DSPS COUNSELOR’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF DEAF AND
HARD OF HEARING STUDENT JOB SEEKERS

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, School
Psychology & Deaf Studies
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MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
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by
Mary Anne Kelly
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by

Mary Anne Kelly

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I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the project.

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Date

Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation,
School Psychology & Deaf Studies
Abstract

of

DSPS COUNSELOR’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENT JOB SEEKERS

by

Mary Anne Kelly

Statement of the Problem

This project was developed to address the needs of local Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers, at American River College, Sacramento, California. Those clients who are eligible and receive services through the Disabled Students Programs experience a lack of accessibility to DSPS Counselors who have knowledge of Deaf Culture and the ability to communicate using American Sign Language.

Sources of Data

Data was compiled as a result of library database searches JSTOR, EBSCO host, SAGE, ERIC, personal interview, text book references and related government internet resources.
Conclusions Reached

A DSPS Counselor’s Guide, was developed to address the needs of the DSPS Counselors at American River College. The limited accessibility of the DSPS counselors with training and knowledge of Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients due to communication deficits among the majority of DSPS counselor’s, is the matter the author seeks to resolve. The guide places emphasis upon the empowerment of the DSPS counselor through education. Counselors through the training will become empowered and, consequently, more accessible to their Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. By empowering DSPS counselors to be capable in their approach to communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients, those clients will realize the benefits of reciprocal communication with their counselors and, ultimately, become more greatly empowered and competitive with their hearing peers.

Legislation, and employment topics relevant to the above, as well as tools and strategies for personal and professional development are included in the guide.

______________________, Committee Chair
Guy Deaner, Ph.D.

_____________________
Date
DEDICATION

When considering those who are the most instrumental to my success, my family naturally comes to mind. Many sacrifices were endured and within the chaos, including schedule disruptions, and minimal quality family time. My children continued in their unyielding support of my efforts and assisted me in reaching this goal. As a fellow student my daughter, Felecia appreciates the work necessary to succeed at university pursuits. My goal was to encourage her throughout this process, so that she could view her own future accomplishments. My son Michael, a community college student, was not only a support, but also healthy competition in the pursuit of grades for our efforts. My grandson, Ahawney, was a continuous source of physical encouragement. He came with hugs and “I Love you’s”, which in the thick of things meant the most. This effort is dedicated to the youth of my family, both close and extended. Be encouraged in the pursuit of your dreams and let nothing or no one convince you that anything short of your goal is your destiny. I am a strong believer in dreams and in each of you.

To my sister Nicole, I would not be here without your invaluable support and I look forward to your graduation with the degree of your choosing. To those who doubted, I wish to thank you especially for your pessimism fueled my resolve. I now challenge you to get up, get out and get something for yourselves.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank by name each of the individuals who contributed to the completion of this project, however I am convinced that this forum is far too limited to hold the magnitude which is the support I have received. As a beginning I would like to give thanks to my project advisor and instructor Dr. Guy Deaner. We have had a special relationship on this journey and he has assisted me in growing into the role of Counselor, as growing pains go, it has been rocky at times but worth the trip.

Dr. Todd Koch has been a positive support and mentor throughout some of my most trying times as a student. Thank you for the ever optimistic point of view, which was vital in keeping my vision toward this ultimate goal. To Susan Abrahams who kept me on schedule and in line to gain the most of my advising experiences with a smile, I thank you. Mr. Donald Nahhas, you are such a rock star to the students of the departments you support and I appreciate everything you have done for me. Ms. Veronica Richardson, I appreciate your smile and time as well.

Dr. Lisalee Egbert, I would not be here without your inspiration and belief, of that I am certain. Thank you for your whole-hearted support during my undergrad studies and throughout my grad school ventures. To all of the members of the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, School Psychology & Deaf Studies, I thank you!
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The presence of relatively high levels of unemployment among Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals piqued this author’s interest in researching employment discrimination against this group. Individuals with disabilities not only experience daily challenges to the activities often taken for granted by those who would consider themselves able-bodied but navigating the labor market and the means necessary to obtain employment can become an additional obstacle (Bonds, 2003). Instances of reported discrimination and denial of employment based upon one’s presenting or perceived disability exists despite legislative efforts to protect disabled workers from such inequitable treatment (RNID, 2003). The Americans with Disabilities Act Title I, and Title V, as well as the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), exist to curtail instances of discrimination from a legal standpoint.

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a “person with a disability” as someone who “(1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment” (Brodwin, Siu, Howard, & Brodwin, 2009). There are numerous conditions which qualify under the above definition as a disability; however, the author’s focus will be limited to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and the barriers encountered by those who identify themselves as members of this group. The intent of this project is to provide empowerment to those in the role of counselor, by
meeting the needs of counselors who are not specialists in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Counselors who are not specialists in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and unfamiliar with the needs of this population, may view that lack of specialization as an obstacle to their effectiveness. Counselors who have been educated with a focus on Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may be better equipped to identify barriers to their student’s success and potential solutions and accommodations. Elevation of a counselor’s knowledge base fosters the idea of empowerment as confidence is gained in one’s ability to meet the needs of their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

An empowered counselor is better able to approach issues such as communication, cultural norms, and discrimination faced by their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and respond in accordance to their advisory and advocacy roles. Expanded knowledge of the needs may lead to increased interest and a more capable and accessible counselor who is willing and able to work with students who identify themselves as Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing. The author is using a phenomenological inquiry, to bring attention to lack of understanding of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and to empower the counselors. The information gathered is to be used as part of a training model to be implemented at the community college level at American River College, Sacramento California.
Background of the Problem

Historically, people who were born Deaf or with significant hearing loss were excluded from social interaction and assigned to sanitariums for long term care (Lane, Harlan, 1992). Popular was the idea of being rid of those who were unable to care for themselves without assistance or who were unable to add to the workforce as a productive wage earner.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing people face multiple and cumulative disadvantages in accessing worthwhile jobs and pursuing careers (Harris & Thornton, 2005). Historical beliefs and expectations of disabled people have generally been low, and the perception of their contributive capability, mostly nil. Institutions such as Social Security Disability Insurance were developed as a means to partially support the needs of those deemed unemployable. However, Social Security Disability Insurance has instead become a crutch or a hindrance to many who qualify for such services. One’s dependence upon cash payments and health care coverage make venturing into the workforce difficult (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2003). For those individuals who have successfully completed high school, the prospect of attending college may be viewed as a logical next step. For those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, the choice may be limited or absent.

One’s choice to pursue further education may be limited by a perception that once high school is completed, the mandate to attend school is gone and life as an adult ensues (Punch, Hyde, & Creed, 2004). As an individual who has possibly been denied the opportunity to make one’s own choices, the freedom of a graduation or certificate of
completion may be quite enticing. Those individual’s identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and who have successfully completed a high school program, have decisions to make. It is within this decision making stage that the author is hoping to introduce or reinforce the idea of empowerment toward employment success. American River College, Sacramento California, is a choice for many who have decided to pursue higher education. ARC is a community college in the Los Rios Community College District which serves approximately 38,000 students, including part-time and full-time enrollees and 36,645 students were served during the spring 2011 (Statistics & Demographics, 2011). In the academic counseling realm there are generalists and specialists. The general counselor is one who will work with the overall population and seek to advise and guide the students through their college experience. Specialists have an area of focus which impacts a particular group within the student population. The specialists may have extensive training in specific areas such as Louise Kronick who works with individuals with Autism and learning disabilities and Barbara Westre has extensive training and experience with individuals with (TBI) Traumatic Brain Injury. This training creates an opportunity to support individuals whose identified disability presents additional challenges or barriers to their academic success and as such require specialized supports and interventions intended to even the playing field in order for student to compete.

At American River College, there is one counselor whose specialty is in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The availability of this counselor is a consideration for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students when they are researching their role in the
matriculation process, due to the ability to communicate directly and ensure that one is understood.

Statement of the Problem

The problem at American River College is “the lack of access to appropriately qualified staff, which possesses knowledge of Deaf Culture and signing skills” (James, 2012). American River College has a Disabled Students, Programs and Services (DSPS) center, which is staffed with counselors who have obtained Master’s degrees, with the majority of those degrees being in Vocational Rehabilitation. One such counselor, Mrs. Dana Brittingham-Garrido, is the primary contact for students who are identified as Deaf. Mrs. Brittingham-Garrido is an Interpreter who became a vocational rehabilitation counselor and is able to interact with her clients without the necessity of third party assistance.

