

GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Do We Need a National Standards-Based K-12 Deaf Studies Curriculum?:
An Analytic History of Trends and Discourse in Development of Deaf Studies Curriculum

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requirements for the degree Master of Arts

In

Deaf Studies, with cross-cultural emphasis

By

Alexander Zernovoj

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I. Introduction and Overview

Deaf education has devoted considerable attention recently to the pedagogy and language acquisition research exploring ways to improve English reading and writing literacy skills of deaf¹ students. The attribution of this devotion can be due in part to the fact that on standardized tests the majority of deaf students perform between a third and fourth grade reading level when they expect to graduate from high school². As these tests become “high stakes” tests in many states, teachers are increasingly accountable for documenting progress in deaf and hard of hearing students’ literacy skills. Not only are these teachers increasingly accountable for documenting progress, they are also increasingly accountable for using and teaching their curriculum that meets the state and national standards for students’ learning outcomes. On top of this, they also are accountable for meeting deaf students’ annual IEP³ goals, many of which often must be aligned with the state standards for the grade level they are in.

With the mounting supply of responsibilities such as “high stakes” tests⁴, meeting deaf students’ IEP goals, and a myriad of subjects to cover as required by the state’s standards, teachers often do not have time to teach the whole curriculum in every academic subject area. They are not able to do it at the expense of spending a significant amount of time and energy to produce any kind of increase in the achievement levels of their students’ English literacy and other academic skills and knowledge as mandated by the NCLB. This

¹ The word “deaf” in this paper refers to any student whose hearing loss is severe enough to require an individualized education plan or special accommodations. This includes hard of hearing students.

² Please refer to the *Impact of Standards-based Reform on Deaf Education Curricula* section of this paper for more information regarding deaf students’ achievement levels.

³ IEP is an abbreviation for Individual Educational Plan. Legislation (in this case, IDEA – *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*) requires schools to annually write these plans to set yearly goals and select services and learning methods for disabled students, including deaf students.

⁴ “High stakes” tests are standardized tests whose results have important consequences for students, teachers, and schools.

pressure on the teachers often means negligence on their part (and, in some cases, includes administrators) in the inclusion of Deaf Studies in their teaching. This also often means teachers do not have the luxury of time and energy to find, collect and adapt the Deaf Studies curriculum materials that at least meet some of their respective state's stringent learning state requirements for some academic content areas, such as language arts and social studies.

Many teachers and researchers, including myself, in the field of deaf education have observed a need for infusing Deaf Studies into the deaf education curricula at all levels to give the deaf students the knowledge that is beneficial and empowering for their personal growth and self-esteem as a deaf individual⁵. Historically, K-12 residential and other central schools for the deaf were the center and hubs of deaf culture, and, in some cases, provided in-depth Deaf Studies, for deaf students. However, in a big departure from history, there currently is an ongoing trend in declining number of residential and other central schools for the deaf across the United States. These closures are happening due in most part to shifts in school enrollments from residential and other central schools to mainstreaming and public schools with small and large deaf student enrollments across the nation in the past few decades. Financial incentives for public schools' mainstreaming of deaf students are another reason for declining residential school attendance⁶. This ongoing trend creates a pressing need to create a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum for deaf students (including those with no continuous exposure to deaf culture) since the benefits for access to

⁵ Refer to the *Assessment of Need for Standards-based Deaf Studies Curriculum* section for literature review of the benefits that deaf students gain from access to the Deaf Studies curriculum, e.g. positive self-concept/self-esteem and empowerment.

⁶ Ibid (for some of the reasons for mainstreaming deaf students).

this curriculum include the knowledge and skills they need regardless of their family and academic backgrounds.

Yet, the Deaf Studies curriculum discussions in the deaf education circles remain very general, and when these discussions last for a considerable period, it usually becomes clear that there are various needs. Some of these needs include (1.) full inclusion (or integration) of teaching Deaf Studies in the K-12 schools, and (2.) teachers' ability to freely use the Deaf Studies materials designed to meet the state (and national) learning standards. It also becomes clear in those discussions that not all parties to the discussions have thought of, discussed, or have a similar idea in mind as to how to create a national standard full-fledged Deaf Studies curriculum, let alone a Deaf Studies curriculum that is aligned with state (and national) standards. This involves how to align it with primarily the language arts and social studies standards to help the teachers meet as many learning standards as possible rather than through just a handful of lesson plans. This allows teachers a choice, rather than resorting to painstakingly creating a lesson plan for each one of many learning standards, which other teachers may not have access to and can use.

In one way or another, and for better and for worse, one of the focuses in deaf education reform has revolved around the state and national standards. In the last decade or so, it has become more common and acceptable for the policy makers to impose state (and national) learning standards on the schools, including those with teachers of deaf students, thus forcing all teachers to become accountable for their students' learning outcomes. In response to this, this paper is advocating for a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum to ensure its incorporation (or integration) in the deaf education curricula. The main reason behind this paper is advocating for a national-level standards-based Deaf

Studies curriculum rather than a state-level standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum is convenience and usability. With there being fifty states, why devise fifty different standards-complaint Deaf Studies curriculum instead of having just one that all fifty states can use? A nation-wide plan's standards can be aligned with fifty states' standards thus making it possible for all schools and programs that serve deaf students to focus on implementing and improving a nation-wide curriculum. A nation-wide curriculum gives American deaf students a common access to their American Deaf culture and heritage that knows no state boundaries.

While it is true that this paper could have created and provided a full-fledged "model" national Deaf Studies curriculum (let alone, a national Deaf Studies curriculum framework), it is the author's opinion that a good-standing national Deaf Studies curriculum (designed with state and national learning standards in mind) should be developed through cooperative work. In other words, a good national standards-complaint Deaf Studies curriculum should be developed by a team of teachers, administrators, researchers and students from various state schools and school programs across the nation. Instead, this paper will conduct a full literature review of papers focusing on the Deaf Studies curriculum, collect and analyze existing materials and curricula to help encourage development of an effective national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum with all of the learning goals that meet various state and national standards, and provide recommendations to help inform the curriculum development.

Many teachers and researchers (including myself) in the field of deaf education do not have years of experience with state-level or national-level educational reform and leadership that could lead us to have expert understanding of creating national standards.

However, many of us have had some experiences in dealing with state and national learning standards, which might help inform the discussion and the creation of a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum that this paper is pushing for.

This thesis paper is simple in its purpose, with no concerns as to how to create the standards. It has no researcher's theoretical schemes of the deaf education curricula, including, in this case, Deaf Studies curriculum. It does not contain any complete Deaf Studies curriculum framework or guidebook with numerous units of lesson plans. This paper focuses on, discusses and analyzes the history of trends and discourses in development of a Deaf Studies curriculum while taking into account the standards-based reform, and provides recommendations as to how to effectively develop an ideal Deaf Studies curriculum.

Aside from this introductory and overview section, this paper consists of three parts. The first part of this paper provides not only a complete review (or survey) of discussion and development leading up to the current trends in Deaf Studies curriculum development, but other hard data, including patterns and trends. This part covers three sections (sections II to IV): the *Impact of Standards-based Reform on Deaf Education Curricula*, the *Assessment of Need for Standards-based Deaf Studies Curriculum*, and the *Need for Bilingual Approaches to Education*. All of these sections are self-explanatory based on their respective titles and are relevant in the context of Deaf Studies curriculum development. Reviewing, analyzing and understanding the history of discourse and trends in the development of Deaf Studies curriculum is vital in helping inform the present knowledge and discussion. Furthermore, this knowledge and discussion will lead recommendations and other ideas for developing a sound, full-fledged standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum.

The second part of this paper analyzes existing known curriculum (or curriculum-like) materials to help inform development of an ideal standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. This part covers section V: the *Review of Existing Materials and Curricula*. While the title of this section is self-explanatory, it also assesses the depth (and richness) of the body of literature that focuses on the discourse of the Deaf Studies curriculum regardless of the content of each work assessed in terms of the quantitative and qualitative content in this literature body. The literature comes in the form of articles, papers and among other things from various sources; moreover, this assessment takes special note of each work's publication source (e.g., academic journals, mainstream magazines and conference proceedings). It also helps to analyze the existing known Deaf Studies-related materials and curricula because it not only informs us what kind of materials and curricula are out there (in use or not), it lets us envision what is needed to make an ideal standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum.

The third and last part of this paper covers section VI: the *Summary and Conclusions*. This part summarizes the literature review in the historical context of discourse in development of Deaf Studies curriculum and determines what is the current trend in the discussion and development of such a curriculum and in what direction is this trend going. This section also determines what needs to be done (e.g., next appropriate course(s) of action) to start a development of a model standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. It is very difficult to be able to have an informed and productive present discourse without knowing the history and current trend in the discussion among deaf education circles regarding Deaf Studies curriculum and its ideal development. It also helps to be able to have some sense of where this trend is going in the future since it will also help inform present discourse.

Moreover, this paper will not be complete without providing and discussing recommendations for development of an effective national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum based on the information from the previous part since it will help those wanting to take actions by giving them ideas of what they can do.

The following sections address the impact of standards-based reform on the deaf education curricula, including Deaf Studies curriculum, and then assesses the need for a standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum, respectively.

II. Impact of Standards-based Reform on Deaf Education Curricula

A day hardly ever passes without discussion in the academic circles on the closing of the achievement gap between deaf students and regular hearing students at large. The “achievement gap” is a general term referring to disparities in achievement among student subgroups⁷ of different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and English language learning backgrounds. The rise of standards-based education reform⁸, with increasingly rigid state accountability and testing requirements fueled by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) legislation⁹, have brought the long-simmering discussion and concern about achievement gap issues in deaf students’ academic performance to unprecedented prominence. In regards to the standards-based education reform, Goertz (1991) says:

A primary goal of standards-based reform is high standards and improved achievement for all students, particularly those who have been denied access to challenging educational programs. Accountability programs can help address the achievement gap between students of different socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds, and between students with different educational needs by providing information on the nature of the gap and creating incentives for educators to narrow these differences. For this policy to work, however, states must assess all students on the content of the standards-based curriculum, disaggregate and report their scores, and include their scores in accountability measures. (p. 56)

In reality, concern for the deaf students’ achievement gap has a long history (e.g., Fay, 1869; and Pintner & Patterson, 1916) and only recently has begun to rear its ugly head after having been brought forth by the rise of standards-based education reform.

⁷ In this paper, all of the student subgroups will be referred to as minority students.

⁸ The standards-based reform begun in 1990s with schools increasingly required to adhere to curriculum standards, promoted by national professional associations. This, in turn, became the base for mandated state curriculum frameworks in nearly every state. This movement was followed by the development of high-stakes examinations for students in those states, which would decide their promotion and/or graduation based on their respective state curriculum standards. The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 built upon the trend toward state-mandated high-stakes testing with additional rigid requirements and increased school accountabilities for students’ learning outcome. (Moore, D. & Martin, D., 2006).

⁹ At the time of this writing, the NCLB education legislation is up for renewal in Congress this year (2007). Lawmakers are considering fundamental changes to the legislation, including rewrites to it that loosens the testing rules for students learning English and special education students, and softens the annual yearly progress goal deadlines and punishments for those that miss the annual yearly progress goals.

Part of the reason for the deaf students' current achievement gap is the quality of curricula used in deaf education: "In general, the curriculum emphases in deaf education, as a field, have not been closely tied to those in public education for hearing students. In science, mathematics, and social studies, for example, the relevance of the curriculum movements of the 1960s and 1970s, especially those focused on active learning and articulation across grades, were not adequately explored for school programs serving deaf students (Lang, 1987)" (Lang, 2003, p.16). An obvious example of this would be the era of curriculum reform and innovation after the launching of the Russian spacecraft *Sputnik* in 1957. After the launching of *Sputnik*, the United States federal government legislation launched the National Defense Education Act, which funded a number of projects leading to collaboration of subject matter scholars, psychologists, and teachers to produce new elementary and secondary regular¹⁰ curricula. Yet, these developments in academic content areas had little or no effect on the deaf education curriculum (Moores & Martin, 2006). Additionally, the primary focus of deaf education curriculum has long been on English skills and language, primarily development of articulate speech and to some extent reading and writing, to the practical exclusion of other content areas, thus devaluing these other disciplines (Moores & Martin, 2006; Pagliaro, 2006).

The Council for Exceptional Children and Council on Education of the Deaf Joint Knowledge and Skills Statement for All Becoming Teachers of Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Joint Standards Committee, 1996) lists a total of sixty-six knowledge and skills standards for teachers of the deaf, but no skill statements addressing academic content

¹⁰ The term "regular" curricula are used, as a convenience, to refer to those found in mainstream (and hearing) school settings. There is no one curriculum in the United States since curricula vary across and within states, and, to a large degree, reflect the constituencies that they serve due to the fact education being primarily under state and local control. .

(e.g., mathematics and social studies). In a literature review of all 130 peer-reviewed articles that appeared in the professional educational journal, *American Annals of the Deaf*, during a five-year period shows the lack of emphasis on academic content: only three articles dealt with mathematics, but no articles focused on science and social studies (Moore, Jatho, & Creech, 2001).

For instance, the study conducted by Kluwin and Moore (1989) points to the evidence of teachers of deaf students spending less time on mathematics areas than regular classroom mathematics teachers with deaf students integrated into their regular classes in the same school building. Observably, it is easy for anyone to infer from this fact that there is a consequence for the deaf students resulting from the inequality between deaf education curricula and regular curricula, and that is in the form of their achievement gap. Since the onset of a reform-based mathematics curriculum into regular education, there has been a positive trend in mathematics performance by hearing students, but the mathematics performance of deaf students remained the same (Pagliaro, 2006). After creating a significant achievement gap in deaf students because of significant mismatches between deaf education curricula and regular uses for hearing students, Moore (2001) noted that as deaf students move through the grade levels, this achievement gap tends to be exacerbated.

Before delving further into the discussion of needs for standards-based deaf education curricula (and, in this case, Deaf Studies curriculum), let us examine what a deaf education curriculum itself is, should be and should not be. Many people often think of curriculum either as a document that shapes the teaching and learning processes and content that teachers need to teach to any given group of students or as being everything that happens in a given school where the curriculum is being implemented. A curriculum is more

than just a document with a list of predetermined learning goals or with a list of intended learning-based actions and outcomes; it reflects all of the specifications made in regards to students' learning, e.g. government legislation, school policies, and standards-based student assessment. Cohen and Harrison (1982) described curriculum as both intention and reality.

Good intention or not, Lovat and Smith (1998) suggested that “many of the messages of the hidden curriculum¹¹ are concerned with power, authority, access and participation: these are messages that continually shape learners' developing views of the world ... their creating of reality” (pp. 35 – 36). This is also true in deaf education: “History has presented Deaf education with any number of curricula that were created from a pathological view of Deaf people. Deaf people were seen as a medical problem, and the hidden message of the curriculum was that Deaf students needed to be ‘fixed’” (Haring, 1993, p.299). In other words, for a long time, deaf education curricula did not (and still does not) consider deaf students' unique cultural and linguistic capabilities and learning needs¹². Because of dominant pathological perspective of those in control of the curriculum development and implementation processes, deaf students' linguistic and learning needs were not being addressed, and, as a result, they are lagging behind in academic achievement levels (e.g., Baynton, 1996). As Leigh (2001) pointed out:

To fail to acknowledge that a particular perspective on deafness may lead to the adoption of a set of objectives for a deaf student that are not consonant with that student's current or future social circumstance may result in a situation where both educational means and ends are subsequently questioned or rejected by that student and his or her cultural community. There are, for example, unfortunate examples of young deaf students and deaf adults who have come to question, often bitterly, the lack of inclusion of sign language and deaf culture in their educational experience (Jacobs, 1989). Similarly, some deaf people educated in more socioculturally defined

¹¹ The term “hidden curriculum” refers to the unplanned and usually unrecognized learning outcomes that are a result of actual curriculum activities.

¹² See Baynton (1996) for a long history of those in power of deaf education, specifically hearing people, not considering deaf students' learning needs.

programs have come to question their lack of access to assistive technologies for hearing and their lack of programmed opportunity to develop expressive spoken language skills (Bertling, 1994). Clearly, there are issues relating to current and future cultural affiliation, among many other issues, that must be considered in curriculum design. (pp. 158 – 159)

Good deaf education curricula need to factor in these needs during its development in addition to incorporating the state and national learning standards.

While deaf education curricula needs to incorporate standards-based reform and accountability, deaf education curricula also needs to take deaf students' linguistic and learning needs in account before any attempt can be made to close deaf students' achievement gap. However, there is no clear-cut, one-size-fit-all perspective on deaf students' linguistic and learning needs shared by all educators and other professionals in the field of deaf education:

How deafness is defined, what is valued, and perceptions of what a “deaf life” may mean, all will be differently constructed according to the perspectives that are dominant among those who control the processes of curriculum development and implementation. Therefore, there may be quite different interpretations of the curriculum context for the same group of learners. Different constructions of the context will inevitably lead to different curriculum decisions on a range of issues. Not least among these issues will be the important and contentious questions of language and communication type and location of program delivery (i.e., separate special school or some form of mainstream environment). (Power and Leigh, 2003, p. 40)

While it is not possible to represent all perspectives on deafness in all aspects of the curriculum development for every deaf student, curriculum development needs to deal with diverse linguistic and cultural learning needs of all deaf students as broad as it possibly can. Additionally, the curriculum development needs to address the following four fundamental questions to be able to provide the best and most justifiable decisions regarding the content of a curriculum being developed (Tyler, 1949):

1. What educational processes should the school seek to attain?

2. What educational experiences can be provided that is likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

In designing considerations for a deaf education curriculum, Haring (1993, p.299) made an interesting comment that should be kept in mind about what a curriculum should and should not be:

The goals, objectives, materials, texts, and methodologies found in any curriculum are the direct result of a preconceived set of values, beliefs, and assumptions regarding expectations of the students, the nature of human development and learning, and the relationships between teachers and students (Freire, 1990; Giroux, 1981). For many people, curriculum has little to do with belief systems. They perceive curricula as simply a “cookbook” or a guide for teachers and fail to see that what the cookbook suggests as ingredients and directions for mixing the ingredients is based on a set of values, beliefs, and assumptions as to what is nutritional, tasty food. If educators continue to see curricula as only paper, the new and improved “cookbook” will offer new exotic dishes that will continue to leave students malnourished. The definition of curriculum must be changed.

