EMERGING THEMES IN THE STUDY OF DEAF CHILDREN

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Martha Ann Sheridan, B.A., M.S.W.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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Dissertation Committee:
K. Kilty
A. Riemenschneider
V. Richardson

Approved by
Advisor
College of Social Work
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this naturalistic study was to explore and describe how deaf children experience and interpret their lifeworlds. Seven deaf children between the ages of 7 - 10 participated in phenomenological interviews using projective (art and storytelling) and direct child interview techniques. In this study, the children presented their perspectives of themselves, and others and their views of experiences and relationships in their lives. While similarities and differences between the children arose and are discussed in this study, themes emerging from this study are described as images and pathways.

The various dimensions of images included: attachment and domesticated others (comfort in relationships and interactions with those whom the children see as like themselves regardless of hearing status), alienation and disparate others (discomfort in relationships and interactions with those whom the children see as different from themselves regardless of hearing status), infinity (future stories), overt and covert identity, and images of communication.

Pathways are the avenues that these children and their families take to cope with adverse experiences and relationships with disparate others. Dimensions of pathways are relational, recreational, self directional, the use of sign language and other communication methods, use of auxiliary aids and devices, and the adoption of heroes.
Literature on the social development of deaf children and ecological, existential and symbolic interaction theories is reviewed in this study. It was noted that while the literature on the social development of deaf children focuses primarily on negative assumptions and experiences, the children in this study presented a variety of positive experiences, perspectives and pathways in addition to uncomfortable experiences and relationships in their lives. The relatedness of ecological, existential and symbolic interaction paradigms to the themes emerging out of this study is discussed. An eco-existential interaction metatheory is discussed as a useful approach to social work practice with deaf and hard of hearing children.
With love and gratitude

to my parents who, believing in life,
in love, in God and in creating,
have given me the freedom to do the same,
and to find, as they did, a purpose in life.
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VITA

May 9, 1954 .................... Born - Columbus, Ohio

1977 ............................. B.A., Psychology - Social Work
Gallaudet University
Washington, D.C.

1977 to 1978 ...................... Director, Social Services,
Ohio Home for the Aged Deaf
Columbus, Ohio

1978 to 1980 ...................... Social Worker, Maryland
School for the Deaf,
Frederick, Maryland

1981 ............................. M.S.W., Clinical Social Work
University of Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland

1981 to 1984 ...................... Social Worker, Jewish Social
Service Agency of Metropolitan
Washington, D.C.

1981 to 1982 ...................... Coordinator, Counseling and
Community Services for Hearing
Impaired Persons, Family Life
Center of Howard County, Inc.,
Columbus, Maryland

1984 to 1991 ...................... Supervisor of Clinical Services to
Hearing Impaired Persons, Netcare
Corporation, Columbus, Ohio

1991 to Present ................... Director, Ohio Resource Center on
Deafness, and Deaf Services,
Netcare Corporation, Columbus, Ohio
PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Social work
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The population of deaf and hard of hearing school age children consists of great diversity. Researchers report a number of factors that contribute to this diversity including age of onset of deafness, language orientation (i.e., English or American Sign Language), hearing status of family members, etiology, existence of additional disabilities, educational placement, extent and type of hearing loss, and parental and familial acceptance and attitudes towards the child's deafness.

The U.S. Department of Education (1993) reported 60,763 deaf and hard of hearing students under the age of 21 were served by federal laws in the 1991-1992 school year. The Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth (1993-1994) reported that 40% of school age deaf children are members of ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities. Deaf and hard of hearing students are scattered across self contained classes in regular schools, special schools for deaf and hard of hearing students and regular classes with hearing students. These programs use a variety of communication strategies (i.e., oral/aural, total communication, cued speech, and American Sign Language). Teachers of the students in regular school settings often have no training in deaf education. Allen (1986) reported that deaf children attain the equivalent of a third to fourth grade academic achievement level.

Most deaf children (90%) are born to hearing parents who have no previous experience with language and culture of the deaf community, nor do they have
pre-existing preparation for parenting a child who is deaf (Moores, 1987). In response to institutional influences, hearing parents typically grieve their child's deafness and spend the remainder of their child's developmental years in search of answers to the unknown. Parental reactions to the diagnosis of deafness are discussed by Harvey (1989), Kampfe (1989), Koester & Meadow-Orlans (1990), Vernon & Andrews (1990). Earlier researchers suggested that 88% of hearing parents of deaf children are not signers (Rainer, Altshuler & Kallman, 1969).

Traditionally, there are two epistemologies by which deaf people are perceived; clinical (pathological or medical) and cultural (Harvey, 1989). Paul and Jackson (1993) discuss the dichotomous nature of this clinical/cultural debate saying that a psychology of deafness can only be understood when both metatheories are taken into consideration. Harvey (1989) also stated that both, the clinical and cultural epistemologies must be dealt with in psychotherapy with deaf and hard of hearing persons. Lane (1992) uses the term “tragic infirmity” (p. xii) to refer to the clinical view of deaf people. He asserts that people who are culturally Deaf have a different “center” (p. 5) or view of themselves than the paternalistic view which hearing people have of them. It is often assumed that deaf and hard of hearing children will not be happy, intelligent, fully functioning and contributing members of society without speech and hearing.

Related to the above split in epistemologies, a long standing controversy exists among educators, parents, and deaf individuals regarding the “right” way for deaf children to communicate. This controversy referred to as the oral/manual controversy revolves around the use of speech or sign language.

While the profession of social work deserves to be credited for its social justice value base, social work education has done little to prepare social workers for
specialized work with the deaf population. Enhancing the quality of life of individuals in society is one of the purposes of social work (Minahan, 1981).

In 1978, the federal government, NIMH and CSWE issued mandates for the profession of social work, setting priorities to train mental health professionals to work in a pluralistic society. These mandates stressed increased sensitivity of all service providers to the special needs, values and cultures of minorities. No population is homogeneous, and within every racial and ethnic group, there are individuals who are deaf.

The social welfare system has also attempted to prevent and intervene with problems which impact the quality of life of children in our society. However, the profession has paid scant attention to the needs of children with disabilities and, specifically, children who are deaf and their families. Logan’s (1988) review of the literature related to social services to the deaf population revealed that little attention has been given to the social service needs of this population.

Theories of institutional discrimination which apply to minority populations also apply to people who are deaf. The education system in America reflects the melting pot philosophy of our founders (Friere, 1981; Illich, 1970). In our education system, ethnic, racial and cultural minorities are taught to adopt the language, values, and norms of the dominant culture. Lane (1992) discusses the effects of hearing paternalism on the lives of people who are deaf. Humphries (as cited in Lane, 1992) coined the term “audism” to reflect this concept as it is actualized within the deaf community. Both deaf education and social work education have not overcome this tendency in the tradition of American pedagogy.

Specialized skills and knowledge are needed for social workers to work successfully with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families (Luey, Glass & Elliott, 1995; Logan, 1988; McEntee, 1995; Santos, 1988 & 1995;
Sheridan, 1991). In the last two decades, social work training programs specifically for working with individuals who are deaf were developed at Gallaudet University, The National Technical Institute for the Deaf, the University of Maryland, and The Ohio State University. These programs have only begun to address the range of service needs that deaf individuals throughout the nation experience.

While the problems presented by deaf individuals in social work settings are the same as those presented by non-deaf individuals, there are a number of psycho-social, cultural, linguistic and physical factors which interplay in the lives of deaf people that are not commonly understood by social workers. The many factors which shape the development and individuality of people who are deaf and hard of hearing are covered in the literature on deafness. These factors are not traditionally integrated into social work education and practice. As a result, consumers often receive mental health and social services from well meaning but uninformed professionals.

Misdiagnosis often occurs in mental health assessments of deaf and hard of hearing children. Professionals are frequently unfamiliar with linguistic and cultural factors associated with deafness and the structure and grammar of American Sign Language. They may misunderstand a deaf child's attempt to put their visual gestural language (Padden, 1980) into a non-existent written form as a manifestation of psychosis which leads to misuse of psychotropic medications, unnecessary hospitalization, and harmful long term effects on a deaf child's personal and social adjustment and development.

The two environments where deaf children spend the majority of their time, home and school, are often not readily equipped to meet the needs or facilitate the development of children who are deaf. In addition, parents typically unknowingly turn to professionals for the advice and diagnosis, who may reinforce in parents a
medical view which may prolong their denial and their inability to adapt and cope with the difference between themselves and their child. This predominant medical view promotes the notion that deafness is a disorder which should be corrected. A cultural view sees deafness as a difference which can be celebrated and accepted. If this denial is so predominant among those upon whom the responsibility for shaping a child's development rests, how then do these children come to view their existence? How do they perceive their existence and continue in a world that often wants to normalize them? In the face of all this adversity in the environments of deaf children, how do these children survive? What views do deaf children have of themselves? What, if any themes exist for these children? What do they report their experiences to be? This study explored these issues.

Statement of the Problem

We know very little about the perspectives that deaf and hard of hearing children hold of themselves and their lifeworlds; furthermore, little is known about how various social work practice theories present themselves in the lives of these children. Lane (1992) noted problems inherent in deafness research, i.e., researchers are often unable to communicate with their subjects; many questionnaires, scales and indexes used are not appropriate for the reading level or culture of the subjects; research is often done measuring the perspectives of teachers, parents and others in the child's environment who are culturally biased; and researchers have failed to adequately define their population or to recognize the diversity which exists within this population. One result of these problems has been that deafness literature has focused more on the "deficits rather than strengths" (Sarti, 1993) of deaf and hard of hearing children (p. 187). Altshuler (1964), for example, labeled deaf people as egocentric, antipathic, overly dependent, and impulsive.
Lane's 1992 discussion of psychometric testing with deaf people argues that instruments used to determine those labels were not normed for deaf people and therefore should never have been used.

This study collected information on perspectives of deaf and hard of hearing children pertaining to their lifeworlds. Phenomenological interviewing was conducted with seven deaf and hard of hearing children within the framework of naturalistic inquiry. This research avoided the pitfalls noted by Lane through communication and research methods more suitable for gathering data from these children.

**Research Questions**

In this study, I explored, through the process of Naturalistic Inquiry, the lifeworlds of deaf and hard of hearing children. The research questions that guided the study are as follows: What are some of the themes which these children report? From the child's perspective, in what ways do they and their families cope with these life themes? What is it like to be a deaf child in a hearing world which imposes communication, language and cultural biases? What belief systems of belonging and culture exist? How do they deal with issues of grief among their parents and significant others? What views do these deaf and hard of hearing children have of themselves? What meaning do they attribute to these and other environmental influences? What do they report their experiences to be?

**Rationale for the Study**

The social work profession emphasizes a responsiveness to cultural diversity. However, little has been done with respect to understanding and responding to the cultural orientation of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
This study is important because little attention has been given to the meaning deaf and hard of hearing children bring to their existence in the context of a hearing world. Furthermore, the lack of literature on the effects of the values of the hearing populace on the development of self image in deaf and hard of hearing children warranted investigation. Finally, this study was necessary to understand more about deaf children and the construction of their lifeworlds so that the professional community can respond to their issues throughout their formative years.

This study is also important because naturalistic inquiry presents a solution to the problems inherent in conventional research methodology with the deaf population, it is important to derive knowledge based on the realities of the consumer.

This study will allow us to view the individual realities and perceptions that deaf and hard of hearing children hold of themselves and their lifeworlds rather than the perceptions of others about them. This self reporting is largely absent from the literature on deafness and deaf children.

**Purpose of the Study**

Questions about the perspectives of self and the lifeworlds of children who are deaf have been largely ignored in the literature and research in deafness. This phenomenological study allowed for exploration and description of what deaf children “experience and how they interpret their world” (Patton, 1990b, p. 69-70).

**Researcher Bias**

It is important in qualitative research to acknowledge those personal biases which might exist which could effect the trustworthiness of the research findings if they are not dealt with early in the research process. My clinical social work
education and my experiences as an individual who is deaf have taught me to value diversity and participatory relationships. My regard for collaborative interactive knowledge is congruent with acknowledging the voices of the children in this study to formulate grounded theory pertaining to their lifeworlds.

It is my personal bias to respect the diversity which exists among deaf and hard of hearing people. I do not believe that any one method of educating deaf and hard of hearing children or any one way of communicating or socializing can be right for every individual. I believe that we need diversity in our education and communication to match our unique personal histories and characteristics. These personal histories and characteristics along with the personal choices we make play a part in our ultimate identity.

My own history shaped my particular self perception and personal set of values. As a result of illness, I became hard of hearing at age three. My hearing deteriorated throughout my early school years going from a moderate hearing loss at age seven to profound at age 13. Although I have a hard of hearing brother, my parents and my other two siblings are all hearing. My early school years were difficult because I was mainstreamed without any support services or assistive devices. I received my first hearing aid at the age of nine while I was in the third grade. This lack of appropriate educational support resulted in my failing grades. I began to obtain A's and B's when I repeated the fifth grade, but did not benefit from satisfactory relationships with my hearing peers. My teachers, my peers and I had no understanding of my deafness and the effects of being an only deaf child in an all hearing school without supportive services. My parents followed the professionals who advised them not to let me learn to sign or attend a deaf school. Although I was blocked from meeting and interacting with other deaf children, I managed to develop
a longing for the companionship of deaf peers. During this period of my life I also desired to learn to sign.

As a junior in high school exploring career and educational options, I investigated college opportunities and discovered Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Gallaudet is a University geared to the accessibility, cultural and learning needs of deaf and hard of hearing students. My parents agreed with my decision to learn to sign and attend Gallaudet. I believed then and still do today that I learned more in my first few months at Gallaudet than I did in my entire four years of high school. Thus, I made a conscious decision to become acculturated in the deaf community and to focus my career in this area. My acculturation into the deaf community has brought me much happiness.

I realize that every deaf and hard of hearing person has their own story to tell and every story is unique. The experiences and characteristics that led to the choices I made for myself and that my parents made for me as a child are mine alone. Our diversity as deaf and hard of hearing individuals stems in part from the educational and communication experiences and decisions our parents make for us, our culturation, experiences and lifestyles. I believe we need to respect who we are in light of that diversity. At the same time, I believe the educational and communication choices made for us as children can be mismatched with our actual needs.

My personal and professional experiences provided me with a richer understanding of the children's stories. The reflexive journal, peer debriefing and member checking allowed me the opportunity to cautiously monitor any potential for over identification or counter transference issues in my interpretations of their narrative stories. In addition, my clinical experience strengthened my ability to recognize when the children and their families needed professional resources and to make referrals.
Organization of the Study

This study is presented in eleven chapters. Chapter I encompasses the introduction including the background, significance and statement of the problem. Chapter I also includes a rationale, purpose and limitations of the study, and definitions of key terms.

The literature review presented in chapter II includes a review of recent and major literature related to deaf children, their development, social experiences and research methods. Chapter II also includes a review of literature related to existential, ecological and symbolic interaction theories and their relevance to the study as well as a critique of the literature.

Chapter III presents the methodology and its congruence with social work and deaf children. The design, settings, focus, instrumentation, sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, trustworthiness, the pilot study and protection of informants are all discussed in chapter III. Profiles of the study participants are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter IV provides an introduction to the findings, or the themes identified. Themes are presented in chapters V through X.

Conclusions and recommendations are summarized in the final chapter (XI) in relation to the themes identified. Discussion including recommendations for further study is also presented in chapter XI.

Finally, it should be noted that while some may consider it preferable to use "person first" language (i.e.: "children who are deaf" rather than "deaf children") this study takes exception to that rule consistent with other deafness related literature. The continuing trend for deaf people to refer themselves in this manner reflects the view that there is nothing wrong with being deaf.
Key Terms

Defining Deafness

Before any variables related to deafness can be explored, deafness must be defined for the context within which it is studied. In recent years, the terms hard of hearing, and deaf have been given both audiological and cultural meanings. It is important to the scope of this research that these definitions be discussed as they relate to the population under study.

Padden (1980) distinguished between “Deaf” and “deaf”. She defined “Deaf” (upper case) individuals as those who live according to Deaf culture and those who are audiologically deaf and not living according to Deaf culture as “deaf” (lower case). A hard of hearing person has been defined as one who has enough residual hearing for limited speech comprehension or one who views him/herself as hard of hearing.

Padden (1980) defined culture as a set of learned behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules for behavior, and traditions. Regarding Deaf culture, she tells us that a person may grow up and become enculturated later in life when they come in contact with the deaf community. The cultural view of deafness has become widely accepted among those who are familiar with the deaf community. However, a medical view remains predominant in the larger society. Cultural and medical views of deafness are discussed in recent literature and are presented in the introduction section of this study.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing do not always adopt identical views of themselves or identical cultural orientations. While some individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing relate primarily to one cultural orientation (Deaf or hearing) or adopt one particular view of deafness, others may be more bi-cultural, bi-lingual or adopt a combination of both perspectives of deafness (medical and cultural).
Defined from an audiological perspective, deafness is the presence of hearing loss in one or both ears. Amount of hearing, type of loss and configuration can be quantifiably measured with audiometric assessment. Other factors involved in defining deafness, which contribute to the identity, social functioning, and ultimately to the being and becoming of the deaf person include: age of onset, parental and familial hearing status, educational placement, etiology, and communication preferences.

Lane (1992) and Moores (1987) have both reported that a typical mistake of researchers in deafness has been their failure to adequately define their population. The deaf population is widely heterogeneous. Thus, the ability to generalize many of the research results reported in the literature is questionable.

For the purpose of this study, "deaf" will be used inclusively unless specifically referring to the culturally Deaf sector of the population or culturally Deaf individuals. The profiles in Chapter III and thick description used in this study will allow for depiction of individual variables and context within which the data are reported. The nature of this naturalistic study will not allow for generalization across the population.

Perspectives

This study has been undertaken to discover what deaf and hard of hearing children have to say about their lifeworlds. The term perspectives will be used in this study to refer to themes identified in the children’s tales about their experiences, thoughts, views, conceptions and feelings about themselves and others in their lifeworld. Since this study is emergent in its design, the totality of what constitutes a perspective can not be assumed a priori. Thus this term is used loosely in this emergent study.
Lifeworld

In this study, the term lifeworld is used loosely to refer to general dimensions of the self, others, and systems that the children interact with. Again, since this study is emergent in its design, the totality of what constitutes a deaf child’s lifeworld can not be assumed a priori. The term lifeworld may be defined and redefined as the research process emerges.

Residential

The term residential in this study means the type of self-contained educational programs for deaf children that provide classroom and housing facilities. Students attending these programs often commute weekly to school returning home on weekends. However, students who live within a reasonable distance from residential schools often commute daily from home.

Mainstream

Deaf students are “mainstreamed” when they attend non-special education classrooms with hearing children. Deaf students may be mainstreamed for all or some of their classes depending on their placement needs. Total communication classes in regular public school settings are referred to as mainstream settings in this study.

Total Communication

Total communication is described by Moores (1987) as an instructional method in educational programs for deaf children that combines the oral method with the use of signs, fingerspelling, lip-reading, and amplification. This is the definition of the term total communication in this study.
American Sign Language

American Sign Language (ASL) is described by Baker and Cokely (1980) as "a visual gestural language created by Deaf people" (p. 47) and used in North America.

Oral

In this study, the term oral refers to children who communicate through speech and lip-reading. Oral education programs are educational programs for deaf children where speech, lip-reading, and the use of residual hearing are utilized to facilitate the development of spoken language skills. Oral education programs do not advocate the use of sign language.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Patton (1990b) states that there are "advantages and disadvantages related to
when to review the literature: before, during, or after fieldwork – or on a continual
basis throughout the study" (p. 163). He cautions that reviewing the literature prior
to data collection may bias the researcher.

Because I am deaf and have a life commitment to remain informed of
literature pertaining to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, I have reviewed
the literature in this field for many years prior to augmenting my own study. The
overall impression that I gained in my years of reading published literature on
deafness was the catalyst to my desire to utilize a research methodology that would
allow me to become informed on the experiences and shaping of the lifeworld of deaf
children from their own point of view. Therefore my experience both, as a person
who is deaf, and with the literature, was advantageous to framing my questions and
interests pertaining to the children’s perspectives. Thus, the literature review was
done continually throughout the study.

In the literature I began to see that much of the literature on deaf children
related to ecological, existential and symbolic interaction assumptions about their
experiences. The integration of these theories into this chapter does not imply an
exhaustive discussion of these three theories. While other theories may also present
themselves in the literature about deaf and hard of hearing children, it was not my
intent to be exhaustive. In addition, the purpose of this research was not to prove or disprove any theory or assumptions, but rather to discover through an inductive process what the children had to say about themselves and their experiences.

This chapter encompasses a review of the literature on the developmental and social experiences of deaf children. Ecological, symbolic interaction and existential theories presented themselves in this review. Literature on research methods and considerations in doing research with people who are deaf is also explored.

There is a dearth of literature pertaining to the developmental and social experiences of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Thus, an emphasis was placed on major, rather than current, literature as it applies to this study.

**The Deaf Child’s Social Experiences: Ecological, Symbolic Interaction and Existential Assumptions**

Assumptions about, and at times research on, ecological, symbolic interaction, and existential issues prevalent in the lives of children who are deaf are noted in the literature. Issues related to the influence of parental and family reactions to and acceptance of the child’s deafness, social stigma, social alienation and institutional discrimination in various sectors of society, issues of identity, self-concept, belonging, culture, communication, adjustment, interaction, suffering and internalization of the attitudes of others were all noted in the literature.

**Ecological Theory and the Deaf Child’s Development**

Ecological theory is concerned with the individual’s ability to negotiate and compromise with their social environment as they seek to accommodate, adjust, and survive. The ecological approach views the individual as involved in ongoing relationships with surrounding systems, focusing on interactional (not intrapsychic)
phenomena. Ecological theory is not limited to any age group and applies to children as well as adults.


Lane (1992) discussed societal influences which disable the deaf community throughout the lifespan, namely stigma, and paternalism among hearing professionals, and the hearing society at large. Jaussi (1995) contends that there is a sociology of deafness with psychological implications, “Many of the psychological adjustments those with hearing loss must make (or do not make) revolve around the environmental and social impact of hearing loss, not the hearing loss itself” (p. 61). Lane’s (1992) discussion offers a sociological perspective on the devastating consequences of negative social experiences that are imposed upon the deaf children by their environments. Specifically, Lane reviews the work of earlier hearing psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists who contend that deaf children are socially, intellectually, and emotionally inferior to hearing children and possess disturbed personality traits. Lane asserts that the psychological instruments used
which presented these results were of "doubtful validity" (p. 56) and that the evaluators were themselves audist.

Harvey & Dym (1987 & 1988) and Harvey (1989) applied systems concepts to the "deaf and hard of hearing ecosystems". Harvey (1989) developed a framework for providing psychotherapy to Deaf and hard of hearing persons using a systemic model. He emphasized that hearing loss per se does not cause pathological functioning, but the combination of environmental factors on all systems levels and the nature of their interactions contributes to dysfunction. He says there is no psychology of deafness, but rather behavior and emotional characteristics may come about as a function of the interaction within and between systems levels (nested structures, or Keeney's (1983) hierarchy of biopsychosocial systems) across time (i.e., biological, psychological, family, professional, informal network, and cultural/political levels). He also described periods of ecological transition which occur across time and interplay with various systems in the deaf child's life.

Sloman, Springer and Vachon (1993) suggested that parent's unresolved grief over their child's deafness creates difficulties in accepting sign language which in turn increases the child's difficulties. They gave clinical illustrations of the relationship between unresolved grief and communication problems among family members and how this carries over to the relationships between deaf parents and their hearing children later in life.

Martin & Prickett (1992) stated that African American children who are deaf must also deal with discrimination against and social problems of people of color, while in white families the deafness is often the most important issue the family deals with. They state black deaf children are likely to live in single parent lower income homes. Moores (1987) reported that a Gallaudet University survey found 18% of school age deaf children were black. Martin & Prickett also noted differences in
child rearing techniques of white and black mothers. They stated black deaf children
may be cut off from the oral storytelling traditions of black culture. This may be true
of deaf member families of other ethnic backgrounds as well.

Cohen, Fishgrund & Redding (1990) stated that deaf children from ethnic,
linguistic and racial minority backgrounds demonstrate significantly depressed
achievement levels relative to their white deaf peers and attribute this in part to the
historical tendency to denote deafness as precluding minority group membership.
These authors state that dual cultural identities must be recognized and utilized for the
low achievement levels of minority deaf persons to be overcome.

Symbolic Interaction Theory and the Deaf Child’s Development

Mead’s (1934) symbolic interaction theory sees human behavior and self
concept as shaped by symbolic meanings of situations, and meanings emerge out of
our interactions with others. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective,
self-concept is a result of an individual’s symbolic interactions with others (Cooley,
1902 and Mead, 1934). Symbolic interactionists believe that we come to view
ourselves according to how we interpret other’s perceptions of us.

Russell (1984) reported that while most of the literature in symbolic
interactionism has dealt with the social life of adults, nothing suggests the concepts
of symbolic interaction are more relevant to one age group than another. Concepts in
symbolic interaction apply to social interaction from childhood onward. He reported
overlaps in the literature on self in symbolic interaction and self-concept.

Berger (1963) considered the self a process which is created and recreated in
each social situation we encounter. Charon (1995) considered the self a process
which “continues to be defined and redefined in interaction” (p. 68). Stryker (1959)
stated, “We come to know what we are through other’s responses to us” (p. 116).
Interactionists would say that we interpret these responses in situations and actively participate in our self definitions.

Mead suggests that in symbolic interaction we take the role or the attitude of the other. Mead describes role taking as minded action, in that this activity is done within the mind of the self through symbolic language. We use minded action to interpret, define and establish meaning.

Several studies have examined the self-concept of deaf children, (Bat-Chava, 1993; Bolton, Cull & Hardy, 1974; Coyner, 1993; Craig 1965; Garrison and Tesch, 1978; Maxon, Brackett & van den Berg, 1991; Meadow, 1968; Meadow-Orlans, 1983; Schlesinger & Meadow, 1972; Searls, 1993; Warren & Hassenstab, 1986; Yachnik, 1986). Cates (1991) reported the basis for much of the research on self-concept among deaf people is the assumption that we compare ourselves to others and that one component of poor self-concept is the perception that we are lacking in comparison. Cates also discussed the problems with inadequately standardized instruments and newly developed instruments for use with the deaf population that do not have a "body of research literature available with older more accessible instruments" (p. 355). Cates also stated that self reporting measures are difficult because of a lack of standardized procedures.

Early researchers examining the effects of social stigma included: Mindel & Vernon (1971) who stated one of the most important factors in shaping a child’s self-esteem is the acceptance of those around them; Goffman (1974) stated that if a deaf child grows up in a family that considers the child’s deafness a stigma, the child is likely to have low self-esteem; Furth (1966) has indicated that deaf children are vulnerable to the reactions of others concerning their condition; Sullivan (1953) stated that if a child does not feel his or her family is accepting the child’s self-esteem will suffer.
Schlesinger & Meadow (1972) discussed how communication affects a cycle of frustration for hearing parents of deaf children, with the child internalizing this frustration. They also stated deafness per se does not contribute to poor self-esteem. Warren & Hasenstab (1986) presented parental child-rearing attitudes (attitudes toward the child, and not towards the child's deafness) as the best predictor of self-concept among deaf children. Moores (1987) suggested that negative parental reactions toward a deaf child can influence negative self-esteem, and that parental efforts to communicate with their child can have a positive influence.

Perhaps the most important and one of the most recent studies examining self-concept among deaf people was Bat-Chava's (1993) meta-analysis of 42 empirical studies assessing the effect of six constructs of self-esteem among deaf children. Bat-Chava found that differences in self-esteem between deaf and hearing people varied according to the instrument used, the instrument's format, and the communication modes used for test administration.

