in the culture of residential schools for the Deaf (Farmer, 2011; Padden & Humphries, 1988). Padden and Humphries (1988) noted that this culture is “a set or system of shared beliefs and values where Deaf people gather in the community using ASL as a primary means of communication” (p. 24).

ASL is used for social interaction through literature, storytelling, Deaf folklore, and Deaf history. Deaf teachers and Deaf professionals share their ASL by adapting their language, context, expression, and explication to meet the diverse communication needs of Deaf students at the residential schools for the Deaf. These students listen to stories about Deaf history that have been passed down from one generation to the next through sign language, and those stories are valued by the Deaf community. Additionally, ASL narrative (e.g., Deaf folklore) provides new insights and a deeper knowledge of and meaning for stories. Deaf teachers and Deaf dorm counselors play a significant role in incorporating the Deaf culture’s core values and in bringing signing communities together to share their heritage (Padden & Humphries, 1988). In addition, many Deaf adults return and work at residential schools for the Deaf and become involved in school related activities, e.g., sports and Gallaudet University’s Academic Bowl (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Wilcox, 1992).

Although hearing teachers are certified to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, most likely they are not fully immersed in Deaf culture and ASL. Hearing teachers’ lack of skill in using ASL for instruction causes difficulties in reading and language abilities for this special population of students (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002). The Deaf teachers who are fully immersed in ASL and Deaf culture, and who serve as

role models for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the classrooms, typically are in the minority. Further, hearing teachers may display negative attitudes toward Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students (Lane-Outlaw, 2009; Luckner et al., 2005; Marlatt, 2004; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000).

Background of the Study

This study addresses the problem the insufficient knowledge base about the lived experiences of both hearing and Deaf teachers working at the residential school for the Deaf (Luckner et al., 2005; Marlatt, 2004; Robertson & Serwatka, 2000). The philosophy of Total Communication has been the focus of U.S. Deaf education programs, in which teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing are encouraged to sign and speak simultaneously (Cleve & Crouch, 1989; Padden & Humphries, 1988). The literature has suggested the following challenges in English Mastery: Deaf children “require early access to American Sign Language so that the conversational skills are likely to increase,” and the use of ASL as a language in which Deaf children likely would develop “memorial skills and make connections to the real world” (Easterbrooks, 1999, p. 541).

Deaf education in residential schools for the Deaf has changed dramatically over the years. Currently Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students are not fully exposed to Deaf culture and ASL due to the shortage of Deaf teachers at residential schools for the Deaf in the United States (Robertson & Serwatka, 2000). First, hearing teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing are certified in special education but often lack skills in using ASL; as a result, Deaf students are forced to learn from teachers who are working in a second language (ASL) that they have not fully mastered (Lane-Outlaw, 2009; Roald &

Mikalsen, 2000). Second, Deaf teachers proficient in ASL, which facilitates communication for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, struggle with passing the written Praxis state certification in content areas due to English as their second language (Amos, 2000; Luckner et al., 2005; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000). This issue presents problems for Deaf students with respect to mastering Common Core Curriculum requirements (Amos, 2000; Lane-Outlaw, 2009). Farmer (2011) noted that, while Deaf Culture and ASL are the center of the residential schools for the deaf, the interactions around language and learning are compromised.

The few studies that exist on the topic of school climate have focused primarily on comparisons of perceptions of Deaf versus hearing teachers and on students' perceptions of Deaf and hearing teachers. A growing interest can be seen relative to studies on understanding Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, i.e., their reaction to possible cultural differences between hearing and Deaf teachers in the classrooms. However, no systematic treatment of factors exists that could affect the culture of residential schools for the Deaf. Among these factors are the following: (a) lack of early language development of Deaf students in both hearing and Deaf classrooms; (b) the differences between Deaf and hearing teachers' views; and (c) factors that influence student outcomes, both academic achievement and alternative assessment. Several issues are related to this situation.

Deaf Culture, Deaf Students, Hearing Teachers, and Achievement

In Deaf culture, identity and language are the central focus of the Deaf community. Padden and Humphries (1988) commented that Deaf culture is “a set or system of shared beliefs and values where Deaf people gather in the community using

American Sign Language as a primary means of communication” (p. 24); and ASL is used for social interaction through literature, storytelling, folklore, and history. Although hearing teachers are certified to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, they most likely are not fully immersed in Deaf culture and language. Hearing teachers’ lack of skill in using sign language for instruction causes difficulties in reading and language abilities for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Typically, the Deaf teachers who are fully immersed in ASL and Deaf culture and who serve as role models for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the classrooms are in the minority (Lane-Outlaw, 2009; Luckner et al., 2005; Marlatt, 2004; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000). Further, hearing teachers may display negative attitudes toward Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students (Lane-Outlaw, 2009; Luckner et al., 2005; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000). Thus, research is needed on the effect of teaching culture on the achievement of Deaf students (Marlatt, 2004), specifically the effects of ASL instruction from teachers who have not fully mastered the language.

Special Education Certification and Proficiency in ASL

With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Deaf education certification has been replaced by special education certification; concomitantly, sign language requirements have not been fully enforced. The focus has shifted toward special education certification at state departments of education. This has resulted in several states not fully implementing the sign language policy for teachers in residential schools for the Deaf, thus failing to meet the communication needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Further, communication breakdowns due to both cultural and conversational challenges between hearing teachers and both Deaf and Hard-of-

Hearing teachers, as well as Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, lead to frustrations and a less than harmonious school climate at residential schools for the Deaf (Luckner et al., 2005; Marlatt, 2004; Roald & Mikalsen, 2000; Robertson & Serwatka, 2000).

Fewer Deaf educators exist than hearing educators in the field of Deaf education (Marlatt, 2004). However, the literature has provided little insight on the issues between special education certification and proficiency in ASL (Amos, 2000). In addition, many university students in special education programs are not receiving any teacher preparation training for ASL learners. Thus, a need exists to update and evaluate the validity of special education state certifications for both hearing and Deaf teachers, specifically the extent that emphasis on special education certification has resulted in less attention to achieving proficiency in ASL for hearing teachers. Research on this issue clearly is needed (Amos, 2000).

Bilingual/Bicultural Education

ASL/English Bilingual programs have been prevalent in the Deaf schools since the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 passed. Crawford (1989) suggested that the schools are encouraging to teach children in their first language while they learn English as a second language. Most residential schools for the Deaf have established ASL/English bilingual programs promoting ASL as a vital aspect of Deaf culture and communication with an emphasis on instructional strategies that meet students' linguistic and academic needs (Padden & Ramsey, 2000). Deaf children arrive in school with little or limited English and ASL language proficiency, which has not been addressed. In turn, theories and practices have been discussed on developing written English in ASL/English bilingual programs. Cummins (1984) commented that Deaf children should theoretically

be able to transfer over the deeper level of their ASL to learning English and vice versa. This is consistent with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which addresses the need to develop quality and language-rich programs for students who are English Language Learners (ELL); it applies to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, as well as those who were raised to speak a language other than English.

Recent studies have shown that Deaf students depart secondary school with below a fourth grade reading level (Allen, 1994; Traxler, 2000). This could be an issue for the lack of critical thinking skills due to lack of their first language. It is not surprising the study of content area subjects in a second language (in this case, ASL) creates difficulties for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students with regard to mastering Common Core Content standards (Amos, 2000; Lane-Outlaw, 2009). To date, no studies appear to have examined the effects of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students as second language learners with respect to the new Common Core Content standards. Additional research is needed on the effect of ASL/Bilingual programs with an emphasis on Common Core Content standards.

Qualitative Research by Deaf and Hearing Researchers

The difference between Deaf and hearing teachers generally is a current topic of discussion in residential schools for the Deaf. Farmer (2011), a Deaf researcher, utilized an ethnographic case study and mixed method study to examine the differences in teacher morale between Deaf and hearing teachers. In contrast, similar studies by hearing researchers appear to be more common. This distinction (hearing versus Deaf researcher) raises the question regarding whether this factor has an impact on the results and interrelations of such qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a). Specifically,

hearing researchers are likely to possess various levels of understanding of Deaf culture and ASL (not their native language) as compared to Deaf analysts, which could produce bias regarding their understanding of hearing teachers due to their limited exposure to Deaf culture. Further, hearing researchers may have an understanding of Deaf culture, but ASL is not their native language. The reverse would hold true for Deaf researchers' understanding of hearing teachers. Research is needed to explicitly examine the extent to which auditory status of the researcher affects results and interpretations for hearing versus Deaf teachers. However, to the author's knowledge, no researchers have raised this point prior to the current examination. Such dual perspectives could elicit a more complete understanding of cultural experiences of Deaf teachers at residential schools for the Deaf, particularly from the point of view of Deaf teachers.

School Learning Culture

Regarding school culture, Farmer's (2011) study focused on teacher morale; however, it did not address other factors that affect student outcomes (i.e., the school learning climate). Brookover et al. (1982) pointed out that educators must diagnose the distinction between the affective dimension (i.e., teachers' concerns about teacher morale) and the cognitively oriented learning climate (i.e., students' learning outcomes). According to Brookover's Social-Psychological Model of School Learning, a strong linkage can be found between school learning climate and student achievement (Brookover & Erickson, 1975).

Farmer (2011) used both qualitative and quantitative methods focused on both hearing and Deaf teachers' perceptions of "(a) satisfaction in teaching, (b) teacher salary, (c) curriculum issues, (d) teacher load, (e) teacher status, and (f) community satisfaction"

(p. 121). However, he did not address student outcomes. Thus, further research is needed to understand both substantive and methodological factors that influence the learning culture in residential schools for the Deaf; i.e., cohesiveness between hearing and Deaf teachers, teacher expectations for student learning, relationships between teachers and students, and the way in which these factors affect student outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

This study brings together the issues described in The Problem Defined relating to cultural/language interactions being compromised among Deaf and hearing teachers and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, as reflected in the culture of these schools. Specifically, five issues related to this broader problem are addressed. First, some hearing teachers do not possess a strong sense of Deaf culture or adequate mastery of ASL, which affects Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students by receiving instruction from teachers for whom ASL is a second language. Second, many hearing teachers who are certified in special education have not fully mastered ASL. Research is needed on the way in which the emphasis on special education certification has affected requirements for mastering ASL and its effect on Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing student achievement. Third, Deaf teachers who are proficient in ASL struggle with passing the written Praxis state certification in one or more content areas, a result associated with less than optimal instructional strategies for ASL as a second language. Therefore, research is needed on the effect of ASL/English bilingual education programs with an emphasis on mastery of Common Core Content standards. Fourth, most studies related to Deaf culture have been conducted by hearing researchers, many of whom have not fully mastered ASL related to Deaf culture. Thus, the hearing status of the researcher (hearing versus Deaf analysts)

may affect the interpretation of qualitative data; i.e., differences in fluency with both English and ASL could affect the patterns discovered by the researcher serving as the instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2011b). Finally, Farmer's 2011 study on the morale of hearing and Deaf teachers in five residential schools for the Deaf highlighted the possibility of differences between these two groups of professionals, although he did not explore the broader issue of the effect of the learning culture on student outcomes. Research is needed that blends the work on the culture in residential schools for the Deaf with the larger field of school learning climate.

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study is to delve into school experience as lived and perceived by the hearing and Deaf teachers with the focus of factors related to the culture of a residential school for the Deaf in the southeast region of the United States. This study is a qualitative, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with semi-structured interviews to investigate the substantive issues relating to culture as previously described. Both Deaf and hearing teachers were interviewed. Demographic characteristics of the residential school and the full-time teachers employed were collected via a background survey. All interviews were videotaped for a record of both oral (speaking) and visual (signing) data as needed. Upon transcription of the interviews, preliminary themes, interpretative themes, and master themes were developed from three successive readings of the data. This led to the central research question: What are the factors that hearing, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teachers perceive to affect the culture and learning climate at a residential school for the Deaf?

Research Questions

Over the past several decades, hearing scholars have reported on relationships

between Deaf students and teachers of the Deaf at residential schools for the Deaf. The perceptions of Deaf students toward Deaf and hearing teachers have created an important body of literature that has addressed concerns of school culture. Hearing teachers may not be fully immersed in Deaf culture and can develop perceptions and attitudes toward Deaf teachers and Deaf students that are not only antithetical to the school's mission, but are also damaging to the educational experiences of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. At the same time, some Deaf teachers struggle with curriculum content, as reflected in passing Praxis exams. Subsequent to their probationary period, some Deaf teachers have been asked to resign from their position because they did not pass Praxis exams or meet the state certification requirements. This current study is directed toward gaining a better understanding of the school learning culture, specifically the effect of relationships on students outcomes among Deaf and hearing teachers and the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students at a residential school for the Deaf. Accordingly, the following research questions guide this investigation.

1. What are the differences in the way Deaf and hearing teachers experience the school culture?
2. How does the school culture influence the interactions between teachers, and teachers and students?
3. How have teachers experienced the school policies and administrative practices?

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study will have significant implications for the field of Deaf education and will add to the large body of literature available, specifically the five issues

enumerated in The Problem Defined. Accordingly, the current study examines the perceptions of both hearing and Deaf teachers on these issues. First, little research exists on the extent that hearing teachers' lack of proficiency in the understanding and use of ASL affects learning outcomes of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. This study examines that issue from both hearing and Deaf teachers' perspectives.

Second, updating and evaluating the special education state certifications for both hearing and Deaf teachers is needed, specifically the extent that emphasis on special education certification has resulted in less attention to achieving proficiency in ASL for hearing teachers. However, the literature has provided little insight into the issues between special education certification, proficiency in ASL, and effects on student outcomes. Third, recent studies have indicated that many Deaf students depart secondary school with a reading level as low as fourth grade (Traxler, 2000). Yet, the utilization of Common Core Curriculum for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students has not been examined in the research. Thus, additional research is needed on the effect of ASL/English bilingual education programs with an emphasis on Common Core Content Standards.

Fourth, although studies exist on the topic of school culture in residential schools for the Deaf, primarily on comparisons of perceptions of Deaf versus hearing teachers and of students' perceptions of Deaf, most investigations related to Deaf culture have been conducted by hearing researchers who may not have fully mastered ASL related to Deaf culture. The hearing status of the researcher (hearing versus Deaf analysts) may affect the interpretation of qualitative data; i.e., differences in fluency with both English and ASL could affect the patterns discovered by the researcher as the instrument

(Marshall & Rossman, 2011b). This current study (by a Deaf researcher) directly addresses this issue.

