

Culture and Communication Equity for d/Deaf Families in Education

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Abstract

This inquiry paper is part of Chico State's Liberal Studies Program. This is an undergraduate research paper, not a peer-reviewed publication. Readers are encouraged to approach this work as developmental scholarship and a window into the emerging professional insights of a future educator. This paper was developed under the guidance of a faculty advisor; however, the ideas and conclusions expressed are solely those of the undergraduate student author.

This inquiry paper examined how classroom culture and communication practices negatively affect d/Deaf individuals, their families, and CODA (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) students in hearing schools. Grounded in a Disability Theory framework from Whitney, it is argued that students' hearing and language differences should be viewed from a cultural lens rather than a remedial, deficit lens. The study critiqued how practices in mainstream schools are not properly supportive of d/Deaf and CODA families, with instances of cross-cultural misunderstandings, barriers to communication, and barriers to success for CODA students. Through a critical analysis of how these mainstream classrooms are leading to linguistic and educational exclusion, it is argued that schools must utilize culturally relevant pedagogy in classrooms and provide professional development to teachers. This paper advocated for practices that educate staff and connect hearing educators and members of the Deaf community, including implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), culturally-relevant pedagogy, and professional development

***Keywords:* d/Deaf, Family, Accessibility Movement, CODA**

Statement of Problem

This literature review highlights relevant research studies in the field of modern research on d/Deafness. These themes, cross-cultural understanding, communication, and CODAs, support my understanding of my problem of practice, “How do school and classroom culture and communication practices impact the ability of d/Deaf students and their families to engage meaningfully in learning?”

Please note that in this study and throughout the paper, the term “d/Deaf” is used to refer to deaf, Deaf, and hard-of-hearing individuals, for the sake of brevity. This term is broadly used to denote the inclusion of both “Big D” (Deaf) and “little d” (deaf) individuals. “Deaf” identifies one as a proud member of a cultural group with shared language and values, and one who identifies as Deaf from a cultural lens. Whereas “deaf” identifies one without active identification in the Deaf community. When referring to deafness as a medical condition, “deaf” is used. When referring to the Deaf community, “Deaf” is used.

Justification of the Study

The work is important because it addresses systemic failures in the education and support of d/Deaf families and children. This study looks at the unique intergenerational family dynamics between CODA (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) students and d/Deaf families, and advocates for equitable linguistic and educational rights to ensure long-term academic and emotional success for all students. These elements support fixing the systemic gaps in education for d/Deaf families. If these issues go unaddressed, systemic gaps in education, such as the “Fourth-Grade Ceiling”, where many d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing students struggle to read past fourth-grade

level due to language deprivation, and CODA adultification and stressors compound, as Docekal & Klimentova (2025) and Mayer & Trezek (2023, p 10) discuss.

The cultural experiences and language access of d/Deaf students and their families are often pushed aside in hearing spaces, with instances of cross-cultural misunderstandings, lack of consistent communication, social exclusion, and adultification of CODA students. When CODA children are forced to step in for their parents, they face adultification, and the hearing teacher may also perceive the d/Deaf family to be rude due to their unfamiliarity with Deaf cultural practices. While these incidents may seem minor, over time, their cumulative effect reinforces inequality and exclusion. To promote more just education, schools must extend culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development, so individuals can have a greater understanding of Deaf culture, effective visual/spoken language communication practices, and foster cross-cultural community connections.

I see the dire importance of effective, consistent, equitable access for d/Deaf individuals and their families, as well as the consequences of what happens when this is not achieved. This issue affects all, including children and adolescents with disabilities, English Learners, and students of ethnic diversity, as situations of poor access for one group are reflective of inequitable access for all. If these issues are not addressed, seemingly minor incidents, over time, will cumulatively reinforce inequality and exclusion of d/Deaf families.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this literature review, I discuss the findings of relevant research studies as they relate to my problem of practice, which asks, “How do classroom culture and communication practices

impact the ability of CODA (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) students and their d/Deaf families to engage meaningfully in learning in hearing schools?” During my review of the literature, it led me to take note of the following themes: cross-cultural understanding, family and school communication, and CODAs. These themes support my understanding of how culture and communication practices affect students' success, as it is evident that many practices in mainstream schools are not properly supportive of d/Deaf families due to a lack of resources and cultural understanding (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022, p. 1). To foster cultural belonging and academic equity for d/Deaf families and CODA students, support systems and linguistic gaps must be filled on a systemic scale. As educators, we can make this difference through culturally responsive teaching, specialized support systems, and classroom changes such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Children of d/Deaf Adults (CODAs)

