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The Transition Experiences of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Into Postsecondary Education

Christy S. Adkins

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THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCES OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS INTO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

by

Christy S. Adkins

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The College of Education and Human Services

Department of Educational Studies, Leadership, and Counseling

at Murray State University

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

P-20 & Community Leadership

Specialization: Postsecondary Education

Under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Brian Bourke

Murray, KY

August 2020
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To Ted who has supported this endeavor and all my endeavors without fail. Ted, thank you. To Conner, Kendall, Lauren and Layne, who have been my cheerleaders and believed in me, when I doubted myself. To Angie and Beth, your love and support of me is ever constant. To Dad, who raised a strong, determined daughter. Lastly, and especially, for mom. Always in my corner, always by my side, always proud. This is for you.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education were and what barriers exist within the transition process. It is evident that deaf and hard of hearing students face a number of challenges throughout their academic career. Aspects of deaf culture, language acquisition, and communication method, along with lack of support services further exacerbate, an already difficult transition from secondary school to college. This study sought to shed light on the additional obstacles faced by deaf and hard of hearing students, as they transition into their first year of college. The information contained within provides a better understanding of the transition process, the preparedness of deaf and hard of hearing students to transfer, and the readiness of postsecondary institutions to meet the needs of this special population.

*Keywords*: transition planning, Deaf, postsecondary education
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Deaf and hard of hearing children face a number of challenges throughout their lifetime. One of the biggest challenges often exhibited is the academic under-preparedness. This lack of preparedness can be attributed to challenges with language acquisition, chosen mode of communication, and a shortage of appropriate support services while attending elementary and secondary school (Marschark, 1997). These early challenges make it most difficult for students who are deaf and hard of hearing to transition into postsecondary education. As a result, issues with feelings of isolation, lack of belonging, and acceptance are often insurmountable. Simply stated, transition into postsecondary from secondary school can be defined as

the result of comprehensive team planning that is driven by the dreams, desires and abilities of youth. A transition plan provides the basic structure for preparing an individual to live, work and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible. (United States Department of Education, 2017, p. 1)

Although the Department of Education provides an easily understood concept, transition and change is complex, especially when considering transition from secondary to postsecondary education. This change from secondary to postsecondary education can be a very challenging and difficult time for students. Students are often overwhelmed with their newfound responsibilities, feelings of isolation, and overall lack of confidence in their ability to succeed.

The transition to postsecondary education for students who are deaf and hard of hearing presents unique challenges, and often times leaves these students feeling unwelcomed and overwhelmed. This is in large part to issues with communication and feelings of isolation. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), “failure to have belongingness needs met may lead to feelings of social isolation, alienation, and loneliness” (p. 1). The Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Report
of Student Satisfaction at Gallaudet University concluded that 42% of incoming freshmen, who were either deaf or hard of hearing, did not feel welcome, and that they did not belong on campus (Levitz, 2018). Students who responded to the survey indicated that one of the major challenges facing the university was its ability to make students feel welcome on campus. This is a startling statistic given that these deaf and hard of hearing students were attending the preeminent college for the deaf in the United States. Davis (2013) further supports the idea that deaf and hard of hearing students do not feel welcome as they often feel alienated from public services and other functions, such as funerals, political rallies, and lectures on campus. One example is an article that chronicles the fake sign language interpreter at Nelson Mandela’s memorial service in December of 2013. This service was televised around the world, on both the national and international stage, yet someone posing as an interpreter was used to sign the message to those deaf and hard of hearing individuals watching the service on live television or in attendance at this service. This was one grim reminder of those within the deaf community that interpreter services are often inadequate and incorrect, and that colleges and universities do not often provide high qualified interpreters, citing expense as the main reason. Further, the interpreters that are hired on college and university campuses often lack skills interpreting academic language (Davis, 2013). As a result, much of what is interpreted within the classroom is misinterpreted leaving the students with a lack of understanding and feeling as if they are not important. Feelings of welcome and belonging, or lack thereof, are the not the only factors that predict successful transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education. But in order to truly understand what the primary challenges are, one must understand the nature of both the population and the culture.
Description of the Population

Age of onset, degree and type of hearing loss, acquisition of language, and communication methodology each affect the education of deaf and hard of hearing students, as each of these factors plays a role in academic achievement, and often lack thereof (Marschark, 1997). One of the most important factors in achieving academic success for a deaf child depends on when the child was diagnosed with a hearing loss and how quickly appropriate interventions were put into place (Cole & Flexer, 2007). These interventions depend on the type of loss and the chosen mode of communication parents decide to use with their deaf or hard of hearing child. Hearing loss varies in degree from mild to severe/profound, and in terms of conductive or sensorineural loss. Sensorineural loss is much more severe and is permanent, whereas a conductive loss can be corrected with mediation (Stach, 2010). The degree and type of loss present their own unique challenges, thus decisions about appropriate educational placement and appropriate communication mode pose unique challenges as well.

Language acquisition in a deaf or hard of hearing child is atypical (Gleason & Ratner, 2009). This atypical development is often due to a late or misdiagnosis, and the longer a deaf or hard of hearing child goes without access to sound, the more difficult language acquisition becomes (Cole & Flexer, 2007). It is vitally important that a child who has been diagnosed with any degree of hearing loss gain access to sound by way of a hearing aid or cochlear implant (Cole & Flexer, 2007). Sound awareness is key for the development of listening and spoken language, and the sooner a child has proper amplification, the more likely they are to develop language over time (Marschark, 1997). Children who are not aided lack sound awareness and often rely solely on American Sign Language as their formal language. In either scenario, whether through spoken or signed language, development will progress more slowly and will
depend greatly on special education, speech therapy, and other support services (Gleason & Ratner, 2009). As a result, children with hearing loss often perform well below their same-aged hearing peers (Marschark, 1997), including the areas of reading comprehension and literacy skills (Hrastinski & Wilbur, 2016). Although reading comprehension skills are tested as early as the first grade, in deaf and hard of hearing students, nearly one-half of all deaf students in the United States read on a fourth-grade reading level, and only 7% of those students achieve a 7th grade reading level upon graduation from high school (Hrastinski, & Wilber, 2016).

Additionally, a study by Hrastinski and Wilber (2016) indicated that the English literacy skills of deaf and hard of hearing children are positively correlated with their sign language skills. Those students who are highly proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) outperformed their less proficient peers (Hrastinski & Wilbur, 2016). As a result, communication method has a major impact of educational attainment, and many methods exist. Among the most popular methods are American Sign Language, Auditory-Oral approach, and Total Communication (Schwartz, 2007). Other methods exist, but these are most widely used by deaf and hard of hearing children.

Often times, decisions about communication methodology are left up to the parents. This is important to note, as nearly 90% of all deaf children are born to hearing parents (“Quick Statistics,” 2016). Hearing parents typically have little to no knowledge about hearing loss, and have less understanding about communication options. As a result, parents typically choose the communication method that they use themselves, and is most often spoken English (Schwartz, 2007). Children born deaf to deaf parents use ASL as their primary mode of communication, as this is the language used most within the home, if not exclusively (Schwartz, 2007). Although a description of the population to be studied is necessary, a more important aspect to
understanding the transition needs and challenges of deaf and hard of hearing students requires an understanding of the unique culture that is Deaf culture.

**Description of Deaf Culture**

In order to understand the challenge of transition education for deaf and hard of hearing students, it is necessary to understand the unique perspectives shared by those within the deaf community, and how those views influence postsecondary aspirations. According to Tucker (1998), it is widely understood within deaf culture that deafness is not seen as a disability that needs to be fixed. This is an important distinction and helps explain the two groups that exist within the deaf community. Defined by either lower case (d) or capital (D), there is an important difference made. Typically referred to as either big D or little d by those in and outside of the community, and identified as such throughout the remainder of this paper, little “d” deaf individuals do not often associate themselves with members of the deaf community, as they do not perceive themselves as welcome. Often lower case (d) individuals feel isolated from the uppercase (D) deaf community, because they lack sign language skills and knowledge about deaf culture (Marschark, 1997). Moreover, this group views their hearing loss in terms of a medical condition only, and more often than not, they seek medical intervention.

The opposite is true for those in the (D) deaf community who view deafness as a birthright, an inclusion in a community with a proud history and culture. As mentioned earlier in this paper, nearly 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents (“Quick Statistics,” 2016) and as such typically seek medical and audioligic intervention. These interventions may include hearing amplification, such as hearing aids or cochlear implants. Those who are big (D) deaf identify themselves as culturally deaf and maintain a very strong deaf identity. So strong is this identity that there is much controversy around deaf and hard of hearing children receiving
cochlear implants. Since those that view themselves as Deaf see this as a cultural identity, rather than a disability, they insist that it be preserved (Tucker, 1998). The use of cochlear implants, particularly in prelingually deafened children, has caused much controversy, as it is seen as an invasive treatment, and a threat to deaf culture (Tucker, 1998). A cochlear implant is a surgically implanted device that helps mimic the function of the cochlea and replaces the function of damaged sensory hair cells inside the inner ear to help provide clearer sound than what hearing aids can provide. Cochlear implants help aid the restoration of hearing and speech understanding in individuals with severe to profound hearing loss (“National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders,” 2017).

“Because cochlear implants have the potential to eliminate ramifications of deafness, they are opposed by Deaf culturists, who view efforts to cure deafness or ameliorate its effects as an immoral means of killing Deaf culture” (Tucker, 1998, p. 6). This staunch belief is held particularly among deaf individuals who are born to deaf parents (Berke, 2018). In research conducted by Mitchell and Karchmer (2002), nearly 10% of all children born deaf have deaf parents, and are referred to as deaf-of-deaf, and strongly identify with big (D) Deaf culture. Since the distinction is made between the two groups, some level of prejudice is present. This is in large part due to the hierarchy which exists within the Deaf Community. Those deaf individuals born to deaf parents are met with some prestige within the community, while those outside of that category are not part of the Deaf Community at all (Ladd, 2003). The same can be said for those who use cochlear implants, who are viewed as outsiders as well. These distinctions between in/out groups begin early in a deaf or hard of hearing child’s life, often based on preferred mode of communication and use of amplification, and as such influences parents’ decisions made in regard to academic interventions (Marschark, 1997).
To further explain deaf culture, it is important to explain the concept of Deafhood and how deaf individuals define themselves, their culture, and their own ways of being in the world (Kusters & De Meulder, 2013). According to Kusters and De Meudler (2013) the concept of Deafhood hopes to disrupt deafness from a medical orientation perspective and other oppressive discourse that give Deafness a negative connotation. The term Deafhood was first coined by Dr. Paddy Ladd as early as 1993, based on an article in a Gallaudet publication (Ladd, 2003). The popularity of this phrase was wide spread and lead to the Deafhood movement that was popular throughout the deaf community through the mid to late 1990s. It was so popular among deaf individuals that it became a buzzword that was tattooed on arms and feet, and additionally was commercialized on cups, t-shirts, bags, and buttons (Ladd, 2003). Further, this popular phrase was used in meetings and to support activism within the deaf community. This movement was meant to liberate individuals within the deaf community, much like the feminist movement did for women. It did provide an avenue for deaf people to find their voice and to take their place in the world.

The Deaf President Now (“Gallaudet University,” 1988.) movement was a result of newly found empowerment by those within the deaf community. Deaf President Now took place on Gallaudet’s campus back in the spring of 1988. During this time period the Gallaudet community had asked repeatedly for a deaf president to be appointed, as a deaf individual had never been appointed president at the institution. Since Gallaudet University was the first university specifically chartered for deaf and hard of hearing students, the Deaf community felt it important that the legacy of the institution be maintained by hiring a deaf individual as its president. Against the wishes from the campus community at large, Elisabeth Zinser was named president of Gallaudet by the Board of Trustees, in 1988. This appointment led to outrage
among deaf students, faculty and staff at Gallaudet. This outrage in large part, was the fact that Zinser was hearing impaired, but not deaf, and as such was not considered a suitable or qualified candidate for the position. As a result, a formal protest was organized on campus (“Gallaudet University,” n.d.). The students, faculty and staff made the following demands on the Board of Trustees and current Gallaudet administration:

1. Zinzer must resign immediately.
2. Chairperson of the Board of Trustees must resign immediately.
3. The Board of Trustees would be comprised of at least 51% deaf individuals.
4. No reprisals against any faculty, staff, or students who participated in the protest.

