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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

EXPLORING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS OF
STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING AND
GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM TEACHERS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Special Education

May 2019

This dissertation by: Brittany L. Dorn

Entitled: *Exploring Successful Partnerships Between Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and General Education Classroom Teachers.*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Special Education.

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ABSTRACT

Dorn, Brittany L. *Exploring Successful Partnerships Between Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and General Education Classroom Teachers*.
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The field of deaf education has moved from a direct service model to a primarily indirect service model. This means that teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH) increasingly work with school staff as well as with students. However, many TSDHH report feeling unprepared for the consultative aspect of their role, for which training may have been limited during their preparation program. This qualitative study used appreciative inquiry to study what *is* working in TSDHH and classroom teacher partnerships. Five dyads were selected through a two-step nomination process. The 10 selected teachers (general education classroom teachers and TSDHH) participated in separate semi-structured interviews about their professional partnerships. Joint and separate interviews served as the primary methods of data collection. A portraiture design was utilized to answer the following: What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers regarding the consultation process? What are the qualities of successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers?

Themes that arose among dyads included flexibility, shared goals, and mutual respect. For classroom teachers, themes included flexibility, a welcoming nature, and

“good” teaching. For TSDHH, themes included flexibility, positivity, an ability to read the teacher, and an ability to work the room. Results have implications for teacher preparation and professional development, especially in terms of explicitly teaching consultation models, skills, and processes. Findings are integrated with current research, and suggestions for teacher preparation and professional development are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedicated to TD, LD, RD, and WC. For all the things.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	
I.	INTRODUCTION..... 1
	Background
	Statement of the Problem
	Purpose of the Study
	Research Questions
	Theoretical Framework
	Methodology
	Significance of the Study
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE..... 13
	Introduction
	Characteristics of Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
	Definition of Terms
	Consultation Models from School Psychology
	Consultation Research in Deaf Education
	Summary
III.	METHODOLOGY..... 31
	Purpose of the Study
	Research Questions
	Research Design
	Data Collection Procedures
	Analysis of Data
	Trustworthiness
IV.	FINDINGS..... 60
	Participants
	Macro-Analysis: Essence of Consultation
	Micro-Analysis: Themes from Interviews
	Dyads
	Classroom Teachers
	Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
	Preparation
	Advice from the Field
	Summary

V.	DISCUSSION.....	106
	Summary of Research Findings	
	Integration of Findings with Research and Implications for Practice	
	Preparation of Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	
	Professional Development	
	Summary	
	Limitations	
	Recommendations for Future Research	
	REFERENCES.....	127
	APPENDIX	
A.	Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Consent Form.....	143
B.	Classroom Teacher Consent Form.....	147
C.	Letter to Programs that Employ Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.....	150
D.	Letter to Districts that Employ Classroom Teachers.....	153
E.	Interview Questions.....	155
F.	Institutional Review Board Approval Letter.....	158
G.	Nomination Criteria.....	160

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.	Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Demographics.....	61
2.	Classroom Teacher Demographics.....	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Groups and Themes..... 75

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I was a starry-eyed, freshly graduated, 22-year-old when I was hired to teach second grade in Hartford, Connecticut. When my students asked me how old I was, I didn't tell them, afraid that their parents would think I wasn't ready for the responsibility of leading a classroom. I had 23 students—from diverse cultural backgrounds and with a variety of learning needs—in my second-grade class. Several students required help from support staff, including a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, special education teacher, and reading specialist. Like many other first-year teachers, I was overwhelmed by the daily expectations and preparation needed to maintain a successful classroom.

One morning in particular was especially hectic. I was relieved to make it to my prep period, in which I had 35 precious minutes to copy and prepare all the materials I would need for the rest of the day. Buzzing around my classroom, I was surprised when—without introduction or explanation—the occupational therapist entered. She told me that one of the students in my classroom needed an additional accommodation; I had to change his seat. Her seemingly simple suggestion threatened to disrupt the precarious balance that I felt I had finally achieved in my seating chart. After this unexpected and rather brusque consultation, I felt even more inadequate, stressed, and overwhelmed.