The direct benefit of having a counselor who is able to communicate using American Sign Language is that counseling considerations, such as the development of trust and the client’s right to confidentiality, are easier to navigate. The Deaf student is not required to have a third party, such as an interpreter, present to access services. An unintentional consequence of having only one counselor, who is able to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, is that the other counselors are not usually involved in interactions with these students. This lack of involvement impedes counselors from developing their individual skills and knowledge of the needs of those students on campus. Students, especially those who identify themselves as Culturally Deaf, tend to
gravitate as a matter of custom toward environments which are considered to be Deaf friendly.

When entering the ARC, DSPS building, the majority of students who are Deaf and those who are significantly affected by hearing loss or Hard of Hearing, routinely ignore the required check-in process at reception. Rather than stop to inquire whether a counselor is available, a direct route to Mrs. Brittingham-Garrido’s office is preferred.

The direct route to accessing the Deaf friendly counselor means that there are no awkward attempts at communication with individuals who are largely unprepared to interact with the students in a manner consistent with appropriate Deaf etiquette (Inclusion, 2008). Because there is only one counselor who is a specialist in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, there exist gaps in communication when it comes to student’s access of the front counter staff in DSPS. Students are unable to communicate their needs if an interpreter is unavailable and the staff who are not trained with regard to the needs of these students lack the confidence to interact and at times will ignore or defer interaction with these students, causing delays which are problematic for both the students and the counseling staff. This has become a larger problem as the students perceive an atmosphere of intolerance and complain of rudeness or blatant disregard for their rights and needs. Cultural familiarity is lacking and without a means for remedy when students choose to avoid counselors. In their perception, those counselors do not display schema of the specialized needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. Added to this dynamic is the learned behavior of referring students who are identified as Deaf and
Hard of Hearing to the sole counselor who is known to have familiarity and history providing services to these students.

In order to address the problem, the author has developed a DSPS counselor’s guide which is intended to address the counselor deficits and empower the professional counselor to confidently provide services for those student job seekers who are identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This enhancement of counselor training will serve to increase knowledge and experience related to the specialized needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, which are necessary in order to prepare these students to obtain sustainable and meaningful employment.

Students are subject to delays in appointment scheduling as counselors defer to Mrs. Brittingham-Garrido, rather than attempt to extend services to these clients. Continued deferral may lead to unbalanced caseloads as well as the limiting of the ability of the other DSPS counselors to develop a broadening scope of influence.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definition of terms may be useful in enhancing the reader’s understanding of the problem.

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*

ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public
accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications (Ed.gov, 2006).

_Audiogram_

A graphic representation of the relation of vibration frequency and the minimum sound intensity for hearing (Merriam Webster, 2012).

*Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC *)

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that sets the standard for quality rehabilitation counseling services through its internationally recognized certification program. Individuals passing the voluntary certification examination become qualified as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, or CRC’s (Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2010).

*Culturally Deaf*

The cultural definition of Deafness represents a life and world view that is manifested by beliefs, values, and traditions unique to Deaf people and expressed through the use of American Sign Language (ASL) (Saladin & Hansmann, 2009, p. 158).

*Deaf*

56 or Greater dB loss-Severe to profound hearing loss. The term Deaf has a different meaning for those who identify themselves as Culturally Deaf. Deaf is label of cultural identification. People may call themselves Deaf if they subscribe to the cultural
norms, values, and traditions of the culture, even if their decibel loss is less than severe (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007, p. 86).

Deaf Friendly

Atmosphere in which the needs of the Deaf individual are considered and attempts at accommodations are typical.

Discrimination

The treatment of, consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit (US Legal, 2012).

Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS)

DSPS is designed to promote equal access to all programs, services and facilities at American River College; DSPS provides a variety of support services to the student with a disability, at no additional cost. Specialized counseling services, Interpreters for the Deaf, tutors, note takers, readers, test facilitators, and mobility aides are provided to qualified students upon request (Academic Support Services, 2009).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also illegal to discriminate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an
employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012).

*Empowerment*

The process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices, and to transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes (The World Bank, 2011).

*Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)*

A statute which prohibits employment discrimination covering employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, apprenticeship programs and any person or entity who aids, abets, incites, compels or coerces the doing of a discriminatory act. It prohibits employment discrimination based on race: color; religion; national origin; or ancestry; physical disability; mental disability or medical condition; marital status; sex or sexual orientation; age, with respect to persons over the age of 40; and pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. The FEHA also prohibits retaliation against someone for opposing any practice forbidden by the Act or filing a complaint, testifying, or assisting in proceedings under the FEHA (California Fair Employment and Housing Act-FEHA-Govenment code 12900-12966).

*Hard of Hearing*

Mild to moderate hearing loss. Able to detect environmental sounds with or without amplification. Meaning to Deaf people: A cultural identification label—people might call themselves Hard of Hearing, even if unable to hear anything, if they subscribe
to the cultural norms, values and traditions of the hearing majority (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007).

Learned Helplessness

When an individual's efforts have little or no impact on the outcome, motivation and subsequent efforts are reduced (Marks, 1998).

Qualified

According to ADA, a Qualified individual with a disability is a person who meets a legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements of an employment position that he or she holds or seeks, and who can perform the "essential functions" of the position with or without reasonable accommodation (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012).

The term Most Qualified is used in this project and refers to an increased level of preparedness used to overcome possible discriminatory objections to the employment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation is a modification or an adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of nondisabled employees. (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012)
Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act is the Federal legislation that authorizes the formula grant programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living, and client assistance. It also authorizes a variety of training and service discretionary grants administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Act authorizes research activities that are administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and the work of the National Council on Disability. The Act also includes a variety of provisions focused on rights, advocacy and protections for individuals with disabilities (Department of Education, 2004).

Section 504

The non-discrimination requirements of the law that applies to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS). Included are many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers and human service programs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, 2006).

Self-Determination

In the disability community, self-determination refers to individuals with disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities, having the same right to self-determination as all people, that is, to have the freedom, authority, and support to exercise control over their lives (Hughes, 2012)
Limitations of the Project

This project is limited due to the specificity of the subject matter and the population being served, the six DSPS counselors of ARC. Further limitation is due to fact that this project’s geographic scope is contained to Sacramento area and the guide is to be used by the counselors working at American River College, Sacramento, California, DSPS Department. Author bias is an identified limitation as the author is of the opinion that all counselors should be trained to meet the needs of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The guide was developed based information and knowledge currently available, which creates yet another limitation.

Organization of the Project

Chapter 1 includes an introduction, statement of the problem, definition of terms, limitations of the project and reference to the project’s overall organizations. The literature review covering information relative to the development of the project’s counselor’s handbook is contained in Chapter 2. Details of the methodology utilized to develop the counselor’s handbook are described in Chapter 3. Summary and Recommendations comprise Chapter 4. The Counselor’s guide follows and is contained in the appendix.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter the author will discuss deficits in counselor training to work with individuals who identify themselves as Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Counselors who are not trained to work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals are faced with obstacles to the delivery of services such as, communication, cultural differences, and reduced confidence related to interactions which contribute to counselor disempowerment. Possible consequences of a lack of empowerment is manifested as an avoidance of interaction with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students who are in need of competent specialized counselors in order to overcome their own barriers such as isolation, low motivation and learned helplessness.

Issues such as discrimination, underemployment and unemployment and social security entitlements, are challenges which impact the counselors who are seeking to assist their students. Counselor training and enhancement activities such as voluntary certification, gaining knowledge of legislation related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing rights, adherence to ethical guidelines are discussed tools to increase the counselors knowledge and confidence to deliver services.

The first section of this chapter will address the lack of training for counselors and the next section will focus upon the challenges of communication the counselor faces when working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. The following sections will
explore the phenomenon of avoidance of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students by the counselor, and obstacles to successful interaction between the counselor and students. The remaining section emphasizes counselor education and advancement of skills and knowledge of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and their needs.

Lack of Training for Counselors

As many as 2 in 10 individuals encountered by counseling practitioners may have at least one identified disability. Counselors frequently work with individuals with disabilities at a college level; however most possess very little training in that area (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004). Of the counselors working with students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, few counselors possess knowledge of Deaf Culture and fluency in American Sign Language (Fusick, 2008). Training programs for counselors have a limited focus as it relates to hearing loss. As a result, counselors are largely unaware of the unique challenges faced by their students and may lack training and the know how to advise them regarding their concerns (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004).

