BECOMING HEARING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF EXPERT INTERPRETER DEAF-WORLD CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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By
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The Deaf-World is part of the national fabric with its citizens utilizing American Sign Language (ASL) as an indigenous language. Sign language interpreters facilitate sociolinguistic access between Deaf and hearing persons. Information presented in this inquiry focused on interpreter cognitive and behavioral development of Deaf-World cultural competence. Cultural competence relates to learning new patterns of cross-cultural behavior with effective application in various contexts (Gallegos, Tindall, & Gallegos, 2008).

The inquiry explored expert participants’ descriptions of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Participants described transformational processes interpreters experienced entering the Deaf-World or in other words, becoming HEARING, the ASL representative ‘gloss’ for the sign hearing. This inquiry explored how participants’ made meaning around co-constructed Deaf-World cross-cultural connections.

Participants expressed lived experience stories of Deaf-World cultural competence informed by the concept of currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006). Data were coded in aggregate and themes found in participant narratives. Analysis described participants’ significant statements, themes and essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) within the data set. Themes expert Deaf and hearing participants described about Deaf-World cultural competence included: HEARING participants avowed Deaf-World
affiliation or affiliation/alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy; and Deaf participants avowed Deaf-World alliance and efficacy as well as conditional ascription of interpreter affiliation or affiliation/alliance. The essence of the phenomenon consisted of the idea that *becoming HEARING* included co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance. Participants also described a tacit seven step process of entering the Deaf-World titled the interpreter affiliation/alliance narrative (IAAN) paradigm.
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Forever Praise Adonai and Shalom
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

New Orleans, LA, 1995. I watched with trepidation as hotel personnel nailed wooden boards to windows of the New Orleans Hilton, site of the 1995 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) national conference. The local news reported a hurricane warning, and we were in the middle of it, situated below sea level, a great first visit to NOLA. Were we oblivious to the metaphorical connections between the storm outside and ongoing turmoil inside?

We were four colleagues from Ohio and we decided we had to attend a national conference; we were sojourners in the Deaf-World and we were curious about the national scene. It was good to have like-minded people to explore new territory.

Not one given to outward panic, I noticed the people of NOLA moved about their business, oblivious to the pounding of nails and the scurry of people preparing for a storm. The lack of concern seemed like a good sign. Another good ‘sign’ was when we hit the conference hotel; we felt the need to use American Sign Language (ASL) because after all, there were Deaf attendees. Conventional Deaf-World wisdom dictates when there are Deaf eyes about and one is able, then the language one chooses is visual, no argument.

We agreed every time we left our hotel room, were in the hallways of the hotel and beyond, we would sign so people could see our conversation and if so inclined, they could enter it. A political statement aside, we agreed to do what we thought made sense in the situation.
Well, evidently, we were not the only ones who thought the idea made sense. We were in the hotel lobby, talking to each other in ASL, and a Deaf woman ran up to us with a look of urgency on her face, the depth of her feelings visible in the seriousness of her expression. She asked us if we were hearing and we said we were. She noticed we were signing and asked why many typically hearing interpreters at the conference were choosing to use spoken English during conference events and around the hotel. In her opinion, interpreters have the linguistic capability to choose ASL, but often do not and she said it was offensive to the Deaf attendees. She asked us what could be done about it. We fumbled through a response, not sure what to say, because, after all, is that not the crux of the issue for Deaf people? Communication and the lack of access to spoken communication are at the heart of the disparity between Deaf and typically hearing persons. Later, in a special plenary announcement, we saw an impromptu guest on the stage, the same woman who approached us, asking the entire audience of attendees to please be mindful of ‘Deaf-friendly’ conference language use.

Is part of knowing Deaf ways naturally knowing one will sign if able? If we have to debate this issue, are interpreters missing the point? Can interpreters identify themselves as bicultural without understanding culturally responsive language use? What characteristics of Deaf-World cultural competence are described by expert signed language interpreters?

The above personal, actual event illustrates a common Deaf-World sociolinguistic encounter. Hearing interpreters are able to use both ASL and spoken English. Culturally Deaf individuals prefer and use ASL and at times may not be able to effortlessly use
spoken English to express and/or receive information. Language access is a basic human right (United Nations, 2013). When Deaf persons are in the presence of those able to use both languages, they anticipate visual language usage. Disavowing basic communicative access is problematic, in general, and unsettling under conditions described above. Does Deaf-World cultural competence include an understanding of basic human and civil rights such as equal access to communication through a linguistically complete language? Are cultural considerations inherent in the above scenario?

The term Deaf-World describes communities of visually oriented individuals whose primary language is signed and who collectively identify as a minority culture (Lane, 2005). Deaf-World citizens are found in countries the world over; however this inquiry focuses on culturally Deaf citizens and interpreters who work with them on the continent of North America, including the United States and Canada.

Visual language interpreters sociolinguistically interface between Deaf-World citizens whose indigenous language is ASL, and those not able to utilize signed language. ASL/English interpreters are referred to as bilingual and bicultural mediators (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). Smith (1996) stated most professional interpreters are neither really bilingual nor bicultural. Baker-Shenk (1986) discussed hearing persons who worked as interpreters being ‘far from fluent in ASL’ (p.43). Competence of ASL/English interpreters regarding Deaf-World language and culture is opaque, as Grosjean (2008) stated not all bilingual individuals possess bicultural abilities. Humphrey and Alcorn’s (2001) statement, Grosjean’s (1996, 2008) claim, and Smith’s and Baker-Shenk’s observations regarding the sociolinguistic status of ASL/English interpreters require
further exploration. Are interpreters sufficiently Deaf-World culturally competent? ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence is in need of examination.

To contribute to ASL/English interpreting pedagogy and curricula, I have gathered information regarding biculturalism and Deaf-World cultural competence from a group of people who embody dual space, expert hearing and Deaf interpreters. There has been confusion about intercultural interactions (Rasmussen, 2012) in the lifeworlds of interpreters. Stuard (2008) found Deaf individuals and interpreters may see the acquisition of interpreting skills from two dissimilar points of view: Deaf consumers perceive interpreters attain linguistic fluency and appreciation of diversity in the Deaf community by exposure to Deaf-World culture and hearing interpreters perceive cultural affiliation with the Deaf-World as not necessarily improving interpreting skills. The perceptions of interpreters and members of the Deaf-World appear to be mutually exclusive. Forestal (2004) stated tension exists between interpreters and Deaf consumers of interpreting services.

Tension exists between interpreters and the Deaf community perhaps due in part to cultural misunderstandings (Bienvenu, 1987; Sherwood, 1987). Bienvenu (1987) and Sherwood (1987) added to the discussion on interpreter interfaces with the Deaf-World by introducing the topic of third culture, discussed in Chapter 2 of this document. In the past, there were significant discussions about Deaf-World and interpreter cross-cultural interactions (Arneson et al., 1987; Atwood & Gray, 1986; Baker-Shenk, 1986; Bienvenu, 1987; Brislin, 1986; Cavell & Wells, 1986; M. B. Miller & Mathews, 1986; Sherwood, 1987). Contemporary research investigating interpreters and the Deaf-World includes
inquiring by Stuard (2008) on perceptions of interpreter qualifications; McDermid (2009a) on constructed interpreter identities; Coyne (2012) on interpreter leadership through a social justice lens; and Rasmussen (2012) on interpreter intercultural sensitivity.

Within ASL/English interpreter education research, along with the overall lack of inquiry about cultural issues (Rasmussen, 2012), there is insufficient application of data from general intercultural literature. The call from the past for culturally related research (Sherwood, 1987) has not been realized. Sherwood discussed the need for programs to teach culture on a more in-depth level. Philip (1986) stated many programs never get beyond a superficial explanation of culture. Cultural competence as a concept is controversial, in need of clarification and expansion so as not to be challenged regarding empirical efficacy (Gallegos et al., 2008). To effectively teach complexities of intercultural concepts, research data could be applied to pedagogical practices. The quantity and quality of cultural information presented in interpreter programs are in need of amplification. What was evident and important to interpreter educators and scholars in 1987 needs further examination via empirical inquiry.

Dissonance exists in the American Sign Language/English interpreter education literature regarding Deaf-World cultural competence rhetoric and reality. There are cultural and cross-cultural standards in the American Sign Language/English interpreting discipline from various professional organizations suggesting the significance of culture in the work of interpreters. The organizations setting high standards and impacting the work of interpreters are: the Commission on Collegiate Education (CCIE), the Registry
of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC), American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA), and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). Cultural rhetoric abounds in standards, but data from models such as cross-cultural development (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006) and intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) are lacking and demonstrate a gap in interpreter education literature (Rasmussen, 2012). Deardorff (2009) stated the position of cross-cultural interaction as an attribute needs clarification and no less so in the ASL/English discipline. The ASL/English discipline has developed sufficiently to apply interdisciplinary intercultural data. In an endeavor to discern authentic interpreter voice, identify participants’ lived realities, add data to existing literature, and suggest possible applications of intercultural frameworks pertaining to Deaf-World cultural competence, I conducted a basic interpretive qualitative study, interviewing expert Deaf and hearing interpreters.

Rationale for the Study

Interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence has not been established empirically. Proficiency levels of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence have not been measured utilizing frameworks assessing knowledge, skills, and behavioral indicators of acquisition and mastery. Interpreters are purported to possess necessary and sufficient Deaf-World cultural competence to successfully pass an interpreter exam and be credentialed by the National Association of the Deaf [NAD], Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [RID], or NAD/RID standards (RID, 2013).
The inquiry sought clarification regarding interpreters and Deaf-World cultural competence. In the field of interpreting, with the exception of some children of deaf adults (Codas), how hearing people adapt to the Deaf-World in their work as interpreters is in need of study. Within the ASL/English discipline, it is not known if interpreters fully adapt, assimilate, and/or acquire sufficient levels of Deaf-World cultural competence.

The purpose of the study was to explore expert Deaf and hearing ASL/English participants’ lived experiences regarding meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work of ASL/English interpreters. The overarching aim was to identify meaning Deaf and hearing participants assigned to interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community. This study was conducted with credentialed and experienced Deaf and hearing interpreters considered experts (Ericsson, 2001). By conducting this study, I sought to address the lack of hearing and Deaf interpreter qualitative representation in describing their lived experiences regarding ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

An auxiliary aim was to bring together and systematize contemporary, cross-disciplinary literature from such fields as cultural psychology, second language acquisition, translation, interpreting, and intercultural studies, discerning how the literature fits with participant data. There is a need for interdisciplinary data to be merged with the lived experiences of hearing and Deaf interpreters, as bicultural individuals, to describe and amplify characteristics of Deaf-World cultural competence.

To begin to understand interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, I interviewed expert Deaf and hearing practitioners of ASL/English interpreting. Expert participants
self-reported that they were bilingual/multilingual and bicultural/multicultural with a few questioning their Deaf-World bilingual/bicultural status. One hearing participant questioned her ability to truly be bilingual or bicultural, but after the interview stated she actually felt more bicultural than bilingual. One Deaf participant hesitated to physically write on the questionnaire, preferring instead to produce his responses in ASL, his linguistic comfort zone as a bilingual/bicultural individual. Understanding interpreter bicultural status requires further exploration to allow research, Deaf-World voice, and best practice to prevail. The inquiry represents continuation of descriptions of data concerning interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence and biculturalism, far from the first or last word on the topic.

In the general ASL/English RID/NAD certified interpreter population, bilingualism/multilingualism and biculturalism/multiculturalism may not be automatically assumed (Smith, 1996). In the literature, various terms are used to describe life with multiple cultures, such as bicultural, multicultural, transcultural, cross-cultural, pluricultural, intercultural, and so forth. Within this inquiry, there was necessity to select one concept and define it, operationalizing the selection and definition for purposes specific to this study. I selected the concept of cultural competence because it best described the set of cognitive and behavioral characteristics interpreters need to possess in order to effectively cross boundaries into the Deaf-World. Cultural competence as a concept is very important in the interpreting discipline because:

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enables the
system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes. Competence in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in appropriate settings. (Gallegos et al., 2008, p. 54)

Cultural competence as a concept of interpreter best practice seems to fit the idealized concept attempted, but not always achieved by interpreters in their work within the Deaf-World. American Deaf citizens are part of the fabric of the national identity. Deaf Americans interact with persons from a variety of cultural sub-groups, such as hearing persons, other Deaf persons, deaf persons, hard of hearing persons, African American persons, individuals who are gay, and the list could continue. Deaf communities are not unlike diverse others who live in community. Because cultural competence encompasses an active and intentional dynamic, it would have individual, collective, and institutional implications. Achieving cultural competence would not be simple, but may move interpreters and Deaf consumers closer to mutual understanding and respect. I believe cultural competence is a basic competency in the overall skill set of an interpreter. While it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss the cultural competence level necessary to interpret in a variety of settings, if one is identified as an interpreter and has passed the certification exam offered by RID, NAD or RID/NAD, one would exhibit specific knowledge as well as linguistic and cultural abilities deemed
necessary to pass the exam. The exam includes information related to general culture, Deaf-World culture, and a variety of sub-cultures within the Deaf-World (RID, 2013). Cultural differences, on many levels, prove to be significant and ubiquitous in the lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters, but this inquiry focused only on interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

Interpreting is a complex human task (Seleskovitch, 1978) and an interpreter needs to be competent in using at least two languages and knowledgeable about at least two cultures. Interpreters possess varied capacities to attain cultural competence leading to sociolinguistic fitness or incompatibility when faced with a variety of interpreting situations. There are multiple ways to be bicultural and to exhibit intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009). Conducting the inquiry with expert interpreters helped to lay groundwork for describing exemplary Deaf-World cultural competence among ASL/English interpreters.

Figure 1 illustrates in graphic form the conceptual framework of this inquiry by describing and expanding the title of the dissertation: Becoming HEARING\(^1\): A qualitative study of expert interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

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\(^1\) ASL represents some lexical items by using capital letters. In this case, the ASL glossed concept of the English word ‘hearing’ (HEARING) refers to the hearing status and signifier of those persons who are affiliated with the Deaf-World, are not d/Deaf and in this inquiry act as interpreters.
Cultural competence refers to behaviors, attitudes and policies within a system or among a group enabling the system to function in cross-cultural contexts; it includes incorporating and transforming knowledge about people into standards, practices and attitudes utilized in appropriate cultural settings to increase service quality, producing culturally appropriate outcomes; it is action referencing learning new ways of behavior and successfully applying them in appropriate ways and settings (Gallegos, Tindall, & Gallegos, 2008).

**Figure 1.** Description of dissertation title and conceptual framework of the inquiry

Deaf America is a postmodern enigma to the uninitiated due to being couched and somewhat veiled within American mainstream culture. Deaf communities in the United
States are often marginalized, and generally misunderstood linguistically and culturally (Lane, 1992). The role and function of ASL/English interpreters are frequently misconceived as well. I provided information below to foreground some Deaf-World and interpreter related concepts, clarifying basic ideas in the inquiry including the American Deaf-World, ASL, culture, culture/language linkages, and expert interpreter practitioners.

The American Deaf-World, as studied by Deaf-centric scholars, is described as U.S. citizens whose primary language is American Sign Language and who view themselves as belonging to an ethnic group rather than having a disability (Lane, Pillard, & Hedberg, 2010). Accuracy in statistics of language use within the Deaf-World is difficult to achieve (Mitchell, 2006) and it is estimated there are between half a million to one million users of American Sign Language in the United States (Lane et al., 2010). There are approximately 10 million Americans with hearing loss of various degrees. Many of these persons do not necessarily espouse the values of the Deaf community or Deaf-World, but instead self-identify as hearing persons with a medical hearing loss (Lane et al., 2010). Discussion of this population is outside the scope of the present inquiry. The community of persons who make up the Deaf-World, those who use American Sign Language as a native or indigenous language and adhere to Deaf-World characteristics, norms, and beliefs (Padden & Humphries, 1988), compose the community at the center of this study.

According to the National Association of the Deaf, American Sign Language is a grammatically complete visual language (NAD, n.d.). ASL is a linguistically cogent language with a distinct grammar (Valli, Lucas, Mulrooney, & Villanueva, 2011); is
processed through the eyes; is not universal; has regional dialects; changes over time (NAD, n.d.); has register variations (Quinto-Pozos & Mehta, 2010; Zimmer, 1989); and is unlike signed or coded English-based communication systems (Johnson, Liddell, & Erting, 1989).

Language provides a window into human nature (Pinker, 2007) and ASL, declared a complete language by Stokoe (1960) and his colleagues, has been added to the tally of world languages. Human beings typically are able to employ a fully generative linguistic system, unlike other living species such as animals that utilize constrained communication systems (Valli et al., 2011). The signed languages of Deaf individuals around the world have been and continue to be researched by linguists and have been found to be rich, vibrant, fully formed examples of human language (Stokoe, 2001) with concomitant vital cultures attached (Padden & Humphries, 1988; Ladd, 2003).

Defining culture is challenging because there are multiple descriptions from a wide variety of disciplines (Barrett, 2013). Two broad definitions of culture are presented below. The first is general and describes culture as knowledge people utilize to understand experience and generate actions (Spradley, 1980). Hall (1959) described culture as it relates to groups of people and the sum of their ways, their learned behavior patterns as well as their attitudes and artifacts. ASL/English interpreters have dual cultural affiliations and ideally would be able to execute cognitive and behavioral cross-cultural actions as seen in the above definitions. Achieving comprehensive cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1988) in one’s native culture is challenging, so accomplishing the same
in a second culture would be quite demanding. Recognizing the position of culture and dual cultural affiliation in the work of interpreters is foundational to the inquiry.

Within the ASL/English interpreting discipline, discussion of culture regularly appears within multiple Interpreter Education Program (IEP) related contexts (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001; Mindess, Holcomb, Langholtz, & Moyers, 2006); in interpreting process models (Cokely, 1992; Colonomos, 1989); in Deaf Studies literature (Bauman, 2008; Padden & Humphries, 1988, 2005); and within various organizations providing certification and accreditiation. The achievement of target cultural competence with second language (L2) fluency has not been verified (Grosjean, 2008). In second language teaching, scholars in the field discuss the inadequate coverage of cultural information within foreign or second language programs (Lange & Paige, 2003). Within ASL/English interpreting contexts, simply being exposed to a different culture does not assure the development of intercultural sensitivity (Rasmussen, 2012). In addition to deficiencies above, there is a lack of application of data regarding the study of biculturalism from significant disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and cultural studies (Mistry & Wu, 2010). Allied cultural information in various disciplines may be utilized however there is a need to systematize the information efficiently and effectively.

Interpreters are, by trade, bilingual and bicultural (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001) discourse mediators. Within the set of all signed language interpreters, there are individuals who are pre-certified, certified, qualified, under qualified, and over qualified. The state of the field is at times clouded by confusion regarding the status and
credentialing of interpreters (Gile, 2009). In this inquiry, interpreters who were considered experts in the manner of Ericsson (2001) were the targeted participants.

Expert interpreter practitioners included credentialed ASL/English bilingual/bicultural professionals who may had matriculated from Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs) and who have passed the certification exam either offered solely, or collaboratively between the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Examination knowledge and skill pass levels required by the NAD, RID or NAD/RID exams are set by the organizations’ administrations, and included data taken from current linguistic and cultural research (RID, 2013). Interpreters are educated in and tested on knowledge of two languages and cultures, in essence demonstrating bilingual/bicultural skills. Bilingualism and biculturalism are often discussed jointly. In this inquiry, the noteworthy concept was biculturalism with the symbiotic relationship between bilingualism and biculturalism inherent and assumed as an ASL/English interpreter reality.

Experientially, the inquiry encouraged practitioners’ free expression, creativity, and clarity regarding how interpreters made meaning around the subject of Deaf-World cultural competence. The aim of the study was to foreground Deaf and hearing interpreter lived experience in discussion of a very important topic, participant Deaf-World cultural competence. Deaf-World cultural competence occurs partially through processes a hearing person experiences as he or she becomes a HEARING interpreter. Below is a brief explanation of why and how a hearing person becomes known as HEARING within the American Deaf-World.
Bauman (2011) made the claim he became HEARING at the age of 21 when the understanding of the cultural differences between Deaf and hearing individuals became apparent to him. When I saw Bauman’s video biography (Gallaudet University, 2011), the concept of a separate identity within the Deaf-World resonated with me. The cross-cultural changes inherent when one moves from a typically hearing person to a HEARING person vis-à-vis the Deaf-World opened up a world of understanding. Deaf and hearing persons live with differing sensory experiences and apart from the Deaf-World, hearing persons do not typically acknowledge their own or others’ hearing status. However, connected to the Deaf-World, hearing persons are referred to in ASL gloss as HEARING, a lexical item carrying semantic cogency and salience within the Deaf-World. As hearing persons become HEARING interpreters, there are inherent intercultural processes occurring during the transformation. The processes involved in hearing individuals’ intercultural adaptation to Deaf-World culture and identifiers therein described by Bauman (2011) became the inspiration for the first two words of the dissertation title, ‘Becoming HEARING.’

Napier (2002) discussed the use of an upper case ‘D’ compared with a lower case ‘d’ to describe persons who are audiologically deaf or culturally Deaf. Utilizing the d/D convention, Napier proposed a similar description of hearing persons with the convention of h/Hearing, with ‘h’ representing hearing people who are allied with Deaf communities and ‘H’ for the masses of people who do not know about the Deaf-World. For purposes of this inquiry and with acknowledgement of Deaf-World citizens who have created their
indigenous language, I have decided to refer to hearing persons who are affiliated or allied with Deaf persons in America utilizing the ASL glossed identifier HEARING.

American Sign Language has no formal written system, utilizing instead ‘glossing’ of ASL lexical items (or individual ASL ‘signs’). Glossed ASL items are typed in upper case letters, and are representative of ASL concepts (Valli et al., 2011). The concept of HEARING carries specific meaning in the Deaf-world and in the interpreting community. Persons who are not Deaf, have the ability to hear, and communicate in the world of sound are indicated by the lexical item HEARING, loosely translated as ‘one who is able to produce spoken language and able to hear utilizing the auditory system.’ Padden and Humphries (1990) described those who are not Deaf as ‘others’ or persons who are able to hear, with whom Deaf people may interface or a general description of the masses of humanity who are able to take in acoustic information through the ear. Persons who do not sign, but use spoken language to communicate are referred to as HEARING in ASL. Interpreters or others who are able to use signed language, are not d/Deaf and are able to process information through the auditory system are also referred to as HEARING.

The significance of the ASL glossed lexical item, HEARING vis-á-vis the Deaf-World, exists in one’s affiliation with the Deaf-World. Apart from the Deaf-World, persons who are able to hear generally do not self-identify as ‘hearing’ and would typically not use hearing status in one’s self-description. However, once affiliation with the Deaf-World is established and when interacting in Deaf-World culture, a ‘hearing’ person will self-identify (avowal) or be identified by a d/Deaf person (ascription;
Salzmann, 2004) as HEARING. The process of developing dual cultural affiliation as one moves from being a ‘hearing’ person to a HEARING person linguistically symbolizes the transformational experiences of ASL/English interpreters.

Within this inquiry, the focus of study was on participants who had crossed borders into the Deaf-World, thus making them HEARING from a Deaf perspective. Perspectives from both HEARING and Deaf interpreters’ personal currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) experiences blended together to describe Deaf-World cultural competence of HEARING ASL/English interpreter practitioners. Interpreter participants’ lived experience of being transformed and subsequently referred to as HEARING provided the backdrop of this inquiry. Below are key terms and concepts appearing in this document and used in the highly esoteric Deaf-World interpreters partially inhabit.

**Definition of Terms**

A description of key terms and concepts used in this research is necessary to introduce or reinforce important ideas in the discussion regarding Deaf-World cultural competence of ASL/English interpreters.

**American Sign Language (ASL).** The indigenous language of the American Deaf community (Ladd, 2003).

**Ascription.** A concept regarding perceptions others recognize and communicate about one’s presentation of identity (Fong, 2003).

**Avowal.** A concept regarding how one presents to others, or the presentation of self (Fong, 2003).
**Audism, Deaf-gain, Deafhood.** Contemporary, inquiry based terms coined within the Deaf-World to describe aspects of the Deaf experience. Audism was coined by Humphries (1975); Deaf-gain coined by Bauman (2008); and Deafhood coined by Ladd (2003).

**Bi/multicultural.** A state of being seen in individuals who have the following traits: take part to varying degrees in two cultures; exhibit varying degrees of adaptation in their attitudes, values, language and behaviors and; blend aspects of both cultures into their lives (Grosjean, 2008).

**Bi/multilingualism.** Relates to linguistic aspects where two or more languages are acquired, learned and used by an individual (Grosjean, 2008). Bilingualism is defined as knowing two languages (Valdez & Figueora, 1994) and so multilingualism would refer to knowing multiple languages, assumed to be more than two. There are several classification systems regarding bilingualism: simultaneous bilingualism where two languages are acquired from birth or before the age of one (De Houwer, 2005); sequential bilingualism where one language is acquired after another and the age of acquisition is important (Flege, 1992); elective bilinguals who learn the language usually in a classroom for course credit, circumstantial bilinguals are required to learn a second language, often to find work and; subtractive bilinguals, common in the children of immigrants, because first language skills usually decrease or disappear (Valdez & Figueora, 1994). In the work of Kannapell (1980), bilingualism is classified in conjunction with ASL and English as she finds the following: ASL dominant bilinguals are more adept at expressing themselves in ASL rather than English (in either printed
gloss or signed form); English dominant bilinguals are adept at expressing themselves in
English and are able to understand English (in printed and signed form) rather than ASL
and; Balanced Bilinguals are adept in both ASL and English and are able to use both
languages equally well.

**Credentialing.** Some organizations provide examinations, assessments,
standards, and other documentation of professional practice. Organizations include: the
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID); the National Association of the Deaf (NAD);
the American Sign Language Teacher’s Association (ASLTA); the Commission on
Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE); the National Consortium of Interpreter
Education Centers (NCIEC); American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA)
and; American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). The
Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) is the accrediting body for
post-secondary Interpreter Education Programs in the United States (CCIE, 2014).

**Culture.** The way of life of a people, the sum of their learned behavior patterns,
attitudes, and artifacts (Hall, 1959).

**Deaf.** Refers to those born deaf or are deafened usually in childhood and for
whom sign language and the Deaf-World represent their primary experience (Ladd,
2003). A particular group of people who share a language, American Sign Language,
and a culture (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

**deaf.** Refers to the audiological condition of not hearing (Padden & Humphries,
**Deaf Community.** A group of people that may include persons who are not audiologically Deaf; people within the group support the goals of what Deaf people are trying to achieve and actively work in concert with Deaf people to achieve those goals (Padden, 1980).

**Deaf Culture.** The term was developed circa 1970; buoyed by the belief that Deaf persons collectively have managed their own ways of being (Bahan, 2009) mediated via their signed languages (Ladd, 2003). The Deaf culture is more closed that the Deaf community (Padden, 1980) and seems to follow the model for acceptance developed by Cokely and Baker-Shenk (1980). Adequate research into Deaf culture has not been realized (Ladd, 2003).

**Deaf Interpreter (DI).** The following information was taken from the Consortium on Collegiate Interpreter Education’s (CCIE) website (CCIE, 2014). A Deaf Interpreter is a specialist who provides interpreting, translation, and transliteration services in American Sign Language and other visual and tactual communication forms used by individuals who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and Deaf-Blind. As a Deaf person, the Deaf Interpreter starts with a distinct set of formative linguistic, cultural, and life experiences. These experiences coupled with professional training give the Deaf interpreter the ability to effect successful communication across all types of interpreted interactions. Currently, Deaf Interpreters work most often in tandem with hearing interpreters. The Deaf-Hearing interpreter team ensures that the spoken language message reaches the Deaf consumer (CCIE, 2014)
**Deaf-World.** A phrase used in spoken and signed language, to describe the unique space Deaf people occupy, including their ways and experiences (Mindess et al., 2006).

**hard of hearing.** A person with a mild or moderate hearing loss; or a deaf person who wants no affiliation with the Deaf community; or the person may have both characteristics; not hearing but not Deaf (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

**hearing.** A term originating in the Deaf community to describe non-deaf people (Ladd, 2003). Within American Deaf-World contexts, the hearing world is sometimes referred to as American mainstream culture (Mindess et al., 2006).

**HEARING.** The ASL glossed representation describing persons who are able to hear. Two groups of HEARING people from a Deaf-centric perspective are: those affiliated with the Deaf-World and those not affiliated with the Deaf-World. In this inquiry, HEARING people affiliated with the Deaf-World will be discussed and HEARING persons not affiliated with the Deaf-World may be discussed minimally.

**Interpreter.** The interpreter identifies intended meaning or sense of the speaker’s discourse and reformulates it in the target language (Seleskovitch, 1978). The interpreter works with languages and partakes in a form of translation in which a first and final target language message is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of a source language message (Pöchhacker, 2004). An interpreter works with at least two languages and cultures and needs to have an excellent command of both (Pöchhacker, 2009).

**Interpreter Education Program (IEP).** Post-secondary programs offering interpreter education. One may earn an A.A. degree, B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. (RID 2013).
**Language.** Definitions of language often are discipline specific (Pateman, 1987) and the following definition comes out of the study of ASL linguistics. Language refers to a rule-governed communication system with features that make it generative and include: symbols organized and systematically used; arbitrariness or iconicity; community members sharing the same system; productivity as new messages may be created at any time; ways of showing relationship between symbols; ways of introducing new symbols; usage in unrestricted domains; being able to be broken into smaller parts and; the ability to discuss itself meta-linguistically or using language to discuss language (Valli et al., 2011).

**Lifeworld.** The concept of lifeworld is a synonym for and illuminated by the German concept of *lebenswelt*, a way to describe the conscious experience people make of the world in which they live (Orbe, 1998). van Manen (1990) described four existential lifeworlds: the four spaces are lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived others. Interpreters’ lifeworlds would include the lived reality of fluency in at least two languages and at least two corresponding cultures, which would include dual experiences within the four existential lifeworlds (van Manen, 1990) described above.

**Native interpreter (L1).** For purposes of this inquiry, native interpreters are bilingual, bimodal ASL/English (Bishop, 2006) practitioners, typically Deaf parented and exposed to ASL as their L1 (first language).

**Non-native interpreter (L2).** For purposes of this inquiry, non-native interpreters are persons who have learned ASL as a second language, typically in high school or college (or through other means, d/Deaf family/friends); possibly graduating
from an IEP, and eventually acting as an interpreter in a variety of settings and may be credentialed or not

**Professional development of interpreters.** Education of pre-service or ongoing education of practitioners in the interpreting field via workshops, conferences, seminars, classes, symposia or mentoring for the further development of knowledge and skills in the interpreting discipline.

**Visual language.** A term used to describe organic, indigenous signed languages. Visual language (Association of Visual Language Interpreter of Canada, 2013) in the interpreting discipline came to prominence through the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and the term has been utilized within Deaf Studies in the U.S.

**Second culture (C2) acquisition.** The processes occurring when one gains a second language, one also takes on the attributes of the culture with which the language is affiliated (Kramsch, 1998).

**Second language (L2) acquisition.** The processes involved in developing competency in an additional language after the acquisition of a mother tongue (Singhal & Neas, 2012).

**Research Questions**

There were two research questions. Research question one was divided into two parts and asked participants to describe characteristics of Deaf-World cultural competence. The same question was posed to Deaf and HEARING participants.
Research question two was global in nature and inquired about interpreter lived experience and meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence.

Research Question One A:
- What characteristics did hearing practitioners discuss describing their understandings, perceptions and attitudes about Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters?

Research Question One B:
- What characteristics did d/Deaf practitioners discuss describing their understandings, perceptions and attitudes about Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters?

Research Question Two:
- What are Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners?

When asked to tell the story of becoming an interpreter, participants provided rich narratives of entering the Deaf-World and eventually the ASL/English interpreting discipline. Questions guided researchers and participants to reflect on their position in the Deaf-World, levels of cross-cultural competence, perspectives on the field, practitioners in general, and sensitive issues between interpreters and d/Deaf constituents.

**Research Methods and Theoretical Framework**

The research approach used for this inquiry was an interpretive qualitative approach informed by an array of philosophical perspectives and frameworks. Within
qualitative research, there are numerous research methods or approaches from which to choose (Willis, 2007).

The interpretive qualitative approach possesses characteristics of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (Merriam, 2002), frameworks found in various research disciplines. The interpretive qualitative approach employed was informed by phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), emancipatory research (Sullivan, 2009) and the concept of currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006). Below, I describe the main research approach, an interpretive qualitative design, followed by descriptions of approaches informing this study.

Creswell (2007) stated that an interpretive qualitative approach is employed when we seek to study the meaning people ascribe to the experience with a particular social or human problem. I sought to investigate the social problem of ASL/English Deaf-World cultural competence using an interpretive qualitative design informed by additional elements because of the approach flexibility and expanded detailing the combination afforded.

Phenomenology is ubiquitous in qualitative research approaches in general (Merriam, 2002) and provided the footing for the study, helping to extract participant lived experience (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology seeks to uncover meanings in our everyday existence and informed this inquiry as participants were asked to describe the essence (van Manen, 1990) of their cross-cultural experience.
Narrative inquiry centers on individual, in-depth, shared narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and in this inquiry, focused on the stories of expert interpreters. Each participant embodied a personal story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinar, 1975, 2006) and the overarching aim was to provide a space where Deaf and hearing participants could identify meaning they ascribed to Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community.

Heuristic inquiry was fitting for this inquiry because of my lived experience as a second language (L2) ASL/English interpreter. One main characteristic of heuristic research includes intense interest in and personal experience with the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1990). Heuristic research involves creative self-processes and self-discoveries (Moustakas, 1990). Moustaskas (1990) wrote that creative processes within an individual may be hidden or denied. The likelihood of someone unaffiliated with ASL/English interpreting understanding profound meanings connected to interpreter practitioners in the Deaf-World would be improbable. I did not desire that my knowledge and experience as an interpreter be hidden or denied but to be useful and shared. My perspective as a L2 interpreter framed the research with a look toward interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence in the general ASL/English interpreting field. There were a variety of interpreter participants in this inquiry, Coda, sibling of a deaf adult (Soda), L2, and familial connections by marriage. To use a colloquialism, as a L2 interpreter in the 21st century, I have skin in the game related to interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Heuristic inquiry principles helped frame and allowed the vested interest to be prioritized.
Emancipatory disability research is concerned with confronting the power imbalance often seen in research with marginalized groups, attempting to level the playing field (Sullivan, 2009). Researchers, in an emancipatory vein, would want to encourage nonmaleficence, doing no harm and beneficence, doing what benefits others, in conducting empirical studies with marginalized groups (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2009). The inquiry sought to engage a research paradigm to encourage and dignify the Deaf voice within the inquiry and bring out the typically silent interpreter practitioner voice.

Currere, the root word of curriculum, is a concept discussed by Pinar (1975, 2000), a reconceptualist theorist within Curriculum Studies. Pinar’s (1975, 2000) work involves theorizing about and reconceptualizing curriculum, viewing curriculum as a verb. Currere is partially defined by comparing courses of study to one’s educational path, meaning one’s curriculum is the pedagogical ‘course to be run’ (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). Participants were asked to reflect on and describe the cross-cultural course they have run as interpreters in the Deaf-World.

Merriam (2002) discussed strengths of incorporating an interpretive approach, such as exploring how participants understood their experiences, constructed their worlds, and gave meaning to their experiences. The role of the researcher who utilizes an interpretive qualitative approach is to interpret and present findings constructed by participants (Merriam, 2002). Meaning provided by participants about the co-constructed cultural and community connections informed by their currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) narratives served as the primary focus and driving force of meaning in this inquiry.
Personal Interest and Cross-Cultural Currere Narrative

While taking doctoral classes and learning about the concept of curriculum as currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006), I became aware of how past experiences may impact future career choices. Deaf community members figured prominently as authentic and vital chapters of my lived experience story. Participants provided their personal stories or currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006) as powerful examples of their cross-cultural lived experiences. I thought it fitting to provide below a reduced explanation of my interest in the topic by way of personal narrative. Before I became an interpreter, I met d/Deaf persons in various venues and circumstances. Below, is a synopsis of my Deaf-World lived experience, followed by a currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) look at my journey entering the Deaf-World.

1. Early interaction with Deaf-World citizens
   - When four years old, two deaf female children in the neighborhood, attended the same church
   - In middle school attended a school with a self-contained deaf class
   - When sixteen, worked as a park/camp counselor. Met the deaf sister and mother of a camper

2. I initiated interest in the Deaf-World
   - Age 18—took a signed language class for BA degree

3. Deaf community members take note
   - Professor encouraged students to go to Deaf club events
   - Some d/Deaf persons took interest in teaching me their language
4. I continued to contact with the Deaf community
   - While in college, made visits to the Deaf club
   - Moved to Maryland, worked at Gallaudet, and entered graduate school
   - Maintained relationships within Gallaudet community

5. The Deaf community keeps an eye on the hearing person who desires to enter the community
   - Became friends with people on campus; socialized outside of work; was invited and attended social events

6. Hearing person draws in closer, or not, based on Deaf community gatekeeping
   - In graduate school, became involved in student groups, activities, and some activism
   - Continued to be invited and attended social opportunities and events

7. Processes are reflexive and iterative
   - Moved back to Ohio and the above process was repeated
   - Remain socially, politically, linguistically, and vocationally involved with the Deaf community today

I am a practicing interpreter and interpreter educator. I have education in the fields of speech/language pathology and audiology as well as deaf education. In becoming an interpreter, I was mentored within the Deaf community supplemented by courses, and professional development opportunities. A significant amount of mentoring was offered to me by a number of native, generationally Deaf ASL users, a key part of what led me to the interpreting discipline.
Having a community focus and not matriculating from an IEP, I believe my introduction to and sustained involvement with Deaf ways were natural, engendering breadth and depth of cross-cultural lived experience. I was not initially taught Deaf-World culture from textbooks or classes, but was exposed to Deaf ways from a community of ASL speakers. I am not a core member of the Deaf-World, but a guest (Smith, 1996) on an extended stay. As a mindful, mutually agreed upon, protracted guest, I am expected and desire to participate as the community sees fit.

The community from which exposure to and acquisition of the language and culture occurred was not an ordinary Deaf-World community, it was from my affiliation with Gallaudet University for eight years as a young adult. In essence, it was as if I lived in France for a number of years, using the language and acquiring language and culture as a bicultural/bilingual expatriate of a foreign country. There is no place like Gallaudet; it is the world’s only fully accredited, standalone liberal arts institution for d/Deaf and hard of hearing persons.

Upon returning to my ‘home country’ of Ohio and continuing professional affiliation utilizing bilingual/bicultural skills honed as a foreigner, I experienced homesickness for a language, culture, and place. The depth of cultural contact and exposure to the Deaf-World at Gallaudet has impacted my professional demeanor to this day. I was able to witness and be a part of the forward movement of the most advanced Deaf-World community in the world. I was an observer of and participant in meaningful interactions within a setting where a language based on vision is the norm, and proof that
the use of a sound-based language was not the only evidence of one’s humanity (Bauman, 2008).

Taking on the role of interpreter educator within several institutions as well as conducting workshops, I began to discern a disconnect between interpreters and Deaf-World members. In attempting to keep up with the interpreting field and provide state of the art information to students, I continued to attend meaningful Deaf-World gatherings where I observed Deaf-World interactions utilizing ASL. At these events, speakers and scholars exhibited well developed bilingual/bicultural abilities as well as finely tuned ideas and experiences. Comparing and contrasting the national voice with local experiences, I could see similarities and differences. As an interpreter educator, I felt a responsibility to impart both local and global realities to students. Observing some practitioners at local events, it seemed some of the interactions were impacted by a reduced level of cultural knowledge, exposure and comfort interpreters have with Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009).

I was drawn to the study of biculturalism and Deaf-World cultural competence after reading literature from several disciplines such as psychology, cultural psychology, communication studies, cross-cultural communication studies, and the discipline related to intercultural competence. I could see connections between cross-cultural interactions in general, and between Deaf and hearing people in particular. Deaf people maintain the desire not to be viewed as disabled, but function more like an ethnic group (Lane, 2005). I needed a connection for information I had lived, read and gathered over the years. The
connection came in the way of the field of Curriculum Studies in the Curriculum and Instruction department at Kent State University.

As Curriculum Studies scholars, Henderson and Gornik (2007) encouraged educators to identify problems within the curriculum by using wisdom principles. An example of this comes from attending national and international conferences, and noticing an important recurring theme. Some Deaf professionals in attendance reported that they felt marginalized not only in society but during conferences where professional interpreters were in attendance, those who allegedly spoke a common signed language but chose not to in the presence of Deaf attendees. Since Deaf people are cut off from sound, would a cultural norm be using a lingua franca (common language) or ASL, in the presence of Deaf people? Is this linguistic sensitivity a norm regarding communication? How are interpreters to respond to the consumers with whom they work? How are HEARING interpreters to respond to the marginalized Deaf voice in light of the fact that interpreters would not be necessary or have employment without Deaf consumers? How would students learn appropriate norms and veiled cultural behaviors requiring explanations from cultural brokers? A more formalized sequence of culture teaching facilitating Deaf-World cultural competence is needed in IEPs.

In 2010, I began this inquiry with a preliminary study to discern the importance of the topic of Deaf-World cultural competence. Preliminary study data reinforced the idea that bilingualism and biculturalism co-exist in expert interpreters and are requisite for the performance of interpreting from spoken English into ASL and from ASL into spoken English. Interpreters interviewed had a wide range of experiences and perspectives on
what it means to function as an ASL/English bilingual/bicultural individual. Notions they presented reflected diversity within the Deaf-World, but also reflected basic bilingual/bicultural skill sets that individuals who self-identify as ‘interpreter’ should possess. Preliminary study participants identified bilingual/bicultural abilities among the basic tools of the trade of the interpreting profession.

As an interpreter, I believed a study such as this would and could be best conducted by someone interested in the general field and particularly this topic. Heuristic inquiry somewhat alleviates one’s dissonance about researching a topic about which one is intensely interested (Moustakas, 1990). The study explored expert interpreters’ lived experiences regarding Deaf-World cultural competence in their work as practitioners within the Deaf community. I fit criteria as an expert interpreter as explicated in this inquiry and my lived experience is similar to participant Deaf-World trajectories.

Within heuristic inquiry, researcher characteristics include intense interest in and personal experience with the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 2002). I was interested in this inquiry because of my lived experience as an ASL/English interpreter. Moustakas (2002) wrote about heuristic inquiry and how, unfortunately, there are times creative processes within an individual may be hidden or denied. Being an ASL/English interpreter, I have been able to incorporate creative processes within and outside of my work (Patrie, 2013). It is unlikely a person unfamiliar with the field of ASL/English interpreting would have an intense interest in this subject. I did not want the knowledge, experience, and interest in the topic to be hidden or denied but to be useful and shared. My experience, per
heuristic inquiry, enhances the depth of the study, but does not take the focus or main position within the study.

Data reported through this basic interpretive study will assist two general consumer groups within the ASL/English interpreting discipline, faculty in IEPs and interpreter professional development facilitators. Teachers of pre-service or working interpreters in the field of ASL/English interpreting may enhance curricula with cultural information and developmental sequencing of Deaf-World cultural skill development for students. Persons who conduct workshops or professional development opportunities may use data as guidelines as they seek to explore the complex role culture plays in the work of practitioners in the field. I am hopeful these data will be used to expand knowledge for students, assist educators in the challenge of teaching culture and ultimately will impact d/Deaf and hard of hearing consumers of interpreting services in positive ways.

**Subjectivity**

Van Manen (1990) described two significant and related phenomenological concepts, bracketing and reduction. Since this inquiry is informed by phenomenology, it is necessary to mention these concepts as they relate to the subjectivity of this researcher and study.

Bracketing relates to suspending one’s beliefs in order to study a topic and reduction refers to stripping away conceptions of an issue in order to be able to study it in a non-abstractioning manner (van Manen, 1990). While the above concepts may be considered best practice in phenomenology by some, the pure implementation may be
somewhat lofty and naïve in practice (Finlay, 2008). I like to think I am able to recognize my own subjectivity or am able to strip away preconceived notions, but in reality, there may be times when subtle or overt positions may surface in my thinking and/or in my writing.

It is important to remember that I am a bicultural person who is an ally of the Deaf-World. I am situated in the worldview that the Deaf community is an oppressed (Freire, 1970) linguistic minority and one for which I have decided to care (Noddings, 2004). My lived experience in the Deaf-World embodies a Deaf-centric perspective and an Arendtian (Arendt, 1958) view of the polis, claiming Deaf citizenry equal in the marketplace of ideas. Deaf citizens are part of the cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006) of the world at large, deserving mutual respect based on shared standing as human beings (Bauman, 2004).

People could criticize me for not being objective and for being an advocate of the Deaf community because of my affiliation and alliance with the Deaf-World. I need to situate this inquiry, be clear and not be reluctant about the positions I take, because I may face criticism perpetrated out of oppressive perspectives, be they blatant, subtle, recognized or dysconscious (Gertz, 2003). Deaf communities have faced marginalization as long as they have existed, but still choose to self-identify more as an ethnicity than a disability group (Lane et al., 2010). I agree with and base my professional perspective on principles claiming the Deaf-World to function in an ethnicity orientation.

The Deaf-World is not familiar to the uninitiated lay public and its power diminished to some who are affiliates but not allied with its depth and breadth. The
participants in this study were familiar with the Deaf-World and below are assumptions of their contextualized knowledge and expertise.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

There are five general assumptions associated with this inquiry. These notions situate the research linguistically and culturally, thus establishing requisite criteria for the expert status of participants.

Participant skill set—Participants possessed or exceeded ASL, spoken English, American Deaf cultural, and American mainstream cultural knowledge skills required to pass the NAD/RID exam and possessed American mainstream and Deaf-World cultural competence.

Metacognitive skills—Participants in this study possessed metacognitive skills and were able to discuss linguistic and cultural topics related to ASL and English.

Local/global considerations—Participants in this study recognized and comprehended contemporary, local, and global ASL/English interpreting issues as they exist in the Deaf-World, American mainstream culture, and the ASL/English interpreting community.

Biculturalism—Participants in the study fit into one of several possible bicultural scenarios: native ASL/English bicultural individuals such as generationally Deaf persons, children of Deaf adults (Codas), sibling of a Deaf adult (Soda), persons exposed to ASL/English at a relatively early age; persons exposed to ASL/English at a somewhat later age; non-native bicultural individuals such as L2/C2 interpreters, or non-native
d/Deaf bicultural individuals. The assumption is that authentic bilingualism presumes biculturalism.

*Bilingualism*—Participants in the study fit into one of several possible empirical bilingual classifications described in the definitions section.

Thirteen expert participants across multiple sites in the U.S. represented a limited sample for several reasons. The sample included participants from two general geographic locations: interpreters from an area with a critical mass of d/Deaf and hard of hearing persons as well as interpreters; and interpreters from a Midwest location. Interpreters not considered experts (Ericsson, 2001) were not represented in the sample. I wanted to concentrate on exemplary interpreters for the initial study. Subsequently studying other diverse groupings of interpreters such as Codas only, L2 interpreters only, interpreters of color, recent graduates of IEPs, and d/Deaf community members represent possibilities for future research.