When I made the switch from being a general education teacher to being an itinerant teacher for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, I vowed to be more sensitive to classroom teachers. I would treat classroom teachers as professional colleagues, with the respect they deserved. We would work together to make positive changes for students who were deaf and hard of hearing in their classrooms. However, other than my determination to show the respect that had not always been afforded to me, I was unsure how to be effective as an itinerant. The role of itinerant teachers is different from the role of classroom teachers. While the classroom teacher generally works directly with students, the itinerant teacher often works as a consultant. I had not received training in consultation in my graduate program and was unsure how to do it effectively. This was a problem given that consultation was a major part of my role.

Realizing this weakness, I began adding “consultation skills” to my yearly evaluation goals. I sought out information on consultation, negotiation, and conflict resolution. I went to workshops devoted to the subject and read the recommended books. I grew, but not enough. Four years later, when I made the switch from itinerant teacher to doctoral student and it was time to choose a topic for my dissertation research, consultation skills in education was an obvious choice.

My personal struggle to become a stronger consultant, combined with my experience as a classroom teacher, prompted me to explore this issue further. I wanted to know how teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students could be most effective in their role as consultants to general education classroom teachers. I wanted to know how we got to this place in education where consultation is so essential, and more importantly, where we can go from here.

Background

For students with disabilities, the last four decades have brought substantial changes in educational placement. Public Law 94-142, which was passed in 1975, started the trend in which students with disabilities were increasingly educated in their neighborhood schools instead of separate settings. Classroom teachers in these public schools often did not have the specialized knowledge necessary to meet the needs of students with diverse needs, and consultation emerged as a way for classroom teachers to learn best practices to serve students (Gutkin, 1996).

Specialized teachers—who previously worked with specific populations of students in separate settings—now supported students within general education classrooms, sometimes acting as consultants. These specialists—who now had to work frequently with adults—turned to collaboration models from the fields of school psychology and counseling. However, from the very beginning, models used in other fields did not adequately fit the practical considerations and mandates required in public schools (Cook & Friend, 2010). This mismatch caused “exceptions, variations, and incomplete implementation” of consultation within the field of special education (Cook & Friend, 2010, p. 2).

The movement of students with disabilities to general education classrooms was mirrored in the field of deaf education (Benedict, Johnson, & Antia, 2011; Foster & Cue, 2009; Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013; Miller, 2014). This shift occurred in response to federal regulations, and because of widespread implementation of Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and the emergence of new technology, such as digital hearing aids and cochlear implants. These developments improved access for students who are DHH and

increased inclusion in neighborhood schools. Recent reports show that today, over 87% of students who are DHH spend at least part of their day in a general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

This shift in placement changed the nature of the job for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH) (Foster & Cue, 2009). According to Miller (2008), “there are a variety of service delivery models available to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing, but the itinerant teaching model is the predominant model nationally, even internationally” (p. 211). Although itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (ITSDHH) continue to offer direct service to students, indirect service and consultation with teachers and support staff are increasingly important. According to Miller (2014), this trend will likely continue and “TSDHH will be doing more consulting and collaborating and less direct teaching with students. In other words, future TSDHH will be working directly more with adults and less so with students” (Miller, 2014, p. 40). The role of the TSDHH will become increasingly focused on indirect service, and successful TSDHH must become competent in this new model of service delivery (Miller, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the changing field of deaf education, many teacher training programs continue to prepare future TSDHH as if they will work in the substantially separate classrooms common of the past (Foster & Cue, 2009) leading to a disconnect between the training of TSDHH and the positions they will likely be hired to fill.

Foster and Cue (2009) found that only 13% of TSDHH report being taught consultation skills in their training program, with 72% learning the skills while on the job. In a 2013 survey of 365 itinerant teachers, consultation with professionals and

parents was rated as the second most important job responsibility, after working with students (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). The majority of teachers responded that their undergraduate and graduate programs did not adequately prepare them to work as itinerant teachers. When itinerant teachers were asked to suggest professional development topics, the most common topic they suggested was how to more effectively consult and collaborate (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). Research is needed to help TSDHH—in training and in the field—to improve their communication and collaboration skills and support students who are DHH within inclusive settings (Benedict et al., 2011).