Fifth, to this researcher's knowledge, the field of Deaf education traditionally has considered school culture but has not addressed the school learning climate (factors that influence student outcomes). Likewise, the literature on school learning climate has not examined residential schools for the Deaf. This researcher believes in the importance of exploring both the school learning climate and the larger environment (culture) in which the learning climate is formed. Without this background information, it would be difficult to understand the true impact, if any, of the school experience at the residential schools for the Deaf. Thus, this study advances both fields by joining the two traditions.

Limitations of the Study

This study seeks information on the perception and insights of Deaf and hearing teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students using qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews. Although these data represent rich descriptions of the internal and external issues as described by the key individuals, they are subject to certain limitations. First, the researcher is fluent in ASL and possesses a background in Deaf education, which constitutes one bias. The researcher will be required to control tone, facial expression, and reactions to responses to questions as hearing and Deaf teachers are interviewed. Caution must be exercised to ensure that personal feelings specific to culture are not embedded in the interviews, particularly with respect to interpretations of the data for hearing teachers (overly negative) or Deaf teachers (overly positive).

Second, feasibility is an area of concern in a qualitative study. Several residential schools for the Deaf are located in the southern region of the U.S. Travel to the locations

requires both time and resources. The length of time needed for the research could fatigue the researcher. Also, the interviews may be difficult due to the necessity of signing during interactions with the hearing teachers. The sample of teachers was chosen via purposeful sampling. Thus, the findings may not generalize to other residential schools for the Deaf.

Third, this study focuses primarily on the perceptions of teachers. Other role group perceptions are not addressed (e.g., parents, community leaders, students, administrators, and department of education). Fifth, although the study addresses student outcomes, the focus is on teachers' perceptions of these issues, and the study does not examine actual student achievement in any direct way.

Definitions of Terms and Concepts

The following terms are generally consistent with the vocabulary used in Deaf education programs nationwide.

School culture: The beliefs, values, interactions, and practices and their influence on the school (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). Culture typically refers to feeling, tone, and the affective dimension of the school environment, although cognitive norms are an important part of this environment as well.

School learning climate: The affective dimension has been emphasized much more in the literature on school learning climate. Brookover and Erickson (1975) noted:

The school social climate encompasses a composite of variables as defined and perceived by the members of the group. These factors may be broadly conceived as the norms of the social system and the expectations hold for various members as perceived...and communicated to the members of the group. The school

climate refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that characterize the social system of the school. (p. 364)

Continuing, Brookover and Erickson stated: School climate ...refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that characterize the social system of the school. The climate is ...determined by the aggregate attitudes, beliefs, norms, and expectations of the persons who make up the school social system. (p. 364)

Later, Brookover et al. (1982) narrowed school climate to school learning climate in order to focus on only those factors in the larger school social climate and school culture that impact student outcomes. This re-emphasis excluded much of the affective interests of faculty and staff related to their own adult-oriented welfare as opposed to those behaviors, beliefs, and instructional practices that influence learning.

American Sign Language (ASL): A visual-based language that is used in the Deaf community. It allows for optimal language acquisition for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people (Strong, 1988; Valli & Lucas, 2000).

ASL/English Bilingual Program: This approach uses ASL as the primary language of instruction and teaches written English concurrently as the second language (Lane-Outlaw, 2009).

Deaf: An individual with significant hearing loss, who struggles because of not having “linguistic information through hearing” (Easterbrooks, 1999; p. 537); having a strong identification with the Deaf culture and using American Sign Language as his or her primary mode of communication (Padden & Humphries, 1988; Easterbrooks, 1999).

deaf: An individual who does not use ASL; who does not grow up in a Deaf community or residential school for the Deaf (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

Hard-of-Hearing: An individual who utilizes speech and receives additional support using listening devices (Easterbrooks, 1999).

Cultural Deaf: refers to someone from the dominant culture (i.e., ASL community) who interacts with Deaf people and shares similar beliefs, values, and attitudes toward the Deaf community (Glickman & Carey, 1993; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Wilcox, 1992).

Culturally hearing: one who acts and talks similar to a hearing person (Glickman & Carey, 1993).

Culturally marginal: one who mingles in both worlds (hearing and Deaf) and does not have identity with either (Glickman & Carey, 1993)

Summary

Deaf culture and ASL play an important role in the residential schools for the Deaf. Historically, the Deaf community has had a positive relationship with the Deaf school in which Deaf adults interact with teachers of the Deaf and share ASL stories with the Deaf children. In the past few years, most Deaf teachers have been replaced by hearing teachers. Several issues need to be addressed to advance the knowledge base in residential schools for the Deaf. First, some hearing teachers are not fully immersed in ASL and Deaf culture. Second, most special education programs do not offer intermediate and advanced American Sign Language courses for hearing teachers. Third, some Deaf teachers are unable to pass one or more Praxis exams. Fourth, although hearing researchers have conducted interviews with Deaf participants, they may not have been fully immersed in Deaf culture and ASL, which raises the question as to whether the hearing status of the researcher impacts interpretations of the data. Finally, research on

the culture at residential schools for the Deaf has not explored the broader issue of the effect of the learning climate on student outcomes. This study allows the researcher to explore the perceptions of Deaf and hearing teachers on factors related to all of the above issues. The central research question captures the overall sense for this study: What are hearing teachers' and Deaf teachers' perceptions of factors that affect culture and learning climate at a residential school for the Deaf?

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As stated in Chapter I, the number of Deaf teachers has declined over the years, causing increasing concerns for the broader Deaf community about Deaf culture and access to ASL communication for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students have a significant influence on the education of individuals as well as the school culture. Hearing teachers with a limited knowledge of Deaf culture tend to have low expectations of Deaf students and likely demonstrate “minimal value to the student’s first language and cultural values” (Simms & Thumann, 2007, p. 305).

Therefore, it is logical to explore this population of Deaf and hearing professionals, including the effect on student outcomes related to both hearing teachers who do not have proficient ASL skills and Deaf teachers who have strong ASL communication but struggle with their own content mastery, the shortage of Deaf educators in the field related to their special education state certifications, and the school culture as it may affect student learning outcomes.

When examining residential schools for the Deaf, it is important to review the historical perspective on the practice of education, both environment and the overall school culture. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the lived experiences of Deaf and hearing teachers related to the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf in the southeast region of the United States.

This leads to the central research question for this study: What are hearing teachers and Deaf teachers’ perceptions of factors that affect the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf?

A review of the literature was performed using ProQuest accessed through the WKU libraries. The following sections include studies on the Deaf culture, Deaf education, and residential schools for the Deaf, as well as hearing versus Deaf teachers' perceptions of the school culture. While literature on these topics is common, empirical research on both Deaf and hearing teachers' perceptions of school culture is limited. For the current study, the following search terms were utilized: *characteristics of the Deaf community, cultural identity, Deaf education, special education certification, school climate, ASL/English, Bilingual/Bicultural, and academic achievement for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students.*

Deaf Culture

Throughout history, Deaf individuals have been treated as disabled or handicapped based on the pathological view of hearing professionals. On the emic and etic side, one must have a deeper understanding of culture in which this individual is born or raised in the Deaf community in which they share similar “beliefs, values, customs, and political ideologies” (Danquah & Miller, 2007, p. 72). Padden and Humphries (1988) commented that culture is historical, in which ASL stories pass from “one generation to the next generation through sign language” (p. 120). One facet of Deaf culture is Deaf clubs that have primarily served social needs and have created a communication system for social interaction through literature, storytelling, poetry, folklore, and history (Schein, 1989). Using ASL as a primary language plays a central role in self-identification, social communication, and cultural knowledge in terms of values, customs, and beliefs (Lane et al., 1996).

Deaf community members are linguistically and culturally different than hearing people. ASL has unique phonological, syntactic, grammatical, and dialogic properties that are distinct from English (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Pollard, DeMatteo, Lentz, & Rediess, 2007; Pollard, Rediess, & DeMatteo, 2005). ASL is a gestural-visual language to communicate about the world around Deaf people (Baker & Padden, 1978; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Ladd & Lane, 2013; Lane, et al., 1996; Marschark, 1997; Wilcox, 1992). Vigoda (1993) pointed out that ASL is different from English to the extent that when “translated literally it can sound like broken English” (p. 24).

Between 20 and 28 million Americans have significant hearing loss, and 4.8 million cannot hear or understand speech (Pollard et al., 2005). The current estimates of ASL users range from as small as 100,000 to as high as 15,000,000 (Mitchell, Young, Bachleda & Karchmer, 2006). Variations of signing level include (a) monolingualism, which refers to the use of either ASL or English only; and (b) bilingualism, which refers to the use of both languages (Grosjean, 1996; Lane et al., 1996). English is a second language for most prelingually Deaf individuals in the United States (Pollard et al., 2005).

Historical Perspective

Cultural anthropological researchers believed that the Deaf community was first recognized in Martha’s Vineyard in which the majority of the Deaf population used ASL (Cleve & Crouch, 1989; Groce, 1985). Cleve and Crouch (1989) noted that “two out of four children in the hearing families were Deaf” (p. 143). Groce (1985) justified that Deaf genes had subjugated in almost all families on the island. As time progressed, ASL became a well-known method for communication and the islanders did not experience

any barriers (Cleve & Crouch, 1989; Fox, 2010; Groce, 1985). The Deaf community developed the positive social identities and gained a sense of Deaf identity and Deaf culture. In sum, no societal pressure existed in learning sign language for second language learners on the island. The Deaf and hearing worlds emerged and formed a “unique signing community” (Cleve & Crouch, 1989, p. 1).

Alexander Graham Bell took an active role in alienating the Deaf individuals on the island and attempted to prevent a Deaf individual from marrying another Deaf individual (Groce, 1985). He believed that their marriage was the main contribution of offspring. To avoid dealing with Bell’s oppression, families moved their Deaf children to the first American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. The state government opened the residential school in 1817, with help from Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc. Clerc was the first Deaf French teacher who developed sign language education for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children (Cleve & Crouch, 1989).

Following the model of the American School for the Deaf (ASD), “six states opened the Deaf schools” (Cleve & Crouch, 1989, p. 47) with assistance from the active professionals and educators who worked at ASD. Some Deaf people of color (DPC) in the remote areas faced similar oppression and isolation; they moved close to the residential schools for the Deaf in which they found the pleasure in preserving and sharing the Deaf culture, values, and language (Cleve & Crouch, 1989). In addition, they were able to obtain jobs at the school (e.g., dorm counselor, teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, administrator, and others); and the number of Deaf employees was adequate. The growth of residential schools for the Deaf, as well as the Deaf community, increased rapidly in 1857 “moving outwardly in the eastern region in the United States”

(Cleve & Crouch, 1989, p. 71).

Deaf Protest Movement

The Deaf President Now (DPN) movement at Gallaudet University in March 1988 had a significant effect on the Deaf Americans' society (Gannon, 1981; Ladd & Lane, 2013). This event exposed the world to Deaf people's cultural and language rights and reinforced their rights for choosing a Deaf president over a hearing president. Dr. Spillman's famous quote, "Deaf people are not ready to function in a hearing world," fueled the protest and led to the election of Jordan I. King as the 124th Deaf president (Christiansen & Barnartt, 1995, p. 56). The Congress of the United States recognized ASL and Deaf education programs. During the 1990s, more than two thirds of U.S. states passed laws recognizing ASL as a language eligible for foreign credits (Rosen, 2008). The rate of enrollment for ASL classes at the postsecondary level skyrocketed to 4,673 (9%) from 1990 to 2009 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010). Thus, ASL became the fourth most studied language at the postsecondary level in the United States.

Collective Identity

Gaining a better understanding of Deaf identity is imperative; distinctions can be seen among the members who identify with Deaf culture and those who identify with a medical view of deafness. In the Deaf realm, the four major conditions for inclusion are identified as: (a) the utilization of ASL, (b) identification within the Deaf world, (c) the way in which Deaf individuals interact with others in the Deaf community, and (d) sharing the similar experiences as Deaf people with hearing loss (Baker & Padden, 1978). Deaf individuals mingle with one another in a close-knit community (i.e., residential schools for the Deaf, Deaf clubs, local and state associations); maintain their Deaf

identity; and share their primary language, American Sign Language. Wilcox (1992) offered some basic concepts of culture in relation to knowledge and behaviors as a group who:

- (1) share similar language within the Deaf community (e.g., ASL);
- (2) are capable to adapt and survive the Deaf community; and
- (3) identify themselves as members of the Deaf community. (p. 22)

Padden and Humphries (1988) emphasized that hearing status itself is not the factor for involvement of the Deaf community. Marschark (1997) noted that the Deaf culture norms (some unwritten) or rules allow individuals with any type of hearing loss to get involved in the social life activities (i.e., Deaf club, Deaf sports, Deaf state associations, etc.). The term for *Deaf* includes different classifications based on cultural deafness specifically accepted by the Deaf community. In Deaf culture, the term for *Deaf* is capitalized to represent the social, cultural, and political affiliation with the Deaf community (Wilcox, 1992). One who is Deaf is considered an active member of Deaf culture. In the Deaf community, three labels exist for being a cultural Deaf individuals: (a) *cultural Deaf* refers to someone from the dominant culture (i.e., ASL community) who interacts with Deaf people and shares similar beliefs, values, and attitudes toward the Deaf community (Glickman & Carey, 1993; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Wilcox, 1992); (b) *culturally hearing* refers to one who acts and talks similar to a hearing person (Glickman & Carey, 1993); and (c) *culturally marginal* refers to a person who mingles in both worlds (hearing and Deaf) and does not have identity with either (Glickman & Carey, 1993).

Deaf Education

In the early nineteenth century, ASL was predominant in the Deaf education until oral education and English changed the education system for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children. The first Deaf teacher, Laurent Clerc, taught Deaf and students who were Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing using an “English-based revision of Signed French” (Strong, 1988, p. 77). The approach to language for teaching English evolved over time and formed American Sign Language with help from Thomas Gallaudet. During the 1830s teachers of the Deaf were required to master sign language in order to communicate with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the classroom. In addition, ASL became prominent in the field of Deaf education in 1835 (Lou, 1988). Statistically speaking, approximately 40% of the teachers who taught at the residential schools for the Deaf were Deaf (Gannon, 1981; Moores, 1996; Strong, 1988). From 1895 to 1900 Deaf education programs changed drastically; the programs at residential schools for the Deaf shifted from ASL to an oral type method with the “emphasis of speech-reading instruction; the result of declining of Deaf educators to 22%” (Strong, 1988, p. 81). The oral movement became a threat to the Deaf community and residential schools for the Deaf.