Bat-Chava also concluded that 1) deaf people with deaf parents were shown to have higher self-esteem than those whose parents were hearing, 2) those whose parents used sign language at home had higher self-esteem than those who communicated orally, and 3) group identification was a factor in determining higher levels of self-esteem. Bat-Chava noted not enough studies were done around the variable of school placement to draw any conclusions and suggested that more research is needed in this area since type of school placement has been assumed to be an important determinant in self-esteem among students who are deaf.

More recently, Desselle (1994) examined the effects of family communication patterns on the self-esteem of a deaf child. She found that the sign language proficiency of the parents of deaf children were moderately related to the children's self-esteem. Her results are consistent with Bat-Chava's meta-analysis.
As Bat-Chava’s study showed, Becker (1987), Bolton, Cull & Hardy (1974), and Meadow-Orlans (1983), also suggested that individual acculturation within the Deaf Community helps to alleviate negative self perceptions among deaf people. Maxon, Brackett & van den Berg (1991), and Schlesinger & Meadow (1972) hypothesized that deaf children retreat to Deaf culture because of their negative comparisons of themselves with their hearing peers.

Becker (1987) saw the development of a strong Deaf identity, shaped largely by peer socialization, as important to the development of strong self-esteem and a sense of personal well-being. Becker looked at Goffman’s (1974) discussion of stigma and suggests that a deaf peer group and the deaf community meets many of the social and emotional needs of deaf people in five ways which facilitate social competence. They are 1) language and communication, 2) information exchange, 3) friendship, 4) cliques and 5) reciprocity. Nash & Nash (1981) stated that not being able to participate normally in mainstream society gives a community its appeal and “efficacy in defining the selfhood of its members” (p. 105).

While not stating a theoretical framework, Bat-Chava applied symbolic interaction to the self-concept of deaf children. Bat-Chava discussed Cooley’s (1902) notion that internalization of negative attitudes are reflected in one’s self-esteem. Bat-Chava also discussed Rosenberg’s (1979) disagreements with early theories on minority group internalization of the majority’s negative attitudes and applied this to Deaf children who grow up in Deaf homes. Rosenberg’s model predicts that Deaf people are protected from the majority’s negative attitudes when they participate in a community that shares their minority group membership. Becker (1987) discussed the difficulty that deaf members of ethnic minority groups have in learning their family’s traditions. Martin & Prickett (1992) reflect on this as it relates to black deaf children. Becker also stated there is an identity conflict
between deafness and ethnicity for many deaf people stemming from problems in family communication. Martin & Prickett (1992) also state that deaf children must face the discrimination and issues relevant to their ethnic groups.

Cates & Shontz (1990) stated that researchers have hypothesized that role-taking is delayed in deaf children due to difficulty in the quality and quantity of their communication while other studies do not support this. They cited Kusche & Greenberg (1983) as suggesting that while deaf children are capable of differentiating among perspectives, they may be delayed in making correct interpretations through role-taking. In their 1990 study, Cates & Shontz found no relationship between role-taking and pro-social behavior of deaf children, but found a positive relationship between role-taking and emotional adjustment and self image. They also found that the better role-takers were more effective communicators.

**Existential Theory and the Deaf Child's Development**

Heidegger (1926) called the structure of existence “being in the world in transcendence”. He stated that existence is not just being but being in relation to others.

Kierkegaard (1957) and Jaspers (1952) believed that we have courage, and with courage we discover meaning, and that once we discover meaning, we discover the potential for tragedy, loss, and responsibility. With this same courage we can choose to transcend tragedy, loss, and responsibility.

Frankl (1969) believes we have responsibility and freedom to make choices even in the face of tragedy, that meaning in life is our strongest motivator. He believes that individual freedom and responsibility exist in the person first and that social influences pass through this human capacity. The freedom of will is the opposite of determinism. We have the freedom and responsibility to make choices in
our lives, to control our destiny, to make whatever we choose out of our circumstances.

The will to meaning refers to the idea that basic to our survival, and our motivation in life, is our experience of meaning. The meaning of life is a concept used to describe the discovery of meaning in situations.

Frankl’s tragic triad consists of three states of human existence, 1) pain, 2) guilt and 3) death. Out of these states of existence come tragic optimism. Tragic optimism occurs when one takes the opportunity of tragedy to 1) turn human suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment, 2) derive from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better, and 3) derive from life’s transitory nature an incentive to take responsible action.

A review of the literature suggests that reflections on the contributions of existential theory and existential issues to human development are quite recent and that research remains to be done in this area. Most notably, Vandenberg reviewed several social theories which contain existential themes and points out their presence throughout our lives.

Massey (1988) and Vandenberg (1991) have both elucidated that there has been very little written regarding the contributions of existentialism to development. A review of the literature by this writer confirms this.

Vandenberg (1991) stated that existential perspectives have had very little influence on “theory and research in human development” (p. 1278). However, he believes that issues in development can be considered from an existential perspective. He reviewed the work of Becker (1973), Carrol (1985), Kastenbaum (1985), Kubler-Ross (1969), Lifton (1979), and Yalom (1980), stating that the issues these writers discuss (guilt, death, anxiety, regret, mourning losses, and questions about
the meaning of suffering and of one's life and existence) do have an influence on our lives throughout our formative years.

Vandenberg also stated that a conceptual understanding of separation "is not necessary for it to be operative in development" and likewise, a child's understanding of deaf "does not preclude its influence" (p. 1279) Similarly, the literature on deafness implicitly suggests that a conceptual understanding of a parent's grief over their child's deafness does not preclude its influence and is not necessary for it to be operative in a deaf child's development.

Frank (1974) suggested that children's assumptions about their world, their belief systems about their existence, are shaped by those of their parents. Vandenberg stated that "beliefs are not simply epistemic constructions, they are lived commitments" (p. 1281).

In terms of attachment and belonging, Vandenberg cited researchers who elaborated on the ramifications of challenges to a child's sense of belonging (e.g., adoption, Brodzinsky, 1987; minorities, Jones and Korchin, 1982; immigrants, Padilla, Alverez & Lindholm, 1986). Vandenberg (1991) stated:

> These examples are instructive because they reveal the importance of cultural beliefs in providing a sense of stability and belonging in the face of existential uncertainty. When these beliefs are not completely shared, when the individual's place in the world is not fully grounded in the assumptive world of the culture, "adjustment" may be more difficult to achieve (p. 1283).

Moustakas (1969) discussed the concept of alienation in personal growth and existential life. He stated that the young child is guided and influenced by a system (i.e., parents and educators) to become who he/she is expected to become and becomes estranged from his/her real self. Moustakas (1969) stated the following:

> The young child, searching for identity and self-affirmation, lacking recognition and threatened by the withdrawal of love, launches himself into an alien life and becomes estranged from his real self. He
substitutes the spontaneous, flowing self for a controlled, calculating self-system dominated by the rules and "shoulds" of the adult world (p. 3).

This passage describes the existential nature of concerns related to "normalization" referred to in chapter I, the acculturation process and the crisis of identity of deaf children that are discussed throughout the literature on deafness.

In summary, Vandenberg, and Massey, elucidated several developmental influences which are of an existential nature. According to Vandenberg, existentialism is a part of our formative years. It should be noted that all of these "existential influences" which Vandenberg discussed stem from the child's system and are closely related to systems theories.

Vandenberg's discussion of parental influence on our existential belief systems, the influence of cultural beliefs on our sense of belonging and adjustment, the relationship between grief, guilt, anxiety, and suffering to existentialism are mentioned throughout the literature on deaf children as key factors which have special implications for the development of the deaf child.

The literature on deafness reveals that deaf children are faced with a variety of social challenges. Many existential themes are discussed throughout the literature on deaf children although the authors do not identify them as such. Examples include: issues of self (Bat-Chava, 1993; Becker, 1987 and Desselle, 1994; Moores, 1987; Schlesinger and Meadow, 1972), belonging (Becker, 1987; Nash and Nash 1981), grief and feelings of loss among hearing parents of deaf children (Harvey, 1989; Meadow, 1968; Mindel and Vernon, 1971, 1987; Schlesinger and Meadow, 1972); suffering from experiences with institutional discrimination and stigma (Harvey, 1989; Humphries, 1977; Lane, 1992; Mindel and Vernon, 1971, 1987), alienation and transcendence through acculturation and the deaf community (Becker, 1987;
Sheridan (1995) stated that existentialism provides a framework for interpreting and understanding the responses of deaf and hard of hearing people to institutional discrimination and noted that a deaf child’s process of acculturation into the deaf community is a process of existential transcendence. Transcendence is seen as a value held by members of the deaf community and used to take responsibility for overcoming the forces of institutional discrimination.

Sheridan also stated that organizations of deaf and hard of hearing people, community service programs, career choices, and the spread of knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture are all examples of how this population creatively, defiantly, and experientially counters the forces of paternalism and institutional discrimination. Furthermore, while hearing parents of deaf children grieve their child’s deafness, parents may be able to find meaning in the situation and “turn deafness in the family into a positive growth provoking experience for everyone involved and to facilitate the healthy psycho-social and linguistic development of the child” (p. 104).

Sheridan saw the role modeling process for deaf children and late deafened adults as facilitating existential transcendences and the Deaf acculturation process as another example of transcendence. Borrowing from Lantz & Harper’s (1989) discussion of existential psychotherapy with relocated Appalachian families, Sheridan suggested that periods of existential anomie reactive to cultural confusion, interpersonal and social factors may occur for deaf children from hearing families.

**Techniques of Interviewing Deaf Children**

Little could be found in the literature on the success of techniques of interviewing applied to deaf children in the research context. However, some
information was found related to psychological testing methods, communication in research and clinical interviews with deaf children and general psychotherapeutic child interview techniques.

In the context of clinical interviews, Hindley, Hill and Bond (1993) suggested that linguistic and cultural differences may lead to under-reporting of affective symptoms in psychiatric assessment. These researchers stated that verbalization in a non-dominant language may impede the emotional involvement of both patients and clinicians in clinical settings as both become pre-occupied with the process rather than the content of their communication. They cautioned clinician’s attempts to engage deaf patients in communication through overly dramatic, cross-cultural or positive non-verbal behavior may mask the patient’s affective state and actually discourage them from disclosing “distressing personal experiences” (p. 1466). These same authors suggested that responses of deaf children in an interview are influenced by the signing proficiency of the interviewer.

Foster (1993) stated “even the most dedicated student of sign language may fall short of the fluency required to conduct an in depth interview in sign language.” (p. 6) She requests qualified interpreters for her interviews in the event that she is unable to understand the language or mode used by her informants. “The key is to adapt to the preference of the informant” (p. 6).

Vernon (1988) suggested that the validity of intelligence tests with most deaf clients is partly determined by its non-verbal performance type nature. Tests which are dependent on verbal language are not valid or appropriate for deaf children or adults. He suggests that psychological tests of deaf persons administered by professionals unfamiliar with deafness should be viewed with skepticism.

Vernon stated that psychological tests such as the Draw-A-Person, and House Tree Tests are good screening devices for use with deaf children in that they
are relatively nonverbal and practical for use with deaf clients. He also considered the Thematic Apperception Test useful when both the examiner and deaf client are fluent in manual communication. Zieziula's (1982) description of the appropriateness of these tests is in agreement with Vernon.

Gardner (1993a, b) discusses techniques of diagnostic interviewing with children. The techniques he discusses include freely drawn pictures, such as draw-a-person, and draw-a-family. Gardner also utilizes psychotherapeutic techniques of mutual storytelling with children. Gardner stated that children enjoy telling stories and that storytelling is one of the child's favorite modes of communication. He stated "The efficiency of the storytelling approach for the imparting and transmission of values and insights is proved by the ancient and universal appeal of fable, myth and legend" (p. 58).

Gardner uses children's self created stories in a psychotherapeutic form to analyze and teach problem solving and coping skills in a non-threatening way. His reason for using such projective techniques are based on Piaget's (1952) level of formal operations for children under the age of ten. Gardner stated that children generally are not cognitively able to take an analytical stance and engage in meaningful psychoanalytic inquiry until about the age of ten. Although Gardner has found these techniques to be highly effective in clinical interviews with children, nothing was found on the success of these techniques with deaf children.

**Research Methods and the Deaf Population**

Special consideration should be given to methodological, validity, reliability, ethical, linguistic, and cultural implications when undertaking research with people who are deaf. This section reviews the literature related to those considerations.
Several authors discussed the potential problems inherent in research with deaf persons. Moores (1987) reported that most major causes of deafness involve other “harmful residual effects in addition to hearing loss,” (p. 168). This problem makes the generalizability of the research results doubtful in most instances of research with the deaf and hard of hearing populations. Lane (1992) regards this neglect of researchers to define their population as paternalistic because it regards all deaf people as “fundamentally alike,” (p. 63).

Lane (1992), Moores (1987), and Schein and Delk (1974) all noted that defining deafness for the purposes of the research study is an area that has been neglected in research on deaf and hard of hearing subjects. Most often, researchers dump whole heterogeneous groups of deaf and hard of hearing persons into a study without noting the diversity of the group in terms of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, communication, and physical (i.e., neurological, or other disabilities) differences.

Problems with validity and reliability have hindered research with the deaf population. Researchers have struggled to establish a knowledge base in deafness and much of the research appears to have been accomplished through samples of others (i.e., parents, teachers, rehabilitation service providers, mental health professionals) involved in the lives of deaf people rather than direct sampling from the deaf population itself. This research, mostly conventional, has limitations such as the validity of using the perceptions of others, the reliability of written questionnaires used with a population with an average fourth to fifth grade reading level, and the reliability of interpreting questions into a different language (American Sign Language).

Levine (1960) reported on the research on social-emotional adjustment of deaf individuals stating that:
1) Many instruments used assume a level of communicative interaction that may not exist between hearing testers and some deaf testees.

2) Adequate development of a deaf individual may be inhibited not by deafness itself but by inadequate coping behaviors of significant others in the environment.

3) The residual effects of some of the major etiologies of deafness may involve impairments in addition to hearing loss. (p. 51-52)

Lane (1992) discussed the problem with psychological testing of deaf subjects. He noted that most psychologists cannot communicate in American Sign Language and that tests are based on English language skills and norms for hearing persons. He also stated that most psychometric instruments require a 10th grade knowledge of English and that the average deaf person reads English at a third grade level and 1 in 10 deaf persons at a level of 8th grade or better.

Lane also noted the problems in reliability and validity with teacher rating scales that have been used in evaluating the social/emotional/behavioral adjustment of deaf school children. He stated that parent and teacher ratings are biased, since most teachers of deaf children are hearing, "audist" (Humphries, 1977), and are frustrated with their inability to succeed in their mission as teachers of deaf children. Parent’s ratings in Lane’s view would also be "audist" and subjective. Furthermore, Lane stated teachers often disagree since the scales are subjective. Lane (1992) stated:

The “right” answers are right for hearing people and not necessarily for deaf people, and very few tests have ever been used with large numbers of deaf people, so there is no way to compare one persons score with an average. (p. 62)

Moores (1987) stated that “the impact of deafness per se can never be measured in isolation but only within the context of complex social variables,” (p. 167), and cautioned against the overuse of nominalism in the literature related to deafness and many terms such as “submissive, dependent, neurotic, and rigid” (p. 170) since they are never defined by the researchers. He also noted that testing
situations may be threatening for deaf subjects particularly when the examiners have normal hearing and use unfamiliar vocabulary and oral communication.

In addition to the factors listed above, Freeman (1989) noted that the success of interpreters in psychological testing depends upon the interpreter’s qualifications, attitudes in the situation and the ability of the interpreter and the examiner to develop a good working relationship (p. 57). Using interpreters in research and psychological testing is not ideal. The ideal situation is researchers who are fluent in the language and communication preferences of the subjects. In some situations the communication preference of the subject may be the use of an interpreter for maximum facilitation of communication. In that instance, interpreters should be used. It should be kept in mind however, that in addition to the questionable reliability issues in the use of interpreters, trust and confidentiality concerns of the subjects are additional implications.

Schroedel (1984) conducted an analysis of survey research on deaf adults in the United States and Canada to determine how rates of response are affected by three methods of data collection, degree of verification efforts, scope of the sample and socio-demographic characteristics of those in the survey populations. He determined that interview surveys gave a higher mean rate of response than mail or convenience surveys. He also found that smaller sample surveys had higher rates of response than large samples and that greater response was obtained from local communities than from statewide or interstate samples.

Schroedel noted that questionnaire construction of survey research is a problem due to the average English reading skill level of the adult deaf population. He stated that this can be dealt with through appropriate vocabulary levels, making the questions “signable”, clear organization, structured questions and reply formats rather than “open-ended” questions. He also recommended field testing the
questionnaires with representative samples for improving the instruments.

Akamatsu (1993/1994), Foster (1993/1994), Hauser (1993/1994), Pollard (1993/1994), and Stinson (1993/1994) all discussed cross cultural issues in doing research with deaf individuals and the deaf community. They offered insights and suggestions which address some of the issues discussed above. Pollard discussed the application of cross cultural ethical principles and practices to deafness research. He addressed the deaf community as a host community which deserves protection in the research process as a collective entity just as any cultural minority would.

Akamatsu (1993/1994) and Foster (1993/1994) and Hauser (1993/1994) all discuss the importance of reflection on the research process and the involvement of deaf people in the process (i.e., on an advisory board) when researching as an outsider. Stinson (1993/1994) advocates for more deaf researchers leading and conducting investigations.

Critique of the Literature

The literature on deafness reveals that deaf children are faced with a variety of social challenges. Assumptions about and at times research on ecological, symbolic interaction, and existential issues prevalent in the development and lives of children who are deaf are noted in the literature. Issues related to the influence of parental and family reactions to and acceptance of the child's deafness, social stigma, social alienation and institutional discrimination in various sectors of society, issues of identity, self-concept, belonging, culture, communication, adjustment, interaction, suffering and internalization of the attitudes of others were all noted in the literature. The authors who discuss these issues however, for the most part do not state, or apply these issues to theoretical frameworks, and often these assumptions were not grounded in research. Nevertheless, the assumptions the authors made about the
impact of these issues on the lives of deaf children were assumptions about the "being" and "becoming" of the deaf child in relation to self and others.

These existential, symbolic interaction and ecological elements reported to exist in the lives of children who are deaf are interactive and overlapping. Symbolic interaction does not occur without a system of self and others. Existential transcendence occurs in response to our interactions and interpretations of events in our environment.

A term that was used frequently in the literature in reference to hearing parents of deaf and hard of hearing children was parental acceptance of their child’s deafness. Researchers failed to define parental acceptance. Specifically, is full acceptance something that ever really happens or does acceptance refer to levels at which parents learn to adjust and cope? Could acceptance mean a parent’s regard for the child, their perception of their child? Or does it refer to a dichotomous condition between acceptance and rejection of the child? My own definition of this term refers to a parent’s regard for their child and how well they adjust and cope with the difference between themselves and their child.

Nothing was found in the literature on conducting phenomenological research interviews with children who are deaf. Some information was found related to psychological testing methods (Vernon, 1988; and Zizieula, 1982), communication in research and clinical interviews with deaf children and general psychotherapeutic child interview techniques (Foster, 1993; Hindley, Hill and Bond, 1993). Vernon (1988) and Zieziula (1982) agreed that projective psychological tests such as the Draw-A-Person, and House Tree Tests are good screening devices for use with deaf children in that they are relatively nonverbal and practical for use with deaf clients. They also considered the Thematic Apperception Test useful when both consumer and examiner are fluent in manual communication. Based on the above, similar
techniques, such as storytelling from the children’s art work and selected pictures were used for interviews in this study.

Most of the research in deafness has been based on conventional methodology. Within the framework of the conventional research methodology cited in the literature review, researchers have struggled with reliability and validity issues since conventional instrumentation is largely culturally and linguistically biased and not suitable for use with individuals who are deaf. Furthermore, the complex social variables impacting on the child who is deaf are often not taken into consideration in the research process (Moores, 1987). Lane (1992), Moores (1987), and Schein and Delk (1974) all noted that defining deafness for research purposes is an area that has been neglected in research on deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The qualitative methodology used in this study allows for description of case by case contextual realities.

Most of the researchers and authors contributing to the literature on deafness were hearing. There is a lack of research conducted by researchers who are themselves deaf. The majority of the studies and perspectives on the lives of deaf children cited in this literature review consisted of the perspectives of others about children who are deaf rather than the perspectives of the children themselves. No naturalistic studies were found exploring the actual perspectives that deaf children hold of their lifeworlds.

Qualitative research methodology in deafness is fairly recent and more of it needs to be done. Qualitative methodology has the potential for uncovering the realities of informants who are deaf and overcoming the influences of the hearing majority which, as this literature review has shown, has frequently been the focus of empirical attention. I believe that the methodology and design of this study has the potential to overcome many of the problems related to validity and reliability, the complex social and linguistic variables inherent in conventional methods applied to research with people who are deaf, and in generating data on the children's perspectives.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methodology

Thus far, the reader has been introduced to literature on the developmental and social experiences of deaf children in ecological, existential and symbolic interaction frameworks, interviewing deaf children and considerations in doing research with the deaf population. In this chapter, the congruence of naturalistic inquiry with social work and research with deaf children will be discussed as a rationale for its utility in generating knowledge about the perspectives deaf children hold of their lifeworlds. The purpose of the study and application of the techniques and procedures of naturalistic inquiry to data collection and analysis, a pilot study and ethical issues are also discussed.

Paradigmatic Utility for Social Work

The profession of social work has focused on individuals in the context of their environments. Likewise, as Shillito (1993) explains “naturalistic inquiry, rooted in the phenomenological perspective, is suited ... to our profession’s ecological perspective of understanding people in their situational and environmental transactions” (p. 24).

Imre (1984) argued that social work needs to be open to methods encompassing all the dimensions of what it means to be human. Polkinghorne (1983) discussed the weakness of the positivist approach stating that it leaves out
meaning, and the “fullness of human experience” and makes statements which are “poor in content”. “The phenomenological (descriptive) approach focuses on the structures of experience, the organizing principles that give form and meaning to the lifeworld” (p. 203). Tyson (1992) and Pieper (1985) also advocated the heuristic paradigm in social work. Pieper implied that qualitative research is more substantial, more productive and practical for the purposes of social work practice than universal laws and is conducted in the real world of social work clients.

Shillito (1993) states “naturalistic inquiry, like social work, focuses upon the meanings persons bring to their interactions with their environment. Furthermore, the values undergirding qualitative methodology are consistent with social work’s axioms regarding interactive processes and phenomenological shaping of reality” (p. 24).

Paradigmatic Utility in Research With Deaf Children

All of the factors discussed in the literature review as implications for research with deaf children should be taken into consideration when designing research to be conducted with participants who are deaf and hard of hearing. Pollard (1993/1994) stated that “planning appropriate methodologies requires a thorough knowledge of the host community’s language, politics, values, social customs, and other characteristics” (p. 35). Communication, etiology, physical factors, definitions of deafness used for sampling purposes, confidentiality issues, research instrument issues with this population, the cultural orientation and communication skills of the examiner, whether or not interpreters were used, cultural bias etc., all need to be dealt with and reported on.

Given the above, naturalistic inquiry is a viable approach to research on deaf and hard of hearing children. Naturalistic investigation is a systematic interpretive
design which was used to identify emergent themes of the boys and girls in this study. Naturalistic inquiry guided this study because it respects the unique reality of the individual. Naturalistic inquiry allows for case by case communication flexibility in the interviewing process. This approach also allows for reporting the uniqueness of the perspectives and experiences of deaf and hard of hearing children in the context of their individual and subjective lifeworlds.

**Purpose of the Study**

Questions about the perspectives of self and the lifeworlds of children who are deaf have been largely unaddressed in the literature and research in deafness. The complex problems inherent in generating data from such a diverse population of children and the nature of this study lend themselves to Naturalistic Inquiry. This phenomenological study allowed for exploration and description of what deaf children “experience and how they interpret their world” (Patton, 1990b, p. 69-70).

**Design**

The design of this naturalistic inquiry into the perspectives and experiences of deaf children is guided by the methods and principles of Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993); Glaser and Strauss (1967); Gleshne and Peshkin (1992); Lincoln and Guba (1985); Marshall and Rossman (1995); and Patton (1990b).

**Focus of the Study**

The focus of this study was the exploration of the perceptions that deaf and hard of hearing children between the ages of 7 - 10 have on the world they live in. Particular attention was given to gaining information on how deaf and hard of
hearing children view themselves and others in their lives in the context of the
hearing world.

**Instrumentation**

The primary data gathering instrument in naturalistic inquiry is the human
instrument, the investigator or investigators (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Thus, in this
naturalistic study, the researcher was the primary data collection instrument, using
phenomenological interviewing techniques and observations of the children in their homes and schools.

As a researcher, I brought a lifetime of experience of being deaf in a hearing world to this investigation. My experiences as a deaf child allowed for richer understanding and interpretation of the children’s lifeworlds and experiences. However, caution was given to overidentification or counter-transference towards the study’s participants by relying on peer debriefing and member checking to evaluate my subjective distortions of the children’s stories.

I also brought twenty years of experience as a clinical social worker to the research setting. This professional experience and training strengthened me as a human instrument in terms of interviewing, observation, and understanding of human behavior and communication.

Interviews took place at the homes and schools of the informants and observations from each of these interviews were documented in field notes. These observations included non-verbal cues and behavioral observations that were not apparent from the typed transcripts of the video taped dialogue.
Emergent Design

Naturalism consists of emergent design. Emergent design consists of determining successive methodological procedures based on steps already taken, and a flexible, open, continuous refinement as the study develops (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990b). Thus, the design of this study could not be fully predetermined, and much of the design unfolded as the inquiry process progressed.

Inductive Analysis and Grounded Theory

In naturalistic inquiry, findings are grounded in the specific context of the study. Themes and theory are discovered through an inductive process of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The goal of naturalism is to produce grounded theory. Thus, analysis in this study was an emergent inductive process with the goal of producing grounded theory.

The constant comparison method advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used in this study. Glaser and Strauss described the constant comparative method as a four stage procedure: “(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory,” (p. 105) They also described this theory generating process as continuously growing, “each stage after a time is transformed into the next - earlier stages do remain in operation simultaneously throughout the analysis and each provides continuous development to its successive stage until the analyses is terminated.” (p. 105).
Transcriptions of the interviews were coded, and categories were developed. In addition, coding and categories were developed from overall observations and field notes. Themes were generated from this analysis procedure.

Non-verbal cues, and behavioral observations which were not immediately apparent from the transcriptions and were deemed important to the overall study were integrated into the study. Reflexive journal entries and field notes were used for the purpose of reporting significant behavioral cues.

Transcriptions of the video taped interviews were checked and re-checked for accuracy by the investigator. The video tapes provided for referential adequacy through review of the tapes for adequacy of interpretation and analysis.

Selection of Study Participants

Purposeful sampling (maximum variation) was used to identify informants who would be able to provide rich information (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Patton, 1990b) and to capture and describe “central themes or principal outcomes” (p. 172) common to participant variation (Patton, 1990b). Lincoln & Guba (1985) stated that the purpose of sampling in naturalistic investigations is to “include as much information as possible in all of its ramifications and constructions; hence, maximum variation sampling will usually be the sampling mode of choice” (p. 201). Patton (1990a) identified maximum variation sampling as a purposive technique used “when the purpose is to document unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions” (p. 102).

The original intent of sampling was to select children between the ages of 7-10 with diverse familial, audiological, educational and communication conditions. Children were observed in their classrooms in a residential setting with the goal of identifying informants who would be able to provide rich information and who
represent diverse backgrounds. After observations of three classrooms and meeting with the school principal for assistance in identifying potential informants with this diversity, consent forms were mailed by the school to the parents of eleven children selected by myself and the principal. The number of students in this age group at this setting did not provide as much diversity as desired and the final sample was limited to only three children whose parents returned the consent forms.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state qualitative sampling should be contingent and serial. Once the initial three children were identified, additional children were found through a purposeful sampling technique called snowball sampling (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba describe snowball sampling as a process where by members of the group being studied identify others for the study. Snowballing took place through phone calls to parents of deaf children who would be able to assist with referrals. To maximize variation, these next four children possessed different characteristics than the first three children in the sample.