Consultation skills are missing from deaf education teacher preparation programs. One reason for this is that researchers are unsure which factors lead to successful consultation. Erchul calls school consultation “cloaked largely in mystery” (2008, p. ix). Likening consultation to a “black box,” Beidas and colleagues state that consultation is widely utilized, but little is known about what makes it effective (Beidas et al., 2013). Providing direct service in itself is challenging, and consultation brings additional layers of complexity. Consultation services are delivered through a middle source (e.g., the classroom teacher) within a complex organization (e.g., public schools) which makes the process more complicated (Erchul & Sheridan, 2014). According to McKenney and colleagues, “the interaction processes through which positive consultation outcomes are attained are as yet poorly understood” (McKenney, Waldron, & Conroy, 2013, p. 82) and “despite its overall importance and centrality to school-based service delivery, consultation may be one of the least understood modes of contemporary practice” (Erchul, 2008, p. ix). Erchul and Sheridan (2014) write that the research base of school consultation has not kept up with the frequency of the practice. Consequently,

practitioners are engaging in a practice for which there is little empirical evidence, and in which “discussions of consultation have outstripped studies of consultation in the literature” (Noell & Gansle, 2014, p. 395).

Empirical information for training school consultants is limited and in need of development (Noell & Gansle, 2014, p. 394). This is especially true within the field of deaf education, for which little consultation research currently exists. In particular, further research is needed on perceptions related to the push-in model of service delivery for students who are DHH, especially the perceptions of general education classroom teachers (Rabinsky, 2013). According to Erchul and Sheridan (2014), “the practice of school consultation continues to develop at a much faster rate than the research base that should logically support it” (p. 13). The goal is to lessen the gap between research and practice. Through conducting this study, I sought to do just that.

Importance of Consultation Skills

Collaboration and consultation are not new concepts; however, they make up “an area of training that has not been addressed to its maximum potential” (Cochrane & Salyers, 2006, p. 134). Why do consultation skills matter to TSDHH? Because in situations of indirect service or consultation in educational settings, general education classroom teachers act as “the direct agents of change” (Gansle & Noell, 2008, p. 206). Often the TSDHH is only in the classroom for a short time, and it is the classroom teacher who must adopt ideas for daily implementation:

It is typically the consultee rather than the consultant who carries out interventions developed through consultation. In this context, interpersonal processes are of utmost importance in creating circumstances that maximize the

chances that consultees will implement interventions systematically and effectively. (Meyers, Truscott, Meyers, Varjas, & Kim, 2014, p. 104)

Research shows that “teachers sometimes, perhaps frequently, do not implement interventions following consultation—or do not sustain them” (Noell & Gansle, 2014, p. 404). The interpersonal skills of the consultant affect whether or not the teacher continues the intervention introduced by the consultant (Frankel, 2006). Consequently, consultants need not only the skills of their discipline, but of consultation itself, in order to be successful (Frankel, 2006; Gansle & Noell, 2008; Wilson, Erchul, & Raven, 2008). Research using a qualitative approach methodology can “provide insight about consultation outcome variables that are often difficult to quantify” such as interpersonal skills (Meyers et al., 2014, p. 105).

In an article about parent consultation, Sanders and Burke (2014) identify three reasons a consultee may disregard a consultant’s suggestions: (a) the consultant has not appropriately considered or is unprepared for the consultee’s reaction to suggestions, (b) the consultant has underestimated the amount of work it will take to implement the proposed changes, or (c) the consultant has acted in a way that led the consultee to feel negatively toward the interaction. If consultees are not included in shared problem-solving and decision-making, they may be less likely to implement interventions. Finally, general educators and special educators are often trained separately and thus bring different knowledge and beliefs to their collaborative relationship, which can present a barrier (McLaren, Bausch, & Ault, 2007). Separate training can lead to “territorial conflicts” among school professionals (Cochrane & Salyers, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

Today, the majority of students who are DHH spend at least part of their day in a general education classroom, resulting in an increasing need for TSDHH to collaborate and consult with school professionals. However, training in the field has not kept up with the changing demands of the role. Compton and colleagues (2015) conducted a qualitative study of seven itinerant TSDHH, who said they learned collaboration skills mostly while on the job, or through “trial and error,” even though they consider collaborative relationships “as essential to fulfilling their consultative responsibilities” (Compton, Appenzeller, Kemmery, & Gardiner-Walsh, 2015). They deemed it “critical” that itinerant teachers better understand how to collaborate and consult with general educators and reported a paucity of research identifying the skills necessary to do this well. They concluded: “If pre-service teachers are to be better prepared to do itinerant teaching, research needs to identify the skills itinerants use to meet their job responsibilities” (p. 257).