Counselors who are inadequately prepared to assist Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients (Peters S. W., 2007) may allow their individual biases and perceptions to reinforce the poor self-esteem of their clientele (Fusick, 2008).

Specialization in the area of Deafness would permit counselors to work with students with increased confidence as it relates to direct interaction and attention to details such as student privacy, cultural considerations, Deaf student’s negative experiences in the hearing world (Filer & Filer, 2000) and communication. Counselors
often are unaware of Deaf culture and its impact upon those who consider themselves part of that culture. Counselors without adequate training may not understand that the Deaf community is quite small and that personal information regarding a member of that community could become public very quickly if measures are not taken to protect their Deaf student’s privacy (Peters S., 2007). Counselors who are not specialist with Deaf students would not be aware of the unintended breaches of student privacy such as one be seen visiting a counselor’s office or due to the visual nature of sign language, conversations being observed because they did not occur behind closed doors (Fusick, 2008).

Methods of Communication

- Method of communication is critical when working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals (Foster & MacLeod, 2003) and choice of how to proceed is often the first task to be addressed by the counselor. Making a determination of which mode of communication is best for the student client is largely dependent upon the individual being served, and their preference (Cinamon, 2008). Among the various methods of communication are:

- American Sign Language (ASL)-A language used by Deaf individuals in the United States and parts of Canada. It is unique in its grammatical structure and utilizes facial expressions and body language as grammatical markers (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).
• Signed English—Commonly known as Manually Coded English (MCE) refers to any manual form of communication which uses English based signs and English grammar (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).

• SEE-1—Seeing Essential English—This method was developed by David Anthony. It is based upon signing in morphemes or units of meaning. It is known also as MSS.

• SEEING ESSENTIAL ENGLISH (SEE I) and SIGNED EXACT ENGLISH (SEE II)—The idea behind these systems is that Deaf children will learn English better if they are exposed, visually through signs to the grammatical features of English. The base signs are borrowed from ASL, but the various inflections are not used. A lot of initialization is used. Additionally, a lot of “grammatical markers” for number, person tense, etc. are added and strict English word order is used. Every article, conjunction, auxillary verb, etc. is signed. Also, English homophones are represented by identical signs (i.e. the same sign is used for the noun fish and the verb fish, which have different ASL signs). The difference between the two is minor—the principle one being that in SEE II ASL signs for compound words (like butterfly) are used, where the two signs representing the separate English words are used in SEE I (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).

• SEE-1 and SEE-2 are signing systems rather than languages on their own. Therefore some people claim that exposure to does not provide children with the complete linguistic access, which is needed to internalize whole language (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).
- **SEE-2-Signing Exact English**-This method was developed by Gerilee Gustason. It uses lots of initialized ASL + endings, and is very literal (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).

- **L.O.V.E.- Linguistics of Visual English**-This method was developed by Dennis Wampler. It has similarities to SEE-2 and Bornstein’s Signed English method. It is a signing system rather than language on its own. Therefore some people claim that exposure to L.O.V.E. does not provide children with the complete linguistic access which is needed to internalize whole language (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).

- **V.E.-Visual English**-Although the term is mentioned, it is unknown whether or not it is considered the same as L.O.V.E (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007)

- **Pidgin Sign English**-A form of sign language which is more English like than ASL. Adults learning ASL often produce a product which is English like or Pidgin. ASL signs are used and some of its grammar, in English word order (Methods of Communication with the Deaf, 2007)

- **Cued Speech**-Using a series of handshapes placed around the face and mouth to illustrate the phonetics of a word (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).

- **Oral Method**-is the use of voicing and lipreading used by the Deaf individual.

- **Rochester Method**-A method based upon the use of Standard English in which each word in the English sentence is fingerspelled (Wells, McBroom, & Helfrich, 2007).
Methods of Communication with Individuals who are Hard of Hearing

The following are general guidelines related to communication with individuals who are Hard of Hearing:

- Remember that hearing loss does not equate with loss of intelligence.
- Try writing down a couple of words or a phrase to clarify if communication is difficult.
- Remember that just because a person can hear your voice, does not mean they can understand your words. Hearing loss may cause distortion in the way sounds are perceived.
- Speak naturally and with normal expression.
- Quiet places will assist communication. Be aware of office machines, fans, restaurant noise and other people’s conversations.
- Don’t assume that a person who is Hard of Hearing is able to understand casual conversation taking place in the room (Jackson State University, 2007).

Methods of communication which may be useful for those individuals who identify as Hard of Hearing include the use of pen and paper for back and forth communication and immediate clarification; the use of email; use of a computer to type back and forth, or two way communication devices as to allow immediate display of the conversation to each participant (Job Accommodation Network, 2012). The individual may use a hearing aid or other form of alternative listening device (ALD) to amplify
sound, and as such the environment should be considered in order to increase the effectiveness of communication (Better Hearing Institute, 2009).

Individuals who wear hearing aids and prefer spoken communication, may do better in a quiet, noise reduced environment, as all sounds are amplified by the device, both speech and noise (Jackson State University, 2007). The individuals use of speech is likely if Hard of Hearing and impacted by that hearing loss in adulthood, or late deafened. Although the use of expressive speech is typical, the individual may have difficulty processing receptive speech and require assistance in order to achieve effective communication (Job Accommodation Network, 2012).

Methods of Communication with Deaf Individuals

The following are general guidelines for communication with individuals who identify as Deaf:

- Do not shout. The Deaf individual will not hear your voice clearly regardless of the volume.

- When the individual decides to write back and forth, follow their lead as it relates to word choices and complexity of sentence structure and vocabulary. The Deaf individual is the best judge of the level of interaction needed and the counselor should acknowledge the cues given rather than make assumptions.
• When using an interpreter, speak directly to the Deaf student. When the interpreter voices what the student signs, look at the student, not the interpreter.

• Understand that a student who uses American Sign Language is aware of facial expression and body language; the counselor should be patient and kind in their attempts at communication.

• Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Most Deaf individuals are comfortable communicating with hearing people. Many will appreciate any attempt to communicate, even if the counselor uses the wrong sign.

• Avoid dependence upon TTY or a Relay service to communicate. Make an effort to meet face-to-face to learn the richness of the student’s personality.

• A student who is late deafened may find the use of a computer, word processor or two-way communication device useful. For ease of reading the counselor may consider increasing the font size on the computer monitor and allow the student to read the screen if they are having difficulty understanding what the counselor is attempting to communicate (Jackson State University, 2007).

Methods to communicate with Deaf individuals include use of technology such as TTY, and Video Relay as well as use of direct communication with use of paper and pen, sign language and interpreters (Job Accommodation Network, 2012). There are many
methods of communication with individuals who are Deaf and not all people who are Deaf communicate in the same manner (Jackson State University, 2007).

The Deaf individual may prefer to sign with other Deaf people but voice, write or lip-read when conversing with hearing people or those who do not sign. Some individuals may choose to switch to signed English when interacting with hearing people who sign rather than ASL to be better understood. The method depends upon the preference of the Deaf individual and the situation (Jackson State University, 2007).

Challenges Faced by Counselors

Counselor’s Need to Read an Audiogram

Knowledge of an audiogram and how to read the results is an important skill for the counselor to have as it assists with making recommendations of accommodations (Brittingham-Garrido, 2012). Those students who are identified as Hard of Hearing may not be users of amplification of any sort. The counselor’s ability to discern which type of amplification device is appropriate will assist in supporting the student’s success (Saladin & Hansmann, 2009). The audiogram is a visual record of the student’s degree of hearing ability (Audiology Awareness Campaign, 2007). Information contained in the record is useful for the counselor when determining eligibility for services as well as exploring possible accommodations (Brittingham-Garrido, 2012).

Individuals who require third party assistance with communication may be accompanied by a family member or a friend who may be asked or offer to assist. The counselor in that situation must consider their responsibilities regarding informed consent
(Peters S. W., 2007). Permission to discuss the student’s personal matters in the presence of a friend or family member may be implied; however it is important to deliberately obtain consent (Cornes & Napier, 2005).

Hearing children of Deaf adults at times are asked to serve as interpreters responsible to facilitate communication as well as explaining hearing culture to their parents (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004). Although the use of casual signers and family members may be convenient it is to the students and counselors benefit to utilize interpreters who are able to maintain professional boundaries and protect the student’s privacy (Filer & Filer, 2000).

