Early Papers in Deaf Studies

Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons

Foreword by Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn

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Volume 1: Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons

Available as a Manifold edition at gallaudetupress.manifoldapp.org

Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons

April 6–7, 1990

A publication of the College for Continuing Education
The National Academy
Gallaudet University • Washington, DC

Gallaudet University Press
gupress.gallaudet.edu

Gallaudet University Press is located on the
traditional territories of Nacotchtank and Piscataway.

Second edition 2025
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978–1-954622–44–9 (casebound)
ISBN: 978–1-954622–45–6 (paperback)
ISBN: 978–1-954622–46–3 (ebook)

∞ This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48–1992 (Permanence of Paper).

Cover description: Off-white background with curved stripes of pale red, red, and orange in the center. At the top of the cover, black text reads, "Early Papers in Deaf Studies." Underneath in large black text, reads "Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons." At the bottom of the cover, under the stripes, italicized black text reads "Foreword by Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn."

Cover design by Eric C. Wilder.

Contents

Language Disclaimer

This book contains language that may be considered offensive, controversial, or triggering to some readers. The content reflects the historical and cultural context in which it was created and may not align with contemporary values or sensibilities. Reader discretion is advised. If you are sensitive, you may wish to consider this before proceeding.

Foreword to the Reissued Edition

Thirty-four years ago, I was an academic advisor at Lehman College in the Bronx, New York. It was a challenging time for a city that was hit hard by the crack and HIV/AIDS epidemics that were happening concurrently. New York City was not alone, though, as both epidemics quickly became tragedies nationwide. I was then serving my second term as president of the New York City chapter of the National Black Deaf Advocates. My wife and I were also preparing for our wedding and the arrival of our first child. However, activism in the interests of Black Deaf people could not wait, and we continued our quest to raise up our community. We needed a conference fully focused on our unique needs as Black Deaf people who deal with both racism and audism.

Dr. Roslyn Rosen, a Bronx native, was among my most cherished mentors. We often engaged in discourse where we surveyed the state of Deaf America, and I would remind her that Black Deaf people had a ways to go before we could enjoy the privileges bestowed on White Deaf people in the United States after the Deaf President Now movement and the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Dr. Rosen took this to heart and asked me what we can do about it. I brought up the idea of a conference specifically focused on the condition of Black Deaf Americans; the conference would give attention to issues such as education, mental health, and barriers preventing the advancement of Black Deaf people. Dr. Rosen's response was, "Fine, let's do it." At that time, she was dean of continuing education at Gallaudet University and was able to get Gallaudet on board with cosponsoring the conference. She then brought

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Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn is a scholar and, at the time of this writing, is the interim codirector of the Center for Black Deaf Studies, Gallaudet University.

in Angela Gilchrist (now Dr. Angela McCaskill), and they came out to the Bronx on Amtrak and then on the 6 train that passed Yankee Stadium and the neighborhood Dr. Rosen grew up in. They rode the train all the way to Kingsbridge and then made the short walk to the Lehman College campus. This was 1990, and the area around Lehman was vastly different from when Dr. Rosen lived there. Naturally we at Lehman were in awe while Dr. McCaskill was totally overwhelmed by the experience.

In no time at all we got to work. Deborah Copeland (now Meyer), who was the director of the Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students at Lehman College, was in full support of the project; she was thrilled that Lehman would be the host. Angela and I were the conference cochairs, while both Gallaudet and the City University of New York provided the logistical support. All of us agreed on the focus of the conference, and as the reader will see in this collection, we addressed topics that remain relevant 34 years later. In this regard, we raised the question of what it will really take to push the Deaf community closer to where the hearing community is with regard to seriously addressing racism and academic inequity.

We have made significant progress in the past 34 years, but the fact that we have so much more to do is a testament to how deeply rooted inequity within the Deaf community is and how it continues to challenge all of us. Four years after this conference, I was hired by my alma mater, Gallaudet University, as the special assistant to the president for diversity and community relations. This afforded the Black Deaf community a larger platform, especially given that Dr. Glenn Anderson was the chair of the Gallaudet University Board of Trustees, and we also had Dr. Reginald Redding who followed Dr. Rosen as dean of the College for Continuing Education when Dr. Rosen became the university provost. This was a major paradigm shift and sent a powerful message across the nation and around Deaf spaces globally. It confirmed Dr. I. King Jordan's unflinching commitment to confronting what were and still are uncomfortable issues that we in the Deaf community are not always willing to face. Gallaudet continues to seek ways to address the issues, and we now have a Center for Black Deaf Studies and a Black Deaf Studies minor within the Deaf Studies program.

We have indeed come a long way since the conference in 1990, and I am more confident that we will eventually create a more perfect Deaf community. The reader of this collection will be pleased to see the ways in which the community engaged in critical discourse on the challenges faced by Black Deaf people and, in a way, set the stage for similar

conferences addressing the unique challenges faced by Latinx and Asian Deaf people. In a sense, this collection was part of the foundation for the amazing scholarship that has since been published on Black Deaf people and other Deaf people of color.

It has been an honor to write this foreword. I hope readers will find both historical and practical value in the reissued collection.

Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn
Center for Black Deaf Studies
Gallaudet University
November 6, 2024

Foreword to the Original Edition

It is now more than two years since the "Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons" Conference took place at Lehman College, the City University of New York. These proceedings offer a glimpse of where we were in April 1990. The conference was seminal in that it brought together an audience of mostly African American Deaf and hearing people to address three themes: leadership and advocacy, the dynamics and dilemmas of being of dual minority status, and issues related to language and community.

The goal of the conference was for each participant to leave with a clear understanding of empowerment and strategies for empowering themselves and their community. Through the information shared by distinguished keynote speakers and 18 concurrent session presenters, conference participants gained information, insight, and resources. Through the program's investigation, participants examined commonly encountered barriers and emerging solutions that affect African American deaf people in today's society.

This conference was cosponsored by Lehman College, the City University of New York, and The National Academy of Gallaudet University. The planning efforts of the following people were crucial for the success of this conference:

Program Chairs
Lindsey Dunn and Angela McCaskill-Gilchrist

Cosponsor Representatives
Deborah Copeland, Patricia L. Johnson, Susan N. Karchmer, and Kathy Vesey

Interpreter Coordinator
Jo Ann Kranis

Entertainment Coordinator
Celeste Owens

This conference was a forerunner to "The Excellence and Equity Conference Series." It is because of the "Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons" Conference that a national network of consumers, professionals, educators, administrators, and service providers have had an opportunity to meet and push forward the concepts of "The Black Deaf Experience: Excellence and Equity" and "The Hispanic Deaf Experience: Excellence and Equity." These conferences, sponsored by a 14-member national coalition of education and advocacy organizations, have been funded, in part, by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services of the U.S. Department of Education. The seeds that were planted during the "Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons" Conference are coming to fruition.

Let's Get Busy: Empowerment and Development Are the Keys

Larry G. Coleman
Gallaudet University

Farmer Johnson's Mule

Farmer Wilson was a jealous and evil man, and he was jealous of everything that Farmer Johnson, his neighbor, owned. He was jealous of his tractor, his barn, his cows, and even his wife. But most of all, Farmer Wilson was jealous of Farmer Johnson's prize-winning mule. In fact, he was so jealous, he plotted to kill that prize mule.

One dark night, Farmer Wilson dug a hole seven feet long, four feet wide, and six feet deep. He led the mule to the hole with a trail of oats. He was planning to bury the mule alive.

Well, the mule followed the trail of oats until he fell right into the deep hole. Farmer Wilson began to shovel dirt into the hole as fast as he could. He really planned to cover that mule with dirt and bury him alive. But Farmer Wilson was in for a surprise.

You know, mules don't like to have anything on their backs. So, every time that mule started to feel some dirt on his back, he would start shaking and shaking until he shook the dirt completely off his back. Then the mule would stomp down on the dirt and pack it into the bottom of the hole. The more dirt Farmer Wilson shoveled, the more the mule would shake it off and stomp it down. And the mule started to rise by shaking it off and stomping it down. The more dirt Farmer Wilson shoveled in, the higher and higher the mule rose.

Well, the mule kept rising to a higher level until he rose clean out of that hole. When he got to the top, he turned himself around and walked on down the road. The next day, he won First Prize as Best Mule (and smartest too!) at the County Fair.

So here is the moral of the story:

> If life throws dirt, garbage, insults, prejudice, suffering, or other outside obstacles at you . . .
>
> just shake it off,
>
> stomp it down, and
>
> rise to the highest level you can!
>
> If you have inside obstacles that get in the way of your development, like the way you think, or the way you act sometimes, then you must be strong. Change the way you think. Decide to act better. Just . . .
>
> shake it off,
>
> stomp it down, and
>
> rise to the highest level you can.

I am delighted and honored to be able to speak with you on a very serious topic, "The Empowerment of People who are Black and Deaf"—people who are members of at least two oppressed minority groups in this country. Within this context, I am tremendously concerned about the young people who represent our future generations. I am especially concerned about the future development of Black Deaf children.

Currently, there is greater opportunity for achievement in education and in all of the professions: law, medicine, dentistry, journalism, engineering, and architecture. It is clear that we have a huge job to do in empowering ourselves and our children to internalize and operationalize the concept that "we can do anything."

You saw Ms. Angela Gilchrist, in her brilliant introduction, perform the story of the "mule" who was almost buried alive by an evil farmer who continued to shovel "dirt" onto the back of the mule. Well, what is this "dirt"? This "dirt" is many things, but mostly it is made up of the obstacles that have confronted Black Americans in general, and Black Deaf people in particular.

These external obstacles include slavery, racism, the separate and unequal treatment tacitly condoned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1896, segregation in jobs, education, housing, and health care—yes, even segregation among state schools for the deaf and Gallaudet University. It is

external obstacles (dirt) that told us that Blacks in general are "intellectually inferior" to, but physically stronger and more agile and versatile than, deaf or hearing whites. And this belief, in turn, has reinforced the idea that teachers should have lower expectations for Black students and that Black schools should have inferior equipment and materials and poorly trained teachers. In the book titled *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, writer Richard Kluger (1977) cites one Georgia county where over 85 times as much money was spent annually for the education of each white child as compared to each Black child.

While the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* firmly planted the idea of equal opportunity in education, bias and discrimination continue to exist. They exist in the form of lowered teacher expectations for students who are labeled "different" and "minority." This is more of the external "dirt" that murders the spirit, the energy, and the willingness of the Black child to work hard in a climate that is not supportive of his or her achievement. It is a kind of spirit murder. Instead of encouraging these children to learn and grow and seize opportunity, this country's history of Black oppression and bias against Deaf people has tried to destroy the spirit of that child, like the dirt of the evil farmer.

And it is only through effort, hard work, and belief in ourselves that these obstacles can be overcome. Shake it off and stomp it down! Rise up to a higher level!

Some of this dirt, bias, and racism has gotten inside many of us and many of our children, causing some individuals to accept the false belief that they cannot learn. We must spit that "lie," that false belief, out of our mouths and get it out of our minds. It's nothing but the same old dirt. Never believe it; never accept it. Shake it off of you!

We must never accept the idea that we are a failure; we can fail sometimes, and we can succeed sometimes. And when we fail, we must view that failure as "feedback" telling us what we need to do to improve. But when we succeed, we must attribute our success to our ability to be successful combined with our strong effort. That kind of thinking is guaranteed to boost our confidence. Dr. Jeff Howard of the Boston-based Efficacy Institute believes that we must own our successes and use our failures to boost our efforts for the "next attempt."[1] I strongly agree that

1. Read *Gifted Hands,* the life story of Dr. Ben Carson, for a living example of this.

the key to our success and to overcoming many of the obstacles we face in life is to work as hard and as strategically as we possibly can.

I would like to conclude by saying that we can achieve anything we set our minds and our effort to do. Here is a little story about "effort" and two little frogs.

Hold On, Keep On

Two frogs hopped off a lily pad in a pond on Farmer Munson's property. They were having one rollicking good time on this cool summer morning, hopping here and there. They hopped across the meadow and into the barn and—ooops!—by mistake they hopped right into a pail of thick creamy milk that the farmer had left sitting there while he attended to some other chores in the back of the barn.

Those poor frogs were stuck in this creamy, creamy, creamy liquid. One frog, Harry, panicked and started flip-flopping around in the pail, hollering and screaming (in frog talk, of course). Harry called his buddy, Leroy. He said, "HEY, MAN, I'M SCARED! I CAN'T SWIM IN THIS STUFF—IT'S MAKING MY LEGS REAL TIRED!" And Harry scared himself into giving up. He stopped trying and gave up, and he almost drowned in the creamy milk.

Leroy, responding to a voice of strength deep inside himself, was more hopeful. He was determined that there must be a way out, and he kept pushing and thinking and hoping while he was treading water with his little webbed feet. "There's got to be a way out of this mess. I know it! I believe it! I am determined to get out! Ooooooooohhh Harry! Man, why don't you just hold on, keep on!! Keep treading water!"

Even though they both got tired, they pushed on. For about three hours they kept on treading water! When they finally stopped, they realized that the cream had hardened, and they were now standing on top of a bucket of butter—and they hopped out. The moral is: Hold on! Believe there's a solution to problems and work hard to solve them. If so, you will find a solution.

And to the problem of our own educational and psychological insecurities and our low self-confidence, we must continue to believe we can do it; we must work very, very hard, read much more, and get smarter and smarter and more and more confident. Also, we must never give up on ourselves or on our children.

About the Presenter

Larry G. Coleman, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Communication Arts Department at Gallaudet University. He is a professional storyteller who does performances and workshops on black folklore and on folklore and humor in general. He has a strong research interest in how stories as symbols can be used to empower and heal psychological wounds and contribute to the process of empowerment.

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Cousin Hattie's Sister's People: The Ties Between Identity and Leadership Within the Black Deaf Community

Sheryl Guest-Emery
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

There is a book recently published called *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things* (Fulghum, 1989). When I first saw the title I laughed, but after opening the cover I stopped laughing—the basic philosophy behind the book was true! Wash your hands; when you drop something, pick it up; put away your toys when you are finished; treat people as you would have them treat you; and cookies, milk, and a nap in the afternoon are good for you—most of the basics we learn as young children.

My 3-year-old is fascinating to watch; I can see his personality and identity begin to bloom. At 3, he already has a good sense of who he is. He will tell you very clearly, "I am Jumoke' Shelden Emery." He knows that he is a boy; he knows that he is brown; and he knows that he is not deaf. Sometimes, he plays a game called "Follow the Leader," so he is also beginning to understand that a leader is someone you look up to, perhaps want to be, or decide you want to follow. All of this by the age of 3.

Perhaps you are asking yourself why I am telling you this. Yes, I do like to boast about my son, but it also reflects on the subject for today. "Cousin Hattie's Sister's People" is about leadership and identity. My presentation today will focus on the following points:

1. An explanation of the title;
2. I am what I call myself;
3. Shaping the image;
4. Refining the image;
5. Taking a look at the leadership; and
6. Looking ahead.

1. What Does the Title Mean?

Most Black families with strong family ties have a "Cousin Hattie"—I don't mean with the same name; I mean someone with a strong identity. This person is the leader in the family, and everyone else is identified by their relationship to them, not by their own merits or name, but as somebody's cousin, sister, aunt, or grandchild.

In the Black deaf community, Black deaf people have become like Cousin Hattie's sister's people—they have little or no identity of their own. Identity is shaped by parents, religion, sibling interaction, peers, and authority figures; social class, geography, current events, and temperament also have strong influences. In many cases, the identities of Black deaf people have been suppressed by schools, churches, families, and others.

2. I Am What I Call Myself

We must also look at how Black deaf people perceive themselves. Throughout history, Black people have been called many things; some of them have been acceptable, others have not. James Brown would have us called Black and Proud, but Jesse Jackson would rather we were Afro-American. Most Black people currently prefer the term "Black," but this may change as public sentiment moves toward Afro-American.

Within the Black deaf community, there is the added controversy about how Black deaf people identify themselves. Adventitiously deafened Black adults usually consider cultural identification before deafness: "I am a Black, deaf person." By contrast, the person born deaf and raised around other deaf people usually considers himself to be deaf and Black, with stronger ties to the deaf community.

3. Shaping the Image

As noted previously, the image of the Black deaf person is usually suppressed or denied; in most cases, this is done unintentionally. The Black deaf community cannot fully identify with the Black community or with the deaf community, as it is an outsider in both. Community roles are already defined by seeing primarily white and hearing people in leadership positions; in deaf schools and institutions of higher education, less than 3% of the instructors are both Black and deaf; there is a lack of exposure to Black cultural events across the board; the deaf community has

little contact with the Black community; family information and folklore are not passed on to the Black deaf family members; the church, which plays a strong role in the Black community, has been absent to Black deaf people; and the economics and decision-making power in the deaf community are strongly dominated by the image of the deaf white male. These factors combine in a way that warps Black deaf people's images of themselves.

4. Refining the Image

What can we do as practitioners, parents, or concerned members of the community to improve what has thus far shaped and narrowed the identity and leadership potential of Black deaf individuals? To make our programs, family experiences, and training more effective, we are in need of the following:

R = Respect

Respect for the individual's racial heritage as well as deaf culture.

Look beyond the individual's formal training for wisdom and knowledge. Many older Black deaf adults have a wealth of experience that cannot be learned from books. There is a need for organizations to respect whomever Black deaf people have appointed to represent them instead of trying to select leaders and spokespersons for the Black deaf community.

R = Rapport

Get inside the person; forget about your personal agenda for a while. Even if the person is a child, find out who he or she is and what makes that individual tick—their interests, desires, accomplishments, fears, and opinions.

R = Recruitment

We must change our armchair mentality. The Black deaf community is not going to come to you until you reach out to it. Most programs are in the midst of the white community. Service providers will need to get out into the Black community and cultivate rapport. Many have said there are no deaf leaders in the Black community, but there are if you know

where to find them, or at least where to begin looking. Black deaf people can be found at social gatherings, deaf sports events, Black Deaf Advocates (BDA) chapters, some religious activities, and through information-gathering techniques.

R = Retainment

Many programs fail to retain the Black deaf support that they do have because of administrative and staff turnover without thought to the replacement's cultural savvy. Loyalty to an individual does not always transfer to the program.

Many of the Black deaf students entering Gallaudet and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) do not classify their experiences at these institutions as positive. Many do not stay until they graduate. The recruitment and retainment efforts, as well as support services for these students, are weak.

I = Inspire

Deaf people must be motivated and inspired to achieve their potential. There is a need to give continuous encouragement and positive feedback coupled with information and full involvement instead of sitting on the sidelines.

5. Taking a Look at Leadership

Good leaders are able to reflect on ideas, struggles, and problems of their time and be an inspiration to their followers. We have long confused frontrunners with leaders. To do something first paves the way for others; to be a leader, one must possess a very important element—followers. Without followers, there can be no leadership.

The Black deaf community has not sought the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) or the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) to represent its needs; very few Black deaf people even know the name of the current president of either group. These organizations and leaders have failed to inspire the people, to take a strong standpoint on defined issues, or to increase our power and economic stability. The only issue to inspire the deaf community recently was the Gallaudet revolt. Black and white deaf people should be rallying

support for the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), but where is the battle cry?

Within the last eight years, the Black deaf community has just begun to take firm roots as a national community with shared interests, experiences, and goals. The network that links these experiences has been joined by an increased number of Black deaf organizations and by the establishment of the National Black Deaf Advocates. We are finding that there are more Black deaf leaders out there than ever expected—leaders whom the Black deaf community has appointed for itself. Now there is a new generation of leaders emerging—people who bear watching: Evon Black, Lindsay Dunn, Nathie Marbury, Jack Burns, Lordy Smith, John Reid, and others. We have established guards in Lottie Crook, Ernest Hairston, Shirley Allen, and many others. We have silent warriors whose praises may never be sung, but who are there for us.

One of the larger current issues is economic stability. Black people and deaf people need to be involved at all levels of policy-making, programming, and implementation. Currently, Black deaf people are not equally represented in the political, educational, or rehabilitative arenas; more focus must be put on technological literacy, since those without it will be left behind both socially and economically. The Black deaf community must also continue to become more visible, taking an active part in the publication of professional journals and public interest magazines. We must focus on community cohesiveness, including Black and white, hearing and deaf individuals.

Traditionally, Black Americans and deaf Americans have been heirs of second-class citizenship; the stigma is doubly so for Black deaf Americans. However, the stigma must be left behind. As Black deaf people further their search for identity, leadership, and personal success, all of the elements of empowerment will come together.

Black deaf people will no longer be at the foot of the class; they'll be at the head of the boardroom.

Black deaf people will no longer be the afterthoughts of a program; they'll be the thinkers.

Black deaf people will no longer be on the sidelines; they'll be in the headlines.

About the Presenter

Sheryl Guest-Emery is a Black deaf social worker and rehabilitation counselor employed by the Department of Education, Michigan Rehabilitation Services. She obtained her B.A. at Gallaudet and her M.A. from New York University. From 1982 to 1986, she was the first executive director of the National Black Deaf Advocates, of which she is currently vice president.

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A Minority Within a Minority Within a Minority: Being Black, Deaf, and Female

Angela Gilchrist and Carolyn Emerson
Gallaudet University

1. Presentation Abstract

Historically, Black deaf females, due to their unique status as a minority within a minority within a minority, evoke the sad image of a multi-disadvantaged group characterized by poverty, social isolation, gross lack of communication skills, underemployment, and undereducation.

Being Black, deaf, and a woman is, in many ways, a "triple whammy" because of society's stereotyping of each of these three minorities. When the three minorities are combined in one person, the individual effects of prejudice, discrimination, and negative self-image are compounded exponentially. The Black deaf female is therefore deprived of a strong sense of racial pride as well as educational and career opportunities.

2. Presentation Objectives

A. To discuss perspectives on being a minority within a minority within a minority.
B. To foster sharing of common experiences from participants.
C. To discuss strategies for overcoming some of the barriers encountered by Black deaf females.
D. To share data on the rate of retention among Black deaf female college students.

3. Presentation Organization

A. Historical overview of minorities (20 min.)
B. Discussion (45 min.)
C. Questions and answers (10 min.)

Minority Within a Minority Within a Minority Outline

I. Overview of presentation and historical overview of minorities
   A. Blacks
   B. Females
   C. Black deaf females
II. Discussion
   A. "Barriers of life"—pieces of the pie
   B. Psychological effects
      1. Negative self-image
      2. Rejection
      3. Lack of social advancement
      4. Undereducation
      5. Underemployment
      6. Isolation
   C. Examples of retention based on data
      1. Undergraduate
      2. Graduate
   D. Myths about Black deaf females as minorities
   E. Strategies for overcoming some of the barriers encountered by Black deaf females
III. Conclusion
IV. References

Myths About Black Deaf Females

Listed below are some myths about Black females and Black deaf females held by society in general:

1. Most Black households are headed by females.
2. Because there are few Black deaf women professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation, most Black deaf females have no model to emulate and are given no inspiration to succeed.
3. Some employers are reluctant to hire Black deaf females in other than routine or minimal jobs due to preconceived notions that they are incompetent.
4. Black deaf females achieve well in school, but not many go on to college.
5. For many Black deaf women, early marriage and employment are the most common escape hatches from welfare programs.

6. To be successful, Black deaf females should learn to think and experience life in ways that are similar to white deaf females.
7. Black deaf females do not have as much to be proud of as white deaf females.
8. White deaf females are more dependable than Black deaf females.
9. Many Black deaf females do not want to work.
10. Black deaf females have no aspirations of their own.
11. There are many Black deaf males available for Black deaf females as mates.

Undergraduate Retention by Race

(U.S. Students Only)

The following table illustrates the degree to which minorities tend to withdraw from college-level programs at higher rates than their white counterparts. In fall 1987, 16% of the undergraduate student population were minorities; however, 18% of undergraduate students not returning were minorities.

Table 1.

	Enrolled Fall 1987	Graduated	Academic Dismissal	Withdrawn	Retained Fall 1988
White	1252	112 9%	55 41%	222 18%	863 69%
Black	104	2 2%	47 13%	160 22%	465 63%
Hispanic	62	3 5%	5 8%	10 16%	44 71%
Am. Indian/ Eskimo	6	0 0%	1 17%	3 50%	2 33%
Unknown	14	0 0%	0 0%	5 36%	9 64%

Graduate Retention by Race

(U.S. Students Only)

In 1987 minorities represented 10% of the U.S. graduate enrollment; however, 15% of the students withdrawing were minority students.

Causes for Declining Enrollment of Black Students

The following are some explanations for declining enrollment:

1. Federal aid cutbacks and changes. Today, the difference in financial aid usage between Blacks and whites is significantly reduced as middle class groups gain access to this financial pool.
2. Cutbacks in support services. Universities received federal and state funds after the civil rights legislative era to develop programs to recruit and retain minorities in higher education. When the government pulled back in its efforts, so did colleges.
3. Affirmative action. Most institutions have developed affirmative action policies that adhere to federal guidelines. Affirmative action procedures, not policies, become the only guarantee that Black students, faculty, and staff may gain and maintain equal access to higher education.
4. Colleges' efforts to tighten standards. Universities and colleges may be projecting a double message to potential Black students

Table 2.