(“Gallaudet University,” 1988)

The protest created such a disruption to campus that the Board of Trustees conceded and Dr. I. King Jordan was named the 8th and 1st deaf president, of Gallaudet University. Since the late eighties, only those individuals who are deaf can serve as president (“Gallaudet University,” 1988).

This degree of control over a large university has further served to empower the deaf community as a whole and emboldened continued discrimination against those viewed as not deaf enough. This mentality is part of the reason further study of the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students’ needs examination. It is theorized by the author of this paper that those who are not “deaf enough” have a more difficult transition into postsecondary education, particularly when transitioning into an institution like Gallaudet University, which serves deaf students as its primary population.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education. Further, this study seeks to identify what barriers exist within the transition process.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions that sought to determine what the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students are, and what barriers exist within the transition process into postsecondary education for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Research question one. What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?

H₀: Students have a number of experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.
H₁: Students have no experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.

Research question two. What barriers are present in deaf and hard of hearing students transition into postsecondary education?

H₀: No barriers are present within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.
H₁: A number of barriers exist within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Need for the study

Minimal literature exists that examines the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education. Further, even less information is available on how deaf and hard of hearing students perceive their first year of college and how these perceptions impact persistence. Lack of social interaction and feelings of unwelcome and dissatisfaction make it difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students to be successful beyond their first year.
As is evident in Chapter 2, much of the literature that addresses the educational experience of deaf and hard of hearing students in education is dated. This is especially true for literature addressing experiences in postsecondary education, specifically in terms of experiences for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Significance of the study**

This study sought to identify the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students, and the barriers that exist that make transition into postsecondary education challenging. It is evident that deaf and hard of hearing students, face a number of challenges throughout their academic career, and this study sought to shed light on the additional obstacles faced by deaf and hard of hearing students, as they transition into their first year of college. This information provides a better understanding of the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students, allowing colleges and universities, to implement best practices.

**Definitions, symbols, abbreviations**

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act - law passed to protect against discrimination for those individuals with disabilities, within a variety of settings, including school and work

ASD - American School for the Deaf - one of the first schools for the deaf in the country

ASL - American Sign Language A formal language with its own syntax, morphology and grammar

AS - Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children – study conducted to determine overall educational needs of deaf and hard of hearing children

Deafness – the inability to hear

Deafhood – the right of deaf individuals to participate in deaf culture
(d) deaf – individuals often seek medical intervention and do not see themselves as members of the deaf community

(D) Deaf – individuals who do not think deafness is a disability, use ASL as their primary mode of communication and belong to the deaf community at as whole

Hard of Hearing – and individual who has some degree of hearing loss, varies across frequencies

Transition – moving from one issue or event to another

Transition Planning – a formal plan of action to ensure the transition of a special education student from one level of education to the next

IEP - Individualized Education Plan - a formal, legal document that outlines all the special education services a student with a disability should receive

TOR - Transfer of Rights - rights of an individual’s students to be in charge of their educational and academic placement, career once during eighteen years of age

SOR - Summary of Performance - a document outlining all the current levels of performance and individual students possess, and their goals, aspirations in regard to their transition from high school

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – a law that provided more detailed information for the education of students with disabilities

Summary

In summary, the unique needs and challenges faced by deaf and hard of hearing students make transition into postsecondary education difficult. Further, these challenges are exacerbated by decisions made early in the life of a deaf and/or hard of hearing child, in terms of communication methodology and educational preference (auditory-oral versus ASL). These decisions, unknowingly at the time, often divide deaf and hard of hearing children into two types,
either (d) deaf or (D) deaf. The later allows membership into a rich and proud deaf culture and community, while the former gives the impression of not belonging, or being welcome. This perceived “outsiderness” makes it difficult for students to acclimate in a variety of settings, particularly in an academic setting, making transition to postsecondary trying at best. The purpose of this study is to determine what the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students are and what barriers to transition exist. The knowledge gained from this study should inform future research, providing a road map to better prepare deaf and hard of hearing students for academic pursuits beyond high school, while providing educators with necessary information to produce best practices in transition education.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review will outline key aspects of the overarching literature in regard to the transition of deaf and hard of hearing into postsecondary education, including: the history of the deaf in the United States, explanation of transition services, and history of transition planning. Further, the impact of self-determination and friendships on transition, transition planning for general populations, transition for deaf and hard of hearing students, social factors, and academic success are reviewed. Lastly, effective transition planning, readiness of postsecondary institutions, readiness of deaf and hard of hearing students, and the conceptual framework of the study will be discussed.

History of Education of the Deaf in the United States

In 1817 the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb was established, now known as the American School for the Deaf (ASD). Founded by Mason Cogswell, Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and Laurent Clerc, it recently celebrated 200 years of service to the deaf community in the United States (Benito, 2017). The work of Cogswell, Gallaudet, and Clerc paved the way for current best practices in deaf education and the use of American Sign Language as a means of educating children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Until ASD was established, deaf and hard of hearing children were either kept at home or institutionalized. With the creation of the ASD, these children were able to participate in formal, specialized education for the first time in history. Since that time, graduates from ASD established state schools across the country, the majority of which are still in operation today (Benito, 2017). Although state schools for the deaf have proven beneficial providing students with a sound secondary education, it would not provide enough benefit for these students long-term. It was Edward Gallaudet who realized that obtaining a high school education would not be
sufficient to support deaf and hard of hearing students into adulthood. As a result, he founded the Columbia Institute of the Deaf and Dumb, later to be known as Gallaudet University. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed an Act of Congress, giving Gallaudet University the ability to confer postsecondary degrees. This would provide the first opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing students to receive a postsecondary degree (Benito, 2017).

Located in Washington, D.C., Gallaudet University provides a bilingual, multicultural institution for deaf and hard of hearing students. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 1,075 undergraduate and 410 graduate students were enrolled. Although the vast majority of students attending are either deaf or hard of hearing, about 8% of the total enrollment is comprised of hearing individuals (Gallaudet University, 2019). The hearing students enrolled do so to receive their degrees in either deaf education or interpreter services, as few of these programs exist across the country. Gallaudet University, along with the National Technological Institute for the Deaf (NTID), helps support the postsecondary education of deaf and hard of hearing students across the country. A few community colleges in the nation provide two-year and technical degrees for deaf and hard of hearing students pursuing postsecondary education as well. These institutions provide disability resources and other specific support services to enhance the educational opportunities for all students enrolled. Faculty and staff are specifically trained and educated to support the unique learning needs of this population. As such, transition services are a key component of the educational process, and it is important to understand how transition services evolved in the United States over time.

**Explanation of Transition Services**

In order to understand the transition to postsecondary education, one must understand what transition services are and how they benefit students. The reauthorization of the
Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA) would mandate transition planning for all K-12 students that had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2002). The transition process requires the following:

1. The transition process must begin before a child is 16 years old.
2. The transition plan must include the strengths, preferences and interest of the student.
3. The transition plan must include opportunities to develop skills for both work and community life.
4. The plan must be developed and implemented by the IEP team, along with the student, parents, and optimally with employers, college representatives, and student advocates as members of the team.
5. The transition requires the Transfer of Rights (TOR), which requires that before a student reaches ages of majority and legally becomes an adult, the school must alert the student and provide notices of upcoming meetings to the student. When the student comes of age, the student will receive notices and information about the transition plan; the parents will no longer be involved.
6. The transition plan includes a Summary of Performance (SOR). This is a document provided by the school to the student prior his/her graduation from high school. The document includes a summary of the academic and functional achievements of the student, as well as the transition needs. The summary must be specific to the individual needs of the student and include meaningful, useful information. Further, it must be written so that the student can understand. It must include recommendations about how to help the student meet his/her postsecondary goals. The SOP must be reviewed at the student’s final transition planning meeting.
Implementing a transition plan for a student is difficult and complex (Etscheidt, 2006). As a result of the complexity, many parents find themselves dissatisfied with the process and seek legal guidance. This in turn brings into question how adequate transitions services are, as transition planning represents a significant area of litigation (Etscheidt, 2006). The rationale behind transition planning is that it will provide for continuous improvement of graduation rates and the low postschool achievement of students with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). Unfortunately, achievement has been inconsistent, as noted by Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, (2002). These authors suggest that many young adults with disabilities have a great deal of difficulty in finding success at the postsecondary level. This difficulty is in part due to lack of academic preparedness, complexity of transition planning, and the legal issues that often arise from questions with the transition process. This along with the student being solely responsible for his/her transition plan once they reach the age of eighteen, further complicates the transition of students with disabilities into postsecondary education. Although it is important to understand the transition services, of equal importance is the understanding of how transition planning began.

**History of Transition Planning**

Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1999 actually provided definitions for transition services (Kohler & Field, 2003). As early as 1983, there was legislation written into IDEA to discuss transition planning for special education students, but definitions were ambiguous leaving school districts across the country to make varied and inaccurate interpretations of the law. New language in the amended act sought to include the student in the decision-making process, so that individual student needs, interests and preferences about next steps about educational and career options were considered. Amendments made in the 1997 re-
authorization of IDEA mandated that students receiving transition services be a part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings starting at age 14. This was the first time in the history of special education that a student was allowed to have a voice and participate in their transition planning (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Interestingly, research by Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan (1991) suggests that students who were involved in their transition planning process were more likely to meet their long-term educational and/or career goals. When IDEA was reauthorized again in 2004, language was written that mandated that a student be involved in his/her transition planning. These mandates also included specific language about building on the strengths, personal preferences, and interests of the student. Further, the mandate required that college personnel, employment agencies, and student advocates be a part of the IEP team to ensure successful transitions of students either into postsecondary education or a career (Estchedit, 2006). It is not enough, however, to ensure that the correct plans and processes are in place. It is important to look at factors that influence the success of students as they transfer into postsecondary education. One such factor is how students, particularly those with a disability, view their overall abilities and capabilities to succeed.

Along with involvement in transition planning, self-determination has proven to be an important factor in examining the success of special education students as well. Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) found that after being out of school one year, students who graduated from special education programs were likely to be employed making higher earnings if they had high self-determination scores during their final year of high school.

Research over the last several years suggests that self-determination is an important aspect of the overall success of students in general, but particularly so for students with special
needs. Specifically, students with special needs must navigate not only their necessary accommodations, mandates by ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), but must also navigate their academic course work and social life as well. According to Getzel and Thomas (2008), many students enter college either underprepared or unwilling to share their disabilities with others, particularly faculty and staff, due to the stigma often created by revealing such. They typically also lack the knowledge and understanding needed to advocate for the special services and programs made available to them on campus. Getzel and Thomas (2008) also suggest that students with disabilities do not often disclose, as they see college as a fresh start in school after dealing with difficulties throughout both their elementary and secondary education.

**Impact of Self-Determination and Friendships on Transition**

Self-determination is a combination of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that helps students make choices and engage in goal-directed, self-regulated behavior (Luckner & Sebald, 2013). Specifically defined, self-determination is the “ability of individuals to live their lives as they choose, consistent with their own values, preferences, and abilities” (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2010, p.500). As early as 2007, self-determination was identified as a best practice in special education and transition services (Algozzine, Browder, Karvonen, Test, & Wood, 2001). Although identified as a best practice for special education in general, little research exists in regard to self-determination and successful transition of deaf and hard of hearing students, and thus self-determination will be an aspect of the survey instrument used to determine its importance to the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students. Self-determination is not the only factor in the successful transition of deaf and hard of hearings students; friendship has also proven important.
According to Millen, Dorn, and Luckner (2019) friendship is high on the list of factors that provide one with a sense of happiness, joy, and meaning. Additionally, friendship it typically the first bond most children and youth experiences outside of family. Those friendships provide skills that help a child adjust both socially and emotionally, helping them establish conflict resolution, negotiation, and other important interpersonal skills (Millen et al., 2019). Friendships also provide one with help, guidance, safety and a sense of a belonging; as social creatures, belonging is an important factor in developing self-worth (Laursen, Bukowski, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2007). Hearing loss can be isolating making it difficult for friendships to develop (Laursen et al., 2007). Research suggests that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have fewer friends and interacted less often. Conversely those deaf and hard of hearing students who had higher language skills more easily engaged in social interactions and thus developed friendships more readily (Millen et al., 2007).