Another limitation of this study was lack of representation of interpreters of diverse ethnicity or race to a desired degree. A diverse sample was represented, in that there were four males and nine females, one African American interpreter, one Hispanic American interpreter, ages ranging from 27 to 62 years, three heritage language speakers (native ASL users; two Codas and one Deaf person from a generationally Deaf family), one sibling of a Deaf adult, one self-identified (on the demographic form in the category ‘other identity characteristics’) interpreter who is gay, an interpreter who is a lesbian as expressed during the interview, as well as three interpreters with d/Deaf spouses. Even
with the somewhat diverse sample described above, there are still populations not represented such as Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and so forth.

**Contribution to the Research Literature**

The bilingual/bicultural status of ASL/English interpreters has become part of an assumed status in the signed language discipline. Suppositions stand to be challenged. In this study, perceptions regarding interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence within the ASL/English interpreting community is brought to the foreground, discussed by Deaf and hearing interpreters, with expert practitioner voice informing this complex topic. Overarching themes and insightful comments from participants through data analysis clarified and defined issues related to biculturalism and Deaf-World cultural competence among ASL/English interpreters. It is the hope of this researcher that data found in this study will contribute to the body of literature in the Deaf-World, enhanced relationships between interpreters and consumers, and greater ease and understanding in cross-cultural interactions.

**Organization and Summary**

Chapter 1 provided an overview of this inquiry. In Chapter 2, *Review of the Literature*, scholarly information from Deaf-World and multi-disciplinary literature situates the research as Deaf-centric. A postmodern look at the Deaf-World with its rich language and culture is supported by multi-disciplinary literature about ASL, English, and the cultures connected to them. Interpreters are assumed to be bilingual/bicultural professionals and data from cross-disciplinary fields situate and emphasize biculturalism in the ASL/English discipline.
Within Chapter 3, *Data Collection*, overarching analytical frameworks of the interpretive qualitative study informed by phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and emancipatory research are named, further described, and substantiated. Research questions are outlined, providing support for how and why they are situated within the qualitative interpretive design informed by a number of theoretical frameworks. A salient theoretical structure informing pilot themes and questions in phases of this study was developed by utilizing the three-dimensional model by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in their narrative inquiry framework. Information presented described participant selection, data collection, analysis, ethics, and trustworthiness of the study.

In Chapters 4 and 5, data are synthesized, making meaning of participant responses vis-á-vis the literature. Within Chapter 4, *Analysis of the Findings*, I synthesized participant currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006) and amplify main and supporting themes. In Chapter 5, *Discussion of Findings and Implications*, Deaf-World, interpreting related and multi-disciplinary data are considered and discussed. I discussed how these data contribute to understanding salient aspects of ASL/English Deaf-World cultural competence and may inform future IEP pedagogy.

In summary of Chapter 1, it is important to recognize interpreters ideally live within bilingual/bicultural, or multilingual/multicultural sociolinguistic realities. What do expert interpreters have to say about the subject of biculturalism, more specifically Deaf-World cultural competence? There is need for research data from HEARING and Deaf interpreters pertaining to practitioner intercultural affiliation, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes within the Deaf-World. Deaf and HEARING interpreters were given the
opportunity to describe their lived experiences. The study enabled the investigation of Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter participants as they provided descriptions of the question: *What are Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds and work of interpreter practitioners?*
CHAPTER II
UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE

The ASL/English interpreting Deaf-World cultural competence curriculum informs this literature review, with data from disciplines directly or tangentially related to ASL/English interpreters. In this chapter, I discuss literature assisting me in understanding the research question: What are Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds and work of interpreter practitioners? The purpose of the study was to investigate Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work of interpreters.

Data in this literature review described the unique context in which ASL/English Deaf-World cultural competence is situated. Information presented is a collection of inquiries from relevant disciplines including communication, cultural and intercultural studies, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, second language acquisition, expertise studies, translation studies, interpreting studies, ASL/English interpreting, and Deaf studies.

The problem statement of this inquiry asserts interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence has not been adequately verified via empirical practices. Literature review data center both the problem and mitigation process. The literature review examines the following: empirical bicultural research; transdisciplinary inquiries; data from expertise studies; select bicultural related literature from translation studies, interpreting studies...
and the ASL/English interpreting discipline; and Deaf studies literature as an anchor to the entire study.

In the first section, *Understanding the Cross-Cultural ASL/English Interpreter Sociolinguistic Context*, I set the stage by describing interpreter sociolinguistic contexts, looked at the complications inherent in discussing culturally related topics, and provided historical ties between interpreters and the Deaf-World. Without the Deaf-World, ASL/English interpreters would not exist and there would be no need for this study.

In the second and largest section, *Understanding the Transdisciplinary Focus of this Inquiry*, I discussed literature from various fields. The studies under consideration come from various disciplines related to biculturalism, intercultural competence, cross-cultural concerns and the Deaf-World, second language acquisition (SLA) and cross-cultural consciousness, and expertise studies with application to the interpreting field. I discussed the intersection of interpreting and critically reflective/culturally responsive practices. Applying empirical data from a variety of contemporary literature streams provided focus to the inquiry.

In the third section, *Understanding the Application of Culture from Language Mediation Fields*, I presented a selection of inquiries from the fields of Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies (Spoken language), and ASL/English interpreting in order to explore the role culture plays in three language mediation disciplines. The three language mediation fields provided evidence of culture’s role and significance in language transfer. All three fields may be further enhanced by continuing study in the area of ASL/English Deaf-World cultural competence.
In the fourth section, *Understanding Contributions from Deaf Studies*, I discussed historical Deaf-World contributions as well as contemporary Deaf change agents, providing evidence of the organic and scholarly nature of indigenous Deaf perspectives. The authoritative Deaf voice illumined, not hearing loss, but Deaf gain (Bauman & Murray, 2009) and provided the solid foundation on which the inquiry stands. It is important to understand the linguistic and cultural context in which interpreters are situated.

**Understanding ASL/English Interpreter Sociolinguistic Context**

Below, I posit a global perspective of the sociolinguistic interpreting context of ASL/English interpreting practitioners in North America. The algorithm in Table 1 was created by the researcher and utilized by the researcher and peer debriefer in order to contextualize this inquiry. In this section, a description of the generalized, multi-layered linguistic/cultural context of Deaf-World interpreters is represented. Table 1 shows a hypothetical algorithmic device we worked with at the beginning of this inquiry in order to contextualize the work of ASL/English interpreting practitioners. Coda, Soda, and occasionally other interpreters may possess varied L1/C1 and L2/C2 contexts, not necessarily fitting the sociolinguistic context of an L2 interpreter. This study focused primarily on the Cc2 context in bold, encompassing Deaf-World cultural competence of both L2 and Coda/Soda participants for purposes of this study. The assumption was participants possessed attributes of Deaf-World cultural competence whether those attributes were found in their C1 or C2. The overarching, somewhat simplified device may be flipped for Codas, with ASL taking its place in the L11, Cc1 categories. The
study of Coda interpreters, their Cc1/Cc2 status, and possible Cc2 attributes of American mainstream culture are issues outside the scope of this inquiry.

Table 1

*The ASL/English Interpreting Sociolinguistic Context of (L2) Interpreters*

\[(L\text{I1} + \text{Cc1}) + (L\text{I2} + \text{Cc2}) \ (P) = I\]

| L1 = formal language of the interpreter’s mother tongue |
| L1 = informal language of the interpreter’s mother tongue |
| C1 = formal cultural aspects of the interpreter’s initial indigenous culture |
| c1 = informal cultural aspects of the interpreter’s initial indigenous culture |
| L2 = formal language of the interpreter’s second language |
| 12 = informal language of the interpreter’s second language |
| C2 = formal cultural aspects of the interpreter’s second culture |
| c2 = informal cultural aspects of the interpreter’s second culture |
| P = processing of the above |
| I = interpreter |

Interpreters’ work includes simultaneous moving parts as symbolized in the above device. Seemingly simplistically stated, interpreters work between at least two linguistic and cultural contexts. The algorithm above contextualizes the work of interpreters, emphasizing not only language, but cultural considerations and processing that occurs between the two languages/cultures in question. The processing (P) of information leads
to the production of the target language message. The combination of the totality of the moving parts allows a person to mediate information between two languages/cultures, thus earning and receiving the title of interpreter (I).

The formula above describes the overall picture of the sociolinguistic context of interpreters, only selecting the Cc2 portion on which to focus. Selecting only culture, a complex set of thoughts and behaviors woven into the lifeblood of our existence, is not to be underestimated in its power to control the flow of human interactions. Within the interstitial spaces (Bhabha, 1994) of culture, complicated conversations (Pinar, 2011) take place. A discussion of some cultural intricacies complicating this inquiry appears below.

Culture is ubiquitous, ethereal, perplexing, and the focus of this inquiry. There are several concepts muddying the cultural waters and in need of being centered. Clarifying key concepts helps to situate aspects of culture and cultural competence in this literature review.

Cultural complications include imbalance in discussions of language and culture in some sociolinguistic literature (Grosjean, 2008; Lange & Paige, 2003); confusion with labels describing cross-cultural interactions; the validation of the term biculturalism to describe intercultural interactions between interpreters and the Deaf-World; and past emphasis on cross-cultural mediation in the ASL/English discipline and consequent lack of follow up research.

In the study of topics regarding bilingualism and biculturalism, bilingualism receives extensive consideration (Grosjean, 1982) whereas biculturalism traditionally has
not received the same level of examination (Grosjean, 2008; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). Culture deserves a prominent role (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009) when discussing interpreters, their work and their connections to the Deaf-World.

The purpose of the study was to investigate Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds and work of interpreters which may include a bicultural identity. Cross-cultural sojourners may experience ambivalence when attempting to come to terms with their bicultural identity (Grosjean, 2008; Parasnis, 1998). Grosjean’s (1982) premise about bilingualism not necessarily subsuming biculturalism refutes the idea that with second language acquisition one will automatically gain a second culture. Acquisition of two or more languages is a topic of study in its own right, and may or may not include nor prioritize biculturalism in the discussion (Lange & Paige, 2003).

In this inquiry, I was looking specifically at Deaf-World cultural competence in ASL/English interpreters. However in general intercultural literature, multiple terms describe life between two cultures. An in-depth analysis of terms is outside the scope of this inquiry. However, I would be remiss for not briefly reviewing the array of terms and acknowledging the possibility of confusion regarding terminology used (see Table 2).
Table 2

Various Terms Used to Describe Cross-Cultural Interactions (Adapted From Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biculturalism</th>
<th>Global Competitive Intelligence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Competence</td>
<td>Intercultural Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural Adaptation</td>
<td>Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural Awareness</td>
<td>International Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural Communication</td>
<td>International Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Intercultural Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Inter-group Communication</td>
<td>Pluriculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnorelativity</td>
<td>Plurilingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Competence</td>
<td>Transcultural Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For purposes of this inquiry, it seems efficacious to select one term/concept on which to focus instead of the overreach of multiple terms. Some of the terms in Table 2 are associated with international interactions and some relate to communication. All of the terms relate to interactions occurring between at least two cultures. Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) draw a distinction between intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence by describing the demonstrative differences between intercultural knowing (sensitivity) and doing (competence).

The intersection of culture, language, and cultural competence may be subsumed under the comprehensive rubric of biculturalism, but the generic term may not describe exactly what I am examining in this inquiry. An interpreter who possesses competencies in ASL, English, American mainstream culture, Deaf culture, and the ability to work between them may be considered bicultural. The concept of interpreter biculturalism is overdue for exploration (Rasmussen, 2012). Determining participants’ or interpreters’ levels of individual biculturalism was outside the scope of this inquiry.
Biculturalism describes part of the work milieu of the ASL/English practitioner and is a familiar term, but ideally may not be the most accurate way to illustrate the multiple, complex cultural contexts of the interpreter’s lifeworld. The terms pluriculturalism, ethnorelativity, and intercultural sensitivity would need to be further defined and seem not to fit the concept I was exploring in this inquiry. For purposes of this inquiry and for clarity’s sake, I utilized the terms biculturalism in general and Deaf-World cultural competence in particular to describe ASL/English interpreter cross-cultural interactions rather than associated terms such as interculturalism, transculturalism, or pluriculturalism.

In the mid-1980s, the ASL/English interpreting discipline’s focus turned to topics of cross-cultural mediation and third culture (Bienvenu, 1987; Sherwood, 1987). Multiple articles appeared in publications such as the 1985 RID Conference Proceedings (McIntire, 1986) and Volume IV of the Journal of Interpretation (McIntire, 1987). The authors raised important points; the discussion was rich and varied; and there were calls for additional cross-cultural research (Taff-Watson, 1987), but Deaf-World intercultural literature is still lean (Rasmussen, 2012). Below is a synopsis of culturally noteworthy data of the era as it related to the present inquiry.

Brislin (1986), an interculturalist, applied general data to the ASL/English interpreting realm as he discussed correlations between those with advanced intercultural abilities and their ability to develop significant C2 friendships or relationships. The complicated nature of interpreter/consumer interactions provided the backdrop for Baker-Shenk (1986) as she discussed power differentials, adding complex dimension to
cross-cultural dynamics. Coppola (1986) described significant cross-cultural interactions
between Deaf parents and hearing children to emphasize intricacies of culture in the
interpreting process. Inherent tension in the interpreting process may lead to a variety of
scenarios, and Atwood and Gray (1986) discussed the importance of interpreters
dialoguing with each other to avoid frustration and confusion. Cavell and Wells (1986)
proposed the use of an elaborate cross-cultural game in IEPs to assist students in
becoming comfortable with intercultural behaviors. Miller and Mathews (1986)
discussed the importance of culture in teaching ASL, by saying that culture should not be
ignored at the expense of learning ASL vocabulary. Another important culturally related
topic, surfacing in the Deaf-World around the same time, was third culture.

*Third culture* involves intercultural border crossings. The term third culture kid
(TCK) describes children who spend a significant portion of their developmental years
outside their parents’ passport culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Third culture
children are those born or raised in cultures outside of their parents’ home of origin due
to their parents’ occupations or interests (Espinetti, 2011). TCKs have experienced
multiple cultural environments and have developed life patterns different from children
born and raised in one location (Espinetti, 2011).

The concept of TCKs in the non-Deaf-World usually relates to children of
missionaries or business people who live in a location outside their parents’ home
country. Some Cadas seem to live a third culture experience in that they are born and
raised outside their parents’ home of origin, American mainstream culture, due to
parental Deaf-World affiliation. I would argue many culturally Deaf parents choose to live in the Deaf-World because of linguistic access.

The same claims cannot be made of interpreters who have hearing parents. Second language (L2) interpreters do not typically mature outside parental cultures and typically do live outside the territory known as the Deaf-World. Consequently, third culture issues may not wholly apply to L2 interpreters. L2 interpreters may fit what is termed a fourth culture (Lehrer, 2007).

Within the Deaf-World, several individuals have written about third culture as a way to describe the interactive space between interpreters and Deaf persons (Bienvenu, 1987; Sherwood, 1987). It has not been determined if interpreters occupy third culture space. Responses to Bienvenu (1987) and Sherwood (1987) ranged from support to skepticism with countless questions raised about intercultural interactions and a call for further research (Arneson et al., 1987).

The above authors and subjects reflect the importance cross-cultural mediation had nearly 30 years ago. A few scholars have studied intercultural interactions in the ASL/English realm including Mindess et al. (2006), Page (1993), and Cokely (2001). The concepts of third culture, Deaf-World cultural competence, and other cultural topics are overdue for expanded, in-depth research and application. Culture is a significant concept within the Deaf-World and part of the rich history and cultural heritage telling the story of the Deaf community in America. In deference and respect to the indigenous nature of the Deaf-World created by Deaf pioneers and citizens, I present below a brief
look at the historical context of Deaf America including decisions to develop the discipline today referred to as ASL/English interpreting.

The indigenous American Deaf community created their existence, their culture and a place in this world (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). It is a place where ASL/English interpreters may or may not be able to immigrate nor fully grasp. Deaf people and interpreters share some common ground, but confusion remains (Williamson, 2012). The historical context of the Deaf-World shows the challenges Deaf people faced and the solutions that paved their path, and subsequently the path for interpreters.

ASL/English interpreter progress has developed, albeit imperfectly at times, under the auspices and authority of the American Deaf-World (Cokely, 2005). Interpreters cross cultures between the hearing world and the Deaf-World, between American mainstream culture and Deaf culture. The cross-cultural experience of persons who are d/Deaf is not new, as culturally Deaf people have lived within and between two cultures for centuries (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). Interpreters, in their intercultural life, often associate with d/Deaf people, witnessing and acknowledging their lived experiences. There is a need to look respectfully, honestly, and historically at interpreting within the context of the indigenous Deaf-World to maintain the intercultural bond and sense of trustworthiness between the Deaf and ASL/English interpreter communities.

Without the Deaf-World, there would be no need for interpreters, consequently, a historical perspective provides context for contemporary interpreter life. Information below is condensed and recognizes central perspectives regarding the ASL/English interpreting field including information on the need or not for interpreters, origins of the
American Deaf-World, development of the ASL/English interpreting discipline, and emergence of ASL/English interpreter education.

Interpreting has been in existence for centuries (Pöchhacker, 2004). A basic human desire is to be social and communicative, but language barriers periodically exist (Seleskovitch, 1978). Interpreting, a highly complex human venture, encompasses the sociolinguistic processes of uncovering a speaker’s intent and converting it into meaning for a listener (Seleskovitch, 1978) and no less so between d/Deaf individuals who sign ASL and those who do not (Cokely, 1992). Interpreting is not merely the transfer of words, but a communicative function inherently transmitting culture (Hall, 1959). A requisite cultural context ASL/English interpreters work within is the American Deaf-World. The Deaf-World in the United States consists of citizens who are visually oriented, whose primary language is ASL, and who identify as a minority culture, not as having a disability (Lane, 2005). To understand the need for interpreters, a brief explanation of the genesis of the Deaf-World appears below.

It is fitting the first documentation of the Deaf-World originated in France since ASL’s indigenous roots are partially derived from Langue des Signes Française (LSF; Lane, 1984). The advancement of ASL and the Deaf-World holds a shared space with the story of education of deaf students in America and France. In the early 19th century, Dr. Mason Cogswell, a renowned Connecticut surgeon, researched options to educate his deaf daughter (Lane, 1984). He decided to send an emissary, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, to Europe to study deaf education methods (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996). Gallaudet, an American seminary student met Laurent Clerc, a deaf individual
and teacher of deaf students, in France. Clerc became the first deaf teacher in America, as Gallaudet and he established the first North American school for the deaf, the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in 1817 (Lane et al., 1996; Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). The founding of deaf education in America was controversial with arguments between visual language proponents and those who supported spoken language acquisition of deaf students (Winefield, 1987). These are themes still debated in contemporary society and interpreters are privy to the controversy.

There were set backs in the Deaf-World as evidenced by key historical events. Alexander Graham Bell published *Memoir upon Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race*, advocating the elimination of the deaf community by selective breeding and adding to the debate supporting the eugenics movement (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989). Edward Miner Gallaudet (Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet’s son), a proponent of signed language, and Bell, a proponent of the oral method, had an ongoing adversarial debate about deaf education methods (Winefield, 1987), and to some extent, the debate still exists today. Thus were the beginnings of the Deaf-World in America, a story of an indomitable people group who created, based on their needs, a world and place of their choosing (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989), not adhering to theories imposed on them, but maintaining theories of their own (Padden & Humphries, 1988). It is a story describing what was and is essentially a civil rights struggle of an oppressed linguistic minority group of which interpreters play a part, with the interpreter’s role possibly being deeply rooted or tangential.
The Deaf-World flourished (Padden & Humphries, 2005) despite efforts to constrain it. Legislation protecting the rights of American Deaf citizens added to movement in the community and had profound impacts in the mid-20th century. Major pieces of legislation such as the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1968, began to define the civil rights of Americans who lived with various disabilities (Ball, 2007; Gannon, 1981; Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). Another event having a profound impact was the discovery of ASL as a legitimate language with its own distinct grammar.

William Stokoe, an Ivy League educated English professor, would make the audacious claim about ASL being a linguistically complete language (Baker & Battison, 1980; Padden & Humphries, 2005). The charge to prove ASL to be a language and not merely gestures was spearheaded by Stokoe, his deaf research colleagues, Casterline and Croneberg and the deaf and hearing team of researchers who worked with Stokoe in the Linguistics Research Lab at Gallaudet University in the 1970s and 1980s (Stokoe, Croneberg, & Casterline 1965). Bellugi and Klima, researchers from the Salk Institute, were beginning groundbreaking research in neuroscience, using the study of ASL to illuminate general neurolinguistics (Lane, 1992). Initial ASL/English interpreting inquiry was influenced by ASL linguists and findings regarding ASL as a language. There is a connection between the linguistic discovery of ASL and the progress of interpreter education (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). Research regarding the Deaf-World continued to gain in popularity, prominently in linguistic circles, and the Deaf community moved forward, now beginning to utilize the services of interpreters.
American Sign Language/English interpreting originated within the communities of people who required communication access, Deaf communities (Cokely, 2005). D/deaf and hard of hearing persons who live within the borders of the Deaf-World consider themselves more like an ethnic group (Lane, 2005). This inquiry investigated Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds and work of interpreters. There was an attempt to be sensitive to issues of power (Baker-Shenk, 1986) and deferential to the Deaf voice.

Deaf communities first noticed the need for interpreters and initiated language mediation services between d/Deaf and hearing people (Cokely, 2005; Rowley, Kraft, & Dyce, 2008). Until the early 1970s, interpreting services were done as charitable activity and practitioners included hearing friends, family, neighbors (Rowley et al., 2008) as well as teachers of the deaf, social workers, and ministers (Cokely, 2005). Interpreters in the early days were invited into the fold by Deaf people and vetted by the community, encouraging selectivity of practitioners (Cokely, 2005). Essentially, the Deaf indigenous minority population mentored interpreters who were invited in and accepted the invitation to interface with its citizens (Cokely, 2005). Part of the mentoring of interpreters served to discern interpreter ‘attitude’ (Smith & Savidge, 2002) and maintain Deaf-World culture. Attitude is the framework around which interpreters develop identity, Deaf-World values, manners, and political affiliation with the Deaf community (Smith & Savidge, 2002), not putting themselves above the community, but on par with
Deaf people, giving them credit and respect for the establishment of their community, culture and language.

As time went on, leaders in the interpreting movement and interested others started to engage in the professionalization of the discipline. Major events impacting ASL interpreting were initiated in the 1960s and 1970s, eventually leading to the establishment of two significant professional organizations, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (Ball, 2007). RID as we know it today was founded on June 17, 1964, as the National Registry of Professional Interpreters and Translators for the Deaf (Rowley et al., 2008). The organization was formed to recruit, train, and inventory persons who would become practitioners of interpreting (Rowley et al., 2008). With the advent of professionalization, sanctioning of practitioners moved from the community of ASL users, to recruitment by other interpreters, and eventually to Interpreter Education Programs (IEPs; Cokely, 2005). The need for IEP faculty to update knowledge about the field led to the establishment of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) in 1979 (Ball, 2007). RID and CIT were among the first entities to incorporate Deaf-World culture into standards and other organizational literature, thus setting expectations for interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Members of these organizations would generate much of the inquiry regarding ASL/English interpreting in the ensuing decades.

Cokely (2005) described the role IEPs played in interpreter vetting and preparation, taking the selection of interpreters out of the hands of the wider Deaf community. There is concern in the Deaf and interpreter communities about issues
surrounding cultural sensitivity referred to as Deaf-heart, a concept imploring interpreters to listen to the collective wisdom of Deaf people (Cole, 2011). Ties to the Deaf-World hold significance and the field could benefit from ideas for enhancing cultural competence because:

Long gone are the days of Community selectivity. Today, many aspiring interpreters have never met a deaf person prior to entering an IEP. Their interest in the profession often comes from exposure to sign language taught by hearing teachers or seen on television. New interpreters develop their skills entirely through IEPs and, some become practicing professionals with limited contact with the Deaf community. Most often, ASL teachers are the only deaf persons with whom those interpreters have a significant relationship. Indeed, while one of the authors of this paper went through her interpreter training in the 1990s, she was exhorted not to socialize with Deaf people by her IEP instructors, fearing that these kinds of community ties would contaminate the neutrality of the interpreting situation. From conversations with other interpreters across the country, she found this was a common message given to interpreter students during this time. (Rowley et al., 2008, p. 76)

In response to the tone of the above comment, there is need to explore the role of Deaf-World cultural competence among interpreters and successful strategies to encourage development of bicultural behaviors and cognitive processes.

Interpreters are now prepared mostly in IEPs and there is no going back to the idea of the Deaf community as the sole vetting instrument of interpreter practitioners.
American higher education promotes the idea of the consumer purchasing a product (a degree) in order to enter a chosen field. IEPs may be undermining the indigenous groundwork of the Deaf community. Ideally the Deaf community should have a role in describing interpreter preparation.

Historical context of the Deaf-World illustrated the synergy and importance of ties between the Deaf community and interpreters. Deaf-World and interpreter perspectives vary on the importance of interpreter involvement within the Deaf community as it regards their language and cultural development (Stuard, 2008). Tension exists between Deaf people and interpreters (Forestal, 2004). It is incumbent on interpreters, interpreter educators, d/Deaf and hard of hearing persons, and interested others to examine ways to work together. Deaf/HEARING collaboration may be informed by understanding culturally-related data from a variety of disciplines. Data concerning interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence includes inquiries from numerous literature streams, from a variety of scholars. A selection of the work appears below.

**Understanding the Transdisciplinary Focus of This Inquiry**

The literature review combined data from fields depicted in Figure 2, a collection of inquiries addressing multiple aspects of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. There is a lack of empirical data related to ASL/English intercultural issues (Rasmussen, 2012) necessitating the transdisciplinary focus in order to gather information from a variety of reliable sources. This chapter foregrounded interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence by surveying literature in its own and allied disciplines. Some salient disciplines represented in this inquiry appear in Figure 2.
Figure 2. Transdisciplinary fields represented in this inquiry

The areas or topics emanating from the above disciplines and discussed in the literature review include biculturalism, setting the basic framework of this inquiry; intercultural communication studies including foundational data regarding cross-cultural communication and competence; second language acquisition (SLA) studies showing the significance of culture in second language teaching including cross-cultural consciousness; the relationship of expertise studies to this inquiry; translation, spoken language and signed language interpreting studies providing sociocultural concepts found in selected inquiries; and Deaf studies because without Deaf people, their language and culture, there would be no need to study ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.
The first topic and a foundational principle, biculturalism, was consolidated from a variety of disciplines. Data on ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence foundationally draws upon discussions regarding biculturalism.

Biculturalism is studied across multiple disciplines and contexts and is prominent in various literature streams. Biculturalism exists among and between Deaf and hearing people. It is a building block of the premise of interpreter cross-cultural interaction and appears in a variety of disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology, intercultural studies, second language acquisition, interpreting studies, and translation studies.

Data from multiple disciplines deepen understanding of biculturalism and lead to broadening understanding of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. In this section, the following subtopics are presented: descriptions of biculturalism; native biculturalism particularly seen in children of Deaf adults and the Deaf-World; biculturalism and creativity; and inquiry regarding biculturalism from the psychology field.

Worldwide, people are increasingly identifying with multiple cultures (Mok & Morris, 2012). A bicultural person is one who takes part, to varying degrees, in the life of two cultures (Grosjean, 2008). One who is bicultural exhibits comfort and proficiency with one’s heritage culture as well as the culture one is entering also known as the ‘receiving cultural stream’ (Schwartz & Unger, 2010). A truly bicultural person would merge multiple cultural practices, values, and identifications (Schwartz & Unger, 2010). In essence a bicultural person would not be two monoculturals living in the same person but someone who combines, blends and lives with multiple cultures (Grosjean, 2008).
Biculturalism includes those persons possessing a bicultural identity. Tadmor and Tetlock (2006) developed a theoretical model of bicultural development shown in Table 3. The steps are organized from one to five with one being the most simplistic level, moving to full acquisition of a second culture or bicultural identity. This model represents a schematic of developmental levels, adding clarity to the basic premises of this inquiry.

Table 3

*Summary of Bicultural Development Model (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of bicultural development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
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</table>

In the model presented above, one can recognize significant differences between levels of engagement as one interfaces with multiple languages and cultures. The bicultural individual is connected to two distinct ways of life and may experience dissonance due to the intersection of two worlds, possibly leading to identity conflicts (Grosjean, 2008). Deardorff (2009) has found, however, competency with dual cultural affiliation may lead one to become a capable mediator between the cultures, being able to
effectively and efficiently negotiate and combine multiple cultures in performance. The literature on biculturalism provides reasonable resources capable of informing the topic of Deaf-World cultural competence of ASL/English interpreters.

Naturally occurring biculturalism, also referred to as native biculturalism, characterizes the experience of those persons who are comfortable in their heritage culture as well as with the culture of the region or realm in which they have settled (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006). Natural or native bilingual/bicultural traits would most likely occur in the Deaf-World among persons from generationally Deaf families and Codas (Bull, 1994). Instead of living in geographic regions, native ASL speakers are found in family constellations, in what Lane (2005) described as Deaf ancestry and ethnicity. ASL is a naturally occurring language (Stokoe, 1960) and interpreting between signed or spoken languages has proven to utilize similar processes (Patrie, 2000). Native biculturalism, regardless of language pairings, would be an example of naturally occurring phenomena. Deaf-World research is able to utilize scholarly work done with spoken language pairings. Mistry and Wu (2010) discussed the concept of naturally occurring bilingualism/biculturalism based on native L1/L2 and C1/C2 acquisition into which Codas would fit but most likely not L2/C2 interpreter practitioners.

An important source regarding bilingualism/biculturalism would be the literature regarding Codas. Some Codas choose to make interpreting a career, bring native bilingual/bicultural skills to the interpreting community, with some having graduated from IEPs (Williamson, 2012). Codas hold a unique and complicated place in the Deaf-world and have much to teach students in the interpreting field. To date, this is a
rich resource waiting to be tapped in order to better understand bilingualism/biculturalism and interpreting processes because many Codas show evidence of natural or native Deaf-World biculturalism (R. H. Miller, 2004).

Native or native-like ASL/English bilingualism/biculturalism would be rare in hearing persons who are not Codas. Also, native ASL/English bilingualism/biculturalism may not occur in some deaf persons born to hearing families. Native bilingual/bicultural persons acquire L1/L2 and C1/C2 in complex, but relatively homogenous ways (deAnda, 1984). Native bicultural individuals generally acquire two or more languages/cultures organically. Consequently, it is unlikely to impossible to replicate the cross-cultural developmental processes among L2 learners of ASL. C1/C2 and L1/L2 acquisition literature could inform the ASL/English interpreting field since processes are related between acquiring ASL as an L2 and a Deaf-World C2.

Grosjean (2008) claimed in most countries of the world, bilingualism and biculturalism are part of the natural structure of societies. However, biculturalism has been viewed as a problem, particularly in psychology, and has not been recognized for its numerous positive characteristics (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Bicultural individuals may be viewed as deficient due in part to being perceived as lacking majority cultural norms against which other characteristics are measured, rendering minority individuals different at best, or flawed at worst (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Biculturalism is defined within the framework of acculturation theories in psychology (Berry, 2005) and ethnic identity formation in social and developmental psychology (Phinney, 1990; Spencer, 2006). Empirical literature regarding the nature and development of strengths found in culturally
and linguistically diverse individuals and families (Mistry & Wu, 2010) needs expansion in the ASL/English discipline. LaFromboise et al. (1993) found that biculturalism has positive impacts on the wellbeing and psychological functioning of individuals. Tadmor et al. (2009) discussed bicultural individuals at times experiencing greater confusion as they manage not only two cultures, but also greater integrative complexity. Integrative complexity relates to the capacity and willingness to acknowledge the validity of competing perspectives on a particular subject (Tadmor et al., 2009). Studies from psychology offer greatly needed frameworks for the study of biculturalism.

Classic literature from LaFromboise et al. (1993) presented bicultural data from a psychological lens thus providing key information about categories of cultural competence. The reasons a person would take on characteristics of two cultures are varied based on purpose, motivation, values and beliefs. LaFromboise et al. (1993) provided a review of five major models of second culture acquisition including (a) assimilation, giving up a minority culture to retain a majority one; (b) acculturation, taking on a target culture for a reason, however unable to shed identification with one’s culture of origin; (c) alternation/biculturalism, balancing majority and minority cultures; (d) multiculturalism, retaining one’s first culture while adding subsequent cultures; and (e) fusion, when all cultures meld together with no discernible majority/minority distinction.

Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) examined the construct of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), relating the degree to which a bicultural individual views his or her dual cultural identities as compatible or oppositional. The study of BII seeks to
understand the combination of personality, culture, and cognitive variables within bicultural individuals (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Phinney (1990) stated problems with cultural conflicts often do not occur interpersonally between groups but arise intrapersonally within an individual’s own complexities related to values, attitudes, and expectations. BII is under-represented in literature (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) and reinforces the lack of bicultural research in general.

Studies regarding characteristics of those who live in two or more cultures are found in a variety of fields with significant fundamental literature found in psychology. Data regarding biculturalism and the Deaf-World would contribute to not only the ASL/English interpreting discipline but also other language pairs.

Established fields, such as anthropology, communications, and intercultural communication, share base theoretical frameworks directly or tangentially related to the ASL/English interpreting discipline. ASL/English interpreters have engaged in research, utilized theoretical constructs from established fields, and made application to the Deaf-World with examples from Mindess et al.’s (2006) seminal work regarding intercultural communication, specifically Hall’s (1959) understandings of culture; Smith’s (1996) dissertation on Deaf people in context written from an anthropological lens; and Brunson’s (2008) work on ASL/English video relay interpreters from a sociological perspective. ASL/English interpreting could utilize theory from a variety of established, allied areas to support and clarify phenomena seen in the field, starting with the very important and related discipline of intercultural studies.
In the section below, information is discussed regarding ASL/English interpreting and connections to intercultural studies. Salient points include how intercultural studies began as a field of study; relevant work done in the field after its inception; and considerations related to the specialized field of ASL/English interpreting.

Intercultural studies, also known as cross-cultural studies or comparative culture studies, includes basic intercultural data provided by scholars such as Hall (1959), Gudykunst and Kim (2003) and Mindess et al. (2006). Models of intercultural development are presented by Bennett (1993) and Deardorff (2009). Intercultural studies stands on the shoulders of fields such as anthropology and communications (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990). Data appear in ASL/English interpreting literature regarding intercultural understanding between Deaf and hearing persons (Mindess et al., 2006).

The field of intercultural studies began in the mid-20th century, applying abstract anthropological concepts to the practical world of Foreign Service diplomats (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990) and westerners working abroad, such as Peace Corps workers (Sinicrope et al., 2007). Hall, an anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher, is said to be one of the founding fathers of the intercultural communication field (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990) and consequently developed important culturally related concepts. Hall and Foreign Service Institute colleagues laid the groundwork in intercultural studies, but were not involved in the development of intercultural theory per se (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990). With fundamentals in place, intercultural studies theory emerged.

Intercultural theory generated from seminal work of Hall (1959, 1966, 1974, 1977, 1983, 1990) and colleagues, and can be found in the work of scholars such as
Ruben and Kealy (1979), Tajfel and Turner (1979), Bennett (1993), Ting-Toomey (1994), Orbe (1998), Byram (1997), Gudykunst and Kim (2003), and Deardorff (2009), among others. Currently, there are multiple theories and frameworks for teaching culture with examples from cross-cultural interactions (Lange & Paige, 2003), intercultural competence (Deardorff 2009) and scales to assess intercultural competence (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Fantini, 2000; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Koester & Olebe, 1988; Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Ruben & Kealy, 1979). There are two concepts with significant application to the ASL/English discipline. Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Gudykunst and Kim’s (2003) concept of the stranger offer noteworthy relevance to interpreter transcultural border crossings and are discussed below.

Bennett’s (1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, shown in Table 4, describes changes in behavior as a person moves through the cultural adaptation process. Such a model would be helpful in determining levels of interpreter intercultural involvement and possible levels to which to aspire. Bennett’s (1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity describes adaptation processes in persons of diverse ethnicities or nationalities and could be adapted and applied to d/Deaf and hearing interactions.
Table 4

*Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Lack of knowledge of difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Strive to retain own views when confronted with difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>Minimize differences but do not change paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Recognition of differences and act in positive ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Behavioral changes evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Becoming a part of a culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rasmussen (2012) utilized Hammer et al.’s (2003) work in her research providing baseline data on ASL/English interpreters’ intercultural sensitivity. The exploratory research investigated ASL/English interpreters via Hammer et al.’s Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) finding interpreters tend to overvalue cultural commonalities and undervalue cultural differences (Rasmussen, 2012). Rasmussen’s findings, based on Hammer et al.’s (1993) work, would be beneficial in opaque cultural discussions between Deaf persons and interpreters. Deaf people and hearing people may have differing perspectives, at times viewing each other as strangers, a concept discussed by Gudykunst and Kim (2003).

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) discussed both culture and communication in their concept of the stranger. Their theory states when confronted with cultural differences, people tend to view each other as strangers and interactions often include the highest
degree of strangeness (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Deaf people and hearing people may find themselves strangers in general and in a fundamental trait, the ability or not to hear oral/aural language. Reciprocal interactions between d/Deaf and hearing persons would need to be visual in nature. Groups speaking dissimilar oral languages still share a common aural nature and there may be opportunity for linguistic accommodation via a variety of ways, including a lingua franca or common language (Boylan, 2009). Another strategy would be to attend to paralinguistic characteristics of the language being spoken such as tone, pace, and emphasis. Deaf and hearing interactants would be considered strangers in terms of communication, culture, and possibly an added layer of stigmatization due to the perception of disability.

Gudykunst and Kim’s (2003) concept of the stranger illuminated basic interaction issues such as communication levels (cultural, sociocultural, and psychocultural), and uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with strangers. These concepts, particularly sociocultural and psychocultural communication levels (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), would be helpful in further study of differences between deaf/hearing linguistic, cultural, and disability perceptions. Data from such in-depth inquiry requires adaptation but may be beneficial to instructors and students involved in Deaf-World second language acquisition and cross-cultural interactions, helping to clarify extremely complex sociolinguistic phenomena.

Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) discussed intercultural communicative competence, a concept taking into consideration how interlocutors connect through language. There are three domains and four dimensions within Fantini and Tirmizi’s intercultural
communicative competence framework. The three domains, also applicable to one’s first culture (C1), relate to one’s abilities to *develop and manage relationships, communicate with nominal deletions or distortions of information, and cooperate with others to reach mutual goals* (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

The four dimensions of intercultural communicative competence include one’s *knowledge base, behaviors and affect, skill set, and levels of awareness* (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Within the ASL/English interpreting discipline, working practitioners engage in behaviors explicated in the three domains and four dimensions, with emphasis on communicating with minimal distortions of information, and having the right skill set. Interpreters also incorporate appropriate attitudes, affect and levels of awareness, relationship maintenance, and cooperation in mutual goal attainment. Fantini and Tirmizi’s framework provides a structure around which to target cross-cultural competence.

**Interculturalism and Deaf-World Applications**

The study of Deaf-World cultural competence may utilize data derived from investigation and incorporation of classic ‘hearing’ or mainstream cross-cultural interactions, processes and communication. However, there is a layer within the Deaf-World not seen in spoken language cross-cultural contexts and not to be minimized or neglected. It pertains to the argument of Deaf community status and description of it as a disability group or as a diverse cultural group (Dolnick, 1993) and would include questions of ethics, philosophy, and marginalization.
Interpreters’ employment is often predicated on and funded by stipulations within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The argument of Deaf as culture or deaf as disability will not be resolved in this document. Deaf-World language and culture are on par with spoken languages and cultures, and consequently, ASL/English topics may be studied within intercultural frameworks. However, oppression exists in the Deaf-World (Bauman & Murray, 2009), marginalization widespread (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009), often relegating Deaf-World discussions to disability/pathological status (Lane, 1992).

Marginal status is at times a Deaf-World reality and may remain unacknowledged due to ignorance, resistance, oppression, audism, ableism, disability, stigma, or other reasons. Many Deaf-World scholars and citizens do not subscribe to the Deaf as disabled notion (Lane, 2005). There are philosophical camps taking opposing views of the American Deaf community, either from a cultural view or clinical/pathological view (Cokely & Baker-Shenk, 1980; Lane, 1992). Deaf and some Deaf-centric hearing scholars have written or write about the experience of being d/Deaf in America. Proponents of the Deaf as culture argument include Veditz (1913), Cokely and Baker-Shenk (1980), Gannon (1981), Philip (1986), Van Cleve and Crouch (1989), Padden and Humphries (1988, 2005), Bienvenu and Colonomos (1993), Bahan (2009, 2010), Lane et al. (1996), Smith (1996), Jankowski (1997), Ladd (2003), and Bauman (2004, 2008, 2009), among others. Many of the above mentioned scholars are Deaf and others are hearing who write from a Deaf-centric stance.

Conversely, scholars situated in another camp, often referred to as ‘oralists’ include Bell (1883, as cited in Winefield, 1987), Moog (2007), Ling (2002), Flexor
(1994), and Kisor (1990) and generally write from a clinical, pathological or disability stance. Of the scholars and authors mentioned above, one is deaf.

Accomplished mainstream scholars from other fields who write about the Deaf-World include Grosjean (1982), Sacks (1989), Dolnick (1993), and Lane (1984, 1992, 2005). Deaf-World writers or their allies may write from a perspective of inequality of d/Deaf citizens but not necessarily disability. Within Curriculum Studies, there are numerous authors who write about education and marginalization. One of those scholars was Freire (1970) whose foundational work regarding marginalized groups illuminated inequality as a reality among some marginalized peoples.

Freire’s (1970) seminal work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, discussed cultural power differentials between dominant and non-dominant cultures, of which the Deaf community would be one. Freire’s theories, stemming from his study of education, law, and philosophy, apply to this inquiry as he studied vulnerable populations and found issues related to oppressors/the oppressed and colonizers/the colonized. Baker-Shenk (1986) took Freire’s work and applied it to the Deaf-World and interpreters, citing power differentials between hearing interpreters and d/Deaf consumers. In-depth discussion of interpreters, power, and d/Deaf community members is outside the scope of this document. Practitioner/consumer relationships are vital in the interpreter/consumer dyad. Work by Baker-Shenk (1986), incorporating interpreter power, culture and communication issues, seems an inadvertent precursor to a theoretical framework grounded in the work of feminist scholars known as co-cultural theory (Orbe, 1998). Co-cultural theory may allow the discussion of Deaf-World cultural competence to be
taken out of the realm of disability and into the context of two unequal cultures co-existing. A discussion of co-cultural theory (Orbe, 1998) and its potential application to interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence appears in Chapter V.

Students who take ASL classes within IEPs may be under the guidance of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) pedagogy. Teaching C2 competencies is an important and complicated part of the curriculum (Krashen, 1982), is underrepresented (Lafayette, 2003), and is a requirement in SLA teaching with additional importance for interpreter education.

Teaching ASL as a second or foreign language has increased in secondary and postsecondary settings. In the United States, over 91,000 students study ASL (Modern Language Association [MLA], 2014). ASL is the fourth most studied foreign language in higher education in the U.S behind Spanish, French, and German (MLA, 2014). Various states in the U.S. have passed legislation and recognized ASL as a second or foreign language, leading to greater recognition of the language (Jacobowitz, 2001). The proliferation of IEPs may have had an impact on the increase in ASL programs.

Lafayette (2003) stated culture has not taken a place of importance to date in SLA pedagogy, a concern to add to the already difficult nature of learning a second language. Students should be made aware of avenues to L2 fluency, requiring significant time commitments. Estimates of L2 fluency range from four to seven or more years (Collier, 1987), and is in its essence a complex task requiring perseverance and patience. SLA education is foundational to the ASL/English interpreter curriculum, but is nuanced and
in need of well-developed pedagogical practices, particularly because of its relationship to meeting multiple discipline standards.

SLA pedagogy would benefit from incorporating cultural information during initial stages of interpreter training when students need to be put at ease with L2 learning. Krashen (1982) discussed second language learning in relation to the acculturation hypothesis, where L2 acquisition occurs in extended cross-cultural situations. High degrees of comfort within a sustained cultural context accompany effective target language acquisition, according to the acculturation hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). Within IEPs, curricula include varied, wide ranging and complicated data dissemination requiring time and attention in planning, execution, and implementation.

In second or foreign language teaching, L2 acquisition mirroring L1 acquisition is a desirable strategy and is discussed in multiple theories (Bialystok & Smith, 1985; Chomsky, 1965; Krashen, 1982). Second language acquisition (SLA) includes developing intercultural sensitivity. Bennett (1993) discussed intercultural sensitivity development as a protracted process of cognitive complexity centered on adaptation to difference. Students, while adapting to a cross-cultural identity, would undergo what Kolb (1984) described as a transformation of experience via an experiential learning cycle. The transformational nature of second language acquisition involves many complex processes, including acquiring cognitive, behavioral, and affective behaviors within a short amount of time in IEP or SLA programs.

Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) described intercultural competence as a multifaceted set of abilities required to perform effectively and appropriately while interacting with
linguistically and culturally different others. The focus of this inquiry, ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, includes looking into processes connected to effective and appropriate Deaf-World cultural acquisition. When students are acquiring a L2/C2 for purposes of subsequent language mediation work, the acquisition of cultural competence would be more readily attainable if cultural awareness were heightened. Hall (1977) stated, “self-awareness and cultural awareness are inseparable, which means that transcending unconscious culture cannot be accomplished without some degree of self-awareness” (p. 212).

SLA curricula highlight target language acquisition and second culture knowledge, ideally embodying cross-cultural consciousness. ASL standards call for the introduction and development of cross-cultural critical thinking skills (Ashton et al., 2011). Standard 4.2 requires students to examine and make cross-cultural comparisons (Ashton et al., 2011), aligning with the updated Bloom’s taxonomy level referred to as understanding (Krathwohl, 2002). Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE, 2014) standards seek the following array of higher order processes from students: these critical processes include, logical thinking; critical analysis; creativity; appreciation of multiculturalism; ability to make judgments in a variety of contexts such as social, economic, scientific, and political; appreciation of human behavior in socio-cultural contexts including beliefs, ethics and values; appreciation of minority group dynamics including prejudice, class, power, oppression and social change.

Developing cultural competence involves complex processes requiring reflective, systematized activities, perhaps leading one to higher-level consciousness and advanced
levels of critical thinking. Consciousness-raising in the traditional sense may be insufficient when cross-cultural competence is the goal. Boylan (2009) called for developing the ability to transform one’s consciousness through reflection on cross-cultural communicative and social interactions. Becoming culturally competent in one’s C2 requires sustained, reflective practice because becoming culturally competent in a target culture is an imprecise, intricate process. There is no specified high point, no definitive level marking one as having achieved intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009). Cross-cultural consciousness as well as reflective practice (Henderson, 2000) would be required to guide higher order cross-cultural strategy development in those who would act as ASL/English interpreter practitioners.