Prior to participating in the study, parents were mailed a packet which contained an informational letter (Appendix A), consent forms for their child’s participation in the study, consent to video taping (Appendix B), and a participant information form (Appendix C). A self addressed stamped envelope was enclosed for return of consent and informational forms. Once these were received and prior to beginning data collection in the interviews with children, the children were given a signed explanation of the purpose of the research, and their verbal consent to participate was also sought. In addition, the children were told that they would be able to discontinue anytime they wished and that the video tapes and their names would be kept confidential. This introductory and consent process is on video tape for each child. A script was used for this introductory and consent process (Appendix D).
The final sample included children from both residential (three) and mainstream (four) educational programs. Five of the children had two hearing parents, one child had one hearing and one hard of hearing parent and one child had two Deaf parents. Four of the children were boys and three were girls. One child had a severe hearing loss in the 66-85 dB range while the other six children were profoundly deaf (86 dB or greater). Five children were Caucasian, one was African American and one was Asian/Indian. Four of the children’s parents were divorced.

Five of the children primarily used American Sign Language. Two children used a combination of oral communication and Signed English, with one of these two using oral only communication at home and total communication at school at the time of the study. Shortly after the interview with the child using oral only communication at home, her parents informed me she had transferred to an oral only residential school.

All of the children were pre-lingually deaf; five were deaf at birth. Information on the exact age of onset and cause of one child’s deafness was not known. Two of the children were reported by their parents to have attention deficit disorders which were confirmed by the children’s school psychologists.

Profiles

Researchers in deafness have typically not defined their population. One of the advantages of qualitative research is the ability of the researcher to describe their cases and apply their findings to the unique realities of the informants. Thus, in this study, I have developed profiles which describe the unique characteristics of the children who participated in the investigation. These profiles have been developed cautiously to protect the anonymity of the informants. While it would help the reader to understand the context of these children’s lives if in-depth profiles are presented,
ethical considerations necessitated omitting certain information which might compromise the informant’s identity. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study to protect the children’s anonymity as well as that of friends and family members.

Lisa

Lisa has profound congenital deafness of unknown etiology. At the time of the study, she was mainstreamed in a public school total communication program. Lisa’s family communicated orally with her and soon after her interviews Lisa transferred to an oral only program. Lisa’s mother and father are hearing. She has no additional disabilities. Her two siblings are hearing and she was ten years old at the time of the study.

Pat

Pat is a ten year old residential student with profound congenital deafness of unknown etiology. His siblings and parents are hearing. Pat has mild tourette syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pat uses American Sign Language and his hearing family members are learning to sign and make an effort to sign with him at home.

Danny

Danny was nine years old at the time of the study and has profound congenital deafness. The cause of his deafness is genetic. He has one hearing sibling and his father is also hearing. His mother is hard of hearing. Danny is a residential student who uses American Sign Language. His mother and sibling use American Sign Language and Signed English with him. His father, who has more
limited signing skills, uses Signed English. Danny has no additional disabilities. Danny’s parents are divorced.

Angie

Angie is a ten year old profoundly deaf child who is mainstreamed in a total communication program for deaf children. She uses American Sign Language. Her parents are both hearing. She has no brothers or sisters. Angie has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and had a cataract removed from one eye. The cause of her deafness and age of onset is unknown. Angie’s parents communicate with her in Signed English.

Alex

Alex was seven years old at the time of the study and has profound congenital sensori-neural deafness of unknown etiology. His parents are both hearing. He has one sibling who is hard of hearing and another who is hearing. Alex is a residential student who uses American Sign Language. His mother is a proficient ASL user and other family members use mostly Signed English. Alex’s parents are divorced. Alex has no reported additional disabilities.

Mary

Mary has profound congenital hereditary deafness. Both of Mary’s parents and all of her siblings are deaf and are proficient in American Sign Language. Mary attends a mainstream total communication program and uses a combination of American Sign Language and Signed English. She was eight years old at the time of the study. Mary’s parents are divorced. She has no additional disabilities.
Joe

Joe who is ten years old and has a severe hearing loss considers himself hard of hearing. He became deaf at approximately five months of age from an unknown cause. Joe's parents are also divorced. He lives with his mother and attends a total communication program for deaf children in a mainstream setting. All of his family members are hearing. He has no additional disabilities. He and his family communicate primarily through speech but also know sign language. He is of African American descent. Joe had the most residual hearing of the seven children in this study.

Setting

Interviews were held in multiple locations. The location of the interview was dependent on the naturalness and comfort of the setting for the informant as well as convenience. Three residential children (all boys) were interviewed at their school. Three children were interviewed in their homes and one was interviewed in the conference room of a local facility providing services to the deaf population since the child and parent felt there was too much distraction at home.

Data Collection Methods

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the naturalistic paradigm is value bound, influenced by the values of the researcher, the theoretical and methodological paradigm of the inquiry, and the context of the study. These values are interacting (mutual simultaneous shaping).

Stinson (1993/1994) discusses the "potentially dangerous tendency for oversimplification and stereotyping when researchers from the dominant culture try to describe and understand a minority culture" (p. 18). Hauser (1993/1994) argues
that "researchers who are self-conscious and explicit about their biases, and who clearly articulate their purpose, produce research to be respected" (p. 22).

**Data Collection Procedures**

Phenomenological interviews included use of an interview guide and open ended questions to solicit data about the experiences and perceptions of these children. Depth-probing, or questions used "for getting to the bottom of things" (p. 85) as described by Glesne & Peshkin (1992) was also used. Each interview was video taped and a sign language interpreter was present at each interview to operate the camcorder and voice the signed interview dialog. This voice transliteration and interpretation was necessary to convert the signing, inaudible speech, or poor visibility of signing on the tape to text via transcription. The interpreter also served as the transcriptionist in the voice to text conversion of the interviews. Having the interpreter serve as the transcriptionist was advantageous in maintaining confidentiality, accurateness and credibility of the text due to her familiarity with the context (i.e., name signs).

Member checking with this interpreter also lent credibility to the study. The interpreter was familiar with the context of deafness and was employed in the residential school setting that some of the informants attended.

**Data Analysis**

In naturalistic inquiry, data analysis is an ongoing process interactive with data collection (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993; Huberman and Miles, 1994). This ongoing process allows data to emerge. The "constant comparative method" (Strauss, 1987) was used to analyze data. Constant comparison allows us to analyze data as it is discovered, comparing new
data with concepts emerging from the inquiry. This process involves ongoing reshaping and refining of the interpretations.

The data analyzed in this study was primarily text, or the words and stories of the informants. Text was transcribed from the video taped interviews by the sign language interpreter who voice interpreted the interviews. Observations of the behaviors and non-verbal communication of the informants was also used for data analysis. These observations were recorded both into the transcripts and in the field journal.

Inductive data analysis took place in a three phase process. This process involved 1) in field data analysis, 2) data analysis after leaving the field and 3) cross case analysis.

Phase One

In field “within-case” (Huberman and Miles, 1994) data analysis took place during the children’s interviews. During this phase within-case analysis also occurred while viewing the text and observing behaviors from video tapes between each child’s sessions. Preliminary codes and categories were developed from these tapes.

Phase Two

Data analysis continued after leaving the field. At this point, the text from the typed transcripts were coded and categorized.

Phase Three

Phase three consisted of “cross-case analysis” (Huberman and Miles, 1994) to identify common themes across the cases. This process also identified differences
across cases. Cross-case analysis was conducted after the within-case analysis was completed so as not to influence the interpretation of other children's stories.

Coding

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define coding as "the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways" (p. 57). In phase one, codes were developed between sessions by viewing and taking notes on video tapes of interviews. Open unrestricted coding (Strauss, 1987) was used which identified preliminary concepts. Codes represented topics, places, activities, relationships, feelings, observations, conceptualizations, and events that the children presented in their stories. Each child had between nine and twenty two codes. No cross-case analysis was attempted until each child's within-case analysis was complete.

Categorizing

A category is described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as a classification of concepts. Categorizing took place after the open coding described above. Codes were clustered to form categories such as; future, labels, coping, home/family, friends/peers. The categories represented interlocking relationships between codes.

Core Categories and Themes

Core categories are the categories of concepts that relate to each other. Strauss (1987) states "After several workable coded categories develop, the analyst attempts to theoretically saturate as much as possible those which seem to have explanatory power," (p. 35). Thus, the themes that emerged out of the children's stories were grounded in the core categories which described their perspectives.
Editing the Quotes

Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Gleshne and Peshkin, 1992; Richards and Richards, 1994 describe various computer software available for qualitative data analysis. In this study, basic computer word processing was used to record data from the interviews and to transpose quotes from the transcripts to the dissertation report. Actual coding and categorizing of the data however, was first done by hand. A decision was made to approach the data analysis in this manner to avoid distancing myself from the data and to assist me in visualizing the within-case and cross-case categories and ultimately the themes.

Using 18 1/2 x 12 sketch pads and black felt makers, I began within-case coding and categorizing of the data by transposing codes and representative quotes from text to the pads. Within-case coding and categorizing was completed for each child. Once the within-case categories were completed the pads were then reviewed for cross-case categories and core categories or themes were then identified. Quotations representing codes, categories and themes were repeatedly transposed as analysis rose to higher levels. Thus, representative quotes were available to illustrate the themes presented in the study.

Pilot Study

Before any of the children selected for the study were interviewed, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study was undertaken with a deaf student at a residential school to test and establish comfort with the videotaping process, to test the presentation of the interview questions, to test for timing, and to establish the comfort of the researcher.

After determining from the pilot interview that the original list of interview questions might not be enough to elicit sufficient data, a second projective technique
for interviewing was developed. This second technique utilized cutouts of pictures from magazines which the children could tell stories about. It was also determined from this pilot study that audio cassette equipment would not be needed since the voice quality from the video taped interview was sufficient.

**Interviewing**

Phenomenological interviews included use of an interview guide and open ended questions to solicit data about the experiences and perceptions of the children selected for the study. Depth-probing as described by Gleshne and Peshkin (1992) was also used to assist in collecting richer information than originally offered by the informants. In addition, observations at home and school were used to collect data.

Direct and projective interview techniques were used. Direct questioning involved direct questions to the children about themselves and their views of themselves and others in their lives. Projective techniques included drawings (of themselves, and others in their lives), and storytelling. Storytelling was encouraged by the interviewer through questioning (i.e., “Can you draw a picture of a deaf boy (or girl) for me,” and “Tell me a story about that deaf boy.”). Storytelling was also encouraged through the use of story elicitation pictures (Appendix F). Depth probing was used to elicit further information from the stories. Questions and probes presented to the students were largely uniform; however, different situations in the children’s lives, different responses and different communication needs necessitated modifications for clarification and probing.

Each child was interviewed for 20 to 60 minutes per session depending on their concentration and/or environmental factors which may have necessitated shorter or longer sessions (i.e., a child’s interest in returning to class, travel distance, or
enthusiasm). Depending on the amount of data generated they were seen for one to three sessions.

**Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe trustworthiness as the issue related to how the inquirer persuades his or her audience that the study has credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Four techniques of establishing trustworthiness discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were utilized in this study; member checking, peer debriefing, triangulation, and reflexive journaling.

**Credibility**

Consists of techniques that increase the probability that believable findings are produced (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Techniques of credibility used in this study included triangulation of data collection methods, peer debriefing, and member checking.

**Triangulation**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that triangulation is a mode of “improving the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible.” (p. 305). Different methods of data collection were used for triangulation in this study. The methods used included interviewing and observations of the children. Two types of interviewing, projective and direct techniques, were used.

**Peer Debriefing**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define peer debriefing as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the
purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). Peer debriefing took place in two forms, group and individual sessions. Group peer debriefing occurred after interviews with the first three students.

Individual peer debriefing occurred both formally and informally throughout the process. Individual peer debriefing and member checking occurred with the interpreter - transcriptionist who was an employee of the school where three of the children were enrolled and who was familiar with the context of their environments as well as some of the context of the mainstreamed children’s educational programs and significant others. Peer debriefing with this individual centered primarily around examination of my interpretations. The second individual peer debriefer fit what Lincoln and Guba (1985) described as a “disinterested peer” who was available to review and discuss the methodology and analysis of the inquiry. Peer debriefers included individuals familiar with the qualitative research process, and individuals familiar with deaf children.

Member Checking

Member checking “whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba 1985 p. 314). Member checking with children is often difficult and in this study member checking was not always possible with the children themselves. On two occasions, interpretations were explained to the children and were verified by them. With other children, it was not possible to do this because of their declining interest in our sessions, or other factors such as language and length of time which passed after the transcription of the video taped
interviews and emergence and tabulation of themes. Therefore, member checking also took place with other stakeholders in the children's environments such as parents, and the interview interpreter - transcriptionist who was employed at the school of three of the children.

Reflexive Journaling

Following each observation session or interview with informants, field notes were completed which consisted of details of the observation or interview, and the researcher's reflections. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this as reflexive journaling.

A reflexive journal was maintained throughout the process of entering the field, collecting and analyzing data. The journal was used as a tool for self reflection in the research process of entering the field and on the methodology. The journal may be of value at a later date to anyone wishing to audit this study.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the investigator's providing thick description sufficient to determine how well findings of one inquiry can be applied in other contexts with other informants elsewhere (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). While no assumptions are being made about the transferability of this research, thick description has been applied to the time and context of the cases explored to allow for future investigators to check for any similarities in another context.

Dependability

Evidence that a study replicated with the same or similar respondents would result in the same findings is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) mean by dependability.
Records of the inquiry process have been maintained for audit. Dependability was also strengthened by the use of multiple data gathering modes such as direct and projective interview techniques (art work and storytelling).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the neutrality of the inquirer, and the degree to which the findings are determined by the informants and the conditions of the study. A confirmability audit could be conducted on all phases of this study by reviewing the audit trail left for that purpose. Triangulation of the data was conducted using multiple sources (informants) and data collection modes. Interviewing took place using both direct questioning and projective techniques such as drawings and storytelling. A reflexive journal was also maintained throughout the inquiry process.

Raw data consisting of transcriptions of the video taped interviews have been maintained. A reflexive journal, samples of forms used, field notes, and permission and information forms completed by the parents of the informants have all been preserved. Data analysis and data reduction and synthesis products such as the original coding and categorizing documents and notations on emerging themes are all available for audit. The inquiry proposal approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee of The Ohio State University was also maintained.

**Protection of the Participants**

Written consent to participate in and to be video taped for the study was obtained from each child's parents prior to the child's participation. Verbal consent to participate and to be video taped was also obtained from each child.

Confidentiality of the informants was maintained through modification of any identifying information (names and places) in the transcripts. Video tapes of the
interviews were destroyed once the study was completed. Modified Transcripts were maintained for the purpose of an audit trial. All transcripts, video tapes, consent forms and notes were kept in a locked file.

The individual differences that each child brought to this research were important in the context of naturalistic inquiry. These differences were illustrated through the profiles presented earlier in this chapter and through explanations of the children's unique characteristics as they applied to the context of interpretations which emerged. The cohesiveness of the small deaf community presented a potential risk to the anonymity of the informants. Therefore, protection was also maintained by omitting many of the descriptive characteristics from the report. An attempt was made to balance thick description with the omission of identifying information. Names and places were changed to protect the participants.

Exploration into the lives of children in order to uncover and describe themes which they portray has potential emotional ramifications for the children and their families. Exploration of children's perspectives could potentially put children at risk if sensitive issues arose during the interviews (i.e., related to self perception, familial acceptance or peer rejection). In the event that any of the children would reveal emotional disturbance around issues emerging from the study, I stood prepared to refer the children and their parents to appropriate professional sources.

In addition, my background and experience in clinical social work with deaf individuals and their families as a Licensed Independent Social Worker was advantageous in identifying any potential risks involved for individual informants as the inquiry progressed.
Expected Implications

It was expected that this phenomenological study would result in a description of what children who are deaf "experience and how they interpret their world" (Patton, 1990b, p. 69-70). This study does not pretend to make generalizations about the population of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Rather, it describes the similarities and differences which emerged out of the information gathered from the children in this study.
CHAPTER IV
IMAGES AND PATHWAYS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to explore deaf children’s perspectives of their lifeworlds. The fabric of each child’s being is composed of a unique set of intertwining fibers. Moores (1987) and Paul and Jackson (1993) describe some of these factors as age of onset, parental hearing status, communication mode, degree of hearing loss, and educational placement. Children bring these and other systems influences to situations in their lives. These fibers influence the way each child and family experiences and deals with deafness in diverse situations. Maximum variation sampling was used in this study to capture this diversity in the children’s descriptions, yet common themes emerged which can best be described as images and pathways.

Through phenomenological interviewing using projective (i.e., drawing and story telling) and direct child interview techniques, the children revealed elements of their perspectives of themselves and others, and their communicative interactions. The interview script in Appendix D and story elicitation pictures (samples in Appendix F) were used in these interviews. The perspectives that the children revealed are called images and consist of attachment and domesticated others; alienation and disparate others; infinity; overt and covert identity; and images of communication. Chapters V - IX examine the images these children presented of themselves and others, and their images of communicative experiences.
Pathways are the avenues these children and their families take to steer through a system of communication, attitudinal, interpersonal and ecological influences. Pathways will be reported on in chapter X.

Most of the children appeared to be generally happy and involved in their day to day activities and surroundings. The residential students and one mainstreamed child of deaf parents particularly gave the impression that being deaf is no big deal. The residential students’ attachment to their milieu and eagerness to return to their classroom activities, was expressed through such statements as “I want to go back to art class,” and “I want to go to computer class”. Other children also had pleasant experiences to share about family outings such as trips to the state fair and Disney Land. At the same time, a couple of the children’s interviews were colored with adverse reactions and experiences of assorted relationships.

There was a sense among them that deaf and hearing children are different from each other, and most of them did not view their deafness as a problem. The children told stories about difficulties they encounter, but frequently appeared to view these difficulties as shared experiences and challenges with hearing others. There was a continuum of comfortable and uncomfortable images and experiences with extremes on both ends, as in the cases of Mary and Joe. Affectual reports on these images and experiences are woven primarily into chapters V, VI and IX as themes of attachment and domesticated others, alienation and disparate others, and images of communication. Differences also arose in the amounts of information that a) residential children and a child of deaf parents and b) mainstreamed children of hearing parents had about themselves and their lifeworlds.

Domesticated others, presented in chapter V, include those individuals that the deaf child sees as similar to oneself regardless of hearing status. A deaf child’s acceptance of a hearing person as deaf or as similar to him or herself because of their
ability to sign fluently, and the child’s acceptance of other deaf or hard of hearing children as like oneself are two examples of domesticated others. This may or may not involve a conscious awareness of the person’s actual hearing status. It is based rather on the child’s visualization and acceptance of the person.

*Disparate* others, discussed in chapter VI would be those individuals that the child sees as different from himself or herself regardless of hearing status. Three examples of disparate others which arose from this study are, 1) a child whose family was deaf reported that people who are hard of hearing were different from her, 2) a hard of hearing child whose family was hearing reported viewing a classmate whose family was deaf as different from him and, 3) the children gave several examples of their views of hearing children as different from themselves. Disparate others may or may not involve a conscious awareness of the hearing status of the person, and may or may not necessarily imply a prejudiced or ethnocentric view. For most of the children, this difference appeared to be just a taken for granted fact of life, reflective of the cultural metatheory discussed by Paul and Jackson (1993). The children also presented struggles with the influences of the clinical metatheories of others in their ecosystems (i.e., parents and peers). Along a continuum of comfortable and uncomfortable experiences and relationships with domesticated and disparate others, themes related to attachment and alienation emerged.

The children revealed images of their futures through what I call future stories. These future stories are presented in chapter VII as infinity. Infinity includes images of their vocations, their children, spouses, education and hearing status as adults.

Overt identity, a theme presented in chapter VIII, relates to overt or visible indicators of one’s hearing status. In their drawings and stories about pictures they
were presented, the children indicated visible auxiliary aids, and the act of signing or mouth movement as clues to a person's hearing status.

Overall, the findings which emerged out of the context of this study contradicted many of the assumptions in the literature about the self perceptions and lifeworlds of deaf and hard of hearing children. In contrast to the negative expectations emphasized in the literature, these children had many positive experiences, relationships, self perceptions, expectations for themselves and healthy coping styles.
CHAPTER V
ATTACHMENT AND DOMESTICATED OTHERS

The children's feelings about themselves and their feelings in the presence of others were indicated by affectual reports. These affectual reports included situations where the children experienced a sense of attachment. Their sense of attachment occurred primarily in the company of domesticated others. There were, however, situations where the children reported a sense of comfort and attachment in the company of others who were unlike themselves in hearing status, language or communication mode.

In discussing Pat's drawing of himself I asked him about his family. In school, Pat's class apparently had a discussion about themselves as a family unit. He applied this contextual information in response to my questions. This story indicates that Pat sees his classmates and teacher as domesticated others.

I: Okay, great. So does that boy have a family?

P: My family. My family.

I: Who's in his family?

P: Well, there's the class and the teacher. (Name of Deaf teacher) part of my family. And Steven (student in class) and me and, umm, I dunno.

I: Your class or your family?

P: My, my, in my family, in my family...

I: Who's that?

P: And my family. They're different. My family for my class. There's two different ones. There's my class
family, but not (name of hearing teacher), because she’s in a different class.

I: Okay, can you tell me a story about your family?

P: Family?

I: Yes, family. Who’s in your family?

P: My class?

I: Your family.

P: Family, oh, there’s (name of dorm), the house and the bed and lots of friends and fun in that dorm.

I: How many people are in your family?

P: I dunno.

I: Mom and Dad and... Do you have a mother and father and sister and brother?

P: My mom and dad, my sister, my family.

I: Ok, Mom and Dad and one sister? No brothers?

P: (Nods.) And they...

I: And then you’re deaf.

P: Well, no, well, my sisters are hearing. My sisters are hearing. (I has been using fingers to indicate family members. Pat reaches across the table to point at individual fingers.) That’s my mom and dad; they’re hearing. And then a sister who’s hearing. And I’m deaf. All, and they’re all hearing. And they talk (Pat imitates person talking).

Angie’s evidence of having domesticated others is clear in her report that deaf children may not be shy in the company of other deaf children:

Deaf kids go to school and have deaf friends and they’re not shy.

Behaviorally, Angie was open, friendly, and extroverted in our interview. She came out of the house to greet us as we pulled in the drive. She brought with her a favorite stuffed animal which she introduced us to. During the interview, she
sat patiently and responded openly to my questions, volunteering much information on her own.

Alex presented some interesting realities related to attachment and belonging. Alex communicated easily in American Sign Language. He communicated enthusiasm for his involvement in his school milieu. He appears comfortable in his residential environment with other deaf students. He stated his best friend who is a student at the same school is also deaf.

While most children would become restless in the course of an interview, each child has different ideas about what they’d rather be doing. In Alex’s case, he was eager to return to his art and computer classes, “I want to go to art class,” “I want to go to computer class.”. Alex communicated this desire to be in his familiar surroundings both directly as indicated above and in-directly by signing, “This is crazy,” behind my back while I laid out some crayons for him.

To Alex, because his hard of hearing sibling and hearing parents can speak and sign both, he appears to consider them both, deaf and hearing. This is an example of domesticated others.

I: Great. Okay. And this is the deaf boy. Who’s this?
A: His sister.
I: Who’s this?
A: His mom and dad.
I: Okay. Are they deaf or hearing?
A: Umm, she signs, and talks both. She can sign and she can speak. ...the sister. And the mom can sign and speak both and the dad can sign and speak. All of...
I: So are they hearing?
A: Well, hearing and deaf both, because they, they sign and speak. Both.
I: Oh, okay. So can she hear, or is she deaf?
A: She can hear.
I: And Mom?
A: Can hear.
I: And dad?
A: Can hear.

Alex has a positive image of his parent's and other's perceptions of him as indicated in the following passage. He also sees potential for adaptation on both sides in the company of hearing people. This ability to adapt facilitates Alex's sense of attachment and his positive perception of others' views of him.

I: So, how does the boy happen to be deaf?
A: He was born that way.
I: Born deaf, uh-huh. And how do the parents feel?
A: They're excited.
I: Excited when the baby was born deaf? Is that how the parents felt?
A: Mmhmm. Yeah, they, they felt excited, you know.
I: ... So his sister is hearing, and, um, when they look at him, at the deaf child, what do they think?
A: Well they know sign.
I: All right. And that boy who is deaf, if he's going somewhere by himself, some place like to the store, the grocery store, and he's deaf, and everyone else around him is hearing. When they look at him, what do they think of him?
A: Umm, I think, um, um, something, um... They might talk. Mmhmm. And, and you just kind of shrug and go, "I don't know. I'm deaf." You could write, "I'm deaf." And then they would understand. Then they'd understand, they'd say, "Oh, excuse me." And then you could write things and read things and write things.
Okay. Would they like the deaf boy?

Yeah.

Yeah? They would like him?

Uh-huh.

Well that's good. And, um, deaf children, if there's a group of deaf children and they see a group of hearing children, what do they think of the...what do the deaf children think of the hearing children?

Well, they'd know they're hearing, and they could, they could write to each other, they could write.

So deaf or hearing, it doesn't matter, they can play together?

Uh-huh.

Mary was the only child in the study who had deaf parents and deaf siblings. Although her family is deaf, she reflected a positive attitude and comfort in her school environment where she is mainstreamed with both deaf and hearing peers. She reported she makes friends very easily and that it's no problem for deaf and hearing children to get along.

(Talking about one particular hearing cousin) Well, one little girl who is three, I think, two or three, I don't know, she just loves me. That little girl just loves me. Every time I go over to her home she comes running up and gives me a big hug.

That's really nice. So hearing people like you as well. It doesn't matter whether they're deaf or hearing.

No, it doesn't matter.

Now suppose there's a hearing family and there's a deaf family. Are there going to be any differences?

No, you can still be friends. It doesn't make any difference, you can be friends... I have lots of friends... there's lots.
I: ... Your school now has a mixture, but if you were the only deaf person...

M: I'd make friends with hearing people. I'd make friends.

I: ... (After M explains how she is mainstreamed for some classes and attends a self contained class with other deaf students for some periods) ... And if you go into a deaf class and then you go into a hearing class do you feel different?

M: You just switch. No. You just go into one or the other. They're both comfortable because I have friends in both. I have a lot of friends.

I: (After Mary explains there was another deaf child in a previous class with her) ... And did you like having another deaf person in class with you?

M: I liked it.

I: You don't have that anymore?

M: Well, I don't know. I don't know. Maybe I'll be the only one, but that's fine. (This was summer vacation.)

Mary presents a strong positive feeling about her family. It is clear from her stories about her family that she sees her parents as loving and caring for her and her brothers and sisters, and that they enjoy each other's company. She also appeared to have many more details to share about her family than the other children did:

M: Well, a long time ago my sister, you know Barbara? My sister was little, and she wasn't born, then she was born in a hospital, and she stayed in the hospital, my mother stayed in the hospital when she was born, and then she almost died. But then my daddy tried to help, but the hospital said no, no, they couldn't help. Because she just had to die. Because my daddy tried and tried and tried, and we were very lucky that she lived... and we're happy that she was all right. If she had died, I would have cried and cried... The family cried....

Later:
M: My sister has dimples. And I don't. She has dimples. I wish I did.

I: Yes, but you're a very pretty girl.

M: Yes, I know, my mother always tells me that... I have cousins and nieces and everybody. And my two little cousins, or my nieces, they're hard of hearing. I mean hearing. Most of my family is deaf. Most of my family is... I have one baby kitten, named Boy, I don't know how many months. He was lost and my friend went to her mother's friend's house to visit. And she saw this one kitten walking and lost. And he was saying "meow," and came right up. And they picked up the kitty and loved and as real close to my mom... Sometimes we go out, and sometimes...we went to the state fair... Oh yeah, it was a lot of fun...we ate and played a whole lot and had fun. And it was hot...