While deaf education curricula generally needs to take into account deaf students’ unique cultural and linguistic learning needs, this curriculum also needs to take into account any curriculum developers’ “preconceived set of values, beliefs, and assumptions” that they may have about deaf students; failure to do so will impact students’ learning in negative ways. A curriculum is not a “cookbook” or a guide and it is not rigid and limited. In other words, while any curriculum needs to be standards-based, it is not content-oriented or guidebook-oriented curriculum, it is learning-based, which should be able to meet deaf students’ unique cultural and linguistic learning needs, as Haring said, “the definition of curriculum must be changed.”

By not aligning the curricula used in deaf education closely with those used in public education, deaf students are paying the price by falling behind in student achievement. The rise of standards-based education reform changed all of that. In the era of NCLB-fueled state

accountability and testing requirements, deaf education can no longer ignore the fact that deaf education curricula needs to be updated and closely tied to standards-based curricula used in public education for hearing students. Deaf education needs to analyze and incorporate the benefits of approaches and materials used in standards-based curricula for public education. With the onset of standards-based reform, now is the time to make all deaf education curricula standards-based and compatible with deaf students' unique learning capabilities.

While it is true that deaf education curricula may need particular emphases in addressing the unique linguistic and learning needs of deaf students, deaf students have had to deal with low expectations that many researchers have attributed to as one of the contributing factors to the deaf students' achievement gap (e.g., Johnson, Liddel, & Erting, 1989). However, it is important to note that a handful of studies have been conducted and all of these studies found no evidence that can attribute to any differences in deaf students' academic achievement to the types of deaf-related school programs themselves (Allen & Osborn, 1984; Kluwin & Moores, 1985, 1989). In other words, no studies have been able to establish any link between the type of program serving deaf students and deaf students' academic achievement; so, it is safe to say that low academic achievement levels generally affect all deaf students in all school settings.

These days, policy leaders (including those that devised NCLB) have access to more than 40 years of data¹³ on deaf students' academic achievements¹⁴ that they can (but did not) use to educate and inform themselves about the deaf education-related issues before

¹³ From past studies including Furth (1966) and Trybus & Karchmer (1977) to present studies including Gallaudet Research Institute (1996), Holt, Traxler, & Allen (1997) and Traxler (2000).

¹⁴ "The research literature discussing the academic achievement of deaf and hard-of-hearing students is substantially limited to the analysis of commercially available, norm-referenced, standardized tests, and only infrequently have any of the other indicators been examined" (Karchmer and Mitchell, 2003, p. 27).

implementing education policies, which have had (and continue to have) wide-ranging impacts on deaf education. In other words, it was not made clear to the policy leaders that deaf students have exceptional learning needs and academic achievements, which sets them apart from other subgroups of students. Consequently, deaf students' unique linguistic and cultural capabilities and learning needs are not accounted for in the standards-based testing. "In the view of many, the entire system of NCLB – including its emphasis on meeting or exceeding state standards and adequate yearly progress – was created without enough thought about the challenges faced by deaf or hard of hearing students whose access to spoken language – through no fault of their own – is limited or indirect" (Johnson, 2004, p.104).

The passage of the NCLB legislation has notably made the issue of addressing the students' achievement gap a top priority, especially in deaf education. NCLB addresses the achievement gap in its "Statement of Purpose" of the Title I – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged section. That statement notes that Title I's purpose is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). It goes on to state that one of the ways that this purpose can be accomplished is by closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students, between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers. NCLB further mandates that states must make "adequate yearly progress" toward having all students produce academic achievements at a proficient level (in the form of test scores), with "separate, measurable, annual objectives for continuous and substantial

improvement” of these students. In other words, NCLB requires schools to look beyond the achievement gap between white students and racial/ethnic students to address the achievement gap in a number (if not all) of minority and disadvantaged student subgroups. In order to address these NCLB requirements, many schools have made (and continue to make) changes to meet the NCLB goals (e.g., Locke, 2005). For instance, in one intensive year-long study of ten New York City high schools detailing how NCLB requirements forced high-stakes tests to become the *de facto* language policy in schools. The study showed how most schools and individual educators increased the amount of English instruction for the ELL¹⁵ students as a test preparation strategy, while some pursued a different strategy by instead increasing native language instruction for ELLs and how most curriculum and instruction for ELL students focuses on test content and strategies at these schools (Menken, 2006). However, this study did not show any result of the adaptations New York City’s schools made for the ELLs. It is most likely that it is too early to assess the impact of these adaptations on the ELL students’ learning.

In practice, NCLB translates into annual state testing of all students in order for states to make sure that their schools are helping its’ students succeed in academics in addition to their acquiring essential skills. NCLB holds states accountable for the achievement levels of all their students on average, including the achievement levels of minority and disadvantaged students. However, there are serious flaws in NCLB both in the finer points of its implementation and in its characterization of success in academic achievement (e.g., Locke, 2005). For instance, Cawthon noted that under NCLB’s guidelines, “all students, including those with disabilities, must meet yearly benchmarks for

¹⁵ ELL stands for English language learner; it refers to students learning English as a second language. This also applies to deaf students, whose first language is ASL or any other language(s), learning English as a second language.

academic proficiency,” and this means the goal of NCLB is “to raise the percentage of students meeting academic proficiency levels to 100% by the 2013-2014 school year” (2004, p.315). Is this a realistic goal for many deaf students with their unique linguistic and learning capabilities to be able to meet 100% academic proficiency levels? What about those students with learning disabilities, can they meet 100% academic proficiency levels? No honest educator will agree that this is a realistic goal. “The main problem, of course, is that the goals are impossible; 100% success will never be attained and we all know it” (Moore, 2004).

Moore (2005) made another interesting point regarding another flaw with NCLB: while it is comprehensive in detail, including parts of it addressing Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and “Their Historic Whaling and Trading partners in Massachusetts,” there is nothing in it that addresses the education of disabled students which includes deaf students. There is truly something wrong with NCLB since it covers “Their Historic Whaling Trading partners in Massachusetts” and others listed above, but not deaf students or any other disabled students. In regards to deaf students, Moore added, “We all know that when NCLB was passed little or no consideration was given to children receiving special services. We also know that deaf children, especially those with multiple disabilities, will not meet the 100% goal by 2014” (2004, p.348). In addition to the NCLB flaws that Moore pointed out, what many people may not realize that there is another additional flaw in implementing NCLB. Each state is allowed to interpret and implement differently, and what this means for the states is each state is allowed to develop its own assessment programs for all students in its state, including deaf students, regardless of whatever other states do. This prevents anyone from having any reliable mechanism for nationwide comparisons within the

framework of NCLB. Consequently, the students' scores cannot be compared from one state to another because of a lack of uniformity between states' standards-based examinations. The score variation may reflect differences in exams themselves more than actual achievement differences in students. Moores (2004) shares the authors' view on this implementation flaw: "it means that instead of just 1, there are more than 50 NCLBs with common features, but with questionable uniformity" (p.78).

Regardless, while "there may be individual students for whom the tests will be inappropriate [...] but schools are obliged to administer the tests to at least 95 percent of students from any of four subgroups, including students with disabilities, English language learners, ethnic and racial minorities, and students who are economically disadvantaged" (Johnson, 2004). As a result, in addition to an increasing number of mainstream schools with deaf programs already participating in the NCLB accountability reporting frameworks, an increasing number of state schools for the deaf are participating in these standards-based frameworks (e.g., Cawthon, 2004). It has come to the point where at least most or all of deaf students, regardless of their educational backgrounds, are impacted by NCLB and other standards-based assessment reforms despite the challenges that these deaf students face in NCLB-mandated assessments because of their unique language and literacy skills which generally are unaccounted for in the assessments.

Yet, what is known to the policy leaders is this: the achievement gap of minority students has stalled since the late 1980s, and they have been trying to address it ever since (Kober, 2001). The NCLB is the latest incarnation of standards-based education reform with the goal of closing achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students even though it does not fully account for deaf students. However, unbeknownst to the policy

leaders, there is a well-circulated fact in the field of deaf education that the majority of deaf students read between third and fourth grades level when they graduate from high school (Allen, 1994; Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies, 1991; Gallaudet Research Institute, 1996; Holt, Traxler, & Allen, 1997; Traxler, 2000)¹⁶. According to a national norms report published by Gallaudet Research Institute (1996), the median reading level for deaf students at 18 years of age was at the 3.9 grade level. In another report, Deaf 18-year-olds generally on average read at the same level as hearing fourth graders; this report added that only about 3 % of deaf 18-year-olds read at the same level as their average 18-year-old hearing counterparts (Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies, 1991). Paul and Jackson (1993) added that deaf students average six to seven years behind their hearing counterparts by the time they graduate from high school, and only seven percent of deaf students graduate with reading levels at the seventh grade level or above.

Only three state schools for the deaf made “adequate yearly progress” goals under NCLB in the year 2004 after “having demonstrated that there were at least a 95% participation rate in assessments, and at least 95% of their students met or surpassed state proficiency benchmarks in reading and mathematics” (Cawthon, 2004, 2005). Since annual state standards-based assessment have become more common as states attempt to comply with the NCLB requirements, there is little question that the deaf students’ academic achievement gap is clearly a serious local, state and national issue.

¹⁶ The data from these articles is primarily based on the commercially available, norm-referenced standardized tests, particularly the Stanford Achievement Test. The latest data analyzed and presented in publications at the time of this writing was from Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition (known as Stanford 9) administered to deaf students in the spring of 1996. Further standardized tests (e.g., Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition) have been administered since 1996, but the data from these tests have yet to be analyzed and presented in publications at the time of this writing.

The positive correlation between standards-based curriculum and academic achievement is well documented in research literature. Terms such as “research-based” and “evidence-based” in the research literature are often used to indicate the sense of effectiveness of the curriculum that is aligned with the standards. Moreover, the effectiveness of the curriculum as a factor in addressing the achievement gap is tied to how well the curriculum is implemented as well as how well is the curriculum aligned with the standards. Schmoker and Marzano (1999) have noted in their studies that standards-based education can be successful if its goals are well defined and its assessments and curricula deliberately aligned with standards.

Schmoker and Marzano (1999) also listed numerous schools that have been successful in increasing student achievement levels with standards-based regular curriculum. The list of schools in their study includes schools in Frederick County, Maryland, where students rose from the middle to the highest tier after reaching well-defined standards and embedding state assessments with standards, and schools in Phoenix, Arizona, where students’ performance levels have been increased because their teachers are teaching the same state assessments developed by subject-area teams. “[In order to] avoid curricular chaos, educators must be judicious about the standards they assess” (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999). In their work, Schmoker and Marzano (1999) quoted Rosenhotlz (1991): “The success of any organization is contingent upon clear, commonly defined goals. A well-articulated focus unleashes individual and collective energy. And a common focus clarifies understanding, accelerates communication, and promotes persistence and collective purpose.”

In another study, Riordan and Noyce (2001) have shown that students who have access to standards-based mathematics curricula performed significantly better on standardized tests than their counterparts with access to traditional mathematics curricula in matched comparison schools. Moreover, in their studies, this also was true for minority students who fared well because of their access to standards-based curricula. In other words, students (including minority students) with standards-based curricula outperformed their matched counterparts without standards-based curricula. “The positive impact of the standards-based programs on student performance was remarkably consistent across students of different gender, race, and economic status. Students at the top, bottom, and middle of their classes did better with the standards-based programs than did their counterparts using traditional programs” (Riordan & Noyce, 2001, p.390). Adding further correlations between standards-based curriculum and increased achievement levels in many minority students, Kahle, Meece and Scantlebury (2000) showed that teachers who used standards-based curriculum had positive effects on urban African American students’ science achievement levels.

Deaf students, like any other minority student subgroup, are lagging behind in terms of achievement levels due to a variety of factors that affect them, including low expectations, lack of access to standards-based curricula or, worse, “dumbing down” of school curricula. None of these factors can continue to happen since all teachers now face higher standards and greater accountability in deaf students’ academic achievements. NCLB requires teachers to ensure that all deaf students, like all other students, must be held to the same academic standards as others as well as to make “adequate yearly progress.” In order to do that for the deaf students and help them close their achievement gap as much as

possible, teachers need to align their deaf education curricula and assessments with standards, immaculately define their curricula's goals, and ensure that their curricula accounts for deaf students' unique learning capabilities. Wurst, Jones and Luckner (2005) acknowledged these NCLB-mandated expectations, and they addressed these mandates by establishing co-taught classrooms and redoing their literacy curriculum thus making it more research-based and standards-based for deaf students. As a result, the research authors noted that with their standards-based curriculum, students took ownership in development of their literacy skills, improved their communication skills, acquired various literacy skills, and produced higher scores on tests (Wurst, Jones and Luckner, 2005). With the success of standards-based curriculum in many students including deaf students and other minority students shown above, there is little question that there is a need to create standards-based curriculum designed to help deaf students close their achievement gap.

As previously discussed in the *Introduction and Overview* section, with the onset of NCLB and standards-based reform that came along with it, teachers often are feeling a lot of pressures and increased responsibility to increase their deaf students' academic achievement level and close the achievement gap. This increased responsibility has gotten to the point where teachers spend more time and energy on teaching their deaf students to increase their academic achievement levels and documenting deaf students' progress that they cannot teach the whole curriculum, and this often means the exclusion of Deaf Studies from their deaf education curricula (Miller-Nomeland, 1991a; Wood, 1991; Bangs, 1993). However, this negligence does not always have to be that way. Teachers can still incorporate Deaf Studies into their curriculum by making Deaf Studies content more learning standards-based without having to take time away from other content area (e.g., English and Social studies)

since Deaf Studies curriculum has become more important than ever with changing present demographics of the deaf student population.

III. Assessment of a Need for Standards-based Deaf Studies Curriculum

Today, there has been major social changes in the deaf community of the United States, and the United States deaf community is more diverse than ever before. In the past few decades, there has been an immense shift from institutional, residential schools for deaf K-12 students to public mainstreamed education (e.g., Lang, 2003; Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003). There has been an increase in diversification of deaf students in terms of hearing losses, use of hearing aid devices and modes of communication, in part impacted by an increasing number of deaf students receiving cochlear implantations, which this thesis paper is acknowledging but will not analyze for simplicity reasons.

As more deaf students enter public mainstream schools with (and, in some cases, without) deaf programs, education-related legislation such as IDEA – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) – has (and will continue to) accelerated this trend (e.g., Ramsey, 1997)¹⁷. Many public mainstream schools have recognized and taken advantage of the financial incentive for mainstreaming deaf students and other disabled students by not sending them to residential and other central schools and programs for the deaf¹⁸. With current federal legislations in education (e.g., IDEA and NCLB) gaining in prominence and financial incentives for mainstreaming, the current trend in a dwindling number of deaf students in institutional, residential schools (and thereby forcing an increasing number of

¹⁷ IDEA law and its accompanying guidelines and regulations along with its further amendments codified the concept of educating disabled students, including deaf students, in the least restrictive environment (or LRE). The law was widely interpreted as favoring educating disabled children in local public mainstream schools even though it was not explicitly stated or advocated in the text. Consequently, many deaf students are being placed at local public schools and mainstreamed there where these places ended up being the most restrictive environment for them.

¹⁸ While it appears to be logically sound for many public mainstream schools to receive and keep the funding from the government rather than losing it by sending the deaf students to the residential and other central schools for the deaf, the truth is it is not. Many educators have argued that what many public mainstream schools, aside from those with large deaf programs, do not realize it often costs more to keep deaf students in their mainstream setting (e.g., cost of interpreters for each mainstreamed deaf student at a given public mainstream school versus cost of teacher (and aide) for each class of deaf students).

institutional, residential school closures) is not likely to improve. “Mainstreaming has now become so entrenched that deaf schools have come to expect to co-exist with public schools as deaf students move between them. Our familiar school spaces are changing in noticeable ways, causing a great sense of unease among us” (Padden, 1999, p.4). Parts of this sense of unease include not only the effect of mainstreaming on some deaf students, but the fear of losing both their deaf cultural identity and heritage¹⁹.

In reviewing the literature on deaf education, the residential school experience has long been identified as one of the core aspects of deaf culture and community (e.g., Padden & Humphries, 1988). Historically, many deaf students, at most residential schools, often learned ASL and gained access to deaf culture in the dormitories, away from the formal structured classroom (e.g., Van Cleve and Groce, 1989). Nowadays, the majority of deaf students do not attend a residential school (e.g., Karchmer and Mitchell, 2003). There still exists a smaller group of deaf students, who attend the residential schools, and the environment they are in is generally deaf-oriented (because all of the students there are deaf and, together, they form a critical mass necessary to make their environment deaf-oriented). Several notable residential schools are known to have a high number of deaf administrators and teachers, such as California School for the Deaf, Maryland School for the Deaf, and Gallaudet University's Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center.

