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Deaf Students Education

Deaf Students and Higher Education

Easier Access to Higher Education for Deaf Students: An Interdisciplinary Interpretation

Introduction

There is a high emphasis placed on higher education in the United States today. Many jobs require future employees to have a college degree before they will even consider the applicant. Colleges and universities can be very demanding and rough for any individual to attend, and people with any handicap can find themselves in a situation that is almost impossible to finish.

Deaf students that wish to follow their dream of achieving a college degree find themselves in a tough situation, not only by the demands of college life, but also because of the lack of help they receive from these facilities. Deaf students that pursue higher education should have easier access to higher educational opportunities, allowing them to obtain better control over their futures.

College degrees are not easily achieved by most individuals. The success of the person has many outside influences, such as, social standing, educational level when the person enters college, and help from the college itself. " Approximately 70% of the 123, 000 deaf students enrolled in 2, 300 colleges across the United States will not persist until graduation" (Smith, 2005, p 1).

The cause of this high rate must be considered by many different facts as well as different disciplines. Is the educational level of deaf students lacking in some way that causes them not to be ready for school after secondary schools? Are the colleges / universities helping in everyway so these students can achieve their goals? Does society treat these students less significant than hearing students? To fully understand this multifaceted issue, more than one discipline needs to be looked at because one discipline will not lead to a resolution, thus an interdisciplinary interpretation must be used (Repko, 2005).

Many disciplines could help explain the cause for so many deaf students not reaching college graduation. Biology could explain set backs deaf children face, such as, were they born deaf or did they lose their hearing at an early age that cause these children difficulties in development. History could be looked at for how deaf people where treated in the past, and see if the stereotypes and stigmas that were present back then still existence today.

Psychology should be used to help understand the deaf students and their goals for their life. Sociology looks at how deaf people are treated in the society they live in. Education could help explain if deaf student graduate high school with the knowledge they should have learned throughout their primary education years or if the student fell behind and still continued on to high school graduation. *Education, sociology, and psychology* will have more of an impact on the planning that will help more deaf students achieve their goal of reaching college graduation.

Education is the process that brings together the physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of a child to help that individual develop intellectual (Nath & Cohen, 2005). Sociology is the study of various groups and subgroups in a society in a society (Macionis, 2006). This discipline helps illustrate the difficulties deaf students face in the United States and will also show the view that society has about deaf people that they interact with everyday.

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and how people behave in everyday situations (Nairne, 2006). This discipline could help understand the mind of the deaf student and the hardships they face daily. These three disciplines will bring many different views about why deaf students do not reach a college diploma. To fully understand the viewpoints and theories that are in each of these disciplines, a detailed review of literature from each of these disciplines will be examined and introduced to help fully understand this difficult issue.

In order to help deaf student attain a college education, a system must be implemented that helps with the full range of problems that deaf students face. Deaf students not only face difficulties in education but other areas in their life that hold them back; so, these issues must be studied also. With the conclusions from education, sociology, and psychology a plan can be mapped out from grade school to college graduation that help deaf students succeed throughout all of their educational careers.

Background

Many deaf people do not see themselves as broken or that they need to be fixed. The opposite is closer to the truth. Deaf people see themselves as a

subculture, a minority in society. They feel that American Sign Language is their first language and English is their second language, just the same way Hispanics view Spanish (Unknown, 2007). This is quite a different view point that many hearing people may have when they see a deaf person in their community.

Most deaf people do not feel the need to be “cured” from deafness and embrace their deafness as their cultural identity. This must be kept in mind when studying this issue because both, the hearing population and the deaf population, have vast differences to why this problem might be happening. Keeping this point in mind we need to look at several reasons for this dilemma.

Deaf students receive the same high school diploma that hearing students do, so why does the deaf population have higher rate of dropouts than the hearing population? The typical eighteen year old deaf student reads below a fourth-grade reading level (Bollag, 2006). These students are being taught to read lips and with cued speech (hand movements around the mouth to indicate the sound of the word being spoken) and not in American Sign Language (ASL).

Teaching them to read lips and with cued speech is great to develop their English skills but these students also need the access to their “native” language in order to grasp the world around them. “ASL exposes children to the world’s knowledge and it incorporates self-esteem and aspects of deaf culture.