Changes to the Educational System

During the late 1880s, the first International Congress on the Education of the Deaf was held in Milan, Italy; European and American educators debated on the elimination of sign language as a method of instruction in Deaf education (Strong, 1988). Lane (1984) commented that Alexander Graham Bell negatively viewed sign language and Deaf culture; he believed sign language communication prevented Deaf people from socializing with hearing people and they live in their own world. He challenged the

legislators to ban sign language programs in the residential schools for the Deaf, Deaf clubs, and Deaf sports. Cleve and Crouch (1989) noted that the “Times report on the Milan Congress prevailed over the Deaf education programs in the United States and fueled the debates on the language for instruction for years” (p. 111). The oral-only movement impacted Deaf education programs in the United States. The controversy surrounding the oral method overwhelmingly outnumbered the vote for using sign language at the residential schools for the Deaf, as well as day schools for the Deaf. The resolutions passed as Congress recognized the oral method to be the most preferred language for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

Almost without exception, American Schools for the Deaf were officially oral from a relatively short time after the Conference until the last five years or so... (Woodward, 1982, p. 13)

Congress recognized the importance of language and communication development in 1997 when it specified in IDEA that the IEP teams consider the communication needs of the child. Relative to a student who is Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, the teams should consider the child’s language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child’s language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs to include opportunities for direct instruction in the child’s language and communication mode (IDEA, 1997).

The Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) was established in 1868 with the commitment of active involvement in improving Deaf education programs in the United States. The Council on Education of

the Deaf (CED) is an organization sponsored by five major establishments to ensure teachers of the Deaf are highly qualified and certified to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and who completed the accredited teacher training programs. Table 1 lists the accredited teacher training programs approved by CED.

Table 1

CED Accredited Teacher Training Programs

• Augustana College	• National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
• Barton College	• Saint Joseph's University
• Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	• Smith College
• California State University-Fresno	• Teachers College, Columbia University
• California State University-Northridge	• University of Arizona
• Canisius College (New York)	• University of Florida
• College of New Jersey	• University of Minnesota
• Converse College	• University of Nebraska-Lincoln
• Eastern Kentucky University	• University of Northern Colorado
• Flagler College	• University of Science and Arts (Oklahoma)
• Fontbonne University	• University of Southern Mississippi
• Gallaudet University	• University of Tennessee-Knoxville
• John Tracy Clinic/Mount St. Mary's College	• University of Texas Health Science Center
• Kent State University	• University of Tulsa
• Lamar University	• Utah State University
• McDaniel College	• Washington University School of Medicine
• Missouri State University	

CED July 1, 2014

These programs prepare teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing to plan and deliver the student's educational program, including the development of communicative competence with a variety of social, linguistic, and cognitive/academic contexts. According to the certification process, Provisional Certification (initial) allows first-time teachers to complete an accredited CED teacher training program; Professional Certification is completed by teachers who have taught three or more years.

Curriculum Changes

Edward Gallaudet, son of Thomas Gallaudet, created a combined (i.e., speaking and signing at the same time) method for instruction (Lane, 1984). A combined method

of instruction (later named Total Communication) became a popular educational movement throughout the United States. Lane (1984) noted that over 30% of school programs use oral methods; the programs continue to decrease in the percentage of Deaf teachers at the residential schools for the Deaf. The number of Deaf educators again declined in the 1960s and led to a demand for more hearing teachers trained in oral instruction (Moore, 1996; Strong, 1988). It became evident that the oral philosophy adversely affects the number of Deaf teachers. The data documented the historical change of Deaf teachers that dropped from “22% to 4.5% during the 1900s; since the 1960s, it has dropped from 16% to 11%” (Strong, 1988, as cited in Lou, 1988 p. 87).

Bilingual/ASL Education

The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was first signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson to address the needs of students with limited English skills and to assist with the smooth transition to English throughout the school years. In the late 1990s, Bilingual and Bicultural (BiBi) programs were prevalent for both languages: ASL and English in schools for the Deaf and other programs (Mashie, 1995; Simms & Thumann, 2007). BiBi programs gained the attention of local, state, and national institutions (Simms & Thumann, 2007). In order to ensure the quality of instruction, most schools for the Deaf have implemented the BiBi programs throughout the United States and Canada. In recent research, LaSasso and Lollis (2003) indicated that “between 36% and 40% of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the residential schools for the Deaf declared themselves in a BiBi program” (p. 88). In addition, 79% of BiBi programs reported that they did not have a rigorous BiBi curriculum with proper instructional materials, implying that teacher preparation programs lack the courses on the structure of ASL and

English for future teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing who plan to work at the residential schools for the Deaf.

Requirement for Teacher Employment

The CEASD has been a strong advocate for ensuring that educational programming meets the needs of Deaf students and holds the residential and day schools accountable for the high quality of instructional delivery. Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children have the right to be educated by highly qualified teachers with the necessary credentials and skills, specifically in the academic subjects.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has mandated that core academic subject teachers become “highly qualified”; IDEA 1977 has established requirements for highly qualified special education teachers. The High, Objective, Uniform, State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) approach assists the states with providing supplemental support for pre-service and in-service teachers for certifying qualified teachers in specific subjects to be taught. The U.S. Department of Education has expectations that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teachers are able to communicate using Sign language, have a Master’s Degree in Deaf Education including Deaf Culture and ASL, and possess knowledge of the subjects being taught.

Praxis. Scheetz and Martin (2006) conducted a study on the comparison of board certified and non-board certified master’s teachers of the Deaf who worked at residential schools for the Deaf. They found that the “Praxis III system did not prepare teachers of the Deaf to become a knowledgeable or talented teacher, however, they demonstrate highly quality in teaching methodology” (p. 81). Almost 80% of pre-service Deaf teachers who took the Praxis III examination failed several times due to the “test bias and

personal bias” (Amos, 2000, p. 44).

Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI). In the early 1980s, the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) was developed from an existing scale, the Language Proficiency Interview, to assess and evaluate the sign communication skills and to determine the level of conversational language used by the teachers (Caccamise & Newell, 1997; Caccamise, Newell, & Mitchell-Caccamise, 1983; Newell, Caccamise, Boardman, & Holcomb, 1983). SLPI has been adopted as the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview Rating Scale (ASLPI) focused on ASL and based at Gallaudet University as a testing center (Cassamise & Newell, 1997). Since the establishment of the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPLI), more than 70 SCPI Training/In-Service workshop training has been prevalent in the multiple places nationally and internationally (Caccamise & Newell, 1997).

SCPLI includes 11 categories that range from pure linguistic descriptions of ASL to English-influenced signing (Caccasmie & Newell, 1997). A study by Long, Stinson, Kelly, and Liu (1999) focused mainly on the teacher’s affection on the student; the students’ opinions of the teacher’s communication skills were researched and reported in the article. Student rating of communication was higher for teachers with higher scores on their Sign Communication Proficiency Interview such as Superior through Intermediate Plus rather than lower scores of Intermediate through Novice (Long et al., 1999). They suggested that teachers with strong sign skills maintain a strong and positive relationship with the students and foster the interactive communication to provide a safe and healthy learning environment.

An ongoing issue exists concerning communication relative to whether teachers of the Deaf are able to communicate with their students in the residential schools for the Deaf or day programs for the Deaf (Grove & Rodda, 1984; Long, et al., 1999; Quinsland & Long, 1989). Sign Language Policies have been implemented and enforced in some residential schools for the Deaf.

ASL is popular at all academic levels of educational institutions (i.e., elementary throughout college). Most undergraduate or Deaf education programs offer American Sign Language classes as foreign language academic credits. Both Nover (1995) and Mason (1995) found that most Deaf education programs offer two courses on Deaf culture, which is necessary for hearing teachers who lack the acknowledgement of Deaf culture and ASL (LaSasso & Lollis, 2003; Strong & Stuckless, 1995).

Deaf Education Certification versus Special Education Certification

U.S. colleges and universities offer courses in Deaf education and special education at approved teacher training programs for pre-service teachers seeking certification in working with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children. Each state certification board handles it in a different manner. Some states do not recognize Deaf education as a certificate; rather, it is replaced with special education certification. Amos (2000) noted that most states accept other states' Deaf education certificates:

However, state certification makes no distinction between those teachers whose training exceeds minimum or maximum standards. Personnel and Special Education directors may be unaware of differences between training programs. They may assume that all certified teachers working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing are equal. (p. 65)

Residential Schools for the Deaf

Based on a 2011 statistical report from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (2015), more than 90% of Deaf children born to hearing parents have a significant hearing loss either unilaterally or bilaterally. The Gallaudet Research Institute (2010) reported that approximately 30% of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students regularly use ASL in the classroom setting in the southern region of the United States.

During the nineteenth century, most Deaf students lived in the residential schools for the Deaf year around, except the holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. They embraced the adoption of their Deaf peers and house parents as their second family. As such, the hearing families were unable to meet their communication needs. Cleve and Crouch (1989) noted that:

...residential schools became surrogate parent; the language and behaviors learned there become more influential in the lives of their residents than were their previous experiences in their biological families... (p. 30)

Deaf children considered the school to be a second home, and they were fully immersed in a rich cultural environment using the primary language (ASL). The residential schools remained throughout the controversy (oral versus ASL) and were a strong advocate for the Deaf community.

States are able to fund the transportation costs for Deaf students who travel home on the weekends. They offer two options for attendance: day or residential. Day students come to the school in the morning, attend classes, and return home at the end of the day. They do not participate in after-school activities. Residential students live in the dorm,

attend classes, and participate in sports and activities after school.

PL94-142 Law was enacted in 1975 to support states in protecting the educational rights of, meets the individual needs of, improve the educational results of children with disabilities and their families. Eventually, the law went into effect for federal funding of special education programs. The concept of PL94-142 allows for an alternative placement (i.e., public school) to meet the needs of children with disabilities and mandates support for specialized day and residential programs. The regulations allow a reasonable placement for children with a wide range of disabilities to receive free service at a public school (Special Education News, 2016).

Hearing and Deaf Teachers' Perceptions of School Culture

Theoretical Framework

The researcher's role is to seek a theoretical framework that "guides and clarifies" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 183) data collection and analysis grounded in examining the cultural perspectives of the residential schools for the Deaf. The common cultural theory found in this field utilizes the cultural framework of Goodenough (1981). For this study, it is applicable to individuals as well as to the collective responses of the individuals in the institutions. These essential issues direct the research agenda and serve as the framework for the phenomenological investigative study.

Culture can be defined as deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that are known to the members of the school system (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Goodenough's 1981 cultural framework also provides the information regarding whether the school culture exhibits a positive influence on student learning or can seriously deter the functioning of a Deaf school. In addition, the cultural framework examines the interaction

of staff members with one another, students, and the school community (Goodenough, 1981). Peterson and Deal (1998) noted that the school culture influences the actions of the school (i.e., sign language communication, behavior in the teacher's lounge, social interaction, and values in teaching). This type of theory allows the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews and to acquire a deeper understanding of teachers' lived experiences at the residential schools for the Deaf.

Empirical Evidence

The field of Deaf education has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Issues have been identified in the previous chapter in relation to the Deaf education programs and the certification process that impacted the Deaf education programs. In addition, the numbers of Deaf teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students has “declined significantly from 42.5 to 14.5” (Moore, as cited in Robertson & Serwatka, 2000, p. 256). Due to these changes, the need for more Deaf professionals is greater than the need for hearing professionals in the field of Deaf education. Marlatt (2004) found that more hearing teachers pass the national teaching examination than Deaf teachers. Farmer (2011) pointed out that “stress and tensions increased among Deaf educators” (p. 117) due to the effect of NCLB on state certification standards.

Although sign language proficiency of “hearing teachers is significantly less than Deaf teachers” (Luckner et al., 2005, p. 257), school districts are responsible for providing instructional needs and quickly filling special education positions. They are forced to hire hearing teachers who may have an endorsement in Deaf education but who have little or no knowledge of ASL, which is not essential in assisting Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the schools for the Deaf. Luckner et al. (2005) asserted that Deaf and

Hard-of-Hearing students need unique “instructional support to meet their cultural and linguistic needs” (p. 358). In most school districts, education professionals are not fully prepared for the unique cultural and linguistic challenges that exist in Deaf education classrooms. Future research is needed to examine role differences between Deaf and hearing teachers working with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the residential schools for the Deaf.

Marlatt (2004) conducted a study on Deaf and hearing teachers’ engagement with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. His research questions focused on the comparison of perceptions and views of Deaf and hearing teachers toward Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in their classrooms. The Survey of Practical Knowledge (SPK) was mailed to 48 Deaf and 115 hearing teachers at the pre-service and in-service experience levels in 33 states and the District of Columbia. The initial sample included a total of 163 participants. During the data collection process, three steps were identified for administering SPK to participants. The first group included pre-service education students graduating in early May, the second group consisted of in-service novice and experienced teachers in the spring, and the third group included beginning education students in late August. Of the total sample, 89% were female and 90% were Caucasian. Of this sample, 29% were Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, 72% were female graduate students, and 93% were female novice teachers. Fifty percent were graduate students who were Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and 13% were experienced teachers who were Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The SPK contained 60 rules of practice items and 60 practical principle items; all questions were anchored to a Likert-type 5-point format (5 indicating “always”).

Marlatt's (2004) study provided information on the relationship between hearing and Deaf teachers on classroom images, rules of practices, and practical principles utilizing descriptive statistics and discriminant analysis. The three variables were employed using descriptive statistics, along with univariate *t-test*, for both groups. This discriminant analysis included three variables that differentiated between the two groups: Deaf and hearing teachers on their views of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students as equal, classroom management techniques, and classroom organization. The results indicated that 61% of the hearing teachers were correctly classified on the basis of their discriminant scores, and 71% of the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing teachers were correctly classified. Fisher's linear discriminant function coefficients were utilized to compute individual scores for each group with individual discrimination scores (Fisher, 1940). The study revealed that hearing teachers scored low on classroom organization and students as equals and scored high in engagement; Deaf teachers scored high in classroom organization and students as equals and scored low in engagement. Overall, in 12 of 14 categories (six images, five rules of practice, and three practical principles), Deaf teachers scored higher than hearing teachers. Arguably, Deaf teachers served as role models for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, as they shared common sign language and Deaf culture. In contrast to Deaf teachers, hearing teachers emphasized efforts to engage the students in the subject matter by making connections to the real world. Hearing teachers were more involved in teaching academics.