In public mainstream schools, the environment that deaf students are in clearly is not deaf-oriented. There, the administration and teaching staff generally are not deaf. The majority of the students, which the mainstreamed deaf students interact with, also are not deaf. Karchmer and Mitchell (2003) noted that 75.3 percent of the students surveyed in the

¹⁹ Read Ramsey (1997) for instances of how “mere placement of deaf and hearing children in the same room is a waste of deaf children’s development time and a thoughtless burden to place on them” (p.113). In other words, deaf students’ intellectual and linguistic potential, and social growth all were not being fully realized.

annual 2000-2001 Gallaudet Research Institute survey are educated in a mainstream setting and 24.7 percent of other students are in special schools or centers, such as residential or day schools for deaf students (p.23). Additionally, of all deaf students in various educational settings such as mainstreaming and residential schools, approximately more than 90 percent of these deaf students come from hearing families (or homes where only one spoken/written language is used regularly) (Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003). As residential school experience no longer becomes the stability of everyday deaf students' experiences, the accessibility to deaf culture and heritage becomes more distant and invaluable based on deaf students' diverse present education backgrounds. Research has shown that many deaf students in either special schools or mainstream settings have difficulty coming to terms with their deafness and their place in a mainstream hearing world (e.g., Leigh & Stinson, 1991; Stoefan-Fisher & Balk, 1992).

With the loss of a residential school experience, general lack of access to deaf culture due to their family being hearing, and a variety of many deaf students' personal deaf-related issues, Deaf Studies²⁰ curriculum, if aligned with standards, and designed and implemented right, can supplement the lack of exposure deaf students have to deaf culture, rectify their personal deaf-related issues and still become effective in achieving standards-based learning outcomes. Moreover, the Deaf Studies curriculum has potential to enhance deaf students' knowledge and understanding about what it means to be a deaf person in a culturally and linguistically diverse society. Bahl shares this view as well: "[Schools] must include deaf

²⁰ In the last one or two decades, Deaf Studies has become a legitimate curriculum area in its own rights for K – 12 to collegiate settings with increasing number of literature and resources (e.g., Carty, Neale, & Power, 1997; Gaustad, 1997). Typical K-12 Deaf Studies curriculum often focuses on increasing deaf students' knowledge and understanding of themselves as a deaf person and of their deaf community and their self-esteem and confidence in working with the hearing world (e.g., Andersson, 1991; Corson, 1991; Fleischer, 1991; Kannapell, 1991; Luetke-Stahlman, 1991; and Steward & Kluwin, 2001).

studies curricula so that every deaf student's curiosity about what it is like to be a deaf adult in both the hearing and deaf worlds will be greatly accelerated" (1994, p.655).

As deaf education curricula become more important than ever with changing demographics of deaf students, Corson said it perfectly in his welcome remarks at a conference: "It is an important role of schools serving [deaf students] to promote Deaf Studies, thus providing access to the language, history, literature, social, and cultural heritage of the American Deaf community" (1993, p.1). He also added that it is "an important 'access' right of all deaf persons" (Corson, p.1, 1993). With this big departure from the traditional institutional, residential education for the deaf students to public mainstream schools, it is easy to understand why many educators and researchers are calling for full inclusion/infusion of Deaf Studies curriculum content into deaf education curricula across the United States.

For all of the deaf students in the United States today, deaf education must focus on giving these students the skills and knowledge they will need to survive in the real world in which these students will eventually work in when they graduate. "In general, students whether deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing, need the same information as they enter the 21st century to look for jobs or continue their education. At the same time, students who are deaf or hard of hearing – like any other students who are part of other racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities – may find a specialized body of knowledge particularly important" (Carroll & Mather, 1997b, p. 187). Indeed, the 21st century has arrived, and it is inexcusable not to provide standards-based deaf education curricula to provide the tools and knowledge that deaf students need to succeed in the real world. Carroll and Mather add, "Deaf Studies is similar to Women's Studies and African American Studies not only because of its particular

importance to a specific group of individuals, but also because the ideas and even the factual content encompassed in the curriculum have often been ignored or treated with disrespect. This is the kind of knowledge incorporated in Deaf Studies curriculum” (1997b, p. 187). Among these skills are the ability to be cultural-literate, self-assertive, and a strong sense of deaf empowerment.

In many deaf classrooms at both the residential schools and public mainstream schools, the content of elementary Deaf Studies curriculum often consists of achievements of deaf people and leaders. This content alone does not teach deaf students their deaf culture and heritage. The content of Deaf Studies curriculum needs to be wide-ranging; it should include American Sign Language, deaf history, deaf culture, technology, and among other things. In her vision of what Deaf Studies can do for deaf students in K – 12 school settings, MJ Bienvenu (1993) points out to the dangers of what can happen if the Deaf Studies curriculum is not properly created and implemented:

[Suppose] we offer Deaf Studies courses to deaf children and they begin to understand about their language and culture within the confines of the classroom. They see pictures and stories of Deaf leaders and are inspired by the possibilities for their own successes. Then they leave the classroom and are met by reality – the reality of mistaken approaches in Deaf education, the reality of poor language policy, the reality of oppression. In their other classes, they are not exposed to the positive environment that they experienced in the Deaf Studies classroom. Understandably, this sends mixed messages to the children. Their school experience is anti-Deaf, except in that one classroom. The information gained from the Deaf Studies course cannot be internalized in that child if it is not being reinforced outside that one classroom. The dichotomy only serves to promote confusion, frustration, and anger. (1993, p. 10)

Indeed, in order for the Deaf Studies curriculum to be effective, it needs to be carefully designed, implemented, and fully infused into the deaf education curricula (e.g., Bienvenu, 1991, 1993; Cohen, 1999). Additionally, the effectiveness of Deaf Studies curriculum also depends on teachers moving beyond decisions of “what to teach” and tackling issues of

“how they teach” as well (Welch, 2000, p.22). The Deaf Studies curriculum should not be confined to separate (or “special”) Deaf Studies courses in which Deaf students cannot connect (or relate) to other academic domains or their experiences. In other words, the Deaf Studies curriculum needs to be cross-curricular and relevant to deaf students’ personal experience. Confining the Deaf Studies curriculum to “special” courses can also send mixed messages to deaf students: “The word ‘special,’ however, has several connotations and is often interpreted to mean ‘different.’ Deaf children should not feel different in a school for the Deaf. The Deaf child should feel s/he is the norm in that environment” (Bienvenu, 1993, p.10).

Bienvenu (1993) also pointed out the fact that because of the content of many curriculums in the United States are Eurocentric (which sends a message to all minority students that being white is the norm), many minority groups have successfully advocated for a more balanced representation in all school curriculum. Bienvenu then described her vision of what Deaf Studies-infused deaf education curricula can look like:

Maybe we can make our curriculum more Deafcentric, so Deaf people see themselves as at the core. One way to make a curriculum more Deafcentric is to look at the messages we are currently sending to our children in the schools. If you look at the walls of the classrooms you will see the Capital, monuments, and the presidents of the United States. Those pictures are fine. Where is Jean Massieu? Where is Fred Schreiber, the first executive director of the NAD? Where is Barbara Kannapell, the Deaf sociolinguist? Where is Ann Silver, the Deaf artist? We have so many accomplished Deaf people that we could be showing to Deaf children. [...] It would be nice for children to be surrounded by an environment that reinforces and supplements what they are learning in the Deaf Studies classroom. We need to go deeper than the current use of artifacts and superficial items. We need to look at racism, sexism, homophobia, and all of the issues that affect society and that affect Deaf people, too. These changes need to be school-wide (1993, p.15).

In summary, her point was that if these minority students can succeed an equal representation, then we could learn from them and then do same thing as they did.

Additionally, Bangs shares the same view as Bienvenu does in his description of ideal purposes of Deaf Studies curriculum:

[The] process of teaching and learning Deaf Studies involves a great deal of conflict and confusion as the students' illusions, myths, and stereotypes about Deaf people collide with a different reality presented by their teachers [...] Deaf Studies for Deaf students often focuses on building pride, increasing self-esteem, enhancing self-concepts, and fostering empowerment among these students (1993, pp. 26 – 27).

In short, Bangs is saying that Deaf Studies requires a diversity of curriculums designed to meet every deaf students' need regardless of their various educational backgrounds. Bangs has the hard data from his research to help support the need for inclusion of a Deaf Studies curriculum. In his ethnographic research focusing on five schools with “more developed” Deaf Studies programs, he “was astonished to discover that, for virtually every course, students injected a considerable amount of processing of personal issues into the discussion of the subject matter content of these classes” (1993, p.38). “Steinem, the former editor of Ms. Magazine, wrote that women and members of minority groups often struggled to maintain positive self-esteem in situations where the mainstream culture undermined their belief in their abilities and points of view” (Bangs, 1993, p.38). Bangs (1993) strongly believes that the curriculum should “take into account the level of their self-esteem and the quality of their self-concept” (same idea as Jacobs, McMillan, & Weinstock, (1991) and Jacobs & Weinstock (1991) both agreed, they used the term “identity” and self-esteem”.

Bangs defines self-concept as something that “involves the feelings, attitudes, and values that people have in regard to their behavior, abilities, and worth” (1993, p.39). Deaf students develop it through interaction with other students, teachers and others, and continue to develop it from infancy to adulthood experiencing thoughts and images that shape their self-concepts. “During their formative years, many deaf children undergo experiences that

contribute to a poor self-concept. Those who have hearing parents and are mainstreamed will face serious communication problems with virtually every person they encounter. They may almost never be exposed to adult Deaf role models²¹ [, and] because they are surrounded by hearing role models, their ideal self-concept may be that of a hearing person, producing all sorts of painful contradictions and conflicts” (1993, p.39). To make his point, Bangs said that since African American students faced similar impediments to a positive, healthy self-concept and positive self-esteem, educators developed Afrocentric curriculum to help develop healthy self-concepts in the students. This particular curriculum has an African American point of view as its center, and it exposes African American students to positive African American role models and their culture.

Educators created Afrocentric curriculum to address both the high dropout rate amongst the African American students and to close their achievement gap. How African American community/education advocates were able to get schools to reform their curricula, thus making it more Afrocentric, generally can be attributed to two things. Firstly, readily clear to everyone are schools’ general historic failure to educate African American students well, and, secondly, studies and reports dating back to the 1980’s have shown African American students’ disengagement from education because of underlying racism in the school system and the Eurocentric curricula (Cooksey, 1993; Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1995; Sefa Dei, 2006). A Eurocentric curriculum inaccurately represents African American history and culture.

There have been many instances of educators being able to incorporate Afrocentric curriculum into their curricula by aligning it with the schools’ existing goals and learning standards for the specific content area(s), especially social studies. To address disconnection

²¹ See Sutcliffe (1991) for example for benefits of incorporating deaf role models in Deaf Studies curriculum.

between African American students and education and guarantee success for African American students, schools need to have an inclusive environment with holistic education that affirms all of their identities and myriad experiences (Sefa Dei, 2006). While there is no comprehensive data on the effectiveness of Afrocentric schools, there have been many success stories regarding full integration of Afrocentric curriculum into their school curricula (e.g., Binder, 1998, 2000; Bowean, 2006; Robinson, 2007). Binder (2000) found that many teachers were more willing to infuse Afrocentric curriculum into their teaching if its curriculum content is cross-referenced with established educational goals and outcomes. She also found that schools with full integration of Afrocentric curriculum into their school-wide curriculum are more likely to be more successful with their students academically than other schools that did not integrate their curriculum.

Afrocentric curricula have reengaged African American students and improved their self-esteem because the African American presence in the curriculum units not only taught the students about their history, it gave them a voice in the education system, thus lowering the dropout rate and closing the achievement gap of African American students (e.g. Binder, 1998, 2000; Giddings, 2001; Iyewarun, 1997). “Through greater impact is still at the Elementary level, there is enough evidence, throughout this nation today, showing that Afrocentric Curriculum has succeeded where it as been introduced and implemented. The students who have been exposed to this program possess impeccable attitude, show regular school attendance, and demonstrate resounding academic achievement” (Iyewarun, 1997, p.4).

Bangs’s point was that if it could be done for African American students, then it also definitely could be done for any other minority students, including deaf students. Deaf

students, like their African American counterparts above, need opportunities to build healthy self-concepts and positive self-esteem, therefore, Bangs proposed a new approach to deaf education for deaf students called “Deaf-centric education” and he describes it as:

Instead of focusing on the learning of English reading, writing, and speaking skills so that Deaf children can ‘get along in a hearing world,’ Deaf-centric education attempts to provide Deaf children, with a positive, healthy views of themselves so that they can learn to ‘do anything except hear’ and this includes the learning of English among other things (1993, p. 40).

In an ideal standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum, deaf students’ point of view will not only be validated but also valued as well, thus fostering positive self-esteem. The curriculum needs to enable deaf students to process negative self-concepts and misconceptions, and then absorb new, positive information about deaf people, including themselves.

Having access to Deaf studies curriculum enables deaf students to examine themselves and their self-concepts to identify their own (and others’) understanding and biases of deaf people and how these students can develop their behaviors to transcend them. “Attitudes toward deaf people and their sign language are often acquired at an early age, and these attitudes are frequently both stereotyped and prejudiced. Deaf children are too easily seen as problems by their hearing teachers and other staff members who lack understanding of and respect for both ASL and deaf culture” (Bahl, 1994, p.651).

In considering the content of a Deaf studies curriculum, the primary concern of the educators in the field of deaf education should be that of enabling deaf students to develop an understanding of their deaf culture and heritage. This includes understanding the roles and contributions of various groups of deaf and hearing people to the deaf community and culture and the greater mainstream society and culture. “In our quest to become, and to help others become, members of both Deaf and hearing communities, we need to recognize the

fact that we live in one world together, that the deaf community is one segment of a larger society. We need to recognize that it is important to develop one's identity and self-esteem and to learn one's cultural heritage. These are necessary foundations enabling deaf people to connect to our world to the larger world, which is composed of people with diverse backgrounds and cultures" (Corson, 1993, pp. 2 – 3).

One of the critical components for a Deaf studies curriculum is to include deaf experiences that allow deaf students to examine their self-concepts through exploration of actions, issues, and themes from multiple perspectives. These deaf experiences along with multiple perspectives of different groups will help deaf students understand the broader scope and implications of being deaf. In addition to the inclusion of deaf experiences, a Deaf Studies curriculum should be relevant to the lives of deaf students and should reflect their images as well as their natural experiences. The content should reflect deaf students' everyday life and their daily experiences.

There are so many different possibilities that educators and teachers apply to building a Deaf Studies curriculum. One of the ways is by collecting a wide variety of illustrations and literature (e.g., deaf role models' biographies, historical events, history of deaf education, ASL poetries/narratives/anecdotes, deaf-related technologies and deaf consumers' rights) and deaf-related artifacts. Everything that they collect needs to have meaning for deaf students in terms of deaf culture and heritage. They can then come up with analogies and allegories to help deaf students relate to new information, and write up lesson plans (with standards-based learning goals and sensitivity to deaf students' cultural and linguistic learning needs) that incorporate the things they collected. There is one known commercially packaged Deaf Studies curriculum guide (i.e.: *Kendall Demonstration*

Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide, Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993) and one known online Deaf Studies curriculum framework with various resources on Gallaudet University Department of Education's website (i.e.: Gallimore, 2004: *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework*, <http://aslcurr.gallaudet.edu>). These materials can be used to help guide future creation of their own fully-fledged Deaf Studies curriculum.

Bangs (1993) conducted another research project in addition to his ethnographic research: a mail survey to supply basic statistical information about Deaf Studies curriculum implementation. Part of the mail survey Bangs sent out focused on four types of students (deaf students in the K-12 educational programs with at least 50 deaf students, deaf students in post-secondary college and career programs for deaf students, hearing students in interpreter training programs, and hearing students in teacher training programs). However, the focus is on only one of these types of students here because of its relevance: deaf students in the K-12 educational programs with at least 50 deaf students. Bangs received 46 percent response rate from the K-12 educational programs, which he noted that the lower response rate might stem from the fact that this category included mainstream programs that offered a limited number of separate self-contained classes. Upon analysis of this data, he noted that nearly 60 percent²² of the K-12 educational programs provided Deaf Studies instruction, but if his theory is right, this percentage number does not include those in mainstreaming. In other words, if the data was to account for the mainstreaming factor, then the percentage number will undeniably drop dramatically.

²² This study was conducted in 1993 and is the latest one at the time of this writing, so there is no way of knowing for a fact whether this percentage from the same study group has increased since then or not. Moreover, this was one of the only two known studies that were conducted regarding the extent of Deaf Studies curriculum implementation in school settings across the United States.

However, Bangs admitted that these 60 percent of the programs that provide Deaf Studies instruction can signify a wide range of programs and its extent “could imply, for example, that the program merely invites the local Deaf club president to come and give an annual talk to the students, or, at the other extreme, offers a variety of Deaf Studies classes, festivals, workshops, and other features of a complex and elaborate program” (1993, p.29). However, this study was conducted in 1993, which means that a lot of time has passed since the study was reported. Many K-12 educational programs that were surveyed in 1993 probably have added Deaf Studies curriculum since then, but with the accelerated trend in mainstreaming of deaf students and numerous closures of residential schools for the deaf, the percentage of deaf students currently having access to Deaf Studies curriculum is probably unacceptably low.

In the same survey, he explored the factors that limited the success of Deaf Studies programs. Below is his ascending ranking of limiting factors from highest to lowest percentages of the schools surveyed.