Use of Interpreters

**Interpreter Functions**

An interpreter either interprets, which means working between English and ASL, or transliterates, which is working between English and a form of a signed language that uses a more English based word order (Profession Standards Committee, 2007). Some interpreters specialize in oral interpreting for Deaf or Hard of Hearing persons who lip-read instead of sign. Other specializations include tactile signing, which is interpreting for persons who are blind as well as Deaf by conveying signs into the person’s hands; cued speech; and signing exact English (Profession Standards Committee, 2007).
Access to Qualified Interpreters

Students who are Deaf may require an interpreter to navigate interactions with hearing people. The ADA defines a qualified interpreter as one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively using any necessary specialized vocabulary (Department of Justice, 2012). Students who are provided good support services through the use of qualified sign language interpreters have the flexibility to use whatever mode of communication they find most comfortable (Convertino, Marschark, Sapere, Sarchet, & Zupan, 2009). Students who are confident that they are being understood are likely to be comfortable during the counseling appointment are able to benefit from the encounter as it relates to their individual goals and expectations (Feldman, Kluwin, & McCrone, 2005).

Interpreters who are certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) maintain adherence to a strict code of ethics which reinforces confidentiality as one of its first tenets (Peters S. W., 2007). Interpreters who are assigned to work with students through Deaf Services are typically RID members and certified or in process of becoming certified as part of their coursework as a student in the Interpreter’s Preparation Program (Brittingham-Garrido, 2012). Interpreters are available to the student upon request through Deaf Services and the student and counselor may request the services of an interpreter for an appointment. The individual making the request may do so by filling out an appropriate form and are asked make the request well in advance of the scheduled meeting or appointment as possible (Academic Support Services, 2009).
Counselors may also refer the Deaf student to meet with the staff interpreters who will assess the student’s communication style and preferences in order to assist in matching the Deaf student with a qualified interpreter or interpreter team who are best suited for the students preference and needs (Brittingham-Garrido, 2012; James, 2012).

**Etiquette When Using an Interpreter**

When using an interpreter, it is etiquette dictates that the counselor speaks directly to the student rather than to the interpreter, as the student is the person receiving services (Foster & MacLeod, 2003). While speaking directly to the student, the counselors should be cognizant of the tendency for the student to give their attention fully to the interpreter, which may give the appearance, that they are ignoring the counselor. Well trained interpreters may periodically assist the counselor by reinforcing for the student that they are acting only as a facilitator to the conversation and that the student should engage the counselor rather than the interpreter in conversation (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004).

In the role of facilitator, the interpreter is responsible for moving information from one source to another, and as such the interpreter is not processing or creating responses independent of the student or counselor. Due to the interpreter’s dedication to the role, it is important for the counselor to remember to check understanding or seek clarification from the student directly, rather than solicit the opinions of the interpreter (Cornes & Napier, 2005).
Counselor Listening Strategies

The counselor need to employ excellent listening strategies during their interaction with the Deaf student who uses an interpreter, as the possibility of the counselor becoming lost or confused during the interaction is probable (Flier & Flier, 2000). The counselor must take care to listen carefully to what is being stated rather than focus upon the voice of the person making the statement, to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding based upon what is heard or observed (Cornes & Napier, 2005). Counselors, who are unfamiliar with expressive features of sign language, may become distracted by the responses of the student which are expressive facially or with body language which could lead to uncertainty about the interpreted exchange (Peters S. W., 2007).

Confusion during the interaction may occur if the counselor is too focused on the Deaf student’s nonverbal cues, such as eye contact of the student. While maintaining eye contact with the student, the counselor’s work to remain attentive as a listener may serve to reduce distractions inherent to interpreted conversations (Cornes & Napier, 2005, Peters S., 2007).

Counselor’s Inability to Sign

Working with students who identify as Deaf or Hard of Hearing may be uncomfortable for counselors who do not possess the ability to communicate using sign language. Counselors who are not specialist in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing are not likely to possess the ability to communicate directly using American Sign Language
(Willcox, L. 2006). Counselors who work with Deaf students should consider enrolling in sign language classes and attending classes on Deaf culture (Peters S. W., 2007). Counselors with an interest in learning to sign should involve themselves more directly with students and staff who are Deaf and those who are able to sign such as interpreters (Peters S., 2007).

DSPS counselors have access to the Deaf Services department and may schedule interpreters or refer the student to the Deaf Services department to schedule an interpreter for their appointment (Brittingham-Garrido, 2012). Interpreters can alleviate the discomfort of a non-specialists attempts to communicate in sign language as they learn, by insuring that the information is relayed. Many Deaf individuals appreciate efforts of a non-signer to learn their preference and are open to assisting those who are willing to learn to communicate with them (Colella, 2001, Cinamon, 2008).

Areas of Focus for Counselor Efficacy

**Ability to Advocate for Students**

The counselor’s ability to advocate for the student is at times hampered by low levels of confidence in one’s own knowledge of Deaf Culture and sign language (Boutin & Wilson, 2009). Counselor confidence may be enhanced through continuing education and will strengthen the ability to advocate and collaborate with the student to assert their rights (Peters S. W., 2007).

Advocacy for Deaf students by the counselor should be seen as an opportunity to discover the student’s potential by focusing upon abilities, rather than the counselor’s
ability to assist them in reaching a goal (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007). In order to be an effective advocate for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, the counselor needs to have proper perspective.

Obtaining the perspective of individuals who themselves are Deaf or Hard of Hearing students, will enable the counselor to act in a manner which is not skewed by their own viewpoints and conventions (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007). Counselors, who are also aware of their own biases and assumptions, as they relate to their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, are better equipped to develop relationships in which counselors and students are in alliance (Peters S. W., 2007).

**Effects of Unemployment on Students**

Understanding the prevalence of underemployment and unemployment among Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals (Fraser, et al., 2010) and the impact upon one’s sense of motivation (Fusick, 2008) will enable the counselor to better direct the student toward their employment goals. Counselors, who possess the knowledge of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and their needs, are empowered and able to provide the guidance needed for the student (Boutin & Wilson , 2009).

Counselor’s awareness of employment stereotypes and myths, such as the inability for Deaf individuals to work because of an inability to hear, is important to the understanding of why many Deaf students remain unemployed (Jambor & Elliott, 2005). Counselors’ knowledge of legislation enacted to protect individuals with disabilities is important to rehabilitation potentials, as the student clients are instructed on how to
advocate for self (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007). The counselors who possess knowledge inclusive of the stereotypes/myths related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing and legislation are empowered to become better advocates for their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Underemployment/Unemployment

Individuals with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than those without a disability (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Below Figure 1, depicts the disparity between unemployment rates of the overall population nationwide compared to individuals with disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

![Figure 1](Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011)

Approximately seven out of ten people with disabilities are unemployed, although high percentages say they want to work (O'Day, Schartz, & Blanck, 2002). Many of the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers, faced with these statistics, fail to assert themselves in situations in which difficulty attaining employment is encountered (Cook & Burke, 2002). Counselor awareness of this dynamic will be beneficial for effective planning and the development of self-advocacy tools for their students (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007).

Avoidance of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Many hearing individuals find themselves uncomfortable working with individuals who are Deaf due to their limited exposure (Foster & MacLeod, 2003) and, as a result, avoid interaction and extending service to students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Avoidance of interactions with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people is a phenomenon which not only occurs among counselors, but also members of the general population, due to a lack of confidence (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007).

Counselor insecurities due to limited knowledge or exposure to Deaf students may foster an aversion to interaction as well as prevent attempts at communication. Aversion may be overcome by the counselor’s increased exposure to opportunities for interaction with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as well offer advantages to both the counselors and their students (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007). An advantage of increased exposure to Deaf students will assist the counselor in building rapport in the counseling relationship. Part of relationship building includes investigating by the use of questions, how the counselor can best meet the needs of the student (Jambor & Elliott, Self-esteem and Coping Strategies among Deaf Students, 2005).
Cultural needs of the Deaf student should be of paramount concern and counselors should align themselves with a multicultural worldview (Peters S. W., 2007). Being the best judge of their own cultural needs and expectations, the Deaf student should be considered a partner in the relationship, giving input as to how their cultural needs can be met and what those needs involve (Filer & Filer, 2000). Counselors who are able to gain insight into the varied and diverse needs of their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students will be able to work successfully with their students, rather than for the students (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007).

Entitlement

The student job seeker’s sense of entitlement can be a barrier to the counselor’s ability to connect with the student and effectively provide services. Students who have become discouraged by their inability to overcome obstacles encountered because of their Deafness may decide that their only option is to rely upon government entitlements such as Social Security Disability Insurance SSDI (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2003).