Limitations were noted in the Marlatt (2004) study related to selective sampling and educational roles of Deaf and hearing teachers in teaching Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. The selective sampling consisted of students or graduates at Gallaudet

University, which may not generalize to hearing universities in the United States. The hearing graduate students in the study were not true representatives of the sampling among Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing graduate students. The procedures for sampling groups were different; one group was surveyed by mail, and the other was surveyed in a face-to-face group. The response rate was higher in the face-to-face group, as responses were received immediately.

Robertson and Serwatka (2000) conducted a related study on perceptions of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students for hearing teachers versus Deaf teachers. A need for further research was noted on the efficacy of Deaf teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the classrooms. The researchers hypothesized that elementary and secondary students' perceptions of Deaf and hearing teachers may differ in terms of communication and cultural identity. Ninety Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students were surveyed, ranging from ages 13 to 21, in two of the largest residential schools for the Deaf using Stanford Achievement scores from two consecutive years in order to make comparisons in both hearing and Deaf teachers' classes. During class sessions, 23 students from Western Pennsylvania and 67 students from a Florida school for the Deaf completed a demographic questionnaire and written survey. The survey included six questions that discussed Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students' perspectives on the impact of their achievement scores and their preferences for hearing and Deaf teachers. Their classroom teachers reviewed transcripts of their responses for language content and format and presented information to the school administrators and professionals.

Robertson and Serwatka (2000) utilized paired *t-tests* to compare both student groups in order to identify a preference for Deaf and hearing teachers. The conclusion

was reached that no differences exist between the two groups of teachers and the number of students who showed a preference for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teachers. Overall, 86% of the students reported a preference for one or both groups. Of the students, 61% of Deaf students reported no preference for hearing teachers; conversely, 45% of Hard-of-Hearing students reported no preference for hearing teachers on any item. No Deaf students showed a preference for Deaf teachers on all items. After a series of paired *t-tests*, the results from the three sets of questions indicated significant differences in preferences for Deaf and hearing teachers. Deaf students reported a higher preference for Deaf teachers than Hard-of-Hearing students in each case. The researchers identified several limitations in their study. First, hearing status did not “define the effectiveness of a teacher’s behavior” (Robertson & Serwatka, 2000, as cited in Serwatka et al., 1986, p. 261). Second, the researchers were unable to match teachers based on the length of teaching experience due to the limited pool of participants. In addition, the data shed little or no light on Deaf and hearing teachers’ certifications. Due to Deaf culture and ASL, Deaf students may be unaware of their bias toward hearing and Deaf teachers. Deaf students and Deaf teachers share their native ASL used in the Deaf community, which is common. Finally, the field of Deaf education includes fewer Deaf educators than hearing educators.

The purpose of the two previous studies related to the perceptions of hearing and Deaf teachers and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in classes. In contrast to Marlatt’s (2004) study, Robertson and Serwatka (2000) focused on instructional effectiveness of Deaf and hearing teachers in the classes using achievement scores to measure Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students’ preferences for hearing and Deaf teachers. Due to limited

selection in the sample, the comparison on achievement scores between the two schools reflected bias. Also, the sample was small and unsuitable for generalization. Marlatt's study did not specifically deal with instructional effectiveness in the classroom; rather, it was centered on the relationship between teachers and classroom behaviors and practices. Finally, Robertson and Serwatka were concerned with the effectiveness of teacher behavior in classes, while Marlatt's research did not discuss the differences between Deaf and hearing teachers' roles in teaching Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Robertson and Serwatka, as well as Marlatt, hypothesized a combination of relationship issues of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and hearing and Deaf teachers. However, they did not investigate the efficacy of Deaf versus hearing teachers.

Both Robertson and Serwatka (2000) and Marlatt (2004) utilized surveys of their respective sample groups and conducted quantitative research including *t-tests*, survey outcomes, and demographic data to identify perceptions of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and Deaf and hearing teachers. The Robertson and Serwatka study was partially qualitative, in that they conducted an open-ended question survey for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and used a series of paired *t-tests* to compare the scores between students. Marlatt's research was quantitative, using discriminant analysis to determine results in each group.

Marlatt (2004) and Robertson and Serwatka (2000) discovered a relationship between Deaf teachers and Deaf students, i.e., they share common sign language and Deaf culture. In addition, they expressed similar concerns regarding the shortage of Deaf teachers in the Deaf education field. Finally, they both found differences in perceptions of the challenges experienced by Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Some limitations

existed in the Marlatt and Robertson and Serwatka studies, including issues with sampling, bias, the nature of the data, and responses from participants that would affect the outcomes of their research. Marlatt was the only researcher to acknowledge sampling issues. First, the sample was limited to Gallaudet University in the United States, which does not allow for generalization. Second, Marlatt did not manage the bias when comparing the in-person and the by-mail groups. Finally, the auditory status of the sample did not represent the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing educators in Deaf education programs in the United States. In order to minimize bias, Robertson and Serwatka could have discussed other potential variables that may have affected the outcomes of their studies. No explanation was given for issues regarding the shortage of Deaf teachers in this field. Also, the self-identification of Deaf students was not scrutinized in the study.

Summary

The previous sections have outlined several issues in relation to the school culture. Some residential schools for the Deaf are inadequately preparing Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students with challenges in the area of academic and social/culture. While a shortage of Deaf teachers is concerning, Deaf students are more likely to experience socially and culturally deprivation from student-teacher interaction. The school leaders may need to examine the administrative/policies in residential schools for the Deaf to acknowledge the need to raise the curriculum standards to ensure that students receive an accessible language through instruction, to facilitate teacher-student interaction, and to increase teachers' expectations of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Thus, it would take more extensive research in order to address the following research questions:

1. What are the differences in the way Deaf and hearing teachers experience the

school culture?

2. How does the school culture influence the interactions between teachers, and teachers and students?
3. How have teachers experienced the school policies and administrative practices?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the research methods used in the study. Sections include **The Qualitative Paradigm, Data Sources, Data Collection Procedures, Data Analysis, The Researcher's Role, Potential Bias, Trustworthiness, Ethical Considerations**, and a **Summary**.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of both hearing and Deaf teachers' attitudes and insights regarding the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf. It summarized the purpose of this study: What are hearing teachers' and Deaf teachers' perceptions of factors that affect culture and learning climate at a residential school for the Deaf? A residential school for the Deaf in the southeast region of the United States was utilized in this phenomenological study, and a background questionnaire obtained socio-demographic information. The primary method was semi-structured interviews to capture teachers' reflections and dispositions regarding the school learning culture. These interviews were analyzed and synthesized in order to gain an understanding of both hearing and Deaf teachers' attitudes and insights regarding the school culture at this residential school for the Deaf. In addition, a background survey supplemented the interviews to describe teachers' roles and related demographic information within the residential school.

The Qualitative Paradigm

For this research, a qualitative study was conducted of the school culture within a residential school for the Deaf. The qualitative design allowed the researcher to collect thoughts, feelings, and reflections from hearing and Deaf teachers in relation to the

school learning climate (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a). Specifically, the study utilized Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the qualitative genre. Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) noted that IPA provides a tool with which to direct the researcher with richness of information on “subjective lived experiences” (p. 4) of the teachers.

Phenomenology is based on interview or diary types of data. Hermeneutic is based in constructed written texts and requires special attention to the interpretation and meaning of a text (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Beyond different types of data, the two approaches have different philosophies.

Phenomenology refers to the study of the essence of consciousness. Van Manen (1990) explained that phenomenology seeks to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence. Creswell (1998) added that the researcher should use the textural description to expose what happened and the structural meanings to reveal the way in which phenomenon was experienced. The component of the description will expose the essence of the experience. The hermeneutic theorists have suggested that Hermeneutics and Idiography work hand in hand to provide the richness of information and allow the researcher to speculate on the relationship between the text and the data, which leads to the interpretation and the way in which the phenomenon appears.

The first step for data interpretation is integrating the phenomenological reduction process. The researcher sets aside, or brackets, all preconceived notions about the phenomenon at hand to the greatest extent possible. Smith et al. (2009) commented on the reflective practices that require the researcher to use “bracketing” (p. 37) to describe the meanings of the participants’ ASL stories. Each interviewee has a story. The story has its own meanings, experiences, and interpretations. Commonalities between stories can

be interpreted. Each story may exhibit recurring thematic particularities or similarities that could lead to meanings.

Face-to-face interviews were effective for this study because ASL has no written form and allows the ASL participants to express through first language with the Deaf researcher (Glickman, 1993). ASL has very little resemblance to English. ASL is a “dynamic language of movement, spatial dimensions, and has no written form” (Jones, Mallinson, Phillips, & Kang, 2006, p. 76). Mayer and Akamatsu (1999) stated that successful translation from ASL to written English or written English to ASL would be possible if Deaf researchers and participants share a common culture. Due to ASL being a visual language, videotaped interviews were necessary. For this reason, qualitative research was an appropriate choice for conducting the study.

Data Sources

Patton (2002) suggested that qualitative investigations focus on relatively small samples to permit in-depth inquiry and explanation of a situation. Qualitative cases do not demand a certain number of participants, although sufficient data was recommended for this study. The target population was Deaf and hearing teachers of various gender, age, and other demographic characteristics who currently teach at a residential school for the Deaf in the southeast region of the United States. All participants were assigned pseudo names and place of school to protect their identity. In order to avoid bias, participants were provided an opportunity to be selected as representative of the population.

This sample was purposefully selected in order to enhance “transferability and generalizability” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011b, p. 252). Of the six participants included in the study, an equal number of Deaf and hearing teachers were represented. For

appropriateness of selection of sample, the researcher utilized a “purposeful sample” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a, p. 111) based on criterion selection. The sample size in a qualitative study is considered to be suitable because the researcher recognizes the redundant themes emerging in the interviews and does not draw generalizations across all Deaf schools. The sample size in qualitative studies typically is small with the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied. The purposeful sample represents population validity. In this instance, the sample represented both criterion selection (from the hearing teachers and Deaf teachers), a census of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teachers in the building due to their restricted number.

This research also discusses the interviews and demographic survey in order to enhance “dependability and confirmability” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a, p. 253). Due to the small size of the Deaf community, the researcher did not provide a full description of the residential school, the participants’ educational background and type of educational setting, which would have allowed the outside readers to easily identify the participants at the residential school for the Deaf.

Table 2

Participant List

Name*	Signing Experience	Teaching Experience	SLPI Rating Score	Gender	Hearing Status
Alison	1.6	29.6	Survival Plus	F	Hearing
Beth	44	22	Advanced	F	Deaf
Catherine	35	34.7	Advanced Plus	F	Hearing
Delia	32	30	Advanced	F	Hearing
Eva	46	21	Native-like	F	Deaf
Farrah	52	17.3	Superior Plus	F	Deaf

*Names are pseudonyms

It was interesting to note that one hearing teacher of 20+ years asked to use a sign language interpreter to sign for her, though she was fluent in ASL. As such, she desired to share her true words using her first language (spoken English). Another hearing teacher of less than 10 years was hesitant in using ASL during the interview due to limited ASL skills and the additional time required communicating with the researcher. Four teachers (one hearing and three Deaf) of 10+ years preferred ASL, and two sign language interpreters voiced for them.

The researcher is fluent in ASL, has strong social interactions with the Deaf community, and has been involved in the field of Deaf education for 15 years as a certified teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in the various K-12 educational settings. She currently works as an outreach consultant and provides technical assistance to the public school districts that serve children who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. In addition, the researcher has presented the various topics on instructional strategies, ASL (beginner-advanced) signs, impact of hearing loss in the classroom, co-teaching models and strategies, and early intervention strategies in the state districts.

The previously mentioned issues generally apply to qualitative research. Within this context, the primary investigator is Deaf and a fluent user of ASL. Due to the added complexity of this communication, the limits of involvement were acknowledged during the process of asking and reproducing the questions. She was challenged when involving the modality of communication changes (i.e., ASL vs spoken English), which affected the interview process. There is no exact equivalence for converting ASL experiences and meanings into the English text. Translating from one language to another requires rigorous work on the part of the researcher, as “translating from one language to another

is not a simple task” (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 164). In ASL, body movements and the use of space, time, and facial expressions all convey particular meanings. The choice of the English vocabulary, description of emotions, and comprehending context can vary from person to person on the receiving end. The English text never equates to the complexities of ASL. Furthermore, interruptions occurred at times during the interviews between participants and the researcher; two interpreters paused and asked for clarifications before translating ASL to spoken English. Thus, the translation from the sign language interpreters may have reduced the complexity of the meanings from ASL to spoken English. For example, one Deaf participant signed “aggressive,” and the interpreter voiced “assertive.” The more complete translation was lost between the two languages. However, Ladd (2003) explained that the researcher’s knowledge of ASL and written English allowed her to both capture and convey the full meanings of ASL and, thus, report more completely the richness and breadth of information.

Instrument Development

Instruments (e.g., the interview schedule) were consistent with the topic, research questions, and contextual paragraphs listed in the previous sections. Specifically, interview questions corresponded to each research question (Appendix A), and the questionnaire items (number) were grouped according to each research question as well. Demographic data pertaining to the participants were obtained through a background questionnaire emailed to the teachers (Appendix B). Drafts of these instruments were developed in conjunction with the author’s dissertation committee.

Upon identification, participants agreed to meet with the researcher in a small room at the residential school for the Deaf. The interviews occurred after school hours to

ensure protection of privacy. The transcriber and sign language interpreters from the agencies were assigned to work with the researcher. The consent forms were sent in PDF format for the participants' own records. The participants deemed that they were satisfied with the privacy of the interviews, during which both the researcher and participants were videotaped to capture oral (speaking) and visual (signing) aspects of the communication. The video recorder was positioned to cover both the researcher (who is Deaf) and the teachers (who were either Deaf or hearing). These participants possessed similar characteristics to the population with respect to educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and experience with Deaf culture and ASL. The interviews were 60 to 90 minutes in length. The instruments and procedures were submitted to and approved by the WKU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Data Collection Procedures

The analysis of qualitative data began with data collection. The initial step in data collection was selection of the residential school for the Deaf in the southeast United States. Prior to approval from IRB, the researcher had secured through an email agreement with the school administrators and director of instruction. The instruments (drafts approved by dissertation committee) and the IRB application from Western Kentucky University (WKU) were completed. Subsequent to approval, the researcher requested assistance from the school administrator, as email distribution to K-12 teachers occurs through the administrative office.