1. Unable to add to curriculum because of course-load limitations (58.1 percent)
2. Lack of curricular materials (49.8 percent)
3. Lack of available and qualified teachers (47.3 percent)
4. Lack of financial support (40.7 percent)
5. Unable to obtain certification/graduation approval for Deaf Studies courses (21.7 percent)
6. Lack of student interest (14.7 percent)

The two most significant limiting factors ranked at the top are the inability to add to curriculum due to the course-load limitations and a lack of curricular materials. Apparently, many schools were unable to add Deaf Studies to the deaf education curricula because of these limiting factors at the time of his survey. With the onset of NCLB accountability requirements and standards-based reform in recent years, these limiting factors are no longer

an excuse. No doubt, it will require a lot of hard work and knowledge to develop standards-based Deaf Studies and then incorporate it in the deaf education curricula without affecting course-load limitations.

Corresponding with the data from the survey conducted by Bangs (1993) above, in another study conducted by Wood (1991), she presented the data from the survey that she conducted together with Miller-Nomeland. Unlike Bangs's survey, the survey Wood and Miller-Nomeland conducted focused only on the K-12 educational programs that had mostly an enrollment of at least 50 deaf students. They received a 48 percent response rate from these educational programs (which is just about identical as the response rate Bangs received in his survey). Their data showed that nearly 57 percent²³ of the K-12 educational programs surveyed provide Deaf Studies instruction. This is consistent with the other survey conducted by Bangs (1993) as reported above. The data showed that a Deaf Studies program was available to elementary, middle, or junior high school deaf students in only 32 to 38 percent of all K-12 educational programs reported to have some form of Deaf Studies teaching and learning. In addition, majority of high school deaf students had access to Deaf Studies curriculum in 78 percent of all K-12 educational programs reported to have some form of Deaf Studies program (Woods, 1991). As previously noted in the discussion of Bang's study, the percentage of all K-12 educational programs that serve deaf students across the nation will without a doubt drop significantly if the programs that mainstream deaf students were to be factored into the given data.

²³ This was the only other known (albeit older) study, in addition to the study reported by Bangs (1993) as discussed in preceding paragraphs above, conducted regarding the extent of Deaf Studies curriculum implementation in school settings across the United States.

As Bangs did with his 1993 study, Woods and Miller-Nomeland explored the factors that limited the implementation of Deaf Studies programs. Below is the ranking of limiting factors from highest to lowest percentages of the schools surveyed:

1. Lack of curricular instructional units (64 percent)
2. Lack of materials (56 percent)
3. Not enough time (46 percent)
4. Lack of input from Deaf adults (21 percent)
5. Not a priority subject (14 percent)
6. Lack of awareness or interest (14 percent)
7. No qualified teachers (12 percent)
8. Other reasons (27 percent)

Just about all of the surveyed schools (49 out of the 52) that indicated having no Deaf Studies curriculum at their school agreed that there was an urgent need for an useful Deaf Studies curriculum guide. Consistent with Bangs's 1993 study, the three most significant limiting factors were: lack of curricular instructional units, lack of materials and not enough time. Intriguingly, another one of the limiting factors for including a Deaf Studies curriculum was that it was not a priority subject, which was probably to be expected due to the fact that deaf education curricula generally is known to gear a significant load toward English literacy (and, now, standards-based content areas mandated by NCLB). However, this study was published in 1991, which predates the 1993 study Bangs did; as indicated in discussion above about Bangs's study, the percentage most likely have not significantly improved since then due to the accelerated trend in mainstreaming of deaf students and numerous closures of residential schools for the deaf. The low percentage in the number of schools that implement a Deaf Studies curriculum presents another reason for the need for standards-based elementary Deaf Studies curriculum.

The following certainly said it all about Wood's vision of what an ideal Deaf Studies curriculum should look like: "A current practice among teachers is to select a feature about

deafness and use that one lesson for a day or a week to fulfill their duty to conduct an awareness program during the academic year. Ideally, deaf awareness should be part of everyday learning to be effective for every deaf student. Imagine hundreds and hundreds of children like me, who grew up with minimal knowledge of deaf heritage that could have contributed to a natural understanding for their existence as future effective deaf adults” (Woods, 1991, p.169).

Below is an excerpt of what is probably the only known writing to discuss something that is remotely similar to standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum that this thesis has been discussing and is pushing for:

In considering curriculum development for an ASL/Deaf Culture program, it must first be determined whether school districts are required to use state-mandated curricula, or whether curricula are site-based. State-mandated curricula are usually developed and distributed by the state department of education, and are required to be used by all school districts in the state. When curricula is site-based, the state department provides general guidelines and standards by which each district develops its own curricula.

If a state uses state-mandated curricula, a strategy must be developed to ensure that the state department has appropriate consultation and assistance in developing a state curriculum for ASL and Deaf Culture. Ohio uses site-based curricula, which means that school districts are free to develop their own ASL and Deaf Culture curricula. It has been found, however, that most school districts are not in a position to be able to develop their own ASL and Deaf Culture curricula adequately, and are eager for some type of course of study, curriculum, etc., from the state department. What the Ohio Department of Education has done is to integrate the courses of study and “curricula” developed by the pilot projects into an instructional guide and model course of study that can be used and expanded on by school districts (Liedel, 1993, pp 274 to 275).

This paints a complex picture of how pre-NCLB state standards can influence the development of a Deaf Studies curriculum in certain states. One can only imagine how much more complex it has gotten now in the era of NCLB-mandated state standards and accountabilities. Even back in 1993, Liedel was well too aware of teachers’ having not enough time to teach everything to deaf students:

A very common response among regular classroom teachers to requests to teach new material is the feeling of being overwhelmed with too much material to teach in a short school day. It is important to remember this when planning lessons or activities to implement in the classroom. For this reason, teachers may be reluctant to even try new material, especially if presented in the form of a curriculum (1993, p.278).

This observation made by Liedel is validated by the data Woods (1991) and Bangs (1993) published (e.g., those schools and programs who said that their teachers were “unable to add to curriculum because of course-load limitations” and that their teachers did “not have enough time;” both of them were the popular explanations for not having Deaf Studies curriculum at their sites). However, it is this author’s belief that no matter what excuses schools give for not having Deaf Studies curriculum implemented at their sites, they can still integrate Deaf Studies curriculum into their existing regular curriculum. Liedel shares this view when he wrote: “In considering the limitations on time during the school day, it was decided that the more easily a lesson could be integrated into the regular curriculum, the more likely teachers would be to use the in-depth lessons on ASL/Deaf Culture” (1993, p.278). A wide variety of ways that educators and teachers can create their Deaf Studies curriculum has already be discussed in the preceding paragraphs above.

Rather than creating a self-sustaining Deaf Studies unit/course for the deaf students, Deaf studies should be integrated²⁴ across all academic disciplines (e.g., Cohen, 1999). Stewart and Kluwin (2001) refer to this as “the integrated approach to Deaf Studies” (p.116). This approach allows Deaf studies curriculum objectives to be integrated into learning experiences for deaf students in language arts, social studies, science, health, mathematics, and among other academic disciplines (Gaustad, 1997, 1999). The need for a Deaf Studies curriculum is not just a United States issue; this is an international issue (e.g.,

²⁴ See Shaw (1991) for examples of instances of successes in integrating Deaf Studies curriculum across various academic disciplines.

Carty, 1992; Carty, B., Neale, J., & Power, D., 1997). This approach helps ease the pressure off the teacher to take time away from the focus on the standards-based learning and create a separate block for Deaf Studies. Additionally, by aligning the Deaf studies curriculum with the standards, the teachers will have a much easier time infusing this curriculum into their curricula across various academic disciplines.

Giving deaf students access to the Deaf Studies curriculum is just not only about giving them access to deaf culture and heritage, gaining access to the accommodative solutions for a successful life as a productive deaf citizen, or looking up to successful deaf role models who have overcome the limitations of their deafness in their chosen field or career. It is also about letting deaf students analyze their self-concept in addition to building their self-esteem in a positive way. Jacobs & Weinstock (1991) writes:

Students of Deaf Studies learn to stand up for their rights as Deaf consumers. They learn to register their use of ASL in a variety of situations through presenting in front of class, participating in discussions, and working together on individual and group projects. In Deaf Studies classes, students learn the art of public speaking. They learn to express themselves with their own ideas and feelings as Deaf individuals. In order to gain respect of others, students stick together and help each other develop positive self-esteem as Deaf individuals. [...] The results are astounding (p.112).

In closing, “All deaf students should be offered the opportunity to know and understand their own heritage and culture. With this knowledge, they will be empowered with the sense of identity, confidence, and security they will need to meet life’s challenges and be successful and productive citizens” (Bahl, 1994, p.655).

The need for and importance of a Deaf Studies curriculum have become more prevalent with not only an increase in the number of K – 12 deaf students becoming more mainstreamed, but with the entire K–12 student body (including deaf students) in the United States increasingly becoming more diverse today. Many mainstream public (including

charter and private) schools have since then (or begun to) approached and included multiculturalism into their curriculum to address diversity in the student body. As a result, many minority students have been given opportunities to learn and enjoy their culture and heritage through minority studies. When these opportunities are being given to the minority students, deaf students should also have the right to these same opportunities to learn about their own deaf culture and heritage.

“With the changing trend of public school curricula toward offering a variety of minority studies, deaf students also should have access to accurate information about their deaf cultural differences or similarities” (Bahl, 1994, p.650). In doing so, Bahl (1994) says that this will inspire deaf students to “become proud, confident, competent first-class citizens in our society” (p. 650). Additionally, Cohen argues that Deaf Studies will help deaf students “develop communicative competence in ASL, instill an appreciation and respect for ASL as a language, foster awareness and understanding of the Deaf community, and guide each student in his or her quest of becoming an individual among his or her peers” (1999, p.178). In addition to these benefits for deaf students having access to a Deaf Studies curriculum, Liedel wrote: “An ASL/Deaf Culture program can be a greatly rewarding program. Hearing, hard of hearing, and deaf students in public schools benefit tremendously. The long-range benefits for the Deaf community as these students graduate and enter the workforce as informed employers, businesspersons, colleagues, etc., can only be imagined. An effective program takes much planning, organization, and collaboration, but the rewards are definitely worth it” (1993, p.279). Indeed, it will be worth it!

In the latest article at the time of this writing, Storbeck and Magongwa had this to say, which is consistent with earlier papers’ views:

Deaf and hard of hearing learners, regardless of their academic placement – residential/day school, self-contained class, or resource room – have a right and a need to know their Deaf heritage. We argue that this is a right because deaf students rarely have opportunities to understand themselves as a linguistic and cultural group, which is seen as crucial in their development of identity. Additionally we propose that deaf and hard of hearing learners also have a need to develop an understanding of their Deaf culture and how it relates to their home culture (and thus the language) of their family, which in the large percentage of cases is the hearing community. This in turn is a necessity for a growing understanding of themselves as part of a broader diverse community (nationally and globally), which will lead to the development of Deaf education as inclusive and multicultural. To this end, we propose that deaf and hard of hearing children be exposed to a rich and diverse Deaf cultural studies curriculum to prepare them effectively to take their rightful place in society (2006, p.114).

This view is also shared by this author's position on the need for an inclusive Deaf Studies curriculum. To make this happen, Storbeck and Magongwa (2006) said that “[to] effectively meet the needs of our Deaf learners, we need to argue that schools for deaf students need to be responsive to the multicultural needs of the Deaf community.” (p.113). This approach is based on the premise that the deaf community is enormously diverse (e.g., Padden & Humphries, 1988, p.4). In order to do that, they suggested using Banks' (1994) framework for multicultural curriculum reform. In this framework, Banks refers to four levels of approach to including cultural content into the curriculum (in this case, the Deaf Studies curriculum): the contributions approach, the additive approach, the transformation approach, and the social action approach. In this framework, he sees a gradual cumulative development from the first to the fourth level; however, these levels of approach can be mixed or blended, it is this blended approach to the Deaf Studies curriculum that Storbeck and Magongwa propose.

The contributions approach is an important first level (or first step) of approach in the Deaf Studies curriculum. It helps create a deaf consciousness in the deaf students. Banks

refers to this approach as the “heroes and holidays” approach, which for the Deaf Studies curriculum means exposing deaf students to deaf role models.

The second level of approach in the Deaf Studies curriculum, namely the additive approach, allows for culturally appropriate deaf role literature, issues, and role models to be included in the deaf education curriculum. The next level of approach is the transformation approach. It infuses various perspectives, frames of reference, and content from various groups that will extend deaf students’ understandings of the nature, development and complexity of current society. This approach is the first to introduce deaf students to diverse perspectives and insights and to challenge the dichotomous and hierarchical approach to cultures.

The social action approach (fourth and final level) in the Deaf Studies curriculum encourages deaf students to act upon their newfound knowledge. For instance, deaf students “are given a social problem, such as prejudice against Deaf people in the workplace or discrimination in schools, and are encouraged to engage critically with the problem, do research, ‘analyze their values and beliefs, synthesize their knowledge and values, and identify what alternative courses of action, and finally decide what, if any, actions they will take’ to address the issue concerned (Banks, 1994, p.209)” (Storbeck & Magongwa, 2006, p.123).

Inclusion of Banks’ multicultural framework, especially the given four levels of approach, into the Deaf Studies curriculum will help fully integrate and infuse deaf culture into the deaf education curriculum, thus creating a Deafcentric curriculum – including content, visual learning and teaching styles, and deaf indigenous teaching and learning practices (Storbeck & Magongwa, 2006). Additionally, at the core of the Deaf Studies

curriculum, the multicultural inclusive framework's four levels of curriculum transformations needs to recognize and take into account Deaf learners' plurality of identities (i.e.: their family background, country relativeness as well as their deaf identity).

A literature review of all the articles and paper proceedings discussed above in this section shares one of the popular emphasizes on implementing Deaf Studies curriculum which is the ASL-English bilingual approach to teaching (e.g., Bienvenu, 1993; and Carroll & Mather, 1997), thus necessitating the need to discuss the ASL-English bilingual methodologies. This author has elected to include in the following section the classic text from one of the sections from my first master's thesis (i.e.: Zernovoj, 2005) arguing the need for bilingual approaches to deaf education. In the two years since its completion, the author has come across a number of significant research findings concerning the bilingual methodologies or any other related matter. As appealing as it may be to try to alter or rewrite the following text, the argument presented in this text is still very credibly relevant. The author has opted to retain the original text with no alterations at all, and inserted new number footnotes in several places of this text directing the reader to more new information that this thesis's author may have included in his writing two years ago. In other words, the author is doing this as a means of highlighting (thus calling the reader's attention to) the significant recent research literature published outlining the benefits of the bilingual approach to teaching and learning. The entire text in the following section is the aforementioned original text in its entirety.

IV. The Need for Bilingual Approaches to Deaf Education

Bilingual students find themselves in a wide variety of bilingual education programs, from those meticulously designed to meet their specific native linguistic and cultural needs to programs in which not much is done to address their needs. Grosjean (1992, 1996) defined bilingualism as the regular use of two languages, and a bilingual as a person who needs and uses two languages in his/her everyday life. “The bilingual is not the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals; rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration” (Grosjean, 1992, p. 55). An example of the unique capabilities (or “unique and specific linguistic configuration”) of bilinguals is their flexibility to activate both their languages in a given conversation, regardless of the actual language used in that conversation (Grosjean & Miller, 1994)²⁵. The monolingual approach to the education of deaf and hard of hearing children may not take the full advantage of their unique capabilities as bilinguals. Only bilingual education is up to such task as it addresses these children’s linguistic configurations.

The term “bilingual education” by and large refers to the use of at least two languages of instruction sometime in the student’s academic career; so, bilingual education programs in the United States use two languages, one of which is English, for teaching and learning purposes. These programs come in many different forms, but the two common goals shared by all of these programs are acquisition of English literacy skills and

²⁵ Please refer to Bishop and Hicks (2005) for examples of how bilinguals (in this case, Codas – hearing children from deaf families) activate both their languages, namely ASL and English, in any given conversation. For instance, their study looks at ways how bilingual users of both ASL and English combine aspects of both languages simultaneously. Also, refer to Chung (2006) for how Korean-English bilinguals use both languages via code switching technique to meet the complex communicative demands between or within generations of their family.

meaningful learning of the core school subjects often through the students' heritage language.

There are two approaches that promote second language learning: additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism (Crawford, 1999; Cummins, 1986; Lambert, 1974, 1977). Lambert (1974, 1977) proposed that the social perception and treatment of primary and secondary languages are the roots of bilingualism, and distinguished between “additive” and “subtractive” forms of bilingualism. Additive bilingualism occurred when the students learn and add a second language (L2) to their repertoire, which does not interfere with the learning of their existing first language (L1) (e.g., Mahshie, 1995). In other words, the learning of L2 does not threaten to replace the existing L1. Unlike additive bilingualism, subtractive bilingualism referred to the form of bilingualism where L2 learning often meant interfering with the learning of a first language and replacing it with the second language (e.g., Wong-Fillmore, 1991). In this case, the learning of L2 competes with L1, threatening to replace it.

In a 1992 interview, Lily Wong-Fillmore stated that the social circumstances under the second language learning takes place strongly determine whether this learning is additive or subtractive (Hass, 1992). Wong-Fillmore added that if second language learning took place in a setting in which first and second languages were equally valued, then this learning had a possibility of being additive. However, if this learning happened in a setting where the only acceptable means of communication was English, then the second language learning would be subtractive. Cummins (2001) noted that there are about 150 empirical studies in the last 30, or so, years that had reported positive findings showing a definite correlation between additive bilingualism and bilingual students' linguistic, cognitive, or academic

growth. This was also supported by several empirical studies (e.g., Long & Padilla, 1970; Dubé & Hébert, 1975; Bhatnagar, 1980) showing evidence of bilingual students performing academically better when their L1 was valued and used than when L1 was neglected in the home and school. Because of its benefits, the additive bilingual education programs, whose prevailing goal is preservation of languages and culture, will be the focus of this thesis.