I: Tell me about school. What do you do at school?

M: Well, I work. And I'm in third grade. And my sister Barbara will be in first grade, and my little sister will be three. She's going to (name of school)...She really wanted to ride the bus. And we play on the bus, it was, "Do we play on the bus?" And it was, "Yes! We get to go on the yellow bus!"...She was like "Yeah! Yeah!" We were laughing.

Like Alex, Mary had a positive picture of hearing parents reactions to the diagnosis of a new baby's deafness.

I: Who are those people?

M: A Mother and a father and a baby... they're holding the baby. They're holding the baby... hugging it... maybe they'll go to bed. There's the mother and the father there. They love their son very much.

I: ... Now suppose the parents are hearing and the baby's deaf. How would the parents feel?

M: I don't know. Happy.

I: Happy? And what about the baby? How would the baby feel?

M: Happy too.
Later:

M: The mother is telling the baby "I love you." And the baby boy, or something... "I love you" to mother, like "goodbye." "I love you." Saying "I love you" to the mother. "I love you" to the father, and to the whole family.

Danny’s affectual reports included the possibility of resolving difficult situations somewhat if hearing children can use sign language. He reports a sense of comfort where he discovers the hearing children sign.

D: ... For, if, maybe if they’re shy and somebody’s talking or something, and they say, "ok," and they see somebody signing. And they come up and they’ll talk to each other and they become friends. So you need to learn sign.... like if there’s hearing people on a team or something like that and there’s somebody that’s shy, well, hearing people, they can just talk, you know, Talk with their mouths, And then they might say, “You can...” and then they find out this boy’s deaf and it’s like, "Oh you can sign?" And then the boy might go “Yeah, I can sign, I can sign. I’m hearing but I can sign.” And then the deaf boy would, well, they would become friends and they could be on a football team together or a baseball team together or a basketball team. ‘Cause they could sign together. ‘Cause they could learn.

I: So how’s the boy feel?

D: Oh, the boy would feel really good and be surprised, too.

After explaining a possible scenario where a deaf boy would be rejected by hearing children and having no one to talk with about it, Danny later states that it would not happen anyway because there are other deaf and hearing people around.

I: ... Does that happen to that one deaf boy only or does it happen to many deaf boys?

D: None... because there would be other deaf. There would be some other deaf, some other hearing.
Danny also reports he would feel happy in the company of his deaf peers. As Danny tells me about his school and his friends his comfort in the company of deaf people is apparent:

I: If the deaf boy was playing with other deaf kids, how would he feel?

D: Happy.

Later:

D: Deaf. Deaf. He has many friends, many friends. Well, his friends are (signs several names of deaf friends at school). He has lots of friends... they play “It.” You know, where you tag somebody, and they’re it, and then you run? It’s also called “tag”...and they go on the swing set together.

I: And is the boy happy at his school? Is he happy?

D: Yes, the boy likes to learn. He likes to learn things, lots of things.

I: You like that boy?

D: Mmm hmm.

I: ... That boy’s friends, are they deaf or are they hearing or are some?

D: Oh, they’re deaf. All of them. They’re in the other hall, and sometimes there are hearing friends, but very few of them. But most of them are pure deaf.

I: All deaf and just a few hearing. Can you tell me more about how there happen to be so many deaf friends?

D: (points to picture he drew) Well you can see, this says you have to be deaf to go there. It’s for deaf kids. That’s where deaf kids need to go, to that school. Because there’s a separate school for hearing people and a school for deaf people.

Angie has hearing parents. She also recognizes that there are differences between hearing and deaf people. She understands that early childhood illness caused her deafness. Her deafness is a strong presence in her life. She communicates
skillfully and energetically in sign, she appears to be a happy child, and situates herself comfortably with other deaf kids. She also recognizes that her parents make an effort to learn about and understand her deafness.

(Looking at picture) That’s a deaf class deaf book. Deaf, a deaf book... that you pay. My parents have deaf books that they read and understand.... deaf kids go to school and have deaf friends and they’re not shy.

Joe has a deaf friend he identifies with.

Sometimes me and my friend, this other boy named Carl, he lives over that way. He’s deaf like me and he talks, too. And sometimes we fight and sometimes we play together. Sometimes we argue.

As will be seen in chapter VI, Joe indicated some uncertainties about his self image. When asked if he would rather be able to hear or if it was ok to be deaf, Joe responded:

I: ...would you rather be able to hear, or is it ok to be deaf?

J: Both...well, I like to be deaf because I like signing. And compared to other kids I like two ways. I like signing and speaking both... and I like that.

Reflections on Attachment and Domesticated Others

Affectual reports that the children presented included reports about situations where they felt a sense of attachment or belonging. Their sense of attachment, belonging, self assurance and fulfillment appeared greater in relationships that were communicatively accessible such as with domesticated others. Domesticated others are those whom the children see as being like themselves, regardless of hearing status. Domesticated others included classmates, deaf teachers, and other deaf children, as well as parents and siblings (both deaf and hearing) who communicated in the same way the children did.
There was evidence across the group that the children were comfortable in the presence of their deaf peers. They also appeared more comfortable with hearing children who could sign than those who did not. The children showed evidence of comfort in their school milieus among other children like themselves. Communication, not their deafness, was at the forefront of these children’s minds when their relationships and attachment with others were discussed.

Contrary to the heavy emphasis in the literature on the grief that parents of deaf children experience, the children presented primarily positive images of their parents’ regard for them with evidence from some of the children that hearing parents would need to adjust to their deafness and would worry about them. Affectually, the children appeared primarily happy, and well adjusted although there was evidence of additional physical disabilities or emotional problems for some of them. For the most part they appeared to take their deafness for granted.
CHAPTER VI
ALIENATION AND DISPARATE OTHERS

Contrary to the feelings of attachment that some of the children reported in the company of domesticated others, even with others who are different from themselves, they also reported situations where they experienced a sense of alienation. Affectual reports related to this alienation included boredom in communicatively inaccessible situations; awareness of potential rejection by hearing peers; shyness, sadness, anger, nervousness, and discomfort in the presence of hearing children who do not sign; discomfort with teasing by hearing peers; frustration in some communicative interactions; and for one child, association of deafness with illness and fear of becoming ill or developing disabling conditions.

These unpleasant affective reactions were reported by the children in the presence of hearing peers, and hearing family members. These reports are indicative of the child's sense of belonging and relationships with disparate others.

Lisa has hearing parents and attended a total communication educational program and used oral communication at home with her family. Shortly after these interviews, Lisa transferred to an oral only school. Lisa acknowledged that sometimes hearing people do want to learn to sign, but she appeared ambivalent about her comfort with this.

Lisa showed evidence of a strong oral influence through her verbal and non-verbal communication. This presented itself in her attention to hearing aids, her initial hesitance to sign, and later nearly continual placement of her signs at lap level. At
one point, when Lisa used the sign for “deaf”, she exaggerated on that sign by putting her index finger in her mouth as if signing “yuck”. In the passage below Lisa again expresses a reluctance to use her signs with hearing children at school, even though she acknowledges that mutual signing skills would ease their communication..

L: Hearing... she's making “I love you.” (in signs)
I: ... What's the teacher doing?
L: Showing the “I love you” to her.
I: ...Why would they sign “I love you?”
L: For the family.
I: For the family? Why do hearing children learn sign?
L: I don’t know.
I: Do you know any hearing children who sign? Who?
L: I don’t know.
I: Hearing children in your school? Do they sign? Why do they sign if they’re hearing?
L: They know how to sign language... because they want to know how to do sign language... easy to sign for hearing and deaf... people know sign language... when I was in third grade, the people would ask how to sign something, “How do you sign that?” I would say, “I’m not telling you.”

Pat saw deaf and hearing people as “Different”. Like Lisa, Pat’s story also reflected the influence of oral values.

I: ... Can you tell me more, some kind of story about that boy?

P: Well, hearing are different from deaf... it's different from hearing. He has to practice speech, he has to practice talking, so he can communicate. He has to practice, and he has to practice talking.
Alex's domesticated view of his immediate family members as deaf, even though they can hear, contrasts his view that his grandparents, who do not sign as well, are hearing or disparate others.

I: ... Are your grandparents hearing or deaf?
A: They’re hearing. They don’t know sign.
I: They don’t?
A: Oh, they know some. They know a little bit... they’d write.

Danny stated he might feel a bit nervous and unsure about being understood by hearing peers. His affectual reports included expressions of shyness, embarrassment, hesitancy and fears of being rejected by hearing children:

Well he might be kind of nervous and... Yeah, a little unsure. Because they’re hearing and they might not know... he might not know how to use his voice, so they might not understand.... Maybe not comfortable.

... Kind of shy and kind of embarrassed and kind of hesitant. A little bit afraid if no one signs.

I: Ok, they’re all hearing right? If a deaf boy should happen along and say, “I want to play with you”, what would they do? How would they react?
D: Well, they’d be puzzled and they’d say, “Go away. Go away.”
I: So they’d kind of shoo him away?
D: Yeah, ‘cause they’re hearing.
I: Well, that’s not very nice. How does the deaf boy feel?
D: Kind of sad. Because they don’t want him around. And he might be kind of mad and kind of lonely. That’s how he might feel.
I: Would that happen very often?
D: Mmm hmm.
What would the deaf boy's mom say about that?

I: Would his mom try to help the deaf boy?

D: No, mom's hearing and doesn't know sign.

I: Who does the deaf boy talk with to explain what happened to him?

D: I don't know.

Mary projected a strong positive self image. She indicated she was comfortable moving back and forth from her deaf family to her mainstreamed school setting. She did, however, have the following to say about her disparate others within a diverse deaf community. In this passage, people who are hard of hearing are seen as disparate others.

I: (After M indicates that one of the children in the picture may be hard of hearing)... But I'm really really curious now. Because we started talking about hard of hearing people. And I'm really curious about if you see a deaf person and a hard of hearing person and a hearing person. How do you know that person's hard of hearing? How do you know?

M: (Picture is propped up in front of her) Because they look like this... Because they talk, that means they're in an all hearing family... Maybe they're talking, or not clear signing... They wouldn't sign.

As indicated in chapter V, Mary demonstrated a strong positive self perception. There were however, some behavioral observations that may be indicative of some underlying hostility. While responding to questions I presented to her towards the end of our second interview, Mary began to put the pictures in front of her face and voiced her responses without signing behind the paper. Doing this made it impossible for me to either lip-read her or read her signs.
Perhaps Mary was testing my hearing, to determine how she should relate to me, or maybe she was just getting restless since this was towards the end of our second interview. Even if it was restlessness, I believe it can be viewed in the context of disparate vs. domesticated others, as well as overt and covert identity, and her attempt to determine how to relate to me. Mary and I do have different backgrounds in that I was adventitiously deafened at the age of three, my family was hearing, and we were non-signing until my late adolescence. Mary was born Deaf, has a Deaf family and she is a native signer. Mary knew before she met me that I was deaf, but this incident reflected her need to find her own context for me.

Joe appeared to be quite mature and analytical for his young ten years. He seemed to possess a sense of pride and positive self esteem as he told me of his various talents and aspirations (i.e., wanting to be a professional football player, an artist or actor). At the same time, there were underlying uncertainties and negative affectual issues related to his deafness and his relations with his hearing peers. Joe’s sense of alienation was clearly heavier than it appeared to be for the other children. Perhaps just the direct manner in which he communicated his concerns made these issues more clear since some of the other children expressed underlying negative affectual issues non-verbally.

Joe attributed these negative experiences to his deafness. Since Joe was the only African American child interviewed in this study, attends a predominantly Caucasian school and resides in a mostly Caucasian neighborhood, I began to wonder if racial prejudice might be a factor in the teasing he reported. Joe did not mention race as an element and I questioned whether or not my being white prevented him from feeling free to discuss that as an issue. I didn’t want to suggest this to Joe and create an issue that might not exist in his awareness. I phoned his mother to ask if she thought racial prejudice might be a factor in the amount of
His mom reported she was unaware of such behavior on the part of his peers. She also stated that Joe's teachers report they do not see the teasing happening, and said, "so it's all relative." Could this difference in perception be due to a difference in communication skills? Nonetheless, Joe attributed these issues to his deafness.

I: Tell me a story about that boy.

J: I think maybe (looks at picture) he has trouble with hearing and people tease him. You know, um, he, um, he doesn't hear. He hears less.

I: Who teases him? Who teases him?

J: Diane.

I: Diane? Is that somebody from school?

J: Yeah.

I: Is that a hearing person or a deaf person?

J: A hearing... no, um, hearing... she talks, but she's always teasing and...

I: Do hearing people give you trouble and tease you?

J: Mmm hhm. And then, um, I ask them to stop it. But they still tease and call names and get friends in fights and stuff like that. And we tell the teacher but the teacher says just ignore it.

I: And how do you feel about that? When that happens?

J: I feel angry.

I: ... And does that happen to other deaf kids in your school?

J: Yeah. And then, me and this other person sometimes get sick or get hurt. And sometimes people are in the hospital. And many times it happens that people are hurt or they're in the hospital. Then you try to tell the teacher about what to do and the teacher just says, "Ignore it," or "Stop"... One day umm, I have a new friend named Nancy and there's another person whose name starts with a "B" and there are people who
will try to help us by, when people tease and other things, and they tell the teacher, but the kids don't pay attention. They don't pay attention, ...

Later:

J: Because, those people pick on me because, because I didn't hear very well for the low sounds and loud voices. I can hear the lighter sounds. And sometimes they'll call my name.

I: And that makes you feel what?

J: Upset.

I: ... Do you ever get frustrated?

J: With my uncle... because he talks real fast.. Uncle Jim talks too fast.

Joe sees himself as a person “that has trouble hearing” who is teased by hearing children. In addition to the disparate others that these hearing children represent to Joe, he also saw himself as different from a classmate who has a Deaf family. To Joe, this family represents another group of disparate others.

J: I'm hard of hearing.

I: So you can hear some?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you understand people’s voices?

J: Not all people’s voices. I understand people with light voices, not deep voices or low voices.

I: ... And can you hear on the telephone?

J: No, but I’m going to get a TTY, to type, for Christmas.

J: I have this one friend, Thomas and Catherine (voices and gives name signs). They’re all from the same family. And all of his family, their whole family, their whole family, the parents and everybody is deaf. They’re all deaf. And they have a lot of deaf kids in
their family. This one family, they're all deaf. I was really surprised when, when Thomas' mom had the baby and then Catherine was born deaf. Well, when they all came one time, and I said, when I talked they didn't understand. I tried talking and I had to sign. And then they signed back to me and I thought, "Whoa!"... Yeah, but when I talked, I just thought they were hearing, but they looked at me funny and then I started signing and then they signed back... No, not that many deaf people wear hearing aids. Sometimes my friend Thomas, and Catherine, they don't have hearing aids because in their family everybody's deaf. All of them.

I: So they don't wear hearing aids. At school do they wear them?

J: Well they use these things, the phonic ears... I think it's weird... They sign all the time. They just sign. You know, they don't yell or anything except the dad sometimes will yell. But if they want to get their attention they flash the lights. They flash them on and off and then that gets their attention.

I: You don't do that here in your house?

J: No, I hear well enough.

I: Okay, And here at home it's different with your family than with that deaf family?

J: ...Yup.

I: How else are things different?

J: Well because if you yell they can't hear and, um, they might throw something... Yeah, something soft, not something hard.

While looking at a picture of an infant and two adults, Joe reported the infant may become deaf from illness and the hearing parents would worry:

J: It's a new baby... Well, the baby might have just been born, and then maybe the baby became deaf after a while.... might have gotten sick or there might have been an accident.

I: Okay. And if that happened how would the parents feel?
J: Worried. They'd be more worried... about the baby. If the baby had an accident or was sick and then became deaf.

I: Are the parents hearing or deaf?

J: They're hearing.

Joe's sense of differentness appeared to be stronger than for the other children. Being hard of hearing may have been a factor in this since he reports feeling different from deaf children of deaf parents as well as different from his own family. It appears that race, parental hearing status and severity of hearing loss may all have contributed to the feelings he reported.

**Boredom in Inaccessible Situations**

In looking at a picture of two children, where one is talking on the phone and the other sits close by, several of the children reported that the child they perceived as deaf would have been bored in that situation.

P: I have, a boy who's talking on the phone and a girl who's bored who's sitting there. She's bored. She's kind of complaining about it. And the other person's talking on the phone and the gal's just sitting there like, oh, nothing to do. And they're friends and they want to have fun.

I: Are they hearing or deaf?

P: Deaf and hearing.

I: Both?

P: This one's hearing, (points to the one talking on the phone) and this one's deaf (points to the one not on the phone). Or I don't know, that one could be deaf or hearing. I don't know.

Danny had the following to say about the same picture:

This kid's talking on a phone and he's bored and he's bored and he's just kind of staring into space. And he's like, "hurry up, hurry up," this kid is. And the other kid's just yakking
away on the phone. And his friend is waiting and he’s bored, and he’s kind of mad, and he’s bored, and he’s going, “Come on, I want to play a game.”

I: Are they deaf or hearing?

D: Well, he’s hearing. He’s deaf. (points) And he’s hearing (points), but he can sign. Because he’s talking on the phone, so he must be hearing. The other one’s deaf because it means he’s bored....

Angie’s response was as follows:

A: This person’s deaf.

I: Who is deaf? (A points) This person’s deaf? What about this person? (I points)

A: That person’s hearing.

I: That person’s hearing? How do you know?

A: Talking on the phone. And this person’s getting really bored. And waiting and waiting. The friend’s chatting on the phone. He wants to play a game with him. But he’s bored, his friend’s bored. And he’s making faces maybe at his friend or something. And the other one’s just ignoring him.

And Joe:

Well, the hearing guy’s happy, but the deaf guy’s bored, and he’s upset.... I like gym and art, but not music, that’s boring...

**Reflections on Alienation and Disparate Others**

Contrary to the feelings of attachment and the relationships and perspectives on domesticated others that the children reported in chapter five, this chapter focused on their relationships with disparate others and feelings of alienation.

*Disparate* others, are those individuals that the child sees as different from himself or herself regardless of hearing status. Three examples of disparate others which arose from this study are, 1) a child whose family was deaf reported that
people who are hard of hearing were different from her, 2) a hard of hearing child whose family was hearing reported viewing a classmate whose family was deaf as different from him and, 3) the children gave several examples of their views of hearing children as different from themselves. Disparate others may or may not involve a conscious awareness of the hearing status of the person, and may or may not necessarily imply a prejudiced or ethnocentric view.

For most of the children, the difference between themselves and others in relation to their deafness appeared to be just a taken for granted fact of life, reflective of the cultural metatheory discussed by Paul and Jackson (1993). The children also presented struggles with the influences of the clinical metatheories of others in their ecosystems (i.e., parents and peers).

The children’s affectual reports indicated that they experienced a sense of boredom in communicatively inaccessible situations, and that they possess an awareness of potential rejection by hearing peers. Shyness, sadness anger, embarrassment, nervousness, hesitancy and uncertainty are feelings that the children reported they experience in the presence of disparate others. Feelings of discomfort with teasing and discomfort in the company of hearing children who do not sign were also described. In addition, frustration in communicatively inaccessible situations was also discussed.

It’s important to keep in mind that while feelings of alienation do occur for these children, other chapters in this report indicate that positive affectual experiences, feelings of attachment, relationships with domesticated others, a positive outlook on their futures and healthy coping mechanisms also exist for them. Thus the information noted in this chapter should be seen only as one element of the children’s perspectives and viewed as only a part of the whole.
CHAPTER VII
INFINITY

At times, the children relayed visions of their futures through stories about the pictures they drew, or observed, and in answer to direct questioning from the interviewer. These future stories, which are presented in this chapter, centered primarily around vocational and parenting issues. Educational aspirations were also revealed. The stories imply that the children primarily see their hearing status as unchanging, however, one child indicated that a deaf child's hearing may improve, or he could develop an additional disability as he got older.

Pat, a residential student with hearing parents has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pat shared the following with me about his future:

I: Thank you. Now, this deaf boy, when he becomes an adult, when he becomes a man, will he work?

P: His favorite thing is to be a policeman.

I: A policeman?

P: That's my favorite thing. Or a fireman, a policeman, ride in a helicopter, ummm, fox, that's another one of my favorites. And Mickey Mouse. Those are my favorites.

I: Ok. If this boy got married, will he have children?

P: Um, he's got to wait 'til he gets big.

I: Ok. When he's big and gets married, will he have children?

P: Umm, when he gets big, real big, real big. And days and days and days and days and days and days. Many, many days, and, 1, 2, 3, 4, lots, and then he's gonna be a policeman. 'Cause that's my favorite.
I: Ok. I was wondering if someday he has children, will they be deaf or hearing? What do you think?

P: Um, deaf. Or hearing. Lots of people. There are lots of people and they're different....

I: And when this boy grows up, when he gets to be a man, an adult...

P: Wait a minute, wait a minute. (draws and signs) Ten, and you wait and you wait and you wait and now I'm eleven and you wait and you wait and you wait and wait and then you wait and wait and wait some more until you're thirteen, and you wait and you wait some more, and you wait and you wait some more, and you wait and you wait some more, sixteen, and you wait and wait and wait, then you wait and wait and wait and wait. And you wait and wait. My... you're very big, and... when you're twenty years old... you have to wait a long time and get very big... but you have to wait and you have to be patient. Eleven, and you wait and you wait and wait and you're eleven for a long time. And then you're twenty, twenty-two, twenty-one, twenty-nine, no wait, umm twenty-nine. Ok that's enough.

I: Ok, good. Now, this deaf boy, when he's twenty, what kind of job will he have? Will he work?

P: Umm, he'll work at a house. And he'll work and work and work and work and some of it'll be hard, and he'll know lots and lots of stuff.

I: Will he get a job? What will he do?

P: Oh, lots of different things. Lots of things. You know, like all over.

I: Like what?

P: Oh, different things. There are many different things, all over. And many places to live...

Danny, looking at a picture of a man sitting at a desk, after I informed Danny that this man was deaf..

I: So what does he do?

D: Umm, he's learning and it's hard.
I: Is he learning at school?
D: Can't see.
I: Does it look like school or work? What do you think?
D: Umm, another work.
I: What?
D: There's another work.
I: Another work? What do you mean?
D: I don't know. No, um, it's like a town and there's houses set up there.
I: And that's where he works?
D: Yeah.
I: What kind of a job does he have? What does he do? What's his job?
D: I don't know.
I: If... ok, you're deaf. As you grow up and you're not a little boy anymore, when you're a man (Danny signs college) What's your job going to be?
D: Umm, well, his job is with an animal, and he might have to feed the animals.

Danny also envisions deaf people becoming doctors. At Danny's school the superintendent is a deaf person with a Ph.D. So being a deaf person with a doctorate is not outside of his experience.
I: Do you think they're deaf or hearing?
D: I think they're deaf. I think they're deaf, both of them, they're deaf... it kind of looks like they might be signing... I think they're signing.
I: And what do you think they're talking about?
D: Mmm, I dunno. I dunno. Maybe a doctor.
I: A doctor?
D: Yeah, I think this one's a doctor, and this one's kind of sitting back 'cause he's hurt his hand. And this hand's hurting right there. And the doctor is, I think the other one's a doctor.

I: A deaf doctor?

D: Uh-huh.

And regarding deaf women:

D: (Looks at a picture) It's a mom. It's a mom. and she's calling a friend, and she's typing on the TTY. That means she's deaf....

I: And the mother's deaf. What... does she work?

D: She's in the home.

I: Ok. She doesn't have a job?

D: No.

I: No job? Why not?

D: Oh, um, I dunno... she's free, it's her choice... the mother doesn't have to have a job...

I: Can deaf women work?

D: Oh yeah.

I: Do some deaf women work?

D: Mmm hmm.

I: What kinds of jobs do they have?

D: Oh, many jobs. Many jobs. There's a long list. They could do cleaning, they could get a job working with animals, oh, lots and lots of different jobs. There's a long list. Many, many different jobs.

Regarding parenting, Danny tells a story of how a deaf mother communicates with her hearing baby and teaches the baby to sign:
I: ... And this is picture number four. What are they doing?

D: Umm, he’s got a hot dog. And mom’s showing “I love you.” And the baby’s looking up, like, “I love you?” You know, why are you learning signs? The mom’s like, you need to, you need more signs. And the baby’s kind of shy, but he’s trying to do “I love you.” And mom’s going, “Come on, come on, smile. Say ‘I love you.’” And the baby’s kind of smiling and going, “I love you.” And that’s the boy, and looking at, this is, this is (name sign) looking down, ‘cause there’s a pin there. (a pacifier pinned to the baby’s shirt) And this, umm, he’s hearing and she signs, and she’s deaf, and he’s hearing and signs.

I: ... If the parents are deaf, why is it important for the children to learn to sign? What’s the reason for that?

D: ... For, umm, if, umm maybe if they’re shy and somebody’s talking or something, and they say, “Ok,” and they see somebody signing. And they come up and they’ll talk to each other and they become friends. So you need to learn sign.

Angie envisions attending college, and working in the food business. She also envisions driving an automobile, living separately from her parents and continuing to use her hearing aids. She foresees the possibility of having deaf children (she states this as preferable to hearing children), perhaps experiencing some confusion over the baby’s deafness but finding ways to adapt with assistive technology.

A: ... I’m going to a hearing college... and learn to understand people... Work... maybe with food, I don’t know... sell food... I’d like to drive it (the car) but my dad says “no”. I have to wait ‘til I’m bigger.... When you’re born, if you can’t hear, when you grow up, you can be separate deaf... you go to a hearing aid doctor, and then you’re fine.

I: You’re fine? With a hearing aid they’re fine? And are they still deaf?

A: But they can’t hear anything. And they can’t hear, and you say. “My name is Angie,” but they couldn’t hear. But a hearing aid, it can help you with
talking.... And then I'll go to middle school, and then
I'll go to college for hearing people, and I'll
understand.

I: So when you grow up and become a mother, will your
children be deaf or hearing?

A: I don't know... I'd prefer deaf.

I: If your baby was born deaf... if you should have a
deaf baby, how would you feel?

A: I'd feel fine, maybe confused if the baby couldn't
hear... You know a flashing alarm clock? I have one to
wake me up, but I wake up, but then I sleep and then
the light flashes. And that way you can know if the
baby cries, if my son was crying, at night, and I would
say, "Stop," to his brothers and sisters.

Alex also anticipated that he would live separately from his parents and
perhaps work as a policeman.

I: Ok. As that deaf boy grows up, what's he gonna do?

A: Oh, he hasn't grown up yet.

I: But he will. He's going to grow up. What's he going
to do in his future?

A: I don't know. I don't know.

I: Will he work?

A: Umm, he won't be with his parents. He'll, he'll be
somewhere else. He might work or he might have a
house.

I: What kind of work would he do, what kind of job?

A: Oh, I don't know.

I: Just imagine something.

A: Well, umm, he might want to work, umm with the
police.

I: The police?

A: Uh-huh.
I: Deaf policeman?

A: Yeah. Maybe when I get big, I want to be a policeman.

Mary predicts many possibilities for the future. She sees deaf adults getting married but also sees the possibility of divorce since her deaf parents are divorced. Mary imagines deaf adults having children (either deaf or hearing), and possibly being on television, or interpreting for deaf blind people. She envisions herself being a helper, a school bus driver or a teacher. From the information provided in her interviews, Mary doesn’t appear to have met a teacher who is actually deaf, but she refers to her speech teachers who are hearing as “Deaf teachers” possibly meaning teachers of the deaf.

It was also interesting to see that of the four children whose parents are divorced, only Mary made mention of it and provided rich information about how and why the divorce occurred and its effect on her. This factor in her life brings the possibility that deaf adults in the pictures she viewed may also be divorced.