In the criterion sampling, all teachers were invited to participate in the study. After the email was disseminated, seven teachers responded and expressed their interest in the study. However, one teacher had to step down due to the transportation issues. The

researcher then sent an informed consent letter, met, and discussed with the teachers about the document regarding the purpose and implications of the study. The informed consent letter contained specific information including the WKU Office of Human Subjects, contact person, physical address, phone numbers, and email address. In addition, a letter requested that the individuals consider participation in a qualitative study of the school culture at their school. This group of teachers received a formal letter (via email) indicating final details and confirmation of their commitment. Once agreement was achieved, the researcher verified the demographic information with each participant and provided a set of the questions and demographic survey prior to the interview. Demographic data were collected at the end of each interview and the consent form was reviewed with the participants. Date, time, and location were determined based on the interviewees' availability.

Setting

The interviews were approximately one hour in length. The researcher set up two cameras, one focused on the interviewer and one on the respondent. The transcriber sat behind the camera and the microphone attached to her laptop placed in the front of the camera. An interpreter stood behind the hearing participant to sign for the researcher in the opposite view of the participant. The ASL dialogue was transcribed, due to the presence of the interpreter's voice translating the researcher's signs. The data recording strategies were carefully planned out (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a). At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to complete the Informed Consent Document (Appendix C), which was explained to them. The interpreters and transcriber also were asked to complete the interpreter and transcription consent form (Appendix D). Each

participant was given a copy for their records and was asked to complete the demographic sheet, which provided information regarding gender, hearing status, years of signing experience, years of teaching experience, sign language proficiency status, and educational level.

Role of Interpreters

Two sign language interpreters, certified and proficient in ASL, from outside the residential school for the Deaf were hired for both researcher and participants. Prior to the interview, participants were asked whether they preferred to use voice or sign. The qualified interpreters were present to voice/sign that which the participants were signing/voicing in the entire interview process. Sign Language interpreters were reminded to voice verbatim the interviewees' body language and behaviors (e.g., smiling, nodding, shaking, etc.). Two of the three hearing participants preferred to voice their answers. Four signed for themselves and the interpreter voiced their responses. All interviews were videotaped and audiotaped while the transcriber recorded verbatim all words, body language, and behaviors. All interviews were "translated from ASL into English on the written narration" (Slavin, 2007, p. 123). Transcripts of each interview were generated. Upon completion of the qualitative interview process, the researcher detailed these "verbatim transcriptions" (Patton, 2015, p. 525).

Rapport was established in a non-threatening manner to allow the participants to feel secure in disclosing their perspectives and experiences. The sub-questions were read prior to the interview and allowed the researcher to encourage the interviewees to clarify and expand upon their responses. Probing sub-questions elicited further explanation, clarification, elaboration, and details. Some were modified to accommodate the situation

and added questions probed for more information in order to maintain some implicit information. As such, the researcher's teaching experiences were an asset during the interview process. The researcher was responsible for ensuring that the participants' perceptions were "captured and recorded their exact words/comments into the written narration" (Slavin, 2007, p. 123).

Data Analysis

Moustakas (1994) described the procedural steps for developing textual and structural descriptions. The NVivo9 software program allowed the researcher to develop themes and coding. Data from the group interviews were analyzed using the coding methods of grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a). The interview responses were grouped according to each teacher; interviews were conducted in ASL and recorded on video. The content of ASL interviews was transcribed into written English. The concluding descriptions were typed in English text.

Patton (2015) described content analysis as the step-by-step process of identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data. The first step in this study's data analysis was transcription of all interviews, after which all narrative sections were highlighted as a pre-reading cycle. Saldana (2013) suggested a pre-reading process as a tool with which to allow the researcher to reflect upon the "emergent pattern" (p. 10) and to gain a clearer understanding of participants' lived experiences. Some interview sections were not used when the information was unrelated to the research questions. The verbatim sentences were carefully deleted from the respondents' interview sections due to redundancy. Some information required little effort to conduct due to various lengths and depths. As such, five participants were self

reflective and expressive when discussing their experiences, while one was more concise and reserved. Five were asked for communication preferences prior to the interview. Three Deaf participants preferred ASL and were comfortably discussing their thoughts in detail and describing their understanding of the educational experiences. The true meanings of their stories were able to be captured. Two hearing teachers preferred using spoken English. The transcriber typed word for word while they spoke directly to the interviewer. Their dialogues provided rich information. One hearing participant chose to use ASL, although it was her second language. The hearing participant was encouraged to express herself, to elaborate to discuss her thoughts in detail. For example, the interviewer made statements such as “Tell me more about it,” in order to elicit a more detailed response. In spite of the interpreter’s function in translating for this particular hearing teacher, the translation process became secondary to the actual dialogue. The result of a written transcript for this particular participant was concise.

The Progress of an Audit Trail

An identification system was developed for recording and filing all interviews (i.e., code ID tags for responses). The researcher chose the NVivo9 program as a coding method for developing a hierarchical tree by identifying and classifying the codes from the coded written texts (Saldana, 2013). The coding method allowed the novice researcher to capture the patterns from the written texts and to make connections to the meanings of interpretation. All names (i.e., name of participants) were removed from the transcripts and replaced with alphabetic order code. The NVivo9 software provided a way to keep the progress on an audit trail. The transcripts were printed and placed in a black binder for the tracking purposes. The researcher secured the black binder in the

locked cabinet. The researcher found the coding process to be challenging in instances that were carefully coded and recoded in order to obtain the richness of the data. Some of the transcriptions did not make sense and the videotape was reviewed again to ensure the translations from ASL to written English were aligned. For example, the signer signed, “Assertive...”; in reviewing at the videotape, the word should have been aggressive. The word was carefully translated from the original word to the conceptual word for accuracy. The researcher’s chosen coding method was to (a) first read for central ideas in the research questions, (b) second read for the codes in each category and develop further codes, and (c) third read for the major themes. Each interview was treated as a separate unit of analysis. The first step was to read the raw data thoroughly, then re-read each participant’s interview transcript line by line and that the text highlighted that was relevant to the research questions. This task was extremely time consuming and demanding because each transcript ranged from 10 to 15 pages. The second step was to record the patterns, then regroup and construct the meaningful units into several in vivo codes. Each theme stood alone to construct. The third step was to place multiple emergent codes under each appropriate theme based on the characteristics of the codes. The themes were organized into a condensed paragraph format for easier viewing. All of the previous thematic interpretations of the six participants were re-examined. Similar topics from each participant’s interviews were compiled to the theme concepts, which were developed into the detailed description in order to answer the research questions. A short preliminary description of each interview was then added to each interview to search for significant factors that were commonly found in each narrative. The three overarching themes were identified based on the existing database in Deaf education.

Using the priori concept (literature), a new perspective was developed that was grounded in the participant's voice.

The Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher was to understand the “phenomenon of participants’ lived experiences” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a, p. 92). Other aspects associated with qualitative research include (a) the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and (b) the researcher capturing participants’ reflections through videotape and translating them into written narration, i.e., “textual analysis” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a, p. 93). The researcher at times employed phenomenology study within the context of a specific setting. The experience within the setting is a crucial process for gathering and collecting data. The researcher was expected to establish a positive rapport with the participants (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) identified 10 interview principles and skills that affect the interview process with the respondents. The researcher was encouraged to:

1. develop “open-ended questions” that allow the respondents to express their thoughts and ideas freely,
2. ask an “answerable question,”
3. be an “active listener,”
4. “probe appropriately as needed,”
5. “observe and adapt the process,”
6. make a smooth “transition” from one question to the next,
7. move from “descriptive behavior questions” to “descriptive questions,”
8. maintain “empathic neutrality,”

9. be “flexible” during the interview process, and
10. stay focused, not “being distracted” by other things. (Patton, 2015, p. 428)

Potential Bias

Temple and Young (2004) commented that the researcher should be aware of possible biases and should attempt to eliminate those sources to the extent possible. The first step is to simply recognize those potential problems. The researcher’s Deaf status introduced three factors that “could lead to bias, either conscious or unconscious” (p. 163). First, the researcher was familiar with some of the Deaf teachers at the residential school but did not know some hearing teachers, which could have been a bias. Second, communication was effortless with Deaf teachers who used ASL, as compared to hearing teachers who were not bilingual (i.e., fluent in ASL and English fluent); who possessed various levels of ASL (i.e., basic to advanced); and who relied on sign language interpreters for translation. This could have produced bias regarding their understanding of hearing teachers due to their limited exposure to Deaf culture and ASL. The reverse would hold true for Deaf researchers’ understanding of hearing teachers.

Third, the Deaf community had strong personal bonds with Deaf teachers at the residential school for the Deaf (Padden & Humphries, 1988). Deaf teachers and the researcher shared their native ASL. Deaf teachers shared these bonds; however, the hearing teachers did not. The researcher was part of the Deaf community and shared those bonds with the Deaf teachers; the possibility of a bias (even if unconscious) existed toward the Deaf teachers. Being aware of all possible sources of bias, she worked to ensure no conscious influence of the interpretations of the data. All of these points would have been reversed in the event that the researcher was hearing. To the author’s

knowledge, previous researchers have not raised these issues. In addition, the author was unable to locate any studies on current teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in a residential school for the Deaf in a qualitative format that focused on the questions in this study.

Trustworthiness

Most quantitative researchers assert that qualitative studies have methodological issues such as validity, reliability, generalizability, and subjectivity that are not adequately addressed (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 2011a; Shenton, 2004). However, qualitative research has its own procedures for attaining rigorous research guidelines that are simply different from those of quantitative approaches. Claims of generalizability are not made; however, it attempts to create a form of resonance with readers and provide implications of the results.

Trustworthiness of the data is one of the goals of a qualitative researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A qualitative researcher does not impose strict controls on conditions of the study but encourages a flexible research methodology, which is difficult to replicate. The researcher acknowledged that the sample was typically small, but the quality of work and in-depth interview emerged from each participant, which is significant. Shenton (2004) listed the recommended provisions for increasing trustworthiness; three provisions were mentioned in the work of this qualitative study:

1. Member checking: All data needs to be checked by the participants first, allowing the researcher control of the interpretative process and final approval of the revised transcripts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The written transcript was mailed to each participant for review. Four responded with comments and two

did not.

2. Transferability: Transferability provides enough rich description that the policy makers or school leaders may develop an awareness of information presented and apply it their residential school for the Deaf (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This is entirely up to the readers to feel this information is useful for discussions with the school administrators, teachers, and students.
3. Audit Trail: This is based on a “data-oriented approach” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72) to determine whether information was carefully gathered and processed in the study. Shenton (2004) explained that researchers would never be entirely free of their own preferred ways of viewing situations and biases. However, researchers must examine their perceptions, recognize personal bias, and then identify their effect on them as researchers. Marshall and Rossman (2011a) commented that researchers’ insight and personal understanding could improve the base of the social construction being investigated.

Such as this research was conducted rigorously and intelligently, and the results have led to a generation of relevant discussions. It is important to continue to investigate other directions of the study. This type of study may lead to a much fuller and richer understanding of the school culture.

Most qualitative researchers advocate the dependability of results, which acknowledges the dynamic, complex, and interactive nature of reality, rather than one of static (Marshall & Rossman, 2011b). “External validity is also a factor in qualitative study; however, the study’s findings can be used for transferability” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011b, p. 252) as a goal in qualitative study. Those numerous direct quotes

from participants can provide a rich and thick description, which could be tied to the theories that contribute to the literature related to school culture. Transferability provides enough rich description that the policy makers or school leaders may develop an awareness of information presented and may apply it to their residential school for the Deaf (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Ethical Considerations

Marshall and Rossman (2011a) discussed some limitations of interviewing that should be addressed in this research. The researcher's personal experience represented both an advantage and disadvantage for the study. Maxwell (2005) suggested that, in order to reduce the influence of researcher bias and transcription errors, member checking is needed (i.e., the peer reviewer and certified sign language interpreters). The researcher reviewed the written transcripts and videotape for accuracy and did not have a Deaf peer review the data, discuss the accuracy of transcriptions, and reach agreement on the correct transcriptions.

With regard to advantages, the researcher is fluent in ASL and able to identify with the participants' perspectives and experiences at the residential schools for the Deaf. The Deaf participants could speak openly using their first language, ASL, with the Deaf researcher. However, the ethical obligation of the researcher was to establish and manage boundaries with the participants; i.e., the Deaf community is small and close knit (Lightfoot & Williams, 2009). Additionally, participants' main concern was that their identity would remain confidential and their information not be divulged to an outside member of the Deaf community. The participants and the researcher could have potentially met in a common location (such as Deaf club for socialization). The

researcher used precautions to protect their confidentiality. The disadvantages of the study included the researcher's closeness to obtaining some leading answers that mirrored the researcher's cultural values, and the talkative participants became comfortable and unaware that they should move on to the next question. Participants may have been reluctant to fully engage in the reflective process. Accuracy of fact have been questioned when the researcher was concerned about meeting the interview's research needs, rather than obtaining the truth.

The researcher noticed that the sign language interpreters interrupted the participants by asking for clarifications causing the interview process to be longer than expected due to the translation issues. Feasibility is an area of concern in a qualitative study. A concern arose relative to the availability of participants in this study. The researcher experienced difficulty in accomplishing the research design as a result of several factors. Due to the nature of the qualitative study, the researcher required additional time for data collection, producing triangulation data, using multiple theoretical lenses, and discussing emergent findings with existing researchers to ensure the analyses were grounded in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011a). The qualitative study required more time for resources. Initial efforts to gather population and sample data were a significant first step. An additional step was the scheduling of all teachers, which involved a substantial amount of time and energy to coordinate. Travel to the locations required both time and resources, and the length of time for the research fatigued the researcher.