Krashen (1996) postulated that we all acquire language through comprehensible input (the “input hypothesis”) (Krashen, 1985, 1994), where all information is both understandable and comprehensible²⁶. Through comprehensible input, the knowledge that children obtained through their primary language helped make English more comprehensible, and this resulted in more English language acquisition (Krashen, 1996). Crawford (1999) quoted Krashen stating that acquisition occurred in “one fundamental way”: “We acquire language when we understand it” (p. 123). For instance, a bilingual student with background knowledge in mathematics developed by effective mathematics instruction in the primary language would be more than likely to understand mathematics taught in English than another student without background knowledge. Terrell (1991) speculated that for some people language acquisition might not be exclusively based on input. He further suggested that grammar instruction should be seen as an aid to the learner during the process of the language acquisition.

Krashen (1996) noted that literacy transfers across languages as demonstrated by high correlations between literacy development in the first language and the second language. The ability to solve problems or to clarify ideas in one language can be used in another language is an example of literacy transference. Cognitive academic language

²⁶ Spencer and Harris (2006) conducted a study of characteristics of input that facilitate the development of a signed language in deaf infants and toddlers; in their study, they found that deaf children’s acquisition of sign language appears to be related to the input they receive from their mothers.

proficiency (CALP) had been defined and characterized by Cummins (2001) as the combination of knowledge and literacy. CALP refers to grade-level fluency in academic target language in academic contexts (the “classroom language”), which, according to Cummins (2001), in general, takes five to seven years to develop. In addition to CALP, there is another type of language proficiency (Cummins, 2001): basic interpersonal communications skills (BICS). BICS refers to fluency in conversational aspects of the target language in social contexts, or the “playground language.” BICS can be developed within a year or two of exposure to the target language. Cummins suggested that students could not develop CALP without having a strong foundation in BICS. Environment plays an important role in developing both BICS and CALP fluency in various situations and contexts (Cummins, 2001). Effective bilingual education programs provide opportunities for development in proficiency of both BICS and CALP skills in target language(s).

Keeping in mind the importance of the environment’s role in the development of BICS and CALP, Cummins (2001) posited the linguistic interdependence or common underlying proficiency principle (CUP). The interdependence principle has been stated as follows: “To the extent that instruction in L_x is effective in promoting proficiency in L_x, the transfer of this proficiency to L_y will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L_y (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L_y” (Cummins, 1981, p. 29). The main implication of this principle is if a student is proficient in L₁, then, with enough and appropriate exposure that proficiency will transfer to L₂. This transfer is explained by Cummins’ common underlying proficiency model, which states that proficiency in L₁ and L₂ are seen as interdependent across languages because skills in different languages reside in the same area of brain, which enable facilitation of a ready transfer of academic skills.

This is one explanation for why deaf children of deaf parents typically outperform deaf children of hearing parents in academic tasks and English proficiency. They have had the opportunity to develop literacy in a language (ASL) most accessible and natural for them as a first language.

Mayer and Wells (1996) challenged the applicability of Cummins' linguistic interdependence principle for deaf students. These researches stated that ASL and print English as a form of bilingualism does not meet the conditions set forth by Cummins' CUP model. In other words, that “there is no one-to-one correspondence between signed and written phrases, as there is between spoken and written phrases in English” (p. 102). They argued that it is impossible for deaf students to acquire proficiency in English literacy skills without some form of exposure to English in an accessible form. According to Mayer and Wells, an internal “oral” representation of English is a necessary condition for successful English literacy, which can only be created by acquisition of spoken English, signed English or both. However, English in any form is not as accessible as ASL is as a primary mode of communication for deaf children, and, yet, many deaf children continue to attain successful English literacy without ever acquiring either spoken or signed English as a primary language (Strong & Prinz, 1997; Lane, 1999). Deaf children of deaf parents and their success in attaining bilingual fluency, as shown by some studies (Strong & Prinz, 1997; Lane, 1999), seem to contradict the Mayer and Wells argument. There is also strong research evidence of correlation between ASL fluency and English reading achievement (Strong & Prinz, 1997, 2000; Padden & Ramsey, 2000; Hoffmeister, de Villiers, Engen & Topol, 1997; Singleton, Suppalla, Litchfield & Schely, 1998).

While bilingual education in the United States often refers almost exclusively to the education of English language learners whose primary spoken language is not English, in deaf education, this model uses both the language of the ASL-signing deaf community and that of the English-speaking hearing. Despite the diversity of bilingual education programs for deaf children (Strong, 1995), the accepted idea of bilingualism in deaf children is to have ASL as a primary language and English as a second language.

The bilingual approach to the deaf education is not exclusive to the United States, or even the American continent, but is spanning the globe in the other countries. Before 1980, the educational approach to Swedish deaf and hard of hearing children was mostly strict oralism. The Swedish parliament passed a law in 1981 formally recognizing Swedish Sign Language (SSL) as one of the nation's minority languages and mandating that bilingual education be instituted in the nation's schools for deaf and hard of hearing children. All parents of deaf children were also required to learn sign language, and that they receive consulting services from immediately after the diagnosis of their children's hearing-loss.

Because of the law in 1981, major changes were made two years later to incorporate the bilingual approach in national curriculum policy governing deaf children's education. In Sweden, professionals, parents and the Deaf community work together as a resource network to provide the best possible environment and accommodations to capitalize on the critical period for language acquisition; thus maximizing potentials for the academic achievement of deaf students. They make sure that the deaf students receive good comprehensible input available only through Swedish Sign Language, which in time translates into natural second language acquisition of written Swedish. As a direct result

from parents receiving early supports, deaf children often enter school with fluent sign language skills and high reading levels.

While in Swedish school, Deaf students were required to study Deaf people's lives, language, history, and accomplishments as an obligatory part of their school curriculum. In learning about and gaining knowledge of historic deaf figures (e.g., the "Laurent Clercs" of our world), and their accomplishments as an individual or as a whole in their deaf history, deaf students gain ideas of possible lives that they can lead and find a basis for self-esteem in their hearing society. Being a well-informed adult means possessing one's knowledge about one's heritage as it provides a useful framework, as well, for organizing other knowledge (Lane, 1999). As a result of incorporation of the bilingual approach to educating deaf and hard of hearing children in Sweden, tests of Swedish and of mathematics administered to eighth grade orally taught Deaf children taught, before the bilingual approach were introduced and embraced in Swedish deaf education, were administered again to bilingually taught Deaf children in the late 1980's; these tests show that the latter group outperformed the earlier one by a wide margin, especially in Swedish proficiency (Allen, Rawlings, & Schildroth, 1989). Further evidence of the success of bilingual approach to deaf education in Sweden were the reading and mathematics achievement levels of the first Deaf students in bilingual classes that were comparable to those of hearing peers when they graduated from high school (Stedt, 1992). In summary, the successful implementation of bilingual education for deaf children and its impressive results in Sweden shows that deaf children can and do benefit from the bilingual approach to teaching and learning.

An ASL-English bilingual approach has full support of many professionals in the field of deaf education and deaf adults within the deaf community (Livingston, 1997; Jacobs, 1989)²⁷. Lane (1999) described the approach as “student-centered education” conducted using the child’s “most fluent language” (ASL) while fostering child’s literacy in English. Numerous recent studies of classes of deaf and hard of hearing students where bilingual classroom practices are being implemented have shown the successes (Coye, Humphries & Martin, 1978; Andrews, Ferguson, Roberts & Hodges, 1996; Allen, 1998).

In addition to the successes of the bilingual classroom practices in the deaf classes, a research examined the relationship between ASL fluency and English proficiency. Strong and Prinz (1997) examined the relationship between ASL skills and English literacy among deaf students between eight to fifteen years old. Their study has shown that deaf students benefit from fluency in ASL in achieving English proficiency (Strong & Prinz, 1997). This is evidence that ASL-English bilingual education can work for deaf children. Strong and Prinz (1997) also found that deaf children of deaf parents outperform deaf children of hearing parents in both ASL literacy and English literacy; this is also supported by many other studies (Strong & Prinz, 2000; Hoffmeister et al., 1997; Lane, 1999). Additionally, it was found that, in most cases, when ASL level was held constant, there was no difference between these two groups of deaf children (Strong & Prinz, 1997, 2000). This is further indication that ASL is a factor in literacy development. It is possible for deaf children to have strong English literacy skills, regardless of whether their parents are deaf or hearing. Children with ASL fluency had early diagnosis of their hearing losses, had early access to sign language, and were continuously exposed to English early (Strong & Prinz, 1997;

²⁷ Please read Thumann-Prezioso (2005) for deaf parents’ perspectives on deaf education. All of the deaf couples in the study generally support ASL-English bilingual approach to teaching and learning of their deaf children.

Padden & Ramsey, 2000). Rationally, having parents who sign during deaf child's early years, and giving that child enough comprehensible input, is as important as whether at least one of the parents is deaf or hearing, and can have a powerful impact on that child's ASL and English literacy development.

There is a general agreement that if learners are provided with enough comprehensible input, they can become successful with target language acquisition. The comprehensible input premise was put forth by Krashen (1985, 1994) to explain how the language learner acquires a target language. Interestingly, de Villiers, Bibeau, Ramos and Gatty (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of profoundly deaf children of oral deaf families and found that these children consistently outperform other deaf children of hearing families academically. This strongly parallels the way signing deaf children of deaf families have been seen to outperform signing deaf children of hearing families. These oral deaf children had sufficient comprehensible input from their parents because their parents made compensations for their deafness by heavily using gestures in communication to a greater extent than hearing parents of oral deaf children; and those children, in turn, took full advantage of the gestural medium in communication (de Villiers et al., 1993)²⁸.

There is evidence showing the importance of deaf children's early, prolonged exposure to language as "individuals who are exposed to language at earlier ages consistently outperform individuals exposed to language at later ages for first and second language acquisition" (Morford & Mayberry, 2000, p. 111). Recognizing the need for early language experience in deaf and hard of hearing children's development as a literate person, Kassel, Osbrink and Zernovoj (2003) presented how their families supported literacy

²⁸ Read Dominguez (2005) to see how Spanish-English bilingual students took full advantage of the gestural medium in communication in addition to words to communicate their mathematical reasoning to others and to direct their own cognitive activity.

development in the home underscoring how any deaf child can develop into a successful, literate deaf adult, regardless of family backgrounds. Comprehensible input started at an early age for these three deaf adults. The families of these three adults used a variety of learning tools to support the education process and their successful literacy development. While Kassel, Osbrink and Zernovoj presented real life experiences, there is a study that demonstrated the impact of consistent linguistic input regardless of which language or mode of communication can have on various academic and cognitive outcomes (Lou, Strong & DeMatteo, 1991).

Padden and Ramsey (2000) studied reading achievement in two groups of deaf children, one from a residential school and the other from a public school, whose early experiences involve exposure to and using sign language. Consistent with the findings by Strong and Prinz (1997), Padden and Ramsey also found that the three factors that correlate significantly with reading achievement are having deaf parents, hearing losses being detected early, and early exposure to English. In their studies, they looked at how ASL plays a role in reading development of deaf children by measuring ASL competence in deaf children testing their specific ASL skills, evaluating how well these children knew the association between vocabulary of certain ASL initialized signs to their English word counterparts, and assessing their fingerspelling skills. They found that there is a strong relationship between ASL skills (and knowing specific ASL structures) and reading achievement in deaf students. They also found that these students “have made an alternate discovery in which they form association between elements of a signed language and elements of written language as they acquire the ability to read” (Padden & Ramsey, 2000, p. 168).

Padden and Ramsey (2000) noted strong relationships between fingerspelling and reading, and between initialized signs and reading²⁹. Padden and Ramsey concluded that “Deaf children seek links between accessible systems, not between words they cannot hear or speak, but between signs that have some tangible link to English print, in this case, fingerspelling and initialized signs” (pp. 184–185). Humphries and MacDougall (1997) described one such procedure as “chaining”. In chaining, connections were made between ASL and English print using print, fingerspelling, pointing at words, and signs. In their observations of residential and public schools teachers' methods of teaching English, they noticed that residential school teachers fingerspelled more words and used chaining more often than public school teachers, and that deaf teachers also fingerspelled more words and used more chaining than hearing teachers. What this study showed was that deaf children received exposure to a culture of signing teachers that provided them tools to find links between ASL and print English³⁰. This made both systems fully accessible to deaf children, and helped them make sense of print English. In another study, Padden (1996) showed that deaf children actively seek to form correspondences between fingerspelling and written spelling systems and ASL signing. This was evident in the uniqueness of the fingerspelled

²⁹ For most recent research findings to take note of link between fingerspelling and reading acquisition, read the following: Padden (2006); Puente, Alvarado, & Herrera (2006); and Haptonstall-Nykaza & Schick (2007). Padden (2006) described the development of fingerspelling as learning to fingerspell twice. Children learn to recognize lexicalized fingerspelling first, and then to use neutral fingerspelling second. The latter part of learning occurs when they begin to learn to read and write, which helps them to understand that the letters of fingerspelled words have internal linguistic patterns that correspond to English alphabetic letters. Puente, Alvarado and Herrera (2006) concluded in their research that fingerspelling can facilitate the internal representation of words and serve as a supporting mechanism for reading acquisition. Haptonstall-Nykaza and Schick (2007) found in their research that fingerspelling can serve as a visual phonological bridge as an aid to decode English print; in other words, deaf students were able to recognize and write the printed English word as well as fingerspell the word, when training incorporated lexicalized fingerspelling.

³⁰ In their literature review, Singleton and Morgan (2006) highlighted some of the observed social and linguistic practices in both home and classroom settings that help guide deaf students' development of language and identity, and showed how teachers may emulate the visual, linguistic, and bilingual practices to help contribute to their deaf students' linguistic, academic, and social progress in positive ways.

words and how they matched up to written English words during deaf children's early use of fingerspelling and written spelling.

Similar to Padden and Ramsey's (2000) study that showed deaf children are actively seeking links between ASL and print English to help them make sense of the print English, Singleton et al. (1998) had a similar finding when they investigated ASL-based techniques for learning print English. In their investigation of several studies, they found that when students receive ASL pre-reading lessons, their comprehension of the printed English text improved. They also found that in English translation activities, students improved their English writing skills after they produce ASL narratives and then write written English narratives using English glosses from their ASL narratives and use these same glosses to compare ASL to English narratives. Based on these findings, they concluded that paying attention to, analyzing and mastering the linguistic features of ASL is strongly connected to English literacy skills.

Continuing the theme of finding the link between ASL and print English, Hoffmeister et al. (1997) conducted a study assessing the students' primary language competence and comprehension abilities in both English and ASL. In the study, Hoffmeister et al. (1997) looked for the relationship among English literacy skills, comprehension and production of "through-the-air" English in simultaneous signed and spoken language, and comprehension and production of several syntactic and semantic features of ASL at four schools that use Total Communication in their classrooms. In their study, they found that in the deaf students, their knowledge of English syntax facilitates the English reading achievement, and their mastery of high level skills in both ASL and English also makes possible the development of good English reading skills. Based on their findings, they posit

that acquisition of more ASL fluency enables deaf students to reflect on language structures, thus facilitating their exceptional performance on tests assessing their English literacy skills.

The studies discussed in the previous section have shown that deaf children of deaf parents outperform deaf children of hearing parents in educational achievements. Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan (1996) stated that it is because the deaf children of deaf parents have had opportunities to develop language using a naturally accessible language (ASL) to communicate with the members of their deaf families. The reality is about nine out of ten deaf children have hearing parents (Lane, 1999; Mayberry & Fischer, 1989). Deaf children of hearing parents often lack full, consistent communication with their hearing families for the first five or six years of their lives. Mayberry and Fischer (1989) estimated that about 92 – 97 % of deaf children are born into hearing families unfamiliar with any sign language, and most of them learn sign language outside their family home, frequently at an age beyond the critical language acquisition period. Consequently, these children often enter school lacking fluency in or without having ASL as their native language and English as a second language. Therefore, the moment they first enter the school, they begin trying to learn ASL as well as English simultaneously. Allen (2002) stated that deafness “does not recognize the cultural, economic, or linguistic diversity of families, and, therefore, creates classrooms of children from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (p. 150). It is the school where cultural information and language has been for the most part passed down from classmate to classmate rather than from parent to child (Padden & Humphries, 1988). Deaf children of hearing parents never enter school language-less because they are continuously exposed to their family language and start learning it to some extent before starting school. Deaf children of deaf parents and hearing parents that sign are exposed to and able to start

learning sign language as a form of communication early on before they start school. Based on deaf children's varying family backgrounds, the ASL-English bilingual approach to teaching deaf children is the most viable option of deaf education because ASL, as a visual language, is most accessible to them. It gives them a communication tool, as well as a foundation, to help communicate abstract and complex information, which can aid in the acquisition of English along with good English literacy skills.

Bilingual education for deaf children is probably a main issue in deaf education today and is being actively examined by many directly and indirectly involved in the field. It is clear from the research done in the last few decades, there is evidence supporting the bilingual approach to deaf education. Many studies have shown that bilingual education can be effective if the program is well designed to help deaf children acquire academic English (Cummins, 2001; Krashen, 1996). There is evidence that reading ability transfers from any one language to another language (Cummins, 2001). In other words, literacy in first language can help in acquisition of literacy in the second language. As discussed earlier, ASL is one of the signed languages Deaf children have full access to because it provides visual access addressing their communicative and learning needs.