Lastly, mode of communication, signed verses oral communication, can also affect the development of friendship among deaf and hard of hearing students. Those that sign versus those that do not may find themselves once again on the outside of things, as they do not speak the language to communicate, which is a factor in the development of friendships. As such, this too can be isolating. This isolation seen both from a social and emotional standpoint, as well as an academic one, continues to make it difficult for students who are deaf and hard of hearing to adjust in all aspects of their lives (Millen et al., 2007). It is not surprising, then that these same factors make it challenging for deaf and hard of hearing students in terms of transition into postsecondary education (Luckner, 2002). In order to further understand these challenges, it is important to understand the unique trials presented to deaf and hard of students in terms of transition.
Transition Planning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

John Luckner (2002), a leading researcher in the field of deaf education, posits a number of reasons that transition planning for deaf and hard of hearing students is important. These include: transition planning is mandated in legislation, and transition into postsecondary education represents a milestone change in the life of any individual, but presents unique challenges for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (Luckner, 2002).

In an effort to understand the unique issues related to transition, it is important to first understand the demographic composition and the social, economic, and educational challenges facing this population of students. Currently, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019), there are 20,000 deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled annually in postsecondary institutions in the United States. However, overall, there has been a decline in the number of deaf and hard of hearing students, due to a decrease in birth rates between 1984 to 1994 (Allen, 1994). During that same decade, elementary and high school experiences of these students saw a drastic change. Many students exiting high school during that period attended local or mainstreamed educational programs, as opposed to attending residential schools or day programs specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing students (Allen, 1994). These mainstreamed educational settings provided opportunities to learn with hearing peers during instruction.

During this same decade, according to the Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Gallaudet University, Research Support and International Affairs, 2003) there was a decrease in the number of students attending special schools. This finding correlates with an additional finding by the Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, (2013) that students who have a less severe hearing loss are more likely to attend mainstreamed, public
institutions. Changes in workforce also have an impact for students transitioning out of high school into postsecondary education as well. Lastly, one element that has not changed is the academic performance of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Allen (1994) states that about one-half of students leaving special education programs had a fourth-grade reading level upon graduation. Luckner (2002) states that barriers faced by deaf and hard of hearing students in college are due to gaps that occurred during their early learning and development. These gaps, like gaps in reading level and reading comprehension, make it difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students to succeed: “70% of all deaf students entering college exit without graduating” (Stinson, Scherer & Walter, 1987, p. 244). This is a startling statistic and may be in light of Luckner’s suggestion that gaps in early learning impact academic success later.

Stinson and colleagues (1987) discuss skill gaps in math and science, as well as reading, make it difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students to use traditional methods to transfer information into college. Even with the abundance of academic support services on college campuses, these deficits in learning are not often overcome, as the degree of the deficit may be too great. In addition, if one factors in the method of communication is an additional barrier, often these barriers are insurmountable for deaf and hard of hearing students to be successful. Lastly, the barrier that may be most difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students to overcome is the personal and social factors that make postsecondary education persistence difficult.

Social Factors and Academic Success

Being prepared academically is an important factor in student persistence in college. Equally important are the social factors that can make-or-break a first-year experience. Research suggests that deaf students drop out of college due to lack of socialization (Albertini, Kelly & Martchett, 2011). Albertini and colleagues (2011) contend that persistence in college is a
function of students’ interactions both academically and socially, and that informal, social interactions outside of class are vitally important to student success. In the article, (“Non-Cognitive Factors,” 2017) the author suggests that deaf and hard of hearing students who persist beyond their first year of college have high levels of social interaction. These interactions include participation in social events, clubs, sports, fine art activities, and most importantly, interactions with deaf peers.

However, participation in such events is often hindered by a number of factors. Not all colleges provide total communication and language access that allows for all deaf and hard of hearing students to communicate effectively. Often times, assistive listening devices, sign language interpreters, written materials, or closed captioning is not provided in all the necessary locations on campus, nor at all times (Porter, Camerlengo, DePuye, & Sommer, 1999). In addition, most deaf and hard of hearing students live and learn among hearing peers, faculty and staff. As such, they are asked to conform to the rules of a hearing culture making is difficult to fully integrate socially, or academically (Porter et al., 1999). These factors present real difficulties, as communication among deaf and hard of hearing individuals varies greatly among individuals. Communication as it related here is the “ability of deaf students to communicate with each other and with hearing peers in academic and social settings” (Albertini et al., 2011, p. 87). It is important to note that both English and ASL are utilized by deaf and hard of hearing students. This may take the form of signed, oral, or both in terms of communication delivery. Cawthon, Caemmere, Dickson, Ocuto, and Bond (2015) discovered that opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students to develop social skills depends largely on language modality, and family language use. Preferred mode of communication and the communication mode used at home did affect students’ ability to interact on campus. Often, a new mode of communication
has to be learned in order for a student to be successful. An example is ASL. There is a tremendous learning curve needed to acquire any new language, such is the case with ASL. This can be an isolating factor for students until they master and make practical use of the language, affecting their social interactions.

Stinson et al. (1987) discuss how important social satisfaction is to college persistence, but notes that participation in social events on campus did little to increase social satisfaction. In contrast, his research suggests that students who established personal relationships with roommates or dorm mates and developed independent living skills on campus felt more integrated. Further, they perceived a sense of belonging; thus, they felt more socially satisfied. To further support this idea, Boutin (2008) found that communication and social interactions in less formal settings were more positive indications of personal and social satisfaction among students. It should be noted that deaf and hard of hearing students who engaged in goal setting and made commitments to themselves and their learning proved important factors in personal satisfaction and persistence (Brown & Foster, 1989). Additional research by Brown and Foster (1989) suggested that both the social and personal experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students while in high school had a significant impact on their transition into postsecondary education as well.

Students that have disabilities that alter access to sensory information, like deafness, have an even more difficult time in social settings (Cawthon et al., 2015). This is in part due to missing important social cues and contexts when interacting with others. As a result, the path students who are deaf and hard of hearing take to achieve social interactions differs in comparison to social skills development among hearing peers. One important factor that influences social skill development is opportunities to interact with peers who use the same
communication mode. Deaf and hard of hearing students considered high performing were likely to have had their schooling take place in mainstream, public institutions (Luckner & Muir, 2001). Study results concluded three themes were important to overall success. This included acquisition of social skills commensurate with hearing peers, friendships, and involvement in extra-curricular activities while in school. Further, when deaf adults who were deemed successful by their peers were interviewed by Luckner and Stewart (2003), those interviewed stated that interactions with others, helped them learn important social skills, and equally important were opportunities to engage in conversations with family, involvement in organizations, sports, church activities, and having close, personal friendships in their current success.

Deaf and hard of hearing students historically had limited access to educational and extracurricular activities (Scholffstall, Cawthon, Dickson, Bond, Ocuto, & Ge, 2015). As the authors state, due to changes in legislation over the last several years, these opportunities are more prevalent than they once were, but are still few in number compared to opportunities for their hearing peers. In addition to the above-mentioned factors, self-determination, social networking, self-advocacy, perceptions regarding the academic institution, belonging and perceptions of the accommodation process for deaf and hard of hearing students play important roles in transition, overall persistence and academic success as well.

According to Getzel and Thomas (2008), “25% of youth with disabilities participate in postsecondary education after exiting high school” (p. 77). Even with the increase in students with disabilities attending college, self-determination for one’s academic success is vitally important to transition into college. Self-determination skills are a set of interpersonal skills that help students navigate their world. This skill set includes an acknowledgment and acceptance of
their disability and understanding of the support services they will need in college, the ability to articulate one’s disability accurately to others, and a willingness and desire to overcome one’s disability (Gentzel & Thomas, 2008). Further, it implies valuing education, an interest in learning, and confidence in their own capabilities and attributes (Deci, Vallerand, Pelleteir, & Ryan, 1991).

Self-determination alone is not enough to ensure positive outcomes for students in college. Specifically, one’s social network is another important factor in the retention and persistence of students beyond their first year of college. According to Thomas (2000), the most important source of influence in the lives of college students are their peers. Deaf students continue to enroll in postsecondary institutions at higher rates than ever reported before, but attrition rates remain high as well (Foster & DeCaro, 1991). Further, work by Stinson and Walter (1997) suggests that the degree of social interaction, or lack thereof, helps explain the high attrition rates of deaf college students and an inability to fully integrate into the institution. The study conducted by Foster and DeCaro (1991) sought to determine the degree to which deaf postsecondary students had access to and participated in social systems while in college. Specifically, the study looked at the social interactions of deaf and hard of hearing students at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, who lived in student housing, and how these interactions affected social interaction. The study concluded that those students who had more painful or difficult social interactions prior to enrollment in college had a more difficult time integrating socially and did not fare as well as those with more positive social experiences prior to their college enrollment (Foster & DeCaro, 1991).

Lastly, it is important to look at social belonging, and how belonging impacts social interaction and persistence. Fleming, Oertle, Plotner, and Hakun (2017) examined the social
factors that influence student satisfaction among students with disabilities. Their work concluded that belonging is an important factor, not only in overall student satisfaction but in terms of persistence as well. Belonging, according to Baumeister and Leary (1995), is the sense that one has made a connection or a relationship with another individual, and that a lack of belonging is predictive of negative outcomes for individuals. Further, they suggest that belonging is a basic human need. Abraham Maslow’s (1943) work on self-actualization also suggests that belonging is one of five needs all human beings must have met in order to be motivated. This theory can be extrapolated to suggest that one must have a sense of belonging in school to be motivated to interact, integrate and to succeed; for deaf and hard of hearing students this can and is often very difficult, making academic success hard to achieve.

Often, special populations of students do not feel as if they belong because they feel marginalized. Schlossberg (1989) states that, “people in transition often feel marginal and that they do not matter” (p. 1). Further, when an individual experience a transition of any kind the potential for feeling marginal can occur. Deaf and hard of hearing students may feel marginalized and as a result believe that they do not matter as well. Schlossberg (1989) also discusses why mattering is an important concept in the transition process. One must feel as if he/she matters in order to feel as if they belong. Thus, the psychological aspects of marginalization, mattering, and belonging are key considerations when looking at academic achievement among deaf and hard of hearing students.

**Effective Transition Practices**

In their study, “Transition-Focused Education,” Kohler and Field (2003) suggest a framework that includes effective transition practice. These elements include: student-planning, student development, interagency, and interdisciplinary collaboration, family involvement, and
program structure and attributes. Each of these elements plays a role in successful transition of students into postsecondary education and will be explained in detail. Student-focused planning requires that students be part of the transition process. Having the student involved in his/her transition planning allows the student to set specific goals, interests and preferences (Kohler & Field, 2003). Preferences are key. Until this point in the academic career of special education students had little say in regard to their future. Allowing personal preferences to be factored into the transition equation allows the student to develop self-awareness skills and supports self-determination. Additionally, Kohler and Field (2003) suggest that students who participate in student development activities apply learned self-determination skills, and have appropriate academic, living, social and occupational skills, have more positive postschool outcomes, which in turn help support more positive postsecondary outcomes.