	Enrolled	Graduated	Withdrawn	Retained Fall 1988
White	187	74 40%	29 15%	84 45%
Black	13	2 15%	3 23%	8 62%
Hispanic	6	3 50%	1 17%	2 33%
Asian Am.	2	0 0%	1 50%	1 50%
Am. Indian/ Eskimo	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

through their aggressive recruitment juxtaposed with "get tough" academic policies.

5. Black students' declining enrollment and lack of interest. Black children are taking, in the early grades, fewer of the basic courses necessary for developing skills, study habits, and content required to excel in science, math, and technology in the intermediate, high school, and college years.

Strategies for Overcoming Some of the Barriers That Black Deaf Females Encounter

1. Promotion of positive awareness of minority deaf women.
2. Implementation of a Black Deaf Women's Caucus.
3. Provision of workshops geared toward their needs.
4. Provision of cultural awareness programs.
5. Emphasis on psychosocial rehabilitative programs.
6. Implementation of support group meetings.

About the Presenters

Angela McCaskill-Gilchrist has been employed at Gallaudet for nine years, and is currently a professional academic advisor for pre-major students. She obtained her B.S. in social work from Alabama State University in 1980 and her M.S.W. from Howard University in 1984. She has a wealth of experience in academic and social development areas.

Carolyn McCaskill-Emerson is a career counselor at Gallaudet University. She has counseled deaf students at various levels in high school, community/agency, and postsecondary settings for 11 years. She received her B.A. in psychology-social work in 1977 and her M.A. in counseling with the deaf in 1979, both from Gallaudet.

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Minority Persons With Disabilities: Equal to the Challenges of the 21st Century

Sylvia Walker
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> To everything, there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
>
> (Ecclesiastes 3:1–8)

I'm sure that many of you are familiar with this quote from Ecclesiastes 3. These ancient words of Solomon were spoken well over 2,000 years ago. The 1990s are surely the time for creative and talented Black people who are deaf. It is a time for Black people who are deaf to dream impossible dreams and to accomplish what might be perceived as unattainable goals. As many of you know, I am currently a professor in one of the leading universities in the United States, if not the world (Howard University, Washington, D.C.). At present, I serve as director of the Center for Disability and Socioeconomic Policy Studies. In this capacity, I have the unique privilege of responding to a wide array of challenges. These range from preparing leaders in the fields of special education, rehabilitation, and related services to providing assistance to parents of children with disabilities. I would like to share a few of the experiences that have brought me to this time in my existence. This unique conference provides an opportunity for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, advocates, and professionals to focus on issues that are of special interest to Black people who have a hearing loss. I would like to provide a historical view of events that have brought us to this crossroads of opportunity.

Historical Perspectives

The attitudes of a specific society at any point in its existence are a manifestation of the cumulative experiences of individuals within that society (Walker, 1978, 1984). An examination of attitudes toward individuals who are deaf, as well as toward those who have other disabilities, suggests that across cultures, down through the ages, people with disabilities have consistently been relegated to low-status positions. Greek and Roman perceptions of disability and illness are detailed in the literature. Greeks considered people with disabilities and those who were ill to be inferior (Barker, Wright, Meyerson, & Gonick, 1953). Plato recommended that the deformed offspring of both the superior and the inferior be put away in some mysterious unknown place (Goldberg & Lippman, 1974). During the 16th century, Christians such as Luther and Calvin thought that individuals with hearing impairments were possessed by evil spirits. Thus, these men and other religious leaders of the time often subjected people with disabilities to mental and/or physical pain as a means of exorcising the spirits (Thomas, 1957). During the 19th century, supporters of social Darwinism opposed state aid to the poor and otherwise disabled because preserving the "unfit" could only impede the process of natural selection and damage the system whereby the "best" or "fittest" elements of society would rise to the top and the weakest elements would perish (Hobbs, 1973).

In a comparison of the status of people with disabilities in a number of non-occidental societies, Hanks and Hanks (1948) found wide differences. Some cultures completely rejected people with disabilities and treated them as outcasts; in others, they were treated as economic liabilities and were grudgingly kept alive by their families. However, in a few cultures, individuals with disabilities were given respected status and allowed to participate to the full extent of their capacities (Walker, 1986). Lukoff and Cohen (1972) speak of the blind who were banished and/or ill-treated in some places and given special privileges in others. The degree to which individuals who are deaf are accepted within a society is not directly proportional to the financial resources and/or technical know-how of that society. Lippman (1972) observes that, in many instances, small European countries such as Denmark and Sweden are more accepting of individuals with disabilities than is the United States. In addition, these countries provide more effective rehabilitation services. The prevailing philosophy in Scandinavian countries is acceptance of social responsibility for all members of society without regard to type or degree of disability.

Although many changes have taken place in relation to the status and treatment of people with disabilities throughout the world, the residue of tradition and past beliefs continues to influence present-day practices (DuBrow, 1965; Walker, 1984, 1986; Wright, 1978). Thomas (1957) views social perception and treatment of people with disabilities within and across cultural boundaries as a kaleidoscope of varying hues reflecting tolerance, hatred, love, fear, awe, reverence, and revulsion. In most societies, the most consistent feature in the treatment of individuals who are deaf is that they are categorized. "Deviance, rather than being an innate characteristic of the individual, is an attribute defined by society" (Lippman, 1972, p. 89). As Goffman (1963) indicated, society establishes the means of categorizing people and then decides on the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary for members of these categories. Attitudes towards deafness and other disabilities are, for the most part, based upon vague, superficial, and exterior impressions on the part of the non-disabled. Wright (1958) spoke of the phenomenon of "spread." In most instances, the initial response of the non-disabled to people who are deaf (or physically challenged) is to place them in a predetermined category based on what are assumed to be their attributes and status based on appearance. This one-dimensional approach with regard to people with disabilities has served to constrain, restrict, and propitiate negative concepts and economic dependence. For the most part, individuals with disabilities have been hidden away in attics, institutions, and "special programs." The labor shortage, brought about during the early 1940s by World War II, provided one of the first opportunities for substantial numbers of individuals with disabilities to be gainfully employed.

A historical review by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (1987) documents the fact that America's priority in those post-war years was to return jobs to veterans, not to reward people with disabilities who had performed civilian work at home. This is the way most people felt it should be. In retrospect, perhaps more should have been done to capitalize on the performance record of people with disabilities. In 1948, a study conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor provided information about job performance by people with disabilities. This survey found that, on the average, workers with disabilities had fewer accidents, were absent no more often, and, most importantly, were as productive, and at times more so, than workers without disabilities. These facts, surprising at the time, have since become common knowledge among employers; this is in large part

because of the leadership of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (1987).

From a historical perspective, the evolution of legislation in the United States relative to people with disabilities reflects three distinct social attitudes. The first is the older view, which considered people with disabilities, including those with hearing impairments, to be incompetent to take care of their own needs or incapable of full participation in life's activities; the second is the view that individuals with disabilities are capable of limited participation in some of life's activities. The corollary of these perspectives is a limited definition of public and private responsibility to people with disabilities. The third social attitude is the perspective that individuals with disabilities are capable of full participation in some or all of life's activities, and that a democratic society has a responsibility to establish and maintain an environment supportive of such participation (President's Committee, 1980).

Since the early 1960s, concern has increased substantially for people with hearing, mental, and physical disabilities. The spirit of concern for the rights of minority groups has resulted in greater judicial and legislative sensitivity. In 1972, two federal district court cases, *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (PARC) (Ingalls, 1978) and *Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia* (1972) had a tremendous impact upon the status of individuals with disabilities in America. These court actions created the foundation for the right of all children with disabilities to a publicly supported educational program suitable to their individual needs. A fundamental presumption of the current approach to the education of children with disabilities is that placement in a regular public school class with appropriate ancillary services is preferable to placement in isolated and/or restricted environments.

As a result of the PARC and Mills decisions, federal and state governments passed legislation that required that children with disabilities be educated; this resulted in a dramatic reversal of decades of neglect when compulsory education laws did not apply to children with disabilities. At the end of the 1960s, only 10 states had special education laws requiring special efforts to educate children with disabilities; by the end of the 1970s, all states had such laws. One year after PARC, Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504–45 C.F.R. 84.3). This legislation established the requirement that all federally assisted programs must be accessible to people with disabilities. According to this law, no otherwise qualified handicapped individual

in the United States may be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance solely by reason of his handicap. For purposes of Title V of the act, the term handicapped individual means any person who "(1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment" (p. 2).

The significance of Section 504 cannot be underestimated. The results of this legislation constituted an affirmative declaration that individuals desire to be educated to the fullest of their abilities and that American society has a responsibility to integrate individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of life. Education is part of the foundation for being able to earn one's living and to enjoy and contribute to the nation's economic and cultural development. Therefore, opportunities for communication and accessibility are essential in order for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to enjoy full access to educational facilities and employment opportunities.

Employment and Socioeconomic Issues

The current Bureau of Census figures show that, in many urban areas, the unemployment rate for minority persons is at least twice as high as it is for whites. Thus, many minority persons become caught in the dilemma of having to rely upon public assistance. Given this bleak economic outlook and the fact that a large proportion of Black Americans and other minority groups have low incomes and are just barely able to survive, the impact on the family unit of an individual with a disability presents a formidable problem (Walker, 1988, 1989). Non-disabled Black American families are three times as likely as their white counterparts to be unemployed: the unemployment rate for Black females is 14.3%, while for white females it is only 5.2%.

The 1986 Current Population Survey reported that 13.3 million non-institutionalized people in the United States have a work disability; this constitutes 8.6% of the working age population (16 to 64 years). A higher percentage of Black males (13.7%) and females (12.3%) are work disabled compared to Hispanics (7.9% for both males and females) or whites (8.6% for males and 7.6% for females). Black males (9.5%) are more than twice as likely to have a severe work disability than white males (4.2%). A similar pattern is observed in the female population,

where 8.9% of Black females and 4% of white females have a severe disability.

Of the 13.3 million people with a work disability, approximately one-third (33.6%) are in the labor force; the remainder are unemployed (President's Committee, 1987). This is in stark contrast to the non-disabled population, where 78.5% (104.9 million) participate in the labor force and only 6.8% are unemployed. Males, with or without work disabilities, have higher rates of participation in the labor force than do females. Among people with work disabilities, Hispanic females have the lowest rate of participation (20.4%); 22.4% of Black females and 28.1% of Black males participate in the labor force. With regard to unemployment rates among the work disabled, Black males (24%) are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as white males (14.1%) (Kraus & Stoddard, 1989).

Work disability has a significant effect on a person's annual income: the median annual income of individuals with a work disability ($6,434) is almost half that of people with no work disability ($13,403). Of the three groups—Black Americans, Hispanics, and whites—Black Americans with work disabilities have the lowest mean annual income. Whites, with or without a work disability, earn approximately $8,000 more than their Black American counterparts. The National Health Interview Survey for 1983–85 (LaPlante, 1988) reports that among people 18 to 69 years old, 6.6% (9.9 million) are unable to work, and 4.9% (7.5 million) are limited in amount and type of work activity due to chronic health conditions; in this latter group, Native Americans have the highest proportion (7%), compared to Black non-Hispanics (4.4%), Black Hispanics (4.2%), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (2.3%). These findings are consistent with research conducted at Howard University (Walker, 1986).

Jacobs (1987) makes the point that the buying power of Black Americans and many other minority individuals has diminished in real terms during the 1980s. Due to their high cost, care, medication, and/or aids (such as wheelchairs and hearing aids), which would assist the individual with a disability in gaining a degree of independence, frequently cannot be afforded. This creates the necessity for a greater degree of public assistance to the family of the minority person with a disability; the absence of supportive aids further limits the earning power of these families (Nicholls, 1986).

Black Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans who become disabled frequently find, if they are employed, that their jobs are not accessible; this is particularly true if they work in an old section of the community, where the barriers to access are the most numerous. If such

a person is the head of a household, the entire economic structure of the family is destroyed. Thus, minority individuals with disabilities are frequently unable to become totally integrated into community life because their range of mobility is restricted. The community labels them as inferior and does not provide free access to education or to social and cultural development. This isolation has serious ramifications for self-concept and educational achievement (Walker, 1988).

In spite of the critical needs identified above, relatively few research activities—with the exception of work conducted by Atkins (1986, 1988); Bowe (1985); Walker, Akpati, Roberts, Palmer, & Newsome (1986); and Walker (1988)—have focused specifically on the unique characteristics and needs of culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged disabled populations during the past 10 years. Disability is disproportionately represented among minority groups and people who are economically disadvantaged.

The 1981 Bureau of the Census data showed that out of 22.6 million Americans with some significant disability (aged 16–64), 4.6 million, or one-sixth, are non-whites. Proportionately, Black and other minority individuals with disabilities outnumber their white counterparts two to one. Non-white Americans with disabilities are generally older and unemployed. They are more likely to work in service oriented occupations that demand greater health hazards and risks (Bowe, 1985).

These inequalities were found to exist throughout all regions of the country. Implications for vocational rehabilitation program remediation were suggested by Atkins (1986, 1988), Walker et al. (1986), and Walker (1988). Other inequalities included the fact that Black American applicants were less likely to be accepted than whites for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services; consequently, Black Americans received fewer VR educational services and less training and financial aid for colleges, universities, business schools, and vocational schools.

The Lawrence Johnson Associates (1984) findings suggest that even though minority clients in general agencies may experience immediate positive outcomes as a result of VR (i.e., they find a job via VR), in the long run more majority clients in both general and blind agencies seem to realize more favorable outcomes (i.e., they reported having a job when surveyed after case closure). This may be due to the barriers to assisting minorities who were reported by counselors (i.e., barriers such as discrimination and economic conditions). It should be noted that because of limited work and educational experience, minority clients may rely to a greater extent than majority clients on getting work immediately;

however, after case closure, these same factors may deprive minority clients of continued employment.

Recommendations from a number of research reports and conferences have consistently cited the need to train minority and other professionals in order to equip them to respond to the unique and diverse needs of minority and economically disadvantaged individuals with disabilities (Walker, Asbury, Fosu, Gear, Maholmes, & Rackley, 1989). In addition to the development and expansion of undergraduate programs that prepare professionals (both non-white and white) to respond to the needs of Black and other minority groups with disabilities, there is a dire need to implement programs at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels. Such activities will facilitate the development of leadership, including researchers and administrators who may function at the local, state, and national levels. There is also a need to develop training and service activities that will expand the role of historically and predominantly Black colleges and universities in: (a) research and training of rehabilitation personnel, and (b) responding to the needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Very few of these institutions are currently involved in the rehabilitation community.

Current and Future Challenges

In addition to the dramatic changes in the types of employment opportunities available today, there are inconsistencies between the types of college graduates available and the demands and needs of the job market (Walker, 1988). In its publication, *Out of the Job Market: A National Crisis*, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (1987) gave examples to show that, in many instances, disability does not limit or impede functioning or job performance. It should be noted that one of the most amazing changes of the 1980s with respect to the possibility for gainful employment by people with disabilities was the emergence of high technology equipment and software that literally does what some disabilities prevent. Unfortunately, an individual who is economically disadvantaged and who may have a disability is least likely to have knowledge of or access to the benefits of these new technologies; therefore, the implementation of assessment, training, and dissemination activities is essential in order to close the gap. The expanded utilization of technology by deaf and other minority individuals with disabilities will expand their capabilities and render them more likely to be successfully employed. Scientific advances and medical research have made it

possible for many thousands of individuals to survive who would not have survived in the past (both infants and the elderly). Organ transplants and expert surgery provide potential for life that was unimagined in the past. The challenges for the future must deal not only with the length of life but with the quality of life.

Research conducted by the Hudson Institute (1987) revealed several startling trends with regard to the American workforce as we approach the year 2000. In addition to the new developments in technology, international competition, demography, and other factors will change the nation's economic and social landscape. The following trends were cited by the Hudson Institute Report:

1. The population and the workforce will grow more slowly.
2. The average age of the workforce and the population will rise, thus the pool of young workers entering the labor market will shrink.
3. More women will enter the workforce.
4. Immigrants will represent the largest share of the increase in the population and the workforce since the First World War (a projected 600,000 legal and illegal immigrants).
5. Persons with disabilities (including those with hearing impairments) and individuals from minority groups will be a larger share of new entrants into the labor force. It is projected that by the year 2000, this trend will escalate.

Many Blacks and other minority individuals are at the lower end of the educational and job skills spectrum. By contrast, the new jobs will demand much higher skill levels than the jobs of today. Very few jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow instructions, and use mathematics. These trends will lead to both higher and lower unemployment—more joblessness among the least skilled, and less among the most educationally and economically advantaged.

Current trends and challenges of the immediate future make it necessary to improve the educational preparation of all present and future workers, including Black individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Furthermore, there is a need to fully integrate disabled, economically disadvantaged, and ethnic minority workers into the economy. Given the pressing societal and economic demands, including the shrinking number of young people, the rapid pace of industrial change, and the ever-rising skill requirements of the emerging economy, it is essential that we respond to the task of fully utilizing the potential of Black people

who are deaf or hard of hearing, now and in the year 2000. These beautiful individuals are truly equal to the challenges of the 21st century. Their skills and abilities can assist America in maintaining her position as a world leader. This conference is an excellent springboard for the empowerment of Black persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

About the Presenter

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Sociolinguistic Issues in the Black Deaf Community

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Acknowledgments

The research reported here is part of an ongoing study of language contact in the American Deaf community that has been generously supported by the Gallaudet Research Institute and by the School of Communication at Gallaudet University since 1986. We gratefully acknowledge that support, as well as that of our participants and judges. We also thank Virginia Wulf for the preparation of the manuscript. Portions of this research are reported in C. Lucas (Ed.), *The Sociolinguistics of the Deaf Community* (1989). A full account of the study entitled *Language Contact in the American Deaf Community* will be published in 1992 by Academic Press.

Introduction

An important sociolinguistic issue in the American Deaf community concerns the outcome of language contact. Specifically, there exists a kind of signing that results from the contact between American Sign Language (ASL) and English that exhibits features of both languages. It has been claimed (Woodward, 1973; Woodward & Markowicz, 1975) that this kind of signing is a pidgin and is the result of Deaf-hearing interaction. The studies upon which these claims are based suffer from either a lack of data or data that are not interactional, as well as from the failure to include Black signers. This paper is part of an ongoing study of language contact, the overall goals of which are to provide a linguistic description of contact signing based on naturalistic data and to re-examine claims that it is a pidgin. In this paper, we will describe the data collection methodology used to elicit shifting between ASL and contact signing, in addition to the language use of Black signers.

Two other sociolinguistic issues in the Black Deaf community have to do with identity and education. During the interviews, the participants

were asked to discuss how they identified themselves: as Black first and Deaf second, or as Deaf first and Black second, and why. They were also asked to discuss whether they thought Black Deaf individuals have the same educational opportunities as white Deaf individuals.

These questions can be seen as representing sociolinguistic issues since language choice often plays a central role in identity, and perceptions and realities about equality in education may have a lot to do with the use of language in education (Kannapell, 1989). In this paper, we will present a summary of the participants' comments on identity and education and discuss the trends that emerged from these comments. Finally, we will discuss the implications of our findings.

Eliciting Contact Signing

It has been widely observed that members of the American Deaf community, be they Deaf or hearing, do not always sign American Sign Language (ASL).[1] There exists a kind of signing that results from the contact between ASL and English that exhibits features of both languages.[2] It has been claimed that this kind of signing is the result of Deaf-hearing interactions and is a pidgin (Woodward, 1973; Woodward & Markowicz, 1975; Reilly & McIntire, 1980). The label PSE (Pidgin Sign English) is widely used in the Deaf community to describe this kind of signing. These claims depend upon the integrity of videotaped data; however, a notable problem with earlier descriptions concerns lack of data or problems with the data used to back up claims about the linguistic nature of the signing being described. Neither in Woodward (1973) nor in Woodward and Markowicz (1975) is there any description of the sample that serves as the source for the list of features proposed for PSE. Woodward (personal communication, 1988) has indicated that the description of

1. American Sign Language (ASL) is the visual-gestural language used by members of the Deaf community in the United States. It is a natural language with an autonomous grammar that is quite distinct from the grammar of English. ASL is also quite distinct from artificially developed systems that attempt to encode English that can include the use of speech, ASL signs, and invented signs used to represent English morphemes. There are a number of such systems, which are often referred to by the generic term signed English.

2. Based on a preliminary examination of the linguistic and sociolinguistic data, we are reluctant at this point to call the contact signing that we have observed a variety or a dialect, and the absence of such labels in the present study is conscious. Further study may reveal the need for such a label.

PSE was based in part on a sample from his dissertation: 140 individuals, ranging in age from 13 to 55, with 9 Black signers and 131 white signers. But these data are still problematic as the basis for a description of language contact because (1) the data were elicited by a hearing researcher on a one-to-one basis with the use of a questionnaire and were not interactional; and (2) the signers providing these data range from Deaf native ASL signers to hearing non-native signers, making it virtually impossible to separate features of the language produced that are a function of language contact from features that are a function of second-language acquisition. For example, Woodward and Markowicz (1975) claim that the ASL rule of negative incorporation can occur in PSE but that "deaf signers use more negative incorporation than hearing signers" (p. 18). This may indeed be true, but it might also reflect a difference in language competence (i.e., native signers knowing and competently using a rule that non-native signers may be in the process of learning), rather than a reflection of language contact between hearing and Deaf signers.

It seems that Deaf language production and hearing language production in a language contact situation are necessarily different by virtue of differences in language acquisition backgrounds. Also, the features of contact signing (PSE) cannot be described based on data that not only combine native and non-native signers' productions but also are not interactional.

Researchers have certainly been aware of the need to distinguish between native and non-native production. In fact, Lee (1982) reports that Stokoe (personal communication) suggests that there may in fact be two PSE continuums: a PSE_d produced by deaf signers and a PSE_h produced by hearing signers. PSE_d is likely to have more ASL grammatical structures and to omit English inflections. PSE_h tends to have greater English influence and rarely approaches the ASL extreme of the continuum (Lee, 1982, p. 131). The need for separation of data source is thus recognized, but this need is not reflected in the actual descriptions of PSE that are produced. Thus, Reilly and McIntire (1980) base their description of the differences between ASL and PSE on videotapes of a children's story that was signed by four informants. Three of these informants were hearing. Three informants have Deaf parents. Two of the three hearing informants did not use sign in childhood. The instructions for different versions of the story were given either in ASL or, as Reilly and McIntire (1980) describe, "in PSE and spoken in English simultaneously . . . or interpreted, i.e., signed as they were being read aloud by the investigator" (p. 155).

Figure 1. The Composition of the Black Dyads and Triads

Participant	A	B	C
Dyad 7	Deaf at age 3, hearing family, mainstreamed, then residential school at 9	Born deaf, hearing family, residential school	
Dyad 8	Born deaf, hearing family, mainstreamed, then residential school at 11	Born deaf, hearing family, mainstreamed then MSSD at 13	
Dyad 9	Born deaf, hearing family, residential school	Deaf at 7 months, hearing family, mainstreamed, then residential school at 10	
Dyad 10	Born deaf, hearing family, mainstreamed, then residential school at 10	Hard of hearing, became deaf at 15, mainstreamed, then residential school at 12	
Triad 11	Early onset, hearing family (deaf sister), mainstreamed, then KDES at 11	Born deaf, hearing family, residential school	Born hearing, deaf at 8 1/2
Triad 12	Born deaf, hearing family, residential school at 4	Born deaf, hearing family, KDES at 6	Born deaf, hearing family, KDES at 3

Although there is an awareness of the need to control for the variable of signer skill, and the description of PSE is based on videotaped data, the problem of separating the consequences of language contact from the consequences of second language learning arises in Reilly and McIntire's (1980) study. In their conclusion, they observe:

> It seems that there is a gradation from structures that are more obvious to the language learner (classifiers and directional verbs) to those that are more and more subtle (sustained signs and facial and other non-manual behaviors). This gradation is reflected in differential usage by different signers. (p. 183)

Once again, we encounter the "apples and oranges" dilemma, resulting from descriptions of PSE based on sign production of signers with different levels of competence and ages of acquisition. Furthermore, data

Figure 2. The Structure of the Interviews

	1st Interview	2nd Interview
Situation 1: With Deaf interviewer (Interruption)	White Interviewer	Black Interviewer
Situation 2: Informants left alone	White Interviewer	Black Interviewer
Situation 3: With hearing interviewer (Interruption)		
Situation 4: Informants left alone	White Interviewer	Black Interviewer
Situation 5: With Deaf interviewer		

collection in analogous spoken language situations does not typically yield naturalistic data, and accordingly, it is not clear that the data upon which Reilly and McIntire's description of PSE is based bear any resemblance to language production in a natural language contact situation. It is fair, then, to say that studies claiming to describe the linguistic outcome of language contact in the American Deaf community to date may not reflect the actual situation, owing either to a lack of data or problematic data.