With ASL-English bilingual education, deaf children will be exposed to ASL and print English teaching and learning, thus giving them better chances for educational achievements because both of these languages are made accessible to them. They can make associations between these two language systems mainly using their ASL linguistic base to aid them in their development of English skills. As previously shown here in this section, research shows that ASL is not a deterrent, but rather an incentive, to acquisition of English literacy skills. Despite the fact that bilingual education is still relatively new in deaf

education, and research on the bilingual approach is still young, bilingual education can help facilitate deaf students' grade level achievement by providing a fully accessible and comprehensible classroom language, ASL, as well as developing and promoting English literacy skills. The fact that a bilingual approach is gaining wider acceptance in deaf education offers hope that in the future educators will be able to freely develop effective bilingual programs, which will address deaf children's unique developmental pattern growing up bilingually and bi-culturally (e.g., Hamers, 1998) and help them learn and internalize English as children seem to do in Sweden with Swedish Sign Language and print Swedish.

V. Review of Existing Materials and Curricula

My search for existing materials and curricula started with Gallaudet library and the WRLC (Washington Research Libraries Consortium) partner libraries, ERIC database, professional journals and deaf-related conference proceedings, the Internet, and my personal collection of textbooks, articles, papers and schoolwork. I looked for existing relevant materials and curricula that would help inform the development of an ideal standards-based elementary-level Deaf Studies curriculum.

With the need for a standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum in mind, the research began first by browsing through the Gallaudet University library and its WRLC partners' database using all the possible combinations of some or all of the main keywords: Deaf Studies, curriculum, and elementary. Many other keywords were tried, as an experiment, to manipulate search results through trial and error. For instance, the use of the terms deaf and culture were used briefly, but later dropped because they were considered too broad. In my search through a variety of sources listed above, I was able to find only one actual commercially published curriculum guide (*Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*, Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993) and one online curriculum guide (*ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework*, Gallimore, 2004) for teaching Deaf Studies. What were also found was a handful of other published activities and curricula centered on the culture, language, and history of deaf people in the form of student workbooks and teacher guides (i.e.: Stone-Harris, 1998; Carroll & Mather, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Goldstein & Walworth, 1979; Podmore, 1995; Toole, 1996, 1998, 2000; and Alexander & Gannon, 1984). They were reviewed in this thesis despite the fact that these materials were narrowly relevant to this paper's criteria for what constitutes a full-fledged

Deaf Studies curriculum. Additionally, some articles and papers, which did not provide a curriculum, were found that are deemed relevant to this thesis. I repeated the same search through ERIC database only to find nothing relevant to this thesis.

Before conducting a search through various books, journals and magazines for relevant articles on the Deaf Studies curriculum, I limited the search to issues published in 1970 up to now because 1970 was the year when Frederick Schreiber made the earliest mention of Deaf Studies (i.e.: Schein, 1981). In my search, I used three techniques to find the relevant articles: reading the article titles (and, if available, abstracts) in the table of contents in each issue; checking each relevant article's references to find more articles of interest; and skimming through each issue of select journals and magazines listed in the following paragraphs below. While it is possible that there might have been short blurbs about a Deaf Studies curriculum in the articles that are deemed non-relevant that my search may not uncover, I came up with a third technique to account for that. I decided to do only three aforementioned techniques in my search because there is not adequate time to read thousands of articles from hundreds of issues of different relevant journals and magazines.

I searched through every single issue of *American Annals of the Deaf*³¹ from the 1970 issues (volume 115) to up to the Fall 2006 issue (volume 151, issue 4), and every single issue of *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*³² from its first issue up to the Spring 2007 issue (volume 12, issue 2). In my search through both journals, which many professionals consider as the top two major journals in the fields of deaf education, Deaf

³¹ *American Annals of the Deaf* is the oldest deaf-related professional educational journal in the United States for researcher and other professional audience (e.g., teachers, administrators and counselors). Throughout its history, the journal has played a critical role as a scientific and professional outlet for publications in the development and professionalization of deaf education since 1847 (the year the magazine was launched).

³² *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* is the other major journal than the *American Annals of the Deaf* that generally publishes scientific and professional research since its inception in the winter of 1996.

Studies and other deaf-related fields, no articles on any kind of Deaf Studies curriculum was found. I also searched through every single issue of the following: *Sign Language Studies*³³ (from 1972 to 1996, and from volume 1, issue 1 in 2000 to volume 7, issue 2 in 2007), *Deaf Worlds: International Journal of Deaf Studies*³⁴ (from volume 12, issue 1 in 1996 to volume 22, issue 2 in 2006), *Deafness and Education International*³⁵ (from volume 1, issue 1 in 1999 to volume 9, issue 1 in 2007), *Australian Journal of Education of the Deaf*³⁶ (from volume 1, issue 1 in 1995 to volume 9, issue 1 in 2003), *Australian Teacher of the Deaf*³⁷ (from volume 11, issue 1 in 1970 to volume 33, issue 1 in 1993), *Journal of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf*³⁸ (from volume 1, issue 1 in 1977 to volume 22, issue 2 in 1998), *Teacher of the Deaf*³⁹ (from volume 68, number 399 in 1970 to volume 74, number 440 in 1976), *ACEHI Journal*⁴⁰ (from volume 1, issue 1 in 1974 to volume 21, issue 2/3 in

³³ *Sign Language Studies* publishes a wide variety of original scholarly articles and essays relevant to signed languages and signing communities. The journal provides a forum for the dissemination of important ideas and opinions concerning these languages and the communities who use them. Topics of interest include linguistics, anthropology, semiotics, Deaf culture, and Deaf history and literature. It published journal issues from first issue in 1972 to until last issue in 1996; it was re-launched with volume 1, issue 1 in 2000.

³⁴ *Deaf Worlds: International Journal of Deaf Studies* is the international academic journal that provides a focus for analysis and debate on social, psychological, cultural and political factors influencing deaf people's lives and the societies in which they live. All scholarly and library databases that include this journal started with volume 12. No success was made in locating the first eleven volumes.

³⁵ *Deafness and Education International* is the Australian/British academic journal equivalent of *American Annals of the Deaf*; it is a merger of both *Australian Journal of Education of the Deaf* and *Journal of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf* put out by the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf (AATD) and the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), respectively. Its first issue came out in 1999.

³⁶ *Australian Journal of Education of the Deaf* was published in 1995 (volume 1, issue 1) until its final issue came out in 2003 before it merged with the *Deafness and Education International* journal.

³⁷ *Australian Teacher of the Deaf* (final issue was volume 33, number 1 in 1993) was a predecessor to *Australian Journal of Education of the Deaf*.

³⁸ *Journal of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf* was a predecessor to the *Deafness and Education International* journal. It replaced *The Teacher of the Deaf* beginning publication in 1977 until 1998 before the successor *Deafness and Education International* replaced it in the following year.

³⁹ *Teacher of the Deaf* (final issue was volume 74, number 440 in 1976) was a predecessor to *Journal of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf*.

⁴⁰ *ACEHI Journal* was the Canadian academic journal equivalent of *American Annals of the Deaf*. It was in press from 1974 until its last issue came out in 1995.

1995), and *Volta Review*⁴¹ (from volume 71, issue 1 in 1970 to volume 106, issue 1 in 2006). Like the other two journals above, these journals did not contain any article that focused on Deaf Studies curriculum. In other words, there is no article on the Deaf Studies curriculum in all known (eleven different relevant journals identified by this paper) deaf education and/or Deaf Studies-related academic journals. I then expanded my literature search to cover both informal magazines published in the field of deaf education and mainstream consumer deaf-related magazines, part of which occasionally focus on deaf education between 1970 to now. Nine relevant informal magazines were uncovered in this expanded search. This expanded search yielded only six relevant articles: two 1990 and 1991 articles in *Perspectives in Education and Deafness*⁴²; one 1991 article in *Preview*⁴³; one 1983 article in *Deaf Canadian*⁴⁴; two 1973 and 1982 articles in *Deaf American*⁴⁵; and none in any of the *Deaf American Monograph*⁴⁶, *NADmag*⁴⁷, *Odyssey*⁴⁸, *Deaf Life*⁴⁹ and *Talk*⁵⁰ issues. Out of a

⁴¹ *Volta Review*, established in 1899, is the official professional journal of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, particularly interested in the communication abilities of people with hearing loss. This journal contains articles devoted to the education, rehabilitation, and communicative development of people who are deaf.

⁴² *Perspectives in Education and Deafness* is a magazine for professionals, parents and other people involved in deaf education. It is not a journal of research as *American Annals of the Deaf* is; it is an informal and practical source of ideas for teaching deaf students (e.g., successful strategies, curriculum and activities), information, and support. It was produced by Pre-College Programs, including Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) and Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD). It was being published from first issue (volume 1, issue 1) in 1982 until the last issue (volume 18, issue 1) in 1999 before *Odyssey* replaced it in the following year.

⁴³ *Preview* was a periodical focusing on a wide range of issues and activities at Pre-College Programs, particularly KDES and MSSD, important to the professionals involved in deaf education and to families of deaf children. It was produced by the Publications and Production Department within the division of Administration and Business at Gallaudet University until its last issue came out in 1999 before *Odyssey* replaced the magazine.

⁴⁴ *Deaf Canadian* was a Canadian magazine equivalent of *Deaf American*. This magazine started with its first issue in 1972 until it became defunct with the last issue in 1989.

⁴⁵ *Deaf American* was a monthly mainstream consumer magazine published by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD). It was a successor to the *Silent Worker* magazine beginning with volume 17, number 1 in 1964 until its last issue in fall of 1989 with volume 39, issue 4. After the last issue came out in 1989, it morphed the following year into the *Deaf American Monograph* largely collecting scholarly work on deaf-related issues, which lasted from 1990 to 1999 before ceasing publication.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

total of over approximately 1,500 issues (or 7,500 articles) from twenty different journals and magazines (around 700 issues total from eleven different scholarly journals and around 800 issues total from nine different public mainstream magazines), there are only six articles on the Deaf Studies curriculum published. In other words, for every approximately 250 issues (or 1250 articles from these issues) from various journals and magazines, there is one relevant article. That is about 0.08% (which is not even close to one percent since it is less than 1/10th of one percent) of all articles in related journals and magazines that at least cover the Deaf Studies curriculum. Finding no articles pertaining the Deaf Studies curriculum in eleven different deaf-related academic journals and only a handful of six articles in nine other deaf-related periodicals and magazines in the last thirty-seven years (from 1970 to now) may reveal a lot about the perceived (or implied) value and priority of discussing and developing the Deaf Studies curriculum for K-12 deaf students.

The 1974 article in the *Deaf American* magazine is the earliest article found related to Deaf Studies curriculum. That article was Robert Panara's "Deaf Studies in the English Curriculum." In this article, Panara (1974) was the first to report, in writing, the need for a Deaf Studies curriculum for deaf students (in this case, in high schools and colleges). However, he did not provide any information on how to infuse Deaf Studies into the

⁴⁷ *NADmag* is the current publication put out by NAD. It focuses on a specific theme, such as technology and telecommunications, human services, deaf culture, education, and interpreting. It began bimonthly publication in 2000.

⁴⁸ *Odyssey* is the latest incarnation of both *Perspectives in Education and Deafness* and *Preview* magazines published by Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. It started with its first issue in 2000.

⁴⁹ *Deaf Life* is a mainstream consumer magazine published to update deaf people in America on issues that they struggled with – from interpreters to deaf education to communication modes and assistive devices (e.g., hearing aids and TTY's). The magazine also included deaf people's input on these issues. The first issue came out in 1988 until 1998 when it went on hiatus. The magazine returned in January 2007 with a cover story on the Gallaudet Protest of Fall 2006.

⁵⁰ *Talk* is a publication put out by The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) for both families (of deaf children and young people) and professionals working with them. One of the main recurring topics in *Talk* was education. NDCS is the only British charity solely dedicated to providing information (e.g., education choices, welfare rights, and advising on health and technology) and individual advocacy for deaf children and young people and their families and professionals working with.

curricula; instead, he focused on deaf characters' biography in English literature that could be taught to deaf students. The next article found was in *Deaf American* magazine, published by Robert Harris in 1982, was entitled "Communication and Mental Health: Implications for Development of Positive Self-Concept in Deaf Individuals."

In his article, Harris reviewed both linguistic studies and communication-related mental health studies and gave numerous recommendations as how to apply these research findings to the development and improvement of deaf students' self-concept. One of these recommendations was to incorporate Deaf Studies into deaf education curricula "so that deaf children's curiosity about 'what it is like to be a deaf adult in both the hearing and deaf worlds' would be greatly accelerated" (1982, p.12). Harris only briefly touched upon it with one paragraph; in this paragraph, he basically wrote about how a colleague of his, who teaches history to deaf children at Minnesota School for the Deaf, developed the curriculum incorporating the materials in relation to famous deaf people. As Panara did with his article, Harris also did not provide any information on how to integrate the Deaf Studies curriculum into deaf education curricula.

The 1983 article found in the *Deaf Canadian* magazine by Clifton F. Carbin's "Historical and Personal Perspectives on Deafness" focused on deaf people and their history. In it, Carbin touched upon Deaf Studies by referring to an article written by Harris in one of the 1982 issues of the *Deaf American* magazine to argue that by teaching deaf students about famous deaf people, this would motivate them more in school and life. Carbin then provided little-known facts about deaf people that could be included in the Deaf Studies curriculum. Carbin argued: "[the] idea of including Deaf Studies in the school curriculum will provide deaf people with the opportunity to learn about deaf people and what they have

accomplished” (p.10). He then asked his audience to think about the possibility of a Deaf Studies curriculum’s implication on deaf students.

The 1990 and 1991 articles found in the *Perspective* magazine were no doubt inspired by the development of the yet to be published *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* (Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993) at the time of these articles’ writing considering its sources. The Miller-Nomeland & Wood, 1990, article explored reasons why schools and programs serving deaf students should incorporate the Deaf Studies curriculum into their deaf education curricula and presented a sample instructional Deaf Studies curriculum which was a blue print for at the time the yet-to-be-published *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*. The article from the following year 1991 by Wood presented results of an important KDES survey of schools to show that there was a need for the Deaf Studies curriculum. The 1991 article found in the *Preview* periodical (i.e.: Johnstone, 1991) described how the Deaf Studies curriculum helped deaf students to gain knowledge and better understanding of their own deaf culture and deaf history, and developed pride and positive self-esteem among themselves.

Even though I was able to find only six articles altogether on the Deaf Studies curriculum from all of the deaf-related journals, magazines and periodicals reviewed above, a wealth of papers on development and/or implementation of the Deaf Studies curriculum were more commonly found in many Deaf Studies-related conference proceedings⁵¹. A review of all proceedings from all major Deaf Studies-related conferences, including all Deaf Studies conferences hosted by Gallaudet University, revealed this: the number of

⁵¹ All of these papers were covered in the *Assessment of Need for Standards-based Deaf Studies Curriculum* section.

papers on the Deaf Studies curriculum collected in the proceedings dwindled with each subsequent publication of collection of proceedings from each conference since 1989. In the first batch of proceedings from the first Deaf Studies conference hosted in March 7 – 10, 1991, there were eleven papers on Deaf Studies curriculum. In the second and third biannual conferences on October 24 – 25, 1991 and April 22 – 25, 1993, there were three papers and four papers, respectively. In the next three biannual conferences from 1995 to the last one in 1999, there were only two papers presented altogether (one in 1997 and one in 1999). There were no papers presented on Deaf Studies curriculum at the Deaf Studies Today conference (the most recent conference at the time of this writing) in 2004. As for the Deaf Way conferences, only one article (i.e.: Bahl, 1994) that focused on the Deaf Studies curriculum was presented at the first conference in 1989, but no related article was presented at the second conference in 2002. While it is possible that there might have been some nationwide (or statewide or local) deaf education- or Deaf Studies -related conferences (e.g., CAID) that may have had some presentations on a Deaf Studies curriculum, it cannot be determined whether any of it had happened due to the lack of collection and publication (and availability) of the proceedings from these conferences. However, all of the important major Deaf Studies-related conferences are covered in this paper.

It remains to be seen if the subject of developing/implementing K – 12 Deaf Studies curriculum will remain a significant part of (or, let alone become more prominent in) the future Deaf Studies conferences. It is this writer's theory that after deaf education has amassed enough resources for Deaf Studies curriculum at individual schools and programs for the deaf and deaf education which are beginning to feel the pressure from the standards-based reform and accountability to close the achievement gap; this will lead to further

negligence in focus on the K-12 Deaf Studies curriculum. Again, while these are just theories of mine, this still can usefully explain the aforementioned perceived or implied value and priority of discourse on teaching Deaf Studies to K-12 students.

In my review of all available articles and papers, it seemed that the general description of reasons for teaching Deaf Studies were to (1.) develop and strengthen identity and belonging as a deaf individual, (2.) develop a positive deaf self-identity, (3.) develop communicative competence in ASL and appreciation and respect for it as a language, (4.) develop an understanding of and appreciation for deaf heritage, and (5.) develop awareness and understanding of the Deaf community as a minority group.

All curriculum guides, student workbooks and teacher guidebooks used with deaf students found during the search had interesting material that proved to be useful references in the construction of future national learning standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. Additionally, all of these materials were neither designed nor adapted for any state (and national) learning standards, thus necessitating a creation of a Deaf Studies curriculum that incorporates state (and national) learning standards.