To further support culture and communication equity, educators must acknowledge and understand the presence of CODAs (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) in the classroom. The term CODA refers to a person who has one or more d/Deaf parents, most often refers to an adolescent, and is most often hearing or hard-of-hearing, though a CODA can also be d/Deaf. Docekal and Klimentova (2025) and Allard and Roos (2025) agree that the CODA identity is bicultural and complex, as CODAs are an overlooked minority group who face many challenges. Specifically hearing and hard-of-hearing (otherwise known as functionally hearing, or perceived to be hearing) CODA students are an often misunderstood group in mainstream classrooms, facing issues such as identity and cultural conflicts, adultification, emotional burden, and language development differences.

CODA children in the classroom face struggles that are based on the formation of their own distinct identities. For CODA children, the distinction between the Deaf and hearing worlds is not only sensory differences, but “a divergence at the level of language and the associated cultural elements” (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025, p. 554). The identities themselves of multimodal-bilingual individuals are complex, as these individuals are fluent in one language that is perceived visually, and the other produced by speaking (Allard & Roos, 2025 p. 481). Multimodal bilingualism refers to one’s ability to use both a spoken language and a signed language. This ability offers the unique chance to communicate in both languages simultaneously. For example, this can look like the ability to speak out loud to answer a spelling question, while using ASL to spell the individual letters of the word (known as fingerspelling) to help spell it correctly. For CODAs, the experiences of multimodal bilingualism, as well as the combination of the Deaf and hearing worlds, create a complex social, cultural, and personal identity. The cultural identities of CODA students and their families must be understood by hearing educators to ease interactions.

Due to historical and social barriers, d/Deaf parents often rely on their hearing children (CODAs) to bridge communication gaps, placing unintended burdens on CODAs. Because of this added responsibility, Docekal and Klimentova note a “protective role” that is often assumed by CODAs, as well as heightened “empathy” and “problem-solving skills” due to bilingual and bicultural roles of the child. Educators must realize that CODA students bring these experiences into the classroom and are affected as students by these interactions. In parent-educator interactions, CODA students are often instrumental, as well, due to a lack of high-quality resources, such as interpreters, or as interlocutors, forcing children to assume roles typically reserved for adults (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025). CODA students often interpret their own

parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, school events, or other complex bureaucratic systems on their own, resulting in “long-term emotional impacts” (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025, p. 556). Given that support for those in the Deaf community is poor and often focuses exclusively on hearing needs, there are significant gaps in resources for mental health and well-being, leaving CODA children at risk when their mental health is impacted (Furness et al., 2019).

As Guynes and Wood (2024) note, educational interpreters remain the “least qualified” of all related service personnel. This shows that even if ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters are available, the quality of language interpretation is not likely to be strong. In addition to this adultification of CODA students, this reflects a “broader systemic failure in providing adequate support” for d/Deaf families (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025; Jolly et al., 2024). This is similar to the experiences of bilingual students whose parents do not speak English, where the student then has to act as an interpreter, is adultified, and has undue responsibilities and stress put on them. In both cases, this shows how schools’ failure to provide language interpretation services deprives children of their childhood to solve their parents’ communication issues (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025).

Barriers to Communication

Next, the theme of family and school communication is discussed. Specifically, the communication between d/Deaf families and/or CODAs and hearing educators. One of the most significant elements of supporting d/Deaf and CODA students is supporting effective communication between family and school. This is an important theme that I am going to explore. Barriers to communication for d/Deaf families range from systemic lack of specialized training to poor interpretation services (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025; Furness et al., 2019).

In the United States, mainstream classroom teachers are often inadequately prepared and undersupported to meet the unique needs of students and their families who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. School administrators and educators often lack understanding of d/Deaf students' unique educational requirements, language usage, and assistive technology (Furness et al., 2019; Mayer & Trezek, 2023). For example, many d/Deaf individuals use FM systems in public settings, such as at a parent-conference meeting or in the classroom, which require educators to be aware of how to use them. An FM system is a piece of wireless technology used to improve speech understanding by attaching a small microphone to a table or on the speaker, and attaching the transmitter to the listener's hearing aid, so speech goes directly to their ears at an increased volume. In the modern classroom, there are thousands of options for assistive technology, which can be challenging to adapt to, especially with limited resources and staffing (Furness et al., 2019). To avoid further “substantial delays in language development [and deprivation] that have been documented for several decades,” as Luft (2016, p. 7) adds, effective communication between hearing and d/Deaf individuals is essential. Given that d/Deaf people already exist in a world that often fails to support their differences, efforts to support language deprivation and the resulting language delays are essential.