Cross-cultural consciousness is also discussed in the translation field and relates to sojourners discerning clarity of information in C2 contexts (Gang, 2002). Attributes of cross-cultural consciousness include transfer of pragmatic meaning and cultural information processing (Gang, 2002), concepts at the heart of sociolinguistic mediation between source and target languages/cultures. It is affirming to note that enhanced cross-cultural consciousness is important in other language mediation contexts, including translation of texts.

Cross-cultural competence through transformation of consciousness is a goal of those who work cross-culturally (Boylan, 2009), but higher consciousness may be challenging to achieve for some people (Kegan, 1994). Do all students enrolled in IEPs have the capacity for both culturally responsive and critically reflective practice? Cultural responsiveness is a concept discussed by Gay (2002), based on cultural
difference theory (Au, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and applied in some educational contexts. The concept may be applied to interpreting as well, as concepts of cultural difference and marginalization exist (Gay, 2002) in the ASL/English interpreting context with hearing interpreters interfacing with d/Deaf consumers. The concept of being culturally responsive originates from education of diverse student populations (Gay, 2002) and could inform the interpreting discipline. Information from other disciplines helps to clarify higher-level reflection and responsive practice requirements of a translator, interpreter or cross-cultural sojourner.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) has studied intercultural interaction and communication with a distinctive approach, extending the concept of culture, calling it a fuzzy set of attributes including attitudes, beliefs, behavioral norms, basic assumptions, and values. These attributes, while sometimes indefinable, are shared by a group of people and are collectively impactful on the group (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). The idea of teaching about fuzzy values, norms, and beliefs would be helpful to students when preparing them to cross into tenuous, unknown territory. Being prepared for complex cross-cultural interactions would be essential and unavoidable when learning an L2 and entering a culture other than one’s own.

Boylan’s (2009) work incorporates specific aspects of cross-cultural accommodation presenting complicated but needed data to those who cross cultures. His work represents an intricate look at philosophy, discourse analysis, critical thinking, and higher order consciousness regarding cross-cultural interaction. Boylan (2009) made a case for the ways interlocutors who experience effective cross-cultural exchanges vary
their communication style to meet and deal with the variety of differences between speakers. One of the main reasons cross-cultural interlocutors transform their interaction relates to the desire to experience effective and successful communicative practices across cultures (Boylan, 2009). Boylan and Mari (1996) described the ideal level of consciousness incorporating literature from discourse analysis. Goffman’s (1981) classic discourse footing and framing theory is applied to the SLA discipline by Boylan and Mari (1996) and they contend that in order to gain footing in a second culture, individuals need to figure out what is important in that culture and exploit it appropriately.

Those with heightened sensitivity to people who live with difference may be better prepared to work within the Deaf-World. A significant question relates to the philosophical arguments represented in the *Deaf as culture* perspective compared to the *deaf as disability* outlook. Interpreters are part of this milieu. Positions and perspectives need to be clarified so that ASL/English interpreters would be more likely to attain higher order understanding and possible expert interpreter status.

The purpose of the study was to investigate Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work of interpreters. Expert practitioners have an important place in the field, but the social and economic status of top-level professionals can be undermined by the existence of untrained and under-prepared interpreters (Gile, 2009). There is benefit in applying data from expert ASL/English interpreters, who lead the field as exemplars of Deaf-World cultural competence. Deaf and hearing expert ASL/English interpreters were interviewed in this inquiry.
Choosing to interview interpreter practitioners who demonstrated expertise in the field was done with intentionality. ASL/English interpreter experts often work from the perspective of interpreting process, not necessarily interpreting product (Patrie, 2013) and provided deep insights into interpreter practice. Experts often work from a perspective of critical reflective practice and can be significant change agents in the field. Expertise does not happen abruptly, it requires significant time (Patrie, 2013). There is much to be gained from listening to the collective wisdom of seasoned, expert interpreters. Experts interviewed demonstrated the ability to critically reflect during the interview.

Expertise in general is defined by characteristics found in Ericsson (2001) and the practitioners represented in this inquiry were exemplars within the ASL/English interpreting discipline. Experts in various disciplines have been found to attain expert status through intentional practice (Ericsson, 2008; Ericsson & Charness, 1994) and not necessarily ‘giftedness.’ Experts have exceptional memory for interpreting and exhibit a combination of short term memory, long term memory, and working memory for the development of long term working memory (Patrie, 2013). Long-term memory does not necessarily depend on age; it depends on a significant event during the time of learning (Patrie, 2013).

Other attributes of experts include accumulation of knowledge in a discipline, better long term memory for discipline specific information, continuous practice in a field for at least a decade, mastery of complex skills, use of long term working memory (Patrie, 2013), and deliberate (Ericsson, 2001, 2008), reflective (Brookfield, 1995; Henderson, 2000) practice.
Critical reflection among practitioners of various disciplines has been promoted by Curriculum Studies scholars and scholars from other fields (Brookfield, 1995; Henderson, 2000). Expert status via critical reflection may be attained by sustained, conscious, intense work in the field over time. ASL/English interpreters by virtue of their training or affiliation with the Deaf-World will not automatically attain cross-cultural consciousness and biculturalism nor always engage in deliberate practice and reflection.

Ericsson and Ward (2007) found by encouraging the attainment of expert status, genetic dispositions in healthy individuals could be activated. While not everyone may attain expert status, pedagogical principles and information learned from experts demonstrating culturally responsive and deliberate reflective practice may enhance interpreter cultural competence outcomes. Experts conduct themselves in ways that guide and inform the field. Of course experts are not ‘gods and goddesses,’ the only ones who contribute to a field.

Expertise and critical reflection are important in many fields, and no less so in language mediation disciplines. With linguistic and cultural issues at the heart of decisions, documents, laws, etc., ethical practices and high quality work are required and expected of experts. Data regarding cultural competence within various language mediation disciplines informs and supports this cross-cultural study and appears below.

**Understanding Cultural Application From Language Mediation Fields**

Three fields providing scaffolding and solid guidance regarding ASL/English interpreter cultural competence are, Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies (spoken language), and ASL/English interpreting studies. These language mediation fields share
fundamental similarities (Gile, 2009) and a similar basic aim of meaning transfer between source and target languages. Gile (2009) discussed differences in translation and interpreting related to time constraints and concomitant stress faced by interpreters as they work with synchronous language transfer compared to translation’s asynchronous nature. The fields have engaged in cross-pollination, at times sharing common processes and data. It is fitting the three fields are presented together in this section, explicating their shared relationships to culture and language mediation.

**Translation Studies**

Translation Studies provided a window into processes of language/culture transfer and thus informed this study. Ideas about culture would be similar in Translation studies, Interpreting studies, and the ASL/English interpreting discipline. Translation is defined:

An interlinguistic transfer procedure comprising the interpretation of the sense of a source text and the production of a target text with the intent of establishing a relationship of equivalence between the two texts, while at the same time, observing both the inherent communication parameters and the constraints imposed on the translator.

Note 1. As opposed to interpreting, which involves the mediation of oral or gestural expression, translation involves written documents.

Note 2. Translation constitutes a form of reported speech. Translators are not the authors of source texts; they restate what has already been written.

(Delisle, Lee-Jahnke, & Cormier, 1999, p. 188)
Translation entails message transfer involving predominantly asynchronous, static discourse such as written texts. Interpreting occurs in real time and involves synchronous, dynamic spoken, or signed discourse. Translation and interpreting are related but separate actions, performing essentially the same function, re-expressing in a language what has been expressed in another (Gile, 2009). The terms are sometimes interchanged by laypersons. The focus of this inquiry is ASL/English interpreting, but data from spoken language Interpreting Studies and Translation Studies reinforce underlying message transfer seen in all three sociolinguistic processes.

See Table 5 for a sample of culturally related research from the Translation Studies discipline. The scholarly works represented in Table 5 provide a window into the importance of culture within Translation Studies, bringing culture or cultural knowledge forward in the translation process. Scholarly attention to the topic of culture indicates its necessity and importance in language mediation processes.

If bilingualism drives the motion behind linguistic transfer of meaning, then the translator systematizes the translation processes, generally, by mediating the cultures in question (Tonkin & Frank, 2010). The concepts below speak to the complex, enigmatic nature of language mediation and the commanding role culture plays. Culture provides us with information to discuss and language is the vehicle via which we narrate culture. The translator or interpreter is the instrument through which language and culture merge making the unfamiliar source language familiar via the target language.
### Table 5

**Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the Translation Studies Discipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahumaid</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Cultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are interpreters well-versed in culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>competence in English-Arabic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sufficient to render a dynamically equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translator training programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maier &amp; Boeri</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Forum papers</td>
<td>Activism and translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation/interpreting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreters may act as allies in working with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and social activism/Compromiso</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>marginalized Deaf community members; oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social y traducción/interpretación</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is a part of Deaf culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naaijkens</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>The role of translations on cultural and historic</td>
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<td>Event or incident; On the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>events</td>
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<tr>
<td>role of translation in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreters are often a part of historical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dynamics of cultural exchange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>events in the Deaf-World; how does culture come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>reliance on the cultural/knowledge skill set of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating and interpreting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the interpreter/translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sign language: mediating the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer diversity in the Deaf-World is a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAF-WORLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>challenge, relates to the ability to create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthews</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Cultural model for localization of Biblical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward a prototypical model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of culture for Bible translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In interpreter education, we rarely discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Müller</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Cultural differences as a problem of technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences as a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem of technical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In technical text translation, do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>underestimate the power cultural knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>plays in target text preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 5 (continued)

*Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the Translation Studies Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muñoz Is translating purely a matter of translation or a paradigm beyond the teaching of translation?</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay Teaching how to translate requires a complex approach to the biculturalism of the source language and the target language</td>
<td>Interpreters are prepared to interpret in IEPs requiring a complex approach to biculturalism inherent within the source and target languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pommer Translation as intercultural transfer: the case of law</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay The role of culture in legal translation and the importance of making difficult content accessible to a variety of consumers</td>
<td>The same is true for the diversity of consumers in the Deaf-World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahameed Hindrances in Arabic-English intercultural translations</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay Intercultural translation may benefit consumers in better understanding alien cultural elements if competent translators continue to strive for cultural clarity</td>
<td>The heart of language mediation is to make the foreign familiar; true also with Deaf-World interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarpa Towards an ‘activist’ translation pedagogy</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay The author claims that James Holmes’ two paradigms of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and Applied Translation Studies (ATS) should be used; teacher/scholar has the moral responsibility to both describe and prescribe</td>
<td>The Deaf-World interpreting discipline should strive for this level of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yifeng Cultural translation and glocalization</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Essay Global/local knowledge needed for success with culturally accurate text for readers</td>
<td>The discipline of Deaf-World interpreting should prepare students to understand local and global milieu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Translation Studies provides a solid body of literature demonstrating bilingual/bicultural connections. Spoken language and ASL/English interpreters and translators perform similar functions, albeit in dissimilar temporal milieu. Cross-cultural decisions are part of the work of professionals in both disciplines.

**Interpreting Studies (Spoken Language)**

In spoken language interpreting, issues related to culture and various topics presented in Table 6 resemble those seen in ASL/English interpreting. Data from the domains of Interpreting Studies and the ASL/English interpreting discipline can inform Deaf-World interpreters beginning with the premise that ASL is a linguistically sound, complete language (Stokoe, 1960) with a vibrant culture. Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989) maintained signed language interpreting processes are the same cognitive processes seen within spoken language interpreting. The two disciplines are recognized as being connected, have shared research through the years, and continue to partner in the quest to move the professions forward (Gile, 2009).

Some scholars have collaborated across the spoken/signed language aisle. Those who have worked in a cross-disciplinary fashion have included Seleskovitch (1991), Patrie (2000), Nicodemus and Swabey (2011), and Gile (2009) to name a very few.

Within spoken language interpreting, research topics where culture plays a prominent or subtle role or other related issues contribute to the point of this inquiry. The ASL/English interpreting and spoken language Interpreting Studies disciplines have much to learn from each other.
Table 6

*Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the Interpreting Studies Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morell</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>The general field of interpreting requires reflective practitioners who are using self-monitoring and self-control during their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward the development of a metacognitive intercultural communicative competence in the education of students of interpreting: general theoretical/pragmatic foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td>The authors say that there is insufficient treatment of meta-cognition when discussing bilingual interpreting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pöchhacker</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Could predict aptitude for simultaneous interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing aptitude for interpreting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administering a SynCloze test to undergraduate novices and control group of interpreters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SynCloze test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelelli</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Relates to Coda interpreters (Children of deaf adults) who are native bilingual/bicultural individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A professional ideology in the making: Bilingual youngsters interpreting for their communities and the notion of (no) choice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreting for families, young bilinguals develop a sense of being linguistic advocates between speakers of minority languages and society. In multilingual and diverse societies, the linguistic talents of young bilinguals should be fostered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahadir</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Interpreters have power in Deaf/hearing interactions and their intentions should not be misplaced nor should they exploit their power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The task of the interpreter in the struggle of the other for empowerment: Mythical utopia or sine qua non of professionalism?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreters must be sensitized and trained to cope with dangers and opportunities of their in-between position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 6 (continued)

Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the Interpreting Studies Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torikai</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>The perception of culture held by interpreters in post-WWII Japan. Without being aware of their role as cultural mediators, interpreters were actively involved in intercultural communication as co-participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Need for metacognitive skills regarding intercultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setton &amp; Liangliang</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>This article reports the findings of a survey on patterns of professional practice, self-perceptions, job satisfaction and aspirations of translators and interpreters in Shanghai and Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One question related to attitudes about C2 -for Chinese translators and interpreters, this meant English-speaking cultures. Significant numbers were curious/interested and the others found professional/unemotional. Similarities to ASL/English discipline?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valero-Garcés and Martin</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Conference papers</td>
<td>The role of the interpreter and boundaries; what are interpreters doing in medical settings? Are they also culture brokers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Need for definition of community based medical interpreting in spoken and signed language communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudvin</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>The complex nature of professionalism and of cross-cultural differences in attitude toward professional role/social identity need be addressed by the professional community to improve working conditions for consumers &amp; interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASL/English interpreters work from a more individualist orientation while the Deaf-World has a more collectivist orientation. These opposing worldviews cause some friction between Deaf consumers and hearing interpreters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 6 (continued)

Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the Interpreting Studies Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leanza</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Article reports that at times, proxy interpreters are utilized (family members) because the facility is not aware of ethical/legal implications of utilizing the services of trained professional interpreters. Codas may experience this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of community interpreters in pediatrics as seen by interpreters, physicians, and researchers</td>
<td></td>
<td>A new typology of the varying roles of the interpreter is proposed, outlining the relation to cultural differences. A must to move forward with quality healthcare for people from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within spoken language interpreting studies are examples of the impact of culture on interpreting processes. Both signed and spoken language interpreting theory and practice demonstrate shared properties, rich heritages, and much hope for future joint collaboration.

ASL/English Interpreting

Much like Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies, the research in the ASL/English interpreting discipline looks to be a mixture of some empirical research, essay and conference proceedings. Table 7 is a sample of relevant inquiries referencing culture. The table includes inquiries informing this study about expert interpreter cultural competence.
### Table 7

*Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the ASL/English Interpreting Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coyne The Exploration of Signed Language Interpreters’ Practices and Commitments with a Social Justice Lens</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>The investigation of signed language interpreters and their commitments toward their practices framed by a social justice lens. If interpreters possess transformational leadership traits, they are led to redirect their course in third space and Deaf members guide their practice thus promoting social justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasmussen Assessing Interpreter Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Empirical (quantitative)</td>
<td>189 signed language interpreters’ intercultural sensitivity was assessed with Bennett’s Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). According to results of the this study, IDI data indicated signed language interpreters overvalue cultural commonalities and undervalue cultural differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDermid Social Construction of American Sign Language-English Interpreters</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Empirical (qualitative)</td>
<td>34 interpreter educators and ASL instructors in Canada were interviewed and asked to describe how curricula were created and delivered and encouraged to discuss the challenges they faced. Curriculum was defined as teaching to be “good citizens” of the Deaf-World in 5 areas: attitude and values, cultural sensitivity, community involvement, ethical behavior, and life-long learning. Some indicative of being bicultural?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuard Perceptions of interpreter qualifications by deaf consumers and hearing interpreters</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Empirical (mixed methods)</td>
<td>Deaf perceptions indicate that interpreters will attain linguistic fluency and understanding of diversity in the Deaf community by exposure to Deaf-World culture; hearing interpreters do not perceive cultural affiliation with improving interpreting skills. There are differences of opinion between Deaf consumers and hearing interpreters; if d/Deaf people expect interpreters to gain cultural knowledge through interaction, why do interpreters not see the importance of it? How can we close this gap in perspectives?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 7 (continued)

Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the ASL/English Interpreting Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Empirical (extensive literature review and interviews)</td>
<td>The discipline emerged because of a need between two languages/cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The history of American sign language interpreting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key individuals in the emergence of ASL/English interpreter education profession; key events; state and federal laws influencing the field of interpreter education and impact this research could have on future curricular development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindess et al.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Excellent information for students to know and apply about intercultural communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading between the signs: Intercultural communication for SL interpreters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilizes cultural theory to compare/contrast Deaf and hearing (and other) cultures. Has a workbook available as well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith &amp; Savidge</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>Hall says culture is how we use time; students’ views of attitude toward Deaf people are key to cultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond knowledge and skills: Teaching attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>The attitude focused on is an attitude of respect for deaf people and their language. Respect means really understanding deaf people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindess</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>American mainstream culture is very different from Deaf-World culture in artifacts used, behaviors and cognition. Developing cultural competence is a complex and on-going process for students and practicing interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keys to integrating cultural influences in interpreter education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreters need grounding in the study of world cultures. By becoming familiar with them, the discovery comes about Deaf culture sharing features with other cultures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Unpublished doctoral dissertation</td>
<td>An up close look at the Deaf community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf people in context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 7 (continued)

*Examples of Culturally Related Inquiries From the ASL/English Interpreting Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar and title of research</th>
<th>Year research published</th>
<th>Research type and focus</th>
<th>Application to ASL/English interpreting discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dively</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Response to an Issue Paper</td>
<td>Deaf interpreter educators' major contributions to the interpreting field are their presence as consumers and native ASL signers. They provide an environment where student interpreters get constant exposure to ASL and Deaf culture. This is true today. A question is, should all IEPs have a variety of d/Deaf faculty and staff so that students may see the diversity within the consumer community? Are students getting sufficient exposure to Deaf culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Keynote address</td>
<td>Presenter provided the competencies needed; bi-cultural competency: knowledge/appreciation of the cultures underlying the working languages. Do ASL/English interpreters have a deep knowledge/appreciation of the cultures underlying the working languages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bienvenu</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>A translation of a presentation given at an RID conference. An explanation of third culture issues in the ASL/English interpreting community. Issues raised by Deaf scholars are important to pay attention to. The ASL/English interpreting discipline cannot stop asking for advice from the Deaf community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>Because of an ad hoc curriculum design, many programs never get beyond a superficial explanation of culture. Often hearing people teach Deaf culture. Not sure we have improved in this area since 1987.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherwood</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Conference proceedings</td>
<td>An explanation of third culture issues such as lack of linguistic fluency and cross-cultural understanding between Deaf people and interpreters. The issues raised in this essay are still evident today.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear from the inquiries mentioned, that the Deaf community and Deaf-World culture are influential to ASL/English interpreting research. Key interpreting-related data are found in scholarly work from Coyne (2012), Rasmussen (2012), McDermid (2009a), Stuard (2008), and Ball (2007). The Deaf-World has impacted the history and establishment of the ASL/English interpreting discipline in powerful ways (Ball, 2007). Without the Deaf community, its vibrant culture, combined with human and civil rights legislation of Deaf Americans, there would be no need for the profession we see today (Ball, 2007). Deaf citizens and IEP faculty, as stakeholders, have much to teach hearing pre-service and working interpreters about good citizenship within the Deaf-World (McDermid, 2009b; Stuard, 2008). HEARING interpreters should be cognizant of cultural beliefs and norms that guide Deaf-World thinking and strive to have an appropriate ATTITUDE, a Deaf-World way of indicating an effective interpreter from a culturally Deaf perspective. The concept of ATTITUDE has been linked to the concept of Deaf-heart (Merkin, 2009), encouraging equal access and freedom from oppression in spaces where Deaf individuals congregate.

The importance of the word/sign ATTITUDE cannot be overlooked in discussions of interpreters who work in the Deaf-World. Discourse describing cultural competence in the ASL/English interpreting realm seems to partially be described using ATTITUDE as a marker. McDermid (2009b) described characteristics IEP faculty should possess to teach students in Canada. He recommended programs discuss the following: the definition of a good citizen in the Deaf-world; interpersonal skills; the part ‘attitude’
plays in hearing/Deaf dynamics; how issues of interpreter ‘attitude’ can be addressed in classes; and the role hearing citizens play in the Deaf-world (McDermid, 2009a).

McDermid (2009b) found ‘attitude’ to be a theme emerging in his research which supports the perspectives of Smith and Savidge (2002). Smith and Savidge (2002) discussed the importance of teaching ‘attitude’ to ASL/English interpreting students through the following attributes of Deaf community interaction:

- Attitude as identity (social role)
- Attitude as culture (beliefs and values)
- Attitude as values (the valuing of communication)
- Attitude as manners
- Attitude as politics

Attitude is a salient attribute in the role and work of ASL/English interpreters according to Smith and Savidge (2002) and in McDermid’s (2009b) data from IEP faculty. At times an apparent affective or behavioral disconnect is detected between Deaf consumers and the interpreters who serve them (Forestal, 2004; Philip, 1986; Stuard, 2008). Attitude as an attribute is difficult to define and the study of disposition toward second culture adaptation and cultural competence includes attitudinal properties (Byram, 1997). Studying cultural competence of interpreter experts may be an effective vehicle in discussing cross-cultural knowledge and skill development as well as explaining problems with perceptions and behaviors complicating hearing/Deaf interactions.

The work of Hall (1959), a cultural anthropologist, is at the heart of crossing cultures in the Deaf community. Mindess et al. (2006) has been at the forefront of
discussion regarding cross-cultural interaction in the Deaf-world, taking Hall’s (1959) information and mapping it to the Deaf and interpreter experience. Mindess et al. (2006) described the Deaf-world utilizing Hall’s (1966) Proxemic Theory and applied technical terms coined or brought forward from his work, such as collectivist, individualist, high-context, low-context, monochronic and polychronic time orientations. Literature above has been utilized in the preparation of interpreters.

As IEPs have become institutionalized and professionalized, preparation of interpreters has moved away from the indigenous Deaf community (Cokely, 2005; Monikowski & Peterson, 2005). If students are increasingly becoming detached from the Deaf community, how are they to develop and maintain cultural competence? If Deaf consumers view a connection with the Deaf community necessary for interpreters to develop cultural competence (Stuard, 2008), and preparation of interpreters is taken out of the community of ASL users (Cokely, 2005) and into IEPs, then the concept of preparation of interpreter cross-cultural development needs to be revisited.

Findings from Forestal (2004), Stuard (2008), McDermid (2009b), Rasmussen (2012), and Coyne (2012) pointed to the need for continued research on ASL/English interpreter and Deaf-World interactions. Forestal (2004) found tension exists between interpreters and d/Deaf people. Stuard (2008) studied Deaf-World and interpreter perspectives on interpreter skill development and Deaf community interaction finding mutually exclusive views: Deaf consumers perceive interpreters attain linguistic fluency and appreciation of diversity in the Deaf community by exposure to Deaf-World culture and hearing interpreters perceive cultural affiliation with the Deaf-World will not
necessarily improve interpreting skills. McDermid’s (2009b) data point to Deaf-World citizenship, its meaning, significance, and application. Rasmussen (2012) found interpreters’ overvalue cultural commonalities and undervalue cultural differences. Coyne (2012) found transformational leadership skills led interpreters to follow Deaf members’ guidance in shaping professional roles and promoting social justice. The above inquiries, when viewed together, point toward a need for further research in order to foreground Deaf-World concerns (Cokely, 2005).

Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies, and ASL/English interpreting demonstrated scholarly evidence of the significant role culture plays in language mediation. This study seeks to explore how expert Deaf and hearing interpreters perceive the development of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, thus informing language mediation fields of this basic and assumed piece of the practitioner’s skill set. Culture’s role is evident in various standards of the aforementioned disciplines, and in the language mediation literature; therefore culture was front and center in this study. Nowhere is Deaf culture more centered than in the Deaf Studies discipline.

**Deaf Studies and Contemporary Deaf Voices**

*Nothing about us, without us* (Charlton, 1998) is the title of a book on disability rights and was the theme of the 2012 National Association of the Deaf (NAD) convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Contributions from Deaf-World literature such as scholarly data presented below and the assistance of a peer debriefer who is Deaf were vital to this study.
Table 8 presents a sample of Deaf-World individuals and scholars, their historical contributions to Deaf Studies, and the larger synoptic narrative of the Deaf-World as a cultural entity. The inquiries presented below have provided the footing and framing (Goffman, 1981) for contemporary discussions in the Deaf-World. The individuals named and many, whose names do not appear, have helped shape the indigenous Deaf-World. They have set the tone and have framed issues still discussed in modern debates when d/Deaf people gather in real-time or on-line. Interpreters should be able to identify, have knowledge of and respect for the history of the Deaf-World, not at the level of a scholar, but demonstrating some Deaf-World cultural literacy.

The Deaf voice is extremely important in discussion of cultural competence because it is the indigenous language and culture of the Deaf community interpreters are acquiring. The Deaf voice does not exclude those who are able to hear, but includes those with Deaf-centric perspectives who view the Deaf-world as a micro-cultural, linguistic minority within the larger hearing macro-culture. Below is a chronological, historical listing of key Deaf-World agents of change, beginning with persons from the 18th century. Of the 33 contributors listed, 28 are Deaf and 5 are hearing, with one considered adversarial toward Deaf persons, Alexander Graham Bell (Winefield, 1987).

Deaf Studies includes the work of Deaf-World scholars and researchers of the past and present. Many Deaf-World voices have emerged within the last 50 years, paralleling the discovery of ASL as a grammatically complete language. Deaf Studies provides a framework and opportunity to explore an ontological perspective of the Deaf-World from those who live within its borders.
Table 8

*A Sample of Deaf-World and Deaf-Centric Scholars*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deaf-World Change Agent</th>
<th>Birth/death</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laurent Clerc</td>
<td>1785–1869</td>
<td>First Deaf teacher of Deaf students in America</td>
<td>Residential schools for the Deaf are decreasing, and so are numbers of Deaf teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Cogswell</td>
<td>1805–1830</td>
<td>Deaf daughter of Dr. Mason Cogswell and inspiration to her father and to T.H. Gallaudet</td>
<td>Deaf education established in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet</td>
<td>1787–1851</td>
<td>Emissary to Europe sent by Dr. Mason Cogswell to investigate Deaf education methods; brought Deaf-centric scholar back to America</td>
<td>Namesake of Gallaudet University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Miner Gallaudet</td>
<td>1837–1917</td>
<td>Son of T.H. Gallaudet and the first President of the National College for the Deaf and Dumb, later named Gallaudet University</td>
<td>Debated Bell and supported the use of a visual language within education of deaf students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deaf-centric hearing scholar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.G. Bell</td>
<td>1847–1922</td>
<td>Scientist, inventor, proponent of oral deaf education and eugenics Hearing (non-Deaf-centric)</td>
<td>Teacher of the deaf via the oral method; opposed deaf intermarriage and debated against sign language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert McGregor</td>
<td>1849–1926</td>
<td>First president of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD); elected 1880.</td>
<td>The Deaf community has protected indigenous status by Deaf run organizations since their inception.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table continues*
### Table 8 (continued)

**A Sample of Deaf-World and Deaf-Centric Scholars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deaf-World Change Agent</th>
<th>Birth/death</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Veditz</td>
<td>1861–1937</td>
<td>Past President of NAD. Graduated from Gallaudet University in 1884. The first person to capture ASL on film</td>
<td>Quote—“As long as we have deaf people on earth, we will have signs. It is my hope that we all will love and guard our beautiful sign language as the noblest gift God has given to deaf people”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Jacobs</td>
<td>1918–1998</td>
<td>A deaf education advocate and activist. He served on President Carter’s Council on Handicapped Individuals</td>
<td>He was from a generationally Deaf family, wrote his memoir and shared experiences of Deaf life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Lankenau</td>
<td>1919–2000</td>
<td>Past President of NAD. Worked as a chemist at Firestone Tire and Rubber Company during WW II</td>
<td>A Deaf ‘everyman’ is able to make a difference via his leadership efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Schreiber</td>
<td>1922–1979</td>
<td>The first Executive Director of NAD</td>
<td>Established the NAD as a financially solvent and political organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mervin Garretson</td>
<td>1923–2013</td>
<td>Past President and Executive Director of NAD</td>
<td>Deaf leader, writer, poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy K. Holcomb</td>
<td>1923–1998</td>
<td>Father of Total Communication</td>
<td>Broke the oral only mold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Foster</td>
<td>1925–1987</td>
<td>First Deaf/Black person to graduate from Gallaudet University. Missionary to the Deaf in Africa</td>
<td>Today there are many international deaf students at universities around the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 8 (continued)

A Sample of Deaf-World and Deaf-Centric Scholars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Application</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Malcolm J Norwood</td>
<td>1927–1989</td>
<td>Graduated from Gallaudet in 1949. Became a teacher and saw the benefit of students reading text from films, etc.</td>
<td>The Father of closed captioning, a concept in widespread use today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Bragg</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Deaf performing artist, actor, director, poet and mime. He studied with Marcel Marceau</td>
<td>Was involved with the first show on NBC to show sign language and not just mime. The show was protested by the AG Bell Association of the deaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gertrude Galloway</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>First female Deaf President of NAD</td>
<td>Has inspired d/Deaf women to achievements in various fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Gannon</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Author of <em>Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America</em>, Curator of History Through Deaf Eyes project, 2001</td>
<td>An historian who can be thanked for his contribution to keeping the heritage alive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan Lane</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Author of <em>The Wild Boy of Aveyron; When the Mind Hears; The Mask of Benevolence and The People of the Eye: Deaf Ethnicity and Ancestry</em> Deaf-centric</td>
<td>A hearing scholar is able to conduct research and contribute to the Deaf-World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Hagemeyer</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Deaf librarian</td>
<td>Has inspired other deaf people to get involved with various library systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 8 (continued)

*A Sample of Deaf-World and Deaf-Centric Scholars*

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth “Libby” Pollard</td>
<td>Circa 1938</td>
<td>Former NAD president</td>
<td>Has held multiple Deaf-World positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I King Jordan</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>The first deaf President of Gallaudet University</td>
<td>Was and is a spokesperson for the d/Deaf community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Corson</td>
<td>Circa 1944</td>
<td>Has been a superintendent at various Deaf schools; was one of three finalists for Deaf president at Gallaudet University</td>
<td>A Deaf leader is the birthplace of Deaf education—Connecticut. Shows the power of education and activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Humphries</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Educator, lecturer; writes and works within Deaf Education</td>
<td>Contributes a voice of reason and wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Greg Emerton</td>
<td>Circa 1950</td>
<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>Deaf persons may find unique solutions to issues because of their experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddy Ladd</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Deaf scholar and researcher. Advanced the idea of ‘Deafhood’</td>
<td>A force within the Deaf-World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ Bienvenu</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Deaf-World activist, educator and spokesperson</td>
<td>Deaf-centric scholar. A cultural force in the Deaf-World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Padden</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Esteemed linguist; a protégé of Stokoe; a researcher</td>
<td>Deaf-centric scholar. Dean of the division of Social Sciences, UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Bahan</td>
<td>Circa 1956</td>
<td>Deaf scholar and researcher</td>
<td>Co-founder of DawnSign Press; Co-editor of the Deaf Studies Digital Journal (DSDJ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 8 (continued)

A Sample of Deaf-World and Deaf-Centric Scholars

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<tr>
<th>Deaf-World Change Agent</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas K. Holcomb</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Deaf culture articles and texts</td>
<td>A Deaf generational perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirksen Bauman</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Deaf studies, a HEARING Deaf-centric scholar</td>
<td>Audism movie; notion of Deaf gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Murray</td>
<td>Circa 1967</td>
<td>Scholar and researcher; notion of Deaf gain</td>
<td>Involved with the WFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavia Fleischer</td>
<td>Circa 1970</td>
<td>Scholar and researcher; Notion of Deaf cultural capital</td>
<td>Frames her work within the Deaf Studies discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raychelle Harris</td>
<td>Circa 1973</td>
<td>Deaf scholar and researcher; linguist</td>
<td>Academic discourse in English and ASL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Malzkuhn</td>
<td>Circa 1982</td>
<td>VL2 researcher</td>
<td>Digital applications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaf-World scholars write from a Deaf worldview and provided philosophical and epistemological arguments for the Deaf as culture proposition. The Deaf worldview comes from the centering of ‘Deaf’ as a legitimate way of being (Bahan, 2009) among many valid and diverse postmodern identities.

Deaf Studies revealed a variety of powerful Deaf-centric voices standing on the shoulders of some named in Table 8 and others who have emerged as respected scholars. Deaf scholars legitimize the Deaf as culture argument. Padden and Humphries (1988, 2005) have broadly studied the Deaf-World and provided historical, contemporary and a future glimpse of the community and culture. Bahan (2009) wrote about diverse
Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009), a mechanism for discussing being Deaf, thus expanding the concepts of traditional Deaf culture. Kuntze (2004) researched ways Deaf literacy can show us new and innovative ways to broaden the discourse of literacy. If we limit the definition of what it means to be literate to only those who hear, then we stifle the complexity of human potential (Bauman, 2004).

Humphries (1975, 2004) has written extensively about Deaf culture in America, coined the term “audism” in 1975, and helped to expand the concept into significant discussions about marginalization in the Deaf community and modern perspectives on Deaf life. Gertz (2003) provided scholarly, insightful points, raising awareness of Deaf-world issues by writing about dysconscious audism. Dysconscious audism relates to individuals who are Deaf implicitly accepting mainstream American values and privilege (Bauman, 2008; Gertz, 2003) often to their detriment. Bahan, Bauman, and Montenegro (2006) produced a film showing the impact of audism in Deaf communities. Fleischer (2013) discussed work on community cultural wealth and various types of capital (Yosso, 2005), connecting data from marginalized groups to the Deaf-World. Fleischer (2013) challenged the status quo with discussion and examples of various types of audist aggressions. Fleischer applied Yosso’s (2005) work regarding the collective wisdom of marginalized groups by explicating various types of capital such as linguistic, social, familial, navigational, resistant, and aspirational and is discussed in Chapter V.

Emerton (1998), a sociologist, described the d/Deaf experience from the perspective of his discipline. He wrote about marginalized persons who because of the experience of being stigmatized, often develop unorthodox views and find themselves at
the center of social change. Bauman (2008) frequently wrote from a philosophical frame and challenged politicized debate in the Deaf-world. Playing on the traditional pathological use of the term ‘hearing loss’ to describe individuals who live in the Deaf-world, Bauman (2005) wrote about Williamson introducing the concept of Deaf-gain. Bauman and Murray (2009) discussed a paradigm shift to ‘Deaf-gain’ and described benefits to individuals and society when interacting with persons who are d/Deaf.

Bienvenu and Smith (2007) wrote about Queer theory and parallel culture within the Deaf-world. Bienvenu discussed Deaf/Gay individuals having to choose to be either Deaf or Gay and how this may confuse discourse within the mainstream Deaf-world (Bauman, 2004). Educating students about the diversity of the Deaf-world encompasses more than information regarding the mainstream deaf or Deaf communities and may lead to enhanced cultural competence. There is great variety and cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006) in the global Deaf-World with representation of varied voices from numerous micro-cultures such as Deaf/Gay, Deaf/Latino, Deaf/Asian, Deaf/Blind, Deaf/Women and others, illustrating diversity of Deaf-World citizens.

A British Deaf scholar of international acclaim, Ladd (2003) introduced the concept of ‘Deafhood’ to Deaf Studies. Ladd wrote from a liberation theoretical perspective, desiring to make clear to the reader the need to release the oppression perpetrated on the Deaf-world. Deafhood represents an affirmation and positive acceptance of being Deaf, an existential Deaf way of being in the world (Ladd, 2003), and a way of encouraging Deaf individuals to function as healthy citizens of the Deaf and hearing worlds (Hauser, O’Hearn, McKee, Steider, & Thew, 2010). Deafhood is not a
finite state; it is a process of becoming, a way that Deaf people construct their being out of a differently ordered sets of principles and priorities than seen in mainstream culture (Ladd, 2003). Deaf citizens have created and continue to define Deaf-World culture. It is incumbent on interpreter practitioners of all stripes who work with d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to, at minimum, recognize cultural differences, act in positive ways or exhibit behavioral changes, and at best, to become part of the culture (Bennett, 1993).

**Conclusion**

In this literature review, I have shown how the subject of culture is foundational to the ASL/English interpreting discipline. There are standards explicating interpreter principles as well as cultural norms and values guiding the work of practitioners. Standards tangibly demonstrate desired knowledge and behaviors interpreters should possess regarding linguistic and cross-cultural mediation.

Data from Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies, and the ASL/English interpreting disciplines built a basic framework for this inquiry, describing the work of sociolinguistic mediators of language and culture. Disciplines outside language mediation fields were included in this literature review to amplify biculturalism, cross-cultural interaction or Deaf-World cultural competence. Fields represented included the following, psychology (Berry, 2005); developmental psychology (Phinney, 1990; Spencer, 2006); second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Lange & Paige, 2003); anthropology, communications, intercultural studies, and Deaf studies. Within this literature review, data presented ran the gamut of methodologies incorporating empirical research, as well as a significant number of essays and conference proceedings.
In exploring the literature on culture and ASL/English practitioners, I have shown that the topic is complicated, multi-faceted, and necessary when discussing interpreter and Deaf-World cultural competence. Data from inquiries in this literature review framed the topic of culture in relation to Deaf/hearing relationships; terminology used in interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence; and the authenticity of biculturalism among ASL/English interpreters. The literature I chose to present explores the in-depth nature of culture in the lived experience of interpreters.

Interpreter ASL/English cultural competence is socially constructed (McDermid, 2009a) and negotiated vis-à-vis the Deaf-World. In developing the research design for 13 hearing and Deaf interpreters and their understanding of Deaf-World cultural competence, I employed a basic interpretive qualitative research design informed by phenomenology, narrative structure frameworks, and emancipatory inquiry. Interpreters’ lived experiences were documented by interpreters telling their stories within a three-dimensional framework (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) focusing on past biographical circumstances, contextual reflection, and cross-cultural challenges, and supports. In the next chapter, I clarify methodology, approaches, and inquiries informing this research as I sought to investigate Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreters.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN

Overview

Twenty-first century empiricism offers a wealth of research choices from which to choose. Researchers have autonomy to make decisions about inquiry adaptations (Creswell, 2007). Hiles (2001) discussed the importance of qualitative research especially concerning topics considered off limits or difficult to measure. The topic of this inquiry, descriptions of ASL/English expert interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, while difficult to study and measure, was much too important to be neglected.

To answer the research question, *what are Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners?*, I chose an interpretive qualitative design. The focus of the inquiry, participants telling their lived experience currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006), fit well with qualitative inquiry. A qualitative approach, informed by various frameworks (phenomenology, narrative, emancipatory, and heuristic inquiries), was employed because methodological characteristics were compatible with research questions, mindful sensibilities toward the Deaf-World (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) and participant comfort (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Qualitative research facilitates deeper understanding of research problems (Creswell, 2007) and the combination of a variety of approaches enabled in-depth analysis of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.
The interpretive qualitative study design allowed for semi-structured (Merriam, 2002) interviews and the generation of rich data sets. The interpretive qualitative approach inherently contains core aspects of qualitative inquiry in the following ways: the approach realizes the self-reflective tendencies of qualitative research; recognizes the researcher as playing a role in describing and at times embodying data; and acknowledges power issues in every phase of research (Creswell, 2007). The interpretive qualitative research approach allowed for significant Deaf-World issues to be prioritized, such as in-depth heuristic (Moustakas, 1990) reflection and the magnitude of issues of power, and emancipation of the Deaf voice (Sullivan, 2009) to emerge within and among the data set.

The purpose of the study was to investigate expert Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter participants’ lived experiences regarding meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreters. The overarching aim was to identify meaning Deaf and HEARING participants ascribed to ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Deaf-World cross-cultural issues in the ASL/English interpreter discipline were in need of further exploration (Rasmussen, 2012). An interpretive qualitative design informed by phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), emancipatory disability research (Sullivan, 2009) and the concept of currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006), explored the meaning 13 working ASL/English interpreter participants ascribed to interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Below, I present various qualitative approaches, my decisions to incorporate them or not, and explain the rationale behind the approaches and frameworks selected.
Within the array of qualitative approaches, there were five considered as possibilities for this study as informed by Creswell (2007) because they reflect typical qualitative research seen in social and behavioral literature. The approaches considered were case study, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology. Below is a brief description of qualitative approaches I did not select, elements of each, and rationale for why I did not incorporate them as stand-alone methodology.

Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) are key case study researchers who share the case study label, but demonstrate different ways of conducting case study inquiry. Case study employs the concept of constructivism and utilizes multiple data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study data sources include documents, archives, interviews, direct observation, physical artifacts, and participant observation (Creswell, 2007). Additional data sources in this inquiry were not feasible due to the confidential nature of interpreter work and logistical complexities. Therefore I did not employ case study because interviews were the only data source in this study.

Grounded theory researchers Glaser and Strauss (1967) saw the need within qualitative research for a way to generate theory from data. In this inquiry about Deaf-World cultural competence, I was not attempting to generate a theory per se because intercultural models exist in various disciplines. Examples of bicultural models include (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006); intercultural communicative competence assessment (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006); a model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993); and a variety of others (Sinicrope et al., 2007). The feasibility of merging data from this study with a
currently existing theoretical model could be explored. Data from this inquiry may assist the field in further discussing the need for the development of theoretical frameworks.

Ethnography is a qualitative approach that looks at a group or culture and their shared behaviors, norms, values, and ways of life (Creswell, 2007). In studying a small number of ASL/English interpreters, I was not studying Deaf culture per se or interpreters within their own hybrid culture between the Deaf and hearing worlds, sometimes referred to as third culture (Bienvenu, 1987; Sherwood, 1987). The ethnographer remains in a particular setting and conducts extended observation of a group (Creswell, 2007). I studied interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence via in-depth interviews, not an extended observation period within Deaf culture or interpreter third culture spaces.

Narrative inquiry is a postmodern research approach influenced by Deweyan philosophy and illustrates the importance of narrative when investigating experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry methods utilize participant experiences as conveyed by personal lived and expressed stories (Creswell, 2007). In narrative inquiry, multiple types of information are gathered such as interviews, field texts, observation and journaling or the keeping of diaries (Creswell, 2007). Narrative inquiry was helpful in informing and framing this research, but it did not fit as a method again due to only using the open ended interviewing of participants to collect data.

Phenomenology is a complex inquiry approach, steeped in historical philosophy and incorporating well researched and debated philosophical frameworks (Creswell, 2007; van Manen, 1990). In order to conduct an authentic phenomenological study, it requires
in-depth knowledge of the approach and its philosophical underpinnings (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological approach in its pure form did not fit this particular inquiry.

An interpretive qualitative approach comprises the core of this inquiry and is informed by phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), theoretical frameworks from emancipatory research (Sullivan, 2009) and the concept of currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006). Creswell (2007) described incorporating an interpretive qualitative approach when we seek to study the meaning people ascribe to a particular social or human problem. I sought to study meaning participants ascribed to Deaf-world cultural competence and to investigate the social problem of interpreter cross-cultural competence using an interpretive qualitative design informed by additional elements because of flexibility the combination allowed.

The interpretive approach inherently possesses characteristics of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (Merriam, 2002). Phenomenology is ubiquitous in qualitative research approaches in general (Merriam, 2002). Phenomenology seeks to uncover meaning in our everyday existence and informed this inquiry as participants were asked to describe the essence (van Manen, 1990) of their cross-cultural experience.

Symbolic interactionism is an American sociological perspective with philosophical roots in pragmatism (Hewitt, 1997). Proponents of symbolic interactionism view living beings as making practical adjustments to their surroundings (Hewitt, 1997). The interpretive approach is solidly situated historically within philosophy, literature, and disciplines such as phenomenology and symbolic interactionism give the interpretive approach depth and breadth.
Merriam (2002) discussed strengths of incorporating an interpretive approach, which are to explore the following attributes: an interpretive approach informs how participants understand their experiences; construct their worlds; and give meaning to their experiences. The role of the researcher who utilizes an interpretive qualitative approach is to interpret and present findings constructed by participants (Merriam, 2002).

The interpretive qualitative design utilized in this inquiry incorporated characteristics analogous to general qualitative research: the researcher was inquiring about how participants created meaning around a phenomenon; data passed through the researcher as information gathering instrument; and outcomes of the research were descriptive (Merriam, 2002). Because aims of this inquiry related to understanding the lived experiences of participants, incorporating an interpretive qualitative research design helped to reveal how cross-cultural meaning is socially constructed (Merriam, 2002) while effectively fitting with the other approaches and theoretical frameworks informing this inquiry. Following is a section describing the theoretical framework for the inquiry.

**Theoretical Framework**

Dewey (1938) discussed human experience as continuous, individual, and social, an apt description to begin discussion of bicultural iterations within interpreter lifeworlds. I incorporated various qualitative research approaches and theoretical frameworks to amplify the unique nature of this inquiry. I explored experiences of hearing and Deaf adult interpreters as they revealed thoughts on Deaf-World cultural competence in ASL/English contexts and the cross-cultural lives they led. The focus of the study centered on the descriptions of Deaf-World cultural competence and second culture acquisition of
interpreter participants who demonstrated competencies in ASL and English contexts through certification credentials.

There are many options in qualitative methodology from which to choose: one size does not fit all (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Contemporary qualitative research methods are in abundance and I was able to apply a variety of approaches and theoretical frameworks in combination with the interpretive qualitative study design. I incorporated phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), emancipatory research (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009), heuristic inquiry (Patton, 2002), and currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006). The intersection of various theoretical strands framed the research, lent focus and cohesion to the framework, engaged Deaf involvement, encouraged the emergence of participant narratives of ASL/English interpreter lived experience, and are described below.

Phenomenology, with its philosophical underpinnings, challenges researchers not to take for granted that which may typically be overlooked, which is part of mindful research (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). Phenomenology seeks to uncover meanings in our everyday existence and informed this inquiry as participants were asked to describe the essence (van Manen, 1990) of their cross-cultural journeys becoming HEARING within the Deaf-World. I agree with the following statement from Merriam (2002): “Because phenomenology as a school of philosophical thought underpins all qualitative research, some assume that all qualitative research is phenomenological, and certainly in one sense it is” (p. 7).
Attributes of phenomenology were useful in encouraging participant description of their lived experience. Of particular interest were participants’ recollections and levels of consciousness regarding the phenomena of Deaf-World cultural competence, their personal experiences as ASL/English interpreters as they transitioned into HEARING status via co-construction of a cross-cultural identity, and their lived phenomena of crossing cultures (Van Manen, 1990).