In line with the work by Kohler and Field (2003), Luckner (2002) proposes a model of transition specifically for deaf and hard of hearing students, but suggests that this process for transition education begin much earlier than age fourteen. This is the current age, mandated by law, in which as student with a documented disability must be included in transition planning. Luckner (2002) suggests that waiting until middle school to begin the process is counterproductive, and the sooner an individual student becomes invested in their transition planning the better. Further, he suggests six stages of effective transition planning that include: develop behaviors for self-determination and self-advocacy; bring all special education professionals together early in the academic career of a student; include student, family, and professionals in the planning and assessment; identify priorities to implement the transition plan; and include transition goals in the individualized education plan (IEP) plan). Lastly, implement the (IEP) across all settings, evaluate progress and update the IEP as needed in relation to the
specific needs of the student. In addition to academic planning, a solid transition plan will include information about work and career preparation as well (Luckner, 2002).

It is important to note that not all students who are deaf and hard of hearing will transition into postsecondary education, as many will transition into the workforce immediately upon graduation. As a result, transition planning should include career planning and career awareness that provide students with opportunities to be involved in work ready experiences through their educational career (Luckner, 2002). When looking at transition of deaf and hard of hearing students to postsecondary education, one should look at the readiness of the institution to meet the unique needs of these students, as well.

**Readiness of Postsecondary Institutions**

In order to discuss preparedness of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education, one must understand how institutions are to receive them. One is not exclusive of the other and must be viewed in tandem. “The extent to which institutions are prepared to serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing will potentially have an effect on these students’ retention, graduation and future success” (Cawthon, Schoffstull, & Gargeroglio, 2014, p.3).

Additionally, the authors suggest that institutional preparedness is not merely the responsibility of specialized institutions, such as Gallaudet University, or the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. In actuality, the majority of deaf and hard of hearing students who attend college chose to attend mainstream colleges and universities with their hearing peers (Cawthon et al., 2014). Thus, it becomes the work of all institutions of higher learning to prepare for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Institutional readiness is difficult to measure, but one key measure that must be considered is student accommodations. “The quality of accommodations available on campus
and the type of resources the institution offers can be a significant factor in the overall education obtained by a student” (Leppo, Cawthon, & Bond, 2013, p. 190). Fortunately, over the last several years the numbers of and types of accommodations have risen, as a result of the number of deaf and hard of hearing students enrolling in college, has also increased. What is unfortunate, however, are the barriers many deaf and hard of hearing students still experience, even with accommodations and disability resources in place (Leppo et al., 2013). Although resources and accommodation may be in place, the effectiveness of these resources may be lacking. This is often impacted by educational legislation at the secondary to postsecondary level, as well as issues with implementation of services. The readiness of the institution plays a vital role in the success of deaf and hard of hearing students. It is also widely understood that deaf and hard of hearing students are often academically underprepared and perform well below their same aged peers (Marschark, 2007), and as a result do not often complete college. Actually, a number of factors predicts the academic success of a deaf and hard of hearing student, including aptitude, prior academic achievement, and demographic variables, along with institutional readiness (Convertino, Marshark, Spaere, Sarchert, & Zupan, 2009). With this knowledge in mind it is important to further examine the readiness of deaf and hard of hearing students to participate in postsecondary education.

**Readiness of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students**

Whether one agrees with the Individuals with Disabilities Act, it did provide all students with a disability the right to attend public school (Luft & Huff, 2011). Historically, individuals, including children with disabilities, were sent to asylums, poorhouses, or almshouses, or kept at home and did not receive any formal education (Minnesota Department of Administration, 2019). Since that time much progress has been made in the education of individuals with
disabilities. However, much work still needs to be done, and however well intended the IDEA, it may have done little to prepare deaf and hard of hearing students. Since deafness is a low incidence disability, there remain gaps in students’ academic achievement, particularly in terms of reading, writing and mathematical skills. This underachievement has impacted transition opportunities for students (Marschark & Hauser, 2008). Research by Luft and Huff (2011) states that little transition planning occurs within the mainstream, public school. Whether due to lack of funding, personnel, or appropriate resources, transition education did not take precedence amid other required content, curriculum, and intervention services. However, more time, personnel and resources were utilized on these endeavors in the state funded schools for the deaf, as administration in these institutions understood the importance of including transition planning within the curriculum taught (Luft & Huff, 2011). In a study by Garay (2003), deaf and hard of hearing students were surveyed about their transition experiences. The results of this survey concluded the following:

1. Students must be involved in their IEP meetings and be provided the tools necessary to actively participate.
2. Families must be more involved in the transition process.
3. Students felt teachers needed to be sensitive the feeling of parents, specifically in terms of deaf culture.
4. Language within IEP needed to jargon free and easily understood.

Deaf and hard of hearing a student recognized the importance of being personally involved and also recognized the importance of having their parents involved as well. Involvement by both parties, along with input from key school, workplace, or college personnel allowed for a better overall outcome for the students (Garay, 2003). Thus, overall student preparedness comes down
to a number of key factors: ability of the secondary institutions to provide transition planning, services and resources as part of the school curriculum (typically seen within a state school for the deaf); and the necessity of students, parents and key personnel in the transition planning process. These factors, along with self-determination, academic preparedness, and institutional effectiveness ensure a better prepared student for postsecondary education (Garay, 2003).

Postsecondary Transition for General Populations

When looking at the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students, one should examine how students who are not identified as a special population experience transition, and if differences exist among the two groups. Hussey and Smith (2010) contend that one of the most important roles at a college or university has is to ensure positive transition experiences and the avoidance of transition experiences that are not positive. Research suggests that there are a variety of characteristics that influence a student’s decision to enter into postsecondary education. Among these are ethnicity, gender, academic achievement and family characteristics (Lee, Almonte, Youn, 2013). Further, social factors also play a role in the decision to attend an institution of higher education. Social factors aid in the overall transition process, which was examined earlier in the literature review of this study. The importance of self-determination and friendship in terms of transition for special populations has been examined by Ribchester, Ross & Rees (2014). Their research examined how social networking is aiding students in their transition into college. This research is relatively new, and is not seen in the earlier work of transition theory or research in either general or special populations. In their article, “Examining the impact of pre-induction social networking on the student transition into higher education,” Ribchester et al. (2014) examine the effects of online social networking in the weeks leading up to the on campus “induction” or new student orientation and how this “pre-
induction” is assisting students into their transition into their first year of college. Current students and their level of “tech-savvy” prowess are characterized by (Ribchester et al., 2014) as being habitual users of social media, and as such if transition into postsecondary experiences are going to be positive ones, then colleges and universities must get on board to ensure that social networking platforms are an integral part of that transition process. As such, Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe (2007) argue that social media platforms like Facebook aid in the maintenance of old friendships and help facilitate new ones, which in turn facilitates social capital. Further, they contend that the use of social media platforms helps facilitate the transition into college, as these platforms are used prior to the first day experience programs to meet people and make connections (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2007). The notion of gaining social capital has been examined by Donnison, Penn-Edwards, Greenaway and Horn (2017) when they looked at a 4th generation first year experience program at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. This program used students’ social capital to assist in the transition to postsecondary education, by using social media platforms prior to the beginning of the first-year course for an incoming college freshman (Donnison et al., 2017). Social capital is defined as “the connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Donnison et al., 2017, p 64). Thus, social capital strategies were used to engage students and facilitate a sense of community among students. This sense of community allowed for a more smooth and successful transition into college. In comparing the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students’ transition into postsecondary education, with their hearing peers, or within the general population one can see that the strategies for deaf and hard of hearing students’ is based more on their transition plan that is established in middle school, as students with disabilities are required to have such a plan. However, mainstream students, did not need this
special type of transition plan, and seem to benefit best from using strategies that promote a sense of community prior to the beginning of college itself. Ultimately, in both cases it is the responsibility of the individual institutions to facilitate a positive and meaningful transition for all students.

In an effort to explain more about transition theory and its importance to a successful transition into postsecondary education the researcher looked at both Schlossberg’s theory of transition and chaos theory as they relate to the postsecondary transition of deaf and hard of hearing students. Both theories help explain the life altering and often chaotic experiences, one may go through in his/her lifetime, specifically examining, “transition” into college as a “life event”. Both theories provide a theoretical framework that help explain the nature of transition, and the effects life transitions may have on an individual.

**Conceptual Framework**

Nancy Schlossberg created a theory of transition that can be applied to any type of transition one might encounter for example, transitioning into a new job, or any other major life event. In this instance, graduation from high school and matriculation into postsecondary education is the major event to be examined. Schlossberg explains that any transition alters one’s life dramatically, thus roles change, relationships change, and routines and assumptions are changed (Schlossberg, 1981). This change in roles, relationships, routines and assumptions is seen in the transition to college and can be examined further. In the book, *Getting the Most Out of College*, Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) suggest that students transitioning to postsecondary education, see a change in every facet of their lives and must examine and re-evaluate their thoughts, ideas and feelings in terms of their life as a new college student.
Change can be difficult and particularly for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, as their disabilities present unique challenges to be successful in college. Further, Schlossberg (1989) developed the four Ss that help individuals deal with transition. These include: self, situation, support, and strategies. There are two components to self; personal and demographic. This domain deals with how individuals view life, gender, age, stage of life, state of health, and ethnicity. When examining self through the lens of a deaf and hard of hearing student, they are trying to determine who they are in light of the above-mentioned factors, but also their identity as a deaf individual. This is particularly true when students are trying to determine which “d” they belong, whether that is (D) or (d). As discussed in the literature review based on how a deaf individual identifies culturally, can impact how they are perceived by others, and thus how they perceive themselves. Support includes family, institutions, communities, and intimate relationships. Here one can see how support, or lack thereof, can either aid or deter an individual who is in the midst of transition. Again, looking specifically at deaf and hard of hearing students, support systems are a crucial part of their transition into college. Looking again, through the deaf cultural lens, support systems may be dependent on this factor as well. The in-group/out-group (Marshark, 1997) mentality could affect relationships, making systems of support hard to establish. Research presented in the literature review of this paper clearly indicates the importance of social support for deaf and hard of hearing students in college. The next S, situations are the triggers, timing, control, role change, duration, previous experiences, concurrent stress, and assessment that an individual deals with during the transition process. In this domain, the individual is dealing with things that caused the transition to occur, how this transition will change their life, and if there are any additional factors causing stress for the individual while dealing with the transition issue. Deaf and hard of hearing students transitioning
into college, may find the situation S as the most challenging. As mentioned in Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) the transition into college itself is a major step for students, as it changes every facet of their lives. Deaf and hard of hearing students face all of these changes as well, but also must navigate changes that deal specifically with their disability. These changes would include: issues securing appropriate academic support, issues with technology, both in/out of the classroom, and from an audiologic standpoint (Luckner, 2002).

Lastly, Schlossberg (1989) suggests that these strategies are essential to effectively deal with transition and may be viewed as coping skills. Simply stated, transition is an inevitable aspect of life, and human beings deal with transition in a number of ways. The domains identified by Schlossberg provide a context in which to manage transition, and the Schlossberg model can be used by deaf and hard of hearing students in their transition to college.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Transition of any kind in life is challenging, but especially so for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and specifically in relation to the transition into college. Often, many deaf and hard of hearing students have faced a number of difficult transitions long before it is time to transition into college. These transitions may have included the transition from one communication method to another (i.e. Spoken English to ASL), the transition from a mainstream, public school to a state sponsored school for the deaf, or the transition between various speech and hearing therapies, just to name a few. Additionally, these transitions often meant moving from one town to another to find an appropriate school, which made maintaining friendships and relationships difficult at best. Deafness can be an isolating disability and is often exacerbated by all the moving around to insure the deaf and hard of hearing student receives the best education possible in the least restrictive environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine what the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students are, as they matriculate into postsecondary education. Further, the study identified key barriers deaf and hard of hearing students face while transitioning into college.