SSDI was established in 1954 to provide eligible persons with disabilities monthly income benefits (Rubin & Roessler, 2008). Medicaid, and Social Security Income (SSI) are examples of entitlement programs. Medicaid, is usually an automatic benefit and the average federal cash award is approximately $507 per month for working aged persons with disabilities (Bowe, 2004). Those who were deemed eligible for benefits are typically perceived as incapable of earning a wage or the ability to gainful means of earning a living (Lane, Harlan, 1992).
Those who receive Social Security Disability Insurance are also able to access medical care within their benefits. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seeker may have difficulty realizing advantages to becoming employed when the possibility of losing one’s medical coverage may occur as a result of employment (Bowe, 2004). Counselors should be aware of the potential losses to the student as it relates to moving away from entitlements and offer feasible resources for transition to employment (Houston, Lammers, & Svorny, 2010).

Isolation and Low Motivation

Isolation

Deaf students are at risk of becoming isolated based upon considering themselves of lower worth and less deserving than their hearing peers as it relates to employment (Cinamon, 2008). Attempts at navigating the employment market as an individual who identifies as Deaf or Hard of Hearing puts the student at risk for isolation due to the inability to communicate with hearing employers and coworkers (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007).

Dependent upon the relationships the student jobseeker has with their own support system, isolation may occur in various aspects of their lives. Family members who are not Deaf or who do not communicate may contribute to the isolation (DeCremer, 2002). The student may experience separateness in relation to their peers who are also identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing due to differences in culture. Individuals, who are
Hard of Hearing and choose to communicate orally, may not have social contacts who communicate with sign language (Colella, 2001).

**Low Motivation**

Individuals with disabilities have higher rates of unemployment in general; however those who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing have higher instances of unemployment. The disparity in unemployment rates are related to low self-esteem and low motivation based upon stigma associated with being Deaf (Cinamon, 2008). The perception of inequity of treatment and opportunities for employment, advancement and longevity within a job, in comparison to hearing peers contributes to low motivation (Colella, 2001, Cinamon, 2008).

Counselors should be aware of the student jobseeker’s history, as they may have been subjected to the negative attitudes of those who are hearing, including family members and come to the belief that they are of limited potential (DeCremer, 2002, Cinamon, 2008, Wooten & James, 2005). Awareness of the student’s perspective will allow the counselor to use an approach which is sensitive and promotes a relationship of alliance between the counselor and the student (Punch, Hyde, & Creed, 2004).

**Learned Helplessness**

Counselor’s should be aware that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students may have difficulty viewing themselves as capable of achieving employment goals due to a perception of a lack of control over their employment opportunities, despite one’s individual effort (Gottshall & Stefanou, 2011). Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of
Hearing may have experienced global barriers to the attainment of goals and may attribute their difficulties in to a lack of control and powerlessness, as it relates to their ability to become employed or consider the type of job one would like to have (Cinamon, 2008).

Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing may also have identify themselves as having an inability to succeed based upon information provided them during their adolescence by teachers, parents and caregivers who share a belief that Deafness prevents an individual from attaining gainful employment (Jambor & Elliott, 2005). It is important to understand that counselor’s encouragement of the student job seeker toward their goals is necessary; however the responsibility for the work needed to attain that goal is the student’s. Care should be taken so that the counselor does not to do the work for the student, as that may create a situation of dependence upon the counselor and further foster learned helplessness (Gottshall & Stefanou, 2011).

Discrimination against Deaf and Hard of Hearing Job Seekers

There is a relationship between hearing individual’s limited exposures to persons who identify as Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the development of erroneous and stereotypical perceptions (Colella, 2001). Negative attitudes and stereotyping of disabled workers are not necessarily discrimination, but aid in the perpetuation and justification of behaviors which are discriminatory, such as the denial of employment (Bjelland, Bruyere, von Schrader, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Webber, 2010).
Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers face a multitude of barriers to employment, including a lack of information related to training to secure and maintain a job; lack of knowledge of accommodations available to carry out job duties and their rights under ADA (Bonds, 2003). Counselors are a resource for students and by educating their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students with regard to employment preparation, can enable the job seeker in overcoming discriminatory practices of potential employers (Bonds, 2003).

Deaf and Hard of Hearing job seekers may require and be entitled to a reasonable accommodation in the work setting, but may not be a recipient due to a lack of knowledge of how to request that accommodation. Employer ignorance of the need to provide an accommodation and negative perceptions of potential coworkers create barriers to the successful attainment of employment by a job seeker who identifies as Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Copeland, Chen, Bezyak, & Fraser, 2010).

The counselor’s choice to reinforce for their Deaf and Hard of Hearing students the protections under the American’s with Disability Act (ADA) will aid these job seekers in proactive navigation of a discriminatory employment environment.

Legislation

Legislation designed to provide opportunities and protect those job seekers continue to require updating and refinement to best meet the needs of individuals who are at a vocational disadvantage such as individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Wooten & James, 2005).
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first “rights” legislation to protect the individuals with disabilities. It was termed the rehabilitation act due the ability of the party who had been discriminated against to seek the recovery of losses. Section 504 of the Act provided relief for individuals with disabilities in public school, with provision for accessible doors, elevators and buildings.

Congress expanded the use of the provisions of 504 to facilitate accessibility beyond the public schools system. Section 504 protects individuals with disabilities accessing agencies which benefit from federal funds such as colleges and student federal loan programs (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012). The Act has made additional protections and programs available to individuals with disabilities since being enacted in 1973 and amended in 1998, including the Civil Rights Act of 1991- provided for the client to recover damages suffered due to discrimination.

The American’s With Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibited discrimination in hiring, compensation, promotion, and training of individuals with disabilities. Houston, Hammers and Svorny, 2009, researched the perceptions of those individual who were Deaf in order to assess the impact of policy on their abilities to become employed.

Power to overcome discrimination based upon one’s disability exists in the process of becoming informed and active in bringing about change, and opportunities to facilitate the activity that may be initiated in the Vocational Rehabilitation settings (Chan, et al., 2010). Within community college settings, Titles I and V are useful in ensuring that the process is being administered in a manner which allows the job seeker the access
needed to compete with nondisabled counterparts (Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges, 2000).

Title I of the ADA was written to ensure equal access to employment opportunities and it prohibits employers from engaging in discriminatory practices against a qualified individual with a disability on the basis of that disability. Title I contains procedural terms and language which must be comprehended in order for the protections it provides to be sufficiently understood (Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

The counselor’s role is to first become familiar with the laws and the language, in order to effectively relay and instruct their student clients with regard to the protections available to them (Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2010). In this capacity the counselor can assist the client to advocate for themselves in the attainment of equal opportunities from a legal standpoint.

California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)-The FEHA is the principal California statute prohibiting employment discrimination covering employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, apprenticeship programs and any person or entity who aids, abets, incites, compels, or coerces the doing of a discriminatory act. It prohibits employment discrimination. (California Fair Employment and Housing Act-FEHA-Govenment code 12900-12966) The multitude of laws and provisions which speak to the protection of individuals with disabilities is an excellent resource for the counselor and a challenge for those clients served. An expanded knowledge of legislation related to disability may be conducive to increased empowerment.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Review of Sources

Data was collected from library databases ERIC, EBSCOhost, Project Muse and various internet resources including government websites of the Department of Labor, Department of Rehabilitation and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Additional sources of research included the textbooks on rehabilitation, and Behavioral Science journals, as well as peer reviewed articles in the areas of employment, discrimination, entitlement, Deafness, and disability.

Information mined from these sources was useful in identifying and reinforcing the existence of employment discrimination as it relates to Deaf and Hard of Hearing job seekers. The consequential impact of discrimination in the employment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, lead the author to further investigate and prompted the development of a tool.

The author while working in the DSPS department at American River College, Sacramento California, between 2008 and 2011, had become aware of a limited of access to counselors who had specialized skills in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The author during the course of business had informal discussions 2010-2011 with the Counselor for the Deaf, Dana Brittigham-Garrido, as well as the five other DSPS counselors, Louis Kronick, Barbara Westre, Carie Alexander, Raphael Tagle and Teresa O’Brien, regarding the potential needs and problems related to serving students who are
Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The counselors agreed with one another that a need for additional training regarding Deafness was present within the department and confidence to interact with students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing was a consideration when determining whether or not to meet with Deaf or Hard of Hearing students. The results of information gathered from the conversations with the DSPS counselors highlighted a need for more interaction between non-specialist counselors and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students requesting services; training for staff that are not Deaf and Hard of Hearing to educate on proper etiquette, and interaction with the Deaf and Hard or Hearing population.