Clearly, any study that proposes to describe the linguistic outcome of language contact in the American Deaf community should, at the very least, take its departure from data collected in naturalistic interactional settings that reflect actual language contact situations as closely as possible.[3] Toward this end, 10 dyads and two triads of informants were formed in our study, for a total of 26 individuals. Six of the dyads were composed of white signers; the four remaining dyads and the two triads were composed of Black signers. In this paper we will focus on the Black signers. Figure 1 shows the composition of the Black dyads and triads.

All of the participants in each dyad and triad knew each other, and all of the participants described themselves as competent in both ASL and English. However, we draw a distinction between the participants in groups 7, 8, 9, and 10 and the participants in groups 11 and 12.

3. An extensive account of the study, including a description of the linguistic features of contact signing and an explanation as to why it is not appropriate to characterize it as a pidgin, can be found in C. Lucas and C. Valli's *Language Contact in the American Deaf Community* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1992).

In groups 7, 8, 9, and 10, all of the participants are from hearing families, and only two were early learners of ASL, having entered residential schools as small children. (In fact, participant 9A has hearing parents who worked in the residential school and signed.) The other six participants in these groups were all mainstreamed and did not enter residential schools until late childhood or early adolescence, making them relatively late learners of ASL. On the other hand, one of the participants in groups 11 and 12 is from a Deaf family, and the remaining five participants were all early learners of ASL.[4]

During the interviews, video cameras were present, but at no point were the technicians visible. Our efforts to carefully control the interview situations reflect our recognition of the distinction between Deaf people and hearing people. Informal observational and anecdotal evidence suggests that this distinction is an important variable in the outcome of language contact in the American Deaf community. Deaf individuals not only sign quite differently with other Deaf individuals than with hearing individuals, but they may initiate interactions in one language and radically switch when the interlocutor's ability to hear is revealed. For example, a Deaf native ASL user may initiate an interaction with another individual whom he believes to be Deaf or whose audiological status has not been clarified. The latter participant may well be a near-native user of ASL. Once the latter's hearing ability becomes apparent, however, it is not unusual for the Deaf participant to automatically switch "away from ASL" to a more English-based form of signing. Code choice is thus sensitive to the ability versus inability of participants to hear, and this distinction is carefully attended to in our study. In particular, the interviewers were very careful to indicate whether they were hearing or Deaf to the participants. Furthermore, there is some research evidence that Black signers' signing varies as a function of their communication

4. For readers not familiar with the American Deaf community, a word of explanation about the central role of the residential school is perhaps in order: since 5 percent or less of Deaf children are born to Deaf parents (and hence have access to ASL as a native language), the residential schools for the deaf have been the crucibles of language acquisition since their inception. Many Deaf children acquire ASL as their primary language from their peers in the context of the residential school. Many Deaf children from Deaf families also attend residential schools and frequently assume the role of language models for their peers. Conversely, children in mainstream programs often end up with no exposure to sign language at all, or with exposure via hearing, non-native signers, such as interpreters or teachers.

Figure 3. The Interview Questions

Interview #1	1. In a public place, it is okay for a person to offer to help you when they find out you are deaf. Agree or disagree?
	2. The hearing children of Deaf parents are members of Deaf culture. Agree or disagree?
	3. Residential schools are better than mainstreaming. Agree or disagree?
Interview #2	1. Jane Bassett Spilman was right when she remarked that "Deaf people are not ready to function in the hearing world." Agree or disagree?
	2. Most Black Deaf people have the same educational opportunities as White Deaf people. Agree or disagree?
	3. Most Black Deaf people are Black first and Deaf second. Agree or disagree?
Groups 11 & 12	4. What do you think of the current communication controversy on campus?

partner (Aramburo, 1989). Each Black dyad and triad interacted with not two interviewers (Deaf and hearing), but four, as follows: Black Deaf, Black hearing, white Deaf, and white hearing. Each Black dyad and triad participated in two interviews, on separate days. The structure of the interviews is shown in Figure 2.

Each interview consisted of a discussion of several broad topics of interest to members of the Deaf community and to the Black Deaf community, as seen in Figure 3. Statements were presented and participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed, and why.

It was predicted that (1) the situation with the Deaf interviewers would induce ASL, but the relative formality of the situation and the presence of a stranger might preclude it; (2) the situation with the hearing interviewers would induce a shift away from ASL to contact signing; and (3) the informants alone with each other would elicit ASL.[5]

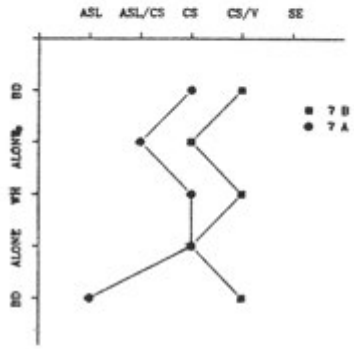
The Outcome of Language Contact

Figures 4 and 5 show the patterns of language use for the Black dyads and triads. As with the white participants, the Black participants used language differently, depending on the situation. For example, in Dyad 7, participant A began with contact signing in the presence of the

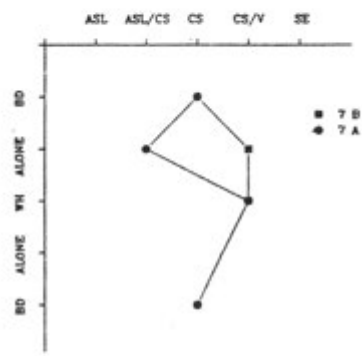
5. The entire methodology was first designed and employed by Robert E. Johnson, Scott Liddell, Carol Erting, and Dave Knight in a pilot project entitled "Sign Language and Variation in Context," sponsored by the Gallaudet Research Institute.

Figure 4. Patterns of Language Use for Dyads 7 and 8

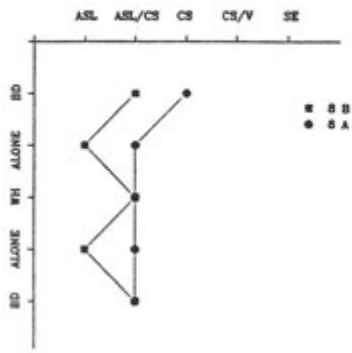
BD	Black Deaf
WD	White Deaf
BH	Black Hearing
WH	White Hearing



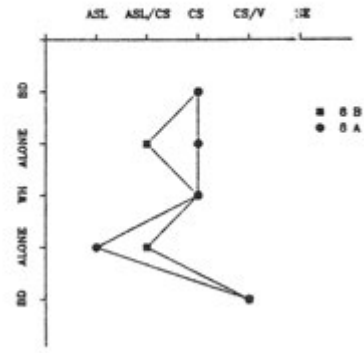
DYAD 7, FIRST INTERVIEW



DYAD 7, SECOND INTERVIEW



DYAD 8, FIRST INTERVIEW



DYAD 8, SECOND INTERVIEW

Figure 4 (Cont.). Patterns of Language Use for Dyads 9 and 10

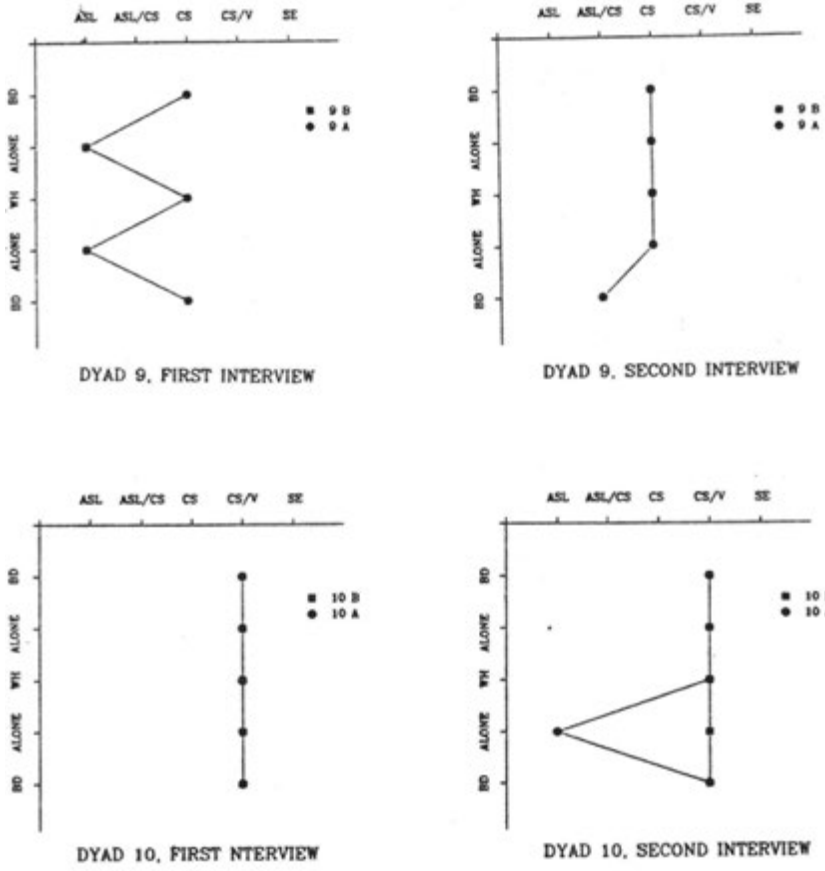
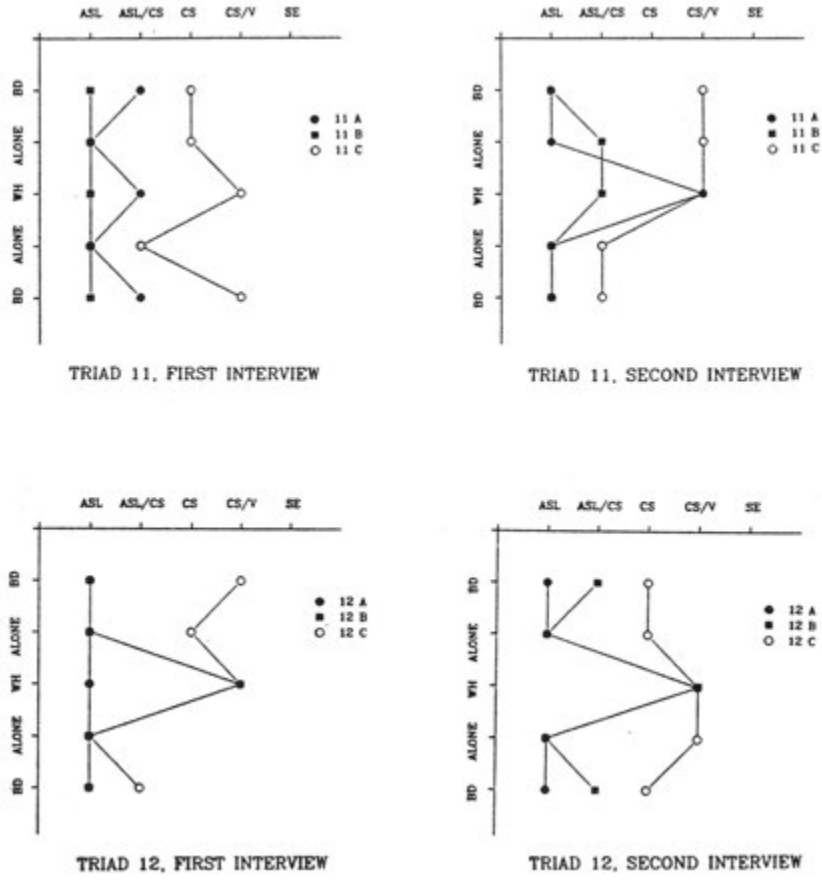


Figure 5. Patterns of Language Use for Triads 11 and 12



Black Deaf interviewer, signed more ASL when the dyad was left alone, moved back to contact signing when the white hearing interviewer appeared, and switched to ASL when the Black Deaf interviewer reappeared. This in contrast to 7B, who, while describing herself as a skilled ASL user and demonstrating ASL skill in informal settings, never used ASL during the interview, alternating between contact signing without voice (cs) and contact signing with voice (cs_v). Similar patterns of language use emerged for Dyads 8, 9, and 10 and for Triads 11 and 12.

As we remarked earlier, the Black signers and the white signers made different language choices depending on the situation. However, we did notice some differences between the Black signers and the white signers, and among the Black signers themselves. For example, the signers in Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10 showed more convergence than did the white

signers (Valli, 1988). That is, the two members of the dyad tended to make the same choices and to mirror each other's behavior. The signers in Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10 also used a lot less ASL than the white signers; they used some ASL with the Black Deaf and the white Deaf interviewers, but none at all with the hearing interviewers. However, they used no signed English; with the hearing interviewers, they used contact signing, regardless of the race of the interviewer.

The signers in Triads 11 and 12 made different choices. They showed less convergence than in Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10, and they were more like the white signers in that three participants may have been using two or three different modes simultaneously. For example, in Triad 11, the interview began with the white Deaf interviewer using ASL. Participant 11B used ASL; 11A used ASL with some contact signing, but 11C began with contact signing and did not use ASL until the group was left alone for the second time. The participants in Triad 11 and 12 also used a lot more ASL than the participants in Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10. Like the white participants, there were two Black participants who used ASL all the way through one interview with the white interviewers. With Triads 11 and 12, ASL was found in all situations except with the Black hearing interviewers.

To account for the differences between Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10 and Triads 11 and 12, we will recall that six of the eight participants in Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10 learned ASL as adolescents, as opposed to the participants in Triads 11 and 12, all but one of whom are native or early learners of ASL. The behavior of the participants in the triads paralleled the behavior of the white participants, all of whom are native or early learners, and we suggest that age of acquisition may play some role in sociolinguistic choices. In general, the native or early learners, be they Black or white, seem to be more comfortable using ASL with hearing people, and in situations where more than one mode is being used.

In keeping with our prediction, many of the informants produced a form of signing that is other-than-ASL with the hearing interviewer—either contact signing or signed English with voice. In some cases, the informants produced ASL with the Deaf interviewer and while alone with each other, as expected. However, some unexpected results emerged. For example, two informants used ASL with the hearing interviewer, contrary to a widely held belief that Deaf native signers automatically switch away from ASL in the presence of a non-native signer. Furthermore, two of the informants (11B and 12A) used ASL consistently across all situations in one interview. One might predict that both of these informants come from

Deaf families; however, both are from hearing families. Another unexpected result is the production of contact signing with the Deaf interviewer and when the informants were left alone; the Deaf interviewers consistently signed ASL, and it was predicted that the informants would produce ASL in this situation and when left alone. These results are particularly noteworthy given another widely held belief that Deaf native signers will consistently sign ASL with each other if no hearing people are present.

The observations on the overall pattern of language use during the interviews are summarized in Figures 6A and 6B. These observations appear to challenge the traditional perspective on language contact in the American Deaf community. For example, it is traditionally assumed that contact signing (known as PSE) appears in Deaf-hearing interaction for the obvious reason that the hearing person might not understand ASL. On the extreme is the position that the very purpose of contact signing is to prevent hearing people from learning ASL (Woodward & Markowicz, 1975). More measured approaches simply describe contact signing as the product of Deaf-hearing interaction. Little is said, however, about the use of contact signing in exclusively Deaf settings. Although the need for comprehension might explain the occurrence of contact signing in Deaf-hearing interaction, it is clearly not an issue in portions of the interviews described here, as all of the participants are native or near-native signers and, in some instances, sign ASL with each other. The choice to use contact signing with other Deaf ASL natives, then, appears

Figure 6A. Summary of Findings on Language Use

I. Participants who learned ASL as adolescents (Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10):

- show switching behavior that indicates sensitivity to the interview situation, like white participants.
- in general, show more convergence than white participants; two people in an interview tend to do the same thing.
- use ASL much less than white participants—they use it only occasionally with Black Deaf, with white Deaf, and when they are alone; however, they do not use signed English either.

II. Participants who learned ASL as their native language or as children (Triads 11 and 12):

- show switching behavior like all other participants.
- show less convergence than Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10; they are more like the white participants in their divergence (all white participants are early or native signers).
- use ASL much more than Dyads 7, 8, 9, and 10; they use it in all situations except with the Black hearing interviewer.

Figure 6B. Summary of Findings on Language Use (Continued)

What we expected:	What we did not expect:
Contact signing with hearing people.	Contact signing with Deaf people.
ASL with Deaf people.	ASL with hearing people.
	Two or three different modes at once.
	Apparent effect of age of acquisition on sociolinguistic choices.

to be motivated by sociolinguistic factors. Two factors identified in the present study are the formality of the interview situation (including the presence of videotape equipment) and the participant's lack of familiarity, in some cases, with both the interviewer and the other informant.

The videotaped data also clearly present counter-evidence to the claim that Deaf people never or rarely sign ASL in the presence of hearing people, as two of the informants chose to sign ASL throughout their respective interviews. This choice may be motivated by other sociolinguistic factors, such as the desire to establish one's social identity as a bona fide member of the Deaf community or cultural group, a desire that may supersede considerations of formality and lack of familiarity with one's cointerlocutor(s). Clearly, different sociolinguistic factors motivate the language choices of different individuals. Indeed, it is this interrelationship between language attitudes and language choices that prompted Stokoe (1969) to describe the language situation in the Deaf community as diglossic—that is, strict ASL in some contexts and a more English-like signing in others, with no overlap. In re-examining this characterization of the language situation in the Deaf community as diglossic, Lee (1982) states that although "there is indeed variation [in the deaf community] . . . code-switching and style shifting rather than diglossia appear to be the norm" (p. 127). Three of Ferguson's (1959) nine criteria for diglossia are linguistic (lexicon, phonology, and grammar), while six are described by Lee as sociolinguistic (acquisition, literary heritage, standardization, prestige, stability, and function). As she (Lee, 1982) observes, "I have found none of the nine characteristics actually consistent with diglossia, at least in some parts of the linguistic community" (p. 147).

Although it is not clear at this point what the roles of code-switching and style shifting are in the Deaf community, it is clear from Lee's re-examination of Stokoe's (1969) work and from the present data that the language situation in the Deaf community is not strictly diglossic. Clearly, some of the informants in our study saw ASL as inappropriate

for any part of the interview. Other informants saw ASL as appropriate only when no interviewer was present. The claim that ASL is regarded as appropriate only when the interviewers are absent is further supported by the informants who switched away from ASL to contact signing when the Deaf interviewer reappeared at the end of the interview. Any attempt, however, to claim that this is evidence of diglossia is quickly thwarted by the informants who used ASL in all of the interview situations, with no apparent regard for formality, familiarity, or audiological status of the cointerlocutor(s).

Issues of Identity and Education

As we mentioned earlier, the two most pertinent questions used during the interviews were:

- Most Black Deaf people say that they are Black first and Deaf second—do you agree or disagree?
- Black Deaf people have the same educational opportunities as white Deaf people—do you agree or disagree?

Figures 7 and 8 show a summary of the participants' responses to both questions, and Figure 9 shows a synthesis of the issues that consistently emerged during the discussion of these two questions. In terms of identity, the Black Deaf participants demonstrated the same perspective as the white participants on deafness as a cultural event, as opposed to a perspective on deafness as a medical emergency. Several participants identified themselves as Deaf first on the basis of socializing patterns and language use, and clearly saw deafness as a matter of identity and not of pathology. At the same time, there was a variability in the self-descriptions, similar to the variability found by Edwards and Chisholm (1987) in a study of language, multiculturalism, and identity in Canada. There were two very striking issues that consistently emerged. One was what we will call "inside vs. outside." That is, many of the participants stated that they identified themselves as Deaf first, but they were aware that most people in the outside world would identify them as Black first because of the "invisibility" of deafness. The second was the issue that can be summarized as "it depends on whom I'm with." Some participants said that in a Deaf group, they identified as Black first, but that

Figure 7. Summary of Comments on Identity

- I'm Black first. At the residential school, I felt Deaf first. When I came to Gallaudet, I learned about Blackness, and about discrimination—maybe color is more important than Deafness.
- I feel that I'm Deaf, but other people see me as hearing (before they know I'm deaf), so they see me as Black.
- Both are important: Black and Deaf.
- Black first, but I'm proud to be Deaf too.
- Some feel they are Deaf first and Black second, but I'm Black first and Deaf second because people see my color and then realize that I'm Deaf—color is really powerful.
- Now, I socialize a lot with Deaf people, and I feel Deaf first—people accept me as I am.
- I'm Deaf—I grew up Deaf, went to residential school, have many Deaf friends, my parents sign (they work at a residential school); I know I'm Black, but I'm Deaf first.
- 50/50. I think of myself mostly as Deaf; the outside world identifies me as Black. To the Deaf group, I feel Black; to hearing, I feel Deaf. Before, I thought Black first; later, Deaf first. Now, 50/50.
- I'm Black first; I'm proud to be Black. Being Deaf is frustrating, not a matter of pride.
- If I'm with a Deaf group, then I'm Deaf Black; if I'm in a Black group, then I'm Black and Deaf too.
- Black. My color is Black and I socialize with Deaf people.
- Black first. If I had been raised equally Black and Deaf.

in a hearing group, they identified as Deaf first. Others said that with white people, they felt Deaf first, but with a Black group, they felt Black first. This brings to mind a study done by Broch (1987) on ethnicity in a multiethnic community in Indonesia. Based on the observation that brothers and sisters in the same community may choose to stress different ethnic identities, Broch proposed the concept of dual ethnicity that may be manifested through language. He suggests that "ethnicity should not be regarded as an imperative status. Rather ethnicity is situational and enables the social actors alternative options for interactions . . . Ethnic identifiers are openly manipulated, and relate to various social situations people confront in their daily lives" (p. 19). At this point, we cannot say whether Black Deaf individuals perceive their dual ethnicity

Figure 8. Summary of Comments on Education

- If Blacks socialize with whites, they get a good education; Blacks alone, not so good. Blacks involved with whites know more, and Blacks in a Black school are limited.
- Whites have more.
- Education is better than before.
- White teachers teach white kids more, and they don't teach Black kids enough; white teachers focus on white kids and ignore Black kids.
- Black and white are no different; it depends on where they grew up and their education. If parents have a weak background, and they don't understand about Deafness, then the kids have a worse education.
- I can't see any difference because in my school, Blacks and whites were together.
- Blacks have no role models, no leadership. White teachers are paid better than Black. White teachers have low expectations: "You can't because you're Black." They made me think I don't have potential, that I have limitations, and they put me in low classes. With Black teachers, I realized that I can be a leader.
- Equal.
- Equal but Black students have to be two times better than white students.

Figure 9. Identity and Education Issues That Consistently Emerge

Identity:
• As with white Deaf, awareness of deafness is a cultural event as opposed to a medical emergency
• There is much variability in self-descriptions (Edwards & Chisolm, 1987)
• Inside vs. outside perspective: how I see myself vs. how others see me
• "It depends on who I'm with"—identity may shift depending on with whom Black Deaf persons are socializing
• Knowledge of Black history is a factor in Black pride and identity
• The role of the residential school in Deaf identity
Education:
• Socializing patterns: Black with white vs. Black with Black
• White teachers' expectations and focus
• Equal, but . . . Black students have to be twice as good as white students

as alternative options for social interaction, nor do we have enough data to adequately describe the role of language in dual ethnicity in the Deaf community. However, it would seem to be an extremely interesting and fruitful area for further research.[6]

As for education, the participants generally agreed that the educational opportunities available to Black Deaf people were not comparable to those available to white Deaf individuals. It is interesting to note that of the two individuals who saw no difference in educational opportunities, one attended a totally integrated residential school and the other, while attending a Black residential school, has parents who sign and had very early access to language. In fact, that participant's explanation for inequity in education had to do with lack of parental knowledge about deafness.

Implications of the Findings

At this point, we would suggest that our study provides a data-based picture of language use in the American Deaf community, and that such a picture can be useful in policy decisions concerning empowerment in general and education and interpreting in particular. For example, it is clear from our data that language use in the Deaf community is complex and diverse, not monolithic and uniform. An awareness of that complexity and diversity may lead to an improved understanding of sociolinguistic competence—competence that can serve as a foundation for further learning. That is, many of the participants in our study clearly feel that different language choices are appropriate for different situations; they display sociolinguistic competence in their situationally appropriate language use. Educators can use that competence to build other language skills, such as the appropriate use of formal and informal registers in written English, or the use of formal ASL in a job interview. Interpreter trainers can use their awareness of the complexity and diversity to prepare interpreters who are able to assess and respond appropriately to any interpreting situation. Likewise, an open awareness of the dual issues could inform curriculum development and teacher training. Several participants stated, for example, that a knowledge of Black history was a major factor in their identity as Black first; similarly, the one participant

6. For a complete discussion of the concept of deafness as ethnicity, see Johnson and Erting (1989).

who identified himself as Deaf first went to a residential school and has parents who were employed at the school, signed, and had an awareness about deafness. It would seem that curricula could include information about Black history and Black culture and about Deaf history and the Deaf community. It would seem that teachers could only benefit from awareness of dual ethnicity.

At the end of our presentation at the conference, a member of the audience approached us to say that he had found the presentation interesting, and that it was a good start. That is precisely how we view this paper. The sociolinguistic issues that we discuss—language use, identity, and education—are among the issues that deserve and, it is to be hoped, will receive more attention by researchers and educators.