Summary

In this chapter, phenomenology was presented as the appropriate methodology in

order to answer the three research questions for this study. The qualitative study allowed a Deaf researcher to delve deeper into the perceptions of Deaf and hearing teachers related to learning culture at the residential schools for the Deaf, and those perceptions' effect on their attitudes toward the learning culture. The qualitative approach had merits and drawbacks. This study is generalizable, with some of the same limitations, and may provide in-depth information that can be explored with other groups of teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The central research question revealed perceptions and attitudes, as the participants were asked to describe their experiences relative to the learning culture at the residential school for the Deaf. The survey results in Chapter IV are fruitful, but do not provide Deaf insights of the Deaf philosophy of education and teaching certification. This qualitative study by a Deaf researcher yielded pertinent information and resulted in a rich and meaningful study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data analysis of six teachers' lived experiences at a residential school for the Deaf. The analysis of interviews (transcripts) and three open-ended research questions are presented in the data description. A summary of research findings concludes the chapter.

The following findings are directly based on the participants' interviews. Data from the interview transcripts span all three research questions. Within each question, the items from seven interview questions organize the information. School learning culture emerged as a concern among participants' descriptions of work life experience at the residential school for the Deaf. The results of the interview sessions are organized following the Research Questions 1-3.

RQ1: What are the differences in the way Deaf and hearing teachers experience the school culture?

RQ2: How does the school culture influence the interactions between teachers, and teachers and students?

RQ3: How have teachers experienced the school policies and administrative practices?

The findings of this study, as presented in this chapter and their connection to the research questions, will be discussed in Chapter V.

Descriptive Results

Descriptive comments from participants are classified in this section according to the context of the residential school for the Deaf. A number of subthemes appeared and are categorized under the broader themes.

School Climate

According to Brookover et al. (1982), school climate refers to feeling, tone, and the affective dimension of the school environment, although teachers are an important part of this environment as well. All teachers were willing to work together with or without support from the administrators and indicated their genuine care for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students.

Instructional beliefs. Most teachers believe that the residential school for the Deaf is a specialized school designed to provide direct instruction for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. A public school setting provides direct communication with hearing students. Direct instruction allows for developing bonds between teachers and students. Although interpreters are provided for communication for both types of students, English is considered to be the second language for Deaf students, although they were exposed to English at an early age. However, linguists have argued that, based on modality alone, Deaf children's first language is American Sign Language despite their first exposure being sign language or English (Nover, 1995). *Delia* remarked,

We want to provide direct instruction. Like the bilingual instruction, signing and written English, I mean, that takes more time. I can't hurry through that process.

And the administration is always telling us rigorous, we need it more rigorous, but what might be rigorous for one student who is at an advanced level, for another

student, that rigorous pace is a challenge for them.

Conversely, teachers agreed that placing a sign language interpreter in the classroom is at first awkward. Alison explained, “I had a student complain to me that the interpreter was signing English, not ASL... I feel this is not my place to tell the interpreter what to do or how to sign...” Eva felt that interpreters assume the teacher-student interactions do not allow for direct communication on a personal level. Eva added, “At a Deaf school, I think that's wrong. They should provide direct instruction. You're using a third party (refers to interpreter)”

Most teachers agreed to the resistance of the new administration due to fear of the unknown and policies/procedures, as well as low trust level. They argued that Deaf children have the right to an education and believed they are unprepared for the change in classroom setting. They were hesitant about the language to be used in the classroom. For example, Beth commented, “I feel like we are limbo, like what do we do now? We are all little nervous because we do not know if they want us to use ASL or if they are moving us a little into a different direction...”

Glickman (1993) suggested that sign language should be used exclusively in informal face-to-face conversational settings between two or more Deaf individuals. English is the preferred language in informal conversations with hearing people. Most teachers tirelessly attempt to convince teachers and administrators who do not possess a Deaf Education background to listen from the Deaf perspective. Beth pointed out, “People have a Deaf education background, they do understand. People who do not have Deaf education background not understand.... Those two perspectives are very different.”

Exclusive vs inclusive. Deaf and hearing teachers experience the culture in similar yet different ways. Their administrators are more likely to be biased toward the Deaf teachers, while hearing teachers are more likely to be favored by administrators. During the interviews, teachers described their views about socialization as challenging. Most commented that they expect everyone to possess knowledge of Deaf culture and Deaf Education. They believe that the school should prepare students with the best education possible. Communication is the key to students' academic readiness.

Unfortunately, most teachers struggle with lack of support from the administration.

Alison: "It is hard to be inclusive, but I think that at this institution that we need to be intentionally inclusive of all the differences that are here and try to get along. Can't we just all get along?"

This reason was due in part to the expectation that the residential school for the Deaf was not fully articulated. The teachers expected that everyone sign, but the sign language policy was not monitored or fully enforced. They became resistant when some teachers and administrators do not sign or understand that which was being signed to them. Their relationship has deteriorated due to the lack of communication. Faith commented, "The supervisor does not trust us... There is the distinct separation. There is no active communication. It is just kind of like individual." Alison added that, regarding cultural differences, "...They say I'm not gonna play the poor little Deaf card...sometimes little comments are made that are like, you know, why are you working here?"

Level of support. The hearing administrators subsequent to the Deaf superintendent's departure have marginalized the residential school. Most teachers agreed

that the residential school should focus on commonalities, rather than emphasizing differences. Some teachers agreed that Deaf teachers do not receive the same treatment from the administrators as hearing teachers; i.e., the administrators do not value Deaf teachers and they do not listen to their inputs regarding the delivery of services.

Catherine: “I’ve seen administrators come and go, some with Deaf education backgrounds, some without, so I feel like just kind of in general we have to do a lot of educating people who are supposed to be running our school.” Beth added to this: “Relationships are good, but I don’t have a hundred percent trust... We had a Deaf superintendent and a Deaf education administrator. Things were very different under their administration. Things have definitely changed with the hearing administrators that we have.”

Delia described in further detail struggling with administrators. She commented, “I feel like since I have been here we have had our ups and downs. Mostly because of the changing of the administration and we get a new principal and superintendent, they set all these things up, and then they are out and somebody comes in and we have to start all over again.... it’s shifting my focus and taking away from the students, and that’s where I really want it to be.”

In addition, teachers desired that the school staff be fluent in ASL and become positive school leaders and models for students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. In addition, they believed school staff should possess the signing skills and knowledge about Deaf culture. Catherine described in further detail regarding communication: “We used to have administrators who were able to sign, and I felt like we could speak to them or approach them directly, but now we don’t really have that open communication, and so

it's not easy. I don't feel involved in the decisions that they make.” *Faith* shook her head in disbelief and said, “I believed that the school leaders should know ASL before they come to a residential school for the Deaf... The administrators have been unable to sign because SLPI is not being mandated. That’s their attitude.” *Delia* expressed the concerns related to the school involvement:

I'm concerned about the younger teachers, that they don't have the heart for the school. Their heart's not in it. Like they come in, they go. So, if you don't ever come to the basketball games, you don't ever show up and support the kids, you don't ever show up for any of the other events that are going on, the monster walk...they're saying they do their classroom work, they get everything together and then they leave and they go home at night, we don't see them again.

In terms of the communication and linguistic barriers faced by Deaf teachers, they lead to a sense of hopelessness that impacts the socialization at the school. Hearing staff face adversity by being unable to communicate with the Deaf staff. It requires the blending of both worlds.

Teacher training. Most teachers agreed that university/college teacher training programs, particularly ASL courses and certification, are issues that need to be examined. Most encourage the residential school in the recruiting of competent Deaf teachers or qualified hearing teachers with knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture. They experience challenges in meeting the students’ communication needs. *Catherine* remarked,

...I came into this field to teach in the special education area, to work with a

special population of kids that took special skills, and yet, we're pulled in many directions at the school, where we have to meet the regular general curriculum kinds of standards, which is fine, because our kids can learn those things and are expected to, but it is constantly battling that...

Teachers expressed frustration in meeting the communication needs and the demands of administrators regarding state standard assessments. They felt burdened with two jobs but less income, as compared to regular education teachers at the public schools.

Catherine stated in relation to meeting the students' communication skills:

Between the students' needs and I feel like Deaf children who are trying to learn two languages and develop their literacy skills and academic skills...being pulled on the other side with the demands of state standards, national standards, and what is expected of a regular public school teacher.

Teacher Interactions

Feeling separated. Both the Deaf and hearing teachers expressed feeling excluded from the dominant culture; however, it was unclear whether the Deaf or hearing culture was more dominant. This cultural issue appeared to be derived from tension between a hearing administrative staff and a principal who is unfamiliar with ASL, while many of the teachers and all students use ASL as their primary language. There appeared to be two different cultures. Alison remarked in relation to the separation between Deaf and hearing teachers:

...you know, generally always a group of deaf teachers together and a group of hearing teachers together, and not a whole lot of intermingling. I don't see a lot of socializing at all between the

Deaf and the hearing.

Deaf culture. The comments from teachers reflected the concerns of the Deaf school's role in relation to the Deaf community. Deaf culture apparently was not well represented at the residential school for the Deaf, as the sign language interpreters are in the classroom in order to facilitate communication between students and teachers. Most teachers believe that the language and Deaf culture should be incorporated in the teaching and should preserve and respect the primary language used in the Deaf community.

Catherine remarked on the value of Deaf culture:

The community is really trying to try to preserve that, but it's tough when you have the top levels of leaders who don't get it.... they are just ignorant to it...between some hearing and Deaf who don't really see the power of being involved.

Alison added, “.... I get the sense that from the Deaf community, Hard-of-Hearing students are not totally accepted in the Deaf community, and then in the hearing community, they are not accepted in the hearing community...”

Deaf Immersion. Five of six teachers reported that the values of Deaf culture, ASL, Deaf history, and Deaf education background are slipping away. They believe that Deaf culture bridges the gap between the Deaf community and the residential school for the Deaf. Crawford (1989) recommended that teachers should expose children to the approaches, attitudes, and materials about their heritage. Most teachers agreed that the school leaders and teachers should possess awareness of the sensitivity to the cultural needs of Deaf teachers and students.

In relation to socialization and identity, Delia remarked, “So if a hearing teacher isn't going to show respect to a Deaf teacher, then why are you even here?” Eva added, “Administrators tend to gather together to make decision and not asking for our input. They're not asking us especially from a Deaf teacher...Administrators don't understand our point of view.” Catherine stressed the importance of knowing ASL and Deaf culture, “.... some hearing teachers that come in and don't sense that, uh, need to do that, that value of being immersed in the Deaf community. And so there's a little bit of distance, I guess, between some hearing and deaf who don't really see the power of being involved.”

Five of six teachers agreed that, while hearing teachers learn ASL during the first year, they are more likely to harm the Deaf children's self-esteem and identity during the critical school years. Deaf students want the school staff to understand the experience of being a Deaf person living in a silent world. Most teachers believe that the only way to develop ASL skills is through socializing with Deaf teachers and students as well as the Deaf community. Eva questioned the hearing teachers' signing skills: “Some Deaf teachers can go up and down the language scale, but can a hearing person really be able to go up and down and match the language needs of each student and bring them up to our level?” When asked about perceiving ASL skills and knowledge of Deaf culture, Delia remarked, “.... I was a student teacher and I taught all day and then at night I volunteered working in the evenings at dorms, and this is that's where I picked up so much. Socializing, understanding Deaf culture... Well, because it improved my signing skills so much....”

Translation from ASL to spoken English during interpretation surfaced as a concern for one participant. Eva commented, “... The translation from ASL to spoken

English may lose its meanings. The evaluator assumes that the language that the teachers are using in the room, it is not being the same what I was using in the classroom, it maybe the lower of English standard.”

Communication barriers. Teachers’ perspectives reflected that the residential school for the Deaf did not prepare hearing teachers and administrators for diversifying the needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students at the school. All teachers agreed that communication breaks down due to misunderstandings between Deaf and hearing staff regarding signs on the campus. *Farrah* commented that sign communication plays a role in the residential school for the Deaf:

The Deaf team decided to set up a sign that says please use signs when anyone enters the campus.... Then many hearing teachers would come in and they felt offended. I was like, wow, we didn't mean anything like that. We want anyone to use sign language when they are on campus, I mean, they should sign, that's all.

Social and cultural context. Most teachers indicated that attitude and cultural behaviors influence both teachers’ and students’ relationships. Hearing and Deaf teachers agreed that attitudes toward communication and interaction may influence students’ Deaf cultural identity in the Deaf school. They believed that they need to preserve their language; value; be able to interact to work together; and to develop self-confidence, to feel pride, and to feel good within a school environment. *Catherine* strongly believed that Deaf students should build their Deaf identity upon arriving at the residential school for the Deaf:

All the children, all the staff have the right to have that language access to everything that a hearing person would have... It could

be out on the driveway, anywhere, where, if somebody's saying something and deaf people are around, deaf staff is around, they need to be signing it, no matter what. So, I mean, it's just respect and equal access to language.

One teacher who did not have a Deaf education background did not understand the visual needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students regarding the seating arrangement in the classroom. Delia remarked "...we have had some problems here about two years ago with one teacher who didn't understand why the students were upset when they set up the classroom in rows." Faith added her experience relative to educating hearing teachers on appropriate cultural behaviors. She commented, "...The teachers pound on the desk. And I said to them that it is not appropriate for in Deaf culture..... First you get their attention, you do the lights three times, then you try and wave at them. If you can't, then the last straw is to pound on the floor or on the desk. That is the last resort."

Farrah believed that hearing teachers need to take classes in Deaf culture in order to understand the cultural behaviors. She remarked, "And, not all of them take ASL. Some of the teachers don't realize these things..." Alison expressed the concerns of a cultural group being left out at the residential school for the Deaf:

....we are leaving out an entire group of students who are Hard-of-Hearing. They are not Deaf and they are not hearing, but they are in being considered in some of the policies that things that are being created.

Personnel. The issues on which the participants commented were the importance of helping the school leaders to become fully aware of hiring future teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. They desired to see administrators fully engaged in enforcing a

sign language policy. Faith: "...even for an interview, for qualifications and an interview, you must finish ASL level one. I think it should be included, because ASL level one should involve culture. The qualifications of what we're looking for as a teacher..."

Catherine felt the school policy did not encourage teachers to learn ASL:

...You know, it's a specified field...but after the time limit, then they ought to be delivering direct instruction by then. So I don't like the practice. I get it for a certain limited temporary time, but I know it's frustrating for the students. The older students who know the benefit of that direct instruction, they voice their opinions.