Discussions with two Deaf staff members, an alternate technology specialist and student tutoring coordinator and 20 Deaf students and 4 Hard of Hearing students, reinforced the idea that a vehicle was needed to bridge the deficits within the area. Among the students’ responses the most repeated concern was the lack of access to persons who knew how to communicate with them or at least understood how to use the services of an interpreter to assist in that communication. Each student, regardless of their individual communication level also pointed to a feeling of exclusion when interacting with reception desk staff and a preference of skipping the check-in procedure when arriving for an appointment in DSPS for counseling or testing. Issues such as communication difficulties between the staff and students, and basic inconsistencies in office protocol as it related check-in and meeting with counselors were also noted areas of concern.
Interest in this subject developed into a Counselor’s Handbook to be used by counselors in assisting Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients at American River College (ARC) DSPS in Sacramento, California.

The handbook evolved from the author’s perceived need to empower clients who were experiencing difficulty in securing employment, and became a tool to assist the counseling staff of the Disabled Student Programs and Services Department. Discussions in the spring of 2012 with students of the ARC DSPS, counselors and staff which included interpreters for the Deaf leading to a more specific search, which involved exploring terms related to discrimination and learned helplessness. Research was conducted, and data compiled and compared by the author, in September of 2012.

Going back further chronologically, in Fall of 2010, the author investigated the various aspects of employment such as interviewing, application and referrals, and the differences in the outcomes of moving through those steps for individuals who were Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This investigation involved researching programs serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and included the Department of Rehabilitation and Nor Cal Center on Deafness B.E.S.T program and the career center at the ARC campus.

Method

The project was designed to be useful as a reference for counselors who are non-specialist in Deaf and Hard of Hearing of the ARC DSPS department. Emails were the initial means of communication between the author and the coordinator of DSPS at ARC in Sacramento, California, Jon James. Follow-up discussions with Mr. James as well as
interviews with DSPS Deaf and Hard of Hearing counselor, Dana Brittingham-Garrido resulted in the content included in the handbook.

Mind mapping programs, such as Claro Ideas and Inspiration were employed to gain a perspective on the structure of the handbook. In addition reading programs like Microsoft and Adobe Reader text-to-speech were utilized to hear the project, rather than just read the ideas as they were developed by the author.

Once a concept was identified, Microsoft Publisher was the author’s choice for desktop publishing of the handbook. The author discovered a need to use an alternate program, Microsoft Word which allowed for a professional product and ease of use. The transition however did create a delay in production.
Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Should the author attempt such a project in the future, it is believed that the addition of collaborators would be beneficial. The research is a task which can be taken on singularly; however, production assistance does have merit. The end product is one that the author invested a great deal of thought and is hoped to be a benefit to many.

This project began as the result of an interest in the phenomenon of helplessness and powerlessness which translates into deficits in employment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers in the Sacramento Area and specifically at American River College. It morphed into a handbook for counselors who are non-specialists in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The research confirmed notion of negative stereotyping, learned helplessness, and generalized lack of awareness of one’s protections as provided by the ADA, FEHA, and EEOC.

In relation to the problem at American River College, the handbook was developed to increase knowledge of Deaf Culture, as well as to improve understanding between Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients and counselors who do not have an ability to utilize American Sign Language to communicate. The handbook’s goal is to empower the DSPS counselor toward increased confidence and competence when working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients.
Counselors may use the handbook as a tool toward self-empowerment as well as a resource for checking one’s own perceptions, attitudes and assumptions regarding Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients. Rather than avoiding appointments which may be unfamiliar, as the counselor navigates communication strategies and becomes aware of the individual needs of the client; it is hoped that they will choose to interact with Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients.

In bringing knowledge to the counselor, the consequence may be the empowerment of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing student, as they are able to meet with any counselor in DSPS with confidence. Increased access, and enhanced experiences, will serve to ready the student job seeker to become not only qualified but the most qualified candidate and more highly employable.

Recommendations

Collecting an annual inventory of the data regarding users’ opinions should be considered, and recommendations from Deaf and Hard of Hearing student clients, as well as faculty and staff, solicited in order to ensure delivery of services in accordance with the needs of the student clients. Although the handbook is designed as a synopsis in consideration of time limitations, a more detailed undertaking may yield immediate benefits with implementation, especially as DSPS counselors venture out to communicate with the population which was formerly referred.

It is the recommendation of the author that the handbook be expanded into a tool that will support a vocational curriculum specifically addressing the issues encountered
by Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as job seekers. Access to the materials should be structured in such a way that student clients would be responsible for the initiation and tracking of their individual success within the curriculum and seek DSPS Counselor input at various intervals during their experience.

Student client accessibility would be achieved by development of a visual platform, utilizing American Sign Language for primary communication and closed captions for those for whom captioned video is more appropriate. The development of a tool to gather information regarding student client satisfaction of the curriculum should be addressed, as well as a method in which the counselors may collaborate and improve the handbook and subsequent programs.
Appendix

DSPS COUNSELOR’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS
OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENT JOB SEEKERS
DSPS COUNSELOR’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING
THE NEEDS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
JOB SEEKERS

COUNSELOR’S HANDBOOK

By:

Mary A. Kelly, M.S.

Created in support of American River College’s
DPS Deaf Services
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PREFACE

This handbook has been created to be utilized on the American River College Campus, Sacramento, California which is within the Los Rios Community College District. The students who are identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing are the focus of this material, designed to be used by Counselors of the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) department.

Empowerment is the goal of this handbook as counselors will develop tools necessary to interact directly with students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Counselor focus upon their own increased knowledge and subsequent confidence will be of assistance when assisting their students towards becoming gainfully employed and self-advocacy.

This handbook will give the counselor the opportunity to examine challenges to working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students such as communication, cultural differences, and reduced confidence related to student interactions which are contrary to counselor empowerment. Methods and modes of communication are presented for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, as well as information about interpreters and access to that resource within DSPS. Differences in needs and obstacles faced by Deaf and Hard of Hearing students will be discussed and practical applications for counselors, such as how to read an audiogram are included and etiquette when working with interpreters.

In order to encourage counselor empowerment, the handbook includes worksheets intended to allow for self-reflection on matters such as personal bias and stereotypes.
related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Counselors will gain knowledge of the impact of traditional stereotypes upon Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as it relates to motivation, self-esteem and the students ability to become employed. Counselors will have increased understanding of the student’s employment challenges and be better equipped to advise Deaf and Hard of Hearing students toward their employment goals.

The handbook’s use will create increased effectiveness of the DSPS department with more of the counselors being empowered to deliver services to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as well as improve confidence of the students seeking services.
Definition of Terms

There are specific and specialized terms used by the author which will allow the reader increased cognition of the problem which will be delineated in the following:

- **ADA**: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications (Ed.gov, 2006)

- **Audiogram**: A graphic representation of the relation of vibration frequency and the minimum sound intensity for hearing (Merriam Webster, 2012)

- **CRCC**: Commission on Rehabilitation Counselors Certification; The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that sets the standard for quality rehabilitation counseling services through its internationally recognized certification program. Individuals passing the voluntary certification examination become qualified as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, or CRCs.

- **Culturally Deaf**: The cultural definition of Deafness represents a life and world view that is manifested by beliefs, values, and traditions unique to Deaf people and expressed through the use of American Sign Language (ASL) (Saladin &
Hansmann, 2009)

- Deaf: 56 or Greater dB loss-Severe to profound hearing loss. The term Deaf has a different meaning for those who Deaf people: A label of cultural identification. People may call themselves Deaf if they subscribe to the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the culture, even if their decibel loss is less than severe. (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007)

- Deaf Friendly: Atmosphere in which the needs of the Deaf individual are considered and attempts at accommodations are typical

- Discrimination: the treatment of consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than in individual merit (US Legal, 2012)

- DSPS: Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), is designed to promote equal access to all programs, services and facilities at American River College; DSPS provides a variety of support services to the student with a disability, at no additional cost. Specialized counseling services, Interpreters for the Deaf, tutors, note takers, readers, test facilitators, and mobility aides are provided to qualified students upon request ( Academic Support Services, 2009)

- EEOC: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person’s race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also
illegal to discriminate against a person because the person complained about
discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment
discrimination investigation or lawsuit (Equal Employment Opportunity
Commission, 1997)

- Empowerment: The process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to
make choices and to transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes
(Poverty Net, 2011)

- FEHA: Fair Employment and Housing Act A statute which prohibits employment
discrimination covering employers, labor organizations, employment agencies,
apprenticeship programs and any person or entity who aids, abets, incites,
compels or coerces the doing of a discriminatory act. It prohibits employment
discrimination based on race; color; religion; national origin; or ancestry; physical
disability; mental disability, or medical condition; marital status; sex or sexual
orientation; age, with respect to persons over the age of 40; and pregnancy,
childbirth or related medical conditions. The FEHA also prohibits retaliation
against for opposing any practice forbidden by the Act or filing a complaint,
testifying, or assisting in proceedings under the FEHA (California Fair
Employment and Housing Act-FEHA-Govenment code 12900-12966).