About the Presenters

Clayton Valli received his B.A. in social psychology from the University of Nevada in Reno in 1978 and his M.A. in linguistics from Gallaudet in 1985. Currently, he is working toward his Ph.D. in linguistics at the Union Graduate School. He is an instructor in Gallaudet's Department of Linguistics and Interpreting, serves as a consultant/researcher for a variety of sign language research projects, and gives workshops and lectures related to ASL structure, Deaf culture, and ASL poetry.

Ruth Reed received her B.A. in sociology and is employed as a teacher aide in the Special Opportunity Program at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School. In addition, she teaches in Gallaudet's Programs in Adult and Continuing Education.

Norman T. Ingram, Jr. was born deaf in St. Louis, MO, and was raised in Michigan. He attended the Michigan School for the Deaf until he graduated in 1970, and received his B.A. from Gallaudet in 1977. For the last 16 years, Mr. Ingram has been employed as a carpenter at Gallaudet University. He is married to the former Catherine Lennon. Mr. Ingram worked with Ruth Reed, Clayton Valli, and Dr. Ceil Lucas as an interviewer of Black Deaf signers for their project on Black Deaf culture in the Black community.

Ceil Lucas has taught in the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting at Gallaudet University since 1982. Her major areas of interest include the structure of American Sign Language and the sociolinguistics of the Deaf community. She has edited *The Sociolinguistics of the Deaf Community* (1989, Academic Press), *Sign Language Structure: Theoretical Issues* (1990, Gallaudet University Press), and *ASL PAH! Deaf Students'*

Perspectives on Their Language (1992, Linstok Press, co-editors Clayton Valli, Esme Farb, and Paul Kulick), and, with Clayton Valli, co-authored *Linguistics of ASL: A Resource Text for ASL Users* (1992, Gallaudet University Press; student text, teacher's manual, videotape) and *Language Contact in the American Deaf Community* (1992, Academic Press).

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Sociolinguistic Aspects of the Black Deaf Community

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Introduction

The black deaf community can be described as a group of individuals who live in a "hearing- and color-conscious society" (Anderson, 1972). Black deaf people continually strive to overcome communication problems; in addition, they must deal with the racist attitudes that govern our society. As a group, they appear to be immersed in both black culture and deaf culture.

At least three issues surface as a result of this "double immersion." One issue concerns the reality of the black deaf community, which is distinct from both the black community and the deaf community. A second issue concerns identity: given the double immersion in both black culture and deaf culture, it is possible that a black deaf person's primary identity may be black, deaf, or black deaf. A third issue concerns communication patterns: the differences between black and white signing, including sign variation and code-switching.

This study investigates these issues and presents empirical data that permit a clearer sociolinguistic perspective than has heretofore been possible. Data relating to identity consist of the results of a survey conducted with 60 black deaf individuals; data relating to black-white communication patterns consist of videotapes of the conversational interaction of seven dyads controlled for race, audiological status, and signing skills.

The Black Deaf Community

As defined by Hillery (1974), a community is a general social system in which a group of people live together, share common goals, and carry out certain responsibilities to each other. Loomis (1983) states that communities strive to protect the resources that will serve to inform future generations of their cultural past. Padden (1980) distinguishes between culture and community, referring to the former as a set of learned

behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules for behavior, and traditions; she points out that, in addition to culturally deaf people, the community can include both hearing people and audiologically deaf people who interact with culturally deaf people and who see themselves as working for solutions to various common concerns. Further evidence for the existence of both a black community and a deaf community is presented elsewhere (Higgins, 1980; Padden, 1980).

As stated above, the first issue concerns the reality of the black deaf community as distinct from both the black community and the deaf community. The contention is that there is a black deaf community that shares some characteristics and values of both the black community and the deaf community; in addition, it has some unique characteristics and values. With the black community, the black deaf community shares the struggle of overcoming societal prejudices and racism. The unemployment rate is higher in the black community than in the white community; among the black deaf, it is higher still. Indeed, underemployment is rampant in both black communities (Christiansen & Barnartt, 1987). In addition, there are few black political leaders in the black community, and in the black deaf community they are non-existent. The black community and the black deaf community share their black heritage, and the struggles that blacks endured to obtain their civil rights are salient in both.

The features shared by the black deaf community and the deaf community are largely in the domain of communication. Within the deaf community, American Sign Language (ASL) is important to socialization. Social activities, such as deaf sports events, deaf club activities, and deaf-related conferences and meetings, attract deaf people because they share a common mode of communication. Aside from this, stereotypes that classify the deaf as dumb, uneducated, and unable to work must be overcome by all deaf people in a "hearing world"; black deaf people and lower-class whites have additional stereotypes placed on them.

Characteristics and values unique to the black deaf community can be identified through patterns of social interaction, education, and use of sign language. For example, in most cities, the social clubs used by the black deaf community cater primarily to them (Higgins, 1980); the white deaf community uses separate facilities. No laws or rules mandate this occurrence; it simply happens. The clubs are used to disseminate information about how the group will carry out certain functions: club meetings, sports events, dances, card socials, and personal celebrations, such as birthdays and anniversaries, all happen at the club house; information

related to jobs, problems that members are faced with, and new laws pertaining to deaf people are available there as well. In addition, black deaf individuals tend to marry among themselves, typically with someone who attended the same residential school. When a black deaf individual does marry a hearing person, that hearing spouse is usually black.

Educational patterns provide further evidence of the existence of a black deaf community. In recent years, the black and deaf communities have made significant achievements in the area of education. Blacks no longer need to settle for an education that is "separate but equal"; they can freely attend any school or university for which they are qualified. During the days of racial segregation, however, most elementary school programs for black deaf children were set up on all-black campuses. Although there were good intentions for educating this special group of students, the reality was that the tools and personnel needed to achieve the best results were not available; the programs were mediocre (Hairston & Smith, 1983), and in most cases the administrative personnel had no expertise in the field of deaf education. Teachers in black schools for deaf students were not required to have college credits related to the education of deaf children, and college programs that provided black students with a degree in education offered no such coursework. Teachers did their best to provide black deaf students with a decent education; however, the problem of communication persisted.

Early educational programs for deaf students did not require that teachers were well-versed in American Sign Language, and programs designed to teach sign language to teachers were scarce. In many schools for the deaf, sign language was not permitted in the classroom—the predominant mode for teaching was the manual alphabet, and often entire lessons were fingerspelled; needless to say, a solid grasp of the English language was required in order to comprehend what was being taught. In many cases, the home environment was not the ideal place to learn English, so the students had a great deal of difficulty.

Today, black deaf children who are born to hearing parents face the same communication predicament as their peers in the past—namely, many hearing parents refuse to communicate with their children through sign language. Parents often leave the burden of educating their child solely to the school system. Black deaf children born to deaf parents have an advantage over their peers with hearing parents, since deaf parents communicate with their children through sign language. When these students go to the residential schools, they bring sign language with them; this provides a means of communication other than

fingerspelling. Outside the classroom, students converse using sign language; playground activities and other non-school-related activities permit students to develop their language and social skills.

During the years that black schools were not permitted to compete with white schools in athletic activities, black students had to travel in order to compete with rival schools. During these visits, black deaf students shared their language and taught each other new signs. Upon completing school, most black deaf students chose to learn a trade in order to make their living, and it has been suggested that a correlation exists between this choice and inadequate English skills. Moreover, this choice of vocational training greatly lessened the number of black deaf students entering college (Christiansen & Barnartt, 1987).

The number of black deaf students entering colleges and universities today remains small. Many students, whether in the residential schools or in mainstream special education programs for deaf and hard of hearing students, are graduating with a high school certificate rather than a high school diploma. Facilities and services offered to black deaf students are improving, but the number of black deaf individuals possessing a doctoral degree is very low when compared to the overall deaf community.[1]

Although a certain level of achievement has been attained within the majority of deaf and hearing communities, black deaf individuals are still behind in terms of advancement. The black deaf person is doubly affected insofar as being labeled black and disabled amounts to simultaneous placement in two devalued worlds (Alcocer, 1974). Blacks in general have made considerable gains, but members of the black deaf community have had a difficult time emulating their success. Deaf people, like other minorities, are subject to categorical discrimination (Schowe, 1979). Deaf people in general did not participate in the movement to improve their civil rights until the 1970s, when they actively joined other organizations of disabled people in transforming their own special civil rights issues into the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Boros & Stuckless, 1982). However, many black deaf individuals have noticed no overall improvements in their community.

1.These observations come from in-depth interviews with administrators and teachers at the Southern School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge, LA (closed in 1978). The interviews covered the educational situation for the black deaf people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas in particular.

Additional evidence of the existence of a black deaf community comes from differences observed between black signing and white signing. Later in this chapter, evidence of these differences will be provided.

On the whole, members of the black deaf community are aware of both their black culture and their deaf culture. Much as members of the black community pass on cultural resources—such as black art, black folklore, and black spirituals—to future generations, members of the black deaf community pass along their resources. For example, an oral history about residential school experiences from the era when schools were segregated parallels the oral history of the black community about slavery.

Black or Deaf?

As discussed earlier, black deaf individuals are immersed in both black and deaf culture. It appears that the black deaf individual can be part of both cultures, so a question of identity arises—that is, does a black deaf individual identify primarily with the black community or with the deaf community? In an attempt to answer this question of identity, a survey was conducted among 60 members of the black deaf community in the Washington, D.C., area. The majority of the participants were high school and college students attending the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) and Gallaudet University. Approximately one-third of the individuals interviewed lived in Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas. Twenty individuals were targeted from each of three age groups: 18 to 25, 26 to 35, and 36 and above. A representative sample of 10 men and 10 women was targeted for each age group. Older members of the black deaf community from Washington, D.C., were sought as representatives of the adult population.

In all, 33 men and 27 women participated in the study. The median age of the participants was 27.1 years. The age at which each respondent acquired sign language was recorded: 14 participants (23%) learned sign language before age 6, while 46 (77%) learned sign language after this age. Fifty participants (88%) attended a residential school; the remaining seven participants (12%) attended either public or parochial schools, or both. Four of the participants (7%) were children of deaf parents; the remaining 56 participants (93%) were children of hearing parents. In disclosing their competence in ASL, 55 participants (92%) described themselves as native signers of ASL.

The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one, informal basis. A comfortable setting was agreed upon by both the interviewer and the

respondent. Interviews averaged 30 minutes in duration. In the initial part of the interview, respondents were briefed about the nature of the study; these preliminaries also enabled the interviewer to gain familiarity with the communication skills of each respondent. ASL was used as the primary mode of communication throughout all interviews.

First, respondents were asked background questions concerning age and onset of deafness, deaf family members, and educational history. Once comfortable with the interviewing process, the respondents were questioned about black culture and the black community in general. The questions were: 1) Who are some of the black leaders you recognize as influential in the black community? 2) Where did you acquire your knowledge of black history? 3) Have you ever felt you were discriminated against or treated differently, not because you are deaf, but because you are black? 4) In terms of upward achievement, where do you see the black community headed? 5) What contribution(s) do you feel black deaf people can make in bringing about racial equality? This session on black culture and the black community in general was followed by questions about deaf culture and the black deaf community. The questions included: 1) Just as we talked about in black culture, do you feel there is a deaf culture that exists in the deaf community? 2) Who are some deaf leaders you identify with? 3) What is the most significant achievement obtained by deaf people? 4) When in school, were you taught deaf culture in class? 5) Did you ever feel you were discriminated against or treated differently because you are deaf?

Subsequent to the discussion of the individual topics of black and deaf culture, the two topics were combined in order to inquire about the participants' feelings on being black and deaf. The participants were asked to conjoin their knowledge and experiences of being black and deaf in order to comment on what they perceived to be black deaf culture. The questions leading into this discussion were: 1) How does black culture and the black community differ from deaf culture and the black deaf community? 2) What are advancements you notice that have been made by black deaf individuals? 3) Do you feel black deaf culture is alive and strong in the black deaf community? 4) What do you see as the most significant barrier black deaf individuals have to overcome in order to be considered equal with the black community and with the deaf community? 5) What do you hope to contribute to the black deaf community? 6) Which do you identify with first, your black culture or your deaf culture?

Results

The survey provided a general answer to the question of identity. Eight participants (13%) said that they identify themselves as deaf first, and then black; the remaining 52 participants (87%) identified themselves as black first. Among those participants that identified themselves as deaf first, the majority have deaf parents and were educated in a residential school for the deaf. These people are more integrated into the deaf community than those who identified themselves as black first. In response to questions about deaf culture, all of the participants agreed that there is a deaf culture. When asked about prominent deaf leaders, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was named most frequently, and nearly exclusively by a majority of the participants. No contemporary deaf leaders were identified as making a substantial contribution to the deaf community; many of the participants, however, provided names from their school or local community when discussing who they felt made a contribution to the deaf community. On the whole, all of the participants agreed that the deaf community has progressed in recent years. Areas of achievement were noted in the fields of employment opportunity and education. All participants felt that they were discriminated against, or treated differently, because of their deafness, their blackness, or both; many of the participants also mentioned that they felt they were being discriminated against, or treated differently, by members of the deaf community in addition to the general hearing community.[2]

2. This issue was raised by Dorothy Gilliam in an article in the *Washington Post* (April 18, 1988), which appeared a month after the Gallaudet protest. The article remarked that "it is tempting to think that within their own world, every person who is hearing impaired is totally visible, absolutely equal. But according to some black and white parents of students in Gallaudet's Model Secondary School for the Deaf, the institution over the years has sometimes displayed marked insensitivity to black students." One parent describes the racism she witnessed as "horrific, shocking." Some parents formed a Black Concerns Committee, which organized discussion groups between black and white students and workshops on race relations. One goal of the committee is the appointment of a black deaf person as one of the deaf board members guaranteed in the student victory. A further example of the racism that exists in the deaf community was provided by a white foreign student studying at Gallaudet for one year. This student inquired about shopping at a market near the campus and was told by a white deaf university administrator that it might not be wise to shop there, because "that's where all the black people shop."

As hypothesized, when compared to the responses of the black-identified participants, the responses of the deaf-identified participants were broader in scope with questions about deaf culture and more limited in scope with questions about black culture. This deaf-identification does not serve to preclude knowledge about black culture, but the responses of the deaf-identified do indicate much greater enthusiasm for questions related to deaf culture than those related to black culture. In contrast, the respondents who identified with black culture first said that they see their color as more visible than their deafness, and that they want respect for their ethnicity before their deafness. One comment was typical of many black-identified participants: "You see I am black first. My deafness is not noticed until I speak or use my hands to communicate." As expected, the black-identified group gave more detailed answers than the deaf-identified group to questions about the black culture. All were able to identify with famous black leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesse Jackson; when asked to identify the person who invented the cotton gin or the person who discovered plasma, they were not able to produce the names. Many of the participants were babies during the time blacks fought for their civil rights, so their knowledge was not first-hand. When asked where they acquired their knowledge of black history, the majority said that they did not learn about black culture in school. They were informed about their black heritage from what parents and siblings taught them in addition to what they learned on their own. Most could identify with present problems facing blacks; many of the answers focused on racial discrimination. In response to a question about how they would achieve racial equality, these participants spoke about blacks working together. Their common goal was to see blacks and whites, both deaf and hearing, interacting on the same level.

In the final battery of questions, participants were asked to comment on the black deaf community. In many of the responses, participants mentioned parallels between the black community and the deaf community. Also mentioned were notable accomplishments that blacks have made since the civil rights movement began. The barrier of communication was seen as the most prevalent obstacle separating the black deaf community from the black and deaf communities. Individuals in the black deaf community feel that their communication skills are not on the same level as hearing members of the black community. Communication is facilitated when individuals have something in common, but it is hampered when differences exist among individuals (Glenn & Glenn, 1981). Members of both the black deaf community and the black

community share black culture, but the members of each group lack, to a certain degree, the ability to communicate effectively with each other through either American Sign Language or spoken English. Black deaf individuals often find themselves alienated from the dominant black culture. The lack of cross-cultural communication between members of the black deaf subculture and members of the majority black culture places both cultures at a distance. The participants who strongly identified with their black deaf culture also noted that differences exist in the ways of signing between black deaf and white deaf individuals. They mentioned too the separation of black deaf clubs and white deaf clubs as an ongoing dilemma that explains why both cultures are not totally cohesive.

The following are some not-so-flattering excerpts from the interviews that provide examples of what some of the participants said about the harsh realities facing members of the black deaf community:

- The black community in general has more opportunities for advancement than the black deaf community.
- Black deaf women have a much harder time at success than their male counterparts.
- Progress within the black deaf community has seen little or no improvement within the last 10 to 15 years.
- The total number of blacks seeking higher education has increased, while the number of black deaf individuals seeking higher education is still comparatively low.
- The deaf community has made progress, but the black deaf community still lags behind.
- Communication is important in terms of socializing skills. Black deaf individuals' communication skills are weak when relating to the general black community
- Sign language skills are an important tool in functioning in the black deaf community.
- Upward achievement is difficult for black deaf persons without sufficient role models.
- Much of what black deaf people learn about black culture is through readings they do on their own or what family members teach them. We learned nothing in the schools.
- A black deaf person has to identify with their blackness first because of its visibility. Deafness is invisible. You do not notice I am deaf until I begin to communicate.

Members of the black deaf community have well-developed feelings and sentiments towards each other. They behave according to well-defined norms on what is proper and improper in their black deaf culture. Throughout the interviews, the sense of identity and the feeling of belonging were apparent in the comments and behavior of the participants. To be sure, a person who is black and deaf is not automatically a member of the black deaf community. Black individuals who become deaf late in life are examples of this; they have not yet experienced the combined effect of being black and deaf. Many of the examples of discrimination cited by the participants were not very encouraging in terms of comparisons between where black deaf individuals were 10 years ago and where they are today. Still, the black deaf community is a cohesive, highly motivated culture. Its members demonstrate a desire for self-improvement—prevalent in their responses is a need to educate the black deaf community. In order to find ways to improve their situation, the concerns and attitudes expressed by the participants warrant some examination and discussion.

Attitudes are commonly analyzed according to three components: affective, cognitive, and conative (McGuire, 1969). The affective component refers to the subjective feeling of what is good or bad. For example, the formation of a national organization for black deaf individuals is viewed with positive feeling; in contrast, black deaf individuals who lack motivation and enthusiasm to succeed are viewed as affectively bad. The cognitive component refers to the beliefs and ideals that are attributed to the members of a culture by others. Stereotypes are most frequently manifested in this component; for example, black deaf individuals are perceived by some individuals as being underachievers and lacking in motivation. The conative component refers to the behavioral intentions of individuals. For example, sign language skills are looked upon by members of the black deaf community as important to effective communication, but the majority of members of the black community who have deaf relatives lack the signing skills needed to communicate with them and other members of the black deaf community. The attitude of discrimination, referring to the behavior adopted by members of the black community which puts other individuals in the black community at a disadvantage, represents this conative component.

Eighty-seven percent of the individuals taking part in this study stated that they identify with their black culture first. Other studies relating to deafness provide evidence of unhealthy denials of self (Stewart, 1969).

Stories are often told of individuals denying their deafness, claiming to belong to the hearing world, but when black deaf individuals discuss whether they identify first with the black community or with the deaf community, they state they are not denying one or the other but rather are placing each in the proper perspective of degree of societal acceptance. An often-cited reason for identifying with the black culture first is the actuality of skin color. Black deaf individuals believe that society views them as black first because of the high visibility of skin color. Deafness is an invisible handicap; until a person uses sign language or speaks in a manner unnatural to native (normal) speech, it is not obvious to a viewer that the person is deaf.

Communication Patterns

As discussed earlier, differences have been observed between black signing and white signing. It has also been observed casually that the signing of black deaf individuals varies as a function of the race of the other participants in a conversational setting; that is, black signers sign differently with white signers than they do with other black signers. The second part of the present study collected empirical data on sign language production in black-white interaction. This data provides evidence of code-switching by black signers.

Specifically, the conversational interaction of seven dyads was videotaped. The participants in the study were: two black deaf men, both native ASL users, hereafter identified as X and Y; one black hearing man, a professional working in the deaf community; one white deaf man, a

Table 1. Composition of Conversational Dyads and Language Used

Dyad	Participants	Language
1	Black deaf (X) – Black hearing	ASL-like signing
2	Black deaf (Y) – Black hearing	ASL-like signing
3	Black deaf (X) – Black deaf (Y)	ASL
4	Black deaf (X) – White hearing	ASL-like signing
5	Black deaf (Y) – White hearing	ASL-like signing
6	Black deaf (X) – White deaf	ASL
7	Black deaf (Y) – White deaf	ASL

professional working in research on deafness; and one white hearing man. Table 1 presents the composition of the seven dyads set up among these five participants and the language used in each dyad by the participants. Each dyad was videotaped for approximately 20 minutes while the two participants, alone together in the taping room, engaged in casual conversation. The setting was kept as informal as possible. All other participants, as well as the videotaping crew, were dismissed so that the signing mode of each dyad would not be influenced by the presence of others. The general topic of conversation is the same in all dyads. ASL is the predominant mode of communication used when both participants are deaf (native ASL users); when either of the hearing participants are involved, the predominant mode of communication is ASL-like signing, as opposed to pure ASL.

Dyads 1, 2, 4, and 5 provide evidence of code-switching. Although the predominant mode of communication in these dyads is ASL-like signing, the deaf participant in each dyad often began the conversation in ASL and then switched to incorporate more English in the signing. An example of this is the initialization of ASL signs, such as the use of the I-handshape instead of the 1 (index finger)-handshape to sign "I."

Dyads 6 and 7 display sign language variation within ASL, as opposed to code-switching to ASL-like signing. ASL is used by both speakers in each dyad as their primary mode of communication; there are not any "English-like" features embodied in their conversation. Moreover, initialized signs are not used by these deaf participants in their all-deaf dyads. In contrast, the feature of initialized signs is fast apparent in dyads 1, 2, 4, and 5. Nonmanual features also are different between these two groups; exaggerated body movements and facial expressions are not as prevalent when a deaf participant converses with a hearing participant, as compared to when both participants are deaf.

In setting up this project, it was hypothesized that the deaf participants would sign differently when paired with a hearing participant than when paired with each other. In light of this hypothesis, what takes place in dyad 3 is significant when compared to dyads 6 and 7. ASL is used in all three dyads. Yet, in dyad 3, X and Y use signs when paired together that they do not use when paired separately with the white deaf participant in dyads 6 and 7.

By way of explaining these differences in lexical choice, it is important to note that all three deaf participants had ample time to meet each other

Figure 1. FLIRT, citation form.

Figure 2. FLIRT, black form.

Figure 3. SCHOOL, citation form.

Figure 4. SCHOOL, black form.

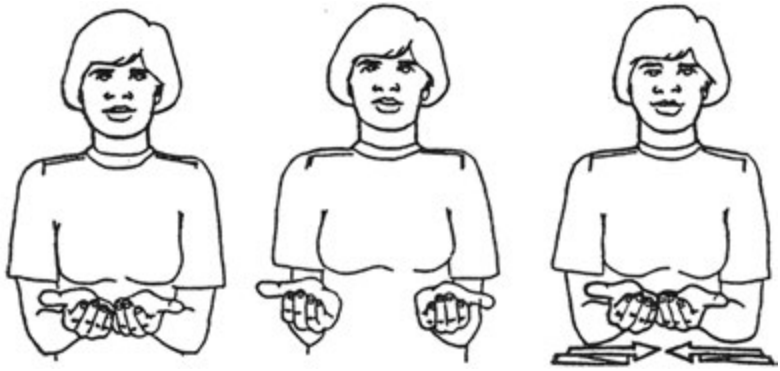

Figure 5. BOSS, citation form.

Figure 6. BOSS, black form.

and converse about different topics before the actual process of data collection began. This time together permitted each participant to become comfortable with the other two, as well as familiar with the others' respective modes of communication. Further, analysis of the discourse in dyads 3, 6, and 7 did not reveal any discernable differences between the speakers in each dyad with respect to hesitance in signing. As opposed, then, to the social familiarity versus non-familiarity of coparticipants, and even participant uncertainty (hence hesitance) about particular ASL signs, the social identity of participants as black versus white appears to be sociolinguistically salient in accounting for certain lexical variation in the data. Specifically, the citation forms of FLIRT, SCHOOL, and BOSS occur in dyads 6 and 7, but black forms of these signs occur in dyad 3 (see figures 1–2, 3–4, and 5–6). When asked about these particular forms and other similarly categorized forms that are not described here, the black deaf participants characterized them as older signs used by blacks, originating from the time that blacks attended segregated schools for the deaf. When questioned further about why blacks sometimes do not use these forms, one of the black deaf participants explained that the forms are not used when a black person is with "a person who is not a part of that culture."

The discourse in dyad 3 also differs from the discourse in dyads 6 and 7 with respect to facial expressions, body movement, and the size of the signing space used by the participants. The facial expressions are exaggerated in dyad 3, and both participants use their signing space to the fullest. In contrast, X, in dyad 6, and Y, in dyad 7, use less exaggerated facial expressions, fewer body movements, and a smaller signing space when conversing with the white deaf participant than when conversing with each other.