The effects of consultation depend in part on the strength of the relationship between consultant and consultee. “Consultants who do not actively work to create a supportive, encouraging climate in consultation meetings may render less-than-optimal outcomes when consultees are expected to implement the intervention program independently” (Frank & Kratochwill, 2014, p. 23). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine successful dyads of (TSDHH) and general education classroom teachers through a portraiture design. The portraiture design was utilized to identify what *is* working within these partnerships. “Portraiture resists this tradition-laden effort to document failure. It is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by

searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 9). I interviewed successful dyads of TSDHH and general education classroom teachers in an attempt to determine the contexts and qualities that made them work well together.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study.

- Q1 What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers regarding the consultation process?
- Q2 What are the qualities of successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers?

Theoretical Framework

Two philosophical frameworks, constructivism and ecological theory, were used to guide this study. In constructivism, meaning “is not discovered but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Constructivism is “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings . . . transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). This perspective is appropriate for consultation, which is a human-based practice dependent on the individual perspectives of the people involved. In fact, participants should take an active role in the research process (Meyers et al., 2014). Each classroom teacher brings a different perspective to the consultation process and what is effective for one teacher may not be so for another. In addition, every school operates under different structures and mindsets. Constructivism honors how the context of consultation affects the process.

According to VanDerHeyden (2014), “An intervention can never be separated from the context in which it is delivered” (p. 140). Ecological theory acknowledges the interaction between the participants and the environment. This is essential for consultation research, in which environmental constraints—limited time, space, and resources—have real implications for the way in which consultation is carried out. Portraiture is an appropriate design for this theory, because it takes into account the implications that context and organizational structure have on the practice of consultation.

Methodology

This qualitative study used a portraiture design conceptualized through a lens of appreciative inquiry. Qualitative methodology was intentionally chosen for its ability to “illuminate the subjective perspectives of research participants” (Meyers et al., 2014, p. 130). Qualitative research can “provide insight about consultation outcome variables that are often difficult to quantify . . . [and allows for] studying the process variables of consultation in the context of particular settings” (Meyers et al., 2014, p. 105). A qualitative approach was well-suited for this research since answers to the research questions were “not approachable through quantitative approaches” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21).

According to VanDerHeyden (2014), researchers studying consultation should not ask, “Did consultation work?” but instead ask, “What specific actions and conditions might be replicated to produce a similar effect for other students and consultees exposed to consultation?” (p. 139). This question results in more nuanced answers and increased consequential validity, a measure of meaningful change (VanDerHeyden, 2014).

According to Meyers and colleagues (2014), “Qualitative and mixed methods designs are well suited to studying the richness and complexity of interpersonal processes in consultation” (p. 129). Foster and Cue (2009) suggest that there is a need for qualitative research within the field of deaf education, including exploration of the relationship between TSDHH and regular education teachers to determine “which consultative and collaborative strategies are most effective, and under what conditions” (Foster & Cue, 2009, p. 446). A lens of appreciative inquiry was used as a way to acknowledge strengths within collaborative partnerships and to identify what teachers did that worked, despite challenges. This lens was purposely chosen in order to identify recommendations for future partnerships.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study are significant for the field of deaf education and special education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015-16), 6.7 million students (ages 3 to 21) receive special education services. This equates to roughly 13% of students. In the last 25 years, these students have increasingly been educated in general education classes rather than substantially separate ones (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Thus, consultants increasingly work with general education classroom teachers to serve students who have disabilities.