In the first teacher guidebook reviewed, *Let's Learn About Deafness* (Stone-Harris, 1988) designed primarily for elementary age students, can be easily adapted for children of varying abilities and degrees of maturity, intelligence, and reading readiness. It contains a series of detailed step-by-step lesson plans (with purpose, overview, materials, and procedure) and each lesson plan comes with attached activity worksheet(s) that help students learn about deaf people while acquiring the necessary learning skills and tools through activities provided by these lesson plans. Moreover, these lesson plans contain topics for discussion, information sheets, student activity sheets, ideas for bulletin boards, hands-on

individual and group classroom activities, dramatic skits, and suggested ways to use all of these components.

However, these lesson plans and materials contained within this book were designed before the development of state and national learning standards that the policymakers imposed on the teachers. What this means is that when the teachers come across this book, they may not use a significant portion of this guidebook or none at all. As stated earlier in this thesis, teachers already are coping with their increasing responsibility and accountability for documenting students' progress and using materials that are state and national standards compliant. Teachers end up spending a significant portion of their time to document how students are progressing and how their materials meet certain learning standards that they often do not have enough time and energy to find and adapt more materials to the standards. As a result, the chances are that teachers likely will feel too hard-pressed to even try adapting this guidebook to the standards before using it, let alone devise a list of ways to document students' progress in learning using the materials provided by this guidebook.

The materials in *Let's Learn About Deafness* are grouped together and organized in five categories: "Who Are We?," "Facts About Deafness," "Deafness and Communication," "Devices That Help," and "Famous Deaf People." Looking through all five categories of materials in this teacher guidebook, it seems to have mainly taken the diversity in hearing and deaf people's perceptions and misperceptions about deaf people into account and is designed to help them gain further insight into basic understanding of deaf people and their capabilities. However, upon the review of this guidebook, it appears that these materials may be more useful for hearing students than deaf students because it gives off the impression of being designed for those who have not yet or recently met a deaf person.

Additionally, due to the basic nature of this guidebook's content, it does not incorporate anything else other than deaf people's hearing losses and how they work with it; therefore, this guidebook will not help deaf students acquire both cultural literacy in and knowledge of Deaf culture. In short, this book is definitely not a complete book about deaf people, and the content of some of the materials in this book only has some potential for use as a starting (and straightforward) introduction to deaf people for preschoolers or early primary elementary school deaf students before delving further into the Deaf Studies curriculum.

In the *Let's Learn About Deafness* book, the "Who Are We?" section focuses on building basic awareness of deaf people for those who are not familiar with deaf people. This section introduces students to deaf people and their existence, and helps encourage them to discuss it. For instances, there is a survey to help "sensitize students to different degrees of hearing loss;" and there is a worksheet that helps "make students aware of the fact that deaf people are like hearing people in almost every way" through comparisons. In addition, there is an activity in which students are encouraged to imagine a planet inhabited only by deaf people, whom they can identify with, so that they could find out more about their way of life. The "Facts About Deafness" section focuses on dispelling common mistaken notions about deaf people and replaces them with basic factual information. For instance, there is an activity that encourages a discussion about a list of given "myths" and facts about deaf people, and a worksheet of definitions of deaf-related English terms to help students dispel negative attitudes toward deaf people and have the appropriate vocabulary words to use in discussions about deaf people. The "Deafness and Communication" section focuses on deaf people's sign language (ASL) as their main mode of communication. For instance, there is a activity that encourages discussion about how hearing people receive

information through their ears and mouths and how deaf people receive information through their eyes and hands, and another activity that encourages students to learn and use ASL signs. The “Devices That Help” section focuses on modern technology that deaf people use in their everyday activities. For instance, discussion about how deaf people deal with communication problems caused by hearing losses through the use of devices for television, phone calls, and door bells. The “Famous Deaf People” section focuses on information about the lives of several famous deaf people in history. For instance, this section covers discussion about outstanding lives and successes of a select few famous deaf people to show that deaf people are capable of major accomplishments just as well as everyone else.

In a batch of workbooks reviewed here, *Movers & Shakers: Deaf People Who Changed the World* (Carroll & Mather, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c) consisted of a student storybook, a student bilingual workbook, and a teacher’s guide. The student storybook consists of a collection of short biographical narratives about individual historical deaf people who have contributed to western civilization. This author agrees with the basis of these workbooks: “one of the most important aspects of any curriculum is to impart to students a knowledge of the achievements of the members of their culture who went before them [and when these students] learn about these individuals, [they] develop their own sense of pride, identity, and confidence” (Carroll & Mather, 1997d, p.187).

In addition to the storybook, there is a bilingual workbook where students could explore aspects of American Sign Language and English, and a teacher’s guide that provides guidelines for teachers using the book. Carroll and Mather said that their goal “was to provide a storybook, where students could read exciting narratives about [deaf] people from the past, individuals that [they] selected primarily for their contributions to western

civilization; then turn to the bilingual workbook where they could explore aspects of American Sign Language and English, the two rich and mighty languages that are their heritage” (1997d, p.187). In the storybook, the following themes are evident in the narratives (1997d, p.187):

- As far back as the 1500s, a few deaf people enjoyed tremendous success within the hearing world, contributing to the culture and knowledge of their own nations, and the world as we know it today.
- A sense of camaraderie among individuals who were deaf is sometimes evident. In addition to occurring more frequently and predictably after the founding of schools for deaf students, this sense seems to have occurred prior to and outside of established “deaf communities.”
- Some deaf individuals did not portray deafness as the calamity that was envisioned by the hearing people around them.
- There is evidence for visualability in language – sometimes through signs.

In the student bilingual workbook, students investigate ASL grammar and syntax through exploration and working with ASL synonyms, homonyms, directionality, inflections, and classifiers. One of the explorations has students exploring various translations of certain English words. For instance, one of the words students will explore is “call” since this word has many different meanings, most of which are based on the context of the sentences in which this word is found. Students study several different translations in ASL based on this context-based English word. The workbook authors noted that the main reason for the bilingual nature of this workbook is this: “Many teachers have expressed frustrations that some of the recent sign concepts, expressed so beautifully in some sign curricula for hearing students, were not presented in a format that would be useful for teaching English to deaf students” (Carroll & Mather, 1997c, p.190). This workbook is their attempt to address this frustration by presenting a series of bilingual exercises where deaf students are to show their competence in ASL translations to English and vice versa. Almost all of the stories (21 out of 26) chronicled in the storybook have supporting exercises in the workbook. While it is a

noble attempt, this workbook is not bilingual because deaf students still have to read and solve bilingual exercises, discussing both ASL and English, in the form of print English.

In the teacher's guidebook, there not only are questions from the student bilingual workbook and their answers for each exercise, there are additional information and materials for each exercise. The additional information and materials in each exercise of the teacher's guidebook come in the form of "Goal," "Content," "Language," "Suggested Materials," and "Optional Projects." The "Goal" section states the purpose of each story (or a learning goal for reading that story). The "Content" section provides background concepts and vocabulary to help teachers determine whether students need pre-reading activities based on their background knowledge and reading skills. The "Language" section provides ASL and/or English concepts that teachers need to be aware of and help students explore in their workbook. The "Suggested Materials" section contains a list of visual aid and reading materials that may be helpful in terms of visually aiding their teachings and to help students explore more on a given subject through additional reading. The "Optional Projects" section lists possible follow-up activities (e.g., writing, hands-on, and discussion) to the reading exercise.

As for the student bilingual workbook, each exercise has five parts for the students in their workbook: "Idioms," "Content," "Looking At Language," "Opinion," and "Follow-up." There are five sections in "Idioms" that explore some of the peculiar English phrases that sometimes mean exactly the opposite of its literal meaning. The "Content" section asks readers to write down information from reading the story. The "Looking At Language" section explores specific aspects of English and ASL. The "Opinion" section asks readers to develop and explain their opinions about aspects of what they have read. The "Follow-up"

section provides additional related information and actions that readers can do. These types of exercises are used in sign language curricula, and this is the first mention of such exercises being used in ancillary material. At the end of this book, there is a list of references for more in-depth biographies on individual deaf people. “It is hoped that with these materials deaf and hard of hearing students will be able to increase and refine a specialized body of knowledge that is particularly important to them” (Carroll & Mather, 1997d, p. 191). While Carroll and Mather had good intentions in creating their storybook and workbooks, they did not design or adapt them for any state (and national) learning standards.

Another workbook found in similar vein of the *Movers & Shakers: Deaf People Who Changed the World* book above is *Interesting Deaf Americans: Reading and Writing Exercises* (Goldstein & Walworth, 1979). However, this is a very bare, outdated workbook. It has no lesson plan or any other guide materials for the teachers. Like in the title, this book mainly consists of short narratives about each interesting deaf American complete with reading and writing exercises. These exercises come in the form of a handful of reading comprehension multiple choice questions (and even fewer true/false reading questions), fill in the blanks, reading vocabulary multiple choice questions, and writing short answer questions. There are no lesson plans or any other guidelines for the teachers to follow in using this workbook. Additionally, this workbook was created before the arrival of the era learning standards-based reform and accountability.

Signs in Success (Podmore, 1995) is another short narratives book similar to *Interesting Deaf Americans: Reading and Writing Exercises*. It contains five short biographic narratives about successful deaf people in their fields. Like the book above, this

book is designed to help build students' reading skills in the form of reading exercises before and after each story. Even more books similar to both short-narrative biography books above are the *Living Legends* series (Toole, 1996, 1998, 2000) where each entry contains six short narratives about living deaf people who worked hard to excel in their chosen field (i.e.: vocation or avocation). At the beginning of each short narrative in all three books, there is a pre-reading vocabulary list of words with straightforward definitions designed to help students understand given words used in the story they are reading. Moreover, at the end of each short narrative contains comprehension questions and a creative writing exercise. Similar to *Interesting Deaf Americans: Reading and Writing Exercises*, all of these books do not have any lesson plans or any other guide materials for the teachers, and are not yet adapted for any state (or national) learning standards.

Deaf Heritage: A Student Text and Workbook (Alexander & Gannon, 1984) is designed to act as a supplementary educational student workbook to use with *Deaf Heritage*. It is also designed primarily for deaf high school students who want to learn more about their heritage, but is adaptable to younger (elementary- and middle school-age) students with some teacher guidance. The first part of this workbook is a condensed summary of readings ("student text") from the *Deaf Heritage* book, and the second part of this workbook mainly consists of reading comprehension questions and a short list of follow-up activities (e.g., research work such as additional readings and interviews, written reports, and classroom discussions and role-playings) for each chapter.

While this is a student text and workbook, there are no guidelines provided for the teacher to follow using this workbook. There also is not a list of learning objectives or goals nor there any lesson plans for the teacher to use in this workbook. The teachers are basically

left on their own to use this book and try to fit it into their curriculum, adapt portions or all of this workbook to meet certain state and national learning standards, and come up with how to document students' progress with this workbook.

In the last workbook (in printed format) reviewed here, the *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* (Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993) is the only known commercially packaged nearly comprehensive Deaf Studies curriculum guidebook uncovered during the search. This curriculum was four years in the making. Initially, twenty-six schools for the deaf in addition to invited deaf and hearing experts evaluated the draft curriculum; and seventeen schools and thirteen experts in various areas of Deaf Studies helped complete the evaluation (Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993, p.xi). “The curriculum was written to help students learn about the rich cultural heritage of Deaf people. It is not about the study of deafness. Therefore, it does not include medical and support service information such as types and causes of hearing loss, information on the ear, care and maintenance of hearing aids, or other information about audiological or speech services. This information is available through other sources” (Miller-Nomeland, 1993, p. 84).

While this curriculum guidebook is nearly comprehensive and includes a cultural study of the language, education, history, literature, arts and sociology of deaf people, it contains seventy-six different units each with a main objective, a number of sub-objectives and a list of learning activities grouped into nine different “yearly levels” (roughly equivalent to grade levels one to nine). These seventy-six units are organized into six different themes: Identity, American deaf culture, American Sign Language, Communication, History and Social change. Each theme in the curriculum starts with

helpful background information for the teachers regarding American Sign Language and Deaf Culture before they start teaching that part of the curriculum, and in each theme there is a set of objectives along with a list of suggested related activities for each objective. There are a list of books and resources at the end of each theme. This curriculum is ideal for all elementary and middle school age students from the first to eighth grades.

As indicated in the curriculum guidebook, it can be used to teach Deaf Studies as a separate curriculum area or infused into the regular language arts and/or social studies curriculum (1993, pp. 16 – 17). In order to infuse Deaf Studies into the regular content areas, the guidebook shows that “The units in the Identity strand, the American Deaf Culture strand, the History strand, and the Social Change strand could be infused into the regular Social Studies Curriculum;” while “The units in the American Sign Language strand and the Communication strand could be infused into the Language Arts Curriculum.” The goals of the *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* are listed on page 9 of this Miller-Nomeland and Gillespie (1993) guidebook (or alternative source in Miller-Nomeland, 1993), and they are:

- To foster and strengthen a sense of identity and belonging, and to develop a positive self esteem.
- To develop an understanding of and an appreciation for the rich heritage of deaf people.
- To appreciate the diversity of deaf people.
- To foster good communication within the Deaf community, the wider community, and the world.
- To develop an appreciation for the contributions of deaf people to human achievement.
- To develop an understanding of the Deaf community.
- To develop an appreciation and respect for American Sign Language as the language of Deaf Americans.
- To recognize deaf people as a minority group that has experienced discrimination.
- To develop a better understanding of the rights of deaf people.
- To recognize and utilize one’s skills and opportunities in enhancing personal goals.

These goals are well thought out and designed to help any deaf student understand themselves, their place in the deaf community and in the hearing world. This curriculum appears to be easy to use and adaptable to any type of school or program for deaf students.

Yet, this guidebook cannot be considered full-fledged because this guidebook consists of seventy-six units (covering six major areas/sections) each with a list of optional activities. These units are organized into six sections along with a list of text and video resources at the end of each section. By providing a laundry list of activities with no detailed step-by-step lesson plans for these activities for the teachers, teachers may feel burdened having to create a lesson plan for each activity including the information in it outlining how each meets some of the state (and national) standards for students' learning outcomes and how to document students' progress. In other words, this guidebook was not developed with certain state and national standards in mind, and each unit in this guidebook only contains a list of activities that the teacher can do with no detailed guide of how to do each activity. Again, like with everything else reviewed above in this section, teachers would have to find time to deal with outlining how each activity they do meets certain learning standards.

This seventy-six-unit curriculum explores six major areas: Identity, American Deaf Culture, American Sign Language, Communication, History and Social Change. The design of this teacher guidebook appears to emphasize on helping deaf students gain cultural literacy through access to, understanding of and a sense of belonging to their community of shared language (ASL), history (or heritage), values, accomplishments, and experience. In this curriculum guide, the Deaf Studies objectives spiral from one "yearly level" to the next in each area. This means that students need to complete the units in sequence within each area. This curriculum indicates that a unit is completed when "a majority of the

subobjectives have been taught” (p.15). The way this curriculum guidebook is designed makes it appear to discourage the teachers from handpicking the units within each area and attempting to fit them into their standards-compliant curriculum teaching.

In the “Identity” section, students develop a sense of belonging and gain a better understanding of themselves and of the Deaf community. As an example of how students gain a better understanding, some of the hands-on writing activities in that unit encourage the students to compare similarities and differences between themselves and others, meet other members of the Deaf community, and explore their personal and career goals. In the “American Deaf Culture” unit, students look at the way of life of deaf people, their community, and their Deaf art and literature. A list of cultural-appreciation-and-knowledge activities in that section suggest that students meet Deaf adult role models, view ASL stories (e.g., folklores and jokes) and other forms of ASL literature in addition to English literature and artwork, develop their own ASL literacy skills, and meet Deaf people with different ethnic and racial backgrounds to appreciate the diversity within the Deaf community. In the “American Sign Language” section, students develop an awareness of ASL as a true language of the deaf community and develop an appreciation for it. In order to do that, the guidebook suggests a list of ways how students can study the structure and grammatical features of ASL mainly through hands-on signing activities including ASL storytelling, informal conversations, formal situations, and drama. In the “Communication” section, students develop communication strategies and skills for interacting with each other in the community. For example, a list of writing and (mostly) hands-on activities in this section suggest that students learn how deaf people communicate with each other under various settings and then apply it to themselves, how to use the devices for information and

communication, communicating with different hearing people in the real world and how to use an interpreter. In the “History” section, students learn about their heritage. This section primarily deals with the history of the education of deaf children, but covers some other aspects of historical deaf experiences and some notable historical deaf individuals. In order for the students to learn all of this, some of the suggestions in this guidebook include that students do research and writing of biographies, acting out historical scenarios and characters. In the “Social Change” section, students learn about their legal rights and also look at ways that changing attitudes toward deaf people can lead to social and political changes for betterment (or worse) of the deaf community. For instance, through various activities, students learn about different forms of discrimination and how society is changing, jobs that deaf people can or cannot do, how deaf people who used ASL generally were viewed in the past and present, and how to use the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1994) to their advantage.

As mentioned earlier above, the unique advantage that this guidebook has is that it is the only comprehensive commercially packaged Deaf Studies curriculum guide at this point. However, this curriculum guidebook is already outdated since there has been new information about deaf heritage uncovered from research, technology advances in devices, among other things. More importantly, this guidebook was created before the creation of the state (and national) learning standards, which means that the design of this curriculum did not (and should) incorporate the current state (and national) learning standards.