As humans, we understand the world narratively, consequently it made sense to study it narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the pursuit to further comprehend characteristics of ASL/English expert interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, narrative inquiry informed the study by providing needed framing. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested a framework with three dimensions: a contextual dimension studying participant place (situated in place); temporal dimension studying participant past and future trajectories (backward and forward); and internal and external reflections studying stories of experience (inward and outward).

Centering on individual, in-depth, shared narratives of expert interpreters, I acknowledged that each participant embodied a personal story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The overarching aim was to provide a space where Deaf and HEARING participants could identify meaning they ascribed to Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community. Narrative is important in ASL discourse (Rathman, Mann, & Morgan, 2007) and American English discourse and was integral to this research. Narrative inquiry utilized participant
anecdotes, engaging them in familiar story telling activities. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) reported not being able to imagine research without narrative.

Emancipatory disability research is concerned with nonmaleficence, doing no harm and beneficence, doing what benefits others, in conducting empirical studies with marginalized groups (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2009). This inquiry sought to challenge the typical research paradigm in two ways: to encourage and dignify the Deaf voice within the inquiry and underscore the typically silent interpreter voice.

A Deaf-centric stance is inherent in the phrase, *nihil de nobis, sine nobis*, translated as ‘nothing about us without us’ (Charlton, 1998). In an attempt to mitigate exclusionary practices, a Deaf peer debriefer and Deaf participants were represented in the study. In emancipatory research, a transformative paradigm is essential (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in order to conduct research with others not only on others (Sullivan, 2009).

Indigenous Deaf involvement was a crucial part of this research. James Beldon, Jr., a Deaf peer debriefer (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hail, Hurst & Camp, 2011) in this inquiry from a multi-generational Deaf family, helped to level the playing field (Freire, 1970) with a Deaf-centric perspective during data analysis. A certified Deaf interpreter (CDI) as well as an interpreter educator with an exemplary educational background, his involvement provided a vital contribution. As Ressler (1999) discussed, Deaf interpreters fill needs in the Deaf community for accuracy and cultural fitness in interpreting work.

Emancipatory research methods inspired the typically ‘silenced’ interpreter voice to emerge. Interpreters are not considered marginalized but their dormant role may at times lead to work stress (McCartney, 2003). Interpreter practitioners conduct their work
under the auspices of a code of professional conduct (RID, 2013), a guide for decision making while performing interpreting duties. One of the tenets of the RID Code of Professional Conduct states the following regarding the personal involvement of the working interpreter: “2.5 Refrain from providing counsel, advice or personal opinions” and “3.5 Conduct and present themselves in an unobtrusive manner” (RID, 2013).

Adhering to the above tenets is among the salient features of being an interpreter. Interpreters represent consumers, become the ‘voice’ of the consumers, and take on personas of consumers without getting involved in the proceedings. After years of not having the ability to give opinions in situations with consumers, interpreters are given a different role in this inquiry, a chance to voice general thoughts, opinions, and their lived experience narratives without divulging specific interpreting assignment information. Emancipatory research seeks not to merely investigate the world, but to change it and possibly bring a different lens to a particular problem (Sullivan, 2009).

Heuristic research design has roots in philosophy (Kleining & Witt, 2000) and involves creative self-processes and self-discoveries (Moustakas, 1990). The heuristic process is extremely demanding requiring the researcher to be committed, self-searching and to surrender completely to the research process (Hiles, 2001). I did not want to conduct a study where I became the main focus of the inquiry, however desired to acknowledge my interest in this topic as an ASL/English practicing interpreter.

I was interested in incorporating heuristic inquiry because of my lived experience as an ASL/English interpreter. Moustaskas (2002) wrote about the creative processes within an individual, which may be hidden or denied. It is unlikely someone who was not
affiliated with the field of ASL/English interpreting would undertake or understand the profound meaning connected to being an interpreter in the Deaf-World. I did not want the knowledge and experience to be hidden or denied but to be useful and shared. Within heuristic inquiry, researcher characteristics include intense interest in and personal experience with the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1990). My experience, per heuristic inquiry, enhances the depth of the study, but does not take the focus or main position within the study.

Pinar (1975, 2006), a pioneering curriculum theorist who is part of the reconceptualist movement within Curriculum Studies, introduced the concept of curriculum as currere. Pinar’s (1975, 2006) work involves theorizing about and reconceptualizing curriculum, viewing curriculum as a verb. Currere is partially defined by comparing courses of study to one’s educational path, which means one’s curriculum is their pedagogical ‘course to be run’ (Henderson & Gornik, 2007).

Henderson and Gornik (2007) discussed Pinar’s concept of currere narrative where persons reflect deeply on personal educational experiences. The concept of currere narrative played a role in the inquiry in asking participants to engage in a complicated conversation of self and social understanding (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) in description of their connections to the Deaf-World as ASL/English interpreters. Curriculum as currere and narrative inquiry shared key characteristics such as description of individual narrative experiences.

The study design included an interpretive qualitative design in all three research phases including a pilot study. In the next section, the following topics are discussed:
they consist of research questions, research purpose and aims, introduction to the overall study, pilot study themes, and pilot study data combined with Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three dimensional model.

**Research Questions**

There were two research questions. Research question one was bifurcated to fit either Deaf or HEARING participants. Research question one A related to HEARING participants and research question one B related to Deaf participants.

Research Question One, Parts A and B

- What characteristics did HEARING practitioners discuss which described their understandings, perceptions, and attitudes about Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters?
- What characteristics did d/Deaf practitioners discuss which described their understandings, perceptions, and attitudes about Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters?

Research Question Two

- What are Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners?

**Research Purpose**

There were three phases to this inquiry. The purpose of the study remained the same in all three phases and it was to investigate Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter participant experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World
cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners. The overarching aim was to identify meaning Deaf and HEARING participants ascribed to Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community.

The study described Deaf and HEARING participants’ understandings of the place and meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in their work and lifeworlds as culturally fit and responsive practitioners. Two overarching aims of the study framed the inquiry.

- To interview 13 expert, credentialed interpreters; five in the first phase, five in the second phase, and three Deaf interpreters
- Through data analysis, to report themes from interviews which would inform the interpreting discipline about Deaf-World cultural competence of expert practitioners

Investigating meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds of expert interpreter participants was key in this inquiry. In order to discern meaning interpreters made of Deaf-World cultural competence, there were three phases to this inquiry. Phase one was a pilot study to discern the feasibility of research questions within a well-developed Deaf community. Phase two was an enhanced continuation of the pilot phase in a different location with a medium sized, less cohesive Deaf community. Phase three explored perceptions and attitudes of Deaf interpreter participants within the study.

Participants in the three phases represented similarly credentialed but distinctive groups of stakeholders in the ASL/English interpreting community: there were
HEARING interpreters contextualized within a large, well developed Deaf community; HEARING interpreters contextualized within a medium sized Deaf community; and Deaf interpreters contextualized within a large, well-developed Deaf community.

Data were cross-verified from three sources. In looking at themes across groups, when participants reported similar views regardless of the grouping, it helped to triangulate (Guion, 2002) data and answered research questions from three diverse, yet related perspectives. Triangulation of study data came in the forms of creation of pilot study themes in phase one as well as verification of themes in phases two and three. Data were analyzed throughout the inquiry as well as at the completion of interviews and transcription preparation. Table 9 illustrates phases of the inquiry followed by data analysis.

Data collection methods for all three phases included semi-structured interviews, lived experience currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006), field notes, and a Deaf peer debriefer to assist with data analysis. I asked phenomenologically based main and probe questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) in order to capture participants’ beliefs and attitudes about interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Participants answered main and probe questions prepared by the researcher and designed to be open ended, allowing participants to establish a currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) look at their experience as interpreters. Even though participants worked in divergent locales, as NAD-RID or RID endorsed and credentialed practitioners, homogeneity in narratives and sub-texts appeared in data due to interpreter lifeworlds, Deaf-World cultural knowledge, and shared experience as certified practitioners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase/Date</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase I/November 2010</td>
<td>Conducted pilot study, semi-structured face to face interviews with five expert hearing and one Deaf interpreter in large, well-developed Deaf community</td>
<td>Determined the feasibility of study idea; ASL/English interpreters possess dual cultural identity sufficient to warrant a study on the subject</td>
<td>Interviews videotaped, audiotaped, or combination</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Determined feasibility of continuing the study; pilot data incorporated into subsequent phases</td>
<td>2 HEARING participants chose to use ASL during interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II/January 2011 through July 2012</td>
<td>Conducted semi-structured face to face interviews with five expert HEARING interpreters in medium sized Deaf community</td>
<td>Continuation of pilot study with questions informed by pilot study themes and framed by Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional model</td>
<td>No interpreter chose to use ASL during interviews; One participant was interviewed, then passed away 4 months later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III/November 2010 through December 2012</td>
<td>Conducted semi-structured interviews of Deaf participants; one face to face; two via videophone; participants from large Deaf community</td>
<td>Continuation of study incorporating expert Deaf interpreters</td>
<td>Videotaped with no audio; Translations from ASL to written English; applied translation frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis December 2012 to May 2014</td>
<td>Data analysis by researcher and peer debriefer</td>
<td>Initial data analysis of phase one (pilot study) data and phase two/three incorporated Clandinin and Connelly (2002). Phase three data analysis included written English translated transcripts</td>
<td>Phase one informed phases two and three. Phase three data had similarities and differences to data in phases one and two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 13 participants represented interpreters who responded to an email invitation (see Appendix B) requesting assistance in a study about interpreters and Deaf-World cultural competence. The sample, a subset nested inside a larger set of interpreters, was stratified and purposive (Patton, 2002). Participant demographic information included gender, age, ethnicity, years of experience, certification(s) held, years certified, familial/linguistic affiliations, participant pseudonym (either chosen by the participant or assigned by the researcher), and other identifying characteristics of their choosing.

Participants, with the exception of one Deaf interpreter, met or exceeded criteria of expert interpreter status as described by Ericsson (2001). This Deaf participant who did not meet the 10-year time frame, but a six-year span, had actually been tangentially affiliated with the field for a longer period of time than six years. The perspective of the participant was valuable to the data set and she would be considered an expert for purposes of this inquiry and met most of Ericsson’s (2001) criteria for expertise.

Ericsson (2001) described experts in general, which included the following criteria: (a) would not attain superior performance as an incidental consequence of engaging in domain-related activity, but the continued improvement in performance over a decade; (b) would be engaged in highly structured activities designed to improve specific aspects of their performance (professional development as determined by RID); and (c) would encourage deliberate practice in the discipline in question (current working interpreter). The participants were active, working interpreter practitioners.

The Deaf-World and the subsequent interpreter community are somewhat small and intimate with members being familiar with each other in interpreting and social
circles. In order to keep information anonymous and confidential, it became necessary to forego traditional qualitative participant biographies and present information in aggregate. A Deaf participant interviewed during phase one’s biographical information is included in the section regarding Deaf interpreters. Information presented includes demographic information, Deaf-centric cross-cultural attributes, age of exposure to the Deaf-World, and multi-cultural characteristics of participants. Pronoun usage of various participants was changed in some circumstances.

Phase one participant ages ranged from 32–49 years with the mean participant age being 41.4 years. Four females and 1 male were represented by the following cultures: Caucasian (3), African-American, Caribbean Islander, Jewish-American (2), gay, Coda, and 2 participants with Deaf spouses. Participants had been interpreting from 10 to 25 years, with a mean number of years of interpreting at 17.6 years. Participants had been certified from 8–22 years with a mean of 15.4 years. All pilot study participants were from large, well-developed Deaf communities.

All participants had been exposed to Deaf-World citizens by age 19 and 5 out of 6 had been acquainted with d/Deaf people before the age of 14. One participant was introduced to the Deaf-World at a relatively young age by being in a school with deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstream educational setting. She reported it was serendipitous providential guidance to end up in the school district housing programs for deaf students, leading her to become an interpreter. Another participant reported having seen a group of Deaf people in a public place when she was around age 7. At that time,
she declared her desire to be involved in the Deaf-World, she and her parents acted on her hope, and she is a highly skilled and culturally responsive interpreter today.

Examples of salient Deaf-centric cross-cultural attributes of participants because of familial ties were numerous in this sample. Examples from a Coda participant included spending significant amounts of time on the grounds of a well-known Deaf school; had a Deaf identity at birth; had been Deaf parented leading to well-developed sociolinguistic and emotional well-being; and was committed to work within the Deaf-World because of positive lived experiences. A participant married to a Deaf spouse and active member of their respective Deaf community reported he had been mentored by well-known interpreters and Deaf-World members; had committed to being active within the Deaf community; had a Deaf adopted daughter and biological hearing sons and expressed concern about raising hearing sons who would be sensitive bilingual/bicultural individuals. Narrative examples of life in Deaf-centric households were rich with mindful consideration and important for study and emulation.

Other multi-culturally related characteristics included the following, one participant learned about the Deaf-World mostly within the African-American Deaf community; cultural and religious teachings had been influential in a Jewish participant’s experience as she expressed an inner joy in her choice of vocation and followed Jewish custom of the desire to make the world a better place; a participant was reared in a positively perceived dual environment, considered herself bicultural, and expressed binary identities organically; and an impactful event having to do with discrimination and oppression changed a participant for life due to recognition of marginalization of others.
Some unique aspects of cross-cultural interactions consisted of the following: two participants chose to conduct their interviews in ASL; even though we were behind closed doors and could have chosen spoken English, the participants chose ASL out of respect; one native bilingual/bicultural participant who presented from another L1/C1 sociolinguistic background other than English/American mainstream culture and knew about spoken language learning, applied those principles to learning ASL; one participant told of tension existing between hearing interpreters and Deaf individuals, rated her interaction within the Deaf-World low, considered herself a multilingual/ multicultural person, but did not spend significant amounts of time with Deaf people outside of work; and one participant reported that she was very involved in the Deaf-World because of how she was introduced to it and her continued, profound respect for the Deaf community and its citizens.

For subsequent interviews beyond phase one, I began creating a list by gathering names of potential participants as I presented at state affiliate chapters of RID and announced the need for study participants. From these events, and other email lists, in early 2012, I sent out several mass emails gauging interest in being interviewed. The first five interpreters to respond to the request, met criteria, and agreed on interview times and protocol were scheduled for interviews.

Phase two participants ranged in age from 35–62 years with the mean age of 46 years. One male and four female Caucasian interpreters made up the sample with a Coda, a Soda, and a HEARING interpreter married to a Deaf spouse. Participants had been interpreting from 16 to 31 years, with a mean number of years of interpreting at 23 years.
years. Participants had been certified a mean of 16.6 years. All phase two participants were from smaller to medium-sized Deaf communities.

All participants had been exposed to Deaf-World citizens by age 18 and four out of five had been acquainted with d/Deaf people before the age of nine. One participant was introduced to a deaf boy in the neighborhood who did not join in childhood play. Another reported seeing a deaf boy in the summer and the providential nature of her becoming an interpreter. The Soda participant recollected sitting at the kitchen table as a five year old, helping her deaf brother with his homework. Are these experiences coincidental or did they help lead these participants into the Deaf-World?

Deaf-centric cross-cultural attributes of participants in this sample came from familial related experiences including data from a Coda, Soda, and a participant with a Deaf spouse. Cross-cultural attributes evident from one Coda participant included having not only Deaf parents but various Deaf relatives as well. He remembered negative experiences taking on the interpreter role, recalled being different in school, rebelled and left home in confusion, and did not understand differences in his experiences until much later in life.

Another participant was a sibling of a Deaf adult (Soda), in a typical Deaf-World scenario, as most Deaf adults are reared in hearing families. She was designated the interpreter of the family because of her interest in and ability to understand explicit and implicit Deaf-World communication issues. This participant reported some fuzzy perceptions regarding interpreter Deaf-World involvement. She was not raised by Deaf parents, but was exposed to a Deaf person during critical language acquisition periods.
One participant was married to a Deaf person outside of her race. Being a second generation Western European, her own familial experience crossing cultures was substantial and facilitated her ability to develop Deaf-World cultural competence and to understand issues her spouse faced. She learned and spoke another foreign language fluently because of her lived experience with languages and cultures, which she applied to in-depth understanding of the Deaf-World.

Two participants reported multi-cultural experiences related to religious missionary contexts, one domestically and the other abroad. A Jehovah’s Witness participant was not initially interested in Deaf people when introduced to the Deaf community; however beliefs taught to him by his family and within a religious context helped to break through his resistance. This participant had an organic introduction to the Deaf-World, an authentic and deep affiliation with Deaf persons within his Jehovah’s Witness congregation, and later became an interpreter in the community. He credited his skills and bicultural abilities to this multi-layered association of Deaf friends, interpreting opportunities in multiple geographic locations, and his work within Jehovah’s Witness contexts.

A participant who had spent a significant amount of time on another continent with her missionary parents worked in a very challenging setting, as an elementary school interpreter, and took her role and work very seriously. As a young girl living abroad for many years with missionary parents, she said that her experience living in a foreign culture helped her later cross cultures into the Deaf-World. This participant passed away November of 2012 after a long battle with cancer. Her interview was rich with honesty
and detail about Deaf-World connections and disengagements. She felt that being involved within the Deaf community was requisite to being an exemplary interpreter and that the motivation to do so needed to come from within the interpreter. Seemingly a simple statement, it represented a powerful symbolic lesson. Uttered by one facing her own mortality, she realized, with some regret, that time had been a factor influencing decisions not to be more involved in the Deaf-World. She expressed gratitude to Deaf individuals for teaching her their language and accepting her into their community.

Phase three Deaf interpreter participants ranged in age from 27–53 years with the mean age being 39.3 years. Two males and one female represented this group with three Deaf Caucasian interpreters, including a Deaf Coda, a Deaf interpreter married to a Coda spouse, and a Deaf interpreter of multi-cultural background married to a Deaf spouse. Participants had been interpreting from 6 to 31 years, with a mean number of years of interpreting at 13.7 years. Participants had been certified from 2 to 21 years with a mean of 10.6 years. All phase three participants were from large Deaf communities.

There were less Deaf participants than anticipated and desired. I attempted to secure five interviews with CDI certification. Due to illness and life events, there ended up being three interviews of CDI interpreters. One Deaf participant was interviewed face to face in November 2010 and two Deaf participants were interviewed via video phone in December 2012.

All participants lived as Deaf-World citizens since birth, with one hailing from a generationally Deaf family and two from hearing families. All three had been educated in publicly run programs in local school districts, at times utilizing educational
interpreting services. Interestingly, each Deaf participant was reared in various, larger metropolitan areas with well-developed Deaf communities.

One participant often took on the role of interpreter between his Deaf parents and hearing siblings as they interfaced with the hearing world. When a hearing sibling interpreted for the family, this participant would re-interpret the message, making it clear, sufficiently amplified, and accurate. This participant had a unique set of positions vis-à-vis the Deaf-World, as a consumer of interpreting services, as an interpreter educator, and as an interpreter practitioner.

Another participant was the sole deaf person of a hearing family within a religious context. This participant traveled extensively abroad with her family and interpreted between them and foreign persons with whom they came into contact. She also acted as a bilingual/bicultural mediator in the educational settings with which she was affiliated. These experiences prepared and led her to achieve interpreting credentials as a CDI.

One participant who had not met criteria for expert status but had worked as an interpreter for six years and had been a CDI for two years hailed from a distinct multi-cultural background. He had used the services of interpreters all of his life as a deaf consumer and so his familiarity with the field was steeped in cognitive and metacognitive awareness. His multi-cultural intuition provided straightforward and at times astonishingly honest insights from a Deaf-centric perspective.

Below, an explanation of the inquiry framework shows how the three separate phases came together and provided the vast data set from which themes were found. Phase one details the pilot phase; phase two, the subsequent interviews with HEARING
participants; and phase three with Deaf participants. Phase one details an extensive plan in order to set the structure for subsequent phases.

**Phase One**

Phase one of the inquiry consisted of a pilot study with five HEARING interpreters and one Deaf interpreter. Initial contact with the director of interpreting services at a facility was done in order to gauge interpreter practitioner interest in the study. After sending out a mass email (see Appendix B), six interpreters responded: five hearing interpreters and one Deaf interpreter. The researcher utilized audio, video, or a combination of audio and video digital recording and interviewed five hearing and one Deaf interpreter. Probe questions posed to participants reflected expansions of research questions and asked participants to describe their interpreter journey through expression of a personal narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinar, 1975, 2006) in order to discern the feasibility of the topic. Transcript data were analyzed for initial themes and were categorized into a theoretical narrative framework by Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

**Probe Questions**

Research questions framed the overall inquiry and were expanded by supporting probe (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) questions. Participants were asked to fundamentally tell the stories of their lived experience in becoming interpreters. They also were asked questions about their experiences within the Deaf-World, as culturally competent practitioner experts as informed by Ericsson (2001) and their perspectives on Deaf-World cultural competence within the ASL/English interpreter discipline. Rubin and Rubin (2005) discussed how questions change during the interview process. Some main
questions were vague, wordy, and not understandable for some participants. Consequently, I created probe or sub-questions, which were more understandable. Questions posed included the following:

- Tell me about yourself and how you became an ASL/English interpreter.
- Tell me about your family constellation (often, I did not have to ask this question; participants naturally described familial relationships which brought out information related to cultural affiliations and various identities).
- Tell me about your interaction within the Deaf community.
- Describe your interactions with deaf/Deaf friends and how you feel within these contexts.
- Describe how you move between the Deaf and hearing worlds.
- How do you see hearing or HEARING interpreters, Codas, deaf and Deaf persons moving between the two worlds?

**Application of Clandinin and Connelly’s Three-Dimensional Model**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) presented narrative inquiry as an understanding of narrative as phenomena being studied as well as a method of inquiry. In seeking a framework that would mesh well with Pinar’s (1975, 2006) work regarding currere narrative, I incorporated Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional model, informed by Pinar’s work and aspects of phenomenology or lived experience.

Incorporating portions of Clandinin and Connelly’s three-dimensional model into this inquiry provided a vehicle to understand how participants made sense of the flow of experiences and actions in their lives (Schram, 2006).
Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) model looks at three dimensions of space by situating narrative within the following dimensions: (a) a temporal perspective represented by looking autobiographically into the past and speculating about the future; (b) a metacognitive reflection represented by looking inward and outward; and (c) a contextualized perspective by exploring a topic as it exists in space and time. Themes were categorized and framed by each of the three portions of the dimensions of space by exploring five areas inherent in the model: (a) past; (b) present/future; (c) reflection inwardly; (d) reflection outwardly; and (e) reflection within a particular context or space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As interpreters told their stories, they described the behaviors, attitudes, and values they embraced, those they rejected, those that led to successful interactions in the Deaf-World, and actions they felt had been questionable regarding both their own and others’ professional behaviors.

Pilot study themes, framed and informed by Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional model of space, led to the development of five supportive categories to help focus the inquiry. The narrative inquiry theoretical framework allowed for the development of a series of categories reflecting pilot study themes, guiding participants’ comments, and anchoring their stories in specific contexts. Expert interpreters reflected, discussed their cross-cultural journey, and characterized the field in general. The use of principles from Pinar’s (1975, 2006) concept of currere narrative, as well as emancipatory disability research, helped to frame the inquiry as culturally sensitive to stakeholders and to the marginalized minority status (Sullivan, 2009) of the Deaf-World. Each of the five questions pointed toward the overarching aim, to identify meaning 13
Deaf and hearing working interpreter participants ascribed to ASL/English interpreter
Deaf-World cultural competence. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) model framed data
from three dimensions, which in turn were expanded into five areas of situational
reflection, \textit{backward, forward, inward, outward,} and \textit{situated in place} (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000) and provided a framework and cohesion to the vast data set.

\textbf{Backward.} Pilot study participants naturally discussed their lived experiences.
A currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) reflection of participants’ past generated the following
thematic question: \textit{How did your past biographical context contribute to the
understanding of characteristics of interpreters as culturally competent ASL/English
practitioners?} Through this question, I sought to understand how interpreters’ past life
experiences shaped and continue to shape self-perceptions as Deaf-World culturally
competent professionals. The question provided an opportunity to explore the temporal
and spatial boundaries as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and gave
participants a chance to explore their own lived experience. The question also provided a
bridge into insight regarding events (Badiou, 2006), both in and outside of their control,
which may have influenced their trajectories and decisions to work in the Deaf-World.

\textbf{Forward.} Questions posed to participants sought to elicit a present and future
look at participant views regarding Deaf-World cultural competence and beneficial
examples worthy of paying forward as advice for colleagues. The question consisted of
the following: \textit{What are examples of ASL/English interpreter expert Deaf-World cultural
competence you have experienced?} This question subtly focused participant attention on
the forward dimension of space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) by asking for salient
illustrations of interpreter Deaf-World culturally competent behaviors. The data provided by participants would offer examples of Deaf-World cultural competence that could be emulated by other interpreters.

Inward. I explored participants’ inward dimension of space by presenting a question probing deeper reflection: *In what ways, as a Deaf-World interpreter expert, do you reflect upon Deaf-World cultural competence and how it impacts interpreting work?* With this question, I hoped to gain an understanding of how participants felt about their own and others’ Deaf-World cultural competence and cross-cultural identities. By looking inward, I hoped to gain understanding into participants’ insightful reflections about what it means to be a practitioner who is culturally competent in the Deaf-World. The question served to draw out deeper reflection and understanding of qualities and dispositions that Deaf-World interpreters valued in themselves and possibly others as culturally competent practitioners.

Outward. The outward question looked at how interpreters view their roles as cross-cultural mediators in various contexts in which they may find themselves: *How have you as an interpreter expert understood and responded to various contextual messages you have received as a Deaf-World culturally competent practitioner?* This question assisted me in understanding how participants view themselves in response to the multiple and sometimes competing discourses regarding the role of interpreter. What were the expectations of a culturally competent practitioner from a variety of interpreter stakeholder perspectives such deaf, Deaf, Coda, hearing, and HEARING?
**Situated in place.** The final sub-question in support of the overarching research question was situated in place and asked about specific places where participants work:

*What challenges and supports did you feel you have, within the places, spaces and contexts you work, as you acted on your understandings of Deaf-World cultural competence?* This question assisted me in understanding the context in which participant stories were positioned. The question led to further understanding of how context serves to support or challenge interpreters as they negotiated their understanding of Deaf-World cultural competence. There were differences noted between interpreters who worked in various locations.

Questions reflected salient themes from the pilot study and guided participants to reflect on their position in the Deaf-World. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) model facilitated the inquiry by providing a frame to help categorize pilot data responses and to set the tone for the ways questions were posed in phases two and three. This model helped to draw out well-rounded reflection of the research questions. Data from phases one, two, and three were merged to create the main body of the study related to levels of cross-cultural competence, perspectives on the field and practitioners in general, and sensitive issues between interpreters and d/Deaf constituents.

When asked to tell personal stories framed by the above questions, participants provided rich narratives of entrée into the Deaf-World and eventually the ASL/English interpreting discipline. After analyzing pilot study data, it was found that lived experience narratives were natural ways to elicit characteristics of participants’ Deaf-World cross-cultural journeys and adapted well to qualitative methodology. Expert
interpreters’ cross-cultural pilot data produced themes, and familiar trajectories within the
discipline of ASL/English interpreting, and was a natural fit within a narrative inquiry
model from Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Questions generated from Clandinin and
Connelly’s (2000) framework were invaluable in this inquiry.

**Pilot Study Themes**

Data sets were extensive and rich with salient points about Deaf-World cultural
competence. After consultation with advisors, the study was deemed feasible. The
following themes emerged in phase one, the pilot phase, and were used to frame
subsequent portions of the inquiry:

- Events, life experiences, connections, and intentional action in the Deaf-World
  are requisite in developing cultural competence and helped to lead participants
to become interpreters; interpreters as ‘reorganized hearing people.’
- Issues related to Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009), Deaf gain, audism, and
  interpreter ‘heat’ and the joy of Deaf-World affiliation (naches) were given
  consideration.
- Intentional reflection (including the alleged love/hate relationship between
  interpreters and Deaf people) is required to achieve higher levels of cultural
  competence.
- Developing and maintaining Deaf-World cultural competence is not simple, is
time consuming and requires knowing one’s positionality (Cokely, 2005) vis-à-
vis the Deaf-World; some interpreters seem to have a cross-cultural ‘it’ factor.
• Context matters when developing Deaf-World cultural competence and can be instrumental in supporting or subtracting from one’s lived experience as an ASL/English practitioner.

Themes from phase one data illustrated participants’ lived experience and trajectories into the Deaf-World. Participants’ lived experience fit the multiple angles inherent within the three dimensional model by Clandinin and Connelly (2000); a temporal perspective represented by looking backward and forward; mindful reflection represented by looking inward and outward; and a contextualized perspective by looking at interpreter as situated in place. After the pilot study, I felt the need to frame questions within a theoretical framework and found Clandinin and Connelly’s three-dimensional model intersected with Curriculum Studies theory (Pinar, 1975, 2006) as well as phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990).

**Phase Two**

Phase two of the inquiry was conducted between January 2011 and July 2012 in face-to-face interviews with five HEARING participants from an area in the Midwest. Probe questions reflected pilot study themes merged with pilot study probe questions for consistency in the currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) nature of participants’ lived experience narratives.

Data collection methods for the second phase included semi-structured interviews, lived experience currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006), field notes, and a Deaf peer debriefer to assist with data analysis. I asked phenomenologically based main and probe questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) informed by pilot study data. Participants answered main
and probe questions prepared by the researcher and designed to be open ended, allowing participants to establish a currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) look at their experience as an interpreter. Even though participants worked in different locales than participants in phase one, as NAD-RID or RID endorsed and credentialed practitioners, homogeneity in narratives and sub-texts appeared in data due to Deaf-World cultural knowledge, similar lifeworlds, and shared experience as certified practitioners.

Probe questions for phase two consisted of the following:

- Tell me about yourself and how you became an ASL/English interpreter.
- Tell me about your family constellation (often, I did not have to ask this question; participants naturally described familial relationships which brought out information related to cultural affiliations and various identities).
- Tell me about your interaction within the Deaf community.
- Describe your interactions with deaf/Deaf friends and how you feel within these contexts.
- Describe how you move between the Deaf and hearing worlds; are you ‘reorganized’ as a hearing person?
- How do you see hearing or HEARING interpreters, Codas, deaf, and Deaf persons moving between the two worlds. Do some interpreters seem to have a bicultural ‘it’ factor?
- Describe interpreter ‘heat’ or the controversy surrounding interpreters in the Deaf-World. What does this mean to you?
● Describe the love/hate relationship that seems to exist between interpreters and Deaf people.

● Describe the joy or ‘naches’ you feel by your affiliation with the Deaf community.

No HEARING participants in phase two requested to conduct their interview in ASL. Consequently, all transcripts were typed from spoken, recorded English to written English.

**Phase Three**

Phase three of the inquiry was conducted between November 2010 and December 2012 in one face-to-face interview and two video phone interviews with three Deaf participants from a large metropolitan area. Probe questions reflected pilot study themes and were merged with pilot study probe questions for consistency in the currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) nature of participants’ lived experience narratives.

Data collection methods for phase three included semi-structured interviews, lived experience currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006), and field notes to assist with data analysis. I asked phenomenologically based main and probe questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) informed by pilot study data. Participants answered main and probe questions prepared by the researcher and designed to be open ended, allowing participants to establish a currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) look at their experiences as interpreters. Even though participants worked in different locales than participants in phase two, as NAD-RID or RID endorsed and credentialed practitioners, homogeneity in narratives and sub-texts
often appeared in data due to Deaf-World cultural knowledge and shared experience as certified practitioners.

Probe questions for phase three were similar to phase two questions, consisted of the following questions, and contained some modifications for Deaf participants:

• Tell me about yourself and how you became an ASL/English interpreter.
• Tell me about your family constellation (often, I did not have to ask this question; participants naturally described familial relationships which brought out information related to cultural affiliations and various identities).
• Tell me about your interaction within the Deaf community.
• Describe how you move between the Deaf and hearing worlds.
• How do you see hearing or HEARING interpreters, Codas, deaf and Deaf persons moving between the two worlds; are hearing interpreters ‘reorganized’ as HEARING persons? Do some interpreters seem to have a bicultural ‘it’ factor?
• Describe interpreter ‘heat’ or the controversy surrounding interpreters in the Deaf-World. What does this mean to you?
• Describe the love/hate relationship that seems to exist between interpreters and Deaf people.
• Describe the joy or ‘naches’ interpreters feel by affiliation with the Deaf community.

Some questions with Deaf participants were added in phase three and those questions appear below.
• Do you consider yourself bicultural as a Deaf person?

• Describe your relationship with written English.

• Describe your relationship to books and reading written English?

• Biculturalism and interpreting—describe some of the relationships

All Deaf participants in phase three conducted their interviews in ASL.

Consequently, all transcripts were typed from ASL to written English.

**Methods of Data Collection**

**Interviews**

Interviews occurred between November 2010 and December 2012 and were conducted by the writer of this document, Leah Subak. Expertise criteria, according to Ericsson (2001), was evident, with exceptions, in all interviewees: participants, (a) had not attained superior performance as an incidental consequence of engaging in domain-related activity; (b) attained superior performance via the continued improvement in performance over a decade (with the exception of one Deaf participant); (c) had been engaged in highly structured activities designed to improve specific aspects of performance (professional development as determined by RID professional development CEUs); and (d) had been engaged in deliberate practice in the discipline in question (current working interpreter). Ericsson’s (2001) attributes were marked by ASL/English interpreter participants who exhibited the following:

• Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf/National Association of the Deaf (RID/NAD) full certification
- Fulfillment of professional development requirements of RID/NAD certification
- Engagement in the field as a working practitioner for 10 plus years

I conducted one semi-structured interview (Merriam, 1998) per participant during the data collection phase. Merriam discussed less structured formats in order to capture respondents’ characterization of the world in their own fluid, distinctive ways. Participants were generally not available or did not respond to email follow-ups after the initial interview.

I incorporated Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) responsive interview model to conduct interviews because of the emphasis on interviewer/interviewee relationship, respect for participants as individuals, depth of understanding, and flexible design. From a social constructivist and phenomenological perspective, the responsive interview distinction was important as it allowed for the following: I had the flexibility to form interview questions that were significant to each participant’s individual experiences; the formation of in-depth understanding of participant stories was evident; and participants had a chance to convey their understanding of professional work and cultural competence as influenced by personal stories and current contexts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In the next section, I provide explanations of data analysis, ethics, trustworthiness, reflexivity, and limitations related to the study.

**Data Analysis**

With the amount of interview data collected, it was necessary to comb through information, categorize data, add memos (Schram, 2006), look for patterns (Merriam,
2002) to discern themes within participant interviews. In narrative inquiry, transition from field texts to research texts is a significant component (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Field texts included transcribed interviews and typed field notes from observations. Research texts differ from field texts in that they are borne out of repetitive, reflexive questioning concerning substantive elements of the text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I spent significant time reading, listening, watching, and revisiting field texts throughout the research process. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested using interim texts between field texts and research texts. I used interim texts in documenting emerging ideas that provided strategies to develop themes and major propositions. There were benefits to analysis during data collection processes which include using information collected as a guide to frame subsequent questions and to clarify further discussion (Creswell, 2007). I was able to utilize the above strategies as I formed questions from the pilot phase to ask during the subsequent phases of the inquiry.

In looking at transcribed interviews and field notes, I coded data, paid attention to emerging themes, and used categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995) to organize and analyze commonalities within and between participants. By using categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995), I paid close attention to the following things: I noticed common as well as exceptional descriptions interpreters provided about cultural competence; characteristics of crossing cultures as professional practitioners; significant influences interpreters identified which guided them to cross-cultural encounters; reflections of the above; and other emerging ideas through the telling of their lived experiences. Data were abundant, so focusing themes and setting aside other concepts and issues (Miles & Huberman,
1994) was necessary for information management. Participant narratives shared similar trajectories and themes, and I went through each narrative, created headings for responses, and put them into categories.

After identifying significant themes, I focused my attention on personal narratives, or currere narratives (Pinar, 1975, 2006) of each participant. Personal narratives of each participant framed by the three dimensions of space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) allowed me to be able to better understand themes in participants’ experiences in crossing cultures. Stake’s (1995) direct interpretation allowed me to more closely examine instances that particularly stood out as being significant for individual participants, pulling themes apart and putting them back together until meaning emerged from the data. I then went through a similar recursive process with the peer debriefer, discussed themes, and moved closer to meaning within the data. After lengthy discussions including assessment of categories, we further reduced data, created higher order themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), incorporated theory and findings from Deaf-World and other research.

**Ethics**

During initial meetings with participants, I explained my interest in this research, my personal background as an interpreter, and the procedures I planned to use during the research process. I explained ways their identity would be protected throughout the research project and the fact that they were free to decline from participation in the study at any time. After an initial email sent to a list of interpreters, I asked interested
individuals to indicate their willingness to participate by replying to email correspondence.

In studying interpreters’ understanding of Deaf-World cultural competence and connection in the Deaf community, it was important that I protect the identity of interpreters, since the Deaf and interpreter worlds are very intimate. Pseudonyms assigned by the participants themselves on the demographic survey or that I assigned were used to protect their identity as data were analyzed but do not appear in this document. Some location and institution names were changed and other information otherwise masked to protect participant identities to prevent readers from making identifying connections. Participant documents, audio and video taped conversations, and field notes were kept on file with names removed and pseudonyms in place.

Participants may have derived benefits by being involved in this research. Benefits could have been manifested in participants by how they understood their own past biographical contexts; how they understood their current contexts vis-à-vis cross-cultural contact; and how cultural competence had been shaped and continues to be shaped by deeper reflection. I still have contact with some of the participants and offered assistance to them as applicable and appropriate. Reciprocity is a value in Deaf-World culture as well as a professional and ethical obligation and in some interviews, I assisted interpreters by information sharing when requested by participants.

**Trustworthiness**

Participants were vulnerable in the sense that they divulged personal information for the sake of contributing data to our shared field. It was important to maintain
trustworthiness in information sharing so as not to subject participants to undue scrutiny or hostility of colleagues and/or Deaf community members. Several participants requested I not divulge certain pieces of information and/or to turn off the recording devices for a portion of the interview. To affirm research trustworthiness, I used portions of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) paradigm for establishing trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, and reflexivity.

Credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) shows that the researcher has pursued and presented multiple constructions adequately including reconstructions by conducting the study in a credible fashion and seeking approval from the constructors of the multiple realities being studied. I affirmed trustworthiness by using peer examination/debriefing, and member checks as suggested by Creswell (2007). Transcripts were sent to participants asking them to check for mistakes, misunderstandings, or what they perceived as errors in the document. These processes were especially important with the translations of Deaf interpreter interviews.

Peer examination/debriefing (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998) occurred by sharing data and emerging assertions with committee members and the Deaf peer debriefer. Debriefing sessions occurred periodically throughout the data collecting and analysis stages in a number of ways: I met with a former committee member, on campus in an isolated area to ensure privacy and confidentiality; and debriefing sessions with the Deaf peer debriefer were conducted in person and via videophone. The Deaf peer debriefer and I created expanded themes from the initial iteration of themes found.
I used member checking (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998) by sending transcripts to participants. I shared transcribed interviews with each participant in order to check for accuracy and to invite their comments. This allowed participants to correct errors, clarify intentions, and provide feedback on emerging assertions. I corresponded with participants via email using an email address created only for this study. I had minimal follow-up contact from participants. With the 459 pages of participant field text data, I felt I had sufficient information for this study. It would have been helpful to have more contact with participants; however it was difficult to expect participants to be available. I felt I had sufficient data with which to work.

Transferability of this research relies on thick description of the topic, which allows the reader to conceptualize assertions of cultural competence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher cannot determine the external validity of an inquiry. The researcher is the instrument through which data is passed. The reader is able to conclude what he or she gleans from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of the study was to investigate expert Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter participants’ lived experiences regarding meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreters. The research focused on Deaf-World interpreter practitioners and their understandings of cultural competence in their own contexts. Information gathered may be useful to other similar or dissimilar disciplines.

**Reflexivity**

Schram (2006) described reflexivity as awareness and sensitivity to the self and the other plus the exchange between the aforementioned parties during the research
process. To be more reflective and to write more reflexively means to be conscious of how I represent myself, in other words, my positionality in the research and how I tell the story of the other (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). I was charged to be vigilant and aware of my perspectives and assumptions regarding Deaf-World interpreter cultural competence and it was important that I documented and reviewed my own understanding throughout the research process. I kept an online journal to record personal thoughts and stories and to reflect on how these thoughts informed my understanding of this research. The online journal was used to reflect on how these data may help me to refine my thinking about past and future experiences as an interpreter, as well as to reflect on my own Deaf-World cultural competence.

By keeping a reflexive journal, I have a repository allowing me to describe biases, values, events, and stories. Reflection brings thoughts to a more conscious level, with the possibility that these ideas become more accessible to the readers of my research. Before beginning data collection I wrote in the reflexive journal about my experiences as an ASL/English interpreter, my beliefs about my role as a Deaf-World practitioner, and my own professional identity. I wrote in the journal and on occasion returned to it to read how my understanding transformed as the research progressed.

**Limitations**

Thirteen expert participants across multiple sites in the U.S. represented a limited sample for several reasons. The sample included participants from two general geographic locations: interpreters from a site considered a highly prestigious area for interpreters and interpreters from a location in the Midwest. Interpreters not considered
experts (Ericsson, 2001) were not represented in the sample. I wanted to concentrate on exemplary, prototypical interpreters for this initial study and subsequently study other groupings of interpreters in the future such as Codas, L2 interpreters, interpreters of color, recent graduates of IEPs, and d/Deaf community members.

Another limitation of this study was an unequal representation of four male and nine female practitioners, and low representation of interpreters of diverse ethnicity or race. Numbers seemingly skewed by a higher number of females were offset by the fact that the interpreting field is still a female dominated profession (Cokely & Cogen, 2012). A diverse sample is somewhat represented, in that there are four male practitioners, four interpreters of diverse race/ethnicity, interpreters of various ages (27–62 years of age), three heritage language speakers (Codas), as well as four interpreters with d/Deaf partners or spouses.

**Summary**

This interpretive qualitative study of 13 Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter practitioners’ understanding and negotiation of Deaf-World cultural competence was significant for three reasons. The three salient points related to emphasizing interpreter voice, highlighting culture in pedagogy and prioritizing Deaf interpreters’ perspectives.

First, ASL/English interpreter practitioners are a unique group on which to spotlight Deaf-World cultural competence, making room for them to speak for themselves. The skill set of interpreters should include bilingual and bicultural competencies (Bienvenu, 1987; Cokely, 2005; Philip, 1986; Sherwood, 1987). However, Smith (1996) stated most professional interpreters are neither really bilingual nor
biculural and Grosjean (2008) stated bilingual individuals are not necessarily bicultural and vice versa. I desired to describe to the best of my ability, the Deaf-World cultural competence of expert study participants via their voice to discern their views on the topic.

Second, cultural teaching is challenging to accomplish and seems to be underrepresented in IEPs (Philip, 1986; Rasmussen, 2012). Beginning a dialogue on how to incorporate cultural information into the IEP curriculum would benefit IEP faculty. A qualitative study incorporating expert interpreter voice as they discussed their lived experience of Deaf-World cultural competence may contribute to IEP pedagogy.

Third, a qualitative study incorporating expert Deaf interpreter voice discussing Deaf-World cultural competence of interpreters is important. The culturally Deaf voice must have a place in the curriculum of IEPs. There has been a dearth of Deaf culture information in IEPs (Philip, 1986) and no group is better able to represent the Deaf voice than Deaf expert interpreters.

Stuard (2008) found that Deaf consumers perceive that interpreters will attain linguistic fluency and understanding of diversity in the Deaf community by exposure to Deaf-World culture and hearing interpreters do not perceive that cultural affiliation with the Deaf-World will necessarily improve interpreting skills. Stuard’s findings about the perceptions of Deaf individuals and of hearing interpreters seem to be mutually exclusive, in that, seemingly, Deaf people and interpreters see the acquisition of interpreting skills from two differing points of view. This third issue, if accurate, presents a problem in the ASL/English interpreting discipline and does not give weight to the indigenous Deaf voice (Cokely, 2005). Grosjean’s (1982) premise about bilingualism
not necessarily assuming biculturalism comes into play as well, because there may be
cjecture that learning a second language inherently ensures one will learn a second
culture. In the ASL/English interpreting discipline, cultural knowledge of working
languages is assumed (RID, 2013), but this topic requires continuing empirical study.

Deaf-World cultural competence is socially co-constructed and it is important to
realize the potential of d/Deaf and hearing interpreter partnership as key players in that
co-construction (McDermid, 2009a). There are multiple and sometimes competing
discourses of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Narratives of culturally
competent Deaf-World interpreters are understood within the interstitial (Bhabha, 1994)
cultural spaces of each individual practitioner where they are enacted or rejected. As
such, I conducted an interpretive qualitative study to investigate, what are interpreter
experst experiences regarding the significance of Deaf-World cultural competence
in the lifeworlds and work of interpreter practitioners?
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the National Association of the Deaf, the Conference of Interpreter Trainers, the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education, the National Distance Learning Center for Interpreter Education, and other entities have assisted in establishing standards or standard practice from which the discipline of ASL/English interpreting derives its framework. Within rhetoric, reality and standards of practice of the above mentioned entities, culture, cross-cultural issues, and interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence have been situated.

This study addressed the scarce representation of expert HEARING and Deaf participant voice in the qualitative description of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. The expert participants were mindful (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) of the Deaf-World, ASL, their work, and cross-cultural issues. Cultural competence of ASL/English interpreters has been deemed important (Bienvenu, 1987; Fant, 1990; Philip, 1986; Sherwood, 1987), but studied minimally (Rasmussen, 2012) and is in need of additional exploration. The purpose of the study was to investigate the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lived experience of expert Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter participants. The overarching aim was to identify meaning Deaf and hearing participants assigned to HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community. This study was conducted with credentialed and experienced Deaf and hearing interpreters and sought to address the lack of HEARING and Deaf interpreter
qualitative representation in descriptions of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Data from HEARING and Deaf participants were analyzed, contrasted, juxtaposed, and reported in aggregate to describe perspectives of expert interpreter participants.

Interpreter participants’ currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) accounts of life within the Deaf-World provided the lived experience framework from which these findings were constructed. The researcher, being a Deaf-World interpreter, had a vested interest in the topic (Moustakas, 1990) and unique position from which to conduct this inquiry. Significant statements, themes, and the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) were derived from the data via the application of inductive reasoning, encouraging the future development of theory where none currently exists (Fox, 2008).

The general steps in data analysis consisted of the following: there was the data preparation phase with audio and/or video recording of interviews; transcript preparation included translation if necessary; data winnowing and coding (Creswell, 2007); meetings with the peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) via VP, other video interfaces and face to face; and continuation of the data reduction phase, where multiple iterations of focused coding and naming of themes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) led to finding a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Through the coding of characteristics and the emergence of patterned regularities, I was led to recognition of thematic representations and a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) derived from research questions and described below.