Consultation is widely utilized as a method of service delivery within schools, both in special education and for providing school psychology services (Erchul & Sheridan, 2014). However, despite the increasing use of the practice, there is limited research supporting consultation efficacy and best practices for training. Consultation training is missing from many TSDHH preparation programs, even though research

shows that the way professionals provide consultative services has real implications for students.

Results from this study provide insight into the ways that consultation is currently happening in schools—including the setting, time, and organization of consult sessions, the organizational structures and constraints that exist, and, finally, the perceptions of the consultant and consultee as gleaned from individual interviews. Results may be useful to deaf education teacher preparation programs, current TSDHH, general education classroom teachers, and other professionals who consult on behalf of students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This section begins by describing the characteristics of DHH learners. Following this is a definition of terms, with a focus on collaboration, consultation, and itinerant teaching. Because there are limited articles on consultation in the field of deaf education, the next section reviews consultation models from the field of school psychology with an explanation of how these could apply to the field of deaf education. A literature review on collaboration and consultation in special education follows, which narrows to consultation specifically in the field of deaf education. The section ends with a call for more research on these topics.

Studies included in this review were from peer-reviewed journals. I specifically included articles from the 1980s, when consultation began to emerge as a need, and thus a focus, within the deaf education literature. Some of the articles included (e.g., Scott, 1983) were not available through online databases and required a search through the microfilm section at my university library. My purpose in including these articles was to offer a roadmap and provide context around the current state of the field. The review of recent articles focuses on DHH students in general education settings, who are often served by itinerant TSDHH.

Characteristics of Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Consulting on behalf of students who are DHH can be particularly challenging. First, the population is low-incidence: Students with hearing loss make up just 1.2% of students with disabilities served under IDEA Part B (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Consequently, general education classroom teachers may have limited background knowledge about and limited experience working with students who are DHH. Second, school staff may misunderstand or underestimate the needs of students who are DHH, especially for students who have intelligible speech (Miller, 2014) and function well in one-on-one settings. Third, students who are DHH often struggle to access their education, necessitating ecological changes to the classroom environment, including the way the teacher teaches. This may include use of assistive technology worn by the teacher (such as an FM system) or American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to translate the teacher's spoken message into sign. General education teachers may express anxiety about having an interpreter in the classroom (Marschark, Spencer, Adams, & Sapere, 2011) or may be resistant to using assistive technology.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration: A Style

Although the terms collaboration, consultation, and communication are used interchangeably, they have different meanings and applications. According to Rice and Lenihan, "children with hearing loss are best served through the collaborative efforts of their parents and a team of professionals" (2010, p. 293). Cook and Friend (2010) define collaboration as a style. Collaboration can take the form of co-teaching, where a general educator and special educator teach a classroom made up of students with and without

disabilities (Compton et al., 2015). Collaboration does not simply mean the student receives services from multiple providers; true collaboration is a process of problem-solving and interaction that, when done properly, leads to increased success for students (Rice & Lenihan, 2010).

Consultation: An Indirect Model of Service Delivery

Consultation may be written into students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to describe the delivery of services from a special education teacher or related services provider (Compton et al., 2015). Hazel and colleagues (2010) state that consultation in psychology is common but, "often ill defined" (Hazel, Laviolette, & Lineman, p. 235). Consultation generally refers to a situation in which one person with expertise (the consultant) provides information and suggestions to the consultee. The consultee, rather than the consultant, implements the suggestions and takes responsibility for the outcome.

Although one person may have greater responsibility for implementation, consultation does not imply a power differential. It is different from supervision in that the relationship is nonhierarchical (Caplan & Caplan, 1993). Cook and Friend (2010) define school consultation as, "a voluntary process in which one professional assists another to address a problem concerning a third party" (p. 85). Specialists often work with the general classroom teacher and may also work with other professionals at the school, such as administrators and special education teachers, in one-on-one meetings or workshops (Foster & Cue, 2009). The purpose of consultation within schools is to help students perform well in that setting (Hazel et al., 2010, p. 235). This is true in the field of deaf education: TSDHH consult with school staff with the goal of helping the student who is DHH to be successful at school.