- Hard of Hearing: Mild to moderate hearing loss. Able to detect environmental
sounds with or without amplification. Meaning to Deaf people: A cultural
identification label-people might call themselves hard of hearing, even if unable
to hear anything, if they subscribe to the cultural norms, values and traditions of
the hearing majority (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007).

- **Learned Helplessness**: When an individual’s efforts have little or no impact on the
  outcome, motivation and subsequent efforts are reduced (Marks, 1998)

- **Most Qualified**: According to ADA a Qualified individual with a disability is a
  person who meets a legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements
  of an employment position that he or she holds or seeks, and who can perform the
  “essential functions” of the position with or without reasonable accommodation
  (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1997). The term “Most Qualified”
  is used in this handbook and refers to an increased level of preparedness used to
  overcome possible discriminatory objections to the employment of Deaf and Hard
  of Hearing individuals.

- **Reasonable Accommodation**: Reasonable accommodation is a modification or an
  adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant
  or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to
  perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes
  adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and
  privileges in employment equal to those of nondisabled employees (Equal

- **Self-Determination**: In the disability community, self-determination refers to
  individuals with disabilities, including person with intellectual disabilities, having
the same right to self-determination as all people, that is to have the freedom, authority, and support to exercise control over their lives (Hughes, 2012).

Challenges Faced by Counselors

Counselor’s Need to Read an Audiogram

One of the responsibilities of the DSPS counselor is to read an audiogram. Students who receive services must provide evidence of eligibility and for those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, that documentation would likely be an audiogram. Counselor understanding of what is represented in the audiogram is not only important to verify eligibility, but is also useful when determining what accommodations would be best for the student. The following is information which may be helpful for becoming familiar with reading an audiogram.

Understanding the ranges hearing is the first step in being able to discern the information contained in an audiogram. Hearing is described in terms of Normal Hearing, Mild Hearing Loss, Moderate Hearing Loss, Moderate- Severe Hearing Loss, Severe Hearing Loss and Profound Hearing Loss.

- **Normal Hearing** is hearing sensitivity thresholds 0dB-25dB.
- **Mild Hearing Loss** is hearing sensitivity thresholds 26dB-40dB.
- **Mild to Moderate Hearing Loss** is hearing sensitivity thresholds 41-55dB.
- **Moderate Hearing Loss** is hearing sensitivity thresholds 56-70dB.
- **Severe Hearing Loss** is hearing sensitivity thresholds 71-90dB.
**Profound Hearing Loss** is hearing sensitivity 90dB and beyond.

The following table illustrates the various levels of hearing upon an audiogram.

Table 1:

Audiogram showing levels of hearing loss

![Audiogram showing levels of hearing loss](image)

(Associates, 2012)

The numbers at the top of the table are pitch or frequency measured in Hertz (Hz). The pitch or frequency is read from left to right or from low to high. The numbers along the left of the table indicate loudness measured in Decibels (dB). Loudness is read from top to bottom or from soft to loud. At times you may have the opportunity to view an audiogram which was conducted on a student as a child. Notable differences are located in the values of normal range of hearing, as the range is smaller for children than for adults.
The following table is an illustration of ranges of hearing and includes normal range for a child that of an adult in notation along the right margin.

Table 2

Audiogram illustrating normal hearing child and adult

(Audiology Awareness Campaign, 2007)

In order to understand the impact of hearing loss upon the student it is important to know the level of sensitivity needed to detect sounds which we encounter in daily life. The following table is a graphic illustration of familiar sounds. Notice that that speech and the sound of particular letters of the alphabet are graphed in different regions of the audiogram.
The shaded area is known as a speech banana and covers the regions on the audiogram which are needed to understand speech. Most of the letters of the alphabet are within the banana with exception of q, w, x, and y. The combinations th, ch, sh, and y are also within the banana. These combinations can be difficult for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to hear. The letters c, i, u, and the combination ng, are located just outside the banana and may also be difficult sounds to distinguish.

Table 3

Audiogram of Familiar Sounds

(UM Physics, 2012)
Included in this section will be worksheets which address, the counselor’s knowledge of the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers; stereotypes and assumptions; and that utilizes the ADA’s definition of a qualified candidate and to itemize steps for preparing the student job seeker for vocational success.

The information in this handbook is directed toward DSPS counselors who have certification through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, and is based upon the assumption of adherence to ethical standards as outlined in the CRCC Code of ethics.

The author understands that certification and membership in CRC/CRCC is voluntary as well as the VR Counselor’s agreement to the ethical administration of counseling services. The author recognizes that the inclusion of the following information...
constitutes a personal bias which suggests that VR counselors should be certified and practice within a prescribed set of professional and ethical guidelines.

Ethical Guidelines

**Basics of Counselor Ethics**

According to the CRCC these are basic components of the code of ethics are:

◊ The Counseling Relationship
◊ Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
◊ Advocacy and Accessibility
◊ Professional Responsibility
◊ Relationships with Other Professionals
◊ Forensic and Indirect Services
◊ Teaching, Supervision, and Training
◊ Research and Publication
◊ Technology and Distance Counseling
◊ Business Practices
◊ Resolving Ethical Issues

(Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2010)

The counseling relationship is of particular importance as a counselor attempting to empower one’s clients. Rapport building and consideration of the client and their particular needs is necessary to move toward preparing a Deaf or Hard of Hearing job seeker for success (Benedict & Sass-Lehrer, 2007).
In order to develop a relationship with the student jobseeker, the counselor’s attention to ethical guidelines in the delivery of services is an important consideration (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004). Counselor training in communication is a key piece in this process and the counselor may wish to take classes in sign language, and Deaf culture to understand more fully the needs of the student job seekers (Feldman, Kluwin, & McCrone, 2005).

Deaf and Hard of Hearing student jobseekers value counselors who are prepared to interact with them in relation to their specialized communication and cultural needs (Houston, Lammers, & Svorny, 2010). Counselors who ascribe to programs which promote an adherence to ethical guidelines voluntarily participate in training which may assist them in remaining current with the needs and issues of their students, thus making them more effective (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004).

Perceptions, Attitudes and Assumptions Worksheet

The following worksheet is provided as a checklist to address the counselor’s knowledge of their own ideas toward Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. It is designed as a tool for further introspection and increased growth toward empowerment.
Table 4
Perceptions, Attitudes and Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception/Attitude/Assumption</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deaf people are more prone to accidents than hearing people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Deaf or Hard of Hearing worker will increase operating expenses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker morale will suffer due to the inability to communicate with the Deaf employee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know sign language, so I can’t communicate with the Deaf worker.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf and Hard of Hearing workers can only work in non-customer contact positions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs which require telephone response are not a good fit for workers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are able to do everything a hearing worker does, except hear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employer is the best judge of how to best communicate with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing worker.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers have the right to deny employment due to Deafness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussing Perceptions, Attitudes and Assumptions

1. **Deaf people are more prone to accidents than hearing people**—Although this is a popularly used objection to the hiring of Deaf and Hard of Hearing applicants, research shows that the opposite is true. Deaf workers have been shown to be more safety conscious than their hearing peers.

2. **Having a Deaf or Hard of Hearing worker will increase operating expenses**—Accommodations for workers who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are available at relatively minimal expense in the majority of situations, and an attempt at a reasonable accommodation is mandated. Employers may also take advantage of tax incentives offered by federally funded agencies such as the Department of Labor and the State Department of Rehabilitation.

3. **Worker morale will suffer due to the inability to communicate with the Deaf employee**—The effort of the employer to create an accessible workspace has been shown to increase employee morale. Increasing awareness and exposure of those employees identify themselves as nondisabled to Deaf and Hard of Hearing workers may create an atmosphere of tolerance which would assist in eliminating discriminatory practices and stereotypes.