Research Design

A fifteen question Likert-type scale survey was used. This provided consistency among all users, regardless of preferred method of communication of the study participants. The survey instrument was entitled “Survey of Transition Planning of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students into Postsecondary Education,” which was created by the researcher of this study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), researchers can create their own instrument using a custom template. This survey was created using a Google form template, to allow for ease in submitting
to the social media platform Facebook. Snowball sampling, specifically linear snowball sampling was used to recruit study participants. This type of sampling uses a non-probability sampling procedure, and is often used when study participants are difficult to locate (Rowland & Flint, 2001). To initiate the snowball sampling process, the researcher, contacted a student who is deaf at Gallaudet University, to whom the researcher is acquainted. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and an provided an explanation of the survey instrument with the individual. This individual in turn contacted deaf and hard of hearing classmates, friends, and colleagues, instructing them to complete the survey which was linked to the researcher’s page on Facebook. These individuals then contacted their classmates, friends and colleagues, as this is how snowball or linear sampling is designed to work, while allowing for confidentiality and anonymity among study participants. Additionally, the researcher shared the survey with Deaf Education colleagues, and the researcher’s dissertation chair shared the survey with his colleagues across a number of states. Lastly, the Murray State University Office of Disability Resources, sent the survey to students meeting the study criteria, that were registered with their office.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions that sought to determine what the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students are, and what barriers exist within the transition process into postsecondary education for deaf and hard of hearing students.

**Research question one.** What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?

H₀: Students have a number of experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.

H₁: Students have no experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.
**Research question two.** What barriers are present in deaf and hard of hearing students transition into postsecondary education?

H₀: No barriers are present within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.

H₁: A number of barriers exist within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.

**Description of the Population**

Students from two and four-year colleges and universities completed the survey; these students were enrolled at all levels of college, and represented a variety of college majors. Students were either undergraduate or graduate students, as both populations had unique perspectives about their transition experience, based on how recent they transitioned. Likewise, students who had some “distance” from their initial transition will have the benefit of time. Separation from the actual transition event, provided participants an opportunity for introspection to reflect upon their transition, thus having a different perspective to share.

**Description of Participants**

Participants ranged in from 18 to 41 years of age, and were representative of both undergraduate and graduate students, currently enrolled at either a two-year of four-year college or university. Respondents ethnic backgrounds included: Black, Hispanic, White, Asian and Non-Hispanic. The respondents’ majors ranged from Animation Arts to Undecided, with a variety of major identified across both undergraduate and graduate programs.

**Description of Sampling Procedures**

Twenty-four people participated in this study with a 100% completion rate. Considering the special nature of the subjects studied, the researcher was pleased with the overall outcome and response rate. The researcher found it difficult to get institutional research board approval from colleges and universities whose mission it is to educate students who are deaf and hard of
hearing, as many institutions, like the National Technical Institute for the Dead (NTID) indicated that this population was over studied. As a result of this response and similar responses from like-minded institutions, the survey was completed through social media (Facebook) and utilized snowball sampling.

**Procedures for Data Analysis**

Since the study was exploratory in nature, descriptive statistics were used to identify key demographic information among respondents. The demographic data provided important information to the researcher in regard to the type of deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled in postsecondary education.

A Chi-Square statistical test was used to examine the experiences deaf and hard of hearing students and their transition into postsecondary education. Chi-Square tests are used to look at the difference between categorical variables within the same population. Additionally, this statistical test is used to determine how likely an observed distribution is due to chance. Sometimes referred to as a “goodness of fit” statistic, because it measures how well the observed distribution of data fits with the distribution that is expected if the variables are dependent (Field, 2013).

**Study Validity**

Both face validity and construct validity were used to establish the validity of this study. The constructs identified in the survey instrument, align with the conceptual framework outlined within the study. Face validity, looks at the degree to which a test, measures the variable or construct, that it set out to measure, while construct validity, looks at test to see if it measures the variable (construct) adequately. Although, the study instrument was not piloted among a large subset of participants, one individual did complete the survey as a “trial” to see that the survey
instrument worked, and that the questions asked were appropriate to the population being surveyed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Study Reliability**

Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine test reliability. Cronbach’s alpha is the most common measure of scale reliability, and works well with Likert-type scale studies (Field, 2013). For each item on the scale two things can be calculated: the variance within the item, and the covariance between an item and any other item on the scale (Field, 2013). Variance refers to the average spread of a data set, and covariance reflects the average relationship between two variables (Field, 2013). Cronbach’s alpha was calculated at .525, which indicates a moderate internal consistency across survey items.

**Researcher Positionality**

The theory of positionality originated within the areas of feminist and critical theory research. Positionality then provides a lens through which researchers can understand how beliefs, values, attitudes and positions on social factors can affect the research itself, as well as, the research process (Cawthon & Garberoglio, 2017). Further, the authors point out that a researcher with no ties to the deaf community or knowledge of (ASL) may view Deaf Education from a deficit-model, as researchers see deafness as a medical condition in need of intervention. Thus, researcher paradigm does not allow for differences in culture, positive constructs of deafness, and diversity of language. Those within the Deaf community do not see their deafness as a problem or deficit to be fixed. Therefore, Deaf Education researchers must conduct research through positive constructs of deafness and understand their position and how these constructs will inform their research. Lastly, Cawthon and Garberoglio (2017) contend that researchers...
should use the labels to identify others, but must, “understand how we are positioned in relation to others” (p.59).

My positionality in this study is two-fold. First, I hold a Master’s Degree in Deaf Education and second, I am the parent of a deaf and hard of hearing student. Both of these positions provide insight into the population that most researchers may not have, and it may also include some bias generally not seen. Specifically, my position as educator is important to note. Knowledge about educational attainment, low-academic achievement, language acquisition and college readiness are beneficial as it provides insight into the population being studied. Further, opportunities for teaching within this special population of students provided first-hand experience in the unique and complex world in which deaf and hard of hearing students find themselves. It afforded opportunities to see both academic and social skills develop in students who often struggle in the development of both. However valuable this first-hand knowledge, and my personal experiences raising a deaf child, these experiences create bias, as I have seen first-hand the struggle of deaf and hard of hearing students in every aspect of their lives. Additionally, these struggles are personal and impact my life daily. Although bias has been acknowledged, it is anticipated that the results may shed light on the areas of transition education that are unknown to me, and the benefits that have been afforded to students as a result. By acknowledging my positionality and connected biases, I am more mindful of the potential influences of those biases in conducting this study.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine what the transition experiences into postsecondary education are for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and what if any barriers exist in the transition process. The study sought to answer two questions: The first, “What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?” and the second, “What barriers are present in deaf and hard of hearing students transition into postsecondary education?” Research suggests that the type of transition education needed for deaf and hard of hearing students to be successful, should begin as early as middle school and follow a six-stage plan (Luckner, 2002), there is little research to ascertain what the actual transition experience are like, and how barriers, if they exist, contribute to the successful or less successful transition into college. A survey instrument was used to collect pertinent data. The data was analyzed using a Chi-Square statistical test in hopes of finding answers to these two research questions.

Chapter four highlights the overall findings of this research study. The chapter is divided in to four specific sections. The first, describes the response rate, while the second describes the demographic composition of the respondents. The third section of this chapter includes data analysis as it relates to two specific research questions, and fifteen survey questions. The fourth and final section of the chapter, discusses two open response questions and that analysis as well.

Participant Demographics

The researcher added demographic questions to the beginning of the survey to ascertain specific information about the target population. Those questions included: institution type, enrollment level, type of high school, current age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, preferred communication method, and major or field of study.
**Institution type.** The respondents were asked to indicate their institution type as either two-year or four-year college or university. Table 4.1 indicated below, indicates that 70.8% of respondents attended a four-year college or university, while the remaining 29.2% of respondents attended a two-year college or university.

Table 4.1

*Frequency Distribution of Institution Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Year College or University</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Year College or University</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year in school.** The participants were asked to indicate what year they were currently enrolled in their institution. The frequency distribution illustrated in table 4.2 indicated the highest frequency were seniors, representing 33.3% of all respondents. Next, both freshmen and juniors made of 25% of the responses to this question, while only 16.7% of sophomores were presented in this question.

Table 4.2

*Frequency Distribution of Year in School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in School</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Type of high school.** The respondents were asked to identify whether they attended a public, mainstream high school or a state school for the deaf. Table 4.3 shows 70.8% indicated attendance at a public, mainstream high school, while the other 29.2% attended a state high school for the deaf.

Table 4.3

*Frequency Distribution of Type of High School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of High School</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public, Mainstream High School</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State High School for the Deaf</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current age.** The respondents were asked to identify their current age. Table 4.4 indicates the frequency distribution of respondents by age. The ages ranged from 18 years of age, representing 12.5% of the respondents, to 41 years of age, representing 4.2%, with those 19 years of age, representing 16.7%. Respondents who were 21, 22 and 24 equally represent 12.5% of the total respondents, while those 23, 31, 33 and 41 years of age make up another 4.2% within each of those age categories listed. Finally, those who were 32 years of age, make up 8.3% of all respondents.

Table 4.4

*Frequency Distribution of Current Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender.** The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Table 4.5 indicates that there were 75% females, 20.8% males and one participant, 4.2% that identified as non-binary that completed the survey.

Table 4.5

*Frequency Distribution of Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Race/ethnicity. The participants were asked to indicated their race/ethnicity. Responses are indicated in table 4.6 and conclude that 79.2% of participants were Caucasians, 8.2% of participants identified as Black, 4.2% of the participants identified as Hispanic, and 4.2% of participants identified as white/black/Latina and Asian respectively.

Table 4.6

*Frequency Distribution of Racial/Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Black/Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferred method of communication. The respondents were asked to indicate their preferred method of communication. Those results are reflected in table 4.7 and conclude that: 66.7% indicated that their preferred method of communication was spoken English, 20.8% used American Sign Language and spoken English, while only 12.5% used American Sign Language solely. No respondents use cued speech.

Table 4.7

*Frequency Distribution of Preferred Method of Communication*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Method of Communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoken English</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Sign Language and Spoken English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cued Speech</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Major/field of study.** The respondents were asked to indicate their major or field of study while enrolled in a college or university. Table 4.8 in this study indicated that 13.0% had a major as undecided. An additional 8.7% indicated their major was Journalism and Social Work, while the remaining majors included: Animation, Audiology, Communication Science Disorders, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Ed.D in Higher Education Management, Elementary Education, English, Environmental Studies, Equine Science, Master of Agribusiness, Medicine, Microbiology & Cell Science, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Theater/Musical Theater at 4.3%, with Social Work making up 8.7% of the responses.

Table 4.8

*Frequency Distribution of Major/Field of Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major/Field of Study</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Science &amp; Disorders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed. D in Higher Education Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Agribusiness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology &amp; Cell Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater/Musical Theater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency Distribution of Survey Questions**

The following tables includes the frequency distribution of responses, pertaining specifically to each survey question.

**Survey question one: “I felt prepared to transfer to college.”** Results indicated in table 4.9 suggest that 16.7% of respondents agreed with the question, 16.7 were neutral in their
response, while 50% agreed. An additional 16.7% strongly agreed and lastly 0% of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.9

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 1 “I felt prepared to transfer to college”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 1</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey question two: “I was involved in my transition planning.”** Results as indicated in table 4.10 suggest that 8.3% strongly disagreed, 0% disagreed, 5% were neutral, 50% agreed, and 20.8% strongly agreed.

Table 4.10

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 2 “I was involved in my transition planning”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 2</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question three: “My admissions and release committee meeting were helpful to me.” Table 4.11 shows the following responses: 20.8% strongly disagreed, 4.2% disagreed, 45.8% were neutral in their responses, while 20.8% agreed, and 8.3% strongly agreed.

Table 4.11

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 3 “My admissions and release committee meetings were helpful to me”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 3 “My admissions and release committee meetings were helpful to me”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question four: “My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness.” Results of Table 4.12 indicated that 12.5% strongly disagreed, 4.2% disagreed, 33.3% were neutral in response to this question. 37.5% agreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed.