Other studies provide additional evidence of variation in ASL that is related to ethnic background (e.g., Woodward & DeSantis, 1977; Woodward & Erting, 1975). The findings of the present study suggest that the two sociolinguistic oppositions of deaf-hearing and black-white (i.e., variables of participant social identity) can have interlocking effects on discourse. For example, in dyad 6, X is more of a passive listener when conversing with the white deaf participant. The only instances where Y interrupts his coparticipant in order to speak are all in dyad 3, when he is conversing with X.

There is a general observation in the literature that native ASL signers use a more English-like signing when conversing with hearing signers than when conversing with other deaf signers (Lucas & Valli, 198). In

dyad 1 of the present study, X produces a greater number of English-like signs than occur in any other conversation in the data corpus. For example, in many instances, X uses an ASL sign and then "corrects" the sign with an English equivalent, such as ME-TRY in ASL followed by I T-R-Y. X also uses more copulas in this conversation than occur in any other conversation in the corpus. Additionally, he uses the emphatic form of WORK, which, with non-manual features, means "working hard," adding the sign VERY to indicate emphasis. In contrast, when X converses with Y (dyad 3), copulas, as well as the initialized sign for "I," are not used at all. When these same two participants converse with the white deaf participant (dyads 6 and 7), their conversational styles include English-like features. Finally, throughout his entire conversation with the white hearing participant (dyad 5), Y keeps his responses short and uses almost perfect English word order; when with this same white hearing participant (dyad 4), X does not correct toward English as frequently as he does with the black hearing participant (dyad 1), but he still incorporates English-like features in his signing.

Summary and Conclusions

The existence of a black deaf community is in part evidenced by the survival of all-black clubs for the deaf, where members go to socialize in a setting that satisfies their communication needs. The existence of this community is reinforced by a history of segregated schooling. The lack of adequate facilities and qualified personnel needed to prepare black deaf individuals for the future is reflected not only in the high levels of unemployment and underemployment found in the black deaf community, but also in the small number of black deaf individuals who enter institutions of higher learning.

In the present study, black deaf individuals were surveyed to answer the question of which community they identify with first: the black community or the deaf community. The majority of the respondents identified themselves first with the black community; they believe that they are seen by others as black first since, unlike skin color, their deafness only becomes visible when they communicate in sign language. In contrast, the remaining respondents identified themselves first with the deaf community, since they are more immersed in this community; they are from deaf families, grew up in residential schools for the deaf, and as adults they socialize mostly within the deaf community.

The language of the black deaf community is ASL, yet variations occur; specifically, as found in the present study, black deaf individuals commonly change their signing in conversations with outsiders to the community. Usually, "black signs," which originated when the schools for the deaf were segregated, are not used when conversing with white deaf individuals. This sociolinguistic variation is further evidence for the existence of a black deaf community.

Overall, as an essential part of the deaf community, the black deaf community faces the challenges of securing better education, more promising employment opportunities, and social advancements similar to those already acquired by members of the black community at large. Both in drawing attention to these issues and in describing some sociolinguistic features of black deaf discourse, the overriding aim of this chapter is to stimulate further research on the black deaf community. It is hoped that future studies will increase our understanding of this particular minority group as well as other minorities within the deaf community.

About the Presenter

Anthony J. Aramburo is a rehabilitation specialist for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, working with a deaf caseload. He graduated from Gallaudet with an M.A. in linguistics of ASL, and his interests lie in the area of sociolinguistics, particularly in studying sign language variation within the black deaf community. He is certified as a sign language interpreter by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and is president of the Louisiana Chapter of RID.

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Black, Deaf, and Mentally Ill: Triple Jeopardy

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This paper explores and discusses mental health issues, theories, and treatment philosophies unique to black deaf people. The objectives are to present a theoretical foundation for developing mental health services to meet the needs of black deaf individuals, to provide information for human services workers and others regarding the special characteristics of mentally ill black deaf people, and to provide cultural insights as a basis for effectively working with this population.

Introduction

In order to determine whether an individual's psychological functioning is healthy or disturbed, a therapist must be aware of what is appropriate and effective within the patient's specific cultural milieu. This is crucial to the delivery of effective mental health services. Explaining what it is to be black—or to be black and deaf—in America is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we are attempting to capture the essence of the dilemma in which black deaf mentally ill individuals find themselves as a result of belonging to three unique minorities. Each characteristic—black, deaf, and mentally ill—requires recognition of its complexities. America often views each characteristic differently; therefore, those who are members of all three groups are in constant jeopardy of not regaining their mental health, their civil rights, or the substance of who they actually are.

On Being a Triple Minority in America

A. What It Is to Be Black in America.

White people seldom think about being white; however, ask black Americans to describe themselves, and invariably they will include "black" in the description. Black people are almost always aware of their minority status in America. Their self-identity generally includes race as a component; being black is the one aspect of identity that cannot be overlooked in face-to-face interactions.

Traditional theories of behavior and socialization were originally developed by white scientists to explain the lifestyles of white Americans; it is difficult, and perhaps futile, to attempt to use these same theories to understand the lifestyles of black Americans. When applied to black Americans, these theories may indicate various deficits, and inferiority-oriented conclusions may be drawn. Instead, we will approach our subject from a cultural perspective (Acosta, Yamamoto, & Evans, 1982).

In the last two decades, America has been on a self-love campaign. Improving self-esteem is currently touted as the end-all resolution to almost every psychological disturbance or abusive personality disorder. Yet, such simplistic thinking disregards the negative image and conceptualization of minorities that persists in America today. Black people are still generally perceived as culturally defective and psychologically maladjusted. This is perceived to be a result of experiences and backgrounds that provide inferior preparation for effective movement within the dominant culture.

As a black person in America, one must deal with economic disparity; stereotypical thinking; racism, bigotry, and bias; interracial fighting; overachievers syndrome; disenfranchisement; and feelings of powerlessness. Yet, against all odds, some blacks do manage to survive and achieve in America (Acosta et al., 1982). Survival and success are the good parts; there is always the chance they will not occur.

B. What It Is to Be Black and Deaf in America.

To be black and deaf in America is to experience the stigma, struggles, and economic disparity of hearing blacks, compounded by social isolation from three major segments of the population. Black deaf people deal with attitudinal and communication barriers from:

a. their family of origin,
b. American society, and
c. the deaf community.

In the family of origin of the average black deaf child (a), the majority (90%) of parents do not know, use, or promote American Sign Language (ASL). This is often true for white deaf children, as well (Peterson, 1983); however, the black deaf child often experiences increased isolation within the family of origin because black families tend to have less enthusiasm for ASL, do not view ASL as a language, and feel stigmatized

by having a "handicapped" child. The lack of enthusiasm stems from ASL being visible, which makes the "handicap" more noticeable.

The stigma of deafness is directly linked to guilt and/or embarrassment regarding the child's communication abilities. The phrase "deaf and dumb" is still pervasive in the black community; the phrase is interpreted, mistakenly, to mean stupid. For too long, many black people have been made to feel stupid in white America. Any hint of, or innuendo relating to, stupidity is a call to arms. The parents of black deaf children often expect less of their own child because of this archaic, insulting term. White families are more often directed to resources that support them as they work through the shock, grief, guilt, and acceptance stages of adjusting to a child with a disability. White families also tend to accept "home" signs, often attending sign language classes.

Black families are more reticent toward seeking support services and sign classes. Often, parents do not adequately adjust to the deafness; they may overlook their child's needs as the family deals with the struggles of being black in America. Black deaf children thereby find themselves isolated; deaf culture is unheard of at home, and so residential school staff often become pseudo-family members.

The black deaf person must develop coping skills as a deaf person in a hearing society (b). Until the "Deaf President Now!" movement at Gallaudet in 1988, American society seemed grossly unaware of 21 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans. The entire country suddenly became cognizant of an overlooked population, and the "silent minority" with the "invisible handicap" was catapulted into the nation's consciousness.

For the black deaf American, the issues of being black and deaf are complicated. America's dominant society already views black Americans as second-class citizens. In the last decade, the backlash against affirmative action has effectively eroded many of the gains that black Americans achieved through the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was meant to ensure rights and accessibility for handicapped individuals, persons with a disability are viewed with stigmatizing attitudinal barriers.

Some of the complications faced by black deaf people include:

- less knowledge of and access to community resources;
- exposure to fewer educational opportunities;
- lack of black role models;
- lack of black human service professionals working in deafness;

- families of origin tend to seek services later, when the child becomes older or encounters problems;
- black deaf people are often steered into entry level or minimal skills fields by rehabilitation workers, rather than toward college preparatory or college programs;
- black deaf children seldom see black deaf teachers, principals, administrators, or interpreters as they go through school.

Note: Dr. Glenn Anderson is being run all over the country as the first black deaf person in America with a Ph.D. There are only two black deaf individuals with Ph.D.'s in the United States!

Black deaf people also experience isolation and attitudinal barriers in the Deaf community (c). In 1980, at the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Centennial Convention, members of the Black Deaf Concerns Caucus found it necessary to present a list of concerns and demands to the predominantly white convention membership. Three thousand convention members saw the presentation of the Caucus statement, which stressed better communication between NAD and the black deaf community; minority involvement in the national state organizations; heightened awareness of black deaf people through role models, better publicity, and modification of sign language to exclude derogatory signs; and increased minority membership. The statement was well-received and politely ignored. Not until 10 years later, in 1990, did the NAD announce the appointment of the first black Board member in its 110 year history. In addition, the Caucus requested that black deaf Americans be equally represented in the NAD publication *Deaf American*, rather than only in the sports section. Still, cover stories on black deaf Americans have been few, the implications being that black deaf achievers do not exist, black deaf achievement outside of sports is not newsworthy, or stories on black deaf individuals are of no interest to the readership of the *Deaf American*.

Many private social clubs for deaf people continue to systematically and surreptitiously exclude black deaf members, and potential role models are discouraged from attempting higher education by so-called "professionals" in the mental health, rehabilitation, and social service fields. In Michigan, for example, there are only five black deaf college graduates. Four of the five moved to Michigan from out-of-state to accept professional positions; at present, two work professionally, one is returning home, and one holds a degree in a non-professional field. The civil rights movement only hit the black deaf community in 1981, with the formation of National Black Deaf

Advocates (NBDA). Through NBDA, black deaf Americans have a forum for self-advocacy, self-discovery, networking, and skills building, and a showcase for black deaf talent and role models.

C. The Sum Total of Being Black, Deaf, and Mentally Ill.

Studies reveal nearly 23% of the 21 million deaf and hard of hearing citizens of the United States urgently need mental health hospitalization, outpatient counseling, and therapy. The inference is that specialized mental health services for deaf people are needed. Effective therapy with deaf people must be made available and culturally and communicationally accessible. Unfortunately, mental health services for deaf individuals began only 30 years ago, and services are still not available in many parts of the country.

The poor, working-class, or minority person who needs psychotherapy is characteristically underserved by mental health establishments, which are primarily geared to the needs of middle- and upper-class, non-minority patients. Therapists who make up the mental health establishment often lack the knowledge necessary to work effectively with minority populations; this lack of knowledge and the existence of racism in America combine so that many mental health professionals have prejudicial attitudes toward black deaf individuals. Such attitudes can be manifested in outright rejection, or in the provision of less intensive, less interested, or less enthusiastic care for the black deaf patient who is mentally ill. Few medical schools or graduate programs for mental health professionals address themselves to the issues of deaf people in general, let alone black deaf people. Deficiencies in the instructional literature regarding deafness, black deaf individuals, and black deaf mentally ill people abound; it therefore follows that black, deaf, and mentally ill individuals are likely to encounter obstacles in the availability of services and the lack of qualified personnel. For black, deaf, and mentally ill people to seek mental health services is to be stigmatized, misunderstood, and sometimes shunned by other deaf people. Black professionals with the necessary knowledge of deafness and adequate sign skills are scarce. Black deaf individuals are more often referred to psychotherapists, while white deaf individuals are referred to either psychologists or psychiatrists, and black deaf people are disproportionately misdiagnosed as schizophrenic. Again, this situation is compounded by the paucity of mental health services for deaf people in general.

Most of the aforementioned obstacles would be met by black deaf individuals who are seeking mental health services. In actuality, the majority of black deaf people who are in need of mental health services

do not seek services. Services become an issue only when symptomology and behavior indicate a need for hospitalization. This happens in part because the hearing families of black deaf people are not skilled in communication with the deaf family member. Black families are not usually in touch with the deaf community or knowledgeable of black deaf culture; they are generally unable to separate healthy deaf cultural suspiciousness from paranoia as a symptom. Withdrawal and depression are often overlooked or ignored. Acting out behaviors linked to the frustration of communication are often misinterpreted. Black hearing families, in general, avoid seeking mental health services; often, they will wait until a crisis before attempting to address mental health issues. The black family with a mentally ill deaf person further handicaps the individual through their confusion and hesitation. Attempting to locate a service only increases the burden of the crisis. Black, deaf, and mentally ill individuals therefore find themselves in a state of triple jeopardy.

Theoretical Views on Black Deaf Mentally Ill People

A. Characteristics Unique to the Black Community Regarding Mental Illness.

It has already been stated that black families tend to seek services later, often only in a crisis situation. It can also be said that black patients tend to remain in treatment for shorter durations, with an average of eight outpatient visits; it has been estimated that white patients average 12 visits. However, blacks are beginning to seek mental health services in increasing numbers.

Often in the delivery of services, problems arise related to the social class of the patient and the race of the therapist. Black patients encountering difficulties often leave treatment prematurely as a result of misunderstandings and misinterpretations by non-black professionals. Examples include:

1. Social support system
   Often, white therapists misinterpret the social support systems used by black Americans and view them as a sign of weakness. Attempts by the patient to involve extended family in the therapy are viewed as resistance or overdependence.

2. Cultural factors
   Therapists tend to prefer playing the role of the expert. When white therapists don't understand, acknowledge, or appreciate cultural

components of the patient's history, they are often reluctant to ask for clarification; this reluctance often leaves the therapist uninformed and unable to analyze certain aspects of the patient's culture such as values, familial roles, language, mores, and behavior.

3. Communication style
   White therapists often misinterpret lack of eye contact, limited answers, limited body language, and indirect responses to mean that the patient has poor verbal skills, poor abstract reasoning abilities, or a lack of insight.

4. Skin color
   For black Americans, skin color has been an issue within the black community since slave masters interbred with slaves. Failure to understand its importance in a cultural context is to miss an opportunity to understand the self-concept or self-esteem of the black patient.

5. Discrimination
   Studies indicate that social class has been an important determining factor in services offered. Stereotypical views of black Americans by therapists tend to strongly parallel those of society in general.

B. Characteristics Unique to the Black Deaf Community.

Black deaf culture is a compilation of being black and being deaf in America. Some unique characteristics noted in the black deaf community are:

1. Social interaction and mores
   Social gatherings in the black deaf community tend to be informal; activities are less organized and casually planned. Any activity that offers refreshments draws a large crowd; major events usually require more formal attire and include a meal.

   There appears to be a shortage of black men in general, and of black deaf men in particular. Therefore, fidelity and monogamous relationships are viewed differently in the black deaf community than they are in mainstream society. It is considered a major taboo for black hearing women to date black deaf men. Apparently, it is more acceptable for black deaf men to date white deaf women, although this is not embraced; this is similar to the hostility black women feel toward white women who date black men.

2. Values
   College graduates are somewhat revered in the black deaf community. Their opinions and ideas often go unchallenged, which can be a problem if the college graduate is outspoken. The tendency to dominate the social structure of the local town is strong; for areas blessed with a large group of college graduates (more than five), conflicts arise due to political maneuvering for power and authority.

   Church attendance is valued in the black deaf community, much as it is in the black community, since black deaf people grow up seeing their hearing parents attend church services regularly. Black deaf people will attend churches where deaf ministries provide interpreters, regardless of whether the church is predominantly black or white. The majority of black interpreters get their start as religious signers in church.

3. Sense of community
   The major strength of black deaf culture is its sense of community. Black deaf people view themselves as different from white deaf people, even though there are some commonalities based on deafness. Black deaf people are acutely aware of their minority status; the community embraces itself as a subculture of black hearing culture, while still celebrating its differences. ASL is naturally the native language of black deaf people. Black hearing individuals are welcomed into the community if they are honing their skills, are willing to volunteer or loan skills and resources to the community, and respect black deaf people as leaders in their own right. The majority of the leaders in the black deaf community do not view deafness as a disability or a handicap; despite the fact that most black deaf people have experienced attempted "healings," deafness is viewed as a unique characteristic with accompanying adjustments.

4. Identity
   Black deaf people view themselves as deaf and black; this is an important distinction from white deaf people, who view themselves simply as deaf Americans. It has been stated that there is no black sign language, yet black deaf people do sign differently than white deaf people; the main difference is in style. The oppression of black people in this country has filtered through to the black deaf community, as evidenced by lowered hand positioning for signs;

most black deaf people place their signs lower in relation to the body during casual conversation. This is directly related to black people being made to feel like second-class citizens, often placed in subservient roles. Other stylistic differences relate to the naturally expressive nature of black culture.

C. Treatment Issues Related to Black Deaf Mentally Ill Persons.

Despite the increasing numbers of black Americans seeking mental health services, black families with deaf members are not seeking services. As the family of origin struggles simultaneously with issues of powerlessness and oppression in America, the black deaf person's sense of isolation within the family increases. Black families may remain in a stage of denial well into the deaf person's adult years, claiming that the deaf person can understand conversations and can hear when he or she wants to.

1. Communication-related disturbances
   The frustrations encountered by black deaf individuals attempting to communicate with their families are numerous, and they often lead to miscommunications, confusion, and limited exposure to resources through the family. Inadequate communication skills within families of origin can cause depression and withdrawal, social retardation, and lowered self-esteem.

2. Violent behaviors
   If parents do not communicate well, the child does not learn effective impulse control, cause-effect relationships to behaviors, delayed gratification, or abstract reasoning; it therefore follows that many black deaf people end up in psychiatric inpatient units due to acting-out and/or violent behaviors. These behaviors are the result of frustration, resentment, and a limited ability to express feelings. They may take years to manifest themselves, and they may be masked for some time by substance abuse. Limited resources are always an issue for the black deaf mentally ill individual, since the majority of them come from lower income families with fewer networking experiences. Parents of deaf adults often use the hospital as a last resort when they can no longer control the emotional outbursts; as a result, it is the medical system that generally sends the black deaf person for mental health services, as opposed to the white deaf person whose family seeks a referral to "get help."

3. Lowered self-esteem
   Low self-esteem is not new to the black community in general, and it is pervasive among black deaf mentally ill people. It appears that members of this group feel an increased sense of powerlessness, which is often manifested in sexual acting-out behaviors, substance abuse, domestic violence, and poor employment habits. Many black deaf adults in need of mental health services delay or resist services because of ignorance about the world around them; often, "mental health" is interpreted as "crazy," which has a negative connotation. Black deaf community members do not believe that confidentiality exists in the mental health profession, and so they are convinced that others will find out they are receiving services.

Conclusion

Issues for black deaf individuals who are mentally ill are layered in complexities that necessitate an understanding of what it means to be black in America, what it means to be black and deaf in America, and what it means to be black, deaf, and mentally ill. Thus, the "triple jeopardy" state: the struggle to understand the world, relate to it, adjust to it, survive in it, and feel good about it.

As a black person, one must deal with economic disparity, stereotypical thinking, attitudinal barriers, racism, and a sense of powerlessness in America. As a deaf person, one must deal with communication barriers within the family of origin, America's dominant society, and the deaf community itself. The sense of isolation experienced in the family of origin is characterized by the family's long-term denial, shame, and ineffective communication.

Treatment issues for black, deaf, and mentally ill individuals usually center around communication-related disturbances, violent acting-out behaviors, and an immobilizing lowered self-esteem. Services for mentally ill people must be sought by families who have limited knowledge of resources and who often wait until mental health issues reach crisis proportions; the majority of black deaf people receiving mental health services enter inpatient programs without prior outpatient treatment. In addition, the staff of most mental health programs for deaf people is generally not mixed along ethnic and racial lines, which can cause problems during treatment.

The situation is not as bleak as it sounds; in fact, the saving grace lies in the strength of black culture. The adaptability of family roles, the

strong kinship bonds, the belief in work, achievement, and religion, and the strong sense of community allow for the survival of black deaf mentally ill people, despite their state of "triple jeopardy."

On Empowerment

As the founding executive director of Deaf Options, Inc., I believe people can become empowered if they have choices. Empowerment is the process by which a person recognizes, owns, and uses his or her inherent personal power.

Empowerment happens as a person integrates his or her culture, personal resources, educational opportunities, and support systems. Empowerment is choosing to be; accepting the self with love and affirmation. Upon choosing self-empowerment, a person can do the things he or she wants and needs to do.

At Deaf Options, Inc., staff members do not use the word "help," nor do they believe in "helping" deaf people. "Help" implies an imbalance in a relationship; the so-called expert "helps" the less fortunate, less knowledgeable client. Instead of helping people, we offer services: we offer our skills, talent, training, experience, and knowledge for the benefit of others. Choosing to engage in our various programs is the first step on the path to empowerment.

About the Presenter

Reichelle P. Anderson, M.A., is founding executive director of Deaf Options, Inc., the second of two outpatient mental health programs serving deaf people in Detroit. Ms. Anderson has 11 years' experience in the deaf community as a family therapist, psychotherapist, interpreter, clinical psychologist, and, currently, administrator of Deaf Options, Inc. She has a B.S. in special education and an M.A. in clinical psychology. She established three deaf ministries at three black churches, is past secretary of Detroit Black Deaf Advocates, and is treasurer of National Black Deaf advocates.

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Advising Black Students: Enhancing Their Academic Progress

Sanremi LaRue-Atuonah and Charlotte Doland
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The objectives of this presentation are to provide a working model of a program that facilitates the success of black students in a predominantly white academic institution; to foster an awareness of different techniques used in the retention of black students; and to demonstrate methods of enhancing self-determination that lead to greater empowerment on the part of the black student. The Academic Advising Center at Gallaudet University's Northwest Campus is geared toward the empowerment of minority students, particularly black students, through role modeling, client self-determination, and enhanced self-awareness.

Since the inception of a deaf president, Gallaudet University has been on the plodding path towards "equal rights" for deaf people. Many deaf people are quick to list and clarify their legal rights; this behavior is now evident throughout all levels of the University. However, a major contradiction lies in the seemingly elusive but very real area of racial ethnicity. Deaf people with dual minority status know very well the discrimination imposed on them. Although Gallaudet University has helped make the rights and concerns of deaf people heard, the black students at Gallaudet continue to experience racism. The contradiction is clear: the white students who so fervently fought for their "equal" rights continue to be insensitive to the rights and concerns of black deaf students.

Gallaudet University has been targeted by the black deaf community for many years as being insensitive to its needs. There are instances of institutional racism that seem to support that view: denial of financial aid by rehabilitation agencies; lack of interest in motivating black high school students to apply for college; encouragement by high school guidance counselors to take non-college-prep courses; and many more. In response to a survey done at Gallaudet which asked them why they were leaving school, black students cited a lack of funds, feeling uncomfortable in a predominantly white school, a curriculum devoid of black history or black issues, and a lack of black role models among

Table 1. U.S. Children in America with Hearing Impairments, 1988–1989 School Year

Age	Total Number of Students	Minority Ethnic Background
16 yrs old	2638	950 (36%)
17 yrs old	2763	967 (35%)
18 yrs old	2297	780 (34%)
19 yrs old	1275	510 (40%)
20 yrs old	595	286 (48%)
Total	9568	3493

* By Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies

the faculty and staff. Other research seems to support similar findings (Janasiewicz, 1987).

An overview of the University indicates that there is indeed a lack of sensitivity to the needs of black students. For instance, there are no black deaf American faculty members at the University level, and the curriculum is traditionally European-oriented. It is extremely difficult for black students to obtain certain viable jobs on campus, either before or after graduation. Many black students have turned to security personnel, cafeteria workers, housekeeping staff, and maintenance workers for support and reinforcement; most of these workers are not college graduates; many have not completed high school, and not all of them are well versed in sign language or deafness, but they are the only major source of role models available.

In an effort to understand some of the challenges facing minorities at Gallaudet University, we will look at statistics that show past and current trends related to degrees earned and the movement of minority students from prep status to the freshman class. In addition, we will discuss the role of the Academic Advising Center in fostering success among black students.