4. **I don’t know sign language, so I can’t communicate with the Deaf worker**—Research has shown that Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals welcome attempts at communication by their hearing peers, as it gives them as persons with disabilities, the opportunity to educate those who are unfamiliar with Deafness.
5. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing workers can only work in non-customer contact positions**—The need to work with customers need not be an insurmountable obstacle for individuals identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Accommodations ranging from Alternative Listening Devices ALD’s, Talk to Text telephones are offered as possible solutions to communication concerns (Job Accommodation Network, 2012). Employers have a resource in the Job Accommodation Network, JAN which has a searchable database which offers solutions as well as practical examples of successful accommodations which were utilized by other employers.

6. **Jobs which require telephone response are not a good fit for workers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**—The impact of the employee’s functional limitations must first be assessed in order to determine whether telephone work is applicable to an employee who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Technology has effectively eliminated many of the barriers to telephone communication which previously prevented those with hearing loss to work in positions requiring the use of telephones. Text telephones and Video Relay Services are now tools which effectively level the playing field for those employees whose duties involve extensive customer interaction via telephone.

7. **Workers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are able to do everything a hearing worker does, except hear**—Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are as capable as any potential employee, if not more so. Lack of knowledge and limited
exposure to Deafness lends itself to a continued misconceptions regarding actual ability.

8. **The employer is the best judge of how to best communicate with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing worker:** The authority on how to best communicate with an employee who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing is the person who has identified themselves as such. Extensive experience in managing their communication needs denotes a level of expertise. Many Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are open to respectful attempts at interaction by hearing peers.

9. **Employers have the right to deny employment due to Deafness:** Deafness is a protected disability and laws exist to remind employers that there are alternatives to denial, including the interactive process, which may yield positive results for all.

**Communication Considerations**

When deciding how to approach communication with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing client the following points should be considered.

- **Degree of hearing loss** - Just as people are different, the experience hearing loss is not the same for everyone. As a counselor it is important to consider the degree of hearing loss your client is experiencing and seek to address communication, and accommodations according to the individual’s needs and preferences. The degree of an individual’s hearing loss is an important consideration not only for the counseling process, but also the employee’s job
search. The needs of a student job seeker who is considered from a medical perspective as Hard of Hearing may be very different from an individual identified as Deaf.

- **Client preference of mode of communication**- The client is the best judge of what method of communication is acceptable and works best for their needs. As part of the relationship building process, the counselor should ask the client how they prefer to engage in communication. Avoid stereotypical questions such as “Do you read lips?” or assumptions such as the clients use or knowledge of ASL for communication. Inquiry in a respectful manner should yield the information needed for effective communication.

- **Use of Interpretive services**- If your client requires the use of an interpreter, Deaf Services may be a first step for the counselor in order to facilitate communication. The student who is new to the college or to DSPS may not be aware of the process of requesting an interpreter for appointments. There are a minimum of two staff interpreters on campus to assist those clients who are new to the campus, however if they are not available there are other options available to the counselor. Assistive devices are available such as real time communication device Ubi-Duo™. The device is a face-to-face communication (sComm, 2012), tool which allows the client to communicate by use of a keyboard and a LED display. The device has two components which allow two parties to communicate with each other by typing.
Technological accommodation—Deaf Services offers assistive listening devices (ALD’s) for the use of student clients which may be helpful when working with individuals whose hearing can be enhanced by amplification. FM systems and pocket talkers are available and may be borrowed for the duration of the semester. Counselors should refer the student to Deaf Services in order to obtain the unit appropriate for their needs.

Client preference of mode of communication—As a counselor it is important to recognize one’s limitations as it relates to communication with those individuals who, for example communicate with American Sign Language. It is conceivable that one may have some signing experience, however that experience would be considered insufficient to meet the needs of your client. Perhaps the best method of making such a determination is to inquire of the client, their preferred method of communication and how that to go about that process.

The vocational choice of the client is an important consideration for the counselor as they enter into the exploration phase of the counseling process.

- Type of job
- What job tasks are performed
- How are the job tasks typically performed
- Who does the client need to communicate with
- How is that communication to occur
Table 5

Student Job Seeker Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Check if completed</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educate client of their rights as an job seeker/employee FEHA and ADA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments of interests, skills and education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss the need for skills augmentation i.e. update job skills; acquire new skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a plan for goal acquisition including a timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have client practice accessing community resources i.e. One Stop, Career fairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach and practice a model for self-accountability</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in developing a master application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in developing a competitive resume</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training the Client to be the Most Qualified Candidate

The necessity of vocational training must be recognized by the counselor, as Deaf and Hard of Hearing job seekers continue to be at a significant disadvantage as they attempt to enter the work force.

Educating the client is an important factor in preparing the student job seeker to become the most qualified candidate. An overview of the ADA and FEHA would be of useful when entering into vocational exploration. Many clients are generally aware that there is protection under ADA, however are unable to articulate the ways in which they are covered. More salient is the absence of cognizance related to the criteria of being a qualified applicant.

Initial assessments with regard to skills and training may offer a starting point for the counselor when entering into vocational exploration including the need for additional coursework or remediation. Counselor’s use of the Empowerment Checklist will assist the professional with delivering effective and systematic intervention to the student job seeker.

Most Qualified Candidate

Information every Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seeker needs to know, before applying for a job. As the counselor the focus should be upon the qualification of one’s client. Once the vocational title or goal has been determined in the most specific of terms, an inventory of education, skills and experience should be considered.

In order to present oneself as the Most Qualified candidate, there must be some
substantiation of such a distinction. According to the ADA the definition of a *Qualified* individual is as follows: “an individual who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of the employment position such individual holds or desires, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of such position. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability against a qualified individual (Job Accommodation Network, 2012). As a disabled applicant, the ADA’s protection covers the student job seeker assuming that the previously mentioned criteria are met.

With 11.6% unemployment in the state of California and 11.2% in the Sacramento area (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Employment Summary Tables, 2012) competition for career positions is considerable. Clients must not only be aware of their own skills and accomplishments, but also the current trends and outlooks pertaining to the occupation of which they are pursuing.

The counselor’s role is to ensure that clients are placing themselves in position not only to be competitive, but also successful at attaining the career of choice with
consideration of factors which affect the population as a whole; the availability of jobs, local and national economy and variances employer confidence.

Presentation is a critical component and begins with the application process. As the counselor it is to your advantage to offer your client the most direct path to their goal and as such the following list may be of assistance.

- Encourage the client to examine the Job Announcement
- Identify the ways in which the client’s qualifications match what the employer’s need
- Delineate areas of experience and skill which specifically address the fulfillment of the announced need
- Assist the client to applying for the desired position, being careful to address issues such as filing deadlines and specifics of filling out the application document itself
- Encourage the Inclusion of a letter of introduction as well as a resume, unless the prospective employer specifies that inclusion of such information is unnecessary

Client appointment times in DSPS are limited in duration and as such; the steps may be addressed singularly and in succession in order to appropriately address the student job seekers wishes.

Conclusion

The information set forth in this manual gives an overview of the specialized needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers. Counselors should consider the
adding the voluntary participation in the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification as a vehicle to enhance one’s continuing education. CRCC’s code of ethics serves as a mechanism for reinforcement of counselor competence as well as proactive activity toward continued growth and development.

Considerations for interaction with Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seekers include a willingness on the part of the professional counselor to attempt communication. Functional capacity is to be determined in order to appropriately accommodate the needs of the client. The counselor may want to resist the inclination to discovery etiology of the clients hearing loss, as it is not necessarily a predictor of current functionality.

The student job seekers are the best resource when it comes to information of how to communicate with them and discover what they believe are important aspects of their individual culture. Asking questions is part of the counseling process and those issues of communication and culture should be naturally occurring topics.

Review with the client their rights, as participants of DSPS and as student job seekers, particular emphasis should be given the requirement for a disabled applicant to be qualified as per ADA criteria.

Counselors should have an understanding of the disparity between employment rates for nondisabled job seekers and disabled applicants and its significance. Preparation towards becoming the Most Qualified candidate may be invaluable to the potential employee.
Continued self-assessment with relation to attitudes, perceptions and assumptions as a matter of practice will serve not only to empower the professional in their professional development but as a consequence empower the Deaf and Hard of Hearing student job seeker toward the attainment of sustainable employment.
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