Table 4.12

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 4 “My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness”*
Survey Question 4
“My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question five: “My first semester of college was difficult.” Table 4.13 reflects the results of this question with the following responses: 8.3% strongly disagreed, 16.7% disagreed, 12.5% were neutral, 37.5% agreed, and 25% strongly agreed.

Table 4.13

Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 5 “My first semester of college was difficult”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question six: “I feel isolated from my hearing peers.” Table 4.14 indicated the following results: 21.7% strongly disagreed, 13% disagreed, 30.4% were neutral, 13% agreed, while 21.7% strongly agreed.

Table 4.14

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 6 “I feel isolated from my hearing peers”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 6 “I feel isolated from my hearing peers”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question seven: “My peers accepted my preferred method of communication.” Table 4.15 indicated the following results: 0% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. 25% were neutral in their responses, while 29.2% agreed, and 45.8% strongly agreed.

Table 4.15

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 7 “My peers accepted my preferred method of communication”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 7 “My peers accepted my preferred method of communication”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disagree & 0 & 0.0% \\
Neutral & 6 & 25.0% \\
Agree & 7 & 29.2% \\
Strongly Agree & 11 & 45.8% \\
Total & 24 & 100% \\

**Survey question eight: “Social activities on campus were isolating.”** Table 4.16 indicated that 4.2% strongly disagreed, 33.3% disagreed, 45.8% were neutral, while 12.5% agreed, and 4.25 strongly agreed.

Table 4.16

**Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 8 “Social activities on campus were isolating”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 8 “Social activities on campus were isolating”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey question nine: “I have a support system on campus.”** Table 4.17 indicated the following results: 4.2% strongly disagreed, 16.7% disagreed, 8.3% were neutral, while 41.7% agreed, and 29.2% strongly agreed.

Table 4.17
Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 9 “I have a support system on campus”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 9 “I have a support system on campus”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question ten: “My faculty are qualified to meet my learning needs.” Table 4.18 reflects the following results: 8.3% strongly disagreed, 12.5% disagreed, 12.5% were neutral, 45.8% agreed, while 20.8% strongly agreed.

Table 4.18

Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 10 “My faculty are qualified to meet my learning needs”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 10 “My faculty are qualified to meet my learning needs”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question eleven: “The content of the course work has been challenging”

Table 4.19 indicated the following results: 0% strongly disagreed, 13% disagreed, 17.4% were neutral, while 60.9% agreed and 8.7% strongly agreed.

Table 4.19

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 11 “The content of the course work has been challenging”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 11 “The content of the course work has been challenging”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Question Twelve: “I feel overwhelmed by life on campus.” Table 4.20 reflects the following results of this question as follows: 25% strongly disagreed, 33.3% disagreed, 16.7% were neutral in their responses, while 12.5% agreed and an additional 12.5% strongly agreed.

Table 4.20

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 12 “I feel overwhelmed by life on campus”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 12 “I feel overwhelmed by life on campus”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neutral  
 4  
16.7%

Agree  
3  
12.5%

Strongly Agree  
3  
12.5%

Total  
24  
100%

Survey question thirteen: “I feel confident that I will graduate.” Table 4.21 indicated that 4.2% strongly disagreed, 0% disagreed, 33.3% were neutral, while 33.3% agreed, and 58.3% strongly agreed.

Table 4.21

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 13 “I feel confident that I will graduate”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 13 “I feel confident that I will graduate”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question fourteen: “The college I attend is the right fit for me.” Table 4.22 indicated that 0% strongly disagreed, and disagreed, while 17.4% were neutral, and 47.8% agreed and the remaining 34.8% strongly agreed.

Table 4.22

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 14 “The college I attend is the right fit for me.”*
### Survey Question 14
“The college I attend is the right fit for me”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question fifteen: “My transition plan prepared me socially for life on campus.” Table 4.23 reflects the following results: 9.1% strongly disagreed, 9.1% disagreed, 27.3% were neutral, 45.5% agreed, while the remaining 9.1% strongly agreed.

Table 4.23

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Question 15 “My transition plan prepared me socially for life on campus”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chi Square Results

In this section, the researcher has presented the corresponding data to two research questions. Research question one asked, “What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?” This research question corresponded with findings related directly with questions, one, three, four and fifteen on the survey instrument, when compared against question two of the survey, which stated, “I was involved in my transition planning.” while the remaining questions, five, six, seven, eight, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen corresponded directly with research question two, when compared against survey question nine, which asked about support systems on campus. Research question two asked, “What barriers are present in deaf and hard of hearing students transition into postsecondary education?” Data was analyzed using a one-sample Chi-Square test. Findings and interpretation of data were run at a confidence level of 95%. P values were compared to a significance level of $\alpha$ of.05. The results of the Chi-Square tests by survey question are noted below:

Survey question one, stated, “I felt prepared to transfer to college.” When looking at the Chi-Square test results, Table 4.24 indicated a p value of .107 (P= .107). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, as the data suggests there is no significant relationship between feeling prepared to transition, and actual involvement.

Table 4.24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 1 “I felt prepared to transfer to college”</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>14.467</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey question three stated, “My Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) Meetings were helpful to me.” Looking at table 4.25, the p value was .036 (P=.036). This finding suggested that there is a relationship between involvement and participation in admissions and release committee meetings. Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis.

Table 4.25

Survey Question 3 “My Admissions and Release Committee Meetings were helpful to me”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>22.138&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Research questions four stated, “My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness.” Table 4.26 indicated a p value of .004 (P=.004). Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis as data would suggest a significant relationship between involvement in transition planning and the plan focusing on academic and college preparedness.

Table 4.26

Survey Question 4 “My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>28.800&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. 20 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Lastly, question fifteen of the survey instrument was compared. This question stated,
“My transition plan prepared me socially for life on campus.” Table 4.27 indicated a p value of .004 (P=.004) and as such, the null hypothesis is rejected. Data suggests there is a significant relationship between transition involvement and social preparation for life on campus.

Table 4.27

Survey Question 15 “My transition plan prepared me socially for life on campus”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>21.440</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

All of the above questions analyzed suggest that the experience of participating in Admissions and Release Committee meetings were useful, the plan provided experiences to prepare students both socially and academically. Overall, data suggests students who are deaf and hard of hearing perceived that some transition experiences aspects of transition aided them in their transition into postsecondary education.

Research question two asked, “What barriers are present in the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?” Data was analyzed using a one-sample Chi-Square test. Findings and interpretation of data were run at a confidence level of 95%. P values were compared to a significance level of α of .05. Survey questions five, six, seven, eight, ten, eleven, twelve and fourteen were compared to survey question nine, regarding support systems on campus, as it related to research question two, perceived barriers to transition. The results of the Chi-Square tests by survey question are reported as follows:

Survey question five stated, “My first semester of college was difficult.” Looking at table 4.28, the p value for this question was .553 (P=.553). Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null
hypothesis. The data would suggest that no significant relationship exists between, suggesting the first year of college is a barrier to postsecondary transition.

Table 4.28

*Survey Question 5 “My first semester of college was difficult”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>14.614(^a)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: \(^a\) 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.*

Survey question six stated, “I feel isolated from my hearing peers.” Table 4.29 shows a p value of .004 (p=.004). Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis. Data suggests that isolation from hearing peers may be a barrier to postsecondary transition.

Table 4.29

*Survey Question 6 “I feel isolated from my hearing peers”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>34.763(^a)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: \(^a\) 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .13.*

Survey question seven, stated: “My peers accepted my preferred method of communication.” The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as the p value of .419 (P=.419) as shown here in table 4.30, when running a Chi-Square test. Results of the data would indicate that there is no significant relationship with preferred method of communication being a barrier to postsecondary transition.

Table 4.30
Survey Question 7 “My peers accepted my preferred method of communication”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asymptotic Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(^a\) 15 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .25.

The next question on the survey, question eight, stated: “Social activities on campus were isolating.” Table 4.31 shows the results of the Chi-Square test was a p value of .140 (P=.140).

This value is above the .05, and thus the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that social activities on campus or not perceived as a barrier to transition for deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education.

Table 4.31

Survey Question 8 “Social activities on campus were isolating”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asymptotic Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(^a\) 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

Survey question ten stated: “My faculty were qualified to meet my unique learning needs.” Table 4.32 shows the results of the Chi-Square test, revealing a p value of .096 (P=.096).

Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Data indicates that faculty qualification is not perceived by respondents as a barrier to transition into postsecondary education.

Table 4.32

Survey Question 10 “My faculty were qualified to meet my unique learning needs”
Survey question eleven stated: “The content of the course work has been challenging.” A Chi-Square test was run at a confidence interval of 95% (α = 0.05). Table 4.33 indicated a p value of 0.834. (P = 0.834). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as the data suggested that content of course work is not a barrier found in the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into college.

Table 4.33

Survey Question 11 “The content of the course work has been challenging”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>(2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>23.730&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup> 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Survey question twelve stated: “I feel overwhelmed by life on campus.” A Chi-Square statistical test was run and data found no significant relationship. Table 4.34 shows a p value of 0.767 (P = 0.767). Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as the data indicated feelings of being overwhelmed were not considered to be a barrier by the respondents.

Table 4.34

Survey Question 12 “I feel overwhelmed by life on campus.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>(2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>7.345&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup> 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.
Survey question thirteen stated: “I feel confident that I will graduate.” Table 4.35 shows a Chi-Square test reveals a p value of .386. (P=.386). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Data suggests that confidence in graduating from college was not a barrier in the postsecondary transition of deaf and hard of hearing students.

Table 4.35

Survey Question 13 “I feel confident that I will graduate.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>12.771&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup> 19 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

The last survey question, question fourteen stated: “The college I attend is the right fit for me.” Table 4.36 shows the results of the Chi-Square test. P value is .670 (P=.670). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, as the data indicated that college fit was not considered a barrier to postsecondary transition for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Table 4.36

Survey Question 14 “The college I attend is the right fit for me.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>5.797&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup> 15 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.
Results of research question two, suggested that there was only one significant barrier to postsecondary transition of deaf and hard of hearing students. They barrier dealt specifically with respondents indicating they felt isolated from their hearing peers. As seen in the literature review of this study, hearing loss is isolating and as a result makes it more difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students to make friends (Laursen, Bukowski, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2007). Further they suggest that children who are deaf and hard of hearing have fewer friends, as friendship are more difficult to make and sustain (Laursen et al., 2007). According to Millen, Dorn and Luckner (2019), friendship provides one with a sense of joy and meaning. They also suggest that friendship is often the first bond outside of family, made with others. Millen et al. (2007) also stated that deaf and hard of hearing students who had higher language skills, had an easier time in social interactions and developed friendships more easily.

**Open Response Question Results**

The first open response question asked, “What services do you wish you had received to assist you in your transition into postsecondary education?” (check all that apply) and was completed by 18 respondents, with a total of 35 additional services noted. Services included the following: campus tour, meeting with campus disability resource coordinator, classroom visit, meeting with professors in your major field of study, weekend stay on campus, opportunity to participate in student life activities, meeting with vocational rehabilitation counselor at your high school, opportunity to participate in high school transition planning, and representatives from colleges speaking on your high school campus.

Survey results as illustrated in table 4.37 suggest that 11.1% respondents wished they had taken a campus tour. 50% respondents wished they had met with a campus disability resource coordinator, an additional 11.1% wished they had a classroom visit, while 27.8% wished they
had an opportunity to participate in student life activities, while an additional 27.8% wished they had meeting with a vocational rehabilitation counselor at their high school, and yet another 27.8% wished they had an opportunity to participate in high school transition planning. 22.2% indicated that would have liked to meet with professors in the major, field of study, 11.1% wished they had spent a weekend on campus. Lastly, 5.6% of respondents wished for an opportunity to speak to college representatives on their high school campus, and another 16.7% responded to the “other” category, with the following comments: “I did not have a transition plan,” I had all of these services,” and lastly, “I wish the disability resource office on campus had been more helpful.”