Research questions, significant statements, themes, and the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) appear in Figure 3. Two main research questions guided the inquiry.
Figure 3. Significant statements, themes and essence of the phenomenon
Research question one consisted of two parts and regarded characteristics of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence from Deaf and HEARING perspectives. Research question two was a global perspective about meaning and lived experience of experts in the field as they reflected on interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Significant statements (Creswell, 2007) emerged after data reduction (Wolcott, 1994). Significant statements (Creswell, 2007) were further reduced and informed themes for research questions one A, one B, and two. The essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) emerged through collapsing and analyzing themes. Expert participants described becoming HEARING as including co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or alliance.

The Deaf community’s presence, endurance, and gatekeeping were characteristics described within data. Participants described connections to their respective Deaf communities via collaborative alliances and continued affiliation with local and global Deaf-World citizens. Systems of alliance and affiliation described were Deaf-centric and born out of co-constructed community and cultural connections as participants described interpreter transformations from hearing to HEARING. The connections, managed by combinations of local and global entities and individual and collective dynamics, served as entrée into Deaf communities. Figure 3 shows the sequencing of significant statements and themes culminating in the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) of how participants described Deaf-World affiliation or alliance. The schematic above illustrated the extent of data reduction and sequencing in order to draw out the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) represented inside the tip of the triangle.
Research Question One Significant Statements and Themes

Research question one was bifurcated to include two groups of ASL/English interpreters. The same basic question was posed to HEARING and Deaf participants with different adjectives describing hearing status. The two related queries were research question one A for HEARING participants and research question one B for Deaf participants.

Research question one A consisted of the following: What characteristics did HEARING expert practitioners describe about their understandings, perceptions, and attitudes regarding Deaf-World cultural competence in their lifeworlds as ASL/English interpreters? Characteristics and patterns corresponding to research question one A were derived from reduction of the data set (Wolcott, 1994) of all HEARING participants. HEARING interviewees described significant statements by demonstrating the following attributes: they collectively demonstrated authentic bicultural affiliations; all had formative experiences leading to ASL/English interpreting work; they recognized Deaf/hearing power differentials, complexities, and tension; they recognized Deaf-gain; and participants demonstrated amenability regarding critical reflection, enthusiasm, respect, fidelity, intentional decision-making and actions. The reduced theme from research question one A was HEARING participants avowed Deaf-World affiliation/alliance and ascribed efficacy to the Deaf-World. Hearing participants became HEARING as they asserted their desire to be part of the Deaf-World and ascribed status to the Deaf-World as a viable entity with which one may affiliate or ally. Participants described the avowal of Deaf community connection as one of the initiating steps of their Deaf-World journey.
Research question one B consisted of the following: What characteristics did Deaf expert practitioners describe about their understandings, perceptions, and attitudes regarding Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds as ASL/English interpreters? Characteristics and patterns corresponding to research question one B were derived from reduction of the data set (Wolcott, 1994) of all Deaf participants. Deaf interviewees described the following significant statements: participants demonstrated authentic bicultural affiliations; formative experiences leading to ASL/English interpreter work; descriptions of HEARING interpreters’ culturally competent fit and unfit actions; tensions among interpreters and Deaf persons; intentional decision making; and reflections about HEARING interpreters’ connections to the Deaf-World.

The reduced theme from research question one B was Deaf participants avowed Deaf-World affiliation/alliance, ascribed efficacy to the Deaf-World, and ascribed conditional interpreter affiliation or alliance. Deaf participants’ avowed and ascribed the efficacy of the Deaf-World as a viable entity with which one could be allied. They also avowed a Deaf identity and had formed an alliance with the Deaf-World. With a Deaf identity intact, and the Deaf-World as a viable cultural entity, Deaf participants described the position from which they are able to ascribe conditional status to ASL/English interpreters. Conditional ascription status on a variety of levels is a complicated process managed by Deaf-World citizens and a coveted, sometimes fragile position to attain as reported by most of the HEARING participants.
Research Question Two Significant Statements, Theme, and Essence of the Phenomenon

Research question two consisted of the following global query: What are Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners? The theme of research question two resulted from assimilation of themes from research question one and two, with emphasis on descriptions of Deaf-World avowals and ascriptions. Significant statements related to research question two consisted of the following: Participants described a tacit, Deaf-centric, culturally responsive, collectively managed organic system of reflexive cross-cultural avowal and ascription co-constructed between HEARING interpreters and Deaf communities. This dynamic system serves as entrée into the Deaf-World through community gatekeeping. Processes lead to fluid and conditional development, at various levels, of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Reducing (Wolcott, 1994) data from significant statements of research question two led to the development of the theme of co-constructed community and cultural connections described by and evident between Deaf persons and HEARING interpreters in the Deaf-World.

The combined avowals and ascriptions described by Deaf and HEARING participants pointed to the co-constructed nature of community and cultural connections enacted between the two groups. The co-constructed community and cultural connections theme was described in participants’ narratives in the form of enactment of actions/interactions between Deaf and HEARING people.
Findings identified meaning expert Deaf and HEARING participants assigned to HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and individuals of the Deaf community. In research question one A and B, HEARING and Deaf participants described avowal and ascriptions processes they perceived in cross-cultural interactions in the Deaf-World. In research question two, descriptions from all participants provided an overarching narrative of how hearing people become HEARING interpreters including an explanation of co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation and alliance. Discussion appears below for research questions, including analysis of significant statements (Creswell, 2007), and themes. Summary of each question culminated in the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) of this inquiry.

**Analysis of Research Question One**

Even though research question one A was written for HEARING participants and part B written for Deaf participants, the focus of the inquiry explored Deaf-World cultural competence of HEARING participants only. HEARING participants described their lived experiences related to Deaf-World cultural competence as ASL/English interpreters and occasionally commented on the field and interpreters in general. Deaf participants described their bi- and multicultural backgrounds and experiences first. They then turned their attention to descriptions of the state of Deaf-World cultural competence of ASL/English HEARING practitioners. At times, Deaf participants would comment on the field in general or gave examples, as Deaf interpreters, of experiences interfacing with HEARING ASL/English interpreters.
Research question one A included asking HEARING participants about notable and significant cross-cultural attributes associated with American Mainstream (AM) culture and other cultural affiliations. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

*HEARING Participants’ Cross-Cultural Attributes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>Initiated D-W Entrée?</th>
<th>Welcomed by D-W?</th>
<th>Active today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>N (Coda)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Af-Am</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Car Is</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>N (Coda)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>It Am</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>JW*</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Soda</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J**</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>So Af</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Jehovah’s Witnesses
**deceased

All participants possessed American mainstream cultural affiliation and many claimed it as their C1; however some participants could arguably claim another culture as a C1 (those born into a Deaf family, African-American, etc.). All participants lived or were affiliated with a prominent C2 and possible C3, a surprising attribute I did not
expect to find. Participant C2 or C3 status could be argued or positioned differently, but lengthy explanation of participant cultural background is outside the scope of the inquiry.

Research question one A explored the understandings, perceptions, and attitudes of HEARING participants. In an effort to manage participant narratives, data reduction (Wolcott, 1994) was facilitated through application of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) model. The following Clandinin and Connelly (2000) attributes were incorporated into data analysis. The outward aspect examined participants’ bicultural contexts. The backward aspect explored past formative biographical experiences. Forward asked participants to provide cross-cultural advice, for example reporting information about power differentials and Deaf-gain. The situated in place aspect explored interpreter work contexts and the inward aspect provided an opportunity for reflection.

In lifeworlds and work contexts, participants had been profoundly exposed to authentic, indigenous cultures, in addition to American mainstream culture, as seen in Table 10. Cultural affiliations consisted of the following: three participants had Deaf-World affiliation; one participant was African-American; one participant was Italian-American; one participant was from a Caribbean Island; two participants were Jewish-American; one participant was reared in South Africa; and one participant was raised within a Jehovah’s Witness context. Arguably Jehovah’s Witnesses may not be viewed as a separate culture. Discussion of the topic of religious groups as sub-cultures or micro-cultures is outside the scope of this inquiry.

Participants in the study reflected on and described their individual bi- and multicultural contexts as part of their lived experience. Participants illustrated authentic,
adaptable and familiar Deaf-World and other bi- and multicultural contexts. Cultural affiliations were considered authentic because they were examples of viable co-cultures in America. The cultural contexts were adaptable because all participants reported successfully living with multiple cultures in daily life. Some of the cultural contexts were familiar Deaf-World situations, with two Coda participants and one Soda interviewee. Three participants were married to Deaf spouses and one had a former Deaf partner, also not unusual circumstances in the Deaf-World. Participants reported significant and authentic continuing bicultural experiences and affiliations.

All participants reported deep friendships, relationships and/or spending time within the Deaf-World. Examples of spending time in the Deaf-World consisted of attendance at Deaf events, supporting the Deaf community in various causes, religious settings, Deaf sporting events, vacations, gathering for meals in someone’s home or restaurants, and so forth. Basically, participants described their lives as American citizens, including time spent with people who happen to be d/Deaf. Many of the examples were not out of the ordinary and were similar to everyday interactions people have with friends and loved ones. Exceptions of atypical events included occasions where a civil rights-related cause was the major focus of the interaction.

One participant expressed her preference for interactions in the Deaf-World. She described the pull of the Deaf-World in her life, explaining her connection to the Deaf community overpowering a significant hearing value of music/singing.

I have some friends who don’t sign . . . but here in this area, I don’t have any friends who don’t si . . . who are not involved . . . I also sing, so when I was at the
University of XXXX I was in a singing group . . . and when I came here, I sought that out, and I found a group, and I loved that group, but at the same time, they weren’t, it’s not, my people. You know what I mean? I still love them, and I see them once in a while, and it’s a wonderful reunion and I feel a lot of love for them, but not . . . I just don’t feel the same way, it’s my Deaf community friends, hearing or deaf.

Within the local, regional, national, and international Deaf-World, there are many organizations and events in which one may participate such as the National Association of the Deaf, the World Federation of the Deaf, and Deaflympics, to name a few (Lane et al., 1996). Below is an example from a participant as she described a typical Deaf-World sporting event to which she is connected with her husband, and described the intense level of involvement and motivation to spend time in that setting.

There is that desire . . . to be in the Deaf, in the community . . . I know I am going to be having too much fun, I won’t want to leave . . . its Deaf community football . . . we’re not going to want to disengage from that.

Situated within cultural contexts is the concept of time and how time is utilized. Participants described the amounts of time spent in the Deaf-World and/or the hearing world. Four HEARING interpreters described spending the majority of their time outside of work with hearing persons. Out of the four, two of those participants commented on the fragile nature of the Deaf community in their geographic area leading to not spending much quality time within the Deaf-World.
Two participants reported intentionality in the amounts of time not spent within the Deaf-World and described their experiences. The comments below represent inconsistencies in the data set in that participants reported not spending significant time with Deaf people.

I would say that I am probably one of those people who’s sort of moved off to the margin more than anything . . . at this point I do not have the connections . . . I felt much more connected and much more personally involved with the Deaf community in XXXX compared to here. I think my relationships are primarily professional. Cordial, but primarily almost all professional.

Another participant described reasons why she did not attend many Deaf-World events.

Well the challenges sometimes just boil down to time. You know, everyday interpreting . . . you are just exhausted. And then . . . to think about going to a Deaf-World event. You’re like—Oh man, I’ll catch the next one, I’ll catch the next one, I’ll catch the next one. . . . that’s one factor. I know it’s not really a valid reason. Well, it kinda is a valid reason.

Eight out of 10 participants described cohesive Deaf-World connections. They reported spending significant amounts of time interfacing within the Deaf-World in compelling ways. Summarizing the complex topic of time spent in the Deaf-World, four participants described spending more time within the Deaf-World than the hearing world, two participants illustrated a relative balance between the Deaf and hearing worlds, two participants reported more time spent in the hearing world but would not if there were a
larger Deaf community in their geographic area, and two inconsistencies in the data were participants who reported not spending much time in the Deaf-World.

All HEARING participants reported formative, impactful experiences when asked to go back in time and tell the story of becoming connected to the Deaf-World. Participants were asked to describe their lived experiences from a Deaf-centric perspective and transformation from a hearing person to a HEARING person. All participants vividly recalled narratives of initial and subsequent Deaf-World exposure.

Eight out of 10 participants reported continuously sustained affiliation with the Deaf-World.

Table 11 shows the significance of impactful cross-cultural Deaf-World encounters as all HEARING participants had met d/Deaf individual(s) by the age of 19. Participants with d/Deaf family members reported distinctive, significant experiences, differing from those of other HEARING participants and are included in Table 11.

Participants described their experiences entering the Deaf-World. Five presented to the Deaf-World in college (including one Soda who recalled an incident at five years old), two at birth, one during middle and high school years, one post-college and one within a Jehovah’s Witnesses congregation.
Table 11

*HEARING Participants’ Introduction and Presentation to d/Deaf Person(s)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age at event</th>
<th>Description of significant event</th>
<th>Affiliation with Deaf-World began</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Approximately 6</td>
<td>Encountered deaf people on a tour boat, told mother she wanted to learn sign language</td>
<td>In middle childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>At birth (Coda)</td>
<td>On a school bus when she realized not all parents were able to sign</td>
<td>At birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Approximately 10</td>
<td>Deaf son of family friend would share time at vacation house</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Approximately 12</td>
<td>Met Deaf students in mainstream programs</td>
<td>In middle/high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Approximately 19</td>
<td>Participant’s good friend introduced him to members of the local Deaf community</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>At birth (Coda)</td>
<td>Read the book, <em>Deaf Like Me</em>; it was the first time she saw the acronym ‘Coda’</td>
<td>At birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Approximately 9</td>
<td>Deaf boy in the neighborhood</td>
<td>Post college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Approximately 18</td>
<td>Deaf congregants at Jehovah’s Witnesses Kingdom Hall</td>
<td>Post high school in Jehovah’s Witnesses context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Approximately 5</td>
<td>Remembers helping brother do homework at the kitchen table</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Approximately 6</td>
<td>Deaf boy in the neighborhood in South Africa</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in Table 11, all HEARING participants recalled moments interacting with a d/Deaf person(s). Participants with Deaf family members’ experiences were different, but nonetheless significant cross-cultural events and realizations. In addition to the three participants with d/Deaf family members, five participants were exposed to a d/Deaf person prior to the age of 14 and two met d/Deaf people by the age of 19. An example of an early exposure to a d/Deaf person is represented below by a participant who lived overseas in South Africa.

When we lived in the town of Moncini . . . occasionally, a boy named Musa would come and play, but he never stayed very long, and . . . someone said that he was a deaf person . . . they would call him deafie and make fun . . . I wonder if he knew sign language and I . . . don’t know anything about him, so that made me a little sad . . . how come I knew all the other kids but didn’t know him.

Below is an example of a participant’s description when asked to explain how she became an interpreter. She recalled the moment she saw d/Deaf people on a tour boat and described how she began to learn signed language.

I was about six or seven years old . . . basically I was a little kid. I saw a group of deaf people chatting, using sign language and I was intrigued. I just thought, that is it. I told my mother over and over that I had made up my mind and found what I wanted to do . . . I can recall the event—I remember it so clearly . . . My mother made arrangements to expose me to the language . . . a Coda from the community came and taught and hung out with us.
Participants reflected critically on their pasts as they looked *backward* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Looking at past biographical contexts required participants to delve deep into their memories. All participants easily recalled impactful moments and shared memorable stories of events leading up to their Deaf-World affiliation. These sometimes simple, yet vital stories revealed a variety of experiences as described by the above examples in Table 11. Participants’ bicultural backgrounds were salient factors in their lived experience narratives.

Participants described discerning cross-cultural power differentials in discussing their work within the Deaf-World. A conundrum discussed by some participants surrounded the issue of disability. Deaf-World citizens generally do not subscribe to the medically perpetuated, pathological Deaf as disability perspective (Lane, 2005). The saliency of Deaf-World power differentials and marginalization was described by all participants. Disability in particular was addressed by seven of the HEARING participants. Below, is an example by a participant who provided a reflective look at the complicated issue of disability within the Deaf-World.

You have what looks like a language attached to a disability . . . deaf does have two meanings depending on who you’re talking about, or . . . do we need to start talking about that differently and that’s something that that community I think should decide, I don’t think that’s my right. I think people who look like me and hear like me have done enough damage . . . so if you’re going to say there’s some people who are disabled, I say well, if you say by disabled you mean that they don’t hear like I do then yes they exist. If you’re saying are there people who are
deaf who are completely like me yeah, they have the language . . . so it’s a question of whether or not I have access to their language . . . I think that dichotomy is big there but I think that dichotomy has also been developed in a way to sort of create a division within communities. I see that as being a very political move. And it keeps the people in power, in power.

The participant who provided the comment above had not only spent a number of years as an interpreter in the Deaf-World but came from a cultural background where she experienced oppression. The participant’s lived experience of being marginalized helped frame reflection on a very cloudy issue in the Deaf-World. All participants commented on complicated issues inherent in the local and global Deaf-World.

A synopsis of participants’ comments on cross-cultural power differentials included a variety of responses. One Coda participant reported recognizing her parents being at a disadvantage when outside the walls of the Deaf residential school where they were employed or affiliated. A participant, married to a Deaf spouse, reported the state of disarray of Deaf education for his Deaf adopted daughter. Intentionality in standing against discrimination and marginalization within the Deaf community in which you live was described by an African-American participant. A Coda participant discussed watching her parents’ marginalization and remembering a comparison of their experience to African-Americans’ struggle for civil rights. A participant married to a Deaf spouse described owning some of the oppression and anger as she desired to be an advocate at times. She also commented on wanting to teach d/Deaf people how to conduct the ‘fight’ for justice. Some additional comments included the following: d/Deaf people get the
short end of the stick; recognition of a sense of inequality regarding communication issues with a deaf sibling; and an educational interpreter participant described the difficulty of bringing Deaf-World events into the public schools for the benefit of d/Deaf and hard of hearing students. All HEARING participants’ recognized power differentials in their work with Deaf persons, mitigating unfavorable conditions as part of interpreting practice and affiliation with the Deaf-World. Part of avowing affiliation/alliance with the Deaf community included participants’ ability to apply critical thinking skills to differentials in power.

An example of mitigation of cross-cultural power differentials occurred when two of the HEARING participants conducted their interviews in ASL. They both made the decision to use ASL, with one remarking because we were on what she considered Deaf-centric sacred ground, she wanted to conduct the interview in ASL. The juxtaposition of negative and positive Deaf-World realities caused some dissonance in narratives. Participants were well-prepared and adept in describing congruence of Deaf-World points and counterpoints, as demonstrated in the information describing Deaf-gain.

Deaf-gain was a concept introduced at Gallaudet University by Williamson in 2005 (Bauman & Murray, 2009). It is a play on the deficit thinking of ‘hearing loss’ by reframing the term to reflect the beneficial aspects of being Deaf by the use of the phrase ‘Deaf-gain’ (Bauman & Murray, 2009). All participants described positive examples of Deaf-World involvement. HEARING participant comments described positive Deaf-World interactions as part of their daily interpreter lifeworld existence and therefore inherently affirmative. They expressed views of being satisfied and happy with their
Deaf-World connections, and without possibly knowing or naming the concept of Deaf-gain (one participant did name it), all described it.

A synopsis of participants’ comments on Deaf-gain included a variety of responses. One participant reported being part of the ‘community,’ having friends in the Deaf-World and discussed deriving a sense of joy from her life and work. A Coda interpreter whose parents were affiliated with a well-known school for the Deaf, reported her desire to attend the Deaf school, but being denied. A participant, married to a Deaf spouse, discussed her desire to impart Deaf values and ASL fluency to her Coda sons. One participant stressed the importance of keeping up with new ideas in the field, in order to be culturally responsive to the community. Additional ideas regarding Deaf-gain consisted of the following: the importance of passing on Deaf identity to d/Deaf youth; the ability to recognize and support persons, change agents and other systems who are promoting a cultural view of the Deaf-World; the importance of interpreters and others interacting with the Deaf community to ‘have the mind of a d/Deaf person;’ the recognized benefits of a Deaf school environment for a Deaf sibling; and the recognition of differences between Deaf students who had Deaf parents and those who did not, all noting examples of Deaf-gain.

Deaf-gain was described by a Coda participant: “I’m blessed with the, not only just having Deaf parents but having Deaf grandparents and aunts and uncles and extended family members.” There was a time when this participant would not have described her affiliation with Deaf people in a positive light. While still occasionally ambivalent, with
time and reflection, she came to appreciate the Deaf-World, the Deaf part of herself and to understand the meaning of Deaf-gain.

Another Coda participant described sentiments surrounding Deaf community involvement and an example of the concept of Deaf-gain.

I think we all desire to be in community and being involved in the Deaf-World, if the introduction, etc., is done right and if the love of it doesn’t somehow get completely squelched out of you, you want to have that Deaf time.

The participant spoke using the collective ‘we’ in the above comment, connoting a shared connection to the Deaf-World. Another key phrase relates to when the introduction to the Deaf-World, ‘is done right,’ a small phrase with significant potential impact.

An example from an L2 participant described Deaf-gain and the sense of joy derived from affiliation with the Deaf-World. She expressed a concept from Jewish culture, ‘naches.’ The Hebrew concept of naches is not easy to translate but seems to connote a combination of joy, pride and gratification (Jewish Chronicle On-Line, 2009).

It’s that passion, it’s that spark, that naches, you know. When I am in the community, I get naches, when I am with just hearing folks, I (rolls eyes), it puts me to sleep.

All participants described what would be a sense of ‘joy’ from their involvement in the Deaf-World. Joy is defined as an emotion of great delight caused by something especially satisfying (www.dictionary.com). Nine out of the 10 HEARING participants also described the derivation of great joy from their affiliation with the Deaf-World, connoting the concept of Deaf-gain. Several quotes below possibly describe a type of
Deaf-gain, with great emotional attachment. The first quote came from a participant who was thinking about shifting away from interpreting, and what she might do.

I was sitting in class interpreting today. I was thinking about—maybe I should take classes again . . . I think if I wouldn’t have been an interpreter. I’d be a teacher . . . and I couldn’t be anything but a deaf ed teacher. I can’t imagine just not doing anything.

The pull toward the Deaf-World was still alive in her imagination, showing an emotional attachment beyond a mere career choice.

The next quote showed the path an L2 participant felt interpreters were following and an example of the benefits seen from affiliation with the Deaf-World. There is an emphasis on working with people in general and the inherent joy one derives from the perspective of equality and mutual respect.

I think it is just contagious. I say ‘oh, you’ve got bitten by the same bug!’ . . . I think a lot of interpreters have shared the same path. They have had similar experiences as to how they have met somebody. I think it’s you know, your own view of this joie de vivre of loving people. Thinking people are inherently good, people are inherently equal. People have a lot to offer me and conversely, I have a lot to offer them. Yea, I mean I can’t envision myself doing anything else.

Again, the concept of Deaf-gain may be seen as the above quote is analyzed for meaning. The concept of ‘naches’ and the concept of being ‘bitten by the same bug’ seem to hold similarities in connoting an affiliation with something cohesive and positive for which one has passion.
The last quote is from the participant who faced her own mortality and in the end expressed thoughts born from a depth of understanding unlike the other participants.

I enjoy it . . . not just enjoy it but I get that joy from it. And also that huge satisfaction I get and now with the prospect of not being there and having that, it’s uh, it’s hard (crying) But it’s very definitely joyful (crying).

To summarize, all participants recognized, or at one time recognized, Deaf-gain from affiliation with the Deaf-World. Examples of Deaf-gain were most readily expressed by HEARING participants when Deaf-World affiliation was well intact. Two participants reported not being well connected with the Deaf-World, leading to a decreased number of examples of Deaf-gain in their narratives. However, the participant who faced death was able to reflect in a way other participants were not. She expressed the importance of Deaf-World affiliation with some realization, honesty, and regret related to this topic. Examples of Deaf-gain were described by all participants, some stronger than others, and represented dynamic parts of their narratives.

All participants described various demands, tensions, and complexities in their work as ASL/English interpreters. By reflecting on their own respective Deaf-World contexts, ASL/English participants in the study discussed their life, work, and complicated situations as they pertained to the interfacing of the Deaf, hearing, and HEARING worlds. Participants demonstrated abilities to manage complexities in both local contexts as well as more global Deaf-World venues. Local Deaf-World contexts described more intimate narratives. Global Deaf-World contexts related to overarching ideas reflecting a larger Deaf-World narrative. Local and global contexts are realities for
ASL/English interpreter practitioners. Participants organically discussed complexities and tension in their own local contexts as well as the more global milieu of the Deaf-World.

Most of the following examples occurred in participants’ local contexts but with some global implications for what it means to be in the Deaf-World. The participant described an early local experience in the struggle for equal civil rights, even on the playground, for her deaf brother.

Deaf people have rights. I can remember going to the park with my brother and I played basketball as a kid and so did he. So we would just . . . want to play with whatever kids were at the park, and some of the kids not letting him play or picking on him, and I was like the big sister . . . he can play!

A participant with a spouse who was Deaf and African-American, described multiple reasons for confronting discrimination in the process of becoming a HEARING person in the Deaf-World within an intimate family context. The participant described life choices and family complexities causing turmoil due to perceived difference and marginalization. These are examples of human rights issues interpreters deal with daily.

Because I was married to a Black man didn’t mean I was automatically trusted. As a matter of fact I was looked askance at, as was I in the Deaf community. It’s like what do you think you’re doing marrying a deaf guy and what do you think you’re doing marrying a Black man? There were lots of barriers starting with my immediate family of course . . . and then just the wider communities.
One L2 participant described her employment alongside a variety of Deaf-World citizens from various geographic areas. The experience occurred at a relatively early stage in her affiliation within the Deaf-World.

There were some deaf folks, Deaf family, staunch ASL users, etc., who accepted me as hearing . . . but we’re going to take you in and teach you the ropes . . . Then there was this other sort of crowd who was just . . . annoyed; You are hearing; why are you here? you know, but I found that fascinating. It didn’t make me go home and cry, it made me want to ask more, and talk about it . . . and engage with them . . . when I would do something that would piss them off, I would sit for hours and have conversations about what I did that upset them . . . I made so many hearing faux pas at that time and they taught me; their anger is what taught me.

The participant mentioned the anger expressed by Deaf people teaching her lessons in this particular venue. Four participants specifically mentioned addressing anger in their work as interpreters.

Participants described complicated aspects of entering the Deaf-World and some of the more challenging lived experiences of interpreters’ lifeworlds and work. These experiences appeared to be part and parcel of life as an ASL/English interpreter with participants reporting the ability to manage complexities with which they were confronted.

On a more global level, most participants described tensions between HEARING interpreters and Deaf-World citizens. One participant who initially reported no tension
existed, later gave examples of strained situations between Deaf and HEARING persons. When asked about the tension between Deaf people and interpreters, several participants replied with related ideas on the topic. There were two such comments from two different participants about becoming an interpreter in the Deaf-World.

But I still had a negative attitude because I knew that deaf people didn’t like interpreters. And I thought that I didn’t want to be one of them if that were the case.

And the second similar comment pertained to the following:

I really didn’t even want to become an interpreter especially because, at that time, people didn’t really like interpreters and I thought why would I want to be that?

Deaf people do not like interpreters.

Participants readily admitted to reticence about working as interpreters, yet they chose to pursue the field, certification and have continued as working practitioners for many years. Obviously the negativity did not impede their trajectory of having careers as working interpreters. Participants never mentioned the term burnout, and I did not pose questions related to the concept of not continuing to work as an interpreter, or burnout. Yet, within participants’ narratives, there were numerous comments one may construe as negative in nature. However, the positive attributes of being an interpreter seemed to overshadow the negative aspects for most participants most of the time. The two participants who described inconsistencies, expressing their lack of involvement in the Deaf-World, still expressed overall respect for the Deaf-World.
An example of a local conflict was described by a participant who had reported not being as involved in the Deaf-World as she had initially been. She described a very tense situation for which there was no apparent solution. The example brought up great emotion and the participant asked the details of the situation not be described in the study findings. Relationships were fractured and remained broken at the time of the interview. Eight participants reported very negative situations they had experienced while in the role of or surrounding their work as an interpreter. All described the ability to cope or to move on from negative situations as they all remained employed as interpreters.

ASL/English interpreters, situated in the places of their work, reported challenges as seen from examples given above. The theme of this question consisted of the following: Participants managed complexities in local and global Deaf-World contexts. The key term within the theme is ‘managed.’ Participants, from their descriptions, were capable problem solvers on local and global levels. Local Deaf-World contexts connected to personal values or actions participants experienced, in essence a more intimate narrative with tones of the on-going fight for Deaf civil rights. Global Deaf-World contexts related to overarching ideas reflecting a larger Deaf-World narrative with tones of the tension between HEARING and Deaf Americans (Forestal, 2004). A participant described what may be a window into partially understanding interpreters and Deaf-World vicarious complexities. The participant expressed the desire for Deaf people to lead the way in helping interpreters figure out cross-cultural complexities.
I own some of that oppression and that anger. But I gotta learn out how to get rid of some of that. And hopefully, deaf people are doing that . . . but I am afraid on some level, they [deaf people] really get short shrift, is an understatement.

The co-construction of Deaf/HEARING complexities and mitigation attempts were apparent in the data. Participants’ narratives provided numerous examples of local and global adversity in the Deaf-World and participants’ willingness and capacity to manage it and in some respects to mitigate unfavorable conditions. Some participants reported managing negative scenarios by reflection, action, a combination of both, or a knowing acceptance of reality experienced due to working with a perceived marginalized population. Despite cross-cultural contraindications, 9 out of 10 participants reported the willingness and ability to mitigate difficult and tense scenarios as part of their work as interpreter practitioners. Part of avowing alliance/affiliation with the Deaf community included participants’ descriptions of being able to accept and moderate tensions. The data related to interpreters’ abilities to manage complexities in the Deaf-World were vast in participants’ transcripts and in need of further research.

Participants reflected critically, highly valued Deaf-World affiliation, made decisions intentionally, and expressed respect and fidelity toward Deaf-World affiliation. Critical reflection of participants led them to more refined thoughts in cross-cultural interactions and was key in providing information about avowals/ascriptions. Participant stories of cross-cultural reflections had breadth and depth as indicated through examples in Table 12.
Table 12

**Critical Reflection: Select Attributes of Deaf-World Affiliation/Alliance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Intentional decision-making</th>
<th>Respect and fidelity</th>
<th>Highly valued the Deaf-World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Relocated in order to work in the Deaf-World</td>
<td>Attended Deaf-World camps to discern Deaf ways</td>
<td>Yes. Bored with people who do not sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Relocated in order to raise family in diverse and Deaf-centric context</td>
<td>Coda experience was very positive and cemented her affiliation within the Deaf-World</td>
<td>Yes. Did not want to disengage from Deaf-World events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Decided to sign at the hospital so Deaf husband could be involved</td>
<td>Cherished Deaf-World relationships and maintained deep friendships</td>
<td>Yes. Reported planning many Deaf related events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Met a hearing person who used to sign but stopped; did not want to be like that person</td>
<td>Related to Black Deaf community, said her heart was in it. Desired to give back to those who had given so much to her</td>
<td>Yes. Requested to sign interview in ASL, her L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Experienced Deaf-World avowal/ascription initially</td>
<td>Is not now well-connected to local Deaf community</td>
<td>More in the past than now; indicated inconsistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Intentionally imparted Deaf identity to Deaf youth</td>
<td>Left the Deaf community for a time but returned</td>
<td>Yes. Works for equality and accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Reflected on who makes curriculum decisions, encouraging competence</td>
<td>Deaf-World cultural competence is attitude, respect, appreciation and love for people</td>
<td>Yes. Once we know about the Deaf-World, there is no going back to status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Interpreters need to have the mind of a deaf person.</td>
<td>Felt all persons should be shown respect and dignity</td>
<td>Yes. Friends with Deaf people because they are people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 12 (continued)

*Critical Reflection: Select Attributes of Deaf-World Affiliation/Alliance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Intentional decision-making</th>
<th>Respect and fidelity</th>
<th>Highly valued the Deaf-World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Remembered advice of Deaf IEP instructor to make contribution through education</td>
<td>Deferred to Deaf people when need arose to make community related decisions. Loved her work</td>
<td>Yes. Does not understand how hearing families can leave a Deaf person out of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>The Deaf-World is not in the public schools; interpreters know this and feel responsible to bring Deaf culture to students</td>
<td>Felt a sense of joy from her involvement in the Deaf-World. Followed consumer lead, not make decisions for them</td>
<td>Yes. Thanked the community for teaching her their language with no personal gain on their part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nine out of 10 participants authentically expressed fidelity and positive regard toward the Deaf-World. One participant did not possess the aforementioned attributes at the time of the interview. The participant described an indigenous entrée into the Deaf-World followed by mentoring under the auspices of a local Deaf community. However, at the time of the interview, descriptions of Deaf-World involvement were weak and tentative. The participant nonetheless continued to work as an interpreter at the time of the interview and was very reflective. It seemed the trauma she had experienced led to assisting an already reflective individual to become even more finely tuned in her observations and impressions. Below are examples of other participants’ critical reflections.

A participant described an example of critical reflection, highlighting the concept of trust between HEARING interpreters and Deaf-World citizens.
Interpreters have opportunities for education, for training, for attending workshops. But at the same time, some interpreters do not have their attitude in the right place... First, it’s important to identify that there is a problem...

Maybe you just go along, and you don’t even realize that you are oppressing deaf people! Personally, I have to be ready and willing to have a dialogue with myself and assess my own behavior, my work, my attitude... So, I think for me, I try to keep in the back of my mind... we are all human, but... yes, you have a right to be doubtful about me or to look askance at interpreters... and that we might need to prove our skill or our value, then we will be trusted, because, trust is not automatic.

The participant brought up the very important concept of trust between HEARING and Deaf individuals. Trustworthiness and reflection seem to be salient attributes in the above comment. The participant above mentioned interpreters having self-dialogue or reflection, in order to check themselves for perceived or real questionable actions.

Another participant offered an example of critical reflection related to language use. Culture and language, often studied as separate entities, comprise one domain of experience (Kramsch, 1998). The example below illustrated the significant connection between the entities and how they play out in the life of ASL/English interpreters.

I think the most important thing that you can do to put deaf people at ease is to have the mind of a deaf person... let me just back track... I never knew there was signed English. I just knew this is how you communicated with deaf people. So, by the way I communicated with deaf people, started because of the way I
interacted with my friends and the way people I interacted with treated me . . .
there would be times I was the only hearing person . . . So I think what happens to
a lot of people . . . they still have it in their mind that sign language is English in a
simpler fashion . . . you've got to let go of the way you process information . . .
and try to communicate with deaf people and not try to place, fit them into any
English mold . . . I always think, ‘Do I have the mind of a deaf person?’

Having ‘the mind of a deaf person’ when one has not participated in the authentic lived experiences of culturally Deaf persons would be very difficult. The above participant comment spoke to internalizing Deaf culture on a higher level, perhaps at the level of internalizing a cross-cultural Deaf identity. I believe this participant had experienced an intense Deaf-World cross-cultural immersion experience within the Jehovah’s Witness context to which he had been exposed.

The initial subject matter of this inquiry was ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World identity, from which I quickly veered. It became apparent, through reading, discussion with my advisors and discussions with colleagues, the correct concept for this inquiry would relate to the Deaf-World cultural competence of HEARING interpreters. A Deaf-World identity may require deeper levels of C2 acquisition from a HEARING person than acclimation to or ‘acquisition’ of Deaf-World cultural competence. These determinations are outside the scope of this inquiry and may relate to serendipity, being in the right cultural place at the right time, or possibly to intentional decisions made by the HEARING person or Deaf persons with whom one is affiliated.
Intentional decision making was seen in all HEARING participants’ interviews. One cannot venture into another cultural world to learn an L2 without making decisions outside of the ordinary. Examples of intentional decision making ran the gamut from deciding to stand next to a deaf family member to prevent interaction with hearing non-signers to moving to an area where Deaf culture was not only recognized but celebrated.

An example of making intentional decisions was provided by a participant married to a generationally Deaf spouse. She described a scenario regarding delicate communication issues when her son was taken to the hospital. The family constellation consisted of a hearing Mother and sons and Deaf Father and adopted Deaf daughter. When discussing communication choices she felt she needed to make, she described the following scenario of choosing to use ASL.

When my son . . . broke his arm . . . his dad was going to come [to the hospital] soon, and I was there first . . . I was going to have to leave . . . I thought if he has this life experience now and this was when he was younger, we were thinking all in English and his dad is going to arrive. So I signed with him. Um, because the interpreter was already there . . . I . . . signed . . . and the interpreter voiced for me except when I talked to the doctor. Because I thought your dad is going to arrive in a minute, that is the language decision . . . this fits in right now.

The linguistic decision described above reflects critical thinking on the part of the participant. There were multiple examples, such as the one above, from this, as well as other participants. A sound solution to a complicated linguistic situation was applied,
navigating the dissonance of a medical emergency and making the situation a better experience for all involved.

Participants, by virtue of looking *inward*, described high degrees of valuing their affiliation with the Deaf-World. Since valuing the Deaf-World is such a basic and important attribute, multiple examples were presented in Table 12. All participants expressed, or at one time expressed, a high degree of value and respect for the Deaf-World. The interviews took twists and turns, as previously described, but the tenor would eventually turn to the positive. Participants described unanimous recognition of and admiration for Deaf people and what the Deaf-World represents within the collective mind of the 10 HEARING participants.

One participant reflected on not being able to go back to work because of her illness, leading to her eventual death. The concept of appreciation for being an interpreter was seen in nine of the ten HEARING participants and stated with power and emotion by the participant below.

I couldn’t have picked a better career and not just a career . . . but I couldn’t have worked with more awesome people who are in the Deaf-World and I think just shared with me and brought me in, without any, without any personal gain on their part, you know, or just maybe decided that I was worth it or saw that I wanted it so badly and uh, were willing to share that with me, so absolutely.

Participants, when given the opportunity, were deeply reflective, expressing appreciation of Deaf-ways. Also, they demonstrated amazingly detailed responses,
illustrating their experience and wisdom when asked to tell their personal stories, their currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) journeys of their personal and professional lives.

The level of critical reflection guided participants’ to descriptions revealing cohesive cultural connections. The expert status of participants allowed for trustworthy, authentic examples of Deaf-World cultural competence to emerge from the narratives. Participants opening up as they did prompted discussion of similar cross-cultural lived experiences.

Data regarding participants’ bicultural contexts found interviewees reported authentic, adaptable and familiar Deaf-World and other cultural contexts leading them to becoming HEARING. Several of the scenarios described were familiar within the Deaf-World, such as environments with Deaf parents, Coda children, and with deaf siblings. An aspect I did not expect to see concerned the number of participants from cultures other than American mainstream culture. All participants’ C2 and possible C3 contexts were authentic, organic, and adaptable. Participants, in their respective families of origin, learned to negotiate multicultural landscapes, including family constellations with multiple cultures represented. The participants were capable representatives of bi- or multicultural backgrounds and utilized their lived experiences to their advantage as bi- and multicultural language mediators. Bi- or multicultural backgrounds of all HEARING participants were significant in the data.

Discussion surrounding formative biographical experiences gave participants a chance to go back in time and recall some events leading them to the world of interpreting. It was interesting to note the narratives told by participants who chose to go
into the field of ASL/English interpreting revealed all participants had been exposed to
d/Deaf people by the age of 19. There were compelling stories of participants’
introduction to the Deaf-World. All participants had easy recollection of impactful
events including meeting deaf persons in their youth. Participants were able to describe
these events with clarity and detail within their narratives. HEARING participants
experiencing early connections to d/Deaf people was found to be significant.

Participants’ discussion centering on power differentials and Deaf-gain, described
examples of Deaf-World cultural competence useful to interpreters as they interfaced in
the community. Narrative data included examples of challenges interpreters faced often
due to marginalization and discrimination in the Deaf community. Participants reported
incidences of inequality making their work, at times, even more complex. Juxtaposed
with the negative aspects of power differentials was the concept of Deaf-gain. The
benefits of affiliation and alliance with the Deaf community for all HEARING
participants outweighed the negative aspects or they would not be able to sustain
connections with the Deaf-World.

Participant data contained examples of managing complexities experienced by
HEARING participants within the contexts in which they worked as they acted on
understandings of Deaf-World cultural competence. Participants described abilities to
manage complexities in local and global Deaf-World contexts. Looking at natural
challenges in various environments and responses to the challenges revealed the inherent
ability of participants to incorporate creative solutions when faced with problems.
Participants explored inner thoughts as they reflected on cultural competence and how being cross-culturally savvy impacts interpreting work. Participants had the capacities to reflect critically, to make decisions intentionally, to express fidelity toward the Deaf-World and placed high value on their affiliation within their respective Deaf communities. Ascribing efficacy toward the Deaf-World was integral to participants’ amenability regarding a high level of critical reflections and intentional actions in describing cross-cultural connections.

HEARING participants in the study were amenable or willing affiliates in the Deaf-World. Participants showed little to no capacity for weak responses to Deaf-World affiliations and issues. The concepts of amenability, fidelity, critical reflection, intentional decision making and highly valuing Deaf-World affiliation related to HEARING participant avowal of Deaf-World affiliation/alliance and ascription of efficacy toward the Deaf-World, the theme of research question one A. Below, is a discussion of the analysis of research question one B.

**Analysis of Research Question One B**

Research question one B explored the understandings, perceptions, and attitudes of Deaf participants. In an effort to manage participant narratives, data reduction (Wolcott, 1994) was facilitated through application of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three dimensional model. The following Clandinin and Connelly (2000) attributes were incorporated into data analysis. The outward aspect examined participants’ bicultural contexts. The backward aspect explored past formative biographical experiences. Forward asked for examples of HEARING interpreter culturally competent behaviors.
The *situated in place* aspect explored Deaf participants’ perceptions of HEARING interpreters’ culturally incompetent actions or miscues. The *inward* aspect provided an opportunity for reflection on their perceptions regarding HEARING interpreters’ cognitive and attitudinal characteristics. Research question one B categorized data from three expert Deaf interpreter (DI) participants. Transcripts were translated from ASL to written English and data reduction (Wolcott, 1994) occurred by application of five Clandinin and Connelly (2000) informed characteristics. An explanation of thematized responses in each of the five categories appears below.

Deaf participants discussed bicultural contexts in which they lived and worked. By looking *outward*, participants in the study reflected on and discussed their individual bicultural contexts as part of their lived experience. Deaf participants illustrated authentic, adaptable and familiar Deaf-World and other cultural contexts.

One scenario illustrated the meaning of biculturalism in one participant’s life. The following example described a glimpse into the bicultural lived experience of a contemporary Deaf American.

I have three children—my oldest is deaf and the next two are hearing. And I coached my oldest child . . . I wanted to coach my other two younger hearing children . . . I shouldn’t feel like I can only coach my deaf child because I’m deaf too . . . So it ended up that I did coach my two younger children . . . So the whole team was hearing and I was the only deaf person . . . they called the County to provide an interpreter so that I could coach the team . . . Other deaf people have said, oh I would no way want to coach an entirely hearing team . . . And I ask
them why . . . And they answer . . . they wouldn’t understand what the kids were saying . . . Once they have some experience and someone has an opportunity to educate them, they love it and then things change . . . So I went back for a second and then a third year . . . Not only did I teach them about the Deaf-World but they taught me about the hearing world and they also taught me about the meaning of being a parent.

Interpreters have much to learn about being bicultural between the hearing and Deaf-Worlds. Since d/Deaf people have more experience in being bicultural than interpreters generally do, this is an area on which to concentrate and discern what it means to live with two or more cultures. There are unique characteristics d/Deaf people may share with not only interpreters, but those interested in biculturalism in general.

Deaf participants reported the amount of time spent in the hearing and Deaf worlds. One participant spent time with her Deaf husband, but reported spending a significant amount of time with hearing/HEARING people so as to avoid spending too much time with potential d/Deaf consumers. One participant from a hearing family reported spending time in both worlds. A Deaf Coda reported spending most of his time with d/Deaf people.

All born d/Deaf participants intrinsically presented to the world from a cultural framework outside of American mainstream culture. Below are examples of participants’ comments about their bicultural lived experiences. One participant described her multicultural background.
Everyone in my family is hearing, including my brother. My mom is not an American . . . My brother and I are first generation Americans . . . Because of my mother’s culture, we did not have American culture rooted in our home environment.

Assumptions should not be made about Deaf people in America as having internalized American culture. The participant above lived a life with multiple cultures at play and the internalization of a variety of values and norms. Below, this participant explained important, information about the way Christmas is viewed and celebrated in the United States.

Growing up, Christmas was on the 24th, not the 25th. Here at work, I was asked to work on the 24th and I was really upset. I said, “why the 24th? Its Christmas!!” . . . The answer was, “Oh it’s Christmas Eve” and I said, “no” . . . because in XXXX, the culture says the 24th is the important day, not the 25th . . . We always opened gifts on the 24th and the 25th was more for rest and then get ready to go back to work on the 26th. So here, it’s reversed from that. Here, on the 24th, it is a day to wrap and get ready for the big day which is the 25th.

In our global world, we continue to make multicultural connections. The example above did not carry Deaf-World culture necessarily, but illustrated how Deaf culture meshes with other global affiliations. Deaf-World culture is on par with other indigenous cultures of the world. As video technologies continue to evolve for d/Deaf and hearing persons, the global world appears before us on video screens, the internet, or in real-time, and we are compelled to engage the cultures as they present themselves.
One participant’s family of origin was an example of a familiar American Deaf-World family constellation, generationally Deaf families. Estimates of generationally Deaf families point to the statistic of approximately 8% of deaf children in the United States have one or more parents who are either d/Deaf or hard of hearing (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2005). While the family constellation described below is familiar in the Deaf-World, it is not a typically prevalent family grouping within American mainstream culture.

I was born Deaf, have two Deaf parents, my father’s mother is Deaf, the rest of the family is hearing. I do have a hearing brother . . . Even though both of my parents were Deaf, my dad signed in English word order . . . My mom was more of an ASL signer. When my mom was growing up, she also told people that she was hard of hearing. Until . . . MJ Bienvenu gave a workshop in my hometown . . . my mom came home from the workshop and was a changed person. After that, she became like the ASL police . . . And I thought I better get rid of all the initialized signs in my vocabulary.

The above quote naturally included distinct and significant examples of language use within this American Deaf family. Issues of ‘d’ and ‘D’ d/Deaf and hard of hearing realities are commonplace in the interpreter’s lexicon. Concepts such as ‘initialized signs’ and familiar persons such as Bienvenu are part of Deaf-World cultural literacy. What may not be familiar enough is the literature on generationally Deaf families. The above quote is rich with Deaf cultural information with which interpreters should be familiar.
The third participant described his family of origin: “I am the only d/Deaf person in a hearing family . . . I am the sixth child and baby of the family.”

The above examples described the lived realities of persons who reside in 21st century Deaf America. All three participants were in natural bi- or multicultural contexts. The contexts in which they lived may parallel spoken language bilingual/bicultural contexts, but study of language use of participants was outside the scope of this inquiry. Below are examples of time spent within familial bicultural contexts. One participant described examples of his bicultural lived contexts.