Table 1 shows the number of deaf and hard of hearing minority students considered "eligible" for recruiting purposes. How many actually make the first inquiry about Gallaudet? How many actually end up enrolled? Table 2 shows the number of minority students enrolled in the School of Preparatory Studies. There is some concern about the vast discrepancy between the numbers shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Surely, not all of the minority students qualify for admission to the University,

Table 2. Minority Students Enrolled as Preps U.S. Students Only

	Blacks	Hispanic Am.	Asian Am.	Am. Indian	Total
1987	19	8	3	1	31
1988	17	14	6	2	39
1989	23	9	2	3	38

* From the 1989 Admissions and Enrollment Report by the Office of Enrollment Services, Gallaudet University

Table 3. Promotion to Freshman by Year

	1989–90	1988–89	1987–88	1986–87
Total new student enrollment	240 (100%)	207 (100%)	213 (100%)	255 (100%)
Total number of Black & Hispanic	32(13%)	35	32	35
Total number of students promoted in December	61	29	14	12
Total number of Black & Hispanic promoted in December	5 (10%, 1 U.S. Born)	1	0	3
Total number of students promoted in May	N/A	612	119	96
Total number of Blacks & Hispanics promoted in May	N/A	12	14	10
Total number of students promoted in summer	N/A	27	26	N/A
Total number of Blacks & Hispanics promoted in summer	N/A	5	5	N/A

* From Academic Advising Center, Northwest Campus; Jill Matteson, Records Technician, 1990

but chances are that a significant number do qualify. Why aren't these students applying? Are high school officials making presupposed judgments about the students' potential? Are the students' families unaware of financial resources available to them? Are students not being encouraged to participate in seminars presented by University recruiters? Or are students uninterested because Gallaudet alumni who visit their high schools have not been members of ethnic minority groups? The irony

lies in the fact that deaf people themselves are a minority, which they are quick to forget.

At the School of Preparatory Studies, the Academic Advising Center has identified as one of its greater responsibilities the encouragement of minority students; it is believed that these students are enrolled at Gallaudet at a greater academic disadvantage than their non-black counterparts. The academic advisors act as mentors for these students, providing support and encouragement to utilize the support services available in the areas of tutoring, unique tutoring, peer tutoring, and computer assisted instruction. Minority academic advisors would provide wonderful role models for these students.

Here at the Northwest Campus, the Academic Advising Center has found it crucial to inform all students, especially minority students, of their academic standing from day one. This enables students to determine the best way to get themselves promoted to freshman status. Table 3 shows the numbers of minority students who were successful in getting promoted to the freshman class. Although the promotion rate is revealing, an area of greater concern to the University is the dismal dropout rate of black students. The rate of attrition tends to increase when the students become upperclassmen, resulting in very low numbers at graduation time. Table 4 shows the number of students enrolled each year and the corresponding number who actually graduate from the University.

The results show a dismal attrition rate for blacks enrolled at Gallaudet, but these numbers may be skewed by the fact that both American blacks and African blacks are counted as "black." In order to get an accurate picture of the status of the American black student at Gallaudet, statistics for each separate group would be needed.

Table 4. Black Student Enrollment and Degrees Awarded by Year

Year	# Enrolled	# Degrees Awarded
1985	62	12
1986	135	9
1987	142	7
1988	not available	8

* Memorandum dated August 4, 1988, sent to Astrid Goodstein by Carol McLaughlin

Table 5 shows some of the differences between American blacks and African blacks. Overall, this dropout rate is very discouraging to the younger prep and freshman students. Black students, as well as other minority students, have indicated a concern for the lack of minority alumni. In addition, the University does not take advantage of the resources available within the minority alumni groups. As an example, a non-black staff member was recently appointed to be in charge of minority affairs on campus.

It is clear that something must be done to reverse this trend. For its part, the Academic Advising Center at the School of Preparatory Studies offers the following services to all students:

- an outline of academic expectations
- handbook on academic policies
- four week reports
- red flagging
- midterm grades
- career advising
- diagnostic screening and evaluations
- international student advising
- transfer student advising
- promotion advising
- student special services advising
- faculty/student conflict advising
- mentoring

Ideally, the entire school should participate in retention efforts aimed at minority students. It is only through a unified effort that we will finally achieve "equal rights" for all students at Gallaudet University.

Table 5. Factors Contributing to Retention/Attrition

American Blacks	African Blacks
Present oriented	Goal oriented
Disadvantaged families	Close family structure
Poor money management skills	Financially astute
Negative identity	Positive cultural identity
Poor black role models	Positive black role models
Racial discrimination experienced	Lack of racial discrimination

About the Presenters

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Black Deaf People in Higher Education

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Introduction

Black deaf people remain underrepresented in postsecondary educational and vocational training programs for deaf people. The failure to address the needs of this particular population has had a domino effect on the educational attainment, employment, and social and economic status of Black deaf people. The problem is a persistent one, and essentially reflects the educational system's inability to make reasonable accommodations for Black deaf youth and adults. Bridging programs and remedial interventions are but two areas of need; a more visible and assertive role by Black deaf leadership and the Black deaf community at large is needed as well.

This paper presents a demographic analysis of the Black deaf population as it relates to the current status of Black deaf people in the higher education milieu. An attempt is made to define the problems, issues, and concerns that have a far-reaching impact on the Black deaf population as a whole with regard to educational preparation, career awareness, and career preparedness. Particular emphasis is given to the issues of recruitment and retention of Black deaf people in postsecondary educational institutions and training programs. A profile of Black deaf enrollment in a postsecondary program will be presented as an illustration of the problem and relevant issues. Several principles and strategies will be presented in the context of a collaborative team approach involving organizations, professionals, parents, and the Black deaf community in serving the needs of Black deaf people in higher education.

The definitions of attrition (dropping out of college) and retention (staying in college) vary considerably from college to college; because of this, some findings can be confusing and unreliable. Deaf students are likely to have many of the same problems with attrition and retention as Black students. The problems stem from a lack of understanding of needs, bias against the unknown, segregation within the college

community, and limited support services. While there is mention of specific recruiting for Black students on white campuses, there is no such discussion related to deaf students on hearing campuses. On campus, deaf students are more likely to be systematically grouped as a minority, whereas Black students are simply ignored. It is no wonder that Black deaf students are an invisible group who strive to participate within the mainstream of higher education.

Minority student retention is heavily influenced by teachers' attitudes. Some minority students feel that teachers perceive them as having decidedly less academic interest and ability than the majority students. To help alleviate this situation, teachers should be hired with special training in counseling and advising minority students. Without the expertise of those who know, and the interest of those who believe and care, the segregation and alienation of Black deaf students will continue in institutions of higher education.

Recruitment

Approximately 31 years ago, a pioneering research effort was undertaken to assess the educational and vocational status of deaf people in America. This study, the Lunde-Bigman report of 1959, noted an "underrepresentation" of minorities participating in the study; however, the responses of the few Black participants made it clear that Black deaf people as a population lagged significantly behind their non-Black counterparts in educational and vocational attainment. Researchers further concluded that the small number of Black deaf people included in the study was yet another example of the disparity in social, economic, and educational attainment among Black deaf youth and adults. This disparity, they maintained, led to a certain "invisibility" of Black deaf people.

Thirty-one years later, in the face of tremendous strides made by deaf people in the areas of education, vocation, community advocacy, and legal advocacy, we are still faced with much the same dilemma. Why are there so few Black deaf people visible in the mainstream of deaf society? Why do so few Black deaf youth and adults go on to postsecondary educational programs? Why are they not benefitting from the advanced educational and vocational opportunities available to white deaf youth and adults?

It is estimated that minorities (Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians) make up 21% of the population (Fischgrund, Cohen, & Clarkson, 1988). The Black student population, like other non-White populations, is concentrated in

what is called a "band" of states. Within this band, which extends along the seaboard from New York to Texas to California, minority students constitute the majority of the school age population; Nash (1988) confirmed this phenomenon, adding Florida to the list.

A 1985–86 Annual National Survey of Assessment and Demographic Studies noted that of the 48,720 deaf students surveyed, 17.5% are Black (Fischgrund et al., 1988). It appears that there exists a significant number of school-aged Black deaf children and youth in this country; to date, however, there has been little or no research on the educational status or academic achievement of this population. A cursory glance at postsecondary programs for deaf students reveals that very few Black deaf students are enrolling in or graduating from these programs. As one looks closer, it becomes increasingly evident that the problems faced by Black deaf students in higher education are not altogether different from the problems faced by their Black hearing counterparts.

Despite the fact that minority enrollment has steadily declined since 1980, a recent study conducted by the Ford Foundation reported that fewer than one-third of the colleges surveyed had specific recruitment and retention programs aimed at minority students. The study, which was conducted by the New York State Department of Education, also suggested a relationship between higher college admissions standards and lower minority enrollment; it is believed that this relationship further illustrates the racial inequities of the educational system. However, even in those institutions that have special recruiting and retention programs for minority students, underrepresentation is a complex phenomenon that requires a sensitivity to the demographic, social, economic, and cultural considerations that impact the educational status of minority students.

Historically, estimates of the incidence of deafness among minority groups has been low, and it is believed that this underestimation of the population has reinforced an underestimation of their needs (Moores, 1987). Black deaf children, like their white deaf peers, are likely to be members of a family milieu in which parents and siblings are normally hearing; this means that the Black deaf child is first and foremost influenced by all the social, cultural, and economic conditions that impact Black families today. While deafness is an all-encompassing disability, it does not preclude the child's racial and ethnic heritage, nor the social conditions that surround the child's family. Today, the contemporary Black family is described as being in a "crisis" (Morgan, 1990), and

certain fundamental issues relative to this "crisis" may have direct impact on the Black deaf child:

1. *Black families earn significantly less than white families.*

   In 1983, half of all black families had incomes below $14,000, and 44% of black children lived in poverty conditions.

   Given this profile, it is probable that a minority child or family living in conditions of poverty may not consider education, particularly postsecondary education, an attainable goal; a deaf child adds another dimension to the problem. The family of a deaf child must make decisions that extend beyond the discovery and diagnostic process to include educational placement, individual educational planning, and other interventive and remedial needs. These decisions must be made during the early, formative years, and eventually will influence the educational, personal, and social development of the deaf child. Educational aspirations, support, and on-going family involvement may be absent to the deaf child born into a family for whom economic survival is a daily priority.

   Ideally, personal and social qualities complementary to the learning experience are expected to develop within the family unit; feelings of personal worth, perseverance, and valuation of achievement are to be nurtured and reinforced within the child. The Black deaf child whose family milieu is lacking the tools to provide for such growth ordinarily turns to others, such as the school, church, or any number of service and professional organizations. This is not to imply a minimizing of the roles, responsibilities, and significance of the child's family, but rather to recognize the need for support to parents and families in nurturing the child toward full self-actualization.

2. *Fewer black students actually apply to postsecondary educational programs than do white students.*

   As previously mentioned, minority enrollment in postsecondary educational institutions has declined steadily in the past decade; 47% of the colleges surveyed by the New York State Department of Education reported lower enrollments for Black students since 1980. Figure 1 offers an illustrative example that traces the number of Black deaf students enrolled in a postsecondary educational program over the last five years. Black applicants make up approximately 3% of the students enrolled in this program each year.

Figure 1.

	Fall 1985	Fall 1986	Fall 1987	Fall 1988	Fall 1989
White	1189	1193	1149	1076	988
	(91.7%)	(92.6%)	(92.3%)	(91.9%)	(90.2%)
Black	42	35	34	33	36
	(3.2%)	(2.7%)	(2.7%)	(2.8%)	(3.3%)
Hispanic	35	35	39	36	41
	(2.7%)	(2.7%)	(3.1%)	3.1%)	3.7%)
Am. Indian/ Alaskan	6	3	2	2	6
	(0.5%)	(0.27%)	(0.2%)	(0.2%)	(0.5%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	22	21	24	25
	(1.9%)	(1.8%)	(1.7%)	(2.0%)	(2.3%)
Minority Subtotal	107	95	96	95	108
	(8.3%)	(7.4%)	(7.7%)	(8.1%)	(9.8%)
Total	1296	1288	1245	1171	1096
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

However, while the number of Black students has steadily declined, the number of non-Black minority students has increased slightly. Figure 2 presents a breakdown of the students applying for admission to a postsecondary educational institution during the 1989 academic year (Nash, 1988).

Blacks made up just 9% of all applicants (white and non-white), and 45% of minority applicants. Only slightly less than half of the Blacks qualified for admission, making up 7% of all students accepted. To qualify for admission, applicants were expected to have an overall eighth grade achievement level.

These data point to a number of issues regarding the academic achievement of Black deaf children and youth. First, academic institutions of higher education should recognize that the recruiting of Black deaf students must extend beyond the parameters of traditional recruiting methods. For many institutions, traditional recruiting strategies include sending recruiters to Career Day, Career Fairs, and College Night activities sponsored by local high schools or parent organizations; other techniques include the use of a wide array of audiovisual and printed

Figure 2.

Total Applicants	646
White	517
% of Total Applications	80%
Minority	129
% of Total Applications	20%
Breakdown of Minority	
Black	59
Hispanic	45
American Indian/Alaskan	7
Asian/Pacific Islander	18
Total Accepted Applicants	476
White	409
% of Total Accepted	86%
Acceptance Rate	79%
Minority	67
% of Total Accepted	14%
Acceptance Rate	52%
Breakdown of Minority	
Black	29
Hispanic	22
American Indian/Alaskan	5
Asian/Pacific Islander	11

materials to "sell" college or university programs. While such methods have proven effective in recruiting white students, they tend to have very little impact on the minority student. The absence of minority recruiters, faculty, alumni, and student representation in every facet of traditional recruiting efforts tends, in fact, to send a mixed message with regard to the college community's commitment to attracting, serving, and retaining minority students.

Further, postsecondary educational institutions must do more to "nurture" potential Black deaf applicants. Most recruiting programs target high school students near the end of their senior year, which is often too late to have any significant influence on educational status. Postsecondary educational aspirations must be fostered early in the educational process; career education and awareness and cooperative remedial intervention between colleges, secondary schools, and community-based organizations

are needed. Postsecondary educational institutions can contribute much to the training and preparation of teachers of the deaf in areas related to cultural diversity, ethnic studies, and teaching and learning strategies to foster a sense of pride, self-worth, academic persistence, and achievement for Black deaf children and youth.

The data on Black deaf people in higher education illustrates the fact that this population remains underserved; it also points out that, in addition to their deafness, Black deaf children are affected by the same social conditions that impact the general Black community. A concerted effort on the part of postsecondary educational programs for the deaf, community organizations, elementary and secondary school programs, and teacher training programs would represent a mutually beneficial "investment" toward helping Black deaf children realize their full potential.

Attrition and Retention

The attrition and retention of Black deaf students in higher education is a nationally recognized problem. There are many organizations and departments set up in colleges and universities to focus on the needs of Black students. Obviously, much needs to be done.

From the beginning, the college-bound Black student must choose between two undesirable alternatives: either attend an inferior, predominantly Negro college, or attend a school where "the emotional strain of being one of very few blacks in a white student body may outweigh or affect the very value of a potentially better education" (Corson, 1970). O. C. Wortham (1983), who directed a special program for Black students at Antioch College, says the college experience for Blacks on white campuses can be one long "bad trip." Few students go through so much anguish for so little education. There are many struggles to be fought within themselves, such as the guilt of having an advantage over family and friends in the ghetto, and frustration and ambivalence in dealing with white students who have been given a much better preparation for higher education in early childhood. Having your nose rubbed into your academic deficiencies day in and day out, with the silent ghost of the "inferiority" doctrine hovering in the background, is hardly a happy situation or one likely to bring out a student's best ability.

Felice (1981) pointed out that there are three primary determinants of a minority student's perception of the efficacy of the educational exchange program: 1) the student's perception of the openness of the occupational structure (what remaining in the school exchange process brings in terms

of future benefits); 2) the student's perception of racial prejudice and discrimination in schools (what remaining in the school exchange process brings in immediate costs); and 3) the teachers' attitudes and expectations of minority students (what remaining in the school exchange process brings in immediate benefits and/or costs). Burbach and Thompson (1973) found that Blacks in predominantly white institutions drop out in significantly greater numbers than do others. Noel and Burbach (1978) reported that "with respect to social atmosphere, our findings indicate that the Black school is perceived to be more supportive and congenial." This finding is suggested by student reports that, in the Black schools, instructors more frequently knew students by name, and there was more of a "group spirit" among the students.

One of the most replicated, central findings from research on stratification and occupational mobility is that the primary determinant of occupational success, more important than family background, measured intelligence, or school grade point average, is the number of years of education completed (Felice, 1981). Yet, for every 10 students who enter college in the United States, only four will graduate from that college four years later (Pantages & Creedon, 1978). Summerskill (1962) observed that attrition has been variously defined as the percentage of students lost to a particular division within a college, lost to the college, or lost to higher education as a whole. Panos and Astin (1968) defined a non-dropout as a student who attended college for four years or more; they did not use graduation as a criterion.

The demographic factors that are associated with attrition are age, sex, socioeconomic status, parental education, ethnicity, social status, hometown location and size, and size and type of high school; Lenning, Beal, and Sauer (1980) list other factors under students' characteristics, interactions, and external forces and variables. Authors view factors for attrition from different points of view, but most of the literature strongly encourages the use of counseling in retention efforts. Endo and Harpel (1979) concluded that the two most important services provided by postsecondary educational institutions are advising and interpretation of test scores; they further concluded that the earlier and more frequent the advising, the greater the possibility that the student will persist in school.

In a study by Astin (1973), boredom with classes was cited as the most common reason for dropping out. Astin believes that certain factors are crucial in predicting which freshmen will drop out: past academic records and academic abilities; degree plans at the time of college entrance; religious background and religious preference; concern about

college finances; study habits; and educational attainment of parents, in that order. Except for study habits, which included some unexpected finding, this pattern of predictors is generally consistent with the results of earlier dropout studies. To help reduce the number of drop outs, Lenning et al. (1980) developed 12 single-facet retention approaches:

a. Admissions and recruiting — insufficient information during recruitment can be misleading, thus frustrating students after their arrival on campus;
b. Advising — there should be careful selection of both peer and faculty advisors;
c. Counseling — appropriate counseling can and does improve the rate of retention;
d. Early warning and prediction — retention efforts should be directed at particular groups of students, with procedures established at admissions time;
e. Exit interviews — interviews can serve an action role in reducing attrition;
f. Extracurricular activities — meaningful participation in extracurricular activities would contribute to student retention;
g. Faculty, staff, and curricular development — appropriate selection and in-service development for faculty, staff, and curriculum must occur in order for the students to obtain a quality education that meets personal and career needs;
h. Financial aid — scholarships and grants relate positively to students' retention, irrespective of ability;
i. Housing — retention can be enhanced through involving more students in meaningful residential activities and arranging the setting to stimulate or promote student-student and student-faculty interactions. Living in a dormitory during the freshman year increases the student's chance of finishing college. The same applies to living in a fraternity or sorority house;
j. Learning and academic support — many learning centers have been expanded into learning assistance programs that target all students, rather than only remedial students;
k. Orientation — orientation should meet the needs of all new students, including transfers, minorities, and older students as well as the beginning college freshman;
l. Policy changes — changes in traditional policies may be crucial in influencing retention.

Naiman (1980) indicates that deaf students have the same needs as hearing students, with the addition of support services such as interpreters and notetakers. Further, there is a need for role models in professional positions; more deaf counselors, teachers, administrators, and tutors would be living proof that deaf people can be successful.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, required institutions of higher learning to demonstrate that they were trying to end discriminatory practices in admissions by submitting enrollment figures according to ethnic grouping. Many universities responded by admitting large numbers of black students; some, though, claimed that a more active approach was necessary, and there were demands for the active seeking out of black students under what came to be the widely used term, "affirmative action."

During this time, many problems appeared, some of which were self-defeating in a sense. There were the setting of quotas and the lowering of admission standards, with whites charging reverse discrimination. There was what came to be known as the "open" or "revolving door;" underqualified Blacks were ushered in, then ushered out of the schools after abortive attempts at higher education. University officials were pointing their fingers at high schools and community colleges, blaming them for the students' deficiencies and high rate of attrition; they did not accept that the university which admits students has the obligation to provide support services.

Sowell (1972) suggested that there are many ways in which academic failures can be disguised: students may be steered away from tough courses, instructors, or majors; "incompletes" may be handed out instead of failing grades; or a student who would otherwise flunk out of college may be "given another chance." He may even be allowed to take a "voluntary, temporary" leave of absence from school, never to return. In this way, official attrition rates are kept low on paper, regardless of how many students waste years of their lives and leave with lasting scars.

Black deaf students are very likely to have the same problems with attrition and retention as Black hearing students; these problems stem from a lack of understanding of needs, bias against the unknown, segregation within the college community, and inadequate support services. While deaf people on hearing campuses are likely to be systematically grouped as a minority, Black students tend to be ignored. Many times, federal money is designated for special programs and services to minority students; when the money runs out, universities tend to drop these programs.

There are many factors influencing minority student retention, one of the most important of which is teachers' attitudes; some students feel that teachers perceive minority students as having decidedly less academic interest and ability than the majority students. Emphasis should be placed on hiring persons with special training for working with minority groups. Counseling and advising skills for both common and unique problems are a must. Without the expertise of those who know and the applied knowledge of those who believe and care, the segregation and alienation that many Black deaf students experience will very likely continue.

The Community

In 1982, in a landmark meeting that brought together Black deaf people, Black parents, and minority professionals in the fields of special education and rehabilitation, the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) was born. At that time, the goals of NBDA were to identify, examine, and disseminate information related to the impact of social, economic, educational, and political issues on Black deaf Americans. NBDA was to serve as a forum through which such issues could be emphasized, and a means by which networks could be created to provide intervention, advocacy, and remediation.

Over the years, since that first meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, this organization has provided leadership opportunities for many young Black deaf Americans. NBDA now has 11 local chapters throughout the United States. These local chapters, called Black Deaf Advocates (BDA), were established in the following cities, listed here in successive order: Washington, D.C.; Cleveland, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pa.; New York, N.Y.; Atlanta, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.; Chicago, Ill.; Nashville, Tenn.; Oakland, Calif.; and Los Angeles, Calif.

The organizers of the NBDA realized the need for Black deaf people and supporters to work together to provide leadership and advocacy for the Black deaf population as a whole; they also recognized that NBDA must work within the framework of other organizations to accomplish this responsibility. By joining local chapters, members pledged their support and commitment to helping Black deaf people achieve greater educational, economic, and vocational success. The Cleveland, Ohio, meeting marked the first time in decades that Black deaf people came together in significant numbers, established a common set of goals, and began the long process of working to achieve those goals.

50/50 Responsibility?

The task of providing leadership and advocacy is a huge one, and the members of NBDA recognize the need for networking through existing avenues of community support and advocacy. One such avenue is the National Association of the Deaf, the oldest consumer organization of deaf people in the United States. The NAD, with an estimated 22,000 members and affiliations in all 50 states, serves as an advocate for more than 16 million deaf and hard of hearing people. Since both the NAD and the NBDA are working in the best interest of deaf people, it makes sense that the groups work together; shared needs and concerns provide a measure of unity and a common ground on which to address problems. Such a joint effort would facilitate the education, employment, and political advocacy for Black deaf people while recognizing the cultural diversity that exists within the deaf population; the political advocacy and unity needed to continue to fight for deaf rights would be enhanced, and racial and cultural minorities within the deaf population would be ensured the opportunity to share equally in the benefits of this effort.

Toward this end, Black deaf leaders need to speak on issues, needs, and solutions outside of the Black deaf community; the challenges of political rights and priorities for Black deaf children, youth, and adults must be addressed. In addition, Black deaf leaders should take more responsibility for educating the general public and promoting an awareness of the needs and concerns of those Black deaf people who still remain undereducated and underemployed.

Summary and Conclusion

As stated earlier, Black deaf people continue to represent an underserved population within the deaf community. The failure of our educational system for deaf students to address the particular problems and needs of minority deaf people in general, and Black deaf people in particular, has created what is best described as a domino effect on the educational attainment, employment, and social and economic status of Black deaf children, youth, and adults. To be sure, the problem is a complex and persistent one, and it reflects the inability of our educational system to provide reasonable accommodations for students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. In this particular context, reasonable accommodations may be defined as the provision of a teaching-learning environment that nurtures an appreciation for cultural differences, self-acceptance, a positive self-perception, and academic achievement and persistence.

Along with the contemporary social and economic problems that impact on many Black Americans, a Black deaf child is placed at an added disadvantage. To alleviate this problem, educational programs for deaf people must expand their traditional roles to include collaboration with each other, with the Black deaf community, and with other professionals and organizations. While much is needed in terms of intervention and remediation, a great deal can be accomplished by allowing Black deaf people to participate more fully in and benefit from educational opportunities.

Appendix

Following are the results of an opinion worksheet that was filled out by participants in a conference on Empowerment and Black Deaf Persons which focused on the theme of this paper: Black Deaf People in Higher Education. Approximately 25 workshop participants responded.

I. Recruitment

1. Why do so few Black deaf students apply to post-secondary education programs for the deaf?

- lack of encouragement from family and school
- lack of support: financial, tutorial, positive reinforcement
- lack of educational preparation
- lack of information
- lack of opportunities for career advancement
- lack of role models
- low self-esteem stemming from low expectations from high school
- no personal challenge to excel
- unsure of their right to education
- fear of failure
- Black deaf students tend not to be fully mainstreamed into educational activities and given the opportunity to become fully actualized
- lack of external encouragement, particularly when the student may be the first generation in the family of origin to even consider postsecondary education
- lack of communication with hearing family members: parents, siblings
- peer pressure that emphasizes getting a job after high school or getting married earlier

2. Our experience has been that Black deaf students who do apply to post-secondary educational programs have difficulty meeting minimum educational requirements. Why?