Table 4.37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Distribution for Open Response Question 1 “What services do you wish you had received to assist you in your transition into postsecondary education?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Response Question 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Disability Resource Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Participate in Student Life Activities on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at My High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Participate in High School Transition Planning Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with a Professor in My Major / Field of Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend Stay on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Representatives Speaking at High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings of this question indicated that students who are deaf and hard of hearing would have benefited from the above-mentioned activities, when looking at the frequency distribution among activity type. (See table 4.37). As mentioned earlier in this study, and in the literature review, Luckner (2002) proposed a multi-step transition plan that involved, getting all education and career professionals on board early in the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students. College personnel, administration and staff should be involved in the transition plan of deaf and hard of hearing students to provide these and other activities to aid students’ in their transition into postsecondary education. Statistically however, there is no significant relationship between the activities being identified that would suggest that they were a barrier, only that deaf and hard of hearing students wished they had been given the opportunity to participate in these activities, during high school before their transition into college.

The second open response question asked, “Is there anything else you would like to tell us?” The response rate for this question was 50% of the respondents: Answers to this question are reflected below, as written by the respondents.

1. No

2. Never had an ARC-went to a private school

3. I think I had the picture-perfect scenario [sic] in people who helped me have all the necessary tools to access what I needed. This was critical and I began to received [sic] this in high school.

4. It [sic] wasn't so much the transition that was difficult, though that wasn't easy for me as someone who was homeschooled since the 6th grade and running into many peers who mumble or always speak quietly and don't enunciate their words. It was having teachers
with heavy accents. It was trying to hear the teacher and demonstrator during a lab held outside, where I couldn't get close and strong wind messing with how much my hearing aid microphones picked up. That was what I really struggled with. The introduction to the school was friendly and I got to speak with the disability office. But I struggled with asking for help for something basic like note taking simply because I couldn't hear what was happening during labs. I always had the support. But it was hard asking for it when such unexpected events occurred.

5. I transitioned more on my own. What helped was having friends and family support. What made college life challenging had nothing to do with my hearing it was more of life experiences that contributed to it. Though with my hearing loss it can make be [sic] frustrated if I can’t hear my peers or comprehend what they are saying.

6. I was very happy with how my transition went everyone was able to help me get the [sic]where I needed to be in order to be prepared.

7. My biggest issue while transitioning in relation to my hearing was that I often felt like I wasn't "deaf enough" to qualify for help on campus and struggled because I then didn't know how to cope with moving from small class sizes where I could hear the teacher and had a relationship with them so they knew about my hearing to bigger and louder classes where the professors didn't know about my hearing. I also didn't even know what accommodations would look like for my hearing loss in academic settings. I lived on-campus all four years and going back to the not feeling deaf enough to ask for accommodations led to me sleeping through some fire alarms and sometimes had a hard time hearing people knock at my door. Socially I never really had a problem as I am open
about my hearing loss and so my friends would help if I was having difficulties in group settings.

8. No.

9. Those in my school's disability office are not well equipped for handling deaf and hard of hearing students. I was told that I could not have a live transcript for my biochemistry course because the language was too "advanced". It felt like they were well equipped for the more "common" disabilities so that made for an awkward experience.

10. UF has hired a new person as my advisor every year. It is super hard to have a person to talk to I attended Gallaudet University, the school had all of the accommodations I needed but when I transferred to a local community college that was far more challenging. Currently, I attend a college in Boston and take classes online. The chairperson for Criminal Justice has done everything to make each class accessible including captioning all lectures and related videos. The issue nowadays is language deprivation. Children should be exposed to ASL and a spoken language so that they can rely on an interpreter at times it is necessary. When a child is deprived of language it impacts their cognitive development which then impacts their future and ability to learn beyond a certain grade level.

11. I've experienced a public and state school. I can honestly say from personal experience and observation that state schools (deaf schools) are unparalleled in preparing its students for every avenue. Most public schools are just damaging and ill-equipped to cater to deaf students.

12. There is always the feeling of fear and will I be able to meet [sic] up type of questions popping up. Sometimes there is the feeling of not being like your peers or feeling that
you might not compare to them and whenever you ask for help, there is always that one student who can be very sarcastic in giving you a response.

As previously mentioned, the second research question sought to determine, “To what extent do barriers exist within the transition process for students who are deaf and hard of hearing?” Further, the second open response question, asked, “Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your transition experience?” Responses to this question yielded a variety of barriers that were identified beyond those asked in the initial survey questions. Some of those barriers, included: “not feeling deaf enough,” “fear of asking for help,” “public school more harmful, then state private school in terms of preparation,” “not feeling like your peers,” “language issues such as language deprivation, or not being bi-lingual (using ASL and spoken English),” and “disability resource office, ill-equipped to me assist me.” The above-mentioned findings would suggest there are additional barriers identified by deaf and hard of hearing students, that were not identified in the Likert scale survey questions.

In the literature review of this study the “Deaf President Now” movement (Gallaudet University, 1988.) discussed the issue of not being “deaf enough” in terms of the president of Gallaudet University, having a hearing impairment, as opposed to being totally deaf. This was a barrier identified in the first open response question and merits further examination. Further, it was a barrier theorized by the researcher of this study and should be examined in detail. Another issue raised by in the open response questions, suggested that language acquisition was also a barrier. In chapter two, research by Gleason and Ratner, (2009) concluded that language development in deaf and hard of hearing students is atypical, due to late and/or misdiagnosis. Also, Cole and Flexer, (2007) suggest that the longer a deaf and hard of hearing child goes with access to sound, the more difficult it is for that child to develop language at all. Although not
considered a barrier in the initial survey questions, communication method was mentioned as a potential barrier, by a respondent. The respondent suggested that deaf and hard of hearing students learn both ASL and spoken English to aid in their transition. According to Schwartz (2007), parents often times choose the communication method, they themselves use, which is typically spoken English. There are a number of reasons this may be the case; one may be whether the family and/or the deaf and hard of hearing student identifies as (D) deaf or (d) deaf. Both of these cultural identifications are discussed in the literature review of this study. Tucker (1997) explains the difference between the two cultural types, and explains that the (D) deaf community does not see deafness as a disability, but rather a birthright. This too may explain the barrier of language in terms of type of language chosen, and would explain why it was mentioned in the first open response question in this study.

**Summary**

This study investigated the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students in their transition into postsecondary education. The survey results suggested that Admissions and Release Committee meeting were useful and experiences that prepared students both academically and socially were helpful in their overall transition into college. Further, barriers to transition were examined, with one key barrier identified, isolation from hearing peers. Additional barriers were identified when students were given an opportunity to provide open response questions as well.
Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

This study looked at the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing in their transition into postsecondary education. Additionally, key barriers to transition were examined, which provided insight into the struggles faced by deaf and hard of hearing students as they make the move from secondary education to postsecondary education. The following information provides a detailed summary of study findings, and conclusions that speak directly to the research questions, conceptual framework and literature review.

Discussion

This study sought to answer two research questions: 1. “What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students in their transition into postsecondary education? and 2. “What barriers are present in the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education? As mentioned in chapter four of this study, Chi-Square tests were run comparing survey questions one, three, four and fifteen, to survey question two, to seek answers to the first research question. Second, Chi-Square testing was used to run data comparing survey questions five, six, seven, eight, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen, comparing those questions with survey question nine to determine barriers, to postsecondary transition for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis was that students had transition experiences. Results of the study indicated that some experiences were present that aided students into the transition into college. Specifically, participant in the Admissions and Release Committee meeting were helpful, and student had experiences that prepared them both academically and socially for life on campus. It does not come as a surprise that students had these experiences, as ARC meeting are part of the transition plan. The Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act
(IDEA) which were enacted in 1999 provided definitions and guidance on transition services
(Kohler & Field, 2003). Further the 2002 reauthorization of IDEA, mandated that students
receive transition services, and that these services become a part of the Individualized Education
Plan (IEP) (Kohler & Field, 2003). Additionally, as noted in the literature review of this study,
Deci et. al, (1991) suggested that students involved in their transition planning process were
more likely to meet their long-term goals both educationally and professionally. In an effort to
reach these long-term goals, specific objectives must be written into the transition plan, and
carried out through the Admissions and Release Committee Meetings (ARC).

The Admissions and Release Committee Meetings (ARC), also noted in this study as
helpful to transition are required annually (Kentucky Department of Education, 2004). During
these meetings the student’s IEP is reviewed and revised as needed. According to Estchedit
(2006), the IDEA required that specific language be written that required students to be involve
in the ARC meetings, and starting at age 14 require the student to be present, to begin the
transition planning process. Research by Luckner (2002) indicated that student involvement in
transition planning was crucial, specifically for deaf and hard of hearing students to ensure that
deaf and hard of hearing students unique needs were met in terms of their transition. He further
suggested that the transition planning process begin earlier than the mandated age 14 to ensure a
seamless transition into either postsecondary education are a career (Luckner, 2002). During the
annual ARC meetings, goals and objectives of the IEP are discussed and transition planning must
include both academic and college readiness goals (Kentucky Department of Education, 2004).
This was in keeping with the findings of this study, as respondents indicated that their ARC
meetings included this information and was deemed helpful to them in the transition into
postsecondary education. The involvement with transition planning by deaf and hard of hearing students aligns well with the conceptual framework of this study.

Transition theory as noted by Nancy Schlossberg (1981) can be applied to any major life event of change. The major life event in terms of this study is the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students from high school to postsecondary education. Schlossberg explains that transition of any type, alters the way an individual views his/her life (Schlossberg, 1989). Further according to Schlossberg (1989) roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions change. In reality a transition causes a dramatic change in every facet of one’s life. This is certainly seen with the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education. The result of this study suggests that the more involved a deaf and hard of hearing student is in his/her transition, the better the transition, major life change is managed. In the book *Getting the Most Out of College*, Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) suggest that the transition into postsecondary education presents unique challenges and students must re-examine or change their feelings, ideas, and thoughts. In essence, students are being asked to re-evaluate who they are in light of the transition or life changing event (Schlossberg, 1989). Interestingly, this study did not reveal many barriers to the transition process, even though transition to college is a major, and life changing event (Schlossberg & Chickering, 1995). Hypothesis number two looked specifically at potential barriers to postsecondary transition for deaf and hard of hearing students.

**Hypothesis 2.** The second hypothesis looked to identify if barriers existed within in the transition for deaf and hard of hearing students. One barrier was identified. Deaf and hard of hearing students felt isolated from their hearing peers. The transition into the first semester of college, is a major life change. Schlossberg (1981) suggests that transition of any kind presents unique challenges. Further those challenges are exacerbated when an individual is a member of a
special group or population, such as in the case of deaf and hard of hearing students. They face additional challenges as well. Among those challenges are feelings of marginality and mattering.

Schlossberg (1989) discusses the concepts of marginality and mattering. All individuals, especially those within a special population are concerned with being marginalized and all human beings wish to matter, and belong. Changing roles within one’s life may cause them to feel marginal. According to Schlossberg (1989) young people often feel marginalized when they go off to college. Further, if these students identify with more than one cultural, in the instance of this study, deaf and hard of hearing students who identify with both d and D deaf (Marschark, 1997) cultural, may be “stuck” between the two worlds, as they are constantly aware of their status and don’t feel as if they belong fully to either cultural (Schlossberg, 1989). This was a significant barrier identified in this current study, and the researcher contends that other barriers exist, not with the transition itself, but during the first semester of college, and warrant further study. Further alleviating as many barriers as possible may lessen deaf and hard of hearing students’ feelings of disorder, an unpredictability and help to alleviate marginality as well (Schlossberg, 1989).

**Limitations**

One limitation that resulted from this study, does not deal specifically, nor is it related to either research question posited in the study. This limitation is discussed first, and its importance is explained to provide the reader with information regarding difficulty with Institutional Research Board approval at schools targeted for data collection. Additional limitations will be discussed at they pertain to each research question.