I am in the Deaf-World on a daily basis . . . I have a hearing roommate who is an interpreter. Also, I go out . . . mostly . . . with Deaf people . . . but work-wise, I interact with a lot of hearing people . . . I . . . attend national meetings; I interact . . . with quite a few hearing people. Sometimes, I can tell that I have to make cultural adjustments because the situation does not accommodate Deaf culture because the people involved may not have internalized the culture yet. So, I am constantly making adjustments and do most of the work when I interact with hearing people.

Deaf-World members organically live in a minority culture, placing them in situations such as described above where they must be the party to fine tune behaviors and bridge cross-cultural gaps. Cross-cultural strategies require reflection, as they are not easily acquired, if not exposed to them often. Deaf-World citizens live significant amounts of time in cross-cultural contexts and would be effective teachers for interpreters.
One participant described his bicultural lived experience, seemingly an English-dominant ASL/English bicultural/bilingual (Kannapell, 1980).

Most of my life, I have lived in the hearing world, I always had my d/Deaf friends as well; so now that scenario is reversed, where I spend most of my time in a Deaf environment . . . Unless I am at home, or with friends who are hearing, so really, I have relationships with both Deaf and hearing people. My wife is hearing, and she also is a Coda, my two kids are Codas too, their friends come over; sometimes we have parties, there are deaf and hearing people there . . . English is my first language and ASL is my second language so I am pretty much used to going between the two cultures and . . . between both languages.

The interpreting field could learn much from Deaf people who have paved the way with their bi- and multicultural knowledge and skill. How many interpreters have spent significant amounts of time naturally interfacing within Deaf contexts in order to become bicultural?

A participant described having to limit her contact with the wider Deaf community.

I am a Deaf interpreter and ironically I spend less time with d/Deaf people per se because I am interpreting for them as clients . . . My husband is Deaf and we do hang out mostly with hearing people who are fluent in ASL, and a few who are not . . . we don’t mind being around our neighbors and writing notes back and forth so we can hang out, so yeah, we do hang out with hearing people.
The participant described a reality interpreters live with related to potential for conflict of interest between interpreters and the consumers with whom they work.

Two of the Deaf participants were non-native ASL/English bilinguals born to hearing families, and one participant was a native ASL bilingual/bicultural, born into a Deaf family. All participants were sufficiently bilingual/bicultural to pass the RID or NAD/RID certification exam for Deaf candidates. All three DIs reported reading quite a bit. Two were avid readers of books and one read information such as online articles, newspapers, etc. Reading is important for bilingual/bicultural skills for Deaf persons because they do not have access to aural/oral English.

Asking Deaf participants to reflect on their own bicultural contexts set the stage to reflect on the state of the ASL/English interpreter field and Deaf-World cultural competence of HEARING practitioners. The Deaf participants were definitely bicultural or multicultural in their lifeworlds and daily experiences.

Participants reflected critically on their pasts as they looked backward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and recalled stories of events leading them into the world of ASL/English interpreting as Deaf professionals. All Deaf participants reported significant events and formative experiences when asked to go back in time and tell the story of becoming a Deaf interpreter (DI). Below are two participants’ descriptions of events in their lives leading to work as Deaf interpreters. One participant described life as a Deaf Coda with his Deaf parents and hearing brother.

My grandparents decided they wanted to be cremated . . . (the funeral director) said something and my mom wanted to know what he said. My (hearing) brother
. . . signed for us when the funeral director spoke . . . My mother immediately looked at me for clarification and I signed to her what my brother was trying to say . . . I realized that basically, that was the communication process used as we were growing up. My brother would present his disjointed sign communication, my mother would look at me, I would interpret what he said.

The above narrative was an example of Deaf persons managing their own lives. The narrative this participant told reflected Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009) and typical life events in a generationally Deaf family, as well as the beginnings of his path to becoming a Deaf interpreter.

The second participant described his experience as a d/Deaf interpreter from a hearing family. He described his parents as educators who sought out various schools and methods for him. The reason I used d/Deaf above was because of his descriptions of being from a hearing family and becoming a Deaf person at a later time. Describing processes involved in persons who are deaf becoming Deaf is outside the scope of this inquiry.

After I graduated high school and before I went to college, my parents gave me a gift of a trip to Europe, so the three of us went for 2 months. I noticed in our travels that I was the go-to person for interpreting between my parents and foreigners . . . So I would gesture the communication between us—since we did not use the same language. My parents did not know any foreign language such as French or German . . . I realized that inside me was an interpreter.
He discerned his capacity for work as a Deaf-World interpreter. His reported background is in line with descriptions of the formative linguistic, cultural, and life experiences of Deaf interpreters (DI Institute, 2014). The third participant attended a graduate level IEP to become an interpreter and was the only Deaf participant to have done so.

HEARING and Deaf participants shared the first two characteristics in looking outward and backward in their journeys to becoming interpreters. Shared characteristics of bicultural contexts and formative biographical experiences between HEARING and Deaf participants set the stage for common understandings in regards to biculturalism in the Deaf-World. Deaf participants were not only expert interpreters but keen observers of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

Deaf participants naturally reflected on tangible and intangible examples of culturally fit and unfit actions of HEARING practitioners’ Deaf-World cultural competence. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three dimensional model framed behaviors and thought processes of DIs’ perceptions of HEARING participants’ Deaf-World cultural competence. The Clandinin and Connelly (2000) informed characteristic forward framed DIs’ responses about HEARING culturally fit Deaf-World cultural competence. The Clandinin and Connelly (2000) informed characteristic, situated in place, framed DIs’ responses about HEARING culturally unfit Deaf-World cultural competence. Participants were invited to tell their stories, and in so doing, provided fit and unfit examples of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

Deaf participants described minimal examples of culturally fit actions overall. Of what was described, there were some tangible examples of HEARING interpreter fit
behaviors showing cultural competence with participants describing more examples of intangible fit behaviors.

Deaf participants described examples of cultural competence regarding HEARING interpreters including the following: they noted when HEARING interpreters made the decision to utilize the services of a CDI; they noticed when interpreters went to a private place to make a phone call; when they unlocked a door when expecting a Deaf guest; they could tell when interpreters displayed humility; when interpreters desired to be a team player; noted interpreters who followed the ‘right path,’ and noted interpreters who acquired some level of Deaf-World cultural competence, because it would be doubtful they would attain native-like Deaf-World cultural competence.

One Deaf participant described a key intangible, attitudinal comfort level some interpreters demonstrated and, in general, the type of HEARING person with whom she preferred to interact.

They are not offended if I talk negatively about hearing people. They understand what I am saying and . . . accept it and they own up to the facts, yea. Yep, those are my people . . . they can’t apologize for the whole lot of them. But it is like, they will let me vent and will recognize that . . . gives me permission to express myself, understand my true feelings, real angst related to what I am saying. They will encourage me to say how I am feeling—lets me be Deaf—that kind of concept. And I think that is how they are different from the hearing masses.

The participant addressed how HEARING interpreters are unlike the masses of hearing people with whom Deaf people interact on a daily basis. The comment above was
articulated by one participant, but the sentiment of interpreter acceptance of Deaf ways was inherent within all three Deaf participant data sets.

Slightly more examples of intangible culturally competent behaviors were described by Deaf participants than tangible ones. Do HEARING interpreters not visibly display many behavioral examples of Deaf-World cultural competence in general? Are Deaf people more in tune with intangible, attitudinal discernment of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence? There were open-ended questions posed to Deaf participants allowing them freedom to express lived experience narratives. Below is analysis of perceptions of cultural miscues made by HEARING interpreters as discerned by Deaf participants, often in Deaf/hearing team interpreting contexts.

Deaf participants’ perceptions and descriptions of tangible and intangible culturally unfit actions were informed by Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) situated in place characteristic. Examples of miscues displayed by HEARING interpreters appear below in Table 13. There were more tangible examples of cross-cultural miscues perceived by Deaf participants than intangible examples. Overall, Deaf participants provided more descriptions of HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural missteps than examples of cultural accuracies.

Deaf participants more readily discerned tangible and intangible cross-cultural missteps. Participants did not lack the ability to provide multiple examples of culturally unfit actions of HEARING interpreters. The emotionally charged nature of responses added to the importance of comments represented in Table 13.
Table 13

*Deaf Participants’ Perceptions of HEARING Interpreters’ Cultural Miscues*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible</th>
<th>Intangible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to follow norms of the use of a visual language in a predominantly visual environment</td>
<td>The intangible ‘it’ of interpreter language and culture skill sets can be discerned by DIs. Easy to see when interpreters do not have ‘it’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually noisy environment and inappropriate setup of a visual environment; visually inaccessible work spaces</td>
<td>The Deaf perspective is often missing in Deaf/hearing teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter saying she desires to ‘sign like a Deaf person’</td>
<td>When working as DI, confusion about how message is transferred can be construed as oppressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking on the phone in the presence of Deaf people</td>
<td>Some HIs do not agree -DI called in due to a lack of HI’s ASL skills. We claim HI/DI are equal partners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employing the use of attention getting devices in visual environments</td>
<td>HI and DI fill gaps in interpreting for each other. Should come from a place of respect and lifelong learning for both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outward exhibitions of one’s affiliation to the Deaf-World by getting a Deaf-centric tattoo; perhaps, a Coda can get away with this?</td>
<td>HI puts all power in DIs’ hands at times. Unrealistic expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘it’ of Deaf-World cultural competence does not come through sign production but through NMS, prosodic features, sentence boundaries, etc.</td>
<td>Interpreter thinks because a person is d/Deaf, they would love to attend a Deaf event or conference; not true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 signers often ‘marked’; features which mark them as less native-like often come from aspects other than the signs themselves</td>
<td>Noticed tension between d/Deaf and HEARING persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI and DI in an interpreting situation. HI was struggling and told DI, ‘the demands simply outweighed the control options’ as a way to skirt some issues. The DI disagreed</td>
<td>If an interpreter bypasses the ‘right routes’ that is when she may get ‘hit between the eyes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In VRS settings, have seen VIs default to letting the hearing party talk more. Not allowing equal time for the d/Deaf party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI told DI when working, ‘I am Gishing it,’ Gish model not a license for deletions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 13 (continued)

Deaf Participants’ Perceptions of HEARING Interpreters’ Cultural Miscues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible</th>
<th>Intangible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people attempt to internalize Deaf norms and it doesn’t work; you want to say ‘It’s painful! Make it stop!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using spoken English in the presence of Deaf people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not unlocking the door when expecting a Deaf guest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The desire to know a Deaf person for personal gain. Tokenism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many ILY hand statues on the desk can be a red flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below, a variety of participant descriptions of tangible and intangible unfit behaviors and cognitive thought patterns are presented in quotes. One participant described a tangible example of an unfit reaction to an environment where visual language was in use.

People try and sign at all times, because you never know when a deaf person will enter the conversation . . . in some offices, there are all hearing people in the room, so people just default to using spoken language . . . So I feel like that is really a snub to a visual environment . . . I would hope there is enough sensitivity that if someone would see a figure approaching out of the corner of their eye, they would pick up their hands and start signing. Do something—but oftentimes they just continue to sit there with their hands on their computer and keep on moving
their mouths as they talk. I might start a conversation, signing, and they are still talking, hands on computer, will look and see someone signing right in front of them, but continue in the same vein—like they are blind . . . then another person starts to interpret what the first person is saying . . . Then the person who is talking, eventually realizes that they are being interpreted . . . and they react with a huge visual apology as they sign . . . So it is totally awkward when hearing people are so hearing in their visual orientation . . . Codas have less trouble with this; there is a more natural interaction . . . I try and share my experience, it doesn’t work, so I back off.

It is unclear as to why HEARING persons commit a sociolinguistic faux pas such as the one described above. If one works in an office where d/Deaf people have offices as well, one might be more sensitive to communication issues, especially if one is actually fluent in ASL. The level of incredulity on the part of the Deaf participant is not out of line in the above scenario. The level of sociolinguistic insensitivity is, however, out of line and a cause for concern.

Another tangible description was given by a participant regarding phone etiquette as culturally unfit. The example relates to talking on the telephone within Deaf contexts. The person is on a cell phone . . . that's their thing, let them go. But when there is a mixed group around and the person continues to talk on the phone . . . and the person would throw out some snippets of information from the conversation and what they're talking about to pacify those in the area . . . That situation is not going to fly . . . And if you don't want all involved then show some respect by
removing yourself from the situation . . . go to a quiet, empty hallway, and talk away on your phone . . . So a lot of interpreters always feel like they are in this dilemma . . . They either feel nothing at all, or they know beyond a shadow of a doubt, but they choose a path of conformity.

The above example illustrated a Deaf perspective on the topic of what to do to show sensitivity in a Deaf environment when using the telephone. There are certain HEARING/Deaf topics invoking much consternation and concern, and interpreter use of the telephone around Deaf people seems to be one of these topics.

Below, a Deaf participant described an example of both observable behaviors and non-observable thought processes inherent in a cultural misstep when a HEARING person was introducing a Deaf person.

I would rather they [interpreters] view me as a friend, not as ‘my deaf friend.’ Does the deaf part have to be emphasized? I’ll say, hey we are just friends, but they will introduce me as ‘my deaf friend.’ Anyone can see that I’m deaf, why do you have to say that? Would someone say, ‘my black friend,’ ‘my Asian friend,’ that’s tokenism and I am not interested in that. The type of hearing people who want a specifically deaf friend instead of just wanting to hang out with people and they may happen to be deaf…

If a hearing person desires to become a HEARING person, he or she needs to interact with d/deaf people on more than a cursory level. Becoming friends with or on friendly terms with d/Deaf persons may present some cross-cultural challenges for which
interpreters should be prepared. Deaf participants described not wanting token gestures of friendship from persons who espouse being affiliated with Deaf-World culture.

Below is an example of an attitudinal miscue from a Deaf participant’s perspective. The participant described a communication situation with a mix of hearing, HEARING and d/Deaf interpreters and lay persons, many of whom were able to use ASL. The environment below was Deaf-centric with most people using visual language. There was a situation . . . a group . . . who were talking and were not signing . . . So a Deaf [person] . . . approached the group and said something. One woman jumped up and went off, saying she was a Coda, and she didn’t have to do this and that. People were stunned . . . the idea of an interpreter, I am assuming, is to provide information access to me. So if the cultural piece is missing or weak or missing language, I get ticked. What’s the point of you being here? You are reminding me now that this general information is “inaccessible” by you being here, but it is supposed to be the reason I have access, but it doesn’t make sense!

Some of the participants in the above scenario were interpreters. The Deaf participant expressed disbelief because interpreters, by trade, should provide communication access for d/Deaf Americans. However, in the above example, interpreters not signing in public spaces when they were (a) capable of doing so, (b) in a Deaf environment, and (c) choosing not to sign but to use spoken language, point to inaccessible, possibly unethical choices. Visually inaccessible environments perpetrated or enabled by ASL/English interpreters were salient themes from Deaf participants’ narratives.
The above section described tangible and intangible examples of Deaf-World culturally competent fit or unfit actions of HEARING interpreters as described by Deaf participants in this inquiry. Descriptions were taken from the categories of forward and situated in place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The Deaf participants’ narratives were derived from their impressions of HEARING interpreters’ actions while interfacing in the Deaf-World during work or free time. Overall, Deaf participants reported, within the framework of their narratives, more cultural miscues than examples of Deaf-World cultural competence as they observed ASL/English interpreter behavior.

Deaf participants conveyed deep reflections about HEARING interpreters as they look inward. They reflected and described aspects of HEARING interpreters’ attitudinal characteristics and cultural understandings. Deaf participants described pragmatic and philosophical examples of HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence and these reflections were salient and critical.

A participant discussed the processes associated with interpreters becoming HEARING when asked if interpreters were somehow changed or different from the lay public.

Interpreters are changed, yes; that's true. It simply has to be the case. However how much of a change that occurs would be seen on a continuum . . . Let’s say something went awry and a . . . civil rights event took place involving the Deaf community . . . how many interpreters would jump on the civil rights bandwagon and be like us? . . . Maybe they have internalized some Deaf culture . . . But they
would not be willing to get in it with us and passionately shout for us and fight for us. I don’t think so.

Interpreters are transformed by their affiliation with the Deaf-World. At its base level, learning a second language assumes a second culture is attached. The participant above questions the veracity of ASL/English alleged transformations.

Appendix D contains Deaf participants’ inner reflections of HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence and is titled ‘curriculum wisdom’ (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). Deaf participants provided numerous pragmatic and philosophical comments and select ruminations important to the field and appearing in Appendix D in the following categories: attitude; culture; interpreting; linguistic topics; students/teaching; and philosophy. Some comments seem to be outside of the rubric of culture. However, Kramsch (1998) stated language and culture were under one domain of experience. Many of the examples listed in Appendix D reflect the deepest levels of cultural thought. Pragmatic examples reflect comments made by participants based on their personal lived experiences. These comments were within their purview to apply practical action. Philosophical examples contained very challenging topics on which participants reflected and perhaps should be reflected on again at a later time.

Deaf participants’ comments in this section reflected complex ideas. The theme for research question one described complexities and tension between HEARING interpreters and Deaf constituents. The theme for research question two described similar findings.
Below, comments addressing perceived tension between HEARING interpreters and the Deaf-World are described. The range of complexity on the topic of what one participant called a ‘love/hate relationship’ between d/Deaf persons and HEARING interpreters is displayed in comments from Deaf participants. Within the data set, there were a significant number of comments from participants about Deaf/HEARING tensions. Deaf participants were asked to describe feelings surrounding the tension between Deaf and hearing people and were asked if they ‘liked’ hearing people and a few of those comments appear below.

It depends . . . on their attitude, their point of view. I can read . . . how they look at me . . . like some interpreters, they have an attitude—I can see it. Do I like hearing people? Most hearing people, no. There are lots of wonderful hearing people and some not so much. The same with deaf people, there are lots of great deaf people but some really aren't that great. I think in life you could see both are reflected. But in terms of the love-hate relationship between deaf and hearing people, yes it's there, as a community, as the interpreting world, yes it’s there. I think it’s based on experience, peoples’ backgrounds, deaf people/hearing people how did they grow up, what was their experience, and what did they internalize on the way.

. . . At the same time, it is 4:00 am and you’re in the hospital and an interpreter comes walking in and you feel like—I love interpreters! I love you for showing up!!
The feelings expressed by Deaf participants illustrated positive and negative aspects of ASL/English interpreters in the Deaf-World, reinforcing the idea of the love/hate relationship.

A Deaf participant supported interpreters with the comment below.

My discussions with people in the Deaf community have been . . . “well all these interpreters are flocking to VRS and there are not enough community interpreters.” . . . that is true, but we haven’t been treating interpreters well. Because with interpreters it is either feast or famine. Interpreters, when they freelance, they don’t know if they will have jobs the next month or not. With VRS, interpreters know that they can get steady hours, they could feed their families, plus they have exposure to a variety of signers and can improve their skills through the work. So, to complain and say that interpreters are this and that. What is the deal with the insults? How can we build relationships and connections?

The participant understood the life and work of contemporary ASL/English interpreters.

A participant below described the state of the union between HEARING interpreters and Deaf persons.

[Important factors are] . . . attitude, the ability to hold a conversation in ASL.

There seems to be 3 categories of interpreters. Those who don’t have ‘it;’ those who have ‘it;’ and those who think they have ‘it,’ they are all about it, like a poser, but they don’t, and I want to say, ‘excuse me, but you don’t’ . . . I think with the first category, they know they are limited, they try, are just going about their day to day—are okay with it; the second category, the person might not have ever put it
in their mind to achieve ‘it,’ but the community has said, ‘you are welcome in; you are one of us,’ they are brought into the fold and look around one day and say, ‘Oh, how did I get here?’ I think the community collectively ushers the person in; the third category relates to the person the community never ushered in, but the person acts like they are part of the community. They are like, ‘Oh I love deaf people so much; I am all about them’ and you are like, ‘whoa whoa whoa’ . . . stay back . . . those are the three categories and it is so easy to recognize them.

The participant clearly delineated how interpreters are viewed from a Deaf perspective. It remains to be seen if the same could be said of other d/Deaf persons.

Participants had the opportunity to reflect on their actions as they looked inward. Deaf participants reflected and described aspects of HEARING interpreters’ attitudinal characteristics and cultural understandings of Deaf-World cultural competence. Deaf participants’ reflected deeply and described pragmatic and philosophical examples of HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence in this enigmatic field.

Significant statements (Creswell, 2007) were framed within the three dimensional space model characteristics of outward, backward, forward, situated in place and inward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bicultural data illustrated participants’ authentic, adaptable and familiar Deaf-World and other cultural contexts leading them to becoming Deaf interpreters. Many of the scenarios described were familiar in the Deaf-World, such as a generationally Deaf family and a d/Deaf participant who was the only Deaf member of his family. One participant was from a family where American mainstream culture was not the main culture, or C1 of the family. All of the cultures described were
authentic, organic, and adaptable. Participants, in their respective families of origin, or outward contexts, learned to negotiate multicultural landscapes, including family constellations with multiple cultures represented as well as institutions with inherent larger macro- and micro-cultures attached. The participants were capable representatives of bi- or multicultural backgrounds and utilized their lived experiences to their advantage as bi- and multicultural language mediators.

Discussion surrounding the formative biographical experiences characteristic gave participants a chance to go back in time, or backward, and recall some experiences leading them to the world of interpreting. With the relatively newly recognized field of Deaf interpreting, it was interesting to note the narratives told by Deaf persons who chose to go into the field. Two of the examples were organic in nature with interpreting coming from necessity in respective family structures. One participant was a trained Deaf interpreter, a rarity in 2014. HEARING and Deaf participant data related to the first two characteristics in looking outward and backward in their journeys to becoming interpreters indicated similar characteristics.

The discussion of the perceptions of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence characteristic included tangible or intangible actions of HEARING interpreters as they displayed cultural competence within the forward context. Examples of HEARING interpreters’ tangible cultural miscues were described by Deaf participants in this inquiry more than examples of tangible cultural competence. Deaf participants did not describe a significant number of tangible culturally competence actions by HEARING interpreters within the data set.
Participant data regarding the perception of HEARING interpreter cultural miscues looked specifically at tangible and intangible examples Deaf participants had observed in regards to HEARING interpreters’ unfit actions. Deaf participants described HEARING interpreters’ unfit actions or cultural incompetence more often than culturally fit actions within the situated in place context.

Discussion of the critical reflections characteristic explored the inner thoughts of Deaf participants within the inward context. This category seems to be similar to situated in place. However, I needed a place to categorize the collective reflections and wisdom of the participants. There were many descriptions by Deaf participants I categorized as curriculum wisdom (Henderson & Gornik, 2007), or significant considerations based on their perceptions of the state of the field.

Deaf participants presented themselves in this inquiry as consumers, professional interpreters, and mentors for Deaf and HEARING interpreters alike. Some of them also worked as teachers and workshop presenters. Deaf participants had reaped rich experiences from being in the field. Participants reflected intensely on the field describing pragmatic and philosophical examples of their perceptions of HEARING interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence in this esoteric field of which they had great understanding.

With their understanding of the field, Deaf participants were able informants regarding avowal of Deaf-World efficacy and alliance. They claimed the Deaf-World a viable cultural context with which they were allied. As Deaf-World members, they ascribed ASL/English interpreters affiliation or alliance status with conditions. They
assigned a level of status through responses to questions, recognizing and describing interpreter culturally competent understandings, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

**Research Question Two**

Research question two included a global query because the gist of the question related to overall perceptions of all participants about the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence of ASL/English interpreters. Analysis of question two contained discussion of characteristics pointing to the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) of the inquiry: becoming HEARING includes co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation and alliance.

Research question two consisted of the following: What are Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds and work of interpreter practitioners? The theme of research question two consisted of the following: participants described a culturally responsive, collectively managed organic system of reflexive cross-cultural avowal and ascription co-constructed between HEARING interpreters and Deaf communities. This dynamic system led to fluid and conditional development, at various levels, of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence and described the essence of the phenomenon in this inquiry: participants described co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or alliance. Below, significant statements point toward themes and the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Statements and/or themes with saliency are described below.
Culturally Responsive

Expert Deaf and HEARING participants described being responsive to cross-cultural attributes when in situations where the focus on two cultures was warranted. Below, a HEARING participant married to a Deaf spouse described her experiences and mindful presence while interfacing cross-culturally.

I’m very conscious about decisions I make . . . So when I’m with my husband there’s a lot of times where I’m just interpreting because that’s second nature to me. Other people I talk with a lot never interpret for family members or whatever, that’s never been my issue and I’m very comfortable with it in a situation. It’s like when we go to a restaurant, I will or won’t (use my voice)—but then there are specific times when I just want to be with you and not have that extra talk to me first so I won’t talk. I’m not pretending to be deaf, we’re just, you know, like a Spanish speaking family that speaks Spanish instead of English.

Part of being culturally responsive included critical thinking and decision making, attributes discussed previously in this document. Showing one’s alliance to the Deaf community would require intentionality of purpose as exemplified by the quote above. Cultural responsiveness was described by most of the expert HEARING participants, even though two of them reported not spending significant amounts of time with Deaf people. The two who did not report spending significant amounts of time with Deaf people were nonetheless respectful of the Deaf-World and had been more connected in the past and understood cultural responsiveness.
Collectively Managed Community Gatekeeping

The Deaf-World is by, for and of Deaf people. They maintain equilibrium of it in their own way, on their own terms. A comment from a HEARING interpreter married to a Deaf spouse described when her Deaf husband stood up at various Deaf events and made comments about the exclusion of HEARING or hearing people at Deaf events.

My husband . . . when he’s been interviewed . . . [or] at a huge Deaf party, and he got up on the stage he said . . . ‘get rid of all the hearing people’ . . . and I was like what?!? . . . no your wife is hearing, your kids are hearing—so it’s . . . in there . . . it’s not part of our conversation but . . . when he has been in public . . . there’s something there and I wonder what that is . . .

The above quote was recognized by this HEARING participant as containing an attribute difficult to identify. Within the experiences of participants, there are instances when seemingly insulting remarks were made, but participants’ reactions were generally tepid.

The Deaf community manages the collectivity of the group. HEARING expert participants, with a few exceptions, would generally not be perplexed by issues like the one above.

Deaf people manage the collective nature of resistance to oppression and the struggle for civil rights. A HEARING participant below discussed her involvement within the Deaf community related to such encounters.

I think that I would only want to be involved in the fight if I were invited by everyone and they wanted me there for whatever reason. I don’t think they want us in their fight.
This participant was well aware of the expectations and her ‘place’ within the community, allowing the collective system to direct her actions.

Deaf communities are gatekeepers of local actions. Deaf participants described the ways Deaf people manage the community and HEARING participants reported adhering to Deaf community expectations. One Deaf participant described the monitoring activities from a community perspective.

The community is the force that allows them entrance. The community does not have an open door and does not allow just anyone entrance. I think the community is resistant to most who try to enter.

Deaf community members are gatekeepers of levels of ‘membership.’ The levels of Deaf community involvement and how the system is managed are in need of additional research.

**Organic, Fluid, and Reflexive System**

When asked about interaction between the hearing and Deaf worlds, a participant below described a fluid or organic nature to interactions, not consciously switching behaviors, but crossing cultures unconsciously in ways outside her awareness. Behaviors and ways-of-being are reflexive or spontaneous, developing out of need within the community and learned by those who are willing to place themselves into the community.

The HEARING participant described her lived experience *being* in the Deaf-World.

It’s beyond (awareness) in one sense and then there is a knowledge of it . . . sometimes if a kid is screaming in the other room that kind of thing . . . But I’m not thinking how to maneuver through the world differently, I just am.
She described being able to hear a child screaming, a reaction to which hearing mothers would be particularly sensitive. Sound-based responses are handled differently by HEARING people in the Deaf-World. This participant described reflexive behaviors and actions, responding to Deaf-centric environments spontaneously and appropriately.

The reflexivity of cross-cultural interactions, happening without much forethought, may be positive or may be problematic. Below, a Deaf participant described being reminded of hearing status in a Deaf/HEARING interaction.

They are hearing after all. I might be absorbed in talking to someone and forget for a minute, and then something seemingly insignificant will happen and the culture creeps in even though the person may be a Coda, but still, these little things will happen and there it is.

It is in the interstitial human spaces (Bhabha, 1994) of culture where one’s thoughts, perceptions and attitudes reside. Complicated conversations, such as the one above, are part of the culturally responsive interpreter’s life.

**Development of Deaf-World Cultural Competence**

A Deaf participant described the type of hearing person Deaf people are interested in interfacing with. The participant, in speaking for the wider Deaf community, revealed possible opinions from a more collective Deaf-World view. The comments are in line with other examples of tensions and complexities between Deaf and HEARING persons.

Many hearing people are . . . ignorant about deaf people . . . But if they are open-minded that is important . . . If however they have an attitude of being standoffish, looking down on deaf people, . . . I’m not interested in them and it
has nothing to do with because they're hearing it's because of their attitude... It is
the same thing about deaf people if they're not willing to meet half way, I have no
interest. So I don't necessarily want to put a negative label on all hearing people
simply because they're hearing . . . If the hearing people are willing to give some
and I'm willing to give some, I call that meeting halfway . . . You have to be sort
of careful here. I grew up with a lot of deaf friends who would say that they
couldn't stand hearing people. And I would ask them you mean you hate all
hearing people? And they would back track somewhat and say, no not all hearing
people. So I would say, so to clarify, you mean you can't stand people who . . .
those who really don't care enough to learn anything about your language or your
culture . . . and they would say to me, oh yeah that's what I’m talking about.

Developing Deaf-World cultural competence is a complex set of processes as illustrated
in the above comment, because it is very difficult to measure one’s attitude and affective
related behaviors. One Deaf participant simply stated, “I think that sometimes the Deaf
perspective is missing” from ASL/English interpreters’ work, a seemingly simple
statement with serious and far-reaching undertones.

Co-Constructed Community and Cultural Connections

Co-construction of community and cultural connections requires willingness on
the part of HEARING and Deaf persons in a local community. All participants framed
remarks within the context of Deaf/HEARING interactions. Deaf participants desired to
see HEARING interpreters interact within the Deaf-World. Most HEARING participants
were willing to interact within their respective Deaf communities. Two HEARING
inconsistencies in Deaf-World interaction were seen in the data set, but they did acknowledge the role of the Deaf community in their entrée into the Deaf-World.

When asked about feelings regarding hearing colleagues who were not into the Deaf-World, the HEARING participant below described strong feelings.

But the people who don’t get it? I have had conversations with them to try to pry into that and say, why are you involved if you really don’t want to be involved? Like if you are really not interested in ASL and the Deaf culture and the Deaf community, and deaf people . . . why are you here? Why are you involved? I think it’s fascinating.

How would co-construction be realized without the involvement of both Deaf and HEARING persons working in tandem? One reason I wanted to interview Deaf and HEARING experts was to discern their level of connection to the Deaf-World.

**Deaf-World Affiliation or Alliance**

All HEARING participants described alliance with the Deaf-World more than affiliation. Deaf participants provided examples of affiliation and alliance. The quote below describes the difference between affiliation or alliance with the Deaf-World.

Affiliation connotes a tangential or cursory connection with Deaf people or the local Deaf community. Alliance connotes deeper relationships with more of a supportive and possibly global association. One participant provided a succinct glimpse of the difference between affiliation and alliance.

It looks like interpreters show up from 9–5 to collect their pay check and leave. I am not sure why interpreters act that way, are they afraid? I would love to see
interpreters show up and be involved. In terms of leadership, yes, interpreters could stand back and let the deaf people take the lead and shout out the issues—but support the whole.

Learning how to be in alliance with the Deaf community would involve more complex processes than affiliation. HEARING participants in the study, for the most part, first and foremost possessed the proper amenability and posture of deference toward the Deaf-World encouraging alliance rather than affiliation.

**Avowal and Ascription**

Figure 4 represents the hypothetical concepts of claiming, or avowal and assigning, or ascribing affiliate status to HEARING persons desiring entrance into their respective Deaf communities. Avowal is how one presents to others, or the presentation of self and ascription relates to what other people perceive and communicate about another’s presentation or identity (Collier, 1998; Fong, 2003).

All 10 HEARING participants in the study presented initially toward the Deaf community in an attitude of avowal, of a desire for affiliation with it. Participants described their experience being presented to the Deaf-World. Five presented to the Deaf-World in college, two at birth, one during middle and high school years, one post-college and one within a Jehovah’s Witnesses congregation. All 10 were ascribed some level of status within the communities with which they were affiliated.
Levels of ascribed status were fluid and conditional. Fluid status was earned because it occurred through an amorphous, enigmatic set of processes requiring action on the part of the HEARING interpreter and citizens of the Deaf community(s) with which the person was affiliated. One’s status could be conditional because it may be rescinded or weakened, through actions, real or imagined, committed by the interpreter, perceived by citizens of the Deaf community(s) with which the interpreter was affiliated, but possibly by the interpreter’s abstention. The ascribed status would best be explained by Deaf individuals in the respective communities where interpreters reside.

Figure 4. Recursive co-construction of interpreter Deaf-World connections
A participant described the delicate avowal and ascription processes. The interaction opened when the researcher posed a series of questions. The questions reiterated what the participant had said earlier, as well as comments recalled from past interviews with other participants.

I think they initiate the contact and try to enter into the community, but the community is the force that allows them entrance. The community does not have an open door and does not allow just anyone entrance. I think the community is resistant to most who try to enter. There is what I call a testing phase, where someone is sized up, they continue to learn the language, someone keeps an eye on them, and they are deemed to be acceptable or not. Once they start to learn the language we can see that they're getting better and better, that they are able to communicate with us. Then they start to learn about culture, develop cultural sensitivity, learn about the norms and values of the community. . . . The community says, ‘That person understands us.’ So that is when the community comes in closer. The invitation is extended to a deeper involvement. . . . Also, there is a test of the person's attitude toward the Deaf community. Does the person have a good attitude, is the person positive about the Deaf community, is the person willing to use the right approach, ask the right questions, approach the community in an appropriate manner? If that is the case, then Deaf people are the ones who control opening or closing the door to entrance into the community. . . . I have seen some hearing people run headlong into the community thinking that
they have the right to do that. The door is closed to them, but they burst through it anyway. That doesn’t work.

The above scenario described a fundamental piece of the meaning of this inquiry. One would not be an affiliate of the Deaf-World without first gaining entrance into it. Avowal and ascription are complicated concepts with interdisciplinary roots and in need of further study.

Table 14 show descriptions of avowal and ascription taken from participants’ narratives. The terms avowal and ascription come out of cultural studies data, and were not applied to this inquiry until data analysis began.

Eight out of 10 participants described active (at the time of the interview) avowal toward and ascription from their respective and/or multiple Deaf communities. Two participants had avowed and been ascribed status in the Deaf community at one time; however, status at the time of the interview was tentative for each of them for different reasons. One participant had a negative experience within the Deaf-World, causing her to reduce time and affiliation to it. The other participant had not been as active in the Deaf community for some time, became terminally ill and passed away.
Table 14

Avowal of Affiliation/Alliance and Ascription by Deaf-World Citizens; HEARING Participants’ Descriptions of Instances of Avowal and Ascription in Their Respective Deaf Communities and Current Deaf-World Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Avowal D-W efficacy and affiliation</th>
<th>Ascription status by Deaf community</th>
<th>Ascription description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>By large Deaf Community</td>
<td>Accepted by Deaf persons who formerly rejected her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>At birth (Coda)</td>
<td>By family and several large Deaf Communities; Deaf spouse</td>
<td>Ascribed by family, Deaf school and now husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>By large Deaf Community; Deaf spouse</td>
<td>Ascribed by various Deaf-World citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Middle/High School</td>
<td>By Black Deaf Community and large Deaf community</td>
<td>Ascribed by citizens of the General Deaf and Black Deaf Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>By medium sized Deaf Community</td>
<td>Asked to interpret by Deaf persons, then mentored by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>At birth (Coda)</td>
<td>By family and several medium-sized Deaf communities</td>
<td>Ascribed by the Deaf-World, left it behind and then returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Post-college</td>
<td>By fiancé/husband; Black Deaf community and medium-sized Deaf Community</td>
<td>Ascribed by Deaf husband, Black Deaf community, then Deaf community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 14 (continued)

**Avowal of Affiliation/Alliance and Ascription by Deaf-World Citizens; HEARING Participants’ Descriptions of Instances of Avowal and Ascription in Their Respective Deaf Communities and Current Deaf-World Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Avowal D-W efficacy and affiliation</th>
<th>Ascription status by Deaf community</th>
<th>Ascription description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Post-high school</td>
<td>By large Deaf Community of Jehovah’s Witnesses</td>
<td>Ascribed by Deaf Community of Jehovah’s Witnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>College; at age five (d/Deaf brother)</td>
<td>By medium-sized Deaf community</td>
<td>Ascribed by Coda at young age; later by Deaf IEP instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>By medium-sized Deaf community</td>
<td>Ascribed by Deaf of Deaf children?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Research Question Two**

Descriptions of avowals and ascriptions within the Deaf-World gave a window into the processes involved in the highly complicated development of Deaf-World cultural competence in ASL/English interpreters. The transformational actions taking one from a hearing person to becoming a HEARING person were described by participants and explicated in this chapter.

On a practical note, HEARING participants in this inquiry did not have direct affiliation with nor avow their intentions to enter the Deaf-World to the Deaf participants in this study. The Deaf participants did not necessarily ascribe status to the HEARING
participants in this inquiry. HEARING and Deaf participants were describing processes they have seen or experienced in generic terms.

Research question two consisted of the following: What are Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners? HEARING interpreter experts provided personal currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) narratives of their lived experiences (van Manen, 1990) entering into and maintaining citizenship within the Deaf-World. Deaf interpreter experts provided personal currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) narratives of their lived experiences (van Manen, 1990) coming alongside HEARING colleagues and witnessing their behavioral, cognitive and attitudinal actions at work and as affiliates or allies of the Deaf-World. HEARING participants provided narrative descriptions of their avowal toward the Deaf-World. They also provided narrative descriptions of ascription from Deaf-World citizens. Deaf participants described perceptions of HEARING interpreters’ tangible, intangible and attitudinal Deaf-World cultural competence and reasons why interpreters are ascribed status in the Deaf-World or not. They also described examples of HEARING interpreters’ avowal toward the Deaf-World.

Data, in aggregate, pointed to the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) described by Deaf and HEARING participants. Collectively, participants described interpreter co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or alliance in the process of transforming from a hearing person to a HEARING person. HEARING participants described the presentation of self to their
respective Deaf communities. Deaf participants described the fluid and conditional
designation of some interpreters as being welcomed into Deaf communities. Avowal and
ascription processes were not mutually exclusive; they were described as co-constructed
Deaf-World/interpreter realities.

Closing Thoughts

Participants, HEARING and Deaf, described lived experiences interfacing in the
Deaf-World with generous currere (Pinar 1975, 2006) narratives filled with cross-cultural
insights and straightforward clarity. Participants’ descriptions were analyzed and
significant statements (Creswell, 2007) of their lives and work as ASL/English
interpreters emerged. Significant statements were blended to create the central
phenomenon or essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) of the inquiry.

Deaf and HEARING participants described the willing adaptation to each other’s
lives and cultures through cross-cultural interactions. Participants described interpreter
co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or
alliance in their lived experience of becoming HEARING. Distinct characteristics were
discerned from HEARING and Deaf participant narratives and fused together to illustrate
an example of tacit, or unwritten guidelines describing how hearing people become
HEARING interpreters.

HEARING participants, who were expert ASL/English interpreter practitioners,
described their lived experiences as affiliates of the Deaf-World. Narratives of
interviewees pointed to authentic bicultural contexts as each participant described their
respective, salient multicultural background. All participants had made the acquaintance
of a d/Deaf person by the age of 19. Eight participants had met a d/Deaf person by the age of 14. Early exposure to d/Deaf persons was a noteworthy attribute in the data.

Participants were well aware, through critical reflection, of the local and global complexities of their work. Despite immense obstacles, HEARING participants’ descriptions showed fidelity, respect, and honor toward the Deaf-World and to Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009).

Deaf participants, who were expert ASL/English interpreter practitioners, described their lived experiences as local and global members of the Deaf-World. Narratives of interviewees pointed to authentic bicultural contexts as each participant described their respective bi- or multicultural background. All participants had impactful cross-cultural experiences leading them to becoming an interpreter. Deaf participants were well acquainted with local and global contexts of the ASL/English discipline and through critical reflection, were able to provide rich narratives with multiple descriptions and examples of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

Deaf participants provided more examples of culturally unfit actions of HEARING colleagues than those deemed culturally fit. Tensions and complexities between Deaf and HEARING colleagues were reported as a Deaf-World reality. Deaf participants described examples of assigning status to select ASL/English interpreters and not to others. Participants described Deaf/Hearing collegial relationships, the state of the interpreting field and suggestions for improvement. Despite cross-cultural tension reported by both Deaf and HEARING participants, HEARING participants described strategies for managing complexities in their work.
The representation of HEARING and Deaf participant voice in the qualitative description of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence was achieved. The researcher completed, for purposes of this inquiry data reduction (Wolcott, 1994) of detailed interview transcripts, followed by mindful (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) and iterative review of data analysis.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Deaf people are more able to multitask, looking at a computer, scanning the environment, checking in, making sure everything is okay . . . Awkward situations happen mostly with hearing people who do not have the ability to broaden the scope of their senses . . . Coda have less trouble with this, more natural interaction occurs . . . people who grew up in the hearing world, no connection to the Deaf-World, if you try and get their attention, at times they blankly stare, without much response. (Participant K)

Deaf people and HEARING people live in two divergent sensory worlds (Bahan, 2010) embedded within dissonant cultures. In the opening narrative in Chapter I, I described a scenario in which HEARING interpreters were not adhering to visual norms of an ostensibly Deaf-centric environment. The above quote describes a similar scenario, a basic difference between Deaf and HEARING peoples’ lived sensory, sociolinguistic experience. The differences seem simple, yet are intricately complex.

Interpreters are sometimes referred to as bilingual, bicultural mediators (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001; Sherwood, 1987); however Fant (1990) questions if interpreters are worthy of the bilingual/bicultural title. Smith (1996) stated most professional interpreters are neither really bilingual nor bicultural. Grosjean (1996) wrote bilingualism and biculturalism do not necessarily co-occur; however to work as an interpreter assumes bilingual and bicultural skills. An interpreter works with at least two languages and cultures and needs to have an excellent command of both (Pöchhacker,
Do NAD-RID certified ASL/English practitioners meet criteria of having excellent command of at least two languages and cultures? Are ASL/English interpreters worthy of being called bilingual and bicultural mediators or worthy of the title, in a word, interpreter based on the above definition from the work of Pöchhacker (2009)? These questions were not addressed in this inquiry and need to be explored in subsequent research.

There is need for additional research regarding topics of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence (Fant, 1990; Rasmussen, 2012). This inquiry has been an exploration of the complicated (Pinar, 1975, 2006) cultural conversation utilizing the views of Deaf and HEARING participants as they described their lived experiences and perspectives of ASL/English interpreters interfacing with the Deaf-World.

Findings and implications from this qualitative study prioritized the place of culture in the work of ASL/English interpreter practitioners. Culture is ubiquitous and ethereal in life, and in ASL/English interpreted contexts. Therefore C2 cultural decisions, dependent upon one’s C2 cultural competence, may pose challenges, especially to those without advanced knowledge of Deaf-World culture. Experts represented in this inquiry reported tenacity, knowledge and sophistication, not perfection, in the area of Deaf-World cultural competence. Through narrative imagery, they depicted culturally responsive, collectively managed organic descriptions of reflexive cross-cultural avowal and ascription co-constructed between HEARING interpreters and Deaf communities, leading to various levels of practitioner Deaf-World cultural competence.
Becoming HEARING includes co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation and alliance. The inquiry highlighted the problem of insufficient information regarding HEARING interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. In the field of ASL/English interpreting, with the exception of some Codas and Sodas, not much is known about how hearing people become HEARING interpreters. Within the milieu of the ASL/English discipline, it is not known if interpreters authentically achieve and fully acquire Deaf-World cultural competence.

Through the stated purpose of the study, to investigate Deaf and hearing ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence, the intention was achieved. The overarching aim identified meaning Deaf and hearing interpreters ascribed to HEARING ASL/English interpreters’ Deaf-World cultural competence including association with the culture and people of the Deaf community. This study sought and did address minimal representation of practitioner voice, qualitatively describing lived experiences regarding ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

An auxiliary aim of the inquiry was to bring together and systematize contemporary, cross-disciplinary literature from such fields as cultural psychology, second language acquisition, translation, interpreting, and intercultural studies to amplify IEPs’ cross-cultural curricula and make recommendations for future research. Deaf and HEARING study participants possessed bicultural characteristics and their descriptions assisted in amplifying aspects of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural
There is need in the interpreting field to describe, assess, and classify bicultural abilities of actively working and pre-service practitioners.

Below, I reflect on inquiry findings and implications found within the data. The road map of this chapter includes the following: a multi-layered examination of the two research questions; findings applied to related literature; findings applied to relevant theoretical constructs; Deaf-World perspectives; application of key theoretical frameworks such as co-cultural theory and community cultural wealth; models of cultural competence; implications of findings; contextualization and co-construction; limitations; recommendations for further research; and concluding remarks.

**Overview of Research Question One**

Expert HEARING participants described the following significant statements (Creswell, 2007) within transcript data: they reported authentic bicultural affiliations; formative experiences leading to ASL/English interpreting work; recognition of Deaf/hearing power differentials, complexities, and tension; recognition of Deaf-gain; and amenability regarding critical reflections, enthusiasm, fidelity and intentional actions toward the Deaf-World. Synoptic themes of research question one A found HEARING participants described within their narratives avowal of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. The expert status of participants, as well as collective years of experience, knowledge and wisdom created rich data synthesizing their combined lived experiences. Statement synthesis led to emergence of themes describing Deaf-World cultural competence of HEARING participants in this study.
Question one A regarded HEARING participants, their genuine connections to and compelling support of the Deaf-World. To obtain a well-rounded perspective of HEARING participants in this study, Deaf persons within communities in which participants’ were affiliated would need to be surveyed about the quality of individual affiliations, alliances, and linguistic fluency. Significant statements found in this inquiry are expanded below.

Lived participant experiences, born out of authentic life trajectories of all the HEARING participants, demonstrated significant cultural connections outside of American mainstream culture. Participant bicultural connections reminded me of the proverbial chicken and egg impasse as it related to participants (not including Soda and Coda participants) being drawn to the interpreting field. Were participants drawn to the interpreting field because they already understood cross-cultural dynamics, or did they understand cross-cultural dynamics because of familiarity with transcultural relationships in the Deaf-World? Were participants predisposed to interest in the inquiry topic because of inherent cross-cultural affiliations? Nine out of ten HEARING participants expressed keen interest in the bicultural issue being studied, and this led me to believe they naturally and inherently had more than a passing interest in the topic.