Similar to *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* in terms of comprehensiveness is the *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum*

Framework (Gallimore, 2004). However, unlike any of other publications reviewed above, it is an online format. The main page states the curriculum's main purpose and intention:

The target audience of these curricula is teachers who teach or who will teach ASL as a first/primary language and/or as a second/foreign language. The goal of this project is to develop national level curriculum guidelines of American Sign Language for teaching first language users and second language learners from kindergarten to high school. The K-12 ASL Curriculum guidelines will help standardize the language instruction in schools serving both deaf and hearing populations in the United States. (Gallimore, 2004, Retrieved March 1, 2007, from <http://aslcurr.gallaudet.edu/>)

Even though the primary focus of this curriculum framework is ASL, the title and content indicates that it has the Deaf Studies content to help complement ASL. Additionally, this online curriculum includes a linguistic analysis of ASL grammar, components of ASL literature, Deaf Culture and assessments of students' ASL skills. The *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework* is broken down and organized into two content areas: ASL L1 Curriculum and ASL L2 Curriculum. Much unlike *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*, which only consists of lists of subobjectives and a list of suggested activities for each subobjective, in *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework*, there is a list of not only learning goals and objectives, it also has complete procedures and attached documents that the teachers can use and follow. In other words, with *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*, the teachers have to figure out how to implement the Deaf Studies activities while with *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework*, the teachers have the luxury of having a choice to follow prescribed steps to implement given Deaf Studies activities or to customize their own activities. However, as everything else reviewed here, including *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*, this online curriculum framework has not incorporated certain state and national standards yet.

ASL L1 Curriculum contains online links to separate pages based on content and/or grade levels: “ASL/Deaf Culture Topics All Grades,” “Curriculum, Guidelines & Standards,” “K-1st Grade,” “2nd-3rd Grade,” “4th Grade,” “5th Grade,” “6th Grade,” “7th-8th Grade,” and “High School.” Each grade content area contains a list of subjects (linked to their respective pages of unit plans) that deaf students of that grade level can learn. For instance, the subjects for deaf third graders to learn are “Deaf Artists,” “Deaf Artists 2,” “Deaf Literature,” “Deaf History,” “History of American School for the Deaf,” and “Well Known Deaf People.” For each subject on the list, there is a link to one unit plan containing learning goal, objectives, procedures (or formats), assessment, materials and attached documents relevant to the given unit plan (e.g., student worksheets and handouts).

ASL L2 Curriculum contains the following units with links to their respective pages: “Introduction,” “Level I (Kindergarten),” “Level 2 (1st grade),” “Level 3 (2nd grade),” “Level 4 (3rd grade),” “Level 5 (4th grade),” “Level 6 (5th grade),” “Level 7 (6th grade),” “Level 8 (7th grade),” “Level 9-12 (High School),” “K-8th grade Vocabulary List,” “Assessments/Rubric Guides (Elementary),” and “Resources/Materials.” Each grade-level unit contains various lists for students to develop their abilities in. For instance, in the Level 6 (5th grade) unit, there is a list of functions (e.g., "expresses likes & dislikes"), a list of grammar (e.g., "time signs" and "agent markers"), a list of vocabulary words, and a list of conversational strategies/culture note (e.g., "sample dialogue: SWIMMING, YOU LIKE?; BASEBALL, BASEKETBALL, YOU LIKE WHICH?; and "YOU, WHAT-TO-DO TOMORROW, PLAY WHAT?"). Additionally, there is a materials list to help inform teachers what are needed for a given unit.

High School Deaf Studies Curriculum: A Proposal, by Wynne (2005), is not a guidebook or framework; it is a thesis paper showing how a proposed Deaf Studies curriculum can be created incorporating state standards (in this case, the Social Studies aspect of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards). Wynne (2005) provided six lesson plans (complete with purpose, objectives, materials and procedures) derived from his proposed curriculum. He showed how the following areas of the Social Studies TEKS could be covered: World Geography, World History, United States History, Government, Psychology and Sociology. In his curriculum proposal, there is a three-column chart to help indicate how the standards are incorporated: the first column shows a Social Studies TEKS content area (e.g., “TEKS WORLD HISTORY: (8) History: The student understands causes and effects of major political revolutions since the 17th century”), the second column shows a conversion to Deaf Studies (e.g., “(8) History: The student explores the major political revolutions impacting Deaf lives since the 17th century”), and the third column shows the expectation for the students (e.g., “a) understand Deaf people’s existence and role during major political revolutions”). Wynne (2005) wrote that the ultimate goal of his thesis (or proposal) is to push for the creation of a Deaf Studies curriculum that incorporates learning-based standards. “The proposed curriculum also asks for further examination – while it is considered as the first stage of categorizing Deaf Studies or at least expanding the purpose and possible components of Deaf Studies, it is only the first stage. Further examination, revision and additions may and should be necessary. This proposal is not final yet the paper offers a sense of beginning to refining the Deaf Studies curriculum, using what is already in existence and correlating and/or converting it into something that

will allow for such course to stand alone with as much value and promise” (Wynne, 2005, p.52).

After obtaining general information about research and practices that dealt with Deaf Studies curriculum above, I was unable to turn up any additional existing materials and curricula related to Deaf Studies curriculum. Based on the deaf students’ need for acquisition and mastery of English literacy skills and their need to acquire culture literacy, the next step is for someone to step up and create a national Deaf Studies curriculum that incorporates national learning standards based on the information in this and preceding sections.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

The infusion of a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum into deaf education curricula at many schools and programs serving deaf students can be significantly rewarding for these students. Any deaf student can tremendously benefit from the Deaf Studies curriculum, and these students include those in mainstream settings in addition to those in residential and other central schools and programs for the deaf. However, while it is true that there are deaf individuals who choose not to be a part of the deaf culture and community because often they would rather front their racial or linguistic culture (and identity) over their deafness, it is the author's opinion that they can still benefit, to varying degrees, from having access to the Deaf Studies curriculum. The individual's journey in search of identity needs to be accepted and encouraged regardless of how each person views and values one's deafness. Regardless, the long-range benefits for the deaf community as deaf students graduate from K-12 schools and programs and enter the workforce as informed employers, businesspersons, colleagues and so on, can only be imagined if such a curricula existed. A comprehensive standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum will take much planning, organization, and collaboration among many educators and teachers, but the rewards will be definitely worth it for future generations.

Regardless of the increasing requirement for deaf students (and all other students) to conform to state or national learning standards, deaf education curricula objectives and content needs to consider deaf students' unique cultural and linguistic capabilities and learning needs while still be closely tied to standards-based curriculum used in public education for hearing students. Additionally, Deaf Studies curriculum should not just focus on the "teaching of facts, but on transforming students' own constructions and

interpretations” (Ladd, 2003, p.425). An effective Deaf Studies curriculum design for deaf students needs to be able to address and close deaf students’ achievement gap as well as empower them with its curriculum content.

This paper has conducted an exhaustive literature review identifying and examining all of the found articles and papers in limited existing bodies of literature regarding Deaf Studies curriculum. What resulted from this review were the *Impact of Standards-based Reform on Deaf Education Curricula* and *Assessment of Need for Standards-Based Deaf Studies Curriculum* sections of this paper. All of the papers and articles in these respective sections were examined in the historical content of both the dates on which they were published and their contributions to the field of deaf education in regards to the Deaf Studies curriculum. Looking at them, they reveal standards-based reform’s impact on the deaf education curricula, including the Deaf Studies curriculum, and a development and evolution of the Deaf Studies curriculum in the field of deaf education, respectively. From the years when Frederick Schreiber made the earliest mention of Deaf Studies in 1971 to late 1980’s, the papers and articles regarding Deaf Studies curriculum were very sparse until the flurry of publications came at the end of that period in the aftermath of the Deaf President Now protest movement⁵².

In a period of five years from 1989 to 1993, there was a significant number of published work or studies focusing on the Deaf Studies curriculum than in any other five years group before and after that period. Most of the work published during this five-year period argued for the need to incorporate (or integrate) the Deaf Studies curriculum into the

⁵² The ripple effect of this protest movement led to the greater awareness of ASL and Deaf culture. This offered opportunities for the field of Deaf Studies, e.g. a creation and development of Deaf Studies curriculum at K-12 schools and programs for the deaf, and establishing Deaf Studies academic university courses and programs. For an instance of impact of the DPN movement on a given program leading to the creation and offering Deaf Studies curriculum, read Johnstone (1991).

education of deaf students. The arguments in most of these publications were that only by providing access to Deaf Studies curriculum for deaf students could the students become empowered by (1.) improving their self-concept as a deaf person, (2.) enhancing their knowledge and understanding about what it means to be a deaf person, and (3.) providing the skills, tools and knowledge that they need to survive in a culturally and linguistically diverse society (or the real world). Additionally, there was a common shared view in a handful of the published work advocating for the integration of a Deaf Studies curriculum across various academic subject areas.

From that 1989 – 1993 period came significant findings regarding the status of Deaf Studies curriculum from two different surveys (one in 1991 and another one in 1993) of K-12 educational programs for deaf students. The first finding was that between 57 to 60 percent of the K-12 educational programs actually provide a Deaf Studies curriculum. The second finding was that approximately 50 to 60 percent of schools and programs that do not provide a Deaf Studies curriculum admitted that they either did not have enough time or were unable to add to their school curriculum because of the course-load limitations. While there are other findings, these two findings are significant in that they reveal an important outlook and extent of use of the Deaf Studies curriculum in K-12 schools and programs⁵³. These findings were not taking into account of all the schools that mainstreamed deaf students, which would have lowered given percentages significantly. These findings were some of the major contributions made to the limited existing body of literature focusing on Deaf Studies curriculum. However, some of other work reviewed has also acknowledged

⁵³ Refer to Woods (1991) and Bangs (1993) for more information about other findings based on their respective surveys; their findings are presented and reviewed in the *Assessment of Need for Standards-Based Deaf Studies Curriculum* section of this paper.

that a rising trend in mainstreaming of deaf students was one of the other biggest factors leading to the need for a Deaf Studies curriculum to help these students.

After a commercially published Deaf Studies curriculum guide came out at the end of the 1989 to 1993 period (*Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide*, Miller-Nomeland & Gillespie, 1993), the outpouring activity of publications relating to the Deaf Studies curriculum appears to have slowed down in the following years up to today. The slowing down of publication activity probably can be attributed to numerous overlapping factors: the fact that many educators and researchers slightly have arrived to the point where they concede that in agreeing that deaf students can benefit from the Deaf Studies curriculum led to less need for publishing writings about benefits. The fact that this one widely available commercial Deaf Studies curriculum guide has been created and distributed; the fact that many educators have created more deaf-related materials (not curriculum) for deaf students; and the fact that many schools and programs have created, collected, adapted, and modified various materials putting them together into their own loose, self-made curriculum. Nevertheless, the publication activity in the years after 1993 is still slightly busier than in the earlier years before 1989.

The published work in the years after 1993 up to now at the time of this writing focused on an integration of the Deaf Studies curriculum into deaf education curricula to help ease the pressure off the teachers from having to take time away from the classroom focus on standards-based learning. In 2004 came an online posting of a curriculum framework complete with lesson plans for teachers of deaf students on the Gallaudet Department of Education website (*ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework*, Gallimore, 2004) that is still up at the time of this writing. Even though it contains Deaf

Studies lesson plans, the ultimate goal of that website is to develop national level curriculum guidelines of ASL for teaching L1 users and L2 users in K-12 schools and programs for deaf students. While its primary focus is ASL, it still has a heavy presence of Deaf Studies content. In the following year (2005) after the online guide was made widely available on the Internet, Wynne wrote a proposal for a high school Deaf Studies curriculum as his master's thesis for the Gallaudet Department of ASL and Deaf Studies. Even though his thesis focused on a high school-level curriculum, it showed how his proposed curriculum could incorporate given state standards (Texas' standards). Additionally, it pushed for the creation of a Deaf Studies curriculum (or its conversion into something) that can stand alone on its own with as much value and promise that not only incorporates learning-based standards, but also uses existing materials.

From the same exhaustive review of the literature related to the Deaf Studies curriculum, some aspects of the current trend in the discourse in development of the Deaf Studies curriculum has been identified. While part of the current trend focuses on infusion of the Deaf Studies curriculum into the deaf education curricula across various academic content areas (e.g., language arts and social studies) to make it easier for the teachers to teach the materials without taking time away from other important content areas. Another part of the current trend in publications is an argument for alignment of deaf education curricula with the state and national standards since research has shown positive correlation between standards-based curriculum and academic achievement, which indirectly impacts Deaf Studies curriculum, by requiring it to be standards-based, since it can be considered to be part of the deaf education curricula. What helps is because of the standards-based reform

backed by NCLB and other education legislation, deaf education is required to conform to the standards anyway.

While a number of publication of papers and articles focusing on Deaf Studies curriculum is less than modest at best, this paper foresees eventual discussion to some extent of how to infuse Deaf Studies curriculum into legislation-dictated (e.g., NCLB) and standards-based deaf education through incorporation of and alignment with state and national learning-based standards. This will make it easier for educators, teachers and others to integrate Deaf Studies curriculum content across academic content areas in their given deaf education curricula. This paper also anticipates that some of the future publications will also discuss how to modify the deaf education curricula, including infused Deaf Studies curriculum content, to accommodate for the changing demographics of deaf students and their linguistic and social learning needs in the future.

This paper also reviewed existing materials and curricula related to Deaf Studies (section IV of this paper), and gave recommendations listed below in this section based on data and tools from the given reviews.

Even though the *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* is a product of four years work through the cooperation of twenty-six schools for the deaf in addition to invited Deaf Studies experts and is well organized into a number of sections with complete set of learning objectives, this guide is basically a laundry list of suggested activities. However, the content and format of this curriculum guide can be quite useful in informing the creation and structure of a new full-fledged Deaf Studies curriculum. Why recreate the curriculum guide from scratch if there are readily available resources? While the some of the content in the 1993 curriculum guide may be outdated, it

only needs to go through some small modifications and updates for use in a new complete curriculum.

While the *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework* has a number of useful Deaf Studies lesson plans at each grade level readily available online, it is nowhere as comprehensive and complete in all aspects of Deaf Studies that deaf students should learn. It is nowhere close to the aforementioned curriculum guide in terms of comprehensiveness minus lesson plans. Additionally, it does not primarily focus on Deaf Studies. However, knowing that the *Kendall Demonstration Elementary School Deaf Studies Curriculum Guide* can be used to provide the skeleton framework for a new standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum, the lesson plans and among other related content (i.e., materials) from the *ASL & Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework* website can be incorporated into a new aforementioned complete curriculum. It still has some usefulness factor in the development of a new standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. There are several published activities and curricula centered on the culture, language, and history of deaf people. However, there is no known published standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum in any K-12 schools or programs for the deaf students today. Additionally, many of these materials reviewed in the *Review of Existing Materials and Curricula* section of this paper could easily be incorporated in the curriculum.

More importantly, the new Deaf Studies curriculum that this paper is pushing for needs to be state and national learning standards-based as argued in the reviewed literature related to the Deaf Studies curriculum and in order to do that, we can look no further than to the following materials: the KDES curriculum guide, Gallimore's online curriculum framework, and Wynne's work. Referring to these materials can only benefit the

development of a new Deaf Studies curriculum by not only providing content for the new national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum, but also showing ways to incorporate the state and national learning-based standards while still accounting for deaf students' unique learning needs.

This paper has considered these logistics and used the existing materials to create a proposed sample Deaf Studies framework in the *Curriculum Framework* section of this paper that could be used in a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. This paper has determined the next several courses of action that needs to be implemented in the discussion and development of a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum, and they are:

- 1.) Develop and implement an updated survey that assesses the present status and extent of a use of a Deaf Studies curriculum in K-12 schools and programs that serve deaf students. This will help us understand the current trend in deaf education since the last survey in 1993.
- 2.) Conduct a new empirical (and, if possible, theoretical) study of the impact and benefits of the implementation of a Deaf Studies curriculum at select K-12 schools and programs that serve deaf students. This will give us more evidences in favor of a need for national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum.
- 3.) Conduct a longitudinal study identifying and outlining the benefits of a K-12 Deaf Studies curriculum for deaf students from the moment of their first access up to their last access. This will confirm the benefits for deaf students thus backing up what many educators and researchers have been saying all along in their publications. (Note: there is no research evidence outlining a curriculum's benefits for deaf students at the time of this writing)
- 4.) Set up a think tank to study and discuss the updated status and future of a Deaf Studies curriculum in the field of deaf education. This will help us obtain more new envisions and ideas that the development of a Deaf Studies curriculum could benefit from.
- 5.) Study and use any available national language arts and social studies standards (or a collection of various state standards to create umbrella national standards) and align it with national Deaf Studies learning goals, and show it in future publications. This will give the teachers and administrators more reasons to use the Deaf Studies curriculum content alongside other content areas in their deaf education curricula.

- 6.) Design a standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum based on Banks' framework for multicultural curriculum reform (1994, pp. 206 – 210) and other experts' recommendations in multicultural/multiethnic education.
- 7.) Incorporate ASL-English bilingual approach to a standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum's the teaching and learning activities.
- 8.) Create a framework based on studies and publications as indicated in the fifth, sixth and seventh courses of action recommended above. It will become one of the necessary tools in the creation of (or to help inform creation of) a new national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum. This will help ignite and speed up the development of a national standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum without having to start from scratch.

It is with hopes that the necessary information in the form of those listed in this paper (i.e.: the complete literature review complete with all the essential information repackaged here) will lead to a revival of the insightful discussion of a Deaf Studies curriculum. What's more is that this information can hopefully breathe life into a development of standards-based Deaf Studies curriculum that deaf education sorely needs for all deaf students to benefit from, regardless of their diverse family and academic backgrounds.

VII. References

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