In response to the question regarding qualifications, Alison remarked, "There was a letter to the editor of the newspaper saying how there were three new hires and none of us were qualified to teach here..."

It was expected that Deaf and hearing professionals be present in the interview committee and share the voice of Deaf individuals. Beth explained, "The hiring process is slow, and we have some skilled Deaf people who apply, but then other jobs come available and they have to jump on it because the process is so slow and then we lose out on those qualified candidates." Eva remarked, "For the hiring committee, I was really surprised to see that they hired a person without Deaf education background. Where did they get this person from? They don't have any knowledge and awareness...on the interview committee, they have black, white, but no Deaf person."

School Policies and Administrative Practices

The following remarks were common among most teachers who indicated that no explicit language planning policy had been discussed at the school. Teachers also

indicated that no clear philosophy exists regarding instructional practices for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Most teachers are required to use sign language interpreters in their classroom despite no explicit communication policy.

Unclear communication policy. *Alison* felt the sign language policy was not an issue. She commented that the school is trying to do what is best for students. “So I don't think the policy makes it difficult for the deaf teachers or the deaf students. The difficulty comes from the clash of the two cultures, where some hearing teachers just in general talk because that's what they're used to all of the time, and forget that they're in a public place.”

Five teachers agreed that the new administrators did not establish an adequate Communication system with Deaf and hearing teachers, and the interaction influenced the development of a student's Deaf cultural identity. They believed the teachers should preserve their language, value, and be able to interact to work together in order to develop self-confidence, to feel pride, and to feel good within a school environment. Typically, Deaf students build their Deaf identity upon their arrival at the residential school for the Deaf.

Regarding the removing of the signs, the administrators did not inform Deaf teachers. *Faith* remarked:

With the new administration, a couple years ago, the signs were gone. They took all the signs down. They just grabbed them off, took them all down. The Deaf team got mad. It is courteous to let us know what was going on, but we asked them, where did these signs go? The campus director, hearing, of course, they said, well, it's not on campus anymore...

Three Deaf teachers described their negative experience with a lack of communication from the administrators. Faith expressed her frustrations regarding the communication between the state and residential school for the Deaf:

The (state) department of Education does not inform us as Deaf teachers. We tend to be the last resort, the last one to know. It is not equal access. We are getting less information and it is very frustrating. Often we know that something's going on, but need to know more information {with facial expression and gestural sign--come on}.

The following comments illustrate the teachers' views on communication policies. Alison:

...There is a spoken sign language policy that says the expectation is that you sign at all times. You have to be at a certain level of ASL before you're hired here, but given that, I probably would not get hired then. I plan to be here, but if that rule was in place, you know, I wouldn't get hired.

Delia was concerned about the existence of policy when hiring new teachers and administrators with limited ASL skills, yet the policy has not been fully enforced. She remarked, "We do need to be stricter with our time limit. There's a policy, I think, and maybe I'm mistaken but there was a policy that said two years... But there are some who are past that time."

Catherine added that no consistent follow up with policy exists:

...if you don't have top administrators modeling that, then how can you expect everybody else? ...you try and enforce a communication policy but you don't practice it yourself, it makes it

makes it tough. So, you know, I feel bad for Deaf staff and Deaf students at times, when people don't follow that, that policy. And that's been an issue for a long time.

Most teachers reflected on the concerns of finding Deaf teachers in the school.

Alison remarked:

...the state regulations for teachers, it's very difficult to have Deaf teachers come into the state because the regulations are so prohibitive, where they could go someplace else and get a job easy and not have to take the praxis or go through all of the regulations.

Low expectations. The emotional toll on teachers has increased subsequent to the arrival of new administrators who are unfamiliar with ASL and Deaf culture. Most agreed that administrators do not meet the linguistic and cultural needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, who then experience isolation and frustration. Five of six teachers desired a focus on the teaching role and expected that the administrators do their job.

Delia commented:

We've had some administrators that have come here and have been completely clueless. Well, it definitely brings us down. They're telling us do this, do this, and we're saying well, that's a public school, they do that there, but we're not a public school, we're different, our students are different, they have different needs to be met... With this new administration, they're really cracking down on everyone.

Teachers felt they spend a considerable amount of time educating administrators and new teachers on Deaf culture and ASL. They felt school leaders should come to school with a readiness of knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture. Eva: “I’ve been here under other deaf administrators, and they have a better perspective and a better understanding and acceptance than new ones. Yes, they (refers to hearing administrators) can be sensitive, but they can never be totally inclusive and understanding 100 percent.”

Delia explained:

It's different than if you're in a public school setting teaching deaf children. A lot of times you're really focusing on those IEP needs and those needs of that child and where they are developmentally and you've got other teachers who sometimes work on those other things...I mean, we have to juggle both. So it is really two full-time jobs.

Faith remarked, “There was no follow up on communication policy, therefore no changes on the hiring process and no expectations of the teachers and staff. The administrators haven't been able to sign because of weak SLPI policy.”

Lack of consistency. Four teachers described the effect of the school policy on teachers’ perceptions, specifically the education policy. The Bilingual education policy was written but never fully enforced. Catherine remarked, “....we were in the process and then we got a superintendent and all the policies are being rewritten now. There's a policy, I don't think it's actually set up, they don't have an official sign language policy. They are trying to be a completely bilingual culture here. But it's not officially documented.”

Eva commented regarding signing on campus, “One unspoken policy is that a sign is not allowed on the campus.” Faith added, “...we are trying to remind the school advisory board to make sure that the SPLI and the communication policy being fully enforced and be mandated.”

Two teachers described the benefit of a 20-point system for teachers who voluntarily participate in school events. However, with new administrators, they were unfamiliar with the 20-point system and did not ask for their feedback/input.

Faith remarked:

This was used as a part of teacher evaluation...they were motivated... it's been removed...Now the Deaf are still involved but the hearing are involved less in that. So it's really impacted the school programs, definitely impacted, because we don't have enough volunteers. So the volunteer program is just, you know, basically shut down.

Beth added, “...We don't have that system anymore, and so now, without that requirement, hearing teachers are not involved. I don't remember why it was dropped. That's a good question.”

Dorm experience. The dormitory life provides students an opportunity to enculturate into the Deaf community, primarily using ASL for socialization, and learning about independence. The following important comments involved concerns with the high school dorm policy. Three teachers were concerned about the students' level of independence. Delia commented, “.....they're high schoolers and we are almost like institutionalizing them....you do all these things, and there's no flexibility in that for

them. And this is a recent change, as of this year. And I know they're thinking it's not safe, but, I mean, I don't know if how are they going to learn?" *Eva* also remarked:

"...Many rules at the dorm will cause students rebel and want to rebel, and it feels like it's an army school.... Even if the parents have given their permission for them to walk over there...And, I feel like where is their independence, experiences, life experiences and getting away of having someone always looking over their shoulder?"

Summary

The findings from the six teachers to this point have been presented essentially as raw data, consolidated into the narrative descriptions. This summary provides a brief accounting of the predominant findings for each of the three research questions. The interview schedule was constructed to answer the three research questions. Results are organized by responses grouped under the broader research questions. For each question, responses are divided into two categories: the three hearing teachers and the three Deaf teachers. The primary findings for each research question follow.

RQ1: Social factors affect the school building, specifically between Deaf and hearing teachers related to resistance. Some experiences described by the teachers were negative and revealed frustration.

RQ2: Cultural factors, specifically American Sign Language and Deaf culture, became the main obstacle in overcoming the communication issues for students and teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The predominant barriers for all teachers were communication, lack of knowledge in Deaf Culture, and lack of support from administrators. On a positive note, most teachers were committed to teaching and their job performance had no significant influence on students' outcomes.

RQ3: Institutional factors were related to the administrators' understanding and consistency of the administrative practices and policies and the importance of consistency and fairness. No explicit communication policy fueled the tensions among administrators, students, and teachers.

Most teachers expressed their passion for teaching and desired the best for the students. For many, sign language proficiency was linked to ASL as a language for communication that play a key role in the residential school for the Deaf. The most common themes were (a) communication policy is the most important key in maintaining a healthy school, (b) communication barriers can be overcome with support from administrators, and (c) teachers and administrators should work together to avoid conflicts between teachers.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This qualitative study personifies in depth the essence of inclusion. Using a phenomenological study, an attempt was made to understand the lived experiences of Deaf and hearing teachers related to the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf in the southeast region of the United States. The narratives are extremely important because of their rich descriptions of a phenomenon that historically has not been thoroughly researched from the perspective of Deaf and hearing teachers. A collection of narratives remarkably revealed similarities in thoughts and experiences.

Chapter IV provided the results of the interviews. The open-ended questions allowed for the flexibility of freedom to explore and discover themes from the participants' stories. The conclusions from this study follow the research question and findings of the study and are divided by three main themes: (a) social factors contributing to the relationship between teachers in the school building, (b) cultural factors contributing to the competencies of ASL and Deaf culture, and (c) institutional factors contributing to the administrative and policy practices. Cultural interactions were hindered by incompetent and insensitive teachers and administrators. Decision making was hindered by lack of leadership in policies and an inadequately organized education system in the residential school for the Deaf. The findings were reported in narrative texts. This chapter discusses the findings based on the data collected and provides an analysis to answer the research questions.

A discussion is included on the findings and their relation to the research questions. These findings are paired with information from the literature review in order

to show the alignment of this research with research questions regarding school culture. The significance of findings contributes to the body of literature by filling the knowledge gap that exists in school culture, facilitates more understanding about the level of frustration experienced by teachers of the Deaf culture and provides teachers and administrators with future information on steps to avoid the pitfalls of social and cultural conflicts between Deaf and hearing teachers. Additionally, this chapter provides descriptive conclusions based on the teachers' experiences and stories. Recommendations also are provided for residential school staff, administrators, and future research.

Conclusions

Research Question 1: What are the differences in the way Deaf and hearing teachers experience the school culture?

Four sub-questions linked to the research question were discovered that contributed to the school environment. They include instructional beliefs, exclusive vs inclusive, level of support, and teacher training. Most comments presented the challenging cases related to communication. Cynicism could lead to deterioration of the relationship between the two groups.

Teachers expressed resentment toward educating teachers and administrators who do not know sign language or are unfamiliar with Deaf education and Deaf culture. This takes a toll on teachers for educating newcomers and teaching their students, which is similar to having two jobs. The residential school is a type of family for students, teachers, and administrators to share a sense of community and Deaf culture (Padden & Humphries, 1988). Unfortunately, most teachers do not experience the family life in the school.

In Glickman's work (1993), Deaf individuals need a sense of community and social/culture identification with Deaf culture. Hearing administrators and teachers must recognize the culture identification among students and teachers. One teacher commented, "Administrators don't understand our (Deaf) point of view." Another teacher commented, "...one butting of heads at times because of the lack of background knowledge." One commented, "Relationships are good, but sometimes I feel unsure with what they're doing, and sometimes I don't have a hundred percent trust."

Most teachers reported that ASL should be the language for communication, and they desire to communicate directly with the administrators and staff, rather than relying on sign language interpreters to facilitate the communication between teachers, students, and administrators. As mentioned in Chapter II, approximately 30% of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students regularly use ASL in the classroom setting in the southern region of the United States.

Communication was a major issue at the residential school. It is crucial that teachers and students feel comfortable communicating using their first language. Most teachers' predominant concern was communication modality. They felt sign language interpreters in the classroom would interfere with students trying to learn the concept. Direct instruction was preferred by most teachers and students. Teachers expressed their desire to be engaged in unimpeded communication (e.g., without an interpreter) with both students and staff. One teacher's comment was: "We used to have administrators who were able to sign, and I felt like we could speak to them or approach them directly, but now we don't really have that open communication..." Another comment: "They are really controlling. And I've seen that they have power. Our power is going down, and I

don't like that. I want them to give us the power. It really needs to be a balance.” This information could result in meaningful conversations among teachers, students, and the school leaders.

Research Question 2: How does the school culture influence the interactions between teachers, and teachers and students?

One sub-question was discovered that contributed to the teacher interactions. This question generated two themes regarding the participants’ perspectives, thoughts, and experiences regarding interactions in the school. Themes included feeling separated, Deaf culture, Deaf immersion, communication barriers, and social/cultural issues. From the teachers’ perspectives, the residential school for the Deaf experience appeared to impact social/cultural interactions through ASL and socialization.

Most individuals reported that they are familiar with Deaf culture and have an awareness of ASL. In relation to personal impact, participants reported they felt excluded from others. Additionally, hearing teachers may be unaware of the way in which Deaf identity and attitudes impact the cultural interactions between students, teachers, and administrators (Glickman, 1993). Although hearing teachers are certified to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, they are most likely not fully immersed in Deaf culture and ASL. Hearing teachers’ lack of skill in using ASL for instruction causes difficulties in reading and language abilities for this special population of students (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002). Deaf students struggle with the language of instruction because they do not have access to their first language, ASL. Having a sign language interpreter in the classroom is a third party facilitating the communication between Deaf students and teachers. The voices from the interpreter and teachers confuse the students when oral and

Deaf students try to learn new concepts. Most teachers agreed that they meet the diverse communication needs of Deaf students by adapting their preferred language. To this end, it is important that administrators and teachers understand individuals' views of their deafness in order to adequately serve them.

Research Question 3: How have teachers experienced the school policies and administrative practices?

During the course of the research, it became clear that the majority of discussions were grounded in the experiences of Deaf and hearing teachers. Five themes emerged: hiring issues, unclear communication policy, administrators' low expectations, lack of consistency, and rigid dorm climate. Teachers inquired with questions such as "Where does leadership come in?" and "What are the key principles behind leadership?" It became apparent that the lack of understanding of the education program, failure to account for the social and political environment, and lack of support from school leaders were present.

According to the literature, the number of Deaf teachers has declined over the years, which points to the need for communication policies at the residential schools for the Deaf. Most teachers felt that the school leaders should be considerate and understanding of the challenges faced by those who are being asked to change the ways they are accustomed to doing things. Also, they believed that ASL should be mandated as the language of communication. The school leaders may need to re-visit the written Bilingual/Bicultural program, which was conducted by the past school leaders. Deaf children would benefit from instituting ASL as the language for instruction. English

would then be taught as a second language. This instructional method would protect and honor Deaf culture.