Poor communication between d/Deaf families and educators, and between CODA students and hearing educators, is worsened by poor-quality interpreters, linguistic misunderstandings, and a lack of bilingual resources. Firstly, d/Deaf families often struggle in hearing schools due to a lack of consistent, high-quality interpreters (Guynes & Wood, 2024). As Guynes and Wood discuss, “further attention must be given to improving the qualifications” and consistency of usage of interpreters in educational settings (2024, p. 2). For example, d/Deaf parents will experience inconsistent communication and linguistic misunderstandings at school

events or parent-teacher conferences, which leads to language deprivation and leading to frustration. As research has revealed, “interpreted education is not equitable education”, as Guynes and Wood (2024) discuss, even the most skilled educational interpreters are unable to provide access for d/Deaf individuals to everything that occurs in an educational setting. According to Guynes and Woods’ study, this is because of unsupportive mainstreamed placements, language and communication modality mismatches, continued violations of educational and legal mandates, bias and superficial commitment to communication philosophies, disregard of students’ language needs, lesser skilled interpreters, inadequate standards of interpreted education, continued ambiguity and controversy surrounding the responsibilities of educational interpreters, case overload (42% of interpreters interpret for more than one student at a time) and the inability to accurately capture and interpret everything that is happening in the hearing world for d/Deaf individuals (Guynes & Wood, 2024, p. 264). This is supported by a “lack of standardized expectations” for interpreters themselves (Guynes & Wood, 2024, p. 263). For example, an interpreter may be paired with a d/Deaf kindergartner and be unaware of how to use developmentally-appropriate language to interpret at a level the student would understand, thus causing the student to not understand the content. Whether language interpreters are used for d/Deaf or hard-of-hearing students or their families, the widespread failure to provide high-quality professional interpreters has led to further marginalization for d/Deaf families.

Cross-Cultural Understanding

Cross-cultural understanding between d/Deaf families and/or CODAs and educators is important to validate cultural identity, foster inclusion, and prevent cultural and social

misunderstandings. Cultural understanding between d/Deaf families and schools is often characterized by a significant gap between the linguistic and cultural norms of the home and the auditory-centric expectations of the American educational system. Multiple authors agree that this relationship is often marked by institutional ignorance, philosophical biases, and a failure to recognize the unique identities of d/Deaf families and CODA students (Allard & Roos, 2025; Ikwara et al., 2007). Bidirectional cultural understanding can be improved with culturally responsive education and is greatly beneficial for all.

CODA students and d/Deaf families face institutional and social barriers in education, such as inadequate teacher and administrative awareness, a lack of specialized training, and cultural misunderstanding. Educators may not be aware of Deaf culture norms, and, even with the best intentions, view d/Deafness with an auditory-centric, deficit-based medical lens, and incidentally create a “phonocentric hegemony” (Allard & Roos, 2025). To view d/Deafness from an auditory-centric, deficit-based medical lens is to view it as “hearing loss”, where auditory communication is emphasized, and Deafness is viewed as a disability (Whitney, 2018). However, Deaf culture views Deafness (‘Deaf Gain’) from a cultural, linguistic lens, which emphasises visual communication, shared language, rich culture, personal identity, and intense community. Therefore, educators must learn about Deaf culture to better understand and serve their d/Deaf families. Additionally, the historical trauma that many older generations of d/Deaf individuals were subjected to, where signed languages were prohibited, leads to mistrust between families and current educational institutions (Docekal & Klimentova, 2025). This mistrust can be worsened when family members and students are met with personal biases by professionals or “informed confusion”, where hearing educators believe they know what is best for a d/Deaf adult or student, and often use biased or incorrect information that lacks cultural sensitivity and does

not support the student. For example, misinformation on the dangers of only using signed languages and never learning to verbally speak English can lead an educator to prevent d/Deaf students from using ASL in their ‘best interest’. This often causes d/Deaf families to have to engage in “coaching up”, where they educate the educator on what is correct, again placing undue responsibility on CODA students and families (Cody, 2026). To support students and their families, educators and administrators require resources and education so they can support to the best of their abilities.