As an interpreter taking a currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) look back on my own lived experience, I realized the importance of events (Badiou, 2006), meeting d/Deaf people, and how various experiences had impacted my life. As participants described early events, I reflected on the possible significance of life trajectories in guiding hearing people to change their cultural status and cross borders into biculturalism as they become affiliates of the
Deaf-World. I doubt it coincidental that eight out of ten participants met d/Deaf people before the age of fourteen and all ten met someone d/Deaf by age 19. Badiou (2006) describes a time in one’s life when the ordinary is disrupted and an event breaks through one’s consciousness. Savickas (2005) discussed career choices being influenced by life themes and various factors in one’s life such as past memories and present experiences.

When participants responded with interest in the study, I did not ask them if they had prior connections to Deaf individuals. I was surprised to learn about participants’ experiences and exposure to d/Deaf individuals at an early, impressionable age, especially since they were able to recall and clearly describe impactful past events. Perhaps participants’ early experiences encouraged the development of intrinsic empathy toward d/Deaf persons.

Empathic characteristics were evident within participants’ narratives as all reported recognition of Deaf/HEARING power differentials, complexities and tensions in Deaf/HEARING relationships. Even the only participant to initially deny negative relationships between Deaf and HEARING people, later in her interview, described examples of tension and complicated factors in Deaf-World interactions. There were numerous ideas and thoughts in participants’ narratives, but one issue causing heated intellectual debate centered on the idea of Deaf people as disabled. The public narrative of Deaf people in American mainstream culture is complicated, largely veiled in myth and typically framed within a disability model (Padden, 1989). The Deaf-World has attempted for decades to dispel misunderstandings and stereotypes in the fight for equality (Padden, 1989). Interpreters may be involved, to some degree, in this fight for equality. Padden (1980, 1989) stated the goals of American d/Deaf communities sometimes stem from the
values of Deaf and hearing people. Are interpreters part of change processes in some ways? Are interpreters change agents in the Deaf-World for good or ill?

Deaf-World citizens and the dialectic of disability are complex topics and most participants were able to speak to the issue with forethought and insight. In-depth consideration of d/Deaf persons and disability is outside the scope of this inquiry. However, discussion of ideas surrounding ideas such as disability access, marginalization, disempowerment, and interpreters are important topics within the Deaf-World and ones in which interpreters and Deaf persons should engage (Suggs, 2012; Zangara, 2014).

In response to issues raised above, there were concepts found in data regarding HEARING participants’ capacity to deal with power differentials, complexities and tension in Deaf/HEARING relations. Participants reported cross-cultural examples demonstrating the capacity, desire, willingness and finesse to culturally mediate when appropriate. To get a 360 view of cultural mediation would require d/Deaf persons’ perspectives on HEARING participants’ cross-cultural resolutions to cultural dilemmas, something that did not happen. HEARING and Deaf persons do not always see resolutions to cross-cultural situations compatibly (Suggs, 2012; Zangara, 2014), a possible idea for future research. Learning implicit cultural ‘soft skills’ (Stuard, 2008) is not an easy task. However, if soft skills such as cultural mediation, ethical decision making and negotiation are not applied, tension may disrupt interactions (Forestal, 2004).

Despite participants’ descriptions of issues, they reported the capacity to see positive salient attributes of the Deaf-World or Deaf-gain (Bauman & Murray, 2009). Lakoff’s (2005) frame theory, situates concepts in multiple layers of meaning, allowing for
more than one perspective to emerge. Framing being Deaf in a positive light instead of negatively allowed Bauman and Murray (2009) to define Deaf American life not by what is lost, but by what is gained. All HEARING participants, at one time, were able to appreciate the Deaf-World from a center (Padden & Humphries, 1988) created by Deaf people themselves. Eight out of ten participants reported a joie de vivre (described by one participant by the Hebrew concept of ‘naches’) in Deaf-World interactions. Two participants came to a place where they had disengaged somewhat from the Deaf-World, however, they still reported understanding, admiration and respect for the essence of what it means to be an American Deaf-World citizen.

Participants described through their narratives, amenability regarding critical reflection, fidelity and intentional actions (avowing affiliation) toward the Deaf-World. All participants were able to reflect critically on the questions I asked during the interviews. Their responses were full of sophisticated insights, discretion and commitment to the Deaf-World. Even one participant whose negative experience decreased her affiliation with her local Deaf community still spoke about the Deaf-World with respect. Participants’ actions toward the Deaf-World were evident as they described loyalty and intentionality regarding affiliation. This fidelity toward the Deaf-World circles back to their collective avowal of affiliation/alliance within their local Deaf communities and to the wider global Deaf community as well. While interviewing participants, I was not surprised by descriptions of willingness to be involved in and loyalty to the Deaf-World and how strongly some of them felt through expressions of deep affection for their work with Deaf people. Realizing the state of some obstructive dynamics in Deaf/HEARING interactions
(Forestal, 2004), and participant acknowledgement of negativity, there is reason for hope because of HEARING participants’ descriptions of fidelity toward the Deaf-World as they sometimes navigate difficult border crossings in their life and work. Bridging two worlds as dichotomous as American mainstream culture and Deaf-World culture challenges those who live within those spaces.

Research question one B consisted of the following: What characteristics did Deaf expert practitioners describe about their understandings, perceptions and attitudes regarding Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds of HEARING ASL/English interpreters? Through data reduction, the following significant statements emerged for research question one B. Expert Deaf participants described the following patterns within the data set; they displayed authentic bicultural affiliations; formative experiences leading to ASL/English interpreting work; descriptions of HEARING interpreters’ culturally competent actions and miscues; tensions among interpreters and Deaf persons; and reflections about HEARING interpreters’ affiliation with the Deaf-World. Synoptic themes for research question one B were the following: Deaf participants described avowal of Deaf-World alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy as well as conditional ascription of interpreter affiliation/alliance.

Understandings, perceptions and attitudes of Deaf participants were evident per their descriptions of a variety of significant statements (Creswell, 2007). The expert status of participants, their years within the Deaf-World, and their knowledge and wisdom reflected their collective lived experiences. Their experiences were born out of authentic life trajectories as all of the Deaf participants were born into a cultural context inherently
within the borders of but separate from American mainstream culture. All three Deaf participants were born d/Deaf and expressed a Deaf identity now. One participant was born to Deaf parents and the other two were born to hearing parents. How a deaf person becomes a culturally Deaf person is outside the scope of this inquiry.

Deaf participants hailed from innate, authentic bicultural contexts, establishing credibility as bilingual/bicultural individuals. One participant, from a generational Deaf family, was a native ASL/English bilingual/bicultural. Two participants from hearing families were near-native bilingual/bicultural persons, one possessing an English L1 and ASL L2. The other Deaf participant possessed linguistic abilities in English, ASL and a European language, essentially working with L1/L2/L3 and C1/C2/C3, with varied fluency levels in the languages/cultures in question. It was obvious as Deaf persons, they inhabited life in the Deaf-World and because they lived in the United States, American mainstream culture as well. They all described rich past bicultural experiences as well as travel to other countries.

The three certified Deaf interpreter (CDI) participants described formative biographical trajectories in their lived experiences. Their personal experiences helped to focus understandings of HEARING interpreters’ work because Deaf participants understood life as ASL/English bilingual/biculturals. Two participants were well aware of the moments in their lives leading to entrance into the interpreting field. One participant held CDI certification and briefly described her educational process as a trained interpreter, but did not describe, at the time of the interview, an impactful moment in her life leading her into the field. All participants possessed well-developed interpreter skill sets, partially
derived from their rich cross-cultural experiences. Discussing and evaluating CDIs’ past biographical experiences is outside the scope of this inquiry, but does add value to findings. Past biographical or currere (Pinar, 1975, 2006) experiences assisted participants in recognizing and describing bicultural characteristics, perceptions and attitudes within their own and HEARING interpreters’ lifeworlds. They were meta-aware of trajectories and requirements of the interpreting field, recognizing attributes in their own as well as HEARING interpreters’ lived experiences.

Deaf participants provided a number of descriptions and examples of HEARING interpreters’ culturally competent fit and unfit actions while working or as affiliates of the Deaf-World. Overwhelmingly, participants reported examples of miscues and illustrated stories about what they had witnessed and essentially wished they had not. One participant mentioned, he was doubtful interpreters would want to ‘jump on the bandwagon with us’ in the struggle for civil rights. Issues related to disability, marginality, oppression and other civil rights topics were themes in the narratives of HEARING participants also. Perhaps there is a lack of understanding between Deaf consumers’ perspectives and expectations in this realm and HEARING interpreters’ capacities and amenability toward joining in work outside of interpreting boundaries, such as civil rights causes.

Deaf/HEARING tensions were reported in Deaf participant narratives and supported in the work of Forestal (2004). HEARING participants reported multiple examples of complexities and tension between themselves and Deaf persons as well. Tensions described by Deaf participants have a connection to HEARING unfit
cross-cultural actions observed by Deaf participants, were noted by all three participants and reported in Chapter IV.

There was a wide range of topics on the minds of Deaf participants. Patterns noted in Deaf participant narratives came from a collectivist perspective with inherently high context (Hall, 1977; Mindess et al., 2006) discourse. High context messages assume nuanced cultural information will fill gaps in what is unstated (Hall, 1976). Participants had only to give examples in their narratives, with the reader or listener discerning meaning from inherent cultural implications. High context examples were noted in participants’ individual narratives as well as among Deaf participants collectively. Some misunderstandings seem to exist between Deaf and HEARING persons in high/low context messaging and actions.

An example consists of the universal agreement among Deaf participants regarding HEARING interpreters’ use of spoken English in the presence of Deaf people when they are capable of using ASL. The issue harkens back to the beginning narrative of this document as well as the quote opening Chapter V.

Stating the obvious, d/Deaf people generally are not able to process spoken language, thus requiring the use of ASL or other visual means of communication. Why do HEARING interpreters, those who are capable of using ASL as an L2 or L1, sometimes make the decision not to use ASL in the presence of d/Deaf persons? The question baffled Deaf participants and I believe was an example of high context discourse utilized in the American Deaf-World. Mindess et al. (2006) described American discourse as low-context, often in need of explicit representation, and Deaf-World discourse as implicit
and represented within interstitial spaces (Bhabha, 1994) of inhabitants of high context cultures. The ‘answer’ to the question of whether to use visual language in the presence of d/Deaf persons lies in the collective memory and cultural discernment of the people who have created their own sociolinguistic context. The ‘answer’ is unstated, as high-context cultural messages often are, and lives pragmatically within Deaf-World culture where Deaf people instinctively recognize and comply with communication parameters. Cultural sensitivity and privilege issues aside, are HEARING interpreters able to entertain debate on this issue? The lay public, speech language pathologists, audiologists, even arguably d/Deaf educators may debate the issue, but are ASL/English interpreters in a different position than the aforementioned ‘professionals?’

Cokely (2005) discussed the title of ‘professional’ vis-à-vis interpreters, stating there is little trust of ‘professionals’ among Deaf-World members. If individuals who are members of the Deaf community do not trust ‘professionals’ due in part to maltreatment by them, would interpreters be able to be trusted? In order for Deaf persons to ascribe status to HEARING interpreters with whom they are affiliated, they would fundamentally need to establish trust before a relationship would or could be forged.

Deaf participants reflected on a number of areas within their narratives. Since the discourse was ASL and I completed the translations of the transcripts from ASL to written English, I spent a number of hours working and becoming familiar with these data. If one is unfamiliar with the discourse and culture in which ASL is situated, some of the nuances within comments may be overlooked, and I am sure, another bilingual translator would
catch nuances I did not. Below are examples of some words of wisdom from Deaf participants to which interpreters should pay attention.

Cautions made salient appearances in the following ways: beware of hearing people who seem to be over zealous about d/Deaf people, there could be issues lurking in the background; beware of the interpreter who is not interested in the Deaf community; and beware of interpreters who seem to ‘hate’ deaf people. Are the above attributes related to power? In my experience with the Deaf-World and as a teacher, I have seen hearing people who seem to misunderstand Deaf community values, beliefs and behaviors. There are many cultural faux pas I have seen on both sides. As interpreters, it seems we need to finesse the cultural soft skills (Stuard, 2008), but these are the aspects easy to overlook. I am not sure how to teach students to catch subtle cultural nuances in order to be effective sojourners and eventually interpreters in the Deaf-World. Would application of various cross-cultural models help to alleviate some confusion in these areas?

Comments about culture were also brought forward by Deaf participants further illuminating the depth of cross-cultural interactions. One Deaf participant who reported learning a signed language from another country, noticed the likelihood of missing cultural nuances, and felt empathy for ASL/English interpreters because of difficulty dealing with subtle cultural issues in ASL. Another statement from a Deaf participant described HEARING persons (L2 and some Codas and Sodas) as forever being outsiders in the Deaf-World. In American mainstream culture, is the idea of being ‘on the outside’ antithetical to democratic values? Are interpreters able to accept a status downgrade for the sake of the
cohesion of the marginalized collective Deaf community? Are interpreters able to discern deeper issues beyond their own needs?

Language and language use are worthy of additional discussion in the ASL/English discipline. The discussions would be difficult, representing a complicated conversation (Pinar, 1975, 2006). Having such discussions would bring up the amenability and capacity of HEARING interpreters to accept critical comments from persons affiliated with the complex field of which they are a part. As one is part of the ASL/English interpreting field, one is hypothetically and tangentially affiliated with the Deaf-World. What are cross-cultural parameters and etiquette, in essence being a good citizen of the Deaf-World (McDermid, 2009a)? Who or what entity will guide interpreters as they seek discernment and affirmation regarding their affiliation or affiliation/alliance with the Deaf-World?

**Overview of Research Question Two**

Research question two consisted of the following: What are Deaf and HEARING ASL/English interpreter experts’ lived experiences regarding the meaning of Deaf-World cultural competence in the work and lifeworlds of interpreter practitioners? Significant statements formed the following themes: participants described a tacit, Deaf-centric, culturally responsive, collectively managed organic system of cross-cultural avowal and ascription co-constructed between HEARING interpreters and Deaf communities. This system serves as an entrée into the Deaf-World through community gatekeeping. Processes led to fluid and restrictive development on various levels of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. The essence of the phenomenon related to the
following: as one became HEARING, processes included co-constructed community and cultural connections leading to Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance.

Themes of question two and the essence of the phenomenon focused broadly on aggregate data. Research questions, significant statements found, and themes were sequentially constructed throughout the document to encourage the eventual emergence of the essence of the phenomenon. Below, the significant statements are expanded to illustrate co-constructed relationships between HEARING interpreters and their respective Deaf communities.

The first part of data found within participants’ significant statements included the following: Deaf and HEARING participants described a tacit, Deaf-centric, culturally responsive, collectively managed organic system. The system is tacit in that it is implied and generally not widely discussed outside the walls of Deaf communities. One Deaf participant made a statement about hearing persons trying to enter the Deaf community: “they initiate the contact and try to enter into the community, but the community is the force that allows them entrance. The community does not have an open door and does not allow just anyone entrance.” Deaf persons are the gatekeepers, discuss these issues at will, and are able monitors of the system, because after all, they are protecting the world they created, truly a viable place of their own (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989).

Both groups of participants described being open, amenable and showing fidelity to the collective Deaf-World. Being open relates to humility and acceptance of Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009). Amenability relates to a person’s will to change, to learn something new, to venture into unknown territory. Fidelity is an important concept in
that the Deaf-World is asking for understanding and loyalty, not always an easy task due to effects and issues of marginalization, discrimination and oppression. Baker-Shenk (1986) took Freire’s (1970) work on oppressors and oppressed peoples and applied it to the Deaf-World and interpreters, citing power differentials between hearing interpreters and d/Deaf consumers and ensuing dissonance. These issues are taxing and difficult to live out in everyday reality. More research is needed on interpreter openness, amenability and fidelity despite the oppressed minority group status of Deaf communities.

Many American interpreters hail from low context, American mainstream culture, housed within an individualistic orientation which compartmentalizes life more so than in high context Deaf society (Mindess et al., 2006). Deaf-World culture is said to be more collective in its orientation (Mindess et al., 2006), and L2 interpreters may experience difficulty with everyday interactions because of basic cultural orientation differences. However, interpreters from low context cultural orientations are choosing to venture into the Deaf-World, a collectively managed, high context entity and participants in this study reinforced the above notions. Are L2 interpreters able, on a deep cultural level, to acquiesce to Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009)? The Deaf-World is an organic entity cultivated out of a natural need, with Deaf persons guiding the attributes to create a ‘Deaf center’ (Padden & Humphries, 1988). How much of an influential presence have interpreters been? There is a need for additional research in this area.

Important concepts in the theme for research question two were avowal and ascription. Avowal and ascription are naturally reflexive processes and foundational in cross-cultural identity negotiation (Chen, 2010). These processes involve personally and
socially constructed contextualized systems and identity formation enactment (Collier, 2005). Avowal and ascription will be expanded in the next section of this chapter within the empirical literature discussion.

The co-construction of Deaf/HEARING relational interaction lives at the heart of this inquiry. Without Deaf people, there would be no need for interpreters, a sentiment seen in the Deaf community and one some interpreters resist. Co-construction of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence is a given. The conditions under which these interactions happen are varied. A significant contextual attribute is the marginalized conditions some d/Deaf people live under, complicating aspects of life in the Deaf-World as well as the space interpreters occupy with them. Sonn and Fisher (1996) wrote about resistance in the face of oppression, a concept impacting interpreter lifeworlds as well. Interpreters may not be fully aware of the array of implications inherent when working with marginalized others. Interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence is co-constructed amid Deaf and HEARING spaces, but what lies between those spaces? Below, contemporary and classic research literature is applied in aggregate to research questions one and two.

**Research Questions and Application to Literature**

Cross-disciplinary literature in this inquiry runs the gamut between interpreting related research, literature from fields such as psychology and sociology, to works from Deaf Studies. Literature from classic and more contemporary inquiries were weaved together to tackle the complicated topic of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence seen through the transformative processes as persons became affiliated with
American Deaf communities. Below, literature is presented to empirically inform what is colloquially known about the processes of hearing people becoming HEARING interpreters.

Notable theoretical frameworks characterizing findings and implications in the data include an eclectic grouping from literature. The following concepts were applicable to data findings: Grosjean’s (1996) discussions of connections between bilingualism and biculturalism; cultural identity theory discussed by Collier (2005) including the concepts of avowal and ascription (Collier, 2005; Moss & Faux, 2006); adaptations to the ASL/English discipline; various models from spoken language intercultural competence; and proposed interpreter frameworks incorporating bicultural aspects.

Foundational to ASL/English interpreting contexts include the title of practitioners as bilingual and bicultural mediators (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001) in the Deaf-World. However, Smith (1996) stated most professional interpreters are neither bilingual nor bicultural. Grosjean (1996) wrote bilingualism and biculturalism do not necessarily co-occur: one may possess a level of bilingualism without being bicultural or possess some level of biculturalism without being bilingual.

Grosjean (1996) stated more is known about bilingualism than biculturalism even though both terms are seen nearly equally in the literature. The claim made by Grosjean (1996) is important for ASL/English interpreters. One may be able to possess various levels of fluency in signed language without necessarily possessing in-depth cultural knowledge and/or sensitivity. Conversely, one may be able to have a deep level of Deaf cultural knowledge and/or sensitivity without being fluent in ASL. However, if one is not
comprehensively fluent in at least the two languages in question, culturally literate in two cultures and sufficiently Deaf-World culturally competent in the marginalized minority culture of the Deaf-World (Smith, 1996), would one be able to claim the title of ASL/English interpreter? Are ASL/English interpreters required to possess a cross-cultural Deaf-centric identity to be sufficiently fluent in ASL, knowledgeable about the Deaf-World and acceptable interpreter practitioners in the eyes of Deaf communities? Literature about bilingualism/biculturalism brought forward by scholars such as Grosjean (1996) is extremely helpful in illuminating the cross-cultural lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters. Another important concept in the literature relates to the possibility of interpreters possessing a cross-cultural identity which is discussed below.

When I began this inquiry, the research question included the following concept: what are the lived experiences of interpreters living with C2 (or possible C1 for Codas) Deaf-centric identities? I soon realized the concept begged the question, is the interpreting field ready to determine that interpreters have a Deaf-centric identity? Are Deaf-centric identities possessed by all or some Codas, Sodas and L2 interpreters? A Deaf-centric cultural identity and Deaf-World cultural competence, I believe, while overlapping concepts, are two separate entities. An interpreter who possessed a cultural identity would be more in line with being bilingual/bicultural or a balanced L1/C1 and L2/C2 practitioner, which would include possessing Deaf-World cultural competence.

If an interpreter possessed Deaf-World cultural competence but was not necessarily bicultural, the person would be familiar with and show the ability to cross cultures on varying levels regarding L2/C2 competency. Separate from being bicultural, cross-cultural
proficiency levels may conform to specified ranges of behaviors in order for the person to be considered Deaf-World culturally competent (see the models section). It would, however, be appropriate at this juncture to include information regarding the development of a cultural identity so as to be able to compare and contrast cultural identity with cultural competence. Below is a discussion of cultural identity theory (CIT) proposed by Collier (2005), seen in spoken language research and applicable to ASL/English contexts.

CIT may be applied to the ASL/English context to explore the place of interpreter cultural identity or cultural competence in practitioners’ lifeworlds and work. Identity negotiation is intricately involved with intercultural communication and has a powerful impact on the intercultural communication process (Dai, 2000). Intercultural identity is negotiated and constantly recreated (Hegde, 1998), consequently developing a bicultural identity may be a work in progress for ASL/English interpreters. Two important concepts from CIT inform the ASL/English interpreting discipline and were found as synoptic themes in research questions one and two, cross-cultural avowal and ascription.

Early work on CIT was interpretive in scope and findings indicated several salient social identity attributes related to construction and communication of identity construction, that of avowal and ascription (Collier, 2005). Avowal and ascription are iterative processes and foundational in cross-cultural identity negotiation (Chen, 2010). These processes involve personally and socially constructed contextualized systems and identity formation enactment (Collier, 2005). Moss and Faux (2006) also wrote about cultural identity formation not being a static process but a communal, continuous,
meandering loop, suitable attributes for discussion of the possibility of C2 Deaf-centric identity formation in interpreters.

Avowal seems to have multiple meanings, in that it relates to claiming an identity, how persons portray themselves as group members (Moss & Faux, 2006), and one’s personal views regarding group identity (Collier, 2005). Ascription concerns assignment of identity and pertains to how one refers to others, with the most common types of ascriptions being stereotypes (Collier, 2005). Avowal and ascription are foundational ideas as to how interpreters and Deaf persons assign and claim Deaf-World involvement. The ideas above relate to identity development and growth and a symbolic diagram of the processes, based on themes from research questions one A and B, appears in Figure 5.

![Figure 5. Proposed Deaf-World avowals and ascriptions](image-url)
One possible explanation of the foundational building blocks for the development of a Deaf-centric identity, whether it be C1 (Deaf or Coda) or C2 (L2 interpreters, some Sodas and Codas), may be informed by CIT and avowal and ascription processes. The above diagram attempts a rudimentary explanation and is explained below.

In Figure 5, the Deaf-World is ascribed status as efficacious and a viable entity by both Deaf and hearing persons, thus assigning the Deaf-World the concept of a culture worthy of attachment. Deaf participants in the study definitely avowed alliance with the Deaf-World. Deaf participants also ascribed conditional status to interpreters, albeit affiliation status or affiliation/alliance. HEARING participants in the study avowed affiliation or affiliation/alliance with the Deaf-World. The above information is somewhat fuzzy, as described by Spencer-Oatey (2000), as ambiguous attributes of deep relational cross-cultural connections are difficult to define and assess. Referred to as soft skills (Stuard, 2008), these cross-cultural skills are often overlooked, undervalued and pushed aside in the curriculum (Lange & Paige, 2003).

CIT is one of several communicative theories which could be used as it illustrates processes of individuals’ identity negotiation related to specific contexts, and at times, taking privilege and social justice into consideration (Collier, 2005). Issues in the Deaf-World at times relate to social justice and privilege and may concern marginalization within the Deaf-World. CIT (Collier, 2005) could be applied in discerning some of the tension found between Deaf and hearing/HEARING persons.

Cross-cultural identity development (Collier, 2005) would entail complex processes not easily defined nor taught. The sociological theory of symbolic interactionism, or the
ways one acts toward something based on the meaning ascribed to it (Blumer, 1969),
would seem to fit into the discussion of cross-cultural identity. These concepts are
contextualized in their respective disciplines and would be best researched by a
cross-disciplinary team. However, basic concepts such as avowal and ascription are still
useful in the current discussion in explaining cross-cultural issues or rationale for
affiliations/alliances. All participants described Deaf/hearing power differentials, tensions,
and complexities within their work milieu. Issues regarding stigma, marginalization and
the impacts thereof cannot be minimized. Part of Deaf-World culturally competent C1 or
C2 development concerns possessing strategies for the mitigation of linguistic oppression
and sensitivity to perpetual power differentials. C1/C2 combinations may be Deaf/hearing
or hearing/Deaf, corresponding to differences in life experiences of L2 and Coda/Soda
interpreters. However, it is thought to be a requirement for an interpreter to have
developed fluency/competency in at least two linguistic and cultural lifeworlds, specifically
spoken English/American mainstream culture and ASL/Deaf-World culture. Would failure
to accomplish the above linguistic and cultural attributes render a person as something else,
and not an interpreter per se?

Further investigation is warranted regarding CIT, avowal, ascription, and other
information from the study of identity theories to begin to apply findings from research to
this very complex, foundational, and important topic in the ASL/English interpreting
discipline. There is a need to categorize, define and systematize information to inform IEP
cross-cultural pedagogy in meaningful ways.
Contemporary ASL/English Interpreting Related Studies

Synoptic themes were gleaned from significant statements Deaf and HEARING participants described within their narratives concerning avowal of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. Below, thematic inquiry findings are presented and discussed vis-à-vis contemporary ASL/English interpreting literature put forth by Stuard (2008), Rasmussen (2012), McDermid (2009a), and Coyne (2012) as well as selected spoken language research results.

Findings from this inquiry both confirm and challenge parts of Stuard’s (2008) study. Stuard studied Deaf consumer and interpreter perspectives of the interpreting field and found divergent views: Deaf consumer participants perceived interpreters attained linguistic fluency and appreciation of diversity in the Deaf community by exposure to Deaf-World culture and hearing interpreter participants perceived Deaf-World cultural affiliation would not necessarily improve interpreting skills. It was unclear if hearing participants in Stuard’s study avowed Deaf-World affiliation/alliance and ascribed Deaf-World efficacy.

Stuard’s (2008) study found hearing participants reported Deaf community affiliation would not necessarily improve interpreting skills. Findings from this inquiry indicated HEARING participants maintained active affiliation within respective Deaf communities. Findings from this inquiry supported hearing interpreters as active participants in creating co-constructed community and cultural connections within the Deaf-World. Perceptions of Deaf-World involvement in Stuard’s (2008) study were informed by quantitative data from 75 hearing and 63 deaf participants. Results from this
inquiry were informed by qualitative data from thirteen expert Deaf and HEARING interpreter participants. It would be interesting to quantitatively assess expert interpreters to determine their level of Deaf community involvement and reasons for doing so.

Co-constructed connections described in this inquiry by both Deaf and HEARING participants confirmed findings by Deaf participants in Stuard’s (2008) data. Deaf participants in Stuard’s (2008) study as well as Deaf and HEARING participants in this inquiry reported hearing sojourners would develop Deaf-centric attributes by interfacing within the Deaf community, thus benefiting them as interpreters.

Findings from this inquiry challenged the findings of Rasmussen (2012) in that eight out of 10 participants described a strong affinity toward co-constructed Deaf-World cultural connections, without mention of minimization. HEARING participants within this inquiry described avowal of Deaf-World affiliation and/or alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. Rasmussen (2012) was assessing interpreter intercultural sensitivity, and perhaps tangentially was looking at interpreter avowal of Deaf-World connections and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. Rasmussen (2012) administered Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman’s (2003) Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) and found participants showed a profile of Developmental Orientation in minimization of cultural differences. Findings in the study by Rasmussen (2012) found interpreters overvalue cultural commonalities and undervalue cultural differences between themselves and Deaf persons. If attempting to develop a shared vision between Deaf and hearing parties, approximately one-quarter would want to discuss differences and three-quarters would desire to discuss commonalities, thus minimizing cultural differences (Rasmussen, 2012) and possibly
impacting perceptions of Deaf-World efficacy. Findings in this inquiry, while not utilizing
Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman’s (2003) IDI, found participants valued and embraced
cultural differences.

Findings in this inquiry of expert interpreters confirmed data found by Rasmussen
(2012) in that Deaf participants described ways they felt interpreters minimized cultural
differences. Findings challenged parts of Rasmussen’s (2012) data in that expert
HEARING participants in this inquiry designated the efficacy of the Deaf-World as a
viable cultural entity, claimed either Deaf-World alliance or affiliation and described many
examples of not minimizing cultural differences. Further qualitative and quantitative
research is required to interview interpreters who would not be considered experts, in order
to obtain a well-rounded picture of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

McDermid (2009b) described characteristics IEP faculty should possess to teach
students in Canada, a country with whom we share a common signed language.
Participants in McDermid’s (2009b) study were IEP faculty and ASL educators who
apparently ascribed efficacy to the Deaf-World and avowed Deaf-World affiliation and/or
alliance. Across both inquiries, avowals and ascriptions seen in participants illustrated
similarities and differences. Differences included the fact that participants in this inquiry
were primarily active, working practitioners and participants in McDermid’s (2009b) study
were primarily active, working educators. Similarities included overlap among all
participants as working interpreters and possibly teaching interpreter or ASL related
courses. Also, there would be similarities because many of the participants in McDermid’s
(2009b) study would more than likely meet criteria of expert status in this inquiry.
Participants in McDermid’s (2009b) study would likely avow Deaf-World alliance over affiliation and ascribe Deaf-World efficacy (or one would hope) in order to teach within an IEP. McDermid (2009b) discussed ASL/English interpreting IEP offerings within the framework of Eisner’s (2002) three types of curricula typically taught in educational settings, explicit, implied, and null. He described attributes of the implied curriculum including the following: the definition of a good citizen in the Deaf-World; interpersonal skills; the part ‘attitude’ plays in hearing/Deaf dynamics; how issues of interpreter ‘attitude’ can be addressed in classes; and the role hearing citizens play in the Deaf-world (McDermid, 2009a). He commented on various ASL/English scholars (McDermid, 2009b; Smith & Savidge, 2002; Witter-Merithew, 1995) making a recommendation for implied attributes within the curriculum to be made explicit and taught with intentionality, all attributes of avowing and ascribing deference to the Deaf-World. In meta-analysis of this point, my assumption of interpreter and ASL educators avowing and ascribing efficacy to the Deaf-World would be an example of implied curricular perceptions about faculty members, in need of being made explicit within the curriculum. Findings from this inquiry confirm findings from McDermid’s (2009a) study in that he recommended discussion of what makes a good citizen of the Deaf-World. Findings from this inquiry demonstrate HEARING sojourners need to be amenable, intentional and come to terms with avowing affiliation with the Deaf community and ascribing Deaf-World efficacy.

Findings from this inquiry extend data found by Coyne (2012) because Deaf and hearing participants in his study apparently did avow Deaf-World affiliation and/or alliance
and ascribed efficacy to the Deaf-World and they had described issues of social justice appearing in their work. Coyne (2012) found transformational leadership skills led interpreters to follow Deaf members’ guidance in shaping professional roles and promoting social justice. Understanding social justice issues in the Deaf-World is a part of the skill set of interpreters as described by expert participants in this inquiry, even though they did not label them nor use social justice language per se. Participants reported significant data about the oppressed minority status of American d/Deaf citizens and impacts on interpreting work. Participants reported tensions and complexities, some born from issues of disability and marginalization. Deaf participants in this inquiry described ways they wished interpreters would ‘jump on the bandwagon’ when issues of injustice would arise. There were a significant number of problem statements made by participants in this study as well as comments related to the acknowledgement of marginalization, issues also found by Coyne (2012).

Data found by Coyne (2012) pointed to following the lead of the Deaf-World. Ascription of Deaf-World efficacy were traits found in this inquiry and reported by HEARING and Deaf participants, giving deference to decisions made by and for Deaf-World citizens. Power struggles often impede Deaf/hearing relations (Baker-Shenk, 1986) and while this study was not an in-depth treatise on power dynamics between hearing/Deaf dyads, issues were brought up where participants described examples of social injustices. Issues of social justice are inherent within interpreting and cannot be ignored, made a low priority, nor minimized. Findings from Stuard (2008), Rasmussen (2012), McDermid (2009a, 2009b), Coyne (2012) and the present inquiry all seem to be
seeking elusive attributes related to intercultural competence in interpreter work but implicitly related to questions about interpreter avowal of Deaf-World connections and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. Interpreters are ascribing efficacy to an entity the world sees as disabled and lesser than the status quo. It is difficult to maintain vision in the face of adversity, but HEARING participants reported the ability to maintain a Deaf-centric vision and Deaf participants reported the expectation that interpreters would maintain a Deaf-centric stance. How is a Deaf-centric stance achieved? Below, in the next section, I described the concepts of Deaf-World affiliation and Deaf-World affiliation/alliance as it is applied to ASL/English interpreting literature.

**Deaf-Centric Perspectives**

The following sections relate to points of view from a Deaf-centric stance. Emancipatory research (Sullivan, 2009) informed this inquiry, and consequently, the Deaf voice both from inquiry findings and literature are represented.

Salient themes of research questions consisted of Deaf and HEARING participants’ Deaf-World affiliation and/or alliance as well as ascription of Deaf-World efficacy. As described by HEARING and Deaf participants, Deaf-World affiliation seems to be more fragile than Deaf-World alliance. Two out of ten participants in this inquiry described weak ties to the Deaf-World, illustrating affiliation. They were not completely cut off from the Deaf-World, but neither were they cohesively allied. Stuard (2008) reported hearing participants in her study did not consider connection with Deaf communities a way to improve their linguistic skills. Rasmussen (2012) found interpreters minimized cultural differences, apparently implying a weaker connection to
the heart of the Deaf-World. Would the findings from the above two studies support the idea of interpreter/Deaf-World affiliation, rather than alliance? Findings on affiliation and affiliation/alliance relate to HEARING participants’ community connections as exemplified in the concept of the interpreter affiliation/alliance narrative (IAAN) described later.

Alliances and strong ties, however, were illustrated in eight out of ten participants in this inquiry. Baker-Shenk (1986) discussed interpreters as allies by comparing and contrasting various interpreting models and utilizing a community focus group of interpreters to get to the heart of what it means to be an ally interpreter. Smith (1996) offered, through her dissertation, information from a Deaf-centric perspective and doubts the biculturalism of many interpreters. Smith (1996) described her life as an interpreter with Deaf-World alliances in her dissertation with examples of deep, authentic connections within the context of a local Deaf community.

Fant (1990), a Coda scholar and sage Deaf-centric interpreter, had been affiliated with the ASL/English discipline virtually from the humble beginnings. Fant (1990) painted a picture of the quintessential bilingual/bicultural, culturally sensitive interpreter as he recalled the history of the first twenty-five years of RID with pragmatism and wisdom. The field emerged from beginnings where our main source of learning emanated from experiences at WADLU, watch and do likewise university (Fant, 1990). Fant reminded us, we were not yet worthy of the title of bicultural/bilingual mediators, and that we were possibly undermining the very essence of what we purported to be doing.
Cokely (2005) powerfully wrote about important attributes of the relationship of ASL/English interpreters in the Deaf-World as he described the changing positionality of practitioner vetting. He described the initial need for interpreters emerging organically from the community, gatekeeping done within the Deaf-World and how the tide has turned (Cokely, 2005), often not for the better. Cokely and Baker-Shenk (1980) and Cokely’s (1992, 2005) writings frame the narrative of Deaf-World affiliation and alliance as requisite attitude, passed down as received wisdom of known attributes of culturally competent interpreter practitioners sanctioned by Deaf communities.

Within the data set of this inquiry, alliance was stronger than affiliation and affiliation/alliance/attitude seem the triumvirate of what Deaf-World culturally competent practitioners ideally possess. One may be affiliated without having an alliance. One may not have an alliance without affiliation as well. If one possesses affiliation, alliance and a Deaf-centric attitude, one’s work within the Deaf community will be viewed more from an historic ‘interpreting as my contribution’ perspective (Cokely, 2005, p. 5). Data do exist tangentially related to interpreter affiliation and alliance, however, more research is needed in this area, with a need for the bulk of data to emanate from Deaf-centric communities.

Deaf-World efficacy is an assumption in need of empirical recognition, exploration, verification, and description. It is basic to ASL/English interpreter practice and is in need of being unveiled succinctly and clearly, by Deaf-World scholars and via wisdom (Cokely, 2005) principles (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) from American Deaf communities.

HEARING interpreter avowal of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance, as well as ascription of Deaf-World efficacy are intercultural terms applied to cognitive and behavioral attributes long seen in American Deaf communities. Cognitive and behavioral attributes, sometimes referred to as interpreter attitude (Smith & Savidge, 2002; McDermid, 2009a), are also referred to as soft skills (Stuard, 2008). Participants in this inquiry described co-constructed community and cultural characteristics of Deaf and HEARING persons as they negotiated life within bicultural and multicultural contexts. Key attributes of affiliation or affiliation/alliance were found in significant statements given by participants in this inquiry: possession of lived, authentic bicultural experiences; formative experiences leading to work within the Deaf-World; finely tuned abilities to negotiate cross-cultural power differentials, tension, and complexities; recognition and celebration of Deaf-gain; willingness to be a critically reflective practitioner; displaying enthusiasm, respect, and fidelity toward Deaf people; and the ability to make intentional decisions and to take appropriate action on behalf of Deaf communities. The attributes described are not simple, nor are they easily acquired and developed. More research is needed in the area of ASL/English interpreter soft skills (Stuard, 2008).
Contemporary research on Deaf persons avowing alliance to the American Deaf-World is found in a number of disciplines such as Deaf Studies, Deaf education, psychology, sociology and some anthropological studies, among others. Concepts tied to this inquiry and explained below, are important to ASL/English interpreters because they lay the groundwork of what it means to be affiliated or allied with the Deaf-World as a HEARING person. Below is a brief discussion of considerations related to Deaf avowal of Deaf-World alliance and ascription of Deaf-World efficacy as well as conditional ascription of HEARING interpreter Deaf-World affiliation or alliance.

Citizens of the Deaf-World avow Deaf-World alliance and ascribe efficacy to the Deaf-World, thus declaring themselves bona fide members of the Deaf-World. A Deaf participant wrote:

I went to a hearing college for I think a year. Then . . . I went to Gallaudet. And I thought, here are Deaf people . . . and I started to understand . . . Then I decided to transfer to Gallaudet because I thought . . . this is my world. I was “baptized” as a Deaf person at Gallaudet. I took the oath and accepted it—became a bona fide Deaf person at Gallaudet. Not all at once, but over a period of time.

There are several authors who discussed Deaf identity from the Deaf Studies perspective (Holcomb, 2013; Ladd, 2003; Padden & Humphries, 1988) and from a psychology lens (Glickman, 1996; Leigh, 2009) and described Deaf-World avowal as a viable identity. However, Corker (2002) has discussed Deaf identity as controversial vis-à-vis the notion of disability. It is outside the scope of this inquiry to debate the characteristics or cohesiveness of Deaf identities. Deaf participants in this study avowed Deaf-World
alliance, ascribed efficacy to the Deaf-World, identified with Deaf-World culture and were ASL speakers. If Deaf persons show allegiance to the Deaf-World, should interpreters follow suit?

Deaf-World citizens ascribing a status to HEARING interpreters within the Deaf-World relates to the very real, but very nebulous concept of ‘attitude.’ There have been attempts to discuss interpreter attitude in the literature (McDermid, 2009a; Smith & Savidge, 2002). An important basic component of the theme from research question one B considers participants’ reflections about ascribing HEARING interpreters’ affiliation or alliance status with the Deaf-World. Despite many negative descriptions of HEARING interpreters by Deaf participants, they also reported interpreters who were accepted in their respective Deaf communities. Holcomb (2013) wrote about hearing persons who fit the title of ‘HEARING-BUT,’ are set apart in the eyes of some Deaf individuals, and may be ascribed some level of affiliation or alliance in the Deaf-World. Negative descriptions of ASL/English practitioners from Deaf participants aside, interpreters exist as part of the world of American Deaf citizens and seem to receive designation within the Deaf-World partially according to their perceived attitude. Attitude is a salient feature of Deaf-World perceptions of interpreters (Smith & Savidge, 2002) and seems to be a key ingredient in the determination of ascription of the unwritten classification of Deaf-World affiliation or alliance.

Even though Deaf participants described interpreters as exhibiting more unfit actions than culturally competent behaviors and attitudes, there were descriptions of some practitioners exhibiting attributes of a ‘good’ attitude. One participant’s comment
synthesized the concept of interpreters who possess Deaf-World cultural competence as having an appropriate, ‘. . . attitude and ability to hold a conversation in ASL.’ From comments made by Deaf participants, some Deaf people do assess interpreters’ attitudes and signing skills. The first step in the process would be interpreter fluency level with the second step of discerning an interpreter’s attitude via conversation in ASL. An interpreter actually possessing real ASL fluency would give Deaf people access to conversations in order to discern thought processes and attitudes. If an interpreter did not actually possess fluency in ASL, it would be difficult to hold an in-depth, authentic conversation.

All Deaf participants mentioned attitude as a salient factor in Deaf-World cultural competence. Attitude has been discussed by Smith and Savidge (2002), McDermid (2009a), and has been tied to the concept of Deaf-heart (Merkin, 2009). Attributes of attitude included the following characteristics as described by Deaf participants: an interpreter with a good attitude is extremely culturally sensitive; interacts regularly with Deaf people (not in interpreting settings only); is a fluent ASL user (within a certain fluency range); open-minded; perceiving Deaf people in a positive way; appropriately approaches, supports, and asks the right questions of Deaf people; has humility; is not interested in Deaf people solely because they are Deaf; not easily offended by Deaf people; they understand Deaf people; and are empathic to Deaf-World concerns.

Stuard (2008) found Deaf persons believed practitioners would be more fluent interpreters with Deaf-World interaction, but interpreters did not hold the same views. If interpreters are culturally sensitive, view Deaf people in a positive light and show interest in the Deaf community, are they more apt to interact within it, possibly leading to more
well developed levels of ASL fluency? If interpreters have interest in the Deaf community, they perhaps would be more apt to interact within its borders.

In second language acquisition (SLA) literature, Boylan (2009) calls for developing the ability to transform one’s consciousness through reflection on cross-cultural communicative and social interactions. Boylan and Mari (1996) describe the ideal level of consciousness incorporating literature from discourse analysis. Goffman’s (1981) classic discourse footing and framing theory is applied by Boylan and Mari (1996) as they proposed an idea: in order to gain footing in a second culture, individuals need to figure out what is important in that culture and utilize the knowledge appropriately. Would hearing people who spend more time conversing with Deaf people in ASL increase fluency levels in ASL? As one became more fluent in ASL, would one want to spend more time within the Deaf community? Would spending time within the Deaf community lead interpreters to increased understanding of what Deaf people feel are important topics within Deaf-World culture and what they value?

The lay hearing world does not generally recognize the Deaf-World as a contributor on a large scale, but do HEARING persons? The concept of ‘Deaf-gain’ describes benefits to individuals and society when interacting with persons who are d/Deaf (Bauman & Murray, 2009) and were exemplified in Deaf participants’ narratives. The concept would fit with the community cultural wealth attributes proposed by Fleischer (2013) and explained further in this chapter as well as the concept of ‘Deafhood’ (Ladd, 2003). These Deaf-centric concepts would help ASL/English interpreters to understand and appreciate the Deaf-World with whom they work.
Deaf participants, in their narratives, told stories of life as Deaf Americans. The concept of ‘Deafhood’ and what it means to persons who live on a planet filled with audible sound would best be described by Deaf-World citizens. Deafhood (Ladd, 2003) could be discussed within the rubric of community cultural wealth (Fleischer, 2013), framing concepts to create more cohesive narratives for interpreters and lay persons alike. Interpreters need ways to recognize and internalize messages from the Deaf-World and concepts from Deaf Studies may allow messages, as seen in Deaf participants’ narratives, to flow into the interpreting community.

Deaf citizens have created and continue to define Deaf-World culture. It is incumbent on interpreter practitioners of all stripes who work with d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to, at minimum, recognize cultural differences, act in positive ways or exhibit behavioral changes, and at best, to become part of the culture (Bennett, 1993). HEARING interpreters fall short in the areas of understanding and acting on effective Deaf-World cultural competence, according to Deaf participants. Deaf participants described tension and issues in cross-cultural relations. HEARING participants described tension and seemed willing to listen to concerns. Perhaps frameworks such as Deafhood (Ladd, 2003) and community cultural wealth (Fleischer, 2013) may help bridge gaps between Deaf and HEARING persons.

In summarizing Deaf-centric views of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance, Deaf participants described multiple high context examples and narratives, painting a partial picture of what ideal interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence may entail. Do interpreters, generally from low-context, individualistic
American mainstream culture, recognize the nuances of contextualized messages, couched within collectivist, high-context (Mindess et al., 2006) Deaf-World culture? Deaf individuals in America have created a space, a place of their own (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989), some interpreters have been invited in, and what type of guests shall we be?

**Application of Key Theoretical Frameworks**

In order to be welcomed, protracted guests in the Deaf-World (Smith, 1996), HEARING participants described and Deaf participants encouraged the existence of a co-constructed, Deaf-centric, interstitial (Bhabha, 1994) cross-cultural space, similar to, but apart from the Deaf center described by Padden and Humphries (1988). To explore the idea of an interpreter Deaf-centric ‘center,’ findings brought forth from two scholars, Orbe (1998) and Fleischer (2013) are presented below.

**Co-Cultural Theory**

Interpreters may draw application to their work through a theoretical framework proposed by Orbe (1998). A relevant precursor to co-cultural theory (Orbe, 1998) was discussed in the ASL/English interpreting field when Baker-Shenk (1986) applied Freire’s (1970) seminal work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, to power dynamics between Deaf persons and HEARING interpreters. Freire’s (1970) work stemmed from his study of education, law, and philosophy and was applied to vulnerable populations as he found problems associated with those who were oppressors toward the people they oppressed. Baker-Shenk (1986) took Freire’s (1970) work and made application to the Deaf-World and interpreters, citing power differentials between HEARING interpreters...
and d/Deaf consumers. An in-depth treatise of interpreters, power and the Deaf-World is outside the scope of this inquiry. However, practitioner/consumer relationships are vital in the interpreter/consumer dyad. Work by Baker-Shenk (1986), incorporating interpreter power, culture and communication issues, seems a serendipitous precursor to a theoretical framework grounded in the work of feminist scholars and titled co-cultural theory (Orbe, 1998).