Well, the baby was born deaf, and that would mean he would need to go to a deaf class and would sign. And then when the child grew up, they’d teach him sign. So they would learn. They would know. It’d be real easy... or sometimes if there’s deaf parents and the kids are born hearing. Then what do they do? They have to learn speech. That’s hard.

I: Does he work?

M: Yes. He works doing art things.

I: Ok. And, um, while he’s not working, what might be do? Does he have family?

M: Yep.

I: So tell me about his family.

M: (Voice only) I don’t know.
I: Do you think he’s married?

M: I don’t know if he’s divorced.... Might be divorced like my mother and father. I don’t know.

I: Could be. Do you think he has children?

M: Some hearing people have deaf children And some deaf people have hearing children. But it’s different.

I: Do you know other deaf men? What kinds of things do deaf men do in their lives?

M: Some deaf people are in TV and they do sign language. They sign. And some sign for blind people... They do things for blind people and different things.

I: Why would they sign for deaf-blind people?

M: Because they don’t know what people are saying, when somebody’s making a speech. And the blind person. The deaf-blind person holds their hand and so they can feel the signing....

I: ... Ok, so going back to that picture. That man is deaf and he works. Now when you grow up, what kind of work do you think you’ll do?

M: I don’t know. Maybe a (??).

I: A what?

M: A (??) helper.

I: A helper?

M: Or a school bus driver or a school teacher or help people make their lives in the hospital where babies are born. I might work there.

I: That’s wonderful. Those are wonderful things to become. So deaf people can do those kinds of jobs?

M: I don’t know.

I: Do you know deaf people who work helping people?

M: I don’t know.
I: You haven’t met them yet? (M shakes head) Okay. Umm does your school have any deaf teachers?

M: Some of the teachers know sign language.

I: Have you ever met a deaf teacher?

M: I don’t know.

I: You don’t remember if you’ve met a deaf teacher or not?

M: Yeah. Two. Two deaf teachers.

I: Where? (M gives name signs) Could you spell those names for me? (M repeats name signs with voice.) (I tries names several times.)

M: I don’t know how to spell the names... I know some deaf teachers, I know them for speech.

Joe imagines going to a college with other deaf students and playing football. Although he appears to wish to play football, he also reports having seen a deaf football player get injured. He hasn’t given much thought to having deaf or hearing children, but anticipates marrying a hearing person based on his present relationship with a hearing girlfriend.

Joe foresees difficulties for deaf people in some professions such as teaching. He reports that deaf teachers may have difficulty communicating on the job with other teachers and may not know what to do. Also of note is Joe’s vision that as he gets older, his hearing would improve.

Throughout Joe’s interviews, he made many references to illness, deaf people getting hurt (i.e. from the story about the deaf football player getting hurt) and kids who are picked on getting hurt and sick, or becoming deaf from illness. Joe reported that he has a deaf peer at school who is hyperactive and who also has cancer. Joe’s story about this child indicated he lacked information on the child’s
situation. From the information Joe does have, he appears to have internalized some fears for himself that because he is also deaf the same thing could happen to him:

I: So is there anything else I should know? Anything else you want to tell me?

J: Umm, some kids get cancer from their ears.

I: Get what?

J: Cancer.

I: Cancer? From what?

J: From their ears.

I: How can you get cancer from your ear?

J: Yeah.

I: Are you asking me that or...?

J: No. No. My friend, my friend Tom. He got cancer from his ear.

I: And do you know how he got cancer? How?

J: From my friend, you know my friend Sandy.

I: Have you asked your mom about that?

J: I, for, the interpreter, her husband was going to ask about that and tell me about that.

I: So is it true that this person has cancer in his ear?

J: No, um, from his ear and it came down here (indicates clavicle)....because, because, he had water in his ear, and, when, they put more water in and gave him a little bit of cancer. And then it moved down.

Later:

I: When I write my book, about deaf children, what do you think I should put in there?

J: That some kids, some kids were born with hearing. They could hear. And sometimes, sometimes, um, kids have a disease, and it makes them lose their hearing.
And some, um, something gets broken in their ear or there’s a problem. My friend Cindy, um, who’s deaf. She could hear when she was born. And then when she was 3 years old, she got sick. And then she couldn’t hear anymore and she became deaf... and some kids get the wrong kinds of shots and that could make them, um, not able to hear. And some could be born with no hearing. And sometimes people get sick, sometimes it’s from shots, sometimes they’re born that way.

J: And sometimes, um, when you get 14 or 15, um, and they might have to go to a hospital for...

I: Have to go to a hospital for what?

J: Um, if when you’re say 14 years old, they might be, umm.... It’s called Sean and, and... there’s this new, um, Sean, he’s had a lot of problems and he’s acting real crazy and he made a lot of mistakes in school and he’s improving now but he’s 18 now.... But it just happened. Like, on his birthday when he became 14, then he started getting really wild and acting really wild. And then, um, he stole something and, um, it was at school at 2:00, in the afternoon.

I: Okay, well, he’s only one person, right? And do you see that happen with other deaf people? Get...

J: No. No. There’s, he’s the first one.... he’s the first person who became deaf and got wild...

I: ... Are you worried that will happen to you?

J: Uh-huh.

Joe had the following predicted the following regarding his career:

I: ... Do you know what you’re going to do when you grow up?

J: Uh-huh.

I: What are you going to do?

J: I would like to go to, uh... you know, where... have you heard of where deaf kids go for college? I want to go to that school... and I would like to play football. And I would like to live in Miami City.
I: In Miami? So You’d like to play football there? That sounds like a good goal. Okay, do you know of any football players who are deaf?

J: Yeah... from high school His name is K..., um, K, I don’t know his last name.... one kid who is, who got hurt this one deaf kid. Um, he had to go to the hospital for 3 years... I don’t know why. When they were winning, and they’re losing, and they’re playing...You know you have first down. The team had a first down and they came together and the one team, the player got knocked over.

Later:

J: The teacher’s hearing.

I: ...Okay. And another question for you. Why would the teacher be hearing? Why not a deaf teacher? I’m just curious. Do you know any deaf teachers?

J: No. But, um, I forget. Oh, it might be because, maybe if that teacher’s deaf then they can’t talk to the other teachers or they can’t talk on the phone. That kind of thing. So maybe it would be just wanting to learn how to sign.

I: I’m not sure I’m understanding. You’re saying if a teacher can’t talk, then... Could you repeat that? I’m sorry.

J: If a teacher is deaf, then she can’t talk to the other teachers, or if she can’t talk she won’t know what to do. If the other teachers don’t sign they won’t understand her.

Regarding marriage and parenting:

I: When you grow up, do you think you will have deaf children, or hearing children?

J: I never thought about it.

I: What about when you get married? Do you think you’ll marry a deaf lady or a hearing lady?


I: A hearing woman? Why?

J: I don’t know. I don’t know....Um, because my girlfriend is hearing and so I guess I’d like to marry her.
Joe also mentions the possibility of a deaf child’s hearing improving as they become older:

J: I think she’s hearing and she has a deaf sister... Umm, because, um, I don’t know the name of it, but if you’re deaf or somebody else in your family’s deaf and you might... When you’re little you’re deaf, then you might start to hear better. You might be able to hear well, but you would still be deaf.

I: So you can hear better?

J: Yes.

I: So your hearing would improve as you get older?

J: Uh-huh.

I: Oh, ok. That’s interesting. I’ve never seen that happen before. Do you know of deaf adults who when they were little they’re deaf, then they became hearing as they got older? Do you know someone like that? Who?

J: I can’t remember the name.

I: Do you think when you grow older that you’ll be able to hear better?

J: I think so. I hope.

Reflections on Infinity

The future stories which the children told depicted a decidedly self-assured outlook. The children take it for granted that they are going to grow up to become contributing members of our society, living independently, continuing their education, working, and having families. The stories centered mainly around vocational and parenting issues. Educational aspirations were also revealed with a couple of the children anticipating college.

Vocationally, all but one of the children anticipated having work. Their ideas about their careers varied and included being a policeman, a fireman, a teacher or helper, taking care of animals, being a doctor, playing football, working in a grocery
store, being an artist or actor. One boy explained that deaf women can hold a variety of jobs.

The child who did not mention a career was a female oral student whose hearing mother stays home and she probably has not had female adult role models who are deaf. The fact that she did not mention work does not mean that she does not foresee a career for herself. The absence of this in her stories could have been due to her communication difficulties and the general brevity of her responses. Only one child suggested that deafness may limit career choices.

The stories imply that the children primarily see their hearing status as unchanged in their adulthood. One child indicated that a deaf child's hearing may improve, or he could develop an additional disability as he got older.

Living arrangements separate from their parents were implicitly anticipated. Marriage was mentioned by some of them as a possibility. One child of Deaf parents who was able to explain the reason for her parent's divorce saw divorce as a possibility for deaf adults. My understanding of her foresight was not that divorce occurs because one is deaf, but that she had more information about the world and others around her because of the common language she shares with her family.

The children mentioned the prospect of having either deaf or hearing children and some stated a preference that their children be deaf. A baby cry signaler was mentioned by one child as an aid for her in the future. Other children mentioned teaching their offspring to sign.
CHAPTER VIII
OVERT AND COVERT IDENTITY

In the second phase of interviewing, the children were shown magazine cutouts of individuals and groups. They were asked to tell stories about what they saw happening in the pictures. Often, the children would indicate what they believed to be the hearing status of people in the pictures. When this information was not volunteered, I asked for their impressions.

Some of the children noted visual indicators such as assistive devices, the visible activity of signing, or mouth movement as signs of a person’s hearing status. Hearing aids were indicated only by mainstreamed students as visual indicators and not by the residential students in this study. Use of speech and/or sign language as visual indicators of hearing status were recognized by informants from both mainstream and residential settings (although not exclusively). Telecommunication devices for the Deaf (TTY’s) were also recognized by both residential and mainstream students as indicators of hearing status.

These visual indicators represented the overt identity that the deaf children in this study assigned to those they saw. The covert identity of people who are deaf is the actual identity that the perceived adopts for himself or herself, that which is not visible.

Lisa, a mainstreamed child of hearing parents, attended a total communication educational program but communicates orally at home by parental choice. She made
a distinction between deaf and hearing people in pictures based on the presence or lack of hearing aids.

I: Okay. Is the baby deaf or hearing?
L: Hearing.
I: Is the mother deaf or hearing?
L: Hearing.
I: Why do you think they’re both hearing?
L: ‘Cause they’re not deaf.
I: How do you know?
L: ‘Cause there’s no hearing aids.
I: Oh I see, if they have hearing aids, then that means they’re deaf. Do all deaf people wear hearing aids?
L: (long pause) I think so.
L: (another picture) He’s hearing... I see there’s no hearing aid, I don’t see a hearing aid... (and yet another picture) hearing, hearing. ‘Cause there’s no hearing aids.

Pat is a residential student in a school for the Deaf that is integrating a bilingual, bi-cultural educational approach and uses American Sign Language in the classroom. Pat’s parents are hearing. When asked to draw a picture of a deaf child Pat drew a picture of a boy signing the word “deaf” (figure 1) and made adjustments to the boy’s ears which he thought were initially too large.

P: I did the ears wrong.
I: What’s wrong with them.
P: They’re too big. It’d be better if they were smaller.
I: Oh, you wish they were smaller.
P: Can I do a different one? Hmm. (draws)
I: That’s wonderful.
Figure 1: Drawing of a Deaf Boy
P: (Drawing, changes colors) Nope. (draws)

I: That's very good. Can you tell me a story about that boy? (P nods). What?

P: Well, he's deaf. (draws) He's deaf.

I: Okay. And...

P: Wait a minute. Deaf. Deaf. (draws the boy signing "deaf")

Danny is a profoundly deaf child whose parents both sign. His mother is hard of hearing, and is active at his residential school. He identifies deaf people in pictures based on visible signing and or use of telecommunication devices for the deaf in the following three passages:

I: Do you think they're deaf or hearing?

D: I think they're deaf. I think they're deaf, both of them, they're deaf.... It kind of looks like they might be signing. I think they're signing.

D: It's a mom. It's a mom, and she's calling a friend, and she's typing on the TTY, on the TTY. That means she's deaf... and she takes the phone and puts it on the TTY and there's an on-off switch. She turns it on and then she sits and waits and then she starts typing. And that's her way of chatting, of talking with a friend.

D: This is a dad, And the dad has a baby. The baby's crying and so the dad gives the baby to the mom. 'Cause the baby feels better with the mom. And the baby gets a bottle.

I: You think that the baby is deaf or hearing?

D: Oh, hearing... I don't know, maybe Mom's deaf. No, I don't know, maybe because they're talking or something.... Uh, I think the dad's hearing and the mom's hearing. But I don't know.

I: Well, how might you know?

D: Because I think mom and dad are hearing. Because the baby's got its mouth open so he's probably hearing.
Angie, who has hearing parents and attends a total communication program for deaf children also attributes the visible action of signing to the hearing status of the person in the pictures. The second example shows how she attributes the action of talking to hearing people:

A: He’s deaf... Oh, I know. Signing “I love you”,... this one’s deaf and this one’s hearing.... The “I love you” is deaf. Sometimes they’re together and sometimes separate.

A: This person’s deaf.
I: Who is deaf? (A points.) This person’s deaf? What about this person? (I points).
A: That person’s hearing... Talking on the phone. And this person’s getting really bored. And waiting and waiting. The friend’s chatting on the phone. He wants to play.

Alex realized that a picture of someone talking doesn’t have to mean the person is hearing:

A: One’s talking on the phone so he must be hearing. But maybe he... no, he’s making it up, he’s pretending to be hearing, he’s playing. He’s not really on the phone... he’s making it up, he’s playing.

Mary, whose family is deaf, gave the following indicators of hearing and deaf people:

I: What about the family? Do you think they are a deaf family?

M: No, they’re hearing... Because they look like hearing people.... They look like hearing. They talk. ... Deaf people can’t use speech.

Regarding a picture of two children where one is on the phone, Mary had this to say:

I: Are they deaf or hearing?
M: Hearing. He’s hearing. She’s hearing.
I: Are they both hearing? How do you know?

M: Because she’s using speech on the phone. You can see that. And this one I don’t know.

Later:

M: She’s signing. She knows how to say “I love you.”

I: Oh, that’s why.

M: Yeah, so it looks like she’s deaf.

My understanding in the next example is that Mary was using “talking” to mean conversing in sign since she indicated both of the people were deaf and turn taking in conversational sign is important since eye contact is required for understanding.

M: They’re deaf... there’s a man and a woman and... playing with their son.... because they’re signing.

I: Ah, because they’re signing. Because they’re signing. Okay. And they’re both signing? (Mary leans forward) Are they both signing?

M: (Signing on picture) This one’s talking, and this one’s not... You have to wait until one finishes talking, then that one can have a turn. You have to take turns when you’re talking.

In the following passage, Mary indicates the presence of a hearing aid as well as use of sign language as indicators of hearing status.

M: Sign language American. Know why I know these are deaf? Because right here. (points to a hearing aid on a person in the picture)

I: There’s a hearing aid. Uh-huh. That’s how you know?

M: Yes. Yes. They’re using sign language. They’re using sign language... both are deaf.
I: Okay.... Number 9... Who are those people?

M: I don't know... (sets picture aside; most of the response, voiced, is unintelligible) This is deaf.

I: That's a deaf woman with a TTY? (clarifying what was lip-read)

M: Yes.

M: Looks like zoo. Some deaf and some hearing... because... I don’t know. They’re not talking. (shrugs)

I: They’re not talking so they might be deaf?


I: And they’re not talking. So you think maybe they’re deaf?

M: Not all deaf. Some of them. Some of them are deaf and some hearing.

Mary brought up some indicators pertaining to hard of hearing children that other children did not raise. The following passage showing the difference she sees between herself and children who are hard of hearing includes talking, unclear signing or no signing as visual indicators:

I: (After M indicates that one of the children in the picture may be hard of hearing)... But I’m really really curious now. Because we started talking about hard of hearing people. And I’m really curious about if you see a deaf person and a hard of hearing person and a hearing person. But what about a hard of hearing person? How do you know that person’s hard of hearing? How do you know?

M: (Picture is propped up in front of her) Because they look like this... Because they talk, that means they’re in an all hearing family... Maybe they’re talking, or not clear signing... They wouldn’t sign.

Mary also saw the visible act of talking as an indicator that a person can hear:
M: They look like hearing. They talk...
(and later) he’s hearing.... Because he looks like he’s
talking.. (and still later). Hearing. And they’re
talking to other people on the phone.

Joe has a severe hearing loss. Joe’s hearing parents divorced when he was
two or three, and some of his siblings (all hearing) live out of town with his father.

I: (After Joe explains that they baby in the picture
became deaf after birth from illness or accident) Are
the parents deaf or hearing?

J: They’re hearing.

I: They are. Okay. How can you tell? How do you know
that?

J: Because I can see them talking, but the baby... looks
like the baby’s deaf.

I: Okay. The baby looks like he’s deaf. Okay. What does a
deaf baby look like?

J: Umm, they look like they’re not hearing things.
They’re not looking around and paying attention to
sounds.

J: I think he’s hearing... ‘Cause he doesn’t have a
hearing aid on.

I: Okay. Do all deaf people wear hearing aids?

J: Well, no, not that many deaf people wear hearing
aids. Sometimes my friend B, and K, they don’t have
hearing aids because in their family everybody’s deaf.
All of them.

I: So they don’t wear hearing aids. At school do they wear
them?

J: Well they use these things, the phonic ears.

J: I think this guy’s hearing and this guy is deaf.

I: How do you know that?
J: Because this guy’s talking on the phone... And this other guy is not.

J: I think that these two are both, umm, they are deaf, um, because... Pam and, the teacher, and it’s teaching them how to sign... That looks like maybe a “Y” and this boy is learning how to sign and this boy’s just looking at the names.

I: ...They’re deaf. And the teacher...

J: The teacher’s hearing.

J: And you can see the alphabet all around the wall there. So that’s why I think they’re deaf.

J: Oh, more... you see it better. Um, let’s see. This one is, I think this one on the end is deaf because there’s a hearing aid. And this other boy is hearing but signing. He’s hearing but he’s learning how to sign. And they’re talking. He’s talking to the deaf boy.

Reflections on Overt and Covert Identity

As stated earlier, assistive devices, the visible activity of signing, and mouth movement were all presented by the children as visual indicators of a person’s hearing status. Hearing aids were indicated only by mainstreamed students as visual indicators and not by the residential students in this study. Use of speech and/or sign language as visual indicators of hearing status were recognized, but not exclusively, by informants from both, mainstream and residential settings. The visible act of speaking usually indicated to the informants that the person could hear and when signing was used, it usually represented a person’s deafness. Alex differed in this regard. He accepted fluent signers in his family as Deaf. Telecommunication devices for the Deaf were also recognized by both residential and mainstream students as indicators of hearing status.
The children primarily made distinctions between people who can hear and those who are deaf. There were a couple of distinctions made between Deaf and hard of hearing children. One Deaf child of Deaf parents viewed hard of hearing people as appearing different because they talk, do not sign or don't sign clearly. A hard of hearing child of hearing parents viewed Deaf children in Deaf families as not having hearing aids. One child who particularly enjoyed drawing drew a picture of a Deaf boy actually signing the word “Deaf” (figure 1).

This overt identity which is perceived as a result of visible activity or visual indicators does not necessarily represent the covert identity of the person perceived. To illustrate, Alex saw his hearing family members as Deaf because of their ability to sign. Another application of overt vs. covert identity can be seen where a deaf child may at first perceive a person as hearing because they are seen talking, but the person perceived may actually be a hard of hearing child of Deaf parents and identify themselves as culturally Deaf.

Discrepancies in overt and covert identity may create an incongruence of images between the perceived and the perceiver. These incongruent images have the potential to both, delay or facilitate the achievement of harmony in relationships.

Time plays a part in the process of determining one’s overt identity, as well as their covert identity. When the visibility of hearing aids occurs prior to the action of signing, a person may at first be perceived by other deaf individuals as hard of hearing (because of the presence of hearing aids) and later accepted as Deaf, an identity that they hold for themselves, when they are seen skillfully using American Sign Language and become more familiar to the perceiver. The covert identity of people who are deaf is the actual identity that the perceived adopts for himself or herself, that which is not visible.
CHAPTER IX
IMAGES OF COMMUNICATION

This section will include the children’s reports pertaining to their communicative experiences and perceptions of communication. Observations of some of the overall communicative experiences of these interviews are also noted.

Lisa, a congenitally profoundly deaf child has hearing parents. At the time of these interviews, she was mainstreamed in a total communication program, but her parents preferred that she use oral communication at home. After the school year began, her parents informed me that they made a decision to enroll her in an oral only program.

On arriving at Lisa’s home for our first interview, we were greeted by her mother at the door. Lisa remained out of sight while her mother encouraged her to come meet us. It took one session at Lisa’s home to establish eye contact and rapport. Lisa’s mother assisted in this process and explained that Lisa was reluctant to meet new people because she was afraid she would not be able to make herself understood.

Once eye contact was established, Lisa communicated orally with me, looking to her mother frequently for assistance. The interpreter reported that she had difficulty understanding Lisa’s speech. I relied on lipreading Lisa and repeating back to her for clarification. At one point, Lisa’s mother left the room and Lisa began to use her signs with me. Lisa’s discomfort with her communication was evidenced by the placement of her signs close to her lap, below table level. Conventionally,
signing is positioned near one's chest forming a comfortable line of sight for the viewer. Lisa's responses were briefer than the other children's and her interviews generated less verbal information.

Lisa's behavior and communication inhibitions stand out from the other children. Although Lisa was the most oral child in the sample, this description of her specific contextual reality does not imply a generalization to other oral deaf children. Further research on a larger sample of oral deaf children should be conducted.

I: What do you like about school?
L: Math (signs under the table).
I: Really? You like math?
L: Learn something (signs under the table).
I: Learning something? What else do you like?
L: Art. (spoken) Art. (fingerspelled under the table)
I: You like art? Are you good at art?
L: And music.
I: You like music?
L: Like that. I have music and art and gym.
I: Are those your three favorites?
L: Two. Art and gym.
I: ... And you said that you like music class too, right?
L: Tired.
I: You're tired? It makes you tired music? (L nods) Why?
L: Makes me so tired.
I: It makes you so tired? Why does music make you tired?
I: Because sing, sing, sing, sing.

L: And do you sing? What kind of things do you sing?

L: I don’t know.

I: Do you know the names of the songs?

L: Maybe in fourth grade I’ll do the recorder. I don’t know.... some people like music, I don’t.

Labels

As was true for most of the other children, Lisa did not always seem to have labels for things we were discussing. The example about hearing ear dogs shows how confusing some English labels can be for a deaf child:

I: Is your dog a hearing dog?

L: No.

I: No? Do you know about hearing dogs?

L: My dog’s not deaf.

I: Okay, you know, you see sometimes when you see blind people and they have a dog, and it helps them across the street? Have you seen that before? Well, deaf people have dogs, too, that you can train. And the dog will tell you when somebody’s at the door, or they will tell you when the phone rings, or they will tell you when the alarm clock is ringing in the morning. They will tell you if the fire alarm is ringing. Did you know that?

L: My mom and I throw the frisbee and my dog will jump and catch it.

I: That sounds like fun. But your dog’s not a hearing dog? A trained hearing dog to help you know if somebody’s at the door?

L: My dog always barks and barks and barks I don’t know when.
I: You don't know what?

L: When ___ growing and growing up.

Another example of vocabulary or labeling difficulty that Lisa had appears in this passage about her use of an interpreter in school.

L: The teacher always talks.... She’s hearing. Teacher.

I: And doesn’t sign?

L: All the people from other classes, they help people, the hearing teachers. Tell the teacher what the hearing people said, so they know.

I: Who are the other people? The boys and girls?

L: And other adults to class sign. They tell me what she said.

I: An interpreter? (Lisa nods) Like Jean? (Lisa nods) I see.

Pat may or may not have known that there was a name for hearing dogs. Perhaps the name just didn’t come up as he described how his dog assists him. Whatever the case may be, Pat’s description of his dog’s actions is typical of the manner in which the residential children described things:

P: He listens and he hears things. And he knows, when he hears a sound he goes running over and looks. And we know that he’s heard something. And barks. Pat imitates barking). And then we go and see what’s going on.

Pat was ten years old at the time of this interview. He apparently is learning in school about the sounds that animals make. While he is questioning me, he gives a description of the action of a horse neighing.

P: (Picking up the papers of his drawings) Umm, um, um, (points at paper). There’s a horse. Um, you know, what do horses say? They make a noise. Horses, horses, what noise do they make? They do something with their lips. They put their lips together like this. (imitates)
Alex did not always have labels for the things that he wanted to communicate such as names of games he plays with friends and activities he participates in. Instead, he described the actions involved:

A: Um, they play basketball and they play "It" and, um, I forget the name of the other game. Um, where you throw something up and you run and then you've gotta stop and um, there's like three people and uh, they, th... it's like... You have to freeze and then if they, they touch you and you move... It's a game.

I: Ok.

A: And, um, there's this one that you... the other person would have to take a, a turn, you know, there's this thing that you roll, and if, if it goes... that you throw and it goes and it comes...

I: And it comes back to you?

A: Yeah. Yeah. Um, and I got hit with one of those once, really hard. This thing's really hard, you know. Somebody threw it and it hit me.

In the following example, when Alex was asked to imagine an audience of hearing children and asked what he thought he should tell them about deaf children he applied a real life experience. He told of how a group of deaf children from his school performed Christmas Carols at a local Mall. Although he did not imagine a story, which was what I was trying to help him do, his real life story about this experience gave me information about how he is aware that hearing children can be shown the capabilities of deaf children creatively through artistic performances.

I: ... If you had an audience of hearing people, hearing children, watching this TV, and you had to give them information, tell them a story about how different deaf children feel...

A: Have a deaf person, a deaf person can stand up there (on a platform) and sign, they can sign for the TV. Hearing people can talk and deaf people can sign.

I: You mean there would be an interpreter there?
A: Like my mom, my mom’s an interpreter.

I: Your mom’s an interpreter, okay. Well if there was an audience of hearing people, and you were on TV, and the camera was on you, when you wanted to tell those boys and girls some information or a story about deaf children, what would you teach them?

A: But, but, but, you know before, um, they taught me with, with um, my friend (name sign), we went and we, and we, and we taught (name sign), and I, and, let’s see, when... with, um, let’s see... I can’t remember the name of the store. Um... um, it was, like, at the mall, at the mall, it was Christmas...

I: You did signing? Signing songs? (I had contextual information about this.)

A: Uh-huh, yeah. And we had, um, it was, it was at Christmas, it was an “I love Christmas” song.

I: Oh, and there was an audience of hearing people there? Oh, and they all looked at you, and they learned something about deaf children, right?

A: Uh-huh.

I: Okay. Well, if it was the same thing again, um, not a song, though, not a song, but if you were telling a story about deaf children, could you do that?

A: Christmas. Mmm, like that.

I: Is there any more? Can you tell me anymore?

A: ... I, I, just a Christmas, and, um, Santa Claus went to visit, and they had, um, things that he gave out, and, um, some cards, you know, with, um the reindeer and stuff, you know, these li... these little, um, badges.

I: If remember, um, what I just told you about writing a book about deaf children, that I’m going to write a book? If you were writing that book, what would you write?

A: Uh, about the mall and Santa Claus?

I: No, no. Not about the mall and Santa Claus. Um, this is different now. If, um, you were writing a book to teach about deaf children.
A: Oh, I know. (picks up marker and draws)
I: Go on.
A: I know (shakes head and recaps marker.) No, not th...(Alex opens marker again.) Yes... (draws) ...hmm, Pigs.
I: (looks at drawing) Oh, pigs in a house?
A: Proceeds to tell the story of the Three Little Pigs, a story which he is learning in school. (My question may not have been clear. Alex may have responded in this manner because he is learning this story in school with other deaf children. The “story about deaf children” did not seem to have meaning for Alex.)