- differences in educational programs/inconsistent preparation
- lack of preparation particularly in the areas of English reading and writing skills
- lack of higher expectations
- this depends on the language, culture
- many of these students have become victims of institutional racism, bigotry, and discrimination due to the half-truths that have perpetuated within our educational institutions about Black people and their "inferiority"
- inferior academic placement: too many Black deaf students are routinely placed in special classes or vocational classes and never aspire to or get encouraged to attend college

3. How can we remedy this?

- require standard curriculum mandated by OSERS/Dept. of Education
- include requirements for teaching/support staff (e.g., sign language skills, content knowledge, etc.)
- require teachers to have information and knowledge on cultural aspects of deafness
- emphasize self-actualization from early childhood education onward
- more Black teachers employed, especially in grades K–5
- more supportive services by Black deaf professionals
- more individualized instruction
- offer four- or five-week summer programs to focus on reading, language, etc.

4. What attracts Black deaf students to institutions of higher education?

- more education/better jobs/more earning power
- prestige: being the first person in one's family to go to college
- take Black deaf students on trips to visit college programs
- invite people from the community or educational institutions to give lectures to Black deaf students
- evidence of successful Black deaf alumni

- encouragement to go into fields other than education
- positive input from peers and role models
- financial support
- seeing other minorities at the school, such as students, counselors

5. Do we need special minority recruiters? Why?

- to understand special needs of minority students
- to "speak their language"
- to serve as role models
- to enhance the trust level
- to offer encouragement
- minority recruiters would provide a means of external support and serve as a viable connection for the Black deaf student

6. What can institutions of higher education do to attract Black deaf students?

- create minority scholarships
- offer support groups for Black deaf students
- have more Black deaf faculty/staff
- sponsor career days and internships for Black deaf students
- provide better training to faculty and staff regarding the needs of minority students
- offer remedial studies to minority students
- offer Black deaf students the same support and encouragement offered to white students
- show sensitivity to various minority cultural needs
- establish quotas for minority admissions

II. Attrition and Retention

1. What discourages Black deaf students from staying in institutions of higher learning?

- lack of support from peers as well as faculty/staff
- the lure of easy money from drugs
- English language is the main reason for discouraging Black deaf students
- Black people still carry the feeling of oppression from the past
- lack of educational preparation prior to entering the institution
- financial problems

- poor academic skills
- little or no encouragement
- discrimination
- fear
- problems at home
- frustration
- no support from either culture (Black or deaf)
- lack of motivation
- no interest in studies
- not fully mainstreamed
- lonely and isolated
- no encouragement to try other areas besides education
- no Black deaf professionals
- no one with awareness of Black deaf students' needs
- no resources available
- satisfaction with current situation
- lack of will power
- not career driven
- hard to survive in white environment
- counselors/professionals have no time to deal with Black deaf problems

2. What encourages Black deaf students to stay in institutions of higher learning?

- feelings of importance
- knowledge of the importance of completing education
- being involved in decision making
- adequate financial aid
- peer and faculty support
- clubs/organizations of peers that increase communication
- encouragement from family/teachers
- being successful and making good grades
- having Black counselors as role models
- mentorship
- having career goals
- need to prove to themselves and others that they can succeed
- some get good support while in school
- feelings of acceptance
- the idea of what will happen in the future with a higher degree
- better attitudes from teachers

- financial advantage is realized
- support from upperclassmen
- support from academic counselors
- involvement in Black deaf groups/activities
- having someone who explains the rewards of staying in school

3. What are the similarities and differences between Black students at predominantly white institutions and Black deaf students at predominantly white deaf schools?

- both part of "Black minority" as perceived by predominantly white culture
- in both schools, Blacks are treated differently from others
- white schools of any kind, unfortunately, offer a more well-rounded education
- students have the same needs
- same cultural similarities
- cultural awareness
- lack of minority staff
- all are the same—in different shades
- both experience isolation
- difficulty in identifying with majority culture
- lack of financial support

The only response to differences was that of language (ASL). Most responders shied away from answering #3.

III. Community

1. What can the Black deaf community do to support Black deaf people in higher education?

- make it a priority to write and help each other
- set up scholarship funds for Black deaf youth for higher education
- advocate for funding for assistance for families, education programs, and service agencies working with Black deaf individuals
- set up sub-organizations within large organization of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)—"Education/Communication Network." That would be helpful! To contact every schools where most Black and deaf children go to education them about the future. They would set up "What is there?" from time to time with a lot of encouragement from NBDA.

- offer financial, tutorial, and positive reinforcement types of support
- empowerment for all Black deaf persons as well as Black individuals to do well as a race
- instilling self-respect and providing information about the possible reward to come with achievement
- to help educate them about their needs
- to encourage them to write, read, and use communication skills everyday, no matter whether they do not have good educational background
- to give more workshops on Black/deaf issues that help them understand about themselves and their needs
- encouragement
- role model
- break the way
- training course and workshop
- challenge them with support
- evaluate Black community about culture
- cooperative programs
- mentorship—get student involvement with community activities
- to help provide what Black deaf people need
- monitor the educational programs that the Black students are in during their high school process to ensure that the student education is of a quality nature
- encourage them to apply and give them encouragement once they are in the program
- educate parents with sign language, how to get along with them
- BDA can support students by having events for them
- church can support students by scholarships
- family, friends, teachers???
- support
- have resources available in the community about different higher education
- establish workshops
- advocacy from BDA, search for scholarship assistance
- offer pre-studies for entrance test (GRE, GMAT)
- continue and establish a higher education conference
- help educate current schools on how to provide better services or to improve their services for deaf students
- provide more role models in higher education settings
- the Black deaf community can express the great need for more Black deaf college graduates so they will feel valued

2. How can we develop a better networking system between the Black hearing community and the Black deaf community?

- central database of all members of the Black deaf community (not only members of BDA, etc.)
- get an electronic mail for faster networking via computers. This is cheaper than long distance calls in the long run and much faster.
- develop training programs in advocacy, political process, etc. You have to get into the system to change it.
- it is our responsibility to educate the Black hearing community about our own Black deaf community
- to establish rap sessions to focus on the common needs and common goals
- affiliate with NAACP on the local and national level
- involve many Black parents in events for Black deaf children and parents
- to participate a member of each organization
- keep communication with each other at all times
- to be guest speaker for different organizations
- newsletter
- call for papers for the NBDA conference
- cultural awareness sessions
- sign language classes
- provide social activities together
- develop and maintain contacts through cooperative programs
- BDA needs to become more active within the Black community
- by educating the Black hearing and professional community and working with them
- making a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers to share and exchange information
- encourage participation in the school, church, community, and civic group
- use the churches to search for commonalities
- find benefits that will accrue from this networking to both hearing and deaf communities
- invest with organization (national) that can support this cause; also educate each other in understanding what is needed to communicate better.
- educate Black hearing community about the needs of Black deaf community

- working with Black professional organizations to assist Black deaf community
- working with white deaf community, also.

About the Presenters

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Personal Perspectives on Empowerment

Glenn Anderson
University of Arkansas

Thank you for the invitation to return to New York City to participate in this very exciting conference. New York City is like "home" to me because there are so many special friends of mine that I am delighted to see again. When I travel around the country, there are many people who often ask me, "Do you miss NYC?" and I tell them, "Yes." They then ask me, "Well, what do you miss about NYC?" My answer is always, 'The people I have been fortunate to become friends with."

There is one person in particular that I miss. I wish she were able to be here with us. I miss Claudia Gregory very much. I am sure many of you who knew her feel the same way I do. She is a good example of one of us who became more empowered after she decided to go back to school. I still vividly remember the day she walked into my office at LaGuardia Community College and told me she had quit her job. She said to me, "I'm tired of the 'BS' on the job, and I'm ready to start going to school." Because she had been out of school for several years and had never talked about wanting to go back to school, I was stunned by her desire to enter LaGuardia. Her first year was a struggle, but she was very determined and willing to "tough it out." Before she had completed her degree, I moved to Arkansas.

About two years later, Claudia called me at my office to inform me that she was graduating. That really made me feel good. Then she said, "Now, Dr. G., I want your opinion. Debbie Copeland has suggested that I go to the University of Tennessee to get my bachelor's degree. What do you think about that?" I said to her, "Gosh, the University of Tennessee is a big school with very few deaf students there. Haven't you thought about going to Gallaudet?" She said she preferred to go to a hearing college and was willing to take the chance on the University of Tennessee.

A couple of years later, our paths crossed at the 10th anniversary celebration of the Programs for Deaf Adults at LaGuardia. Claudia told me that attending the University of Tennessee was a challenge because she was one of only about six deaf students on campus. It really impressed

me when she said, "I don't have time to party anymore because I'm too busy studying." Our paths crossed again at the Black Deaf Advocates conference in Detroit. This time, she said, "I've got good news! I'm graduating next month, and my parents are coming to my graduation. I'm going back to LaGuardia to work as a counselor in the deaf program." Her announcement touched me deeply. I could not help but be proud and happy that she was able to overcome so many obstacles to reach her goals. Since our conference theme is about empowerment, I am sure that Claudia would be pleased if we shared her story with others who are not aware of what she accomplished.

I was asked if I would share information on four topics as part of my presentation: my personal experiences as a Black Deaf person; personal insights into how I made my way to where I am now; lessons I have learned over the years; and my views on empowerment.

Personal Experiences as a Black Deaf Person

The Southern IQ Test

During my second year in Little Rock, our Little Rock Association of the Deaf team drove to Jackson, Miss., to participate in a basketball tournament. As we were driving through northern Louisiana, where there was a lot of farmland, one of the players said to me, "Because you have a Ph.D., that means you know everything, right?" I answered, "No, I don't know everything." So my teammate said, "Well, we are going to give you an IQ test and find out." One of the guys said, "Glenn, what's that planted out there in the fields?" I answered, "I don't know, they look like bushes to me." All of the guys in the car laughed and said, "Glenn is a real city boy. He doesn't know what cotton looks like. Glenn, that's cotton out there." I failed my Southern IQ test, but I know what cotton looks like now.

They Don't Sell Such a Thing as Grits in the Food Stores

When I was in the 7th grade at a day program for deaf students in my hometown of Chicago, the teacher asked the class to write a composition about what we had done at home during the past weekend. I wrote about how my father had gone fishing that weekend. He had returned home late on Saturday night with plenty of fish. Whenever my father brought fresh fish home, my mother would fry fish for breakfast on Sunday morning. She would serve the fish with scrambled eggs, hot biscuits, and grits. After my teacher read my composition, she called me over to

her desk and said, "What's grits? They don't sell that in the food stores." No matter how hard I tried to explain to her what grits were, and that they are sold in the food stores, she remained convinced that there was no such food called grits. I felt dismayed and frustrated when I returned to my desk. When I arrived home that evening, I told my mother about the incident. My mother, of course, was upset. She decided to give me a box of grits to take to school. The next day, I showed the box of grits to my teacher and said, "My mother told me to show you this box of grits and to tell you that they do sell them in the food store and also to tell you that Quaker Oats Company makes them!"

"What Did You Get a Ph.D. For?"

Last month I was in San Antonio, Texas, for the SWAAD regional basketball tournament. As our team was warming up, I was filling out the starting line-up. As I gave the line-up to the official scorekeeper, there were two young Black Deaf men standing by. One of them asked me if I had recently spoken at Gallaudet as part of the Black History month celebration. I responded affirmatively. He then explained to his friend who I was. The friend said to me, "Is it true that you got a Ph.D. and you are a Doctor?" I again responded affirmatively. He had a look of amazement on his face, and he said, "You are the first Black Deaf person I have ever met who is a Doctor. Tell me, what did you get a Ph.D. for?" His question really caught me off guard because I had never had anyone ask me that before. I took a few moments to think about what to say to him. Finally, I said, "Well, why not? I had an opportunity, so I decided to take advantage of it."

Personal Insights Into How I Made My Way to Where I Am Now

While I was one of the few Deaf students in a large public high school in Chicago, my parents were constantly encouraging me to plan on going to college. My father was a building custodian at a large high school, and my mother was a short-order cook in a restaurant, and they wanted me to take advantage of opportunities they never had and to get a better job than they were able to get. Since I was not aware that Gallaudet existed, I chose to attend Northern Illinois University, which was not far from Chicago. I was the only Deaf student on campus at the time, and the faculty in the Physical Education department, encouraged me to either change my major or transfer to another school. Their reasoning was that all Physical Education majors were expected to attain at least a "C" in a

required public speaking class; although I had yet to enroll in the course, the faculty had already predetermined that I would not be able to attain a "C" in public speaking. After being referred to several different people for advice and counseling, I was fortunate to meet the chairperson of the Department of Special Education. It was through her that I learned about Gallaudet. She was kind and supportive; she assisted me in applying to Gallaudet, and she even administered the Gallaudet admissions test to me.

Attending Gallaudet was perhaps one of the best things that ever happened to me. My experiences as a student at Gallaudet helped me change my perceptions and expectations of myself. I realized I could do more than just become a P.E. teacher and coach, and as a result I changed my major to psychology. Before attending Gallaudet, I had never thought of myself as capable of being a leader. While I was there, I had the opportunity to participate in a variety of student activities and organizations. I was fortunate to be a student at a time when there were many outstanding student leaders on campus. In many ways, just watching them in action was a learning experience. Those students then are our leaders today: to name a few, Phil Bravin, Harvey Corson, and Gary Olsen.

We have all heard the expression, "behind every successful man is a woman" (and, I hope, "behind every successful woman is a man"). I owe a lot to my wife, Karen, for her support while I was a doctoral student at New York University. Studying for a Ph.D. and working on a dissertation were difficult and frustrating experiences for me. There were so many obstacles in the way, and I often thought I would never see "the light at the end of the tunnel." Many times I just wanted to say, "I don't want to put up with this BS anymore," and quit the doctoral program. But my wife, who often had more faith in me than I had in myself, managed to talk me out of quitting by helping me realize that it was foolish not to get something in return for all the money, time, sweat, and tears I had invested in my studies. When I finally finished, my wife and I agreed we had both earned a degree. While I earned a Ph.D., she earned a Ph.T.—putting your husband through.

Lessons I Have Learned Over the Years

There are many lessons I have learned over the years, and I would like to share some with you. I believe we must have goals for ourselves and be willing to work hard to achieve them. We must keep our eyes and minds on our goals and not let other people or obstacles prevent us from reaching them. Our friend, Claudia Gregory, was a good example of someone

who was persistent and determined to reach her goal of attaining a bachelor's degree. When she decided to attend the University of Tennessee, she did not have a car to commute from her off-campus apartment to school, but that did not stop her; regardless of whether it rained or snowed, she walked to school. She also did not have any close friends or family to support her while she was there; she and her daughter, who was in junior high school at that time, had to support each other and help keep each other's "chin up," regardless of the problems they encountered. Claudia made a commitment and kept her "eyes on the prize," despite the many obstacles that often got in the way. To me, Claudia was a "winner."

The second lesson I would like to share is that we must have good role models and mentors in our lives. My father was a good role model for me. He was a man who always put his family first. In 1968, two months before I was to graduate from Gallaudet, our house was totally destroyed under questionable circumstances. My father knew that the loss of our house could have been prevented if the fire department had gotten to the fire on time; he had sufficient justification to take legal action against the fire department for "negligence," but he chose not to. It was not possible for us to recover our losses because we supposedly lived in a "high risk" neighborhood and could not obtain homeowner's insurance. My sister and I used to get angry at our father for not taking legal action; nevertheless, he had his reason: he did not want to risk losing his job and pension by suing his employer, the city of Chicago. He always said, "It's better for my family to have a roof over their heads and food on the table than to be hungry and not have a place to live." Instead of being distressed, angry, and helpless about all that our family had lost, my father "picked up the pieces" and started all over again. I could not help but admire and respect my father for all he did to rebuild our lives again.

The third lesson I want to share is about the importance of having our own organizations and being able to sponsor our own conferences. Establishing Black Deaf Advocates (BDA) and sponsoring conferences every year gives us something that is "ours." In the early years when BDA was first organized, there were many people who questioned the need for BDA; there were also many people who were skeptical and did not think that BDA would last. But BDA, still alive and going strong in its ninth year, has become a "magnet" drawing many of us together. I am proud of what BDA has accomplished over the years. There is still a lot of work to do to make BDA stronger, but we did "get the ball rolling," and it is our duty to keep that "ball rolling" as long as we can.

Personal Views on Empowerment

I want to close with a few thoughts about our theme, "Empowerment and Black Deaf People." To me, empowerment means being able to control and determine your own life and future. It means getting in the driver's seat and driving the car rather than sitting in the back seat and going along for the ride. It reminds me of what the University of Arkansas basketball coach, Nolan Richardson, has told his players for the past three years since his 15-year-old daughter died of leukemia:

> Life is not promised to you. If you don't use what you have today, you don't have to worry about tomorrow. You may not be here tomorrow.

With my thoughts on the future, I would like to suggest that we work together to brainstorm ideas about how we can make our African American deaf history, our achievements, and our literature and publications more accessible to our sisters and brothers all over the U.S. and throughout the world. We need to build archives, libraries, information centers, and databases to preserve pictures, videotapes, books, speeches, and artistic performances that exemplify our heritage and culture. By doing that, we will be on the road toward empowering our sisters and brothers now, next year, in 10 years, and, more importantly, in 100 years.

About the Presenter

Dr. Glenn Anderson has been director of training at the University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Deafness since 1982 and is also an associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Education and Research. Dr. Anderson earned his Ph.D. from New York University and has been involved in deafness rehabilitation as a counselor, administrator, and trainer for 20 years. He has authored numerous publications and given an extensive number of workshops and presentations. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University.

The Role of a Special School for Deaf Children in Meeting the Needs of Black and Hispanic Profoundly Deaf Children and their Families

Oscar P. Cohen and Cynthia Grace
Lexington School for the Deaf

Positive feelings about racial identity can enlarge a child's overall desirable sense of self; negative feelings about racial identity can plant seeds of self-doubt, even among children who are otherwise developing well (Comer & Poussant, 1975). The effects of racism can be observed more directly after eight or nine years of age. It is at this stage where internalization of attitudes about oneself, influenced by powerful individuals in the environment such as parents and teachers, have an effect on a child's actions or reactions to "reduced expectations" in a self-fulfilling manner. School curricula, television programs, people, and practices regularly convey messages about race that can be troublesome to minority children.

Introduction

Today we are a nation of 240 million people, about 50 million (21%) of whom are Black, Hispanic, and Asian. Federal and private projections estimate that soon after the turn of the century, one out of every three Americans will be non-white. Most of the non-white student population is concentrated in a band of states that begins in New York, stretches southward down the Atlantic coast and then westward, ending in California. California now has a "majority of minorities" in its elementary schools; 46% of students in Texas are Black and Hispanic. In the 25 largest urban school systems, the majority of students are ethnic, racial, or linguistic minorities.

Black and Hispanic children are undereducated in disproportionate numbers across the United States. The failure to educate these children makes them least likely to have the social and academic skills necessary to be eligible for job opportunities, which increasingly reside in

the service and technology industries. Unless schools can find a way to educate these children, the problems associated with unemployment and alienation will escalate.

This paper examines the impact of the social realities and dynamics of minority families on the educational development of Black and Hispanic children. More importantly, it examines implications for schools and programs working with Black and Hispanic prelingually deaf children. Finally, a staff training model, specifically designed to increase awareness of the needs of Black deaf children, is presented.

The Hispanic Community

Hispanics are a diverse population; while Puerto Ricans constitute the majority of Hispanics in New York City (60%), Dominicans, Colombians, Cubans, and Central Americans represent a significant percentage of the overall city population. Hispanics, in comparison to other groups in New York City, are fairly young and have a higher fertility rate than the rest of the population: the median age of Hispanics in New York City is 26.7, compared to 32.6 for the general population; approximately 60% of Hispanic families have children under the age of 18; and the fertility rate of 25–34 year old Hispanic women in New York City is about 1.9, compared to 1.5 for non-Hispanic woman in that age range. This results in a disproportionately large number of Hispanic children in the schools, many of whom come from families suffering great economic difficulties.

Language is the unifying cultural characteristic of Hispanic life. It is crucial that educators are aware of the sentimental importance that Hispanics attach to their language, especially in schools that have the resources to interpret and translate from English to Spanish.

Hispanics and Schools

There is a general sense that Hispanic children do not function well in schools and that schools do not function well for Hispanic children; "poor functioning" in this case refers to the high dropout rate, the disproportionate amount of time spent on non-academic teaching, discipline problems among students, and parents who are relatively unresponsive to teacher and school requests. In general, Hispanic families are ethnically diverse, predominantly poor, recently migrated, young, undereducated, and underemployed, all of which may contribute to these school problems.

Hispanics are generally in the lower and working classes of the city's population. As a result, the daily stress of economic instability may take the child away from the activity of learning and prevent the parent from encouraging academic success. In addition, teacher expectations of student performance are often influenced by the child's socioeconomic status. According to the concept of generational transmission of values, school authorities tend to expect that the parents' occupation will eventually be transmitted to the child. Certain courses and occupations are considered realistic and proper, and others are said to be beyond the child's means. Although parents may not realize it, they collaborate in this effort through their concept of what it means to do well in school; working class parents tend to think that obedience is paramount, while middle class parents encourage inquisitiveness and working as a member of a team.

A second factor related to poor school functioning among Hispanics is their immigrant status. Immigration is a process of acculturation—of learning new ways to behave. It is a slow and anxiety-provoking process that unfolds over a lifetime and places great strain on families. Children are at a pivotal point in this process because they are being torn in two different directions; the teacher's gain is the parent's loss of the "old ways." The immigrant parent sees the school as just one more alien institution that is sometimes puzzling and often difficult to deal with, similar to the courts, the police, and municipal government. To the immigrant parent, education is not a collaborative relationship between the parent and teacher; when a child is in school, in the immigrant's world view, he or she is the sole responsibility of school authorities. The school becomes a major battle area in the process of acculturation, with teachers as the main actors. Educators must be made aware of the need to nurture biculturalism and bilingualism so the immigrant child may feel at home in both worlds. It is important that the teacher affirms the multiple aspects of the child's identity.

In addition to poverty and the immigrant experience, a third factor influences schooling for Hispanic children: Hispanic cultural life. The Hispanic family generally has a pronounced sexual division of labor; the father is considered to be the main source of authority and the final arbiter, while the mother is the chief executive who conducts the daily business of running the family. As the primary broker of services to the family, the Hispanic mother conducts relations with institutions, including the school; a teacher who wishes to discuss a child's performance must deal with her. However, any major decisions require the father's approval. The teacher must understand this subtle distinction in order to communicate with the family.

There are also gender differences with respect to roles and expectations for children. Traditionally, Hispanic males are thought to be driven by inborn malice and sexual energy, while females are viewed as helpless and in need of protection. Hispanic parents will often discipline their daughters in ways that teachers consider unnecessary and out of proportion, yet even the worst behavior is acceptable for boys. There is often unspoken conflict between a teacher and an Hispanic parent regarding the age of independence; immigrant children are viewed within the traditional Hispanic context, and they may continue to be dependent on their parents far beyond the age that most Americans would consider appropriate. This tendency for parent over-protectiveness may further contribute to school-related problems.

When dealing with Hispanic parents, it is important that teachers present themselves less as professional educators and more as persons with qualities attractive to the parents. Teachers and administrators must show that they are interested in the parent as a human being and not only in relation to the student. Emphasis must be placed on respect and personal interest; professionalism, educational skills, and authority, things we are taught to stand for as professionals, should be minimized.

The Black Community

The American social system sustains and encourages Black culture through racial, mental, physical, and social isolation; Black people live, study, work, and socialize together because of our system of social stratification (Hale-Benson, 1982). As with the Hispanic community, Blacks in America are a diverse group representing Caribbean cultures, African cultures, and the American Black experience. Like Hispanics, Blacks do not fare well in America compared to whites.

There is a duality of socialization required of Black people: children must be prepared to imitate the "hip, cool" behavior of their culture while simultaneously taking on those behaviors necessary for upward mobility. For Black Americans, as for other minority groups, socialization becomes increasingly difficult as they attempt to live in both worlds (Levine, 1977).

Income and Poverty

Regardless of family type, Black families earn significantly less than white families; in fact, they average 60% less. In 1983, half of all Black families living in the United States had incomes below $14,500. Now, almost half

of all Black children are poor, making up 44% of the Black population living in poverty; only 1 in 6 white children are poor, making up 36.6% of the white population living in poverty. The gap between Black and white family income has increased over the years; the median Black family income was 10% less in 1983 than in 1970, which is five times the decline among white families. White males earn more than any other group: in 1982, the median income for white male college graduates was $29,000, and for Black male college graduates it was $19,000; for white female college graduates the median income was $18,000, and for Black female college graduates it was $16,000.

Employment and Unemployment

At all ages and educational levels, Black men and women are more likely than white men and women to be unemployed, and those Blacks who are employed earn less money. In September 1984, about 15% of all Blacks and 6% of all whites were without jobs, and almost half the Black teens looking for work were unable to find jobs. Young Black college graduates have an unemployment rate almost as high as that of white high school dropouts; about 1 in 4 cannot find a job. Among Black high school dropouts, the picture is much worse—more than half are unemployed. The unemployment rate among Black teenagers is almost three times that of white teenagers, with only 2 out of 10 Black teens currently holding jobs.