The essence of the study, therefore, was to explore the school's impact on teachers' interactions with administrators and other teachers. The issues involved the importance of the socialization process and struggles with recognizing a sense of Deaf community in the school. A successful school to use great care to ensure the qualities of school leaders fit the priorities of the school staff, teachers, and students.

To this end, this would require an examination of current teacher certifications, hiring practices for teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, choosing decision-making leaders, and establishing language-planning policy. In reference to change within the school system itself, the administrators may need to re-visit the written Bilingual/ASL program that was conducted by the past superintendent of the school for the Deaf. Other changes should include the Deaf education programs' offer to develop the Deaf identity/awareness and recruitment of Deaf teachers.

Summary

The school culture is influential to the students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing because of the amount of impact from the teachers. Effective communication is a crucial component of effective teaching (Allen, 1994; Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Wilcox, 1992). Thus, teachers need to be adequately prepared to teach Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children. Findings from the study suggest that most teachers believe administrators who possess a Deaf Education background and knowledge of ASL/Deaf culture could develop awareness of the communication needs of their faculty and staff, as well as assess with diligence the readiness to change that affects school culture. Most

teachers seek mutual support from the administrators, as they continually face cultural challenges when they arrive on campus. Most Deaf teachers believe that ongoing dialogues with administrators would enable hearing and Deaf teachers to create a productive school environment. Most teachers reported that ASL is the most valuable tool in communicating with all individuals at the residential school for the Deaf. The cultural issue illustrates the gap between what school leaders say that they value and their actual values. If these issues remain unaddressed, hearing and Deaf teachers may be more vulnerable to communication breakdowns and cynicism.

The face-to-face interviews are beneficial for those teachers who use ASL, as ASL has no written form and the survey may not be an appropriate method (Glickman, 1993). Six participants contributed valuable information and each shared the way in which their experiences shaped their thoughts and perspectives that affect the school building relationships. They described their positive and negative experiences regarding the school environment. Most research on Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing participants (e.g., students) has been conducted by hearing researchers who were not native ASL users. The qualitative research was an appropriate choice for conducting the study, as the topic of school culture within a school for the Deaf has been relatively unexplored.

Teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing who currently taught at a residential school for the Deaf were contacted for this study. Six individuals were identified, signed a consent form, and participated in interviews up to 60 minutes in length. Most had 30 or more years of signing experience and 20 or more years of teaching experience. Some teachers' SLPI rate indicated advanced and Master's degrees in Deaf Education. Five of the six received specialized training in working with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students.

The face-to-face interviews occurred in a small room for more privacy. The mode of communication during the interviews was American Sign Language. Videotaped interviews allowed the researcher to review and compare the transcription notes (the transcriber transcribed from spoken to written English). A thorough analysis of the themes emerged in order to answer the research questions.

Relationship to Other Research Findings

The literature review revealed several studies on the examination of residential schools for the Deaf, but none addressed the teachers' perceptions of the school. This study bridges the gap in knowledge concerning lack of administrative supports, insufficient Deaf teachers, and lack of language planning policy. This chapter pairs the findings of this study with the literature review relative to environment and the overall school culture. Researchers in Deaf education fields advocate the learning of ASL as early as possible. Glickman (1993) commented that achieving competence in a first language provides a necessary base for understanding a second language. Most literature has suggested that ASL be recognized as a language for instruction and that the teachers should be fluent in sign, the language should be accessible for all students, and Deaf teachers serve as role model for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Glickman's findings reported that Deaf identity plays the role in the residential school for the Deaf.

This study demonstrated the importance of Bilingual/ASL programs in the residential school for the Deaf in order to promote language development (Mashie, 1995; Mayer & Akamatsu, 1999). The school leaders must provide communication access in order to bring Deaf students to the Deaf school. Therefore, the school leaders should invest time in Deaf culture awareness orientation for hearing staff to reduce frustration

and stress which could provide a rich communicative environment for students. In addition, the school leaders must determine the signing skill level before placing them in the age appropriate classrooms.

The research literature also has raised discussions about the importance of reeducating teachers to broaden their pedagogical philosophy and to update their repertoire of teaching methods. Amos (2000) found that most states have no requirement for sign language or Deaf culture classes. At present, education for the Deaf is problematic because training programs do not offer advanced ASL classes. University or college programs that train potential staff of schools that serve Deaf students should reprioritize their efforts. The teaching training program could offer all levels of ASL classes before students can pass them to get certification.

A small amount of literature exists on Praxis takers (i.e., Deaf), and teacher certification appeared to be an ongoing problem due to the bias (Amos, 2000). Most pre-service Deaf teachers face difficulties in taking Praxis examinations due to the second language, English. The residential school for the Deaf and school district personnel should work in partnership with departments of education to accommodate the Praxis examination for those Deaf teachers who use ASL and should assist with developing the guidelines on obtaining the teacher certificate for Deaf candidates.

Suggestions for Practice and Research

In reflecting on the findings of this study, recommendations are organized by (a) items/practices a residential school for the Deaf can do to improve the integration of Deaf teachers, administrators, and students; (b) that which administrators can do to improve communication and build a strong rapport with teachers and students; and (c) ways to

further explore the school culture at a residential school for the Deaf. These should not be viewed as a blueprint, but taken into consideration in order to maintain a healthy school environment.

Recommendations for Residential Schools for the Deaf

Most teachers believed that the residential school for the Deaf should preserve Deaf culture. Deaf teachers stated that workshops on the topic of Deaf culture and ASL could be provided for hearing teachers and administrators to enable them to be more involved and supportive of the language. Most believed that ASL should be mandated as the language for communication. Deaf children would benefit from ASL as the language for instruction. English would then be taught as a second language. The instructional method would protect and honor Deaf culture. Using a sign language interpreter in the classroom is considered a third party involving the communication between Deaf students and teachers. The voices from both the interpreter and the teacher confuse students when trying to learn new concepts. Deaf students struggle with the language of instruction because they do not have access to their first language, ASL, which also holds true for oral students.

The Gallaudet Research Institute (2010) reported that approximately 30% of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students regularly use ASL in the classroom setting in the southern region of the United States. More oral students with minimal ASL skills come to the residential school. They may get lost in the shuffle and do not receive support from the school staff. The school team may consider designing cultural sensitivity training to encourage a positive interaction between oral students and deaf students as well as hearing and deaf teachers. The cultural sensitivity training should include:

- (a) Social interaction (e.g., cultural behaviors and manners)
- (b) Deaf culture (e.g., communication modality, emotional support, identity, etc.)
- (c) Education (e.g., Deaf history, change of technology for Deaf people, etc.)

Recommendations for School Leaders

Findings may be vital in directing the school administrators to relevant areas of school culture. The findings lead to the following recommendations:

- Cultural sensitivity training for all school staff
- Reevaluation of the hiring process
- Increased recruitment of Deaf teachers and administrators
- Increased hiring of Deaf candidates in positions of leadership
- Prioritization of communication policy
- Re-visit the written Bilingual/ASL program

The stakeholders and key members desire the administrators to be fully engaged in making change happen; to draw on policies and political support for their agenda; to spend time to listen (e.g., teachers) about their administrative and policy practice; and to know their students and teachers on a personal level and maintain the stability in the school culture.

In the sense of the Deaf community, these schools will survive if they have the excellent teachers and school leaders. Generally, these schools are built on the vision and mission statement including the traditions of Deaf culture; school leaders should carry on the traditions and values in ways that attract teachers and students who want to be part of those traditions. Communication begins with the administrators and is carried through listening and interacting with the teachers. These interactions can increase their

involvement in school activities.

School leaders should be knowledgeable of the values of Deaf culture and Deaf history that characterize the school and should seek to build on those traditions from the generations. The school leader must be familiar with institutional culture traditions by:

- (a) spending time interacting with key members or stakeholders of the Deaf community;
- (b) reviewing historical documents (i.e., sports, events, communication policy, philosophy of education, etc);
- (c) attending Deaf clubs, sports events, etc.; and
- (d) learning more about Deaf culture and ASL that surrounds leadership expectation.

Most teachers commented that the hiring policies for staff who work with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students should be re-evaluated. Most teachers were not fully informed about the hiring procedures that exist in the school. Most were in agreement that Deaf teachers should be represented fairly in the decision-making process of the residential school. Deaf candidates should fill positions of leadership and chair the interview committee. Deaf members should comprise 51% of the vote, and each member should be versed in the school system. A panel of Deaf and hearing could review the qualifications of candidates who desire to work with students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The school leaders should include Deaf stakeholders in order to provide a holistic perspective when making educational decisions concerning communication and administrative policies. In order to increase recruitment of Deaf teachers, the school leaders should attend the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and

Programs for the Deaf and visit universities/colleges that provide programs for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teachers.

Implications for Future Research

The review of the literature centered on research in relation to school culture. This current study focused on the lives of only six teachers working at one residential school for the Deaf. Quantitative researchers, with optimum results, could study any hypothesized solutions:

- (a) the enforcement of sign language proficiency policies at the residential schools for the Deaf in multiple regions of the United States
- (b) re-evaluation and examination of the special education state certifications for Deaf teachers
- (c) testing for efficacy of Deaf teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students in the classrooms

With a future study, possible solutions could be provided for the insufficient number of Deaf teachers, teacher certification, and language planning policy in the residential schools for the Deaf. Using a quantitative study may be useful for validating the resulting data toward the language planning policy and teacher certification. The information from the resulting data could improve the learning culture in the residential schools for the Deaf.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF COOPERATION

Dear....

I am currently a doctoral student in Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Western Kentucky University. I am conducting a phenomenological study of Deaf and Hearing Teachers' Perceptions of School Culture in a Residential School for the Deaf. The study will be conducted under the supervision of co-chairs: Dr. Norman and Dr. Fox.

I would like to ask for your permission to conduct this study. Your permission and support are crucial to this study and it will be greatly appreciated. I have included a copy of the informed consent document for your review. The teachers will be asked to participate in face-to-face interviews. No names of schools will be used in the reporting of results.

For answers regarding research subjects' rights, contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at Western Kentucky University at 270-745-2129 or email irb@wku.edu. Please email me at meena.mann732@topper.wku.edu and notify me of your decision to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Meena Mann, Principal Investigator

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I would like to say thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. First of all, I want you to know that any personal information you disclose will not be made public. The interview video will not have your name and will have a code number for identification purposes. Once your interview videotape has been transcribed, it will be destroyed. This study will consist of semi-interviews about 60-90 minutes and demographic data will be collected.

The questions in the Interview Schedule focus on retrospective insights and perceptions of participants regarding the school culture at a residential school for the deaf.

Introduction: I'm interested in how you experience the residential school for the Deaf on a day-to-day basis. Because of that, I'm hoping that you'll spend our time together telling me your stories. While your overall assessments and opinions of the school and the climate are important, the focus of this study is on how you came to those assessments. What happened? What's the story? So, as I ask these questions, please try to think of the stories that explain how you think about your professional life.

1. I'd like to understand what is is like to come to school everyday. How would you describe your professional atmosphere here? Do you enjoy coming to work?
Why? What parts of your work life are challenging? Why?
2. I'd like to understand the relationships between hearing and Deaf teachers. Would you tell me a couple of stories that you think are typical of your relationships with Deaf/hearing teachers?
3. I d like to learn more about your use of ASL? When do you use ASL? If you opt not to use ASL at school, when is that? Why? When you see teachers using English-only (no ASL), how does that make you feel? What do you think of that

practice? When you see a teacher using a sign language interpreter in the classroom, what do you think of this approach?

4. Are there policies, procedures, or unwritten rules that you think make life at the residential school challenging for Deaf teachers or students?
5. How did you become a teacher of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired?
6. How did you become involved in the Deaf community?
7. What do teachers understand Deaf culture to be? How do they describe Deaf culture?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: A Phenomenological Study: Deaf and Hearing Teachers' Perceptions of School Culture at A Residential School for the Deaf.

Investigator: Meena Mann, BA, MS, Ed.S, EDD student, Doctoral Educational Leadership Program at Western Kentucky University, Videophone: 270-495-3414 and email: meena.mann732@topper.wku.edu.



You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** You have been invited to participate in this study in order to explore your experiences and perceptions of school culture at a residential school for the deaf.
2. **Explanation of Procedures:** You are being invited to complete interview that will be conducted to explore your perceptions and experiences of school culture at a residential school for the deaf. The interview will last 60-90 minutes. Mutually convenient times and location for the interview will be determined. Interviews may occur face-to-face interview or via videophone. A copy of the interview questions will be emailed to you prior to our scheduled interview for preparedness.
3. **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences by participating in this research study.
4. **Benefits:** There is no direct benefit to participating in this research study. However, the results from this study may provide insights to change educational policies and practices at an educational setting.
5. **Confidentiality:** Within two weeks after conducting the interviews the audiotapes, videotapes, transcripts, demographic data questionnaire, and select documents will be coded to keep your identity confidential. Any electronic information will be kept within a secure computer. No names of school will be used in the reporting of results.
6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:**
Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

WKU IRB# 16-267
Approval - 1/22/2016
End Date - 8/30/2016
Expedited
Original - 1/22/2016

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant

Date

Witness

Date

- I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. *(Initial here)* _____

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129



WKU IRB# 16-267
Approval - 1/22/2016
End Date - 8/30/2016
Expedited
Original - 1/22/2016

APPENDIX D

INTERPRETER CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to be videotaped/audiotaped for note taking purposes and understand the tapes will be erased after they have been transcribed and within twelve months of the interview.

Signed _____

Date: _____

TRANSCRIPTION CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to keep all of the information stated on this audio tape confidential. I will not discuss the information on this tape with others nor will I allow others to listen to the tape or read the transcription I am typing for Meena Mann.

Signed _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Code ID:

TEACHERS AT A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The information obtained will be strictly confidential. Once study is completed and all data information will be destroyed.

Part one: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (Please check one)

A. Hearing status

_____ Deaf _____ Hard of Hearing
Other: _____

B. Years of signing experience (including this year)

_____ years and _____ months

C. Years of teaching experience (including this year)

_____ years and _____ months

D. Sign Language Proficiency Rating Score

_____ novice _____ intermediate _____ Advanced Other:

E. Highest Degree earned:

_____ BA/BS
_____ MA/MS
_____ Ed.S
_____ Doctorate Degree (Ed.D., Ph.D.)
_____ other

F. Content areas/specialization: _____

G. Department: Elementary

_____ Middle _____ High School _____

H. Gender:

Female _____ Male _____