Additionally, to support d/Deaf families and CODA students, educators must recognize this d/Deaf culture in schools. CODA students’ bicultural identities must be validated in the classroom, as “classroom teachers play an important role in supporting the mental health and well-being” of these students (Furness et al., 2019, p. 399). Silvestri and Hartman (2022) suggest that bilingual CODA students should be treated as English Language Learner (ELL) students and receive English learning support, instead of as monolinguals. Hearing educators must also gain an understanding of Deaf culture norms, such as directness, lack of timeliness, sharing of information, collectivism, and Deafness from a socio-cultural perspective. In Deaf culture, Deafness is celebrated as a unique experience that connects one to a vast community. In comparison, hearing culture is auditory-based and often views Deafness as a disability with a remedial lens. For example, if a d/Deaf parent communicates in a way that is blunt to a hearing educator, it may be perceived as rude by a now-irritated educator, who does not understand that by *not* being direct in Deaf culture, one would be considered rude themselves. This cultural understanding can be gained by simple conversations with those in the Deaf Community, to answer questions and absolve misunderstanding and unintentional ableism (O’Connell, 2024). If

educators do not have this cultural understanding of norms in Deaf Culture, they may feel these misunderstandings pile up and create animosity toward the d/Deaf family.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I found the following themes: cross-cultural understanding, family and school communication, and CODAs. These themes are essential towards understanding my problem of practice of “How do school and classroom culture and communication practices impact the ability of d/Deaf students and their families to engage meaningfully in learning?” The community partner interview will further allow me to connect these findings of prior research with a modern educator’s experience.

METHODOLOGY

My research approach was used to outline the inequities and struggles that exist between educators and d/Deaf families and CODAs (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) due to miscommunication and cultural misunderstandings. It included my positionality, theoretical framework, and my community partner interview with Professor Cody, which was discussed. My methodology employed a qualitative research method.

Positionality

Relevant to this topic, I have personal experiences that make me passionate about Deafness in the field of education. My engagement with this topic stems from both my personal experiences in the classroom as someone who is hard-of-hearing and a CODA, as well as my goals as a future educator.

From kindergarten through high school, I have experienced time in Deaf education classrooms with Deaf educators and in hearing English classrooms with hearing professors. Given that my parents are Deaf, this has helped me understand how CODAs are adultified, especially in situations of mainstream education. For example, I recall frequently interpreting for my parents at school events and parent-teacher conferences from a young age, which was stressful and exhausting. Therefore, I have experienced firsthand the importance of effective access and education- such as interpreters- for d/Deaf families and their CODAs. I have seen that the hearing educators' unintentional lack of understanding can unintentionally create barriers for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing families and CODA students.

Additionally, this topic motivates me as a future educator and as someone who would like to work with d/Deaf students to help remedy an undersupported system. I am committed to addressing this challenge by utilizing my passion and applying my skills to better the outcomes for Deaf learners and their families. My experience has helped me to understand this research with a deeper understanding of the challenges. Access in education is a fundamental human right, and though these are mandated by laws such as the ADA, this is often not the case. Therefore, I would like to use my preexisting knowledge of the Deaf experience and problems with access, and apply this to my researched Problem of Practice that can be applied and utilized in a real-world classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework, Disability Theory, is highlighted by Whitney (2018). In Whitney (2018), she discusses how, by considering the intersectional identities of an individual- such as young black girls in her studies- educators can better provide opportunities for students

(Whitney, 2018). Whitney (2018), hosts a book club for middle school girls, where the students are given the opportunity to explore literature, creativity, and self-expression freely and without explicit expectations or constraints. The students, struggling with learning disabilities, emerged with meaningful experiences and higher rates of literacy and understanding. As Whitney states, the Black Girls' Literacies framework (Muhammad & Haddix, 2016) "offers possibilities for considering the unique experiences of black girls identified as having a learning disability and for providing meaningful literacy instruction" (2018, p. 644). Whitney's writings on Disability Theory and Disability Critical Race studies are supported by Mike Oliver's theories of disability (1981).

In my problem of practice- "How do school and classroom culture and communication practices impact the ability of Deaf students and their families to engage meaningfully in learning?" I can use Whitney's theoretical framework to strengthen my thinking. While my problem of practice does not address race or Disability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit), the environment's role in the success of students is explored. In Whitney's work, she sets out to "become more responsive to my students' multiple identities", understanding students' multifaceted cultural identities and responding appropriately in the classroom (Whitney, 2018, p. 644).