**Family Communication**

Several of the children reported that their mothers and siblings help them to communicate or interpret for them. Although Pat did not present this in his interviews, his mother wrote on the participant information questionnaire, “Pat, if I’m around will ask me to interpret to even other deaf people, he’s so used to me being his primary source of communication.”

Lisa also said that her mom helps interpret at church, and her comfort with having her mom present while she was meeting me and establishing a communicative relationship with me was evident from the previous illustrations.

I: When you go to church on Sunday with your family, does someone help you to follow and understand what they’re saying?
M: My mom.

Danny had the following to say about his family communication:

I: ... What would happen if that boy was playing with hearing people? What would he do?
D: Well, his sister, who’s hearing, would interpret. Just like my sister. She’s hearing and she signs. And she could interpret if there are girls or boys that are hearing.
He might say, "What are they saying, what are they saying?" And if they wanted to play tag or something like that, then his sister would interpret and the brother would be fine. 'Cause somebody would interpret... my sister does that... My mom is really good. She's really a good signer. She's hearing, but she's a really good signer. My father knows some signs, but he's not real fluent. My mother's very fluent....

I: And when you visit your grandparents, how do you communicate with them?

D: Umm, I don't know.

I: Can they... are they hearing?

D: Yeah, they're hearing. My grandfather signs some, he can sign some. He can sign some. Something you know. Some of it gets kind of confused. My grandmother's good. Grandmother's good, but she doesn't know some of the signs. My grandfather doesn't either, he doesn't know some of the signs.

I: And what do the three of you talk about?

D: Oh, nothing. Not really. I don't know what we talk about.

Danny perceives his mother as making a strong effort to communicate with him as can be seen from this story:

I: ... Now if the baby were deaf and the parents were hearing...

D: The mom would start learning and learning and learning and learning and learning so, real quickly so that she could sign. Like, that's what my mom told me, like my mom was hearing and she found out her baby was deaf, she immediately went and started learning and learned and learned real fast so that she would sign... And, because as soon as they found, as soon as the baby's deaf, mom's always got to be learning and learning and learning and learning. They have to sign.

I: Okay, And what would the father do?

D: Well, mom didn't tell me. I don't know.

I: Does father sign?
D: Umm hmm, Yeah, he's good. But my mom is really an ace, and my sister's pretty good. She's good. Dad, Dad's good. Dad's skilled. But my mom's the best. She's the best signer.

Angie also reported that her mother helps her in the company of hearing people if she is having difficulty. In addition, she had the following to say about communication:

I: Your hearing friends, if they don't sign, what do you do?
A: My mom can help if I sign and they don't understand.

I: When you're home with hearing children, if they don't know any signs, how do you feel?
A: Ask to write, speech, hearing people... hearing people talk, and kids understand, and you have to ask. I ask them to play, the kids, the hearing kids and then we can go.

I: And when they talk to you, can you talk, what do you do when they talk to you?
A: We just play.

A: ... I practice speech. I practice a lot. It's hard. And I have to keep practicing all the time.

A: ... Deaf at school, and they help. They can't hear. And you didn't know what to do, the children's names and stuff. And he's really tired.

I: Are you tired?
A: No. This person's parents... 'Cause the name, name, name... it's hard to get the names, cause you don't speak, it's better to talk.

I: Oh, so you practice talking? Is it hard for parents to help children talk? (Angie nods)

As could be seen from Alex's passages in attachment and domesticated others, he associated communication skills of the people in his family with their
hearing status. More specifically, because each of his family members can sign, he considered them deaf. He considered his grandparents hearing because “they don’t know sign”, or rather “They know a little bit”. He called upon his mother’s help if he had difficulty communicating with his grandparents.

I: Are your grandparents deaf or hearing?
A: They’re hearing. They don’t know sign.
I: They don’t?
A: Oh they know some. They know a little bit.
I: And this deaf boy, how would he communicate with his grandparents?
A: They’d write...Yeah, or, or, um, I’d ask my parents to help and to tell them what, what I said. Both those things. Um, um, sometimes I need my mom’s help, um, if I can’t write it.

Alex also appears to consider hearing people who sign perhaps more understanding of people who are deaf:

I: (In discussing the family of the deaf boy in his story) So the sister is hearing, and, um, when they look at him, at the deaf child, (referring to the family) what do they think?
A: Well they know sign.

Mary’s advanced language comprehension and expressive skills may be due to the fact that her parents and family members and much of her extended family is Deaf. This reality provided for extensive access to information communicated in the family since they shared a common native language (ASL). Her communication throughout the two interviews was largely not focused on deafness issues unless I brought her to that focus. In addition, her stories revealed her higher level of involvement in and understanding of family communication.

I: Well, just tell me a story about yourself.
M: I can't remember, when I was little. I can't remember.... My mom and dad talk about it, when I was little.

I: Does mom tell you stories about when you were little?

M: That's what mom tells me, that when I was little I was really stubborn and wouldn't listen to my mom.

I: Really?

M: And I would take off and run away. I would be bad mouth to my mother.

I: Oh, okay, but you don't remember that?

M: But, my mother's told me, and now I remember.

I: Oh, so tell me about your family.

M: Well, a long time ago my sister... (Refer to chapter V)

From here, Mary proceeded to tell me the stories quoted in chapter V about her sister's birth and near death, and the excitement about riding the school bus. In addition, Mary revealed the extent of information she obtains from her family communication through this passage which reflects her understanding of her parent's divorce:

M: My mom and dad are divorced.

I: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

M: But every week, I take turns to go to my dad's or my mom's.

I: So you can visit both, your mom and dad.... Is that hard for you and the children in your family?

M: Well, it is. But we can have vacations and we can go and visit.

I: You have a very good attitude. Are you sad about that?

I: Do you know other girls and boys whose parents are divorced?

M: Oh yes. My friend Katherine has a stepmother and stepfather. Her mother and her father were divorced and so she's got stepparents. Her father has a wife, and her mother has a husband. And so they're both remarried and so she has stepparents.

I: So your friends know how you feel, right? Because they've been through something similar.

M: And I wish my parents were still married, that they'd never divorced.

I: Yeah, it's sad for everyone.

M: My mom and dad were fighting and arguing all the time. My mom had some good rules, but my dad had some different rules. So we'd go and ask and one would say no. We'd ask mom and mom would say no, then we'd go and ask Dad and Dad would say yes. And Mom would say no and Dad would say yes. So it was a problem with the rules because one would say no and the other would say yes. And they just had different expectations....

Joe, who has hearing parents and hearing siblings appears to have much less information about his family members than Mary showed with her deaf family. In this excerpt of an interview with Joe he talks about his family.

I: How old is your brother?

J: 16.


J: Yeah, one of my sisters and then two of my other sisters are in Cincinnati.

I: Oh, so there are four, you and your brother and three sisters so that's five children.

J: Yeah.

I: Five children. And how old are your sisters?
J: My little sister is named, um, I don’t remember how to spell it. (voices) Joelle. And she’s five years old. And she’s here, and then there’s Janay, and she’s 13 years old, and my other sister in Cincinnati whose name is Betty, and she’s um, I can’t remember how old, um, 17.

I: 17? Why does your sister live in Cincinnati?

J: Because my parents are divorced.

I: Oh, I see. How old were you when your parents got divorced?

J: 3 or 2. I don’t remember.

I: Oh, so you were little. Do you know why your parents got divorced?

J: No.

I: ... (later) do your brother and sisters sign?

J: Only my sister. My brother doesn’t. He just talks to me.

I: ... So how does your family communicate with you?

J: They talk.

I: And everybody talks with you? No one signs?

J: Well, my sister signs a little bit. Sometimes my mom.

I: And how much do you understand?

J: A lot.

I: You understand a lot?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you lip-read?

J: Mmm hmm.

I: And when you have dinner with your family, do they talk to you? And do you lip-read and get what they’re saying? Do you know what they’re talking about?

J: Yeah.
I: Okay. And what about playing with your friends? Do you have friends around here?
J: Mmm hmm.
I: How do you understand them?
J: Well, because I'll tell them, if I don't understand them I'll tell them, “will you move your mouth so I can understand you clearly.” And they'll say “okay” and then they'll say it so that I understand. Um, my friend over there, Matt, talks real fast and sometimes I don't understand.
I: ...And when you get together with your cousins, how do you communicate?
J: Um, we talk and I read lips. You have to go slow, make it clear.
I: So they help you understand, okay. And do you ever get frustrated?
J: With my Uncle Jim.... because he talks real fast. And my Uncle Jim talks too fast... I tell him to slow down, and he'll say, “Okay.” (said in a deep voice) but then he talks fast again... some kids read lips, or hear some, or watch signs.

Behavioral Cues of Communicative Inhibitions

There was some evidence among some of the children that they were at times inhibited in their communication. As could be seen in chapter VI in the discussion of alienation and disparate others, Mary displayed an indirect communication style in our second interview, which I interpreted as her way of testing for herself where to place me in the context of domesticated or disparate others. Rather than opting to ask me directly about how much I hear, and when I became deaf, etc., she in-directly tested my hearing by placing papers over her face and talking to me without signs.

The extensive non-verbal behavior that Lisa displayed when we arrived at her home for her first interview suggested that she also had difficulty communicating
directly. In addition to her initial hiding and avoidance of eye contact, Lisa's often inaccurate signing, placement of her signs at lap level, beginning to sign when mom left the room and ceasing when she returned all indicated Lisa's communicative inhibitions. The effect of her parent's preferences for her communication was reflected in her behavior.

An example of Alex's communicative inhibitions were also expressed indirectly. This example, which was also noted in chapter VI, pertained to his signing behind my back. Some researchers or clinicians may be tempted to label the behaviors that Mary and Alex displayed as passive-aggressive. However, given the ages of the children and a lack of additional information on the context from which these behaviors could stem (i.e., the presence of emotional disorder), my inclination is to attribute these behaviors more to an age appropriate unawareness of proper emotional expression or conversational skills.

**Reflections on Images of Communication**

It can be seen from the passages in this chapter that the children often didn't have labels for objects or events they wished to discuss, but they were able to describe them. The better their expressive language skills, the better able they were to describe these events based on visual representations.

It was also clear from the stories presented that mothers and sisters often serve as interpreters for the kids in social situations. A few of the children perceived their hearing parents as making a strong effort to communicate with them. Each of the children reporting on this level of parental effort had parents with good to excellent signing skills.

It was also clear from the stories of four of the children that hearing people who sign were viewed as more understanding of people who are deaf (domesticated
others) than non-signing hearing people. One child associated communication skills and not actual hearing status with perceived hearing status or overt identity.

The amount of information that the children demonstrated they shared about their lifeworlds and themselves varied on a continuum from a Deaf child of Deaf parents with a lot of rich information to the most oral children sharing the least information about themselves. The Deaf child of Deaf parents and the Deaf children who attended a residential school had more information than the oral mainstreamed children of hearing parents. The amount of information that the children had about themselves and their lifeworlds appeared in this study to be based on 1) the solidness of their communication foundation at home and school and 2) the presence or absence of the disability of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
CHAPTER X
PATHWAYS

Introduction

As the children's stories unfolded, they revealed images of themselves, images of others, and images of communication. Affectually, there were both, pleasant and unpleasant experiences, representing attachment and alienation, as well as strong positive perceptions of self for some children and issues of self doubt and shame for others.

Emerging from these stories were indicators of the paths the children and their families chose for dealing with and preventing unpleasant experiences and for creating positive ones. This chapter focuses on those pathways.

The paths taken for coping with or preventing unpleasant experiences and for creating positive ones included: use of auxiliary aids and devices; helping relationships with peers, family members or professionals in their lives (relational); recreational activities (recreational); acculturation; self direction; learning and using sign language; isolation of self from others; visualization; adoption of heroes; and writing to facilitate communication. Below are some excerpts from the interviews which illustrate these pathways.
Lisa

Auxiliary aids

Hearing dogs

As could be seen from the section on labels in images of communication, Lisa has a dog. Her family got the dog wanting to have it trained as a hearing ear dog, but were unable to get the training. Thus, the dog was for coping purposes, a project the whole family was going to participate in. Even though Lisa did not seem to have a label for the function the dog would serve, she does, indirectly, indicate that she recognizes when the dog's behavior is communicating that someone is near:

I: Is your dog, does your dog tell you when somebody's at the door?
L: I don't know.
I: Is your dog a hearing dog?
L: No.
I: No? Do you know what about hearing dogs?
L: My dog's not deaf.
I: Okay, you know, sometimes when you see blind people and they have a dog, and it helps them across the street? Have you seen that before? Well deaf people have dogs, too, that you can train, and the dog will tell you when somebody's at the door, or they will tell you the phone rings, or they will tell you when the alarm clock is ringing in the morning. They will tell you if the fire alarm is ringing. Did you know that?
L: ... Mine just barks and barks and lunges and scratches if people come near if somebody comes in the house, my dog pulls and she scratches.... She wags her tail very hard when she sees people.

TTY's

Lisa also recognizes that there are teletypewriter devices for deaf people.

When we spoke about a TTY that appeared in one of the magazine pictures we were
discussing, Lisa did not indicate that she had knew the label for a “TTY” and instead called it “typing” the visible action of TTY users. In this same discussion, Lisa indicated that even though she has seen TTY’s before, she doesn’t use one, she talks on the phone and the teacher explains what is being said (oral telephone communication). She recognizes the typing as an alternative form of communication between deaf and hearing people:

L:  (describing what she sees in the picture) Maybe her family, her grandmother or someone tells her what they said in typing.

I:  What’s that called?

L:  Typing.

I:  Do you know what this is?

L:  I don’t know.

I:  It’s called a TTY. A TTY.

L:  TTY?

I:  Have you seen one of those before?

L:  At (name of oral school she visited).

I:  They have them there? Did you use one? (shakes head) You’ve never used one before?

L:  I don’t use one, talking, talking (imitates holding phone and talking)... other teachers tell me what they say... on the phone, other teachers. What my family says, two telephones side by side... she says what my mom says. What my family and my mom. Just talk (no signs).

Hearing aids

Lisa gave several indications that hearing aids are important assistive devices used by children who are deaf. Lisa herself wears hearing aids, and as we reviewed the various magazine cutouts she pointed out the presence or absence of hearing aids as indicators that the people in the pictures were deaf or hearing (see overt identity).
Interpreters

Again, Lisa did not appear, at least in this instance, to have a name for interpreters. In our first interview, I was asking Lisa about her communication at school. She explained that:

L: All the people from other class, they help people, the hearing teachers. Tell the teacher what the hearing people said, so they know.

I: Who are the other people? The boys and girls?
L: Other adults go to class. Sign, they tell me what she said.

I: An interpreter? (Lisa nods) Like Jean here? (Lisa nods) I see. How many classes do you have an interpreter for?
L: (shrugs then voices)... about five or ten. I don’t know.

Lisa also has an interpreter for dance class.
L: Last year the interpreter interpreted what she said.

Relational

Lisa plays soccer and says her coach helps her understand at soccer what she’s supposed to do:

L: On August 31st I’ll have soccer practice.
I: How do you understand what you’re supposed to do?
L: ... My coach tells me what to do.

Like several of the other reported in Images of Communication, Lisa reported that her mother often assists with communication:

I: When you go to church on Sunday with your family, does someone help you to follow and understand what they are saying?
L: My mom.
Lisa talked about the opening of a new school year and reported there may be some new students and explained they may not know what to do at first, but reported that other students and teachers will assist them:

I: What happens in school?
L: Some people don’t know what to do...some people at school, they need to know...some other people go to a different school. They go to a different school and they don’t know what to do. They need?

I: Okay... If they don’t know what to do, who do they talk to? How do they find out?
L: Other people will help.
I: Who will help?
L: I don’t know. Some children, teachers.
I: Are those children and teachers hearing or deaf?
L: I think both.

Recreational

Lisa reported she does the following activities in her leisure time: goes on vacation, goes fishing, plays soccer, and takes dancing lessons.

Danny

Auxiliary Aids and Devices

As can be seen from the passage about the Ninja Turtles, closed captioning is an assistive device that Danny is able to obtain limited benefit from at this time, but which will increase for him as he grows older. He is also aware of TTY’s and their benefit for telephone use:

D: It’s a mom. It’s a mom, and she’s calling a friend, and she’s typing on the TTY. That means she’s deaf... And she takes the phone and puts it on the TTY and there’s an on-off switch.
She turns it on and then she sits and waits and then she starts typing. And that's her way of chatting, of talking with a friend.

**Self Directional**

In chapter IX, Danny shows self direction in coping with possible communication and attitude barriers in situations with hearing children. He describes a possible scenario where hearing children will not allow him to play with them and they tell him to "go away." In checking to see what Danny would do in that situation he went from isolating himself, to asking his mother to interpret, to creating an activity that is action oriented and does not require much communication. In a later discussion he said he could play with his sister, who signs, or by himself. He indicated an appreciation for his family members signing abilities. Danny goes on to explain that there might not be as much difficulty in communication with hearing peers as he had related in his story because there would be other people who would sign.

D: ... There would be other deaf. There would be some other deaf, some other hearing.

I: And that boy, how would he... what would he do if he wanted to feel better?

D: Ask his mom to interpret... they could all get together and, umm, if the deaf kid joined them there would be six of them. They could play "It" or something.

I: (At this point in Danny's last interview, I did some informal member checking with him, repeating back to him some of my interpretations.) ...And when I was watching your story, I learned something from you. That sometimes deaf children aren't comfortable with hearing children, right? (Danny nods) So what do you prefer? If you're not comfortable with hearing children, what do you do?

D: I stay and play with my sister, with her and play by myself. My sister's hearing, but she can sign. And, my sister's hearing, but she can sign, my sister can. And Mom too, she's
hearing, but she can sign. My mom's a really good signer. And my dad, he's hearing and he can sign.

I: Yes, that was another thing I understood from your story. That you really appreciate it if hearing people learn to sign. You really like that, right? (Danny nods.) That helps you to play and to understand better. (Danny nods) And so you like that, if hearing people learn to sign, right? (Danny nods). Your mom is a very fluent signer, you're proud about that, right? (Danny nods.) And your sister signs and interprets and you're proud of that too?

D: Mmm hmm. Yep. (Danny also reported he taught his sister to sign.)

I: Okay. Sometimes when deaf children play with hearing children, and in the story, some of the information that I learned about is that when deaf children play with hearing children, that the deaf children might feel bored sometimes and left out?

D: What do you mean?

I: Feel bored sometimes when they're playing with hearing children? They feel left out, kind of alone? Do you feel that?

D: Like, like, um, they might be kind of scared... with hearing kids in a group if they're talking and stuff. Like if they're not talking with me, if they're just talking with each other, then I feel alone and I just kind of play on my own if they're hearing. If the other boys and girls are hearing, you know, I'm just alone and playing.

Another self directional coping strategy was the self motivation that Danny shows with his school work in this story:

I: ... So tell me a story about that boy and his school that you've drawn.

D: The boy is walking along and he arrives at his school and he gets there. He hangs his coat up. He gives his bag, the boy gives his teacher and she checks and makes sure that everything's right and she says, "That's good." Then he sits down and works and works and works and works. Then when he's done with his work he plays a lot. After he plays, then he eats lunch. He has french fries and a hamburger and tomatoes. Then after that, he plays, no he goes to the library and reads. He reads a lot. And then he does some more work and then he leaves. He gets his coat and book bag and the
teacher reminds him that he’s got a paper he has to take home. He walks and walks and walks and then he gets home. He’s very tired, so he goes to sleep for a while. The boy wants to rest, so he lays down in his bed and then he sees a movie.

Relational

Danny reports that he has many deaf friends that he plays with at school. This indicates his acculturation and comfort level in a culturally deaf environment which provides needed relationships.

D: Oh, they play all the time. They play and play and play. He plays with his friends.... They might want to borrow a toy car and they’d play with the car and make it go... He brings it to school to share with his friends, with the other kids, so they can play with it... I have, I brought fake bugs before. Fake bugs, lots of them. I have, like, 70 of them. We play with them. We play with them. It’s a lot of fun.

I: ... That boy’s friends, are they deaf or are they hearing or are some...

D: Oh, they’re deaf. All of them. They’re in other hall, and sometimes there are hearing friends, but very few of them. But most of them are pure deaf.

Another relationship that is helpful to Danny is his relationship with his hearing sister who interprets for him in the company of hearing children who do not sign:

I: ... And suppose that boy would be with hearing people? What would happen if that boy was playing with hearing people? What would he do?

D: Well, his sister, who’s hearing, would interpret. Just like my sister. She’s hearing and she signs. And she could interpret if there are girls or boys that are hearing. He might say, “what are they saying, what are they saying?” And if they wanted to play tag or something like that, then his sister could interpret and the brother would be fine. ‘Cause somebody would interpret.
Use of sign language

As can be seen from the above examples, Danny values the use of sign language in his relationships with others. In this passage, Danny indicates that if parents are deaf, their hearing children would need to learn sign language:

D: Umm, he’s got a hotdog. And mom’s showing “I love you.” And the baby’s looking up like, “I love you? You know, why are you learning signs?” The mom’s like, “you need to, you need more signs.” And the baby’s kind of shy, but he’s trying to do “I love you.” And Mom’s going, “Come on, come on. Smile. Say ‘I love you.’” And the baby’s kind of smiling and going, “I love you.” And that’s the boy, and looking at, this is, this is (name sign) looking down, ‘Cause there’s a pin there. (a pacifier pinned to the baby’s shirt) And this, um, he’s hearing and she signs, and she’s deaf, and he’s hearing and signs.

I. ... If the parents are deaf, why is it important for the children to learn to sign? What’s the reason for that?

D: For um, if, um, maybe they’re shy and somebody’s talking or something, and they say, “Okay,” and they see somebody signing. And they come up and they’ll talk to each other and they become friends. So you need to learn sign.

Danny visited his grandparents over the weekend. At home, he has a church he attends where the pastor signs. However, when his family went to a different church he had to find a different way of participating in the service. He reported that his mother assisted him in that situation:

D: My mom, um, we watch and we write down. We don’t need an interpreter. My mom watches and then writes down and sometimes my sister writes things down. Because I get bored watching them talk. I get bored.

As could be seen from the self directional behaviors that Danny has adopted, he also uses his relationship with his mother and what he perceives as her fluent sign language skills to assist him in the company of hearing children when he is having difficulty communicating.

I: ... That boy, how would he... what would he do if he wanted to feel better?
D: Ask his mom to interpret.

He also stated that his father signs and he implies that he can also retreat to
his father's company for an accessible relationship.

D: And play by myself. My sister's hearing, but she can sign.
And, my sister's hearing, but she can sign, my sister can.
And mom, too. She's hearing, but she can sign. My
mom's a really good signer. And my dad, he's hearing
and he can sign.

**Recreational**

In his interviews, Danny listed the following activities he enjoys in his leisure
time: He plays "It" (tag), Nintendo, basketball, plays with toy guns and race cars,
watches TV, reads and goes shopping.

**Visualization**

Danny reported that he enjoys watching the Ninja Turtles on television.

Danny drew a picture of the Turtles and he went in to descriptive details as he told me
about them. Danny is seven and is still learning to read so closed captioned
television does not help his accessibility to children's television programs much at
this point even though he reports he has closed captioning on his television. In spite
of his not being able to read the captions or hear the audio, he had the following story
to tell me about what the Turtles do on television:

D: Oh, this is the Turtle, and he's Leo. I can't remember the rest
of his name. And the other one's Don, for short. There's
supposed to be an orange Turtle. Oh, there's orange. (draws
again) And I'll do one more. There's red and orange. There's
red and orange Turtles... (moving as if using numchucks)
That's something that he moves around in his hand and it's got
things on either end of it and it moves... There's one more.
There's one more. They're Ninja Turtles, and they beat,
uhhh... oh, I forget. But they beat some kind of monster kind of thing.

I: Monsters, huh?

D: Yeah, you know, they're real big. I can't remember the name of them.

I: Why do they want to fight with monsters?

D: Well they try and try to beat them. 'Cause they always steal things and they hurt people and people die and they beat 'em up. So the Turtles have to beat those monsters, the bad men... There's one more that's red, The red one's really neat... Umm, well, I saw them on TV.

I: Oh. Did you understand what you saw on TV? How did you understand it?

D: Well, I just copy the drawing from that.

I: When you watch TV do you understand what's happening?

D: Some.

I: How do you understand? Do you see, do you have a decoder at home?

D: ... Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

I: And so you can read what's going on?

D: Some of it. But sometimes I just watch the pictures. Then I'll look down at the words, then I'll look at the pictures again, then I'll look down.

I: Is closed captioning hard for you to understand?

D: Yeah.

I: Because you're still learning? (Danny nods) Okay, does closed captioning help you? (Danny nods) But mostly you just watch?

D: Mmm hmm.

I: You like a lot of action, hmm? I imagine that that's really active and then you can understand what they're doing.

D: They go looking for people. And they get in their karate stances. And the one holds his position like this, and the next
one’s like this, and the next one’s like this. And they search for bad people and then they fight them. But, they want to kill the bad people, but there’s two of them that are really dangerous, they’re really dangerous. They look and they look and it’s really hard to find them. And they come up out of someplace and one’s looking with his eye kind of squinted like this. They go into their position and the other one jumps and leaps down, and they fight and fight and fight with the bad people, the bad men. And they do all of these karate moves and then they go “Boom” and then they hit ‘em. And then there might be two dangerous guys, and one is the head guy and the next one’s his assistant. And they fight and they fight and they fight and they fight, and then “boom” they got ‘em. And then the other two might be hit and they might need to rest. And they would go into... Wait a minute. (draws) They jump down into their, into the manhole. In through the manhole cover. And the Turtles eat bugs and stuff. That’s what Turtles do, they eat ‘em all up... Yup, They eat bugs and things like that. Their favorite thing is pizza, though. These guys, they like pizza. That’s what they like....Well, they have, there’s this one that has clothes. They have different clothes, they have different coats and things that they can put on, and hats, when they don’t want people to see them and run away. Then they put those coats and hats on and they would go and get a pizza. But they can also go into this karate stuff and they might tell somebody “stop” and they might run away.... there’s a program that they’ll watch on TV and if they see a bad person on TV then they’ll go leaping up from the underground and then they fight and then they go back down underground. And they go to bed.

Heroes

Like other children, Danny has his heroes. This can be seen from his description of the Ninja Turtles above.

Acculturation

It is easy to see from the above passages and others from Danny’s interviews that he is comfortable in the company of his deaf friends and domesticated others. This is a reflection of his acculturation in Deaf culture.
Angie

Auxiliary Aids and Devices

Angie has closed captioned television at home:

A: And it's hard. Sometimes I watch TV and I get kind of tired.

I: Uh-huh. TV makes you tired. Do you have closed captions on your TV? You have that?

A: Right there, that one doesn't have it (indicating second television set).

Angie also foresees the TTY as a device that will connect her to others:

A: I have some friends at church who will get a TTY... so that I can understand. 'Cause I can't understand what's going on. If mom's not here. So if something happened, I need to have a TTY.

In addition, she sees hearing aids, flashing alarm clocks and baby cry lights as assistive:

A: When you're born, if you can't hear, when you grow up, you can be separate deaf... You go to a hearing aid doctor, and then you're fine... But they can't hear anything. And they can't hear, and you say, "My name is Angie," but they couldn't hear. But a hearing aid, it can help you with talking...

I: ... If your baby was born deaf... how would you feel?

A: I'd feel fine, maybe confused if the baby couldn't hear know a flashing alarm clock? I have one to wake me up, but I wake up, but the I spell and then the light flashes. And that way you can know if the baby cries, if my son was crying, at night. And I would say, "Stop," to his brothers and sisters, if it was kind of scary...