Mastering English gives them access to the richness of the English world, like Shakespeare and idioms” (Bollag, 2006). These children seem less likely to accomplish the same school work as hearing students their age, if they must first learn to read lips or cued speech, which could take years after they start school. This could be another step in implementing a way to help every deaf student succeed after they complete primary school.

Accessibility to the subject content many also play a role. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990, deaf people have the right for qualified interpreter for their classes (U. S. Department of Labor, 1990). This needs a more in-depth look to see if all deaf college students are receiving this service. Qualified is loosely translated and could mean very different things to different organizations.

Sign language interpreters have different levels of qualifications from state to state; therefore one state might be more lenient than others. This is a key to any deaf student’s education and has many negative effect if the interpreter is not highly qualified. The other question about interpreters is; do they understand the course content of the classes the deaf student is enrolled in?

When deaf students are taking the basic core classes most interpreters can clearly understand and convey the message of the professors. After the core curricular, more in-depth discipline classes of the major the deaf student has chosen. If the deaf student decides to major in Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering, will the interpreter be able to fully understand the material and transmit that for the deaf student? This could be a very straining

on both the interpret and the deaf student, which in turn could cause the deaf student to become frustrated with the course and drop out because they do not full understand.

Are colleges deaf friendly? Some colleges have various programs and clubs for the student population. If only a few select deaf people are attending one univeristy the chances that they have special programs or clubs for these students are slim. Thus the deaf person may feel that they do not belong in the college world. People are social creatures and need the feeling of belonging, if deaf people do not feel this and on the extreme side feel excluded they may not want to continue their education.

Another set back maybe how society views the deaf individual. Aristotle thought that hearing was the key to learning and deaf individuals that were not capable of speaking thoughts were thought to be dumb, with this the phase " deaf and dumb" arose (Hummel, 1993). This however is not the case; a minute encounter with an average deaf person will definitely disprove this theory.

The sad truth is that many people today believe that this is true, and will hold on to this stereotype simply because they do not know any deaf people. There is a long history of remarkable deaf people that are not recognized by many hearing people. If this theory is false why do so many deaf people not graduate college? Society makes assumptions about every group and thus the group is stereotyped into something that, in most cases, is not true. Is this the reason why so many fail at higher education, because they have already labeled as less intelligent?

The issues listed above show the star players in the education process for the deaf students. The cognitive ability of the deaf student must first be discovered. The educators in primary schools must be observed and taught the proper way to education deaf students.

Then the college/universities must be examined to insure that the deaf student rights and needs are being met. Society also plays a key role into the education of deaf students; thus the stereotypes they hold need to be broken down to guarantee that the deaf students can succeed in today's educational system. If these steps are taking the deaf student should be better able to seize their goal of graduating college.

This problem needs not only to be looked at by many disciplines but with many different point of views. With this problem a debate with hearing and deaf arises, what is best for deaf individuals? Should hearing people decide what is best for the deaf child or should these decisions come from adults with hearing loss that have understanding about the deaf child experiences?

If this dilemma is only looked at by one strict discipline or one point of view it could go unidentified by other professions and other individuals (Repko, 2005). Deaf students with dreams of higher education need an organization that helps with every aspect of they encounter throughout their educational careers.

This organization needs to be design with the deaf student's needs and also help educate deaf students of the government assistance/programs required under federal laws. This predicament affects many deaf students and has vastly impactions on their life. Without an education deaf people find jobs

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not necessary careers. This “real world problem” should be considered more broadly than one discipline can cover (Repko, 2005).

In order to complete this task education, sociology, and psychology need to be explored. Education should be researched first to find better ways to help deaf students at younger ages to better prepare them for their future.

Sociology should then be studied to see where the deaf students fit into society.

The stereotypes of deaf people need to also be considered to inspect what needs to be altered in order for the deaf students, not to be look down on as less intelligent individuals. Psychology is the final stage of the approach because the deaf student also needs to be analyzed, in order to completely understand the full interpretation of the problem at hand. Armed with these disciplines the complete evaluation can be prepared, as a result a resolution can be achieved.

Disciplinary Perspectives, Evidence, and Insights

This section will present the most valuable material for discussing the topic problem. Both secondary and peer-reviewed sources may be used in this section, but, the primary sources are the most critical for the evidence from each discipline to be presented.

Integration

The integration for the disciplinary insights is the most significant part of the INTS paper. It is the center stage where all the actors come for the grand finale.

Conclusion

The conclusion will be the summary and will also mention any future research ideas or possible outcomes or consequences.

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