Education

For Blacks, the issue of the 1980s seems to be education for survival; the necessity for continuous adaptation to the American social order has destroyed their opportunities for success and their trust in other people (Johnson & Sanday, 1971). Almost 40% of all Black children are growing up in families where the head of the household did not complete high school; this is twice the rate for white children, who are almost four times more likely than Black children to live in families headed by college graduates.

Black children score fewer correct answers on reading tests than do white children, and the older they get, the worse they score; there is a 19-percentage-point gap between the reading scores of Black and white 17-year-olds. Black students of all ages are poor readers when compared to white students. Although significant reading and math gains were made by many Black children during the 1970s, the gap still remains.

Black students are twice as likely as white students to be suspended from school, to be corporally punished, or to be out of school. Black 17-year-olds are three times more likely than white 17-year-olds to be two or more years behind the modal grade for their age, and almost half of all Black 17-year-old males are either behind in school or have dropped out. In 1982, about 1 in 4 Black 18- to 20-year-olds had dropped out of school, with 40% of the Black female dropouts giving pregnancy as their reason for leaving school (Nobels, 1985).

Schooling

It is generally believed that the American educational system has not been effective in educating Black children. Traditional education has emphasized the shaping of children to fit into an educational process designed for middle class, Anglo-Saxon children. One reason for the high failure rate of some minority students is this mismatch between the school culture and the social, cultural, and experiential backgrounds of the children. Educators need to understand the cultural orientation of the home and community and its relationship to the school performance of Black children (Hale-Benson, 1982). Unfortunately, the Black home environment has been labeled "pathological," and Black parents have traditionally been accused of failing to prepare their children adequately for school. Minority student performance would improve if the school curriculum and environment were made to reflect their particular learning styles and cultural backgrounds.

Child-Rearing

Black child-rearing practices are shaped by the racism and economic oppression faced in America; they are generally authoritarian in nature, having as their objective the development of toughness and self-sufficiency. Black mothers tend to be more firm and physical in their discipline than white mothers; they must prepare their children to assume appropriate age and sex roles in addition to the racial role, defined socially and politically as being resistant, suspicious, and cautious (Nobles, 1974). Black parents have had to ignore white child-rearing norms, which they have found to be irrelevant to the existential situation of their children.

Henderson and Washington (1975) find that many school practices are inappropriate for treating the educational needs of Black children because their unique cultural attributes have not been taken into account. Within the Black community, a network of significant adults

firmly corrects undesirable behaviors whenever they occur, and these behaviors are then reported to the parents. The significant feature of this system is that the child develops an external locus of control; however, in the school situation, adults seem to expect that the locus of social control exists within the child. In addition, parents and teachers seldom communicate, and few Black parents participate in the school's Parent Teacher Association. The social control apparatus of the school functions in a way that is quite different from the child's community, and yet it does not immediately include parents in its operation.

The differences in child-rearing practices between Black and white parents may result in cultural dissonance in school. White teachers typically do not function in ways that are consistent with Black children's expectations of adults. They have no conception of the kind of reality Black children face (Hale-Benson, 1982); for example, white teachers cannot believe that Black parents teach their children to hit anybody who hits them. As a result, teachers expect Black children to behave as "good" little children should. Often, teachers do not behave in the same ways as adults in the community, and only gross acts of impropriety are reported to the parents. Hence, children and teachers have mutually incompatible expectations of each other. The teachers conclude that the child is incorrigible, and the child concludes that the teachers are inconsistent and capricious (Henderson & Washington, 1975).

Minority Deaf Students

The same social, economic, and political factors that have created changes in the general population have affected schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing children. For example, the student population at the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York City is now 32% Hispanic, 25% Black, and 7% Asian, and these numbers are on the rise. In addressing the needs of racial, linguistic, and ethnic minority deaf students, all of the preceding issues related to cultural values, child-rearing practices, and varying value systems apply. Poor educational performance among minority deaf children seems to parallel that of minority children in mainstream education (Delgado, 1981).

Deafness makes one no less a member of a racial, linguistic, or ethnic minority; however, educators of deaf children and youth have been either unwilling or slow to respond to this proposition. Deaf children who are members of ethnic minorities possess dual minority group

membership, often compounding their role confusion and identity crisis. Black deaf individuals, for example, may be discriminated against by white deaf people and by hearing Black people (Anderson & Bowe, 1972). In addition, the significant cultural differences that exist between Hispanic and other linguistic minority deaf students are seldom understood or addressed in the curriculum. Consider the following, which indicate a systematic and systemic lack of attention to racial, linguistic, and ethnic minority deaf students:

- There are hundreds of books on the education of the deaf, yet only one, *The Hispanic Deaf: Issues and Challenges for Bilingual Special Education* (Delgado), concerns Hispanic children, and one, *Black and Deaf in America: Are We That Different?* (Hairston & Smith), addresses the needs of Black deaf students.
- Articles addressing the general needs of minority handicapped children have begun to appear frequently in the literature. However, to this day, only a handful of articles exist addressing the needs of minority deaf students.
- Only one federally funded demonstration project, Projecto Oportunidad (Rhode Island School for the Deaf, 1980–83), which developed a program specifically for language minority deaf students, has been funded. This project was funded by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs. No such project addressing the needs of Black deaf students has been funded.
- Twenty-five years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and years after the Bilingual Education Act, personnel at the Lexington School for the Deaf, where a well-developed program addressing the needs of Hispanic deaf students exists, are finally being asked to do introductory level awareness workshops at schools for the deaf.
- Although the rationale and model now exist to support a bilingual approach to education (Delgado, 1981; Fischgrund, 1982), schools for the deaf continue to resist providing home language instruction, usually on the grounds that the children are deaf, that they have "no language" upon school entry, or that they must learn English. These arguments have no foundation in the literature addressing language or educational needs of minority children. Translation and interpretation services, even when required by regulation, are still hard to obtain for most non-English speaking parents of deaf children.

- Only a handful of programs exist to meet the needs of language minority deaf students. Among these are:
  * The Hispanic Resource team at Lexington School for the Deaf, which works with Hispanic students and families.
  * Projecto Oportunidad at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, which works with Hispanic and Portuguese students and families.
  * Project F.A.C.E.T. (Franco-American Children's Educational Team) at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Maine, which works with French-American students and families.

These programs serve approximately 200 students, yet Delgado's 1981 survey identified over 7,000 students from non-English speaking homes. In addition, Delgado's study documented that deaf students from non-English speaking homes are three to four times more likely to be classified as learning disabled, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed. This is believed to be a function of the lack of specialized programs, lack of trained native language personnel, lack of cultural understanding, and lowered expectations rather than a characteristic of the children themselves.

School Policy

There are several ways to approach ethnic and cultural awareness in school policy. Three such models, positive hostility, official disinterest, and positive reinforcement, have been utilized in this country over the years. Positive hostility occurred when laws forbade the use of any language except English in the schools, when children were punished for not speaking English, and when minority children's language and backgrounds were ridiculed (Glazer, 1980). The effects of the positive hostility model are described by Benavides (1980), one of its products, who is a hearing person from a regular school:

> I was consistently reminded of my "differences" through the absence of experiences that reflected my language, culture, values, and most important, being accepted in my own right. I believe it was this process, the process of having to abandon "self and change my differences, that caused the low self-esteem, alienation, dissonance, and a most difficult and unpleasant school experience. (pp. 8–9)

While policies of positive hostility are officially outlawed in the United States, such practices undoubtedly survive.

The second model, official disinterest, seems to have a great deal of support. Despite Dewey's belief in cultural pluralism in public education, which dictates that every pupil should be made aware of the rich breadth of our national makeup, children of various backgrounds have found that schools, for the most part, ignore their backgrounds. The early, immigrant-sponsored, non-English speaking newspapers, schools, churches, and social organizations have been difficult to maintain into their second and third generations. Public schools have taught that people like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln were the heroes and fathers of our country; traditionally, there has been no mention of minority heroes. Children are often placed in the dilemma of deciding whether to take their cultural heroes seriously, since these people are apparently barred from the American school curriculum (Longstreet, 1980).

Out of these models of prejudice and indifference has grown an understanding of and a commitment toward cultural pluralism. This new model, called positive reinforcement, currently dominates in the educational setting. To be effective, positive reinforcement cannot be imposed—it must evolve; initially, process is more important than content. The goal of such an endeavor is not to plan and carry out ethnic activities in isolation, but to create a school environment in which ethnicity becomes institutionalized in a positive and vibrant way. This model may be seen as an abandonment of earlier policies promoting the melting pot theory.

In their efforts to teach basic skills to deaf children, educators and parents have tended to overlook cultural and ethnic experiences and values; these experiences often occur incidentally for hearing children, since so much of our culture, arts, and heritage are naturally transmitted through records, movies, plays, television, religious observances, and other institutions that rely primarily on linguistic and auditory competency. Schools for deaf children in the United States, especially those in urban areas, reflect the same cultural and ethnic variations as do schools for hearing children. A major effort should be made to develop appropriate materials to teach deaf children ethnic, cultural, and racial awareness; helping deaf children become more aware of the ethnic and cultural differences between themselves and deaf persons of other ethnic groups, or between themselves and hearing members of their own ethnic group, is an important factor in their education, development, and survival. When an environment is created in which educators promote understandings

of ethnic and racial heritage, teachers will become more effective (Cohen & Grant, 1981).

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in education is more important for a disabled child than for most non-handicapped children. Yet, as a result of language barriers and cultural and socioeconomic differences, ethnic minority parents often experience discomfort, intimidation, and alienation in their relationships with school officials. These feelings become exacerbated in a school for the deaf, where the specialness, and therefore strangeness, of the situation imposes an added barrier. Every effort should be made to minimize the parents' sense of alienation. Conducting meetings with minority parents in their own language is often a worthwhile initial step toward helping them feel comfortable in taking risks and making further contact with the school.

Board and Staff Representation

Jensema and Corbett (1980) found that approximately 94% of the teachers in their survey reported themselves as members of the "white" ethnic group. From this, the authors concluded that there is a gross imbalance in the racial make-up of the teaching population; this imbalance, likely replicated among trustees of schools for the deaf, may have a great negative impact on school policy. The lack of proportionate representation by minority professionals signals to parents and students that the school's policies are insensitive to their needs. Disproportionately high numbers of white staff generally result in a more rigid, white, middle-class cultural orientation, thereby excluding minority children from full participation in the process of education.

The Center School

The center school takes on a special importance for many deaf children, and minority students represent a high percentage of the institutional care population. Particularly during adolescence, the center school represents an environment where leadership and socialization skills are fostered; opportunities to engage in athletics, student government, drama, yearbook, and other activities are greatly enhanced in the center school. While these activities are essential to their growth and development,

deaf adolescents rarely become active in the social fabric of regular high schools.

Overall, awareness of the importance of curriculum, especially in the area of language, is relatively high at center schools; in these programs, curricula are specifically designed to meet the needs of the children served. Support services, such as staff training in the dynamics of language acquisition of deaf children, are more likely to be available in center schools. In fact, the amount of time devoted to staff training is generally greater at center schools, where the primary focus is the education and development of deaf children; in large urban districts, special education is one of several areas represented, and staff development needs are determined by majority concerns. For example, teachers in the New York City public schools meet for only one hour each month, while teachers at the Lexington School for the Deaf meet for one hour and 45 minutes every week.

In addition to providing quality residential care and treatment for profoundly deaf children, the center school is in a strategic position to meet the particular needs of parents. The trustees of center schools establish policy related to the needs of deaf children; local education authorities are less able to devote time, energy, and resources toward the needs of disabled children, who represent one subset of the larger population. Due process clauses mandated by Public Law 94–142 generally discriminate against minority families, since these families are often unable to assert their rights. The center school, with its focus on the needs of deaf children, is in a position to meet the needs of minority families of deaf children.

In addition to the center schools, professional organizations serving the deaf are in a position to alleviate this situation. Minority concerns sections should be developed to promote awareness of minority issues, personnel recruitment and training, research and development projects, and leadership in areas related to minority deaf children. In New York City, only two established agencies have programs designed for deaf children in residential care—the Lexington School for the Deaf and the New York Foundling Hospital.

Staff Training

Staff training in the modification of intervention strategies is the logical starting point toward addressing the needs of ethnic, multicultural deaf

children. Educators must raise expectations for minority youth; "killer" assumptions must be rejected.

School is a transmitter of culture; it makes a significant contribution to the developing personal and occupational identities of students. For Black children, and Black deaf children in particular, exposure to positive role models is limited because educators are either unaware of their existence or do not recognize their significance. Teachers and administrators typically do not receive training in the cultures of the children and families with whom they interact; they may be unaware that cultural knowledge can be utilized to promote learning and effective cross-cultural exchange. Frequently on the institutional level, and more subtly on the interpersonal level, Black children and their parents find that educational environments offer reminders of their culture's devalued status; for example, lower status employees are typically non-white, while higher status employees are typically white. It was once naively assumed that positive attitudes would develop if people of different races were simply mixed; however, studies of desegregated schools show that the result was often greater intergroup hostility and conflict, since the students quickly learned who was valued and who was not (Davidson, 1976).

Experience has shown that prejudice is extremely difficult to eliminate. The prevailing attitude appears to be an intellectual disavowal of prejudice and racism. This has created a situation whereby many people who do not consider themselves racist justify their racist attitudes and behavior with what they believe to be rational, unbiased explanations; people are less likely to admit prejudice, but there has been no decrease in the tendency to behave in a bigoted manner. Consequently, it is difficult to obtain direct access to prejudiced attitudes for the purpose of altering those attitudes.

In May 1988, under the auspices of the New York State Department of Education, the Lexington School for the Deaf developed a prototype staff training model to build staff awareness and sensitivity to the needs of Black deaf children and their families. The project proceeded on the assumption that a lack of understanding of the values, motives, behavioral codes, and language of Black culture frequently results in low expectations and unwarranted generalizations about these children's educational potential. The program's objective is to enable educators to become aware of how racism affects their lives and impacts upon the educational experiences of their disabled students. It is hoped that teachers will change their attitudes and behaviors toward Black children and adults.

Steps in Implementing the Project

Initially, an organizational structure was established, consisting of a project director, a full-time assistant, an advisory board, and a secretary. Next, a needs assessment was conducted; this included a thorough review of the literature, conferences and correspondence with a variety of professionals in fields related to the goals of the project, and meetings with students, parents, supervisors, teaching assistants, and other staff about their perceptions of the needs and experiences of Black deaf students and their families. The results of this needs assessment guided the development of the training model.

In the end, a triphasic, 18-hour program was designed to promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitude change in teachers, teaching assistants, administrators, and support staff. Phase I of the training centers on helping participants acquire an understanding of institutional and cultural racism, as well as their impact upon the experiences of Black deaf individuals. Phase II encourages participants to explore the culturally relevant values, beliefs, and behaviors that they bring to interactions with those who are culturally different. Phase III addresses action strategies that help to eliminate or reduce the impact of racism and discrimination in the educational setting. Throughout, emphasis is placed on the significance of deaf culture. For additional information on each phase, see Figure 1 on page 126.

The training program was not built around a series of loosely connected cultural awareness exercises; a well-established group relations paradigm was utilized, and the importance of unconscious beliefs, feelings, and motives as primary determinants of individual and group behavior were recognized. The basic premise was that, in order to function optimally, a group must be relatively clear about its primary task and relatively free of anxiety and counterproductive assumptions and motives. Groups vary in size, composition, and purpose; group exercises foster a progression toward awareness of the significance of individual contributions to group attitudes and behavior, as well as larger systems' dynamics that promote or impede positive group relations. Emphasis is placed on how issues of difference impact upon the group's ability to reach its goals and fulfill its tasks. With the help of consultants, participants examine ways of relating to others through observing and attempting to understand individual and group behavior.

There were several assumptions underlying the design of this model: 1) experiential learning leads to greater transfer of knowledge and skills; 2) learning is an active process, and therefore passive acceptance of

information is not learning; 3) learning methods should be varied to decrease boredom; 4) the trainer should attempt to make the complex look simple; 5) if experimenting with new skills leads to success, attitude change will occur; 6) frequent opportunity to practice new skills leads to success; 7) the learner should secure satisfaction from learning; 8) standards of performance should be set for the learner; and 9) improved cross-cultural exchange will result from greater understanding, increased respect for cultural diversity, and the sense of empowerment that comes from feeling more competent as an educator. Each training phase had goals for learning, attitude change, and skills acquisition. Because training is more effective if participants are brought to a minimum level of knowledge, some reading is required during the three-day session. To stimulate thinking and encourage participation, a keynote address on the impact of disability and minority group status preceded the pilot training.

This training program should be thought of as a first step in an ongoing process. Program participants, therefore, should not consider that they have "graduated from a training program." It is hoped that participants will develop an appreciation for the structural dynamics of racial discrimination and, consequently, a commitment to working for change at that level.

After training is completed, consultant services should be utilized for periodic follow-up sessions. To promote continuity, members of the school staff should be trained as consultants when feasible. Since consulting requires a relatively sophisticated level of training and clinical sensitivity, proper selection and training of candidates is of paramount importance. The best trainers are well informed about the dynamics of racism, systems, and groups; in addition, they have a well-developed sense of their own relevant attitudes and beliefs. Trainers should be able to make both manifest and unconscious meanings of participant communication available to the group. Further, they should resist the tendency to emphasize similarities in people while dismissing or ignoring important differences. Most importantly, trainers should be sensitive to signs of defensiveness and vulnerability in participants. The consultant should create an atmosphere in which defensiveness can be replaced by curiosity and a desire for self-knowledge.

During the pilot training, pre-project and post-project interviews were held to assess attitudinal and behavioral changes. The end product was a training manual that will soon be distributed by the New York State Department of Education.

Conclusion

The picture for minority children in the United States is bleak, and the situation for minority deaf children is no less so. A deaf minority child's needs often exceed those of non-minority deaf children for reasons beyond poverty. Minority deaf children live in a multicultural world; they are members of their ethnic minority culture, of deaf culture, and of the predominant Anglo-Saxon culture of the United States. Too much attention may be focused on the needs imposed by deafness, and too little on cultural backgrounds and concomitant forces at play in the home and community.

The picture, however, need not be so bleak. Trustees, teachers, administrators, and government officials must become aware of minority concerns. In addition, curriculum must be assessed, resources made available, minority staff recruitment aggressively pursued, intake and placement procedures reviewed, and parent and home relations analyzed and revamped. In short, a spirit must be developed that focuses on the strengths of minority deaf children and their families.

With few exceptions, neither local educational agencies nor center schools have risen to this challenge, and it appears unlikely that local agencies will in the near future; deafness is a low incidence disability, and with the large number of concerns currently facing education, it is unlikely that these agencies will be willing or able to devote appropriate attention to the needs of multicultural, minority deaf children. As the number of minority deaf children increases, the opportunity exists for center schools to develop programs with goals of excellence and equity. Recently, a feature in Education Week highlighted the meteoric rise in minority children in school throughout the country. The headline read: "Ready or Not, Here They Come." Let's be ready.

About the Presenters

Dr. Oscar P. Cohen is the executive director of the Lexington School for the Deaf. He received his Ph.D. in special education administration from Teachers' College, Columbia University. He serves as chair of the CEASD Committee on Ethnic and Multicultural Concerns.

Dr. Cynthia Grace is the project director of the training program to increase staff sensitivity toward the needs of Black Deaf children and their families at the Lexington School for the Deaf. She is also an assistant professor of psychology at the City College of New York. She earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the City University of New York and an Ed.D. in counseling psychology from Columbia University.

Figure 1.

Phase I		
Learning	Attitudinal Changes	Skills
Identify key elements of racism and discrimination.	More positive attitudes toward black deaf students and their families.	Capacity to objectively assess strengths of black people.
Identify how racism functions in society.	Decreased tolerance for racial and cultural bias and discrimination against disabled people.	Ability to challenge the myths and negative stereotypes pertaining to black families and deafness.
Knowledge of deaf culture.	Appreciate the significance of culture for the experiences of black students and their families.	
Knowledge of the interactive effects of being deaf.		

Phase II		
Learning	Attitudinal Changes	Skills
Self-knowledge as it pertains to cultural values, beliefs, and biases.	More positive attitudes toward those who are different in culture, social class, and occupational status.	Ability to articulate one's cultural values, beliefs, and biases and their possible impact on behavior in work role.

Phase III		
Identify necessity for action and appropriate steps.	Decreased tolerance for institutional barriers to effective learning and intergroup exchange. View that passivity promotes inequity and conflict.	Ability to implement action strategies appropriate to work role.

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A Story About a Group of People

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Seven people went out for a cruise on a pleasure yacht about 50 miles northeast of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Normally there were two inflatable lifeboats attached to the side of the yacht, but this time the owner had forgotten one of the boats, which had been recently repaired. The capacity of each one of the small inflatable lifeboats was FIVE PEOPLE. If more than five people got into one of these little boats, it would sink immediately.

The name of the yacht was "Marimba," and it was sleek and golden brown and beautiful; it was luxurious, with a full upper and lower berth, a wet bar, and a spacious wooden deck. On this day, TRAGEDY STRUCK—the boat hit a hard rock coral reef, which tore a gaping hole in its side. Immediately it began to sink into WATER THAT WAS 300 FEET DEEP—and the people began to panic. BUT, since the one little lifeboat they had could only hold five people, who among those seven would be the survivors?

1. A 75-year-old retired doctor, hearing.
2. A 15-year-old high school student from Puerto Rico.
3. A 25-year-old black deaf man from D.C.
4. A pregnant woman from Los Angeles, hearing, 25 years old.
5. A deaf teacher from Gallaudet's English department, white female.
6. A 6-year-old boy who lived in the Virgin Islands, a Godchild of the Gallaudet teacher.
7. A 60-year-old woman vacationing from Toronto, Canada.

Since there really isn't a lot of time because the yacht is sinking three feet every minute, YOU HAVE ONE MINUTE AS A GROUP TO REACH A CONSENSUS ON WHO SURVIVES. (P.S.—the problem solvers should also try to come to individual conclusions.)

After the group finishes processing the story, introduce the concept of DIVIDE AND CONQUER. The Win-Win outcome would have all people survive by having some hang onto the side of the boat while treading water.

Also tell them that the LONGER it takes for them to see a technique or method for playing Win-Win and trusting each other . . . the MORE IT WILL COST them.

Panel Discussions

Video proceedings of some of the panel discussions will be available from Lehman College by September, 1992. For more information, contact Deborah Copeland at Lehman College, The City University of New York, 250 Bedford Park Blvd. West, Bronx, NY, 10469–1589.

"The Black Deaf Student in High School." Moderator: Patrice Joyner, graduate of Lexington School for the Deaf and instructional assistant at the school. Panelists are from the Fanwood and Lexington Schools in New York: Thomas Ingram, senior; Mary Robin Skinner, junior; Lisa Santiago, sophomore; Tamara Walton, freshman; and Nicholas LaLanne, prep.

"Black Deaf Professionals in the Field of Deafness." Moderator: Angela Gilchrist, professional academic advisor, Gallaudet. Panelists: Evon Black, recruiter/marketing assistant for Dept. of Technical Studies and English Language Institute, Northwest Campus, Gallaudet; Al Couthen, assistant principal, Kendall Demonstration Elementary School, Gallaudet; Carolyn Emerson, career counselor, Gallaudet; Carl Moore, development counselor, NTID; and Reggie Redding, director, Educational Support Services, Lexington School for the Deaf.

"Black Hearing Professionals in the Field of Deafness." Moderator: Lindsay Dunn, counselor for PDHIS at Lehman College and president of NYC Black Deaf Advocates. Panelists: Celeste Owens, executive director of Deaf Enterprises; Howard Hines, counselor at New York Foundling Hospital; Pearl Johnson, director of Rehabilitation Services at New York Society for the Deaf; Kathrine Taylor, VESID; Brian Douglass, Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf/Blind; Pearl Green, teacher, New York City Board of Education; and Pauline Heard, Board of Education's Hearing Education Services.

"Black Deaf Community Leadership." Moderator: Aloy Bibum.

"Multiculturalism, Empowerment, and Ideas for Resolving Oppression Against People Who Are Different." Moderator: W. Kent Winchester,

NTID Department of Human Development. Panelists: Tanya Durarte, NTID, president of the NTID Ebony Club; Delxino Wilson Debriano, RIT; Jeff Pecot, NTID, treasurer of the NTID Ebony Club; Dr. Michael Ayewoh, director of RIT Minority Student Affairs; Lisa Skeete, RIT; Craig Chesson, RIT; and Pam McClain, NTID, member of the NTID Ebony Club. Durarte, Debriano, Pecot, Skeete, Chesson, and McClain are all members of the RIT Black Awareness Coordinating Committee.

"Black Deaf College Students." Moderator: Steve Younger. Panelists: Tanya Ingram, Lehman College; Daisy Wooten, Gallaudet; Michelle Banks, SUNY; Annie Marie Bryan, New York University; Tanya Duarte, NTID; Yolanda Roberson, Miss Black Deaf America and CSUN senior; and Calvin Paul, Gallaudet.

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92–346–174