Self Directional

Angie also takes the initiative to break down some of the barriers she faces in a peer group of hearing children:

I: When you're home with hearing children, if they don't know any signs, how do you feel?
A: Ask to write, speech, hearing people... hearing people talk, and kids understand, and you have to ask... I ask them to play, the kids, the hearing kids, and then we can go.

Relational

A: I have a friend in church who's an interpreter, but I don't understand so Mom interprets for me... (with hearing friends) my mom can help if I sign and they don't understand.

Recreational

Angie reported the following leisure activities: bike riding, going places with her parents in the car, swimming, and playing basketball.

Alex

Self Directional

Alex appears to think his deafness is not a barrier to playing with hearing children. When asked that he thought hearing children thought of deaf children he responded with a report on his behavior in their presence:

A: You just kind of shrug and go “I don’t know. I’m deaf.” You could write, “I’m deaf.” And then they would understand. Then they’d understand, they’d say, “Oh, excuse me.” And then you could write things and read things and write things.

I: Well, that’s good. And, um, deaf children, if there’s a group of deaf children, and they see a group of hearing children, what do they think of the... What do the deaf children think of the hearing children?

A: Well, they’d know they’re hearing, and they could, they could write to each other, they could write.

Alex suggests also that he would use writing as a tool for communicating with his grandparents who are not proficient signers:

I: Are your grandparents deaf or hearing?
A: They’re hearing. They don’t know sign... they’d write... or, or, um, I’d ask my parents to help and to tell them what, what I said. Both of those things. Uh, um sometimes I need my mom’s help, um, if I can’t write it.

Alex explained that he teaches hearing children in his neighborhood how to sign when he is home.

There’s some friends near my house... There’s Bill and Ann and Christopher and Michael (name signs), and um, I can’t remember... a red haired kid. I can’t remember their names. They’re all hearing. They’re hearing. But some of them know how to sign... I taught them.

Relational

The use of sign language is an important value for Alex. As noted in earlier passages (images of communication) he appears very comfortable with the signing skills of his family members and his ability to rely on them (particularly his mother and sister) for assistance. As noted above, Alex would ask his mother to assist him in communicating with his grandparents.

Recreational

Alex reports the following leisure activities throughout his interviews: he runs and plays “It” with friends, basketball, boomerang, swimming, Nintendo, catches bugs and bats outside.

Heroes

Alex mentioned the Power Rangers as superheroes which he pays attention to. He also related stories about the Three Little Pigs, and One Hundred and One Dalmatians, which he apparently was reading in school. Each of these stories presents a conflict that the characters must solve.
Acculturation

As can be seen from the passages in this study, Alex appreciates his relationships with domesticated others, he stays close to them, and turns to them when other relationships are not accessible. His view of his immediate family members as domesticated others is attributable to the fact that their signing skills allow them access to Deaf culture.

Mary

Auxiliary Aids and Devices

Mary uses closed captioned television at home;

M: From five to five thirty, I watch the Power Rangers. Do you know who the Power Rangers are?
I: Uh-huh.
M: And from five thirty until seven, sometimes six thirty or seven it’s “By the Bell”... Have you seen it?
I: Mmm hmmm. It’s closed captioned, right?
M: Yeah, Sometimes they have captions and sometimes they don’t. ‘Cause the TV man sometimes switches them off or on. Boy, I don't like that. I want them to just leave them on.... You know. The man who works for the TV, closed captioning. It’s off and on and off and on. And I get really tired of that. I tell them just leave it on. Just leave it on. I want everything captioned. But sometimes I can’t have that.

Mary also uses interpreters in the classroom:

M: Um, second grade was a hearing teacher. She knew a little bit of signs I taught her. First grade, yes, that teacher was for deaf kids and could sign. Deaf and hard of hearing.
I: So second grade was a hearing teacher who didn’t know any signs?
M: Just, I taught her some.
I: How did you understand her?

M: We had an interpreter.

In addition, Mary has a TTY at home that she sometimes uses:

I: Do you have a TTY at home?

M: Yes.

I: Do you use it?

M: Yes. It's hard, it's a lot of work... it's about this big. My grandmother has one of those big old funny ones she types on.

**Self Directional**

Mary projects a strong positive attitude regarding her integration with hearing children in school. Although Mary has Deaf parents, she is mainstreamed at school.

I: And if you go into a deaf class and then you go into a hearing class...

M: Yeah, you just switch.

I: ... Do you feel different?

M: No. You just go into one or the other. They're both comfortable. 'Cause I have friends in both. I have a lot of friends.

I: ... Sounds like our hearing friends really accept deaf students.

M: Mmm hmm. They want to learn sign. And so I say okay and I teach them.

I: You teach them yourself?

M: Yeah, sometimes I teach my friends. Or deaf friends. Then the deaf friends teach the hearing friends.

Another reflection of Mary's attitude is revealed in this passage about possibly being the only deaf child in some of her classes.
M: And in second grade, my friend and I, we were the only two deaf people in a hearing class.

I: ... You don’t have that anymore?

M: Well, I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe I’ll be the only one, but that’s fine.

Relational

Mary shared that her parents were divorced. She stated that she had friends at school whose families had the same experience. With Mary’s signing and her excellent communication skills and her involvement with other deaf children, she was able to understand that she was not alone with this situation, that other children also had experienced what she did.

M: ... My mom and dad are divorced... but, every week I take turns to go to my dad’s or mom’s...

I: ... Do you know other boys and girls whose parents are divorced?

M: Oh yes. My friend (name) has a stepmother and stepfather. Her mother and her father were divorced and so she’s got stepparents. Her father has a wife, and her mother has a, a husband. And so they’re both remarried and so she has stepparents.

Recreational

Mary reported the following activities that she enjoys in her leisure time, she plays with her kitten, goes to the fair with her family, watches closed captioned television, and plays with her cousins.
Heroes

Mary’s ability to read the captions on television have brought the world of super heroes to her life as well. She reported she enjoys the Power Rangers, although she did not go into detail about them or how they have affected her.

Acculturation

Mary sees learning signs and involvement with other deaf people in a positive light.

M: Well, the baby was born deaf, and that would mean he would need to go to a deaf class and would sign. And then when the child grew up they’d teach him sign. So they would learn. They would know. It’d be real easy.

Joe

Auxiliary Aids and Devices

Joe uses interpreters in school. He stated he prefers using interpreters over teachers who sign, and he hopes that for Christmas, he will get a TTY. In addition, he uses an assistive listening device called a phonic ear.

I: And if you could choose for yourself, which would you rather have? A teacher who signs or do you prefer to have an interpreter?

J: I prefer to have an interpreter.... Because there’s a hard time with the mainstream teachers.

And later:

I: And can you hear on the telephone?

J: No. But I’m going to get TDD. To type for... For Christmas.

J: ... And sometimes if I have my phonic ear or my hearing aid with me, there’s this like microphone. And you call my name in the microphone and I’ll notice it, even if I’m upstairs. You know, I can’t hear that far, but with the phonic ear you can
Joe realizes that there are some differences in the techniques that he uses for himself and with his family and the techniques that deaf families use. When talking about his friend’s deaf family:

J: ... They sign all the time. They just sign. You know, they don’t yell or anything except the dad sometimes will yell. But if they want to get their attention, they flash the lights... They flash them on and off and then that gets their attention.

I: You don’t do that here in your house?

J: No, I hear well enough.

**Self Directional**

Joe teaches other children and his hearing teachers to sign:

I: Oh so is Amanda hearing?

J: Yes. And Robin is hearing.

I: Oh. So do the two of them sign?

J: A little bit. And they’re learning from me.

J: ... Um, I like to teach the other kids sign language and I like to play games with language...

I: ... So you’re teaching a lot of people signing.

J: Not all of them, but my girlfriend, and other girls and some boys.

Joe also reports he teaches some of his hearing teachers

J: I teach them sign language.

I: Oh, I see. So you teach them signs. They didn’t know any signs before?

J: No. They never knew any signs before.

I: ... And what about friends?
If they can communicate by, if you can teach them how to sign, or they can read lips, or they might be able to hear well.

Joe indicates that he takes the initiative to tell people to slow down when they are going too fast for him to understand:

I: I see. And when you get together with your cousins, how do you communicate?

J: We talk and I read lips.

I: Uh-huh. Talk and read lips? And how does that work out?

J: You have to go slow, make it clear.

I: So they help you to understand, okay. And do you ever get frustrated?

J: With my uncle.

I: Why?

J: Because he talks real fast. And my Uncle Jim talks too fast.

I: And what do you do when he talks fast?

J: I tell him to slow down, and he'll say, “Okay,” (said in a deep voice) but then he talks fast again.

Another form of self help that Joe utilizes is when he tells his teachers and counselors when someone is bothering him:

J: ... People tease him because he’s in... he has trouble hearing... because he doesn’t hear. You know, um, he um, he doesn’t hear. He hears less.... Mmm hmmm. And then um, I ask them to stop it. But they still tease and call names and get friends in fights and stuff like that. And we tell the teacher but the teacher says just ignore it.... Yeah. And then, um, me and this other person sometimes get sick or get hurt. And sometimes people are in the hospital. And many times it happens that people are hurt or they’re in the hospital. Then you try to tell the teacher about what to do and the teacher just says, “Ignore it,” or “Stop.”... I tell my counselor and try to get some information...

Joe reports that he lip-reads and takes the initiative to tell his friends if he doesn’t understand them:
J: Well, because I’ll tell them, if I don’t understand them I’ll tell them, “Will you move your mouth so I can understand you clearly.” And they’ll say “okay” and then they’ll say it so that I understand. Um, my friend over there, Matt, talks real fast and sometimes I don’t understand.

Joe also explains he uses his home computer for recreation and learning:

J: Yeah, I have a computer downstairs.... I play friendly computer... that teaches you how to use the computer and there’s a rabbit... You have to remember the carrot and these other words in order and there’s a card that it flips over and if it’s the same...

Joe says that his friends who have a deaf family use a technique at their house for getting the attention of other deaf members that he does not use. Yet he recognizes this as a tool. He reports he uses a listening device so that his family can call him from a different room:

J: Well because if you yell they can’t hear and, um, they might throw something (at the deaf family’s home).... Yeah, something soft, not something hard. And sometimes if I have my phonic ear or my hearing aid with me, there’s this like microphone. And you call my name in the microphone and I’ll notice it, even if I’m upstairs. You know, I can’t hear that far, but with the phonic ear you can hear things even at a distance with the person who has the microphone.

**Relational**

Joe didn’t report as much success with relationships as a form of coping as many of the other students did:

J: I have a new friend named_ and there’s another person whose name starts with “_” , and there are people who will try to help us by, when people tease and other things, and they tell the teacher, but the kids don’t pay attention. They don’t pay attention.... Then you try to tell the teacher about what to do and teacher just says, “Ignore it,” or “Stop”.... I tell my counselor and try to get some information. But they just won’t, they just won’t.
Recreational

Joe reported he enjoys the following leisure activities: He plays football, soccer, tag, and baseball. With his family he plays a game called “blind race”, “soldier”. He also attends church.

Reflections on Pathways

In this chapter, the pathways that the children use to cope in their relationships with disparate others and in their communicative interactions or for daily informational needs were identified. These pathways included the use of auxiliary aids and devices, relationships, recreational activities, the use of sign language and other communication techniques, self directed activities, visualizations and the adoption of heroes.

Auxiliary aids and devices that the children reported they use include, hearing dogs, interpreters, TTY’s, flashing lights, and closed captioned television. The children reported a variety of relationships they have developed such as friendships with their deaf peers (acculturation), friendships with signing hearing children, assistance from mothers and sisters who sign, retreating to interaction with their signing family members for play and companionship.

Recreational activities which the children participate in are varied. Self directional activities which they displayed included self motivation in school work, isolating themselves from communicatively inaccessible situations, choosing to use accessible relationships (i.e., mother or sister interpreting in social situations, directing hearing groups members to more action oriented activities, teaching sign to hearing peers and teachers, asking hearing peers to write, and initiating play). Lip-reading, telling others when you don’t understand, and attending churches that have
interpreters or signing pastors were additional examples of self directed behaviors that the children employed.

For the majority of the children, learning and using sign language were seen as a valuable help in their relationships. The kids used examples of turning to and valuing signing peers and family members, and teaching kids to sign.

When labels were a problem for the children, some of them were able to turn to very detailed descriptions of what they intended to communicate (visualization). This was demonstrated by Danny’s descriptions of the Ninja Turtles, Alex’s Christmas concert, 101 Dalmatians, and The Three Pigs.

The children also adopted heroes such as the Power Rangers, and Ninja Turtles. Alternative forms of communication such as writing came in handy for Alex, Angie, and Danny.
CHAPTER XI
DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this study, I used phenomenological interviewing to enable the children to speak in their own “voices” about their lives and the perceptions they hold of the world they live in. Seven children ages seven to ten who are deaf or hard of hearing were interviewed using direct and projective (drawing and storytelling) interview techniques. I set out to discover through an inductive process what perspectives these children have of themselves, and others in their environments. The literature states the families of these children deal with issues of grief and the children are faced with adversity throughout their development. I was interested in discovering how or if the children shared in this perspective, if it was reflected in their stories or behaviors, how they dealt with it, and what if any meaning they attribute to these and other environmental influences. Primarily, I was interested in discovering what the children report their experiences to be.

In this chapter I will present the themes that emerged from this study, reflect on the interview techniques used and discuss paradigmatic relatedness of themes in the literature with themes emerging from the study.

Conclusions based on the data collected from interviews with these seven children and on the success of the interview techniques used with these children cannot be generalized to all deaf children. These conclusions are specific to the children in this study only.

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Emerging Themes

Chapters IV - X described the themes which emerged from interviews with these seven children. The findings chapters describe, what the children had to say about their experiences. The children revealed elements of their perspectives of themselves and others, their communicative interactions and their coping techniques.

Chapter IV presented an introduction to the themes that emerged from this study. Images and belief systems the children have about themselves and their relationships with others were described as Attachment and Domesticated Others (chapter V), Alienation and Disparate Others (chapter VI), Infinity (chapter VII), Overt and Covert Identity (chapter VIII), and Images of Communication (chapter IX). Pathways (chapter X) answered the question; from the child’s perspective, in what ways do they and their families cope with these life themes?

Overall, the findings which emerged out of the context of this study contradicted many of the assumptions in the literature about the self perceptions and lifeworlds of deaf and hard of hearing children. In contrast to the emphasis in the literature, these children had many positive experiences, relationships, self perceptions, expectations for themselves and healthy coping styles.

Images

Most of the children appeared to be generally happy and involved in their day to day activities and surroundings. The residential students and one mainstreamed child of deaf parents particularly gave the impression that being deaf is not a problem. The residential students’ attachment to their milieu and eagerness to return to their classroom activities, was expressed through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Other children also had pleasant experiences to share about family
outings. On the contrary, a couple of the children’s interviews were colored with adverse reactions and experiences of assorted relationships. Most of them did have some experiences that produced feelings of alienation in relationships with disparate others.

There was a sense among them that deaf and hearing children are different from each other. They told stories about difficulties they encounter. There was a continuum of comfortable and uncomfortable images and experiences with extremes on both ends, as in the cases of Mary and Joe. Affectual reports on these images and experiences are described as themes of attachment and domesticated others, alienation and disparate others, and images of communication. Affectually, the children appeared to take their deafness for granted and themes of attachment and domesticated others, infinity and pathways contradicted society’s assumption mentioned in chapter I and assumptions in the literature that deaf and hard of hearing children will not be happy, intelligent, fully functioning and contributing members of society without speech and hearing.

Differences also arose in the amounts of information that the children had about themselves and their lifeworlds. The amount of information the children shared appeared to be influenced by 1) the presence or lack of the additional disability of attention deficit disorder, and 2) a foundation of accessible language and communication skills used at home and school. Mary, a child of Deaf parents presented the most information about herself and others in her lifeworld. Two residential children with sign proficient hearing parents and no additional reported physical disabilities also had a lot of information to share (Alex and Danny). The children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and one who was mainstreamed and had an oral communication emphasis shared less information about themselves and their lifeworlds (Angie, Pat, and Lisa). While Joe has a severe hearing loss, he
considers himself hard of hearing and had the most hearing of any of the children. Joe, who had no additional disabilities, shared more information about himself than the other two mainstreamed students who were profoundly deaf, (one with ADHD and the other with a strong oral emphasis).

Images also included primarily positive outlooks into the children’s futures which were described as Infinity in chapter VII. Images of overt and covert identity which were depicted in chapter VIII describe the children’s perceptions of themselves and others in terms of visual indicators they perceive and covert identity which is often not as immediately evident.

Reflections on Attachment and Domesticated Others

Along a continuum of comfortable and uncomfortable experiences and relationships with domesticated and disparate others, themes related to both, attachment and alienation emerged. Attachment and Domesticated Others is the theme which emerged out of this study which describes the positive relational experiences that these children presented and their sense of attachment to those that they see as like themselves.

Domesticated Others. Domesticated others include those individuals that the deaf child sees as similar to oneself regardless of hearing status. A deaf child’s acceptance of a hearing person as deaf or as similar to him or herself (i.e., because of their ability to sign fluently), and the child’s acceptance of other deaf or hard of hearing children as like oneself are two examples of domesticated others. This may or may not involve a conscious awareness of the person’s actual hearing status. It is based rather on the child’s visualization and acceptance of the person. Domesticated others included classmates, deaf teachers, and other deaf children, as well as parents.
and siblings (both deaf and hearing) who communicated in the same way the children
did.

**Affectual Reports on Attachment.** Positive affectual reports that the children
presented included reports about situations where they felt a sense of attachment or
belonging. Their sense of attachment, belonging, self assurance and fulfillment
appeared greater in relationships that were communicatively accessible such as with
domesticated others.

Affectually, the children appeared primarily happy, and well adjusted even
though there was evidence of additional physical disabilities or emotional problems
for some of them. For the most part they appeared to take their deafness for granted.
There was evidence across the group that the children were comfortable in the
presence of their deaf peers. With the exception of Lisa, the children also appeared
more comfortable with hearing children who could sign than those who did not. The
children showed evidence of comfort in their school milieus among other children
like themselves.

**It’s Not What You Hear. It’s How You Say It.** Communication, not their
deafness, was at the forefront of these children’s minds when their relationships and
attachment with others were discussed. Primarily, these children did not view being
deaf as a problem (Joe presented some situational exceptions). Rather,
communication between deaf and hearing people was seen as a challenge that both
parties needed to address. This is evidenced by the data in the stories presented in
the chapter on attachment and domesticated others as well as in chapters VI,
alienation and disparate others and in chapter IX, images of communication.
Parental Acceptance. The children presented primarily positive images of their parents' approval of and regard for them with evidence from some of the children that hearing parents would need to adjust to their deafness and would worry about them. This finding contradicts the assumption made in the literature regarding the negative influence of parental grief on the child.

Reflections on Alienation and Disparate Others

Contrary to the feelings of attachment and the relationships and perspectives on domesticated others that the children reported in chapter V, chapter VI focused on their relationships with disparate others and feelings of alienation.

Disparate Others. Disparate others are those individuals that the child sees as different from himself or herself regardless of hearing status. Disparate others may or may not involve a conscious awareness of the hearing status of the person, and may or may not necessarily imply a prejudiced or ethnocentric view. Three examples of disparate others which arose from this study are, 1) a child whose family was Deaf reported that people who are hard of hearing were different from her, 2) a hard of hearing child whose family was hearing reported viewing a classmate whose family was Deaf as different from him and, 3) the children gave several examples of their views of hearing children as different from themselves. As noted in the section on domesticated others, these differences were based on the children’s perceptions of how these various groups communicate, not on the presence or lack of hearing ability. This was evidenced in the data collected by their frequent references to methods of and adaptations to communication.

For most of the children, the differences they saw between themselves and others appeared to be just a taken for granted fact of life, reflective of the cultural
metatheory discussed by Paul and Jackson (1993). The children also presented evidence of, and struggles with, the influences of the clinical metatheories of others in their ecosystems (i.e., parents and peers).

**Affectual Reports on Alienation.** The children's affectual reports indicated that they experienced a sense of boredom in communicatively inaccessible situations, and that they possess an awareness of potential rejection by hearing peers. Shyness, sadness, anger, embarrassment, nervousness, hesitancy and uncertainty are feelings that the children reported they experience in the presence of hearing disparate others. Feelings of discomfort with teasing and discomfort in the company of hearing children who do not sign were also described. In addition, frustration in communicatively inaccessible situations was discussed.

It's important to keep in mind that while feelings of alienation do occur for these children, other chapters in this study indicate that positive affectual experiences, feelings of attachment, relationships with domesticated others, a positive outlook on their futures and healthy coping mechanisms also exist for them. Thus, the information noted here should be seen as only one element of the children's perspectives and viewed as a part of the whole.

**Reflections on Infinity**

The children revealed images of their futures through what this study refers to as future stories. These future stories are presented in Chapter VII as infinity. Infinity includes images of their anticipated vocations, their children, spouses, education and hearing status as adults.

Contrary to popular belief, the future stories which the children told depicted a decidedly self-assured outlook. The children take it for granted that they are going
to grow up to become contributing members of society, living independently, continuing their education, working, and having families. The stories centered mainly around vocational and parenting issues. Educational aspirations were also revealed with a couple of the children anticipating college. One child anticipated a change in hearing status.

**Vocations.** Vocationally, all but one of the children anticipated having work. Only one child suggested that deafness may limit career choices. Their ideas about their careers varied and included being a policeman, a fireman, a teacher or helper, taking care of animals, being a doctor, playing football, working in a grocery store, being an artist or actor. One boy explained that deaf women can hold a variety of jobs.

The child who did not mention a career was a female oral student whose hearing mother stays home and she probably has not had female adult role models who are deaf. The fact that she did not mention work does not mean that she does not foresee a career for herself. The absence of this in her stories could have been due to her communication difficulties and the general brevity of her responses.

It should be noted that four of these seven children have adult Deaf role models that they see on a regular basis (professionals at their school, and parents). Three of the children (all mainstreamed) did not have this level of exposure.

**Hearing Status.** The stories imply that the children primarily see their hearing status as unchanged in their adulthood. One child indicated that a deaf child’s hearing may improve, or he could develop an additional disability as he got older.
Independent Living. Living arrangements separate from their parents were implicitly anticipated. Marriage was mentioned by some of them as a possibility and one child of Deaf parents who was able to explain the reason for her parent's divorce, saw divorce as a possibility for deaf adults.

Parenting. The children mentioned the prospect of having either deaf or hearing offspring and some stated a preference that their children be deaf. A baby cry signaler was mentioned by one child as an aid for her in the future. Other children mentioned teaching their offspring to sign.

Reflections on Overt and Covert Identity

Overt identity, a theme presented in chapter VIII, relates to the overt or visible indicators of one's hearing status and the covert or actual internal identity that the perceived holds. In their drawings and stories about pictures they were presented, the children indicated visible auxiliary aids, and the act of signing or mouth movement as clues to a person's hearing status.

Hearing aids were indicated only by mainstreamed students as visual indicators and not by the residential students in this study. Use of speech and/or sign language as visual indicators of hearing status were recognized, but not exclusively, by informants from both, mainstream and residential settings. The visible act of speaking usually indicated to the informants that the person could hear and when signing was used, it usually represented a person's deafness. Alex accepted fluent hearing signers in his family as Deaf. Telecommunication devices for the Deaf were also recognized by both residential and mainstream students as indicators of hearing status.
While viewing pictures presented to them, the children primarily made distinctions between people who can hear and those who are deaf. There were a couple of distinctions made between Deaf and hard of hearing children. One Deaf child of Deaf parents viewed hard of hearing people as appearing different because they talk, do not sign or don’t sign clearly. A hard of hearing child of hearing parents viewed Deaf children in Deaf families as not having hearing aids. One child who particularly enjoyed drawing drew a picture of a Deaf boy actually signing the word “Deaf” (figure 1).

This overt identity which is perceived as a result of visible activity or visual indicators does not necessarily represent the covert identity of the person perceived. To illustrate, Alex saw his hearing family members as Deaf because of their ability to sign. Another illustration of overt and covert identity can be seen where a deaf child may at first perceive a person as hearing because they are seen talking, but the person perceived considers himself or herself to be deaf.

Discrepancies in overt and covert identity may create an incongruence of images between the perceived and the perceiver. These incongruent images have the potential to both, delay or facilitate the achievement of harmony in relationships.

Time plays a part in the process of determining one’s overt identity, as well as their covert identity. For example, hearing aids may be perceived prior to the act of signing. When this occurs, a person may at first be perceived as hard of hearing and later accepted as Deaf, an identity that they hold for themselves, after they are seen skillfully using American Sign Language. The covert identity of people who are deaf is the actual identity that the perceived adopts for himself or herself, that which is not visible.
Reflections on Images of Communication

It can be seen from the passages in chapter IX that the children often didn't have labels for objects or events, they wished to discuss, but they were able to describe them. The better their expressive language skills, the better able they were to describe these events and objects based on visual representations they perceived.

It was also clear from the stories presented that female family members (i.e., mothers and sisters) often serve as interpreters for the kids in social situations. A few of the children perceived their hearing parents as making a strong effort to communicate with them. Each of the children reporting on this level of parental effort had parents with good to excellent signing skills.

It could be seen from the stories of four of the children that hearing people who sign were viewed as more understanding of people who are deaf than non-signing hearing people. One child associated communication skills and not actual hearing status with perceived hearing status or overt identity.

The amount of information that the children demonstrated they had about their lifeworlds and themselves varied in the context of this study on a continuum from a Deaf child of Deaf parents presenting a lot of rich information to the most oral children presenting the least information about themselves. Amounts of information forthcoming from the children in this study appeared to be based on 1) the solidness of the communication foundation at home and school and 2) the presence or absence of an additional disability of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Pathways

Pathways are the avenues these children and their families take to steer through a system of communication, attitudinal, interpersonal and ecological influences. Pathways are used to cope in relationships with disparate others and in
their communicative interactions or for daily informational needs. Pathways identified included the use of auxiliary aids and devices, relationships, recreational activities, the use of sign language and other communication techniques, self directed activities, visualizations and the adoption of heroes.

**Auxiliary Aids and Devices**

Auxiliary aids and devices that the children reported they use include, hearing dogs, interpreters, TTY's, flashing lights, and closed captioned television.

**Recreational**

Recreational and leisure activities were mentioned by all of the children in their stories. Recreational activities which the children participate in were varied.

**Relational**

The children reported a variety of relationships they have developed. Relationships included friendships with their deaf peers (acculturation), friendships with signing hearing children, assistance from female family members (mothers and sisters) who sign, and retreating to interaction with their signing family members for play and companionship.

**Self Direction**

Self directional activities which the children displayed included self motivation in school work, isolating themselves from communicatively inaccessible situations, choosing to use accessible relationships (i.e., mother or sister interpreting in social situations). The children also sometimes directed hearing group members to more action oriented activities, taught sign to hearing peers and teachers, asked
hearing peers to write, and initiated play themselves instead of waiting for hearing children to do so. Lip-reading, telling others when they didn’t understand, and attending churches that have interpreters or signing pastors were additional examples of self directed behaviors and activities that the children employed.

**Use of Sign Language**

For the majority of the children, learning and using sign language was seen as a valuable help in their relationships. The children described situations where they taught other children to sign as well as situations where they turned to and valued peers and family members who were able to sign with them.

When labels or accessible language were missing or posed a problem for the children, some of them were able to turn to very detailed visual descriptions of what they intended to communicate. This was demonstrated by Danny’s descriptions of the Ninja Turtles, and Alex’s Christmas concert. Alternative forms of communication such as writing came in handy for Alex, Angie, and Danny when others did not sign. One child showed a struggle with her use of and freedom to sign.

**Adoption of Heroes**

Like hearing children, the deaf children in this study adopted heroes such as the Power Rangers, and Ninja Turtles.