The first limitation deals specifically with the researcher not taking into account the difficulty in securing permission from colleges and universities to survey this unique population
of students. It became evident throughout the process that colleges and universities like Gallaudet and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, would not give permission for their students to be surveyed, as administration about both institutions indicated that the deaf and hard of hearing population had been historically over studied. Resistance from other colleges and universities was less difficult, however since the study dealt with a special population, obtaining permission to conduct the study proved to be a limitation overall.

Another limiting factor, was trying to determine how to find study participants, as colleges and universities would not release student information, due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, thus social media was used, along with snow ball sampling to solicit study participants.

Since the researcher is hearing, with hearing peers, those within the researcher’s social network were primarily hearing as well. This made snowball sampling difficult, as the network did not allow for as many “shares” that yielded results, as hearing individuals were soliciting other hearing individuals. As such, those who did share the survey, may or may not have known anyone who was deaf and hard of hearing that met the study parameters to complete the survey. The above-mentioned limitations are specific to the study sample, and data collection method in general terms. Further limitations to this study are research question specific and are discussed in further detail.

As stated in the methodology section of this dissertation the following research questions and hypotheses were examined:

**Research question one:** What are the transition experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students into postsecondary education?

H<sub>0</sub>: Students have a number of experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.
H₁: Students have no experiences when transitioning into postsecondary education.

**Research question two**: What barriers are present in deaf and hard of hearing students transition into postsecondary education?

H₀: No barriers are present within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.

H₁: A number of barriers exist within the transition process for deaf and hard of hearing students.

When looking at limitations of the study in regard to the first research question, the following limitation was identified. This limitation dealt with deaf culture and self-identification within deaf culture. Next, when looking at limitations in regard to the second research question, the study could have included more questions about potential barriers, specifically those barriers identified in the second open response question in this study. A number of barriers were identified that were statistically, significant and thus could have provided more insight into the struggle deaf and hard of hearing students experience when transitioning to college.

The study should have distinguished the difference between (D) deaf and (d) deaf as one of the demographic questions on the survey instrument. This would have allowed for some conclusions to be drawn about involvement in the transition process based upon the delineation of these two distinct groups.

**Implications for Practice P20 and Deaf Education**

When looking at implications of practice there are a number of implications for both P-20 Education and Deaf Education. Since P-20 encompasses an individual’s entire academic history, it would be interesting for educators to begin looking at transition earlier than even the federal mandate of 14 suggests (IDEA, 2004). Additionally, using a holistic approach to educating deaf and hard of hearing students, by removing the silos that exist within education would also be of benefit. Luckner, (2002) suggested that all agencies, including educational, community and
advocate groups come together, and come together early to aid in the transition of deaf and hard of hearing students into either college or a career field, suited to their unique talents. These conversations, Luckner (2002) suggests are vitally important to the overall academic successful of deaf and hard of hearing students. They are of such great importance that these conversations should be happening much sooner than has historically been the case and speak to the importance of the P-20 approach to education and community leadership.

**Implications for Deaf Education**

In terms of deaf education this study provides an opportunity for deaf educators at all levels of a student’s academic career to rethink the message and to change the conversation about deaf and hard of hearing students and their transition into postsecondary education. More opportunities should be provided to deaf and hard of hearing Seniors, to prepare them for that study. The opportunities must be afforded to all deaf and hard of hearing students, whether they are enrolled in a public, mainstream high school, or a state-funded school for the deaf. Further, it is important that the field of Deaf Education, look at preparing college faculty to teach this unique population of students. Currently, there are only programs like those at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine and Eastern Kentucky University, that prepare students to teach at the K-12 level. The researcher is unaware of teacher preparation programs, that prepare individuals to teach deaf and hard of hearing students at the college level.

**Recommendation for Future Research**

The limitations to this current study, would also make interesting work for future studies. It would be of interest to determine how deaf and hard of hearing students identify themselves culturally. In the literature review of this study the “Deaf President Now” movement (Gallaudet University, 1988) discussed the issue of not being “deaf enough” in terms of the president of
Gallaudet University, having a hearing impairment, as opposed to being totally deaf. This was a barrier identified in the first open response question and merits further examination. Additionally, it was a barrier theorized by the researcher of this study and should be examined in detail.

Another issue raised in the open response questions, suggested that language acquisition was also a barrier. In chapter two, research by Gleason and Ratner, (2009) concluded that language development in deaf and hard of hearing students is atypical, due to late and/or misdiagnosis. Also, Cole and Flexer, (2007) suggest that the longer a deaf and hard of hearing child goes without access to sound, the more difficult it is for that child to develop language at all. Although, not identified as a barrier in the initial survey question, language acquisition is an area that merits additional research, specifically is relation to how language skills impact transition into postsecondary education. Language acquisition or lack thereof, can dictate chosen method of communication and could be studied further as well. Specifically looking at how deaf and hard of hearing students affiliate with others on campus, and if those affiliations stay within the confines of the method used by the individual student.

Preferred method of communication was mentioned as a potential barrier, by a respondent. It was suggested that deaf and hard of hearing students learn both American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English to aid in their transition. According to Schwartz (2007), parents often times choose the communication method, which they themselves use, which is typically spoken English. This may be due in large part, as mentioned in the literature review that, 90% of all deaf children are born to hearing parents (“Quick Statistics,” 2016) There are a number of reasons this may be the case; one may be whether the family and/or the deaf and hard of hearing student identifies as (D) deaf or (d) deaf. Both of these cultural identifications are
discussed in the literature review of this study as well. Tucker (1998) explains the difference between the two cultural types, and suggests that the (D) deaf community does not see deafness as a disability, but rather a birthright, and most often choose ASL as their preferred method of communication. Schwartz (2007) states that children born deaf to deaf parents use ASL as their primary mode of communication, as this is the primary language used in the home. However, those that see themselves as members of the (d) community may be aided, using either hearing aids or cochlear implants and seek oral communication as their preferred method of communication (Tucker, 1998). These findings may help to explain language as a barrier, and if one group felt more involved in their transition process based on the cultural in which they were reared and educated.

It would also be of interest to look specifically at the first-year experience of deaf and hard of hearing students. Since a number of the barriers identified in this study, suggested that the initial transition was difficult once the students were on campus at their two-year or four-year institutions, it is of interest as to why. Information from the introduction of this dissertation noted that according to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Report of Student Satisfaction (2018) concluded that students at Gallaudet University, did not feel welcome or that they belonged on campus. Focus groups conducted with first semester deaf and hard of hearing students at institutions like Gallaudet and The National Technical Institute for the Deaf, (NTID) could shed light on this issue.

Of special interest it to understand why these perceptions exist at respected institutions, specially designated for deaf and hard of hearing students. Additionally, it would be of interest to study the dropout rates of first year deaf and hard of hearing students, researching specifically
how belonging issues affect persistence. Additional studies should be conducted to determine whether belonging issues and faculty qualifications have any relationship.

Summary

In conclusion, the researcher was able to analyze the data by both research and survey questions to assist in either proving or disproving the hypotheses for the research questions in the last chapter of this dissertation. Data analysis was reached using basic, frequencies, and one sample, Chi–Square tests. By examining the hypotheses for both of the research questions, the researcher will be able to add important information to the field of Deaf Education, and P-20 and Community Leadership, as it relates specifically to the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students as they transition into postsecondary education.
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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Add Consent form here: Must be 18 or older to complete this survey, include this language in consent form.

Demographic Information:

College/University Currently Attending: (Please check one)
Is this school a two-year or a four-year postsecondary institution? Two-Year ___ Four-Year ___

Year in School: (Please check one)
Freshmen___ Sophomore___ Junior___ Senior___

Did you attend a state school for the deaf or a public (mainstream setting) high school before transitioning to your postsecondary institution? (Please check one)

State High School ___
Public High School ___

Age: ___

Gender: ___

Race/Ethnic Identification: ________

Preferred Communication Method: (Please check one)

ASL ___
Spoken English ___
ASL and Spoken English ___
Cued Speech ___

Major?
Survey Instrument

Perceptions of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students’ Transition into Postsecondary Education

1. I felt prepared to transfer to college.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

2. I was involved in my transition planning.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

3. My Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meetings were helpful to me.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

4. My transition plan focused on academic and college readiness.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

5. My first semester of college was difficult.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

6. I feel isolated from my hearing peers.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
7. My peers accepted my preferred method of communication.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

8. Social activities on campus were isolating.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

9. I have a support system on campus.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

10. My faculty are qualified to meet my learning needs.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Don’t know
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

11. The content of the course work has been challenging.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Don’t know
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

12. I feel overwhelmed by life on campus.
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Don’t know
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

13. I feel confident that I will graduate.
14. The college I attend is the right fit for me.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

15. My transition plan prepared me socially for life on campus.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Don’t know
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

Please provide a brief response to the following questions:

1. What services do you wish you had received to assist you in your transition into postsecondary education?

   Please check all that apply:
   1. Campus tour ____
   2. Meeting with campus disability resource coordinator____
   3. Classroom visit____
   4. Meeting with professors in your major of study___
   5. Weekend stay on campus___
   6. Opportunity to participate in student life activities____
   7. Meeting with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at your high school___
   8. Opportunity to participate in high school transition planning opportunities___
   9. Representatives from colleges speaking on your high school campus___
   10. Other___ (Please indicate here)

2. Is there anything else you would like to share about your transition experience?
Appendix B

IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board
328 Wells Hall
Murray, KY 42071-3366
270-809-2966 • msu.irb@murraystate.edu

TO: Brian Bourke, College of Education and Human Services

FROM: Jonathan Baskin, IRB Coordinator

DATE: 10/24/2019

RE: Human Subjects Protocol I.D. – IRB # 20-051

The IRB has completed its review of your student’s Level 1 protocol entitled Transition of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Into Postsecondary Education. After review and consideration, the IRB has determined that the research, as described in the protocol form, will be conducted in compliance with Murray State University guidelines for the protection of human participants.

The forms and materials that have been approved for use in this research study are attached to the email containing this letter. These are the forms and materials that must be presented to the subjects. Use of any process or forms other than those approved by the IRB will be considered misconduct in research as stated in the MSU IRB Procedures and Guidelines section 20.3.

Your stated data collection period is from 10/24/2019 to 10/23/2020.

If data collection extends beyond this period, please submit an Amendment to an Approved Protocol form detailing the new data collection period and the reason for the change.

This Level 1 approval is valid until 10/23/2020.

If data collection and analysis extends beyond this date, the research project must be reviewed as a continuation project by the IRB prior to the end of the approval period, 10/23/2020. You must reapply for IRB approval by submitting a Project Update and Closure form (available at murraystate.edu/irb). You must allow ample time for IRB processing and decision prior to your expiration date, or your research must stop until such time that IRB approval is received. If the research project is completed by the end of the approval period, then a Project Update and Closure form must be submitted for IRB review so that your protocol may be closed. It is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner.

The protocol is approved. You may begin data collection now.
Appendix C

Informed Consent

Principle Investigator: Christy S. Adkins
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Brian Bourke, College of Education and Human Services, Murray State University
Date: October 1 – October 15, 2019
Study Title: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Perceptions of Their Transition into Postsecondary Education

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted through Murray State University. This form contains information you will need to decide whether to be in this study or not. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. Please read the form carefully.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** To determine to what extent students who are deaf and hard of hearing face barriers when transitioning into postsecondary education, and the extent to which they are involved in their transition planning during secondary school.

2. **WHAT ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO DO:**
   - Complete a simple 20 question survey online

3. **RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:** No risks are anticipated for the participants

4. **BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:** Benefits for participating include helping to inform future research on the importance of transition planning for who students who are deaf and hard of hearing

5. **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** All research participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw or deny the study at any time without prejudice or penalty, should you object to the nature of the research.

6. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** No names or personal identifiers will be used in the sharing of findings.

7. **WHOM TO CONTACT:** Christy S. Adkins at (270) 824-8646 or christy.adkins@muraystate.edu

Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Research Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. Do no sign or agree to participate after the expiration date on the stamp. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the MSU IRB Coordinator at (270) 809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.