Co-cultural theory was proposed by Orbe (1998) in an attempt to highlight the hidden ways marginalized people use creativity to confront communication and power issues as they live within, but separate from, the dominant culture. A phenomenological theoretical framework, based on muted group (E. Ardener, 1978; S. Ardener, 1975; Kramarae, 1981) and standpoint (Harding, 1987, 1991; Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1987) theories, co-cultural communication strategies and co-cultural theory were proposed by Orbe (1998). Orbe (1998) developed co-cultural theory to describe the reality of coexisting varied cultures in the democratic United States. Orbe (1998) claimed, however, social hierarchies and privilege in intergroup dynamics exist in every world culture. The theory argues that in cultural dyads, dominant culture communication is prioritized, rendering lesser co-cultures invisible and marginalized (Orbe, 1998). Orbe (1998) selected the term co-cultural to avoid connoting perceived cultural dominance with labels such as subculture or non-dominant culture. Orbe (1998) discussed Kramarae’s (1981) work on muted-group theory and the exploration of the lived communicative experience of marginalized populations within dominant American structures.
Orbe’s (1998) theory may be applied to the Deaf-World and seems to fit naturally. There are numerous examples of global Deaf-World oppression, marginality and audism (Bauman, 2008; Humphries, 1975; Gertz, 2003). The United States takes human and civil rights seriously; however full equality for all citizens is not yet a lived reality. America is nonetheless a world leader in empowerment of marginalized citizens (Haualand & Allen, 2009) and Deaf citizens enjoy the fruits of America’s endeavors promoting equality and justice. The Deaf-World is marginalized worldwide, and the laws and democratic values of the United States have not mitigated the impacts of oppression. Orbe’s (1998) concept of co-cultural theory would be instrumental in naming and clarifying pedagogical decisions regarding teaching culture in the ASL/English realm. Teaching culture is an important piece in a very complex and necessary part of the interpreter education curricula. Within language pedagogy, not only are students learning a language, but also cultural aspects (Lange & Paige, 2003), requiring students to develop cross-cultural self-awareness (Hall, 1977).

Rasmussen (2012) utilized Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman’s (2003) Intercultural Development Inventory and found interpreters, by their exposure to Deaf-World culture, do not necessarily internalize intercultural sensitivity. Cultural border crossings between HEARING interpreters and Deaf persons have not been empirically verified. Levels of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence have not been sufficiently discussed (Fant, 1990) and compared to potential intercultural frameworks (Berry, 2005; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2000; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006) to determine the feasibility of their usage in the ASL/English discipline.
Interpreters are purported to possess necessary and sufficient Deaf-World cultural competence to successfully pass an interpreter exam and be credentialed by NAD, RID, or NAD/RID standards (RID, 2013), however, this idea requires additional exploration (Fant, 1990).

When cultures exist side by side, and one is alleged to exist at a lesser stratum in importance (Orbe, 1998), problems in communication and power dynamics exist. Power and communication issues experienced by marginalized peoples have been identified in general by Freire (1970), and Orbe (1998), and in the Deaf-World by Baker-Shenk (1986), and others. In the twenty-first century, participants in this inquiry recognized and identified significant issues of communication and power between HEARING interpreters and Deaf-World citizens.

All participants in this study described problems in the spaces where border crossings between HEARING and Deaf people occur. The full scope of problems has yet to be determined. Surveying those who live in and between the cultures in question would provide more comprehensive looks at life and work of interpreters and consumers of interpreting services. In this inquiry, co-constructed cross-cultural processes between HEARING interpreters and Deaf people/communities were described by participants. Information proposed by Fleischer (2013) provides an effective framework within which interpreters may situate their very complex work. If we are co-constructing our realities, then we must work together to figure out how to negotiate our way through the complex waters of cross-cultural communications. Below are implications for the application of ‘community cultural wealth’ (Fleischer, 2013) based on the work of Yosso (2005).
Community Cultural Wealth

Deaf culture, created and ‘managed’ by the Deaf-World, exists in the ASL/English interpreting community. How does Deaf culture exist and what is its importance to interpreters? Deaf participants expressed angst about interpreters and their culturally related actions, thoughts, and attitudes. How might contemporary theories from Deaf Studies inform the field? Fleischer (2013) discussed the idea of community cultural wealth, with the potential application of various types of capital the Deaf-World already possesses. During the 2013 RID conference in Indianapolis, Fleischer (2013) presented a keynote session describing the concepts and inviting interpreters to share the cultural wealth of their respective Deaf communities. In their narratives, Deaf participants described attributes applicable to the theoretical framework of community cultural capital. Fleischer (2013) challenges audist thinking by applying the concept of ‘community cultural wealth’ based on the work of Yosso (2005) who has studied institutionalized racism.

Yosso’s (2005) work countered thought proposed by Bourdieu (1997) who stated that culturally diverse children may come to the classroom with built-in deficiencies. Arguing for the application of critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1995) to counter deficit thinking, Yosso (2005) proposed the idea of community cultural wealth as a way to discern the hidden benefits of culturally diverse others and application has been made to Deaf Studies by Fleischer (2013).

The application of community cultural wealth in Deaf communities provides a counter argument in the face of discrimination of Deaf persons or audism (Fleisher,
Salient types of cultural capital are linguistic, social, familial, navigational, aspirational, and resistant (Fleischer, 2013). Capital categories meshed with information or corresponding descriptions found in Deaf studies and other Deaf-World research may provide a cross-cultural framework for interpreters who desire to reflect on Deaf-World cultural competence. Below are explanations of each type of capital and some examples from inquiry data. Linguistic capital will be discussed more because of the importance of linguistic fluency in ASL among ASL/English interpreters.

Linguistic capital relates to the advantages a linguistically diverse individual possesses (Yosso, 2005) perhaps without being conscious of it. Culturally Deaf persons are fluent users of ASL from whom interpreters may learn not only well-developed language but also nuanced information about the culture.

Participants in this inquiry did not overwhelmingly discuss ASL/English interpreters’ linguistic skills mostly due to the inquiry topic being culturally related. Linguistic skill in ASL is, of course, part of the skill set of a culturally competent ASL/English interpreter or one would not be able to apply the title of interpreter to him/herself. Participants in this inquiry, because of their expert status, were assumed to possess linguistic fluency in ASL.

A basic building block in acceptance into the Deaf-World is linguistic fluency, as stated by Cokely and Baker-Shenk (1980) as one of the four avenues to membership into the Deaf community. HEARING persons do not possess a hearing loss and thus would be exempted from full Deaf community membership. However, there may be opportunities for HEARING persons to possess or acquire the other three attributes of
linguistic, political and social involvement with the caveat of possessing the appropriate attitude at all levels. Discussion of the topic of HEARING persons’ acceptance into Deaf communities, tangentially related to this inquiry, would need to be discussed by Deaf persons as the gatekeepers of the Deaf-World and explored in further research.

The second attribute of cultural wealth discussed by Yosso (2005) and applied to the Deaf-World by Fleischer (2013) is social capital, connecting to the Deaf community to provide navigation through society’s institutions with emotional supports; Deaf participants described attributes they felt would be emotionally supportive. One comment was interpreters could show support of Deaf people emotionally by allowing them to vent against HEARING persons’ cultural miscues as an example of social capital. This would require interpreters to use meta-cognitive abilities. Also, it would require interpreters to not be offended by what Deaf people may say to them. After all, interpreters are hearing people, and may believe Deaf people include them in the larger mainstream group of hearing people from whom they have experienced oppression.

The concept of familial capital includes being nurtured among ‘kin’ and the sense of community one feels in the Deaf-World. Family capital allows the interpreter to give and receive support and to gain and maintain a sense of shared history and celebrated achievements of Deaf persons. Attending community events to be a part of the wider Deaf community would be viewed as part of familial capital. An example would be the Deaf participant who asked why more interpreters did not attend a deaf school’s homecoming. He wondered if interpreters just did not want to ‘be part of us?’
Navigational capital, moving through rough waters while still maintaining hope is a huge attribute Deaf people are able to teach interpreters and the lay public. Having the ability to live or work in spaces not designed for marginalized others and to assist each other in creating DeafSpace, a concept of utilizing light and design in Deaf-centric ways, may benefit other inhabitants as well (Bauman, 2014). Seemingly uncivil behavior of using spoken English in large groups of Deaf people when the primary language was ASL would be an example of navigational capital.

Aspirational capital relates to celebrating how Deaf citizens have overcome obstacles and how we may learn from their experiences. Understanding and involvement in mitigation of audism and its impacts on the lives of Deaf people are examples of both aspirational and resistance capital knowledge.

Resistance capital describes gaining skills in the process of experiencing marginalization (Fleisher, 2013) and celebrating what we have learned from Deaf people and making application to various situations. Participants in this inquiry very definitely described resistance to power differentials, discrimination and oppression. The HEARING participants who were allied with their respective Deaf communities described ways they mitigated oppression in their work as interpreters, thus resisting marginalization.

The theoretical framework of community cultural wealth may be sufficiently comprehensive and cohesive to allow incorporation of additional Deaf-World concepts and theories, such as Deaf-gain (Bauman & Murray, 2009) and Deafhood (Ladd, 2003). The concept of community cultural wealth affirms Deaf-ways-of-being (Bahan, 2009). The positive frame of Deaf-gain (Bauman & Murray, 2009) within the rubric of
community cultural wealth could be useful to ‘house’ the ample Deaf-centric data available in contemporary inquiry and from which further study may be launched.

Models

Several models from spoken language research may be applied to the ASL/English discipline. Among the main models are selected ones by Berry (1998), Deardorff (2006, 2009), Fantini (1995, 1999), and Tadmor and Tetlock (2006).

Berry (1998) described biculturalism as driven by two forces: the extent to which people maintain identification with an ethnic culture and the extent to which people identified with a dominant culture. Would Berry’s (1998) model fit better for deaf people than interpreters? Deaf persons are forced into biculturalism and for interpreters, it is more of a choice. For interpreters, there would be a negative aspect to maintaining identification with their ethnic culture or hearing culture. So are interpreters ‘allowed’ to identify with the dominant culture in question, which would be Deaf culture? More exploration of the application of Berry’s (1998) model is needed.

A model by Deardorff (2006, 2009) contains multiple levels of attributes required for a person to attain the desired external outcome of effective behavior and communication strategies allowing one to achieve one’s cross-cultural goals. Incorporation of a model such as the one offered by Deardorff (2006, 2009) contains attributes such as requisite attitudes, development of knowledge, comprehension and skills leading to desired internal and external outcomes.

Fantini (1995, 1999) looked at intercultural competency (ICC) by the development of four overarching categories, knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness.
The ICC model could be applied to ASL/English interpreting contexts because of the simplicity of the framework. There would be substantial information that could be incorporated into the four categories. The *knowledge* portion would lend itself nicely to curriculum development, including information about Deaf history, literature, art, organizations, and a host of other Deaf-World related data. Seemingly difficult to teach, information regarding *attitude* could be taught to students with the challenge being *how* to teach it. Culturally competent *skills* also would be challenging to present to students and would probably best occur within a community context. The last attribute of *awareness* would be effective if organized and inserted into the curriculum at opportune times.

The last model selected was developed by Tadmor and Tetlock (2006). The model is a clear description of the levels of bicultural development shown in Table 15. Since the final step relates to the development of a bicultural identity, there may be a need to modify the model for ASL/English interpreters if it is determined that some interpreters do not possess a clear and separate C2 bicultural identity.
### Summary of Bicultural Development Model (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Exposure to a new culture increases a person’s attention to cultural differences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Person is accountable to a mixed cultural audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Person experiences high levels of cognitive dissonance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>The high level of dissonance requires more cognitively complex solutions for resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Continued use and reinforcement of complex solutions solidifies the person’s bicultural identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Implications of the Findings

Research on ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence remains underdeveloped (Rasmussen, 2012). ASL/English interpreting scholars have conducted studies related to cross-cultural issues in the interpreting field (Coyne, 2012; McDermid, 2009; Rasmussen, 2012; Stuard, 2008), and yet there are many questions left unanswered. The findings from this study confirm and extend the relatively lean research in this area, however cross-disciplinary inquiries could inform the topic of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Implications of this inquiry related to HEARING participant ascription of Deaf-World efficacy, avowal of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance, Deaf participant avowal of Deaf-World alliance, ascription of Deaf-World efficacy and conditional ascription of interpreter affiliation or alliance.

Cokely (2005) wrote about erosion of Deaf community influence in the interpreting field. He also discussed diminishing ‘received wisdom’ (Cokely, 2005, p. 8), as
contributions from Deaf citizens have been devalued and less recognized. Deaf participants in this study described multiple examples of cross-cultural wisdom for interpreter. Will interpreters heed wisdom of the indigenous Deaf-World? Will interpreters continue to ascribe Deaf-World efficacy and avow Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance? Are we seeing the erosion of the aforementioned attributes because of diminished contact with Deaf communities?

For L2 interpreters, C2 acquisition is often tentative with fuzzy parameters (Spencer-Oatey, 2000), making it a complex set of processes and requiring community connections. The findings of this inquiry challenge researchers, practitioners and IEP faculty to seek ways to encourage co-constructed community and cultural connections in their respective Deaf communities. Deaf community guidance is integral to HEARING persons entering into Deaf-World affiliation (Smith, 1996; Cokely, 2005) because the interactions are dynamic and fluid. It is difficult to cross cultures for even well-prepared persons. If students are not sufficiently prepared in IEPs, it may be difficult to get connected and experience co-constructed interactions unless there is joint interest (Boylan & Mari, 1996).

Co-constructed community connections were described as dynamic, because they contained action, leading to relationships between Deaf and HEARING persons as illustrated by both sets of participants. Are the majority of interpreters experiencing co-constructed interactions with Deaf persons in their communities? Stuard’s (2008) findings reported that hearing participants did not perceive interaction within the Deaf-World would enhance ASL skills, but Deaf participants did. Are expert interpreters
more apt to keep Deaf community ties? Do tensions and complexities keep interpreters away from the Deaf community?

HEARING participants reported connections within their respective Deaf communities. Even the one participant who had decreased connections with the wider Deaf community in her geographic area, still continued to interact with some Deaf persons, sometimes traveling far distances. Deaf participants described HEARING interpreters’ connections within the Deaf-World, albeit, not always perceived as displaying accurate behavioral and cognitive actions. Cultural contact between HEARING interpreters and the Deaf-World occurs, on various levels. Are the levels acceptable to local Deaf communities, to interpreters, to RID, to NAD and other professional organizations serving Deaf persons?

Results from this inquiry showed co-constructed community connections were conditionally fluid because affiliations were reported to be instinctual and consciously or unconsciously monitored by Deaf cultural norms and values. HEARING participants reported knowing how to enter and behave in the Deaf-World. An example from a Coda participant showed the conditional nature of Deaf-World affiliation/alliance. She reported being accepted in one community but having to prove herself after moving to a different geographic location. Coda interpreters may not experience the same level of vetting as that of L2 interpreters. Deaf participants reported acceptance on a case-by-case basis. As the Deaf participant stated in his quote, “Deaf people are the ones who control opening or closing the door to entrance into the community,” showing the conditional nature of affiliation as interpreter participation is co-constructed within Deaf communities. The
complex processes described above would be difficult to quantify. However, are these issues too important to ignore just because they exist, are complex, and in the affective domains of information processing?

Participants described cognitive changes in transforming from hearing persons to HEARING persons. A HEARING participant reported behavioral changes when entering into DeafSpace by ‘having the mind of a deaf person.’ All participants reported knowing how to ‘be’ in DeafSpace, adhering to visual norms, behaviors, and Deaf-World customs. However, the reported appropriate behaviors would be up for debate and to be judged by perceptions of d/Deaf persons with whom they were affiliated. Implications of these findings related to mostly cognitive and behavioral actions seen within the rubric of interpreter soft skills (Stuard, 2008).

**Context of Deaf-World Cultural Competence**

In order to provide context within this inquiry regarding expert ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence, the representation of an algorithm, *ASL/English interpreter comprehensive skill set* has been invaluable to me to contextualize and categorize the all-encompassing interpreter lifeworlds or work contexts. Below is an algorithm that has proved helpful to me in situating the interpreting work of experts, those who demonstrate high levels of fluency, well-developed cross-cultural knowledge and skill and best practice in interpreter service delivery.

Figure 6 is something I developed and have used since the beginning of this inquiry to contextualize and characterize expert interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence for purposes of my own clarity. It is offered in this section as a visual convention of a
hypothetical, global look at what expert interpreters ideally possess and demonstrate in terms of skill set. I welcome opportunities to discuss it with colleagues, but it is not meant, at this time, for any purpose other than contextualization of Deaf-World cultural competence in the lifeworlds of ASL/English interpreters within this inquiry.

\[
\text{L11 + Dd1+ Cc} + s_{s1})^1 + (\text{L12 + Dd2 + Cc2 + s}_{s2})^1 (P) = 1 \\
[(\text{L13 + Dd3+ Cc3 + s}_{s3})^1]
\]

*Figure 6. Algorithm of ASL/English interpreter comprehensive skill set*

The device above was informed by Gile’s (1995) Effort Model and the convention of using characters to symbolize concepts in the interpreting milieu (e.g., C=Coordination Effort, M= Memory Effort). The algorithm situated Deaf-World culture into its larger context. Language groupings were housed within separate parentheses, basic and general content is the same for each linguistic context (L1, L2), with only the first, second (and possibly third) language status changed. Below, I explain symbol representation.

Capital ‘L’ stands for formal or global knowledge of first and second (or subsequent) languages with lower case ‘l’ symbolizing informal or local knowledge of all languages in question. Capital ‘D,’ in subscript, symbolizes knowledge of formal discourse structures, including knowledge of linguistics and discourse analysis being salient. The lower case ‘d,’ in subscript, symbolizes discourse structures of informal settings, including knowledge of how to negotiate informal or local types of talk (examples being sexual in nature or intimate family conversations, etc.).
Capital ‘C’ stands for formal or global knowledge of first and second (or subsequent) cultures with the lower case ‘c’ symbolizing informal or local knowledge of cultures in question. The capital ‘S,’ in subscript, symbolizes knowledge of formal soft skills (Stuard, 2008) within cultural contexts, with knowledge of how to negotiate situations more global in nature. The lower case’s,’ in subscript, symbolizes soft skill strategies in informal or more local settings, with knowledge of how to negotiate or navigate Deaf communities with finesse and appropriate behavior. Within Cc and Ss boundaries, the demand-control schema (Dean & Pollard, 2011) would be applicable on a variety of levels in order to negotiate and appropriately mediate cross-cultural challenges and complexities.

The two areas highlighted in bold in Figure 6 are \textbf{Cc2} and \textbf{Ss2}, in subscript. These symbols relate to Deaf-World cultural competence including navigating global or local cross-cultural contexts. Interpreters should possess cultural knowledge and finesse in cross-culturally mediating situations. This may require the application of soft skills such as negotiation, civility, and appropriate etiquette. Examples would be discussing lighting, room arrangement, lack of preparation materials, and inter- and intrapersonal relationships. The formula would apply to L2 practitioners differently than native practitioners. The above formula may be ‘flipped’ for some Codas and possibly Sodas in that their Cc2 and Ss2 would be an American mainstream cultural context instead of a Deaf-World context.

Interpreters hail from American mainstream cultural contexts, Deaf-World cultural contexts, or a multitude of other macro or micro-cultural sociolinguistic environments. Other tangential macro-cultural contexts may be housed within the capital C symbol. If
other cultural contexts are salient, they could be included in a separate cultural context symbolized by L13. These cultural contexts include Chicano, African-American, and Asian-American cultures to name a few. Micro-cultural contexts would be housed within the lower case c symbol and placed in either the L11 or L12 context, depending on the saliency and strength of the cultural affiliation. They could include situations such as religious affiliations, gender identity, gay, or other micro-cultural contexts with which one may be affiliated. We do not acquire our C2 and C3 attributes in a vacuum, we utilize aspects of C1 contexts to attain our subsequent cultural attributes. This is a very complex topic in need of further research.

The small ‘t’ symbol connotes the temporal context in which the individual is acquiring his/her various cultural contexts. Work by Baker (2011) and Cummins (1991) categorizes bilingualism into sequential, circumstantial, additive, subtractive and a host of other descriptor attributes of when/how a person became bilingual. L2 interpreters would primarily learn ASL as their L2 later in life, thus most may be English dominant bilinguals (Kannapell, 1980). Codas would be examples of bimodal bilinguals (Grosjean, 2008), learning languages from within a Deaf-World context. How and when one learns an L1 and L2 are important pieces of information, encapsulated within the ‘t’ symbol in the algorithm.

The ‘P’ symbol stands for processing. When interpreters process information, the formula is activated via mental representations inherent in rendering a message from one language to another through cognitive processing. Cognitive work of interpreters incorporates sociolinguistic contexts and mental representations seen in process models
from scholars such as Cokely (1992), Colonomos (1989), Gish (1986), and Gile (1992, 2009) among others to describe the lifeworld of the ‘I’ or interpreter.

As can be seen in the above algorithm, development of interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence occurs within spaces occupied by interpreters and Deaf communities in that a Deaf-World context will make up either the L11or L12 side of the interpreter sociolinguistic experience. Reciprocal and iterative processes between Deaf and HEARING persons occur with Deaf community members as gatekeepers. Decisions would be enacted at the intersection of HEARING persons’ claiming Deaf-World status and the Deaf community’s assigning of the status at various levels. The co-constructed community connections described below are reciprocal and collectively communal.

**Cross-Cultural Co-Construction**

The essence of the phenomenon of this inquiry found co-constructed community connections were described by expert Deaf and HEARING participants. Research question two and the concomitant theme were global in nature and the meaning or sense of it related to the basic premise of expert interpreters’ system of connection with the Deaf-World via local community ties.

Expert participants’ narratives pointed to co-constructed community connections between Deaf persons and those desiring to be ASL/English interpreters and ostensibly enter some type of affiliation with the Deaf-World. In order to contribute to IEP curricula and pedagogy, I would like to propose findings from this inquiry in a seven-step model experienced and described by participants in this inquiry. Data discerned within the narrative structure of the interviews are foundational in ASL/English interpreter contexts as
they enter the Deaf-World. Through participants’ narratives, stories of Deaf-World involvement emerged and I am naming the emerging seven-step process the interpreter affiliation or affiliation/alliance narrative (IAAN).

Expert participants’ IAAN expressions were described within their stories of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation/alliance. Eight out of ten HEARING participants described Deaf-World affiliation/alliance and two described affiliation. Deaf participants described the avowal and ascription processes leading to co-constructed community and cultural connections of interpreters. One quote from a Deaf participant described an overview of the IAAN seen in the narratives of HEARING participants. With all HEARING participants describing these steps without being prompted, and the Deaf participant providing a clear and cogent synopsis of the steps to involvement, the IAAN emerged as the essence of the phenomenon of this inquiry. One Deaf participant presented the synopsis below about how hearing people who would like to become interpreters, not Deaf people, initiate contact with the Deaf-World. In essence, it describes how hearing people become HEARING.

Honestly I am not sure if deaf people themselves initiate interpreter involvement in the community. What I see, for the majority of interpreters, is that there is a fascination with the language and community. I think that once they fall in love with the language, then they find themselves in what I call a black hole. They are drawn into a vortex of involvement. I think they initiate the contact and try to enter into the community, but the community is the force that allows them entrance. The community does not have an open door and does not allow just
anyone entrance. I think the community is resistant to most who try to enter. There is what I call a testing phase, where someone is sized up, they continue to learn the language, someone keeps an eye on them, and they are deemed to be acceptable or not. Once they start to learn the language, we can see that they're getting better and better, that they are able to communicate with us. Then they start to learn about culture, develop cultural sensitivity, learn about the norms and values of the community, and all those kinds of things. The community says, that person understands us. So that is when the community comes in closer. The invitation is extended to a deeper involvement. I think from my travels in the United States and internationally, I tend to see that initial interest and learning comes from the person of their own accord. (okay, yea) Also there is a test of the person's attitude toward the Deaf community. Does the person have a good attitude, is the person positive about the Deaf community, is the person willing to use the right approach, ask the right questions, approach the community in an appropriate manner? If that is the case, then Deaf people are the ones who control opening or closing the door to entrance into the community. From my experience that is what I’ve seen happen. I have seen some hearing people run headlong into the community thinking that they have the right to do that. The door is closed to them but they burst through it anyway. That doesn’t work.

The quote above represents a Deaf-centric perspective on the acquiescence on the part of Deaf-World citizens to allow outsiders entrance into sacred DeafSpace. As I recalled my own entrance into the Deaf community (see Chapter 1), I could see similarities
to what expert HEARING participants had described and to the quote above. The synoptic themes of research questions one and two and the essence of the phenomenon of this inquiry informed the development of the IAAN. All interpreters have a story, especially related to their entrée into the Deaf-World. Interpreters’ stories may demonstrate a more loose affiliation, or a stronger affiliation/alliance. The premise of affiliation versus affiliation/alliance would possibly be a topic of debate for a Deaf-centric focus group.

The proposed interpreter affiliation or affiliation/alliance narrative (IAAN) may be framed within a series of seven steps and illustrated how hearing people became HEARING (see Table 16). The natural acquisition Codas and Sodas experience regarding Deaf-World culture as a C1 or C2 may preclude the testing phase L2 HEARING person’s experience. One Coda and the Soda participant did not describe instances of testing. One Coda participant did describe a difficult testing phase after moving to a geographic location of considerable distance away from where she previously lived. Testing of L2 and Coda/Soda interpreters may or may not include common and/or overlapping processes. The steps below are simplified and condensed as the processes are in need of further research.

Questions about the above paradigm are many, and I hope will continue as Deaf and HEARING persons explore the ideas proposed. Are expert interpreters the only practitioners expected to adhere to Deaf-World norms and behaviors, such that is seen in the above seven-step process? Would Deaf-World culturally competent interpreters show acknowledgement and respect for the serious nature and care Deaf communities show for their communities? Would Deaf community members join with IEP faculty to discuss the
proposed steps of the IAAN? If it was determined that Deaf community members agreed with the findings, could we work together in experiencing the processes of hearing people entering Deaf communities?

Table 16

*Interpreter Affiliation, Affiliation/Alliance (IAAN)*

Participants described the following paradigm of Deaf-World affiliation or affiliation alliance

1. Early interactions with Deaf-World citizens or authentic bicultural affiliation
2. Hearing person initiates interest in the Deaf-World
3. Deaf community members take note
4. Hearing person continues contact with the Deaf community
5. If deemed acceptable, Deaf community members test the hearing person (gatekeeping)
6. Hearing person draws in closer, or not, based on Deaf community gatekeeping
7. Repeat until person becomes HEARING or remains hearing

**Limitations**

There were limitations to this study including sample size, sample disposition, and the small number of Deaf participants. Being a qualitative study, the number of participants was not atypical, but may have only included participants who possessed a high level of Deaf-World cultural competence inherently.

Participants ranged in age from 27 to 62 years. The mean age of participants was 42 years which could be a potential limitation. Some seasoned interpreters may have different outlooks and experiences related to development of cross-cultural competence just
by virtue of the number of years in the field. Participants in the study were purported to be expert interpreters and the expert status of any practitioner may be argued.

The sample was purposive in that I sent emails to limited lists of interpreters and those who responded were probably very interested in the subject. One main premise of the inquiry required expert interpreter participation, which also changed the dynamics of the study. Even though I was interested in exploring what expert interpreters’ descriptions were of Deaf-World cultural competence, it meant non-expert, pre-certified and non-seasoned interpreter voices were not represented.

Another limitation related to follow-up with participants. It was difficult to re-connect with participants once interviews were completed. I did not want to take more of their time and I found it somewhat awkward contacting participants once the interviews were over. I did not want to lead participants’ responses by asking specific follow-up questions as well. Participants were in various geographic locations, adding to the difficulty in follow-up.

After conducting this research, I found several models (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Fantini, 1995, 1999, 2000; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006) I could have incorporated into the study. However, I would have had to modify the models, and this may have required research prior to the modification of frameworks normed on hearing persons. I am not aware of the application of intercultural models for candidates taking the NAD/RID certification exams. At this time, it seems models are not incorporated in the examination of interpreter skill sets related to cross-cultural assessments. Perhaps in future studies,
intercultural models and other frameworks could be applied in the assessment of cross-cultural characteristics as was done by Rasmussen (2012).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The place of teaching culture within the second language curriculum, in some circumstances, is tenuous at best (Lange & Paige, 2002). However, culture must be taught in IEPs as stated in the standards and practices of the Commission on Collegiate Education (CCIE), the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC), American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) and American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). Rasmussen (2012) commented on the lack of empirical literature regarding culture in the ASL/English interpreting discipline.

After the experience of conducting this inquiry, I would like to see research in the following areas: the role of culturally responsive reflective practice in developing cultural competence of interpreters and fine tuning soft skills (Stuard, 2008); exploration of the concepts of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006) as applied to the interpreting discipline; and the utilization of collective Deaf-World wisdom and community cultural wealth (Fleischer, 2013) in ASL/English interpreting practice. I begin with information on reflective practice applied to the ASL/English interpreting discipline.

Reflective practice has been discussed by ASL/English interpreting scholars related to ethical decision making (Stewart & Witter-Merithew, 2006), demand-control schema (Dean & Pollard, 2011); the interpreting process (Patrie, 2000); and interpreting
and creativity (Patrie, 2013) among others. Reflective practice has been discussed in general instructional pedagogy by Dewey (1933), Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), Schon (1983), Brookfield (1995), Henderson (2000), Henderson and Kesson (2004), among other scholarly works. Cultural responsiveness has been discussed by Banks and Banks (2004), Delpit (1988), Gay (2002), and Nieto (1999). Combining reflective practice with cultural responsiveness would create a framework of interpreter culturally responsive reflective practice. Facing ethical dilemmas or context demands with culturally responsive reflection may lead interpreters to enhance decision making skills which may lead to the development of soft skills (Stuard, 2008) and more culturally sensitive outcomes. There are working interpreters who possess the finesse of soft skill (Stuard, 2008) management of interpreting contexts and incorporate strategies for accomplishing culturally responsive reflective practice. Researching what, where, why, and how interpreters accomplish this level of expression would benefit the interpreting discipline.

Interpreter soft skill (Stuard, 2008) management is at the heart of this inquiry. Soft skills relate to the cluster of personality traits and characteristics of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005). The search for Deaf-heart (Merkin, 2009) is seen within RID, the community forum movement of RID (Cole, 2011) as well as several other professional organizations regarding Deaf persons. How do Deaf-heart, ethical considerations, demands and control options (Dean & Pollard, 2011), Deaf-World cultural competence, cultural competence in one’s L1/C1 context, and other factors merge to create symbiosis for the application of interpreter soft skills (Stuard, 2008)? Culturally responsive practice would
include being wide awake (Greene, 1995) to a multiplicity of cultural differences, including macro- and micro-cultural subtleties. The research in the areas described above would be challenging because most of what is studied resides in the affective domain of learning and would engage higher order thinking in multiculturalism. Bi- and multicultural border crossings are challenging topics, with solid, classic inquiry coming from LaFromboise et al. (1993) in the psychology discipline.

Work by LaFromboise et al. (1993) on second culture acquisition could inform the ASL/English interpreting discipline. LaFromboise et al. (1993) provided key data regarding categories informing biculturalism with five salient frameworks: models of second culture acquisition included (a) assimilation, giving up a minority culture to retain a majority one; (b) acculturation, taking on a target culture with the inability to shed one’s culture of origin; (c) alternation/biculturalism, balancing majority and minority cultures; (d) multiculturalism, retaining one’s first culture while adding subsequent cultures; and (e) fusion, when all cultures meld together with no discernible majority/minority distinction. ASL/English interpreters may fit any level of the framework. However, there are levels which may connect cogently to interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Alternation/biculturalism would be a natural fit for interpreters, balancing majority and minority cultures. Eight out of ten HEARING participants from this inquiry exhibited attributes of this level. This would probably put them in the category of biculturalism, having dual identities, an American mainstream cultural identity as well as a Deaf-World cultural identity and being more allied with Deaf communities as opposed to affiliation. The two participant inconsistencies in the
data set, better fit the Deaf-World affiliation concept described earlier in this chapter and would possibly fit best in LaFromboise et al.’s (1993) acculturation level described above. Further research on biculturalism, cross-cultural identity development in interpreters, Deaf-World cultural competence of ASL/English interpreters, and the differences and similarities between them is needed. The incorporation of other models may be beneficial as well.

Another LaFromboise et al. (1993) level to explore is number four, multiculturalism. Interpreters need to be able to work with a variety of people, representing a full palette of diversity within the Deaf-World. This multicultural perspective (LaFromboise et al., 1993) is similar to the idea of ‘cosmopolitanism’ (Appiah, 2006) and would be helpful to incorporate in order to flesh out ethical considerations in multicultural contexts. Appiah (2006) is a philosopher who writes about ethics, describes being a citizen of the world, and practices universality with a respect for difference within the concept of cosmopolitanism. As interpreters, we need to be open to a variety of cultures, situations, and to the diversity within our consumer base, both hearing and d/Deaf. Interpreters are exposed to and work with the global Deaf-World and will be faced with every matter of challenge, culture and co-culture, sometimes requiring the highest levels of critical thinking and professionalism, which includes, but is not limited to Deaf-World cultural competence and fits the category of multiculturalism (LaFromboise, et al., 1993).

Curriculum Studies scholars Henderson and Kesson (2004) encouraged educators to identify and tackle pedagogical problems by utilizing a curriculum wisdom paradigm. By utilizing principles such as teaching for 3S understanding and reflective practice,
Henderson and Gornik (2007) provide a template for in-depth pedagogy and teaching practices. Three S understanding (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) helps frame teaching and learning into a continuous development cycle of learning content knowledge (subject matter), one’s own enlightenment (self), and how to apply information to the community at large (social) as well as within the teacher and student dyad. I would like to see more research in exploring standards, applying the curriculum wisdom paradigm and the development of pedagogy utilizing 3S understanding (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) principles.

An example of a wisdom principle would be utilizing signed language in the presence of Deaf people, a scenario exemplified repeatedly in this inquiry. HEARING participants described motivation to partake in the use of visual language in DeafSpace, but still the issue persists. It seems a simple concept, but somehow defies logic and often is in the cross hairs between cross-cultural desire and oversight. A wise and thoughtful discipline may desire to explore the issue further which may be accomplished by the application of 3S (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) principles.

Subject matter understanding could include discussing official language use at Deaf-centric events, etiquette, concepts related to a lingua franca, Deaf community perspectives and protocol of interpreters in various settings. Self-understanding would include higher order thinking and could present challenges to some students. This would probably be the area in need of sensitive research, hopefully leading to in-depth and effective pedagogical strategies for teaching about cross-cultural transformation of perspectives. The last area of social understanding would relate to what the Deaf-World
would want us to know about this topic of utilizing a visual language in the presence of d/Deaf and hard of hearing persons.

Discerning the collective Deaf voice from the heart of the Deaf-World would incorporate received community wisdom (Cokely, 2005). An impactful aspect in the research process I noticed was the generosity of participants in sharing their intimate stories, full of cross-cultural insights. Through interviewing expert Deaf and HEARING participants, I was amazed at the rich data set, replete with deep reflection and intelligent judgment about perceptions and attitudes related to our shared cross-cultural space. I would encourage further qualitative interviews of Deaf-World citizens as well as interpreters.

Overall, further research is needed to incorporate data into IEP curricula and pedagogical practices. Lange and Paige (2003) discussed the lack of cultural information presented to students when learning a second language. Language teaching often takes the bulk of class time, leaving very little opportunity for the deep teaching and learning needed to incorporate cultural data (Lange & Paige, 2003). Cultural teaching is time consuming, and research is needed to discern the best ways to present complex content in a short amount of time.

In curriculum studies, theory, reconceptualizing theory and change are valued as part of what curriculum theorists do in their work. As I was engaged in this inquiry, I became aware of a lack of a title for the discipline surrounding ASL/English interpreting. Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies exist as disciplines. ASL/English interpreting studies to date, does not. Does ASL/English interpreting require additional theory in order
to establish itself as a discipline in its own right? It is my hope that data from this inquiry and Curriculum Studies theory will inform the ASL/English interpreting discipline.

Research findings could be applied to interpreters-in-training as well as professional development of working interpreters. Deaf participants described multiple areas of concern they encountered with working interpreters. While the affective domain is often difficult to present, more research is needed regarding how to present this very esoteric and complex information to both interpreters-in-training and working practitioners of ASL/English interpreting. By utilizing the collective wisdom of interpreter and Deaf communities, I hoped to contribute to IEP curricula on the topic of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence.

**Conclusion**

Participants in this study naturally told their ‘stories’ of entering the Deaf-World and in doing so, provided a framework describing ways interpreters are involved with co-constructed collaborative cross-cultural affiliation or affiliation/alliance in their respective Deaf communities. Narrative inquiry and the concept of currere narrative (Pinar, 1975, 2006) allowed the space for participants to express deep reflections of ASL/English interpreter Deaf-World cultural competence. Participants described positive aspects as well as issues and concerns, but in the end, interpreting engages *people* who happen to require human intervention for linguistic access. One participant described it this way:

> That goes back to my whole notion of what I think interpreting is, it’s about *connecting people* . . . it really is great to go out sometimes and be somewhere and you see a deaf person out and when I’m visiting I’m family . . . “wow I really
remember those days when I was here in XXXX and, you know, this was a community I was really involved in” and it’s just . . . That very warm feeling . . . I think it has to do with how people understand what it is they’re doing with interpreting. You know, some people might think “I’m just passing information”—if that’s what you see it as, then I think you’ve missed a much more important picture.

Within the RID code of professional conduct, the driving force behind interpreter work relates to practitioners first and foremost, doing no harm (RID, 2013). The above quote admonishes interpreters to look beyond the belief they work with languages only. Interpreters work with people, and people live culture, as we work together in intricate sociolinguistic interstitial (Bhabha, 1994) spaces. What of the tension between interpreters and Deaf consumers (Forestal, 2004)? Are some interpreters neglecting cross-cultural nuances in their haste to learn ASL, the tangible path to communication mediation?

Just as the interpreters in the opening narrative signed in the presence of Deaf people, interpreters are to be mindful and ethical in their work, not seeing Deaf consumers as a means to an end. Baker-Shenk (1986) cautioned interpreters more than 25 years ago to pay attention to issues of power and cultural connections, staying close to Deaf communities and to remain wide-awake (Greene, 1995). Participants in this inquiry described the importance and richness of interpreter and Deaf community co-constructed interpersonal connections and the lived experience of practitioners as they became HEARING and consequently Deaf-World culturally competent.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Research Study—*Becoming HEARING*: *A qualitative study of expert interpreter deaf-world cultural competence*

Date_____________ Location______________________ Time___________________

Participant name________________________ Certification(s)________________________

and year received________________________ Pseudonym preference?____________________

Deaf deaf hard of hearing hearing Coda Other______________________________

Membership in professional organizations: RID NAD OCRID OAD other RID affiliate

chapter_________ other NAD affiliate chapter_________ ASLTA CIT Other________

Are you employed at an institution (college, etc.) serving d/Deaf/hh persons?____________

If so, please explain___________________________________________________________

Contact information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Cell phone(text)</td>
<td>Pager</td>
<td>VP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender M F Transgendered Age_____ Race/ethnicity________________________

Other identity characteristics___________________________________________

Years of experience as an interpreter________________________Years in current position_______

Type of interpreting primarily done______________________________________

Live in an (a)urban (b) suburban (c) rural locale additional information_______

Size of Deaf community (a)small (b) medium (c) large additional information?___________

Participation in the Deaf community (a) low (b) medium (c) frequent

Please explain________________________________________________________________________

Use of ASL while interpreting

(a) daily or nearly daily (b) 3/4 times a week (c) less than 3/4 times a week Other_______

Use of *conversational* ASL (a) primary language (b) daily or nearly daily (c) 3/4 times a week

(d) less than 3/4 times a week. Other—please explain________________________________________________________________________
Do you consider yourself bilingual/bicultural? Please explain______________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

Would you briefly share your views on the significance of dual cultural identity (comfortable in the Deaf-world and in American mainstream culture) and your work as an interpreter? ____________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE TO INVITE INTERPRETERS
Content of initial email correspondence to lists of interpreters inviting participation in the study

Hello Interpreters!

It is with great pleasure and a sense of humility that I ask your assistance with a research study.

My name is Leah Subak and I am a doctoral candidate at Kent State University in the Curriculum and Instruction area. The working title of my dissertation is:

*Becoming HEARING: A qualitative study of expert interpreter deaf-world cultural competence*

I am exploring interpreter (d/Deaf and hearing) attitudes and perceptions about acquiring a second culture, intercultural competence and possible second culture identity development.

What I hope to accomplish is to add to the body of research literature in the field of ASL/English interpreter education as well as for professional development of working interpreters.

The purpose of the pilot phase is to survey interpreters’ attitudes and perceptions about intercultural competence in their work as interpreters. I will collect data in order to take statements from participants and connect them to existing research data in Intercultural Studies literature.

I am looking for interpreters who fit specific criteria such as: certified; interpreters with hearing parents; interpreters with first degree d/Deaf family member; d/Deaf interpreter; diverse ethnicity or other identifying characteristics; self-identifies as an ASL/English bilingual/bicultural individual (or multilingual/multicultural); believes intercultural competence is important in the work of ASL/English interpreters; and is available to be interviewed.

Interviews will last between 1 ½ and 2 hours and will be audio or video recorded. Participants will be compensated with a small gift.

Please let me know if you would be available and willing to be involved in this research study. Please email/text or call me with questions! Please do not reply to this email as it may go to other participants and will compromise confidentiality.

Email - terpresearch@gmail.com
Phone number - 330.608.0985 (voice and text)
VP - 330.672.8037

With much gratitude for what you do!

Best Regards,
Leah Subak
APPENDIX C

EMAIL TO INTERPRETERS
Appendix C

Email to Interpreters

Email to Invite Interpreters to participate in qualitative interviews (acceptance)

Dear ___________.

Thank you for your interest in this study! The working title of the study is -

* Becoming HEARING: A qualitative study of expert interpreter deaf-world cultural competence*

I would like to thank you for your interest and to invite you to participate! Participants will be minimally compensated.

Please see the attached flyer for dates and times of interviews.

Below is a breakdown of what you can expect during the interview process -

- Meet and discuss the process; talk about the research and get to know each other a little before we begin the interviewing process (turn on the recorders, etc.)
- Explain informed consent process and sign form
- Answer any questions before we begin
- Talk about what to expect from the interviewing process; explain the methodology—qualitative
- Discuss how the information will be used (if not clear from informed consent process)
- Ask main and sub-questions
- Audio or video taped
- Will debrief at the end of the interview
- Discuss what the next steps will be

I greatly appreciate your willingness to give of your time.

Please contact me by ________ (date)

Please email/text or call me with questions! Please do not reply to this email as it may go to other participants and will compromise confidentiality.

Email - terpresearch@gmail.com
Phone number - 330.608.0985 (voice and text)
VP - 330.672.8037

With much gratitude for what you do!

Best Regards,
Leah Subak
Email to interpreters; thanking them for their interest, however non-acceptance (full)

Dear ____________,

Thank you for your interest in the study, *Becoming HEARING: A qualitative study of expert interpreter deaf-world cultural competence*

At this time, the response was sufficient to allow me to fill the schedule. I greatly appreciate your willingness to be involved and thank you so much!

With much gratitude for what you do!

Best Regards,
Leah Subak
APPENDIX D

CURRICULUM WISDOM PRINCIPLES FROM DEAF PARTICIPANTS
Appendix D

Curriculum Wisdom Principles from Deaf Participants

Attitude

Need to be careful with the attitude, ‘I just LOVE Deaf people and ASL.’ Can be heading into dangerous waters.

The participant reported the willingness to meet hearing people halfway. If he is willing to meet halfway, and the hearing person is not, he backs off the interaction/situation.

One participant reported enjoying being around open-minded hearing people with good attitudes who offer support to Deaf people.

The participant reported not being able to ‘stand’ hearing people who are not willing to go the extra mile to learn about d/Deaf people, their language, their culture, and who they are as people.

If hearing people are standoffish and look down on d/Deaf people, the participant reported having no interest in this type of hearing people.

If someone hates ‘us,’ the interaction goes nowhere.

Culture

Deaf participant described an example of learning a signed language other than ASL. He did not notice subtle linguistic differences pointed out by his teacher. Caused him to wonder, are these actually cultural differences? Does this situation parallel what learning ASL is like for L2 learners?

In learning a second signed language, he realized without knowledge of common cultural information, he did not readily make sense out of certain seemingly pragmatic concepts, such as automobile registration in another country.

Some hearing people can be in a situation where there is no communication access for d/Deaf people and they do not even realize anything is wrong.

Interpreters are outsiders in the Deaf-World and always will be, period.
Interpreter related [including CDI, DI issues]

The roles of hearing interpreters and Deaf interpreters change depending on the situation.

There are differences between good interpreters and great interpreters. Both are able to get the job done. However, this participant gave the example of Michael Jordan playing basketball. Not everyone is able to play with that skill, yet they still play. How do we deal with those issues in the interpreting field?

The need for DIs to stop thinking as consumers and think more as interpreters.

As interpreters, d/Deaf or hearing, our main aim relates to concentrating on how to mediate language and cultural information appropriately.

Deaf communities purport to espouse collectivist values, but noticed traits of individualism, especially within larger Deaf communities, leading to impacts on interpreters.

Deaf consumer’s ASL source language restructured in the target language by the hearing interpreter. At a debriefing meeting, the Deaf consumer was told his ASL source looked like it came from a book (consumer was an avid reader). Consumer reflected and realized hearing interpreter had a good point. Consequently, he learned not to jump to conclusions, instead save reaction until after debriefing, reflection.

Linguistic

As a non-native user of English, Deaf person is ‘marked.’ It is okay if non-native hearing interpreters are also ‘marked’ as non-native ASL users.

L2 language learner means the person has the potential to use the language but are outwardly not comfortable with it, have not internalized the language yet.

Allow people to have the freedom to use their native language at all times.

Students/Teaching

At times, work with or see students/interpreters who you think will never make it, but they do.

Two aspects of ASL are difficult to teach L2 interpreters: NMS and depiction.

When teaching ASL classes, could recognize who should stay and who should change fields.
Need to tell IEP students, if they have not found their niche within the Deaf community by the time they graduate, they ‘are pretty much done.’

Why not tell some ASL students, they could hang around with Deaf people, but they do not necessarily need to become an interpreter?

**Philosophical**

Good interpreters are born, not made (Nida).

The participant reported not wanting to put negative labels on all hearing people just because they are hearing.

Making a d/Deaf environment 100% communicatively accessible may not be a realistic goal, may be too extreme.

Participant reported anecdotal statistics saying 25% of hearing people are interested in d/Deaf people; 50% are somewhat clueless and 25% look down on d/Deaf people.

There are good and bad d/Deaf people and the same could be said for hearing and HEARING people.

d/Deaf and HEARING interactions depend a lot on past experiences of the two parties, how they were raised, what they internalized.

You cannot make everyone satisfied 100% of the time, there needs to be compromise.

There are important differences within Deaf communities and interpreting communities based on size/scope and location of each; larger communities can be more selective with interpreters; smaller communities cannot.

When d/Deaf and HEARING people do not get along, it is more about personalities.

When d/Deaf and HEARING people do not get along, sometimes it has to do with not having a shared background.

Interpreters are different that the masses of hearing people, it simply has to be the case. Seems to be three categories of interpreters and cultural competence; those who have it, those who do not have it, and those who think they have it.
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