**Reflections on Interview Techniques**

The use of storytelling about the children’s drawings (when they were comfortable drawing) and pictures cutout from magazines generally worked well for these children. Stories were sometimes brief and not free flowing and much probing
volunteering of this information was more forthcoming from the children who had better language skills. Early in the data collection process, metaphors were attempted to elicit data from a couple of the children. This attempt was unsuccessful with this group of children and abandoned.

Reflections on Paradigmatic Relatedness

Once themes emerged and were recorded in this study, I returned to the literature review to expand on deeper dimensions that this study might reveal. I analyzed the literature review through a process of coding and categorizing to look for common themes across theories as they were described in the literature. Following this, I looked for commonalities between theories and themes which emerged from the informants. I was interested in seeing if ecological, symbolic interaction and existential theories, and issues in the literature on deaf children presented themselves in this study.

As stated in chapter II, personal, academic and professional circumstances made it impossible to enter the data collection phase of this study unaware of the literature on deafness and deaf children. Thus, in this study, the literature was reviewed continually throughout the study and after data analysis.

I began to see that much of the literature on deaf children related to ecological, existential and symbolic interaction assumptions about their experiences. It was not the intent of this research to prove or disprove any theory or assumptions, but rather to discover through an inductive process what the children had to say about themselves and their experiences, regardless of the literature. After data were collected and analyzed I then looked to see if there were any similarities between these assumptions in the literature and the themes which arose from the children's interviews and observations.
This was not an attempt at theoretical triangulation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not support the credibility of theoretical triangulation in naturalistic inquiry. They see it as a function of similarity in theories rather than the confirmability of facts. Thus, this was done to add an expanded dimension to the information which the children presented in this study. This paradigmatic discussion is not to be considered exhaustive.

Eco-existential Interaction:

Interrelatedness of Ecological, Existential and Symbolic Interaction Paradigms

It is apparent that ecological, existential and symbolic interaction theories are interrelated. Each of these theories involve characteristics of a systems nature which are interactive. In addition, each theory appears to have usefulness for social work practice with deaf and hard of hearing children based on the themes which emerged from the context of this study with this group of children. These children exist in, cope with and develop their self perspectives out of complex systemic influences. Thus, a metatheory, which combines these three useful theories, which I will call eco-existential interaction would apply to these children. The next section exemplifies applications of the three theories to some of the findings in this study.

Ecological Paradigm

From an ecological perspective, or an ecological understanding of the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing children, these children would be said to have an ongoing relationship with environmental influences that the child must negotiate and compromise with as they seek to accommodate and survive.

Harvey (1989), Lane (1992), Mindel and Vernon (1987), Schlesinger and Meadow (1972) and Vernon and Andrews (1990) all discussed the environmental
impact on the being and becoming of the deaf person. These authors agree through their various developmental, psychological or sociological perspectives that environmental and systems issues interact with the child. From an ecological perspective then, the deaf child must negotiate and compromise with these systems influences.

Interviews with and observations of these seven children in their home and school environments revealed that they do indeed interact with a variety of systems. The children reported assorted relationships with Deaf and hearing family members, deaf and hearing peers, and professionals in their lives such as teachers, interpreters, coaches, and ministers. Most of the children had hearing parents, some attended a residential school for deaf children, others were mainstreamed in hearing schools with deaf and hard of hearing peers. The children’s images of themselves and others were influenced by their communicative and behavioral interactions with others in their environment.

The children reported experiences along a continuum of comfortable and uncomfortable interactions with domesticated and disparate others. They also presented experiences of attachment and alienation in relationships with others. These affectual reports of attachment and alienation that the children presented were largely related to their perceptions of their fit and communication in their interactions with others.

Although there was some variation in parental attitudes, most of the children saw their parents as making an effort to communicate with them, and saw their relationship with their parents as a positive one. There was evidence that the children who displayed the strongest positive self images had parents who communicated most skillfully with them in an accessible language or communication mode. It also appeared that the children who had more interaction with others (family members,
peers, and professionals) who were deaf or who could sign, had a more positive self image and more information about themselves and their lifeworlds.

**Existential Paradigm**

From an existential perspective issues related to being in the world in transcendence, and being in relation to others arose both, in the literature and in the children’s stories. There were instances of what Lantz and Harper (1989) might refer to as existential symptoms of depression (Joe), anxiety (Alex), and confusion (Lisa), but overall, the children used many opportunities to create meaning.

Vandenberg (1991) suggested that a conceptual understanding of existential issues “is not necessary for it to be operative in development.” (p. 1279) It appeared that these children did not have a conceptual understanding of how they found and applied meaning in situations in their lives. This is developmentally appropriate. Nonetheless, existential symptoms, issues, transcendence and meaning did exist in this group.

Moustakas’ (1969) discussion of alienation in personal growth and existential life states that young children are guided and influenced by a system (i.e., parents and educators) to become who they are expected to become and the children become estranged from their real selves. The clinical metatheory, and the adoption of a Deaf or hearing cultural identity are discussed throughout the literature on deafness. Arguments on both of these perspectives could be framed in relation to Moustakas’ concept of alienation in personal growth.

While the literature on deafness does not mention Vandenberg (1991) or Frank (1974) their ideas are present as key factors which have special implications for the development of the deaf child. These ideas include parental influence on our
existential belief systems, the influence of cultural beliefs on our sense of belonging and adjustment, and the phenomenon of grief.

As stated above, most of the children appeared to be generally happy and engrossed in their daily activities and surroundings. Affectively, being deaf appeared to be of little concern to most of them. For the most part, they did not view being deaf as a problem, but saw communication as a challenge that both, they and others needed to address.

Experiences of both, attachment and alienation occurred for these children. Their sense of attachment, self assurance and belonging appeared to be greater in relationships with those who they considered to be domesticated others. Relationships with domesticated others appeared to bring meaning into the lives of these children as they coped with adverse situations.

While social and intrapersonal challenges did appear in the data collected from interviews with the children, they were not as predominant on the surface of these children’s lives as the literature suggests. The literature focuses heavily on the negative expectations and limitations that societal influences have. The children in this study however, had many positive images of themselves, and positive pathways to transcendence of their alienating experiences and relationships with disparate others. Data revealed instances where parents were able to transcend their grief by adapting to their child’s deafness and creating the positive growth provoking experiences that Sheridan (1995) discussed.

The data presented in Pathways, suggests that creative, defiant and experiential means are all used to transcend what uncomfortable and disparate interactions or experiences these children encounter. These means include auxiliary aids and devices, relationships, recreational activities, self direction, learning, using and teaching others to sign, and the adoption of heroes.
The children’s reports of boredom in inaccessible situations, awareness of potential rejection by hearing peers, the feelings they reported in their interactions with disparate others all present existential tribulations. Their self assurance about their futures, their pathways, and relationships with domesticated others indicate existential transcendence. Frankl (1969) would say these positive relationships, pathways, and future stories bring existential meaning to situations in these children’s lives.

Regarding Frank (1974) and Vandenberg’s (1991) notion of parental influence, the children did appear to be strongly influenced by the attitudes and values of their parents. This was reflected in the children’s adoption of the language or methods chosen by their parents, and the way their parent’s communication abilities and comfort levels were reflected in the child’s language skills, and self image and behavior in our sessions.

**Symbolic Interaction Paradigm**

Mead’s (1934) symbolic interaction theory provides a way of looking at the development of the self concept of the person who is deaf. Interactionism suggests that our self concept is shaped by symbolic meanings of situations which emerge out of our interactions with others (Berger, 1963). We see ourselves according to our interpretations of others perceptions of us. This is a systemic process that involves the self as well as society. Some implications for symbolic interaction theory did arise from the study.

The children reported relationships with both domesticated and disparate others. From an interactionist perspective, this implies that the children make interpretations about others based on their perceptions of the other’s communication skills, and their comfort in interactions with these others.
Identity and self judgment are concepts in symbolic interaction. The children revealed information about their identity by situating themselves culturally or bi-culturally among deaf and hearing people and in relationships with domesticated and disparate others.

Berger (1963) considered the self a process which is created and recreated in each social situation we encounter. Overt and covert identity has implications for the concept of role taking in symbolic interaction. The overt identity that a child assigns to another may influence the way in which the child interacts with, interprets and responds to this other. From an interactionist perspective, the other's response will then depend on the deaf child's actions. This is a systemic interaction. The process of overt and covert identity discovered in this study relate to Charon's (1995) notion of continual defining and re-defining of the self in interactions, and Stryker's (1959) coming to know who we are through other's responses to us.

Much of the literature assumes that deaf children would have poor self concepts resulting from their perspective that they are lacking in comparison to others (Cates, 1991), or that others see them as inferior. Most of the children in this study however, displayed healthy ideas about themselves, a positive outlook and positive coping methods. Their sense of attachment, self assurance and belonging appeared to be greater in relationships with those who they considered to be domesticated others, and each of the children presented evidence of such relationships.

It was noted in the findings that the children related primarily positive images of their parents approval of and regard for them. If in the framework of symbolic interaction, the children's feelings about themselves are a reflection of their interpretation of their parent's feelings about them, then they should have a generally positive self concept. This was true for the children who shared stories of or presented behaviors reflecting positive parental attitudes.
Self Reflexivity

Field notes, both descriptive and reflective, were kept throughout the research process. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe field notes as "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (p. 107).

Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to text but to maintain and capture more complete meaning and context descriptive field notes were made immediately following each interview. These field notes were typed into the computer using a word processing program.

Bogdan and Biklen describe two parts of field notes, descriptive and reflective. Descriptive field notes are the researchers effort to "objectively record the details of what has occurred in the field" (p. 119). Descriptive field notes include portraits of subjects, reconstruction of dialogue, description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events, depiction of activities and the observer's behavior.

The reflective part of the field notes or reflexive journaling (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is described by Bogdan and Biklen as the subjective side of the research with an emphasis on "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions and prejudices...methods, procedures and evolving analysis" (p. 121). Naturalistic Inquiry uses human instrumentation. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) describe the human instrument as sensitive and actively responsive. They recommend that a log needs to be kept on the primary human instrument to document the researcher's feelings, attitudes, learnings, insights and growth. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) also discussed the importance of self reflection and accurate records of methods, procedures and evolving analysis. The reflective part of the field notes
helped me to stay aware of my subjectivity and biases and protect the trustworthiness of the study.

Each informant in this study was assigned a participant’s binder. All data collected (transcripts, coding, categories, drawings, field notes, newspaper clippings, participant information forms, consent forms, etc.) were kept in these binders.

**Research Concerns**

There were times in the research process where I had to make ethically and clinically sound decisions. This section specifies what these concerns were.

The profession of social work respects cultural diversity, and self determination. This value base lends itself naturally to ethics in research methodology and design. The qualitative methodology and emergent design of this study allowed me to resolve the reliability, validity and ethical problems inherent in conventional research methods with deaf individuals. Conventional methods typically do not allow for the emergence of the realities of deaf children.

Inquiry into the lifeworlds of human beings has the potential for affirmation as well as for distress. Prior to the data collection phase of this inquiry, I was concerned that awareness of the children’s conditions arising out of their stories may be upsetting to some of the children or their families.

A lengthy description of my observations of one child’s behavior was detailed in the field notes. These observations were critical since they revealed far more about the child and the child’s communicative realities than the interview dialogue. The field notes disclosed a painful inner struggle that the child appeared to harbor in communicative relationships. I struggled with how much descriptive detail to present in the findings chapters while still protecting the privacy of the child and
family as well as protecting them from a painful encounter if they should read the report. I decided that their protection was more important than a detailed description in the report of the pain they appeared to experience. A condensed version of the observations noted in the field notes was provided in the final report.

I realized that my concerns for this child's psychological well being stemmed not only from my clinical social work experience with deaf children and their families, but also from my biases related to the communication issues I saw the child struggling with. I wrestled with my judgment about the child's situation and what I thought would resolve the difficulties, and my understanding that the family had a legal right to choose an educational placement and method of communication that they determined was best for their child. I realized that for this family, one effect of participating in the research, may have been that this child's communicative realities were illuminated behaviorally when I went to their home. While this may have been distressing for the family to observe, it may also have presented an opportunity for the family to re-evaluate their child's needs without my providing further intervention.

For a second child whose psychological well being I was concerned about, a phone call to his mother revealed that she was dealing with these issues through dialogue with her child and the child's school personnel.

A full understanding of the effects on participating in this study will never be known. Although I stood ready to refer the children and their parents to appropriate professional sources, no referrals were determined necessary. The parents appeared to have sufficient contact with professional resources and were dealing with their child's issues in one way or another.

My reflexive journal, peer debriefers, frequent return to the interview transcripts and frequent review of video tapes for referential adequacy helped me deal
with counter-transference issues which might otherwise have arisen in my interpretations. An external audit of this study could be conducted to check for what Patton (1990b) refers to as evaluator effect in relation to evaluator biases. An audit trail is available.

**Limitations of the Study**

The findings from this study can not be generalized to the total population of deaf and hard of hearing children. The findings herein are restricted to the particular cases, times and settings in this study. Marshall & Rossman (1989) state that the burden of transferability of qualitative research findings from one context to another lies not with the original investigator, but with the investigators who wish to make that transfer. Several caveats noted here which future investigators should be aware of.

While maximum variation sampling was attempted, actual informants were those whose parents granted permission for them to participate in the study. This resulted in more homogeneity in the sample than was originally intended. Additional children of oral background, minority status and additional hard of hearing children would have lent more variation to the sample. This homogeneity restricts the transferability of the findings to other settings. Furthermore, a single investigator was used in this study and investigator triangulation was not conducted.

Interaction with each child was limited to up to three hours. The possibilities for member checking with participants was limited. Some of the children were able to respond to preliminary interpretations, others were unable to do so. Therefore some of the member checking took place with other stakeholders familiar with the context which emerged from the interviews, such as the parents and school
personnel. Furthermore, modification of the interview questions was sometimes necessary based on the individual needs of each informant.

This study was limited to seven deaf and hard of hearing students in one geographic region. It was also limited to children between the ages of seven to ten, and information gathered from the students was restricted to the cognitive capabilities of students at this age. Finally, an audit trail has been left for anyone wishing to check for evaluator bias, based on the assumption that all researchers approach their research with bias.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

Further qualitative studies into the lifeworlds of deaf and hard of hearing children, particularly with more variation in the sample (more hard of hearing, minority, and oral children) and with multiple investigators for investigator triangulation can expand upon this study. Future studies which value the generation of knowledge based on the participation and realities of the consumer, particularly in light of their lack of participation in the past, can contribute further to our knowledge and ability to provide effective interventions.

This study could be replicated with specific groups of deaf and hard of hearing children such as gender, race, educational placement, severity of hearing loss, communication methods and language orientations. Additional studies can also explore ways to facilitate attachment and increase opportunities for domesticated relationships and reduce the number of disparate relationships and alienating experiences that the children face. It would also be important to look at the families of these children to explore and describe what they report their experiences to be. Finally, further research could examine how the findings of this study apply to other children with disabilities.
Implications for Social Work Practice with Deaf Children

Although some similarities exist between the literature on deafness and themes which arose from this study, enough disparity emerged to illustrate the importance of relying on the realities shared by deaf and hard of hearing children for information about their lifeworlds. Themes of attachment and domesticated others, alienation and disparate others, overt and covert identity, infinity, images of communication and pathways emerged from the voices of the children in this study.

The images and pathways which emerged from this study have the potential to contribute to culturally sensitive social work practice and our understanding of deaf and hard of hearing children in their social environments. This information is important for parents and family members as well as other professional fields such as education, psychology, psychiatry, and counseling which deal with human development.

The social work value of culturally affirmative responsiveness to diversity is reflected in the methodology of this study. The study demonstrated the potential of naturalistic inquiry to overcome the limitations of traditional methodology and the tendency of conventional researchers to collect data from others in the deaf child’s life.

This research demonstrated the ability of deaf and hard of hearing children to communicate their realities through qualitative methods and phenomenological interviewing. Although the children’s stories were sometimes brief and not freeflowing, the use of depth-probing and clarification enhanced the direct and projective phenomenological techniques used. This information helps us to understand the potential utility of these techniques for social work practice and research when the interviews are conducted in the child’s language.
The synthesis of ecological, symbolic interaction and existential theories into an eco-existental interaction metatheory also has implications for culturally sensitive practice with deaf and hard of hearing children. Application of these theories to the themes the children presented contributes to our understanding of their utility for social work practice with this population.
Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Martha Sheridan. I am a Ph.D student in the College of Social Work at Ohio State University. I am interested in what deaf children think and have to say about their experiences.

For my doctoral dissertation, I will interview seven to ten year old deaf children. The title of my dissertation is, *Emerging Themes in the Study of Deaf Children*.

My goal is to understand better the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing children as they report them to be. Approximately four children will participate in this study.

If you consent to your child’s participation, I will observe and interview your child. I will use child interview techniques such as, general questioning about themselves and their systems (families, schools, friends, etc.), story telling, and art work. The interviews will take approximately three to five hours and will be conducted in separate sessions (approximately forty minutes each session) over a period of six months.

The interviews with your child will be videotaped. As the interviews proceed. I might also decide to interview you, other family members, your child’s school personnel, or review records for further information on the themes that your child tells me about. Your consent will be necessary prior to videotaping, conducting additional interviews, or review of records.

An interpreter will be present in the interviews to interpret the sign language of the researcher and your child for the videotape. From these tapes, transcriptions will be made either by myself or a typist. Your consent to your child’s appearance on videotape will be appreciated.
At all times, when the material collected is being presented either in writing or orally, I will be committed to confidentiality. Names of individuals and schools will not be revealed. Transcripts will use initials and later pseudonyms will be used for each child. The envelope for this letter has been addressed and sent to you from OSD to maintain confidentiality.

This research should provide parents, teachers, counselors, social workers, researchers and others very important information about the inner experiences of deaf children in a way that has never been done before. Dr. Keith Kilty, a faculty member at Ohio State University will be supervising this research and has approved the procedures for conducting the study.

You may withdraw from the interview process at anytime. You may also revoke your consent for specific information to be included if you inform me prior to including this information in the dissertation report. I will seek your permission before using any information in any way which is different from the above.

Please read the consent form carefully and return it to me in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact me at (614) 870-1952 TTY, or (614) 228-3323 TTY. You may use the Ohio Relay Service (1-800-750-0750) to contact me if you do not have a TTY. You may also contact Dr. Kilty at (614) 292-7181 if you have any concerns.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Martha Sheridan, MSW, LISW
Researcher

Keith Kilty, Ph.D
Professor
Principal Investigator
APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORMS

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

I, __________________________ consent to my child’s participation in research entitled: Emerging Themes in the Study of Deaf Children. My child’s name is __________________________.

Martha Sheridan has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my child’s participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described. I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. I also understand that my child is free to withdraw consent at any time and that to discontinue participation in the study would not penalize my child in any way.

I will not make any financial claims to the information provided in these interviews or the presentation of this information and will not require any medical or emotional treatment should any injuries result from participation.

I understand that my child will not be identified by name in any publication or professional meeting with which the researcher is associated. I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign this form freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Signed________________________ Date__________________
( Parent/Guardian)

Signed________________________ Date__________________
(Principal Investigator)

Signed________________________ Date__________________
(Researcher)

CONSENT TO MY CHILD’S APPEARANCE ON VIDEOTAPE

I understand that my child will be videotaped for this research. I am assured that my child’s name will not be associated with these tapes in any way.

I freely and voluntarily consent to my child’s appearance on videotape. I understand that once this research is completed and the videotapes are transcribed, the videotapes will be erased in order to protect my child’s confidentiality.

Signed________________________ Date__________________
( Parent/Guardian)

Signed________________________ Date__________________
(Principal Investigator)

Signed________________________ Date__________________
(Researcher)
CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, _______________________ hereby give permission to Martha Sheridan to obtain _______________________________________
(specify records/information)
on ______________________ , date of birth ______________
(child's name)
and I give permission to _______________________________________
(specify name of organization)
to release the following information to Ms. Sheridan for review _______________________________________
(specify records/information).
I understand that I can revoke this consent at any time. This consent will expire on:
(specify date within six months of date of signature)

I understand that this information will be used for research purposes only and that my child’s name will not be associated with any information that is reported in the research.

Signed _______________________ Date ____________
(Parent/Guardian)

Signed _______________________ Date ____________
(Researcher)

Signed _______________________ Date ____________
(Principal Investigator)
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

(To be completed by parents)

This information will help me to understand your child and his or her communication and individual situation. No names will be identified in the report.

Name_________________________________________________

Parent's Names_________________________________________

Address______________________________________________

__________________________

School attended________________________________________

Principal's name________________________________________

School phone___________________________________________

Telephone (home)________________________V/TTY/Both

Parent's work________________________V/TTY/Both

Age____________ Date of Birth___________________________

Year in School_________________________________________

Age of onset of deafness____________ etiology________

________________________________________________________________________

Extent of hearing loss____________ type________
Communication methods used__________________________________________________________

Other disabilities?_______________________________________________________________

Religion______________________________________________________________

Ethnic Background________________________________________________________

Socioeconomic status__________________________________________________________

Family members:

Parents:

Mother_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Father_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Brothers:

Name_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Name_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Name_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Sisters:

Name_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________

Name_________________________________________ age_______________

    hearing status_______________________________________________________
Name______________________________ age________________________

hearing status__________________________

Others in the family:

Name______________________________ age________________________

hearing status__________________________

Name______________________________ age________________________

hearing status__________________________

Description of communication methods used at home and by whom:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Previous educational placements:
school________________________ dates attended____________________

school________________________ dates attended____________________

school________________________ dates attended____________________

school________________________ dates attended____________________
APPENDIX D
CHILDREN'S INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Solicitation Script for Children

Hi, my name is Martha Sheridan. I am deaf and I am writing a book about what deaf children think, say, and feel inside. I am writing this book for school.

Lots of people have written books about deaf children, but most of them did not ask the children to help them write the books. I would like for you and other deaf children to help me by answering some questions, telling me some stories and drawing some pictures for me about yourself, your family, your school, your friends, what you think and what you feel. Would you like to help me do this?

I would like to meet with you a few times for about six months. When we meet we will use a video camera. These video tapes will help me remember the things you told me so that I can write them in my book exactly like you told me to and not forget anything. Is it ok with you if we use the video camera?

Later after the book is finished, I might want to show your stories and answers to groups of people in meetings or in schools to teach them about deaf children or to explain about how we made this book. Would it be ok with you if I use your stories for that?

Because many people do not know sign language, we will need a person (an interpreter) to read our signs on the video tape. I might ask a hearing person to type on paper what we say and if the hearing person can’t see our signs, or does not understand our signs, they will hear the interpreter’s voice and that will help them type things on paper for us. Is it ok with you if the interpreter is here with us while we talk?

If you change your mind later about helping me with this and you decide you don’t want to that is ok, just tell me if you decide you do not want to help. Ok?
Emergent Themes in the Study of Deaf Children
Interview Guide for Children

This outline serves as a tentative guide for use in interviews with the children being studied in this dissertation. These questions are tentative because of the emergent nature of the study, but serve as a guide for introducing the study, opening and guiding the interviews. Other questions and techniques may be added as the need emerges.

I. Introduction

Hi, my name is Martha Sheridan. I am deaf and I am writing a book about what deaf children think, say, and feel inside. I am writing this book for school.

Lots of people have written books about deaf children, but most of them did not ask the children to help them write the books. I would like for you and other deaf children to help me by answering some questions, telling me some stories and drawing some pictures for me about yourself, your family, your school, your friends, what you think and what you feel. Would you like to help me do this?

I would like to meet with you a few times for about six months. When we meet we will use a video camera. These video tapes will help me remember the things you told me so that I can write them in my book exactly like you told me to and not forget anything. Is it ok with you if we use the video camera?

Later after the book is finished, I might want to show your stories and answers to groups of people in meetings or in schools to teach them about deaf children or to explain about how we made this book. Would it be ok with you if I use your stories for that?

Because many people do not know sign language, we will need a person (an interpreter) to read our signs on the video tape. I might ask a hearing person to type on paper what we say and if the hearing person can’t see our signs, or does not understand our signs, they will hear the interpreter’s voice and that will help them type things on paper for us. Is it ok with you if the interpreter is here with us while we talk?
If you change your mind later about helping me with this and you decide you don’t want to that is ok, just tell me if you decide you do not want to help. Ok?

II. Interview Process:

I’d like for you to tell me stories about deaf children and about yourself. There are some story games we can play to help you teach me about deaf children. To start, I’d like for you to draw a picture for me of a little deaf girl/boy and her/his family.

While drawing or after completion:

Can you tell me a story about this little deaf girl/boy?
Tell me a story about the family.
What does the family think of the deaf child?
Can you tell me a story about the deaf child’s school?
What about the teacher?
Can you tell me a story about how the child became deaf?
How did the parents feel about it when they found out the child was deaf?
How does the child feel?
How do the brothers and sisters feel?
How do the teachers feel?
Does the deaf child have friends?
Tell me a story about the friends. Are the friends deaf or hearing? What are the friends like? What kinds of things do the friends do together?
Can you tell me a story about what will happen when the deaf child grows up?
What do other boys and girls think about deaf children?
What do grown ups thinks about deaf children?
What do other boys and girls and grown ups say about deaf children?

What do deaf children think about deaf children?

What do deaf children think about children that can hear?

What do deaf children think about grownups that can hear?

What do deaf children think about grownups that are deaf?

Does the family go on vacation? Tell me a story about what happens on vacation.

When the deaf child grows up will she/he go on vacation? Where will they go? What happens on vacation?

The above questions can be revised based on the child’s language comprehension skills into more projective techniques such as by asking the child to draw pictures of deaf children and pictures of hearing children, of grown ups, of children with adults, etc., and telling stories about the pictures.

Other projective art techniques could include:

Can you draw a picture of a car for me? Can you tell me a story about the car?

Draw a picture of a school. Tell me a story about the children in the school.

More direct questions can include:

What do you think people should know about deaf children?

If you were writing a book about deaf children to reach people about deaf children, what would you say in the book?

If you were writing a book about your parents, family, etc., what would you write in the book?

If you were writing a book about hearing children, what would you say about them?

Of, course, these are just opening questions, more specific questions will be asked of the children to generate data about their lifeworld nd their perceptions and experiences. The interpretations from these
interviews can be checked back with the children and also with the parents.

Tell me a story about the friends. Are the friends deaf or hearing? What are the friends like? What kinds of things do the friends do together?
APPENDIX E

LETTER TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Dear:

I am a Ph.D candidate in the College of Social Work at Ohio State University. At present, I am working on my dissertation, Emerging Themes in the Study of Deaf Children. I am writing to seek your support in locating informants for my study.

My dissertation proposal has been approved by my committee and is currently being reviewed by the Human Subjects Review Committee at OSU. I have attached a copy of my protocol for your review.

This qualitative research will involve videotaped interviews with four deaf children between the ages of seven and ten. Child interview techniques will be used including general questioning about themselves and their systems, story telling, and art work. The interviews will require approximately three to five hours and will be conducted in separate sessions over a period of six months.

My goal is to understand better the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing children as they report them to be. As you are aware, it is rare that deaf children themselves are given the opportunity to provide information about their realities. This research should provide very important information about the inner experiences of deaf children. The methodology used in this study has the potential to overcome the problems noted in the literature which conventional research presents with this population.

Dr. Keith Kilty, a faculty member in the College of Social Work at Ohio State will be supervising this research as the principal investigator. He has approved the procedures for conducting the study. Any questions
or concerns you may have may be directed to me at 228-3323 V/TTY or 870-1952 TTY, or to Dr. Kilty at 292-7181.

I will be contacting you for an appointment to discuss how you might be able to assist me in locating informants for this study. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Martha Sheridan, MSW, LISW
Researcher

Keith Kilty, Ph.D
Professor
Figure 2: Sample Story Elicitation Picture #1
Gallaudet Today, 17(4) 1987, p. 13
Figure 3: Sample Story Elicitation Picture #2
Gallaudet Today, 17(4) 1987, p. 6
LIST OF REFERENCES


Gallaudet Today (1987), 17(4).