Additionally, Whitney, "rather than attempting to remediate deficits", seeks to "understand the rich identities and experiences of my students and build on them" (Whitney, 2018, p. 644). Instead of seeing the environment as something that students of varying cultural identity and/or ability must adapt to, the environment can be seen as an element that should be built around the student. It is this specific part of Disability Theory that I would like to apply to my problem of practice. For example, in a hearing school, spoken language is the norm, and deaf

families and students must adapt to fit this, to make up for their ‘deficit’. Alternatively, through this Disability Theory lens, it can be said that it is not the student or family who has the deficit when faced with only spoken language, as the environment should originally be fit for both spoken and visual language (Whitney, 2018). Personally, I am drawn to this theoretical framework as I feel that viewing disability and differences in language through this lens is an incredible idea, as it completely reshapes how disability and language are viewed.

Community Partner Interview

To gain insight into my Problem of Practice, I was interested in interviewing an individual with experience with d/Deaf students and families. For this Community Partner interview, I based my interview questions around my Problem of Practice, “How do school and classroom culture and communication practices impact the ability of d/Deaf students and their families to engage meaningfully in learning?” The teacher I interviewed, Professor Cody, was an educator at Kihei Elementary, working with students from Pre-K to middle elementary. Professor Cody served as a dedicated educator with a background in Deaf Education, second language acquisition for d/Deaf students, and bilingual multimodal language in the classroom. We are both bilingual and passionate about the value of language and cultural connection in the classroom. Professor Cody worked in education settings with hearing, hard-of-hearing, and d/Deaf adults and children.

Prior to teaching elementary students in a Deaf Education classroom, Professor Cody pursued degrees in special education and Deaf Education, with a certification in ASL interpreting. Before teaching elementary school in Maui, Professor Cody was a teacher in a special education contained classroom, with a focus on family and cultural support for bilingual

students and students with disabilities. To touch on Professor Cody's work and to gain a better understanding of her background, I first asked her broader questions regarding her experiences. As we continued our discussion, I asked more specific questions regarding Deaf and CODA families.

Professor Cody discussed her struggles in education that revolved not as much around supporting Deaf students and their siblings, but more so with a lack of family and school support. For example, she discussed how she can do everything in her power to give d/Deaf students, their siblings, and their families access to resources and classroom materials in ASL and English. However, the majority of her struggles came from when students get on the bus and go home to an environment and public that does not support their bilingualism and d/Deafness. Another point that Professor Cody discussed was the many, many ways that hearing individuals can make the classroom and world more accessible for d/Deaf people. For example, she discussed her use of a specifically ASL/English multimodal curriculum, the representation of every single material in every language the student knows, and class field trips to support exposure to "common knowledge" that most d/Deaf children miss. By discussing this with Professor Cody, I had gained a better understanding of my Problem of Practice. Professor Coody provided me with several resources, as well as other concepts in Deaf Education and cultural support for families, that I had not previously considered. Additionally, she gave me specific ideas on how I can be more supportive with student families and offered great support and encouragement for my future career.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three significant findings from my interview with a community partner and the research literature. From my review of the literature and my discussion with my community partner, I had gathered sufficient evidence that emphasizes relationships between Deaf families and educators. These findings clarify how families and schools must communicate effectively for the success of the student, and bidirectional understanding between Deaf and hearing cultures.

Finding 1: Educators must support multimodal bilingualism in the classroom.

Both the literature and the community partner interview illustrated the importance of educators in supporting multimodal bilingualism in the classroom. Cody discussed how both ASL (signed language) and English (spoken language) are equal in importance and equal in the way that one can convey information, as “language is *language*” (Cody, 2026). Cody emphasized that language from birth and early access to any and all language is what is truly vital for any child’s success. This statement aligns with the literature, which emphasizes translanguaging and open use of multimodal bilingualism for d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing CODA (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) students (Allard & Roos, 2025; Silvestri & Hartman, 2022). Translanguaging, the use of selecting and combining elements of multiple languages, or switching languages, can be used to support students who use more than one language and feel most comfortable performing tasks with a certain language or a combination.

Finding 2: Bidirectional cultural understanding and collaboration are necessary between d/Deaf families and hearing educators.

Secondly, both the literature and the community partner interview illustrated the value of bidirectional cultural understanding and collaboration between d/Deaf families and hearing

educators. A primary barrier to understanding between educators and d/Deaf families is the educational norms and practices that are centered around hearing individuals. Additionally, due to a lack of professional training, educators frequently view d/Deafness through a deficit-based medical lens, whereas many d/Deaf families identify as part of the Deaf community and recognize the community's rich language and history (Allard & Roos, 2025). As Cody (2026) discussed, home-school collaboration to effectively support the 'whole child' requires integration and frequent communication between school staff and educators. This includes Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, recurring parent check-in meetings, frequent family-inclusive field trips/events, and establishing direct lines of communication (Cody, 2026). Additionally, Deaf awareness programming that focuses on understanding Deaf culture, d/Deaf individuals, and how to interact and teach d/Deaf individuals in schools is not only culturally responsive pedagogy, but creates understanding and answers questions between hearing and d/Deaf communities (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022). In simpler words, both the literature and Cody (2026) greatly emphasized the importance of communication between parties, as mutual understanding is key.

CONCLUSION

I provided a comprehensive conclusion summarizing my inquiry into the way classroom culture and communication practices negatively affect d/Deaf individuals, their families, and CODA (Children of Deaf Adult(s)) students in hearing schools. Additionally, I outline the implications of these findings for future and present educators and propose recommendations aimed at fostering a more equitable learning environment. The research question asks, "How do school and classroom culture and communication practices impact the ability of d/Deaf students

and their families to engage meaningfully in learning?” Whitney’s (2018) Disability Theory theoretical framework was utilized to analyze this problem of practice through a cultural lens rather than a remedial, deficit lens. Through Disability Theory, the environment is viewed as the deficit to be fixed and built around the people, with d/Deaf or CODA individuals viewed as a culturally-rich center. The findings concluded that educators must support multimodal bilingualism in the classroom, and that bidirectional cultural understanding and collaboration are necessary between d/Deaf families and hearing educators.

Recommendations/Implications

To address the challenges of inequitable practices for d/Deaf families and CODA students in mainstream education, several recommendations can be considered. Educators can personally implement some elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in their classroom. The ideology of UDL includes barrier-free curriculum as well as d/Deaf-friendly environment construction, and is also advantageous to all students’ success (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022). The implementation of UDL in classrooms is also an accessible pedagogical framework, which can be accompanied by culturally responsive pedagogy in schools to further strengthen curricula. Most importantly, educators, administration, and policymakers can educate themselves on d/Deafness. Schools can strengthen professional development and school education on d/Deafness, so educators are more prepared.

Benefits and Limitations

My study on the communication and cultural practices for d/Deaf families in education included several potential benefits. Firstly, to promote more just education, schools must extend

culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development, so individuals can have a greater understanding of Deaf culture, effective visual/spoken language communication practices, and foster cross-cultural community connections. As a result of this study, and enhanced training and cultural awareness brought forth in the classroom, possible benefits include enhanced cultural and social understanding throughout schools and within social interactions of the Deaf and hearing communities. If educators are able to better understand d/Deaf families and CODA students, they will be able to spread this cultural awareness to students and mediate a more culturally sensitive school culture. This contributes to the growth of social-emotional learning for all. Potential limitations to this study include my personal biases and time restrictions that create scope limitations regarding the study's focus and population demographics. For example, for this research, I am including little to no resources about students or families in education who utilize cochlear implants, or d/Deaf students in mainstream education.

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APPENDIX

The questions I previously prepared for Professor Cody are as follows:

Q1) Within the classroom and school, how do you create a welcoming and inclusive environment for d/Deaf and hard of hearing students?

Q2) Looking at your experiences working with families, what are some things you wish hearing individuals understood more about d/Deaf/hard of hearing individuals, and vice versa?

Q3) In your experience working with d/Deaf and hard of hearing students, what are some of the most prominent issues you have seen for them in the classroom?

Q4) What are some of the negative effects you see that happen from the cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications between d/Deaf/hard of hearing families or individuals and hearing families/individuals in education? *For example, one Deaf culture norm is to be very blunt. This may cause an issue if a Deaf parent is speaking to a hearing teacher in such a direct way where the hearing teacher feels insulted, because they do not understand that this is a cultural norm.*

Q5) Within the classroom and school, how do you ensure consistent communication and access for d/Deaf students and their families?

Q6) What are some of your experiences with CODA students and what have you observed regarding the adultification and struggles facing hearing CODAs in hearing environments? *For example, CODAs are often expected to interpret in situations for their d/Deaf/hard of hearing parents. At a school event, there should be reasonable accommodations (such as an interpreter) provided, but there is often not. Therefore, children are often interpreting for their parents, leading to adultification of the child, and causing the issue of both the parents and child missing out on socialization with their peers.*