Communication: Verbal and Non-verbal Language and Actions

Communication, which includes verbal and non-verbal language and actions, describes the way the professionals work together. Communication is the vehicle for both collaboration and consultation. In this study, I operationally define collaboration as a process in which two or more professionals work together to develop a plan *and* implement it. Consultation is operationally defined as a process in which two or more professionals work together to develop the plan but then *only one person* (the consultee) implements it. Although collaboration plays an important role in special education, consultation is increasingly utilized as a service delivery model in the field of deaf education and is the focus of this dissertation. Communication is the path that guides both these interactions.

Collaboration and Consultation Skills in Special Education

“Successful implementation of inclusion requires that special and general educators collaborate to serve children and families” (Wesley, Buysse, & Keyes, 2000, p. 106). The consultant holds an important role in facilitating the process of inclusion by providing “support and guidance” to general education classroom teachers (Lazarus, 1991, p. 399). Consultation is considered indirect service because the consultant “traditionally does not work directly with clients but rather helps clients through direct interactions with consultees” (Erchul & Sheridan, 2014, p. 4). In situations of indirect service and consultation in educational settings, the general education classroom teachers act as “the direct agents of change” (Gansle & Noell, 2008, p. 206).

The consultant cannot be alone in suggesting and providing accommodations and interventions; the classroom teacher must also adopt these for daily implementation (Marschark et al., 2011). Thus, it is imperative that special education teachers know not only information about the field and their students, but also know generally about the process aspects of consultation (Frankel, 2006).

Consultation in Deaf Education

The itinerant teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. According to Miller (2008), the itinerant teaching model is now the primary model used to serve students who are DHH, both nationally and internationally. An itinerant TSDHH is “a professional who provides instruction and consultation for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and most generally travels from school to school” (Luckner, 2006, p. 94). When providing direct service, TSDHH work with students who are DHH to teach language, academics, and self-advocacy skills within the classroom or in one-on-one or small group settings outside of the classroom. When providing indirect service, TSDHH share strategies and modifications with general education classroom teachers for them to later use with students who are DHH. As the indirect service role of TSDHH increases, there is a growing need to teach collaboration and consultation in preparation programs. This is not new. Calls for consultation training for deaf educators started as early as 1950. However, in 1956, there was less of a need for consultation skills. For example, in 1956, Mackie conducted a study on the competencies needed by TSDHH, and working with team members came in 37th place in terms of importance (Scott, 1983). More recently, in a 2013 study, itinerant teachers were asked to suggest professional development topics, and the most common topic they suggested was how to more effectively consult and

collaborate (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). For a comprehensive timeline of the changing needed for consultation in deaf education, from the 1950s to today, see Dorn, 2019.

Consultation Models from School Psychology

Unlike the relationship between teachers and school psychologists, consultation between educators—such as between general education classroom teachers and TSDHH—typically draws from collaborative models (Truscott, Lopez, Fish, & Margolis, 2015) that reflect parity and a non-hierarchical relationship between participants. School-based models from the field of psychology that may apply to deaf education include collaborative consultation, organizational consultation, consultee-centered consultation, and instructional consultation.

Collaborative Consultation

Collaborative consultation consists of the consultant, consultee, and client (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Nevin, 1995). According to Reinhiller (1999) collaborative consultation can vary widely but typically includes a triadic model, equity between participants, and an emphasis on problem-solving. The goal is to support students with disabilities in their least restrictive educational environment (Idol et al., 1995). The idea behind collaborative consultation is that participants will improve their skills and attitudes throughout the consultation process and together will generate solutions that are different and better than what would have been suggested by either professional alone (Idol et al., 1995). Collaborative consultation aligns more accurately with the relationship occurring between teachers in the service of students with disabilities (Cook & Friend, 2010).

This model represents a student-centered approach in which consultant and consultee share ownership of and responsibility for the student (Idol et al., 1995). When successful, professionals' roles complement rather than challenge one another. Through collaborative consultation, disagreements are not avoided, but instead valued as a way to increase critical thinking and better solutions (Idol et al., 1995); although this assumes participants have skills in conflict resolution. Collaborative consultation depends on creativity, parity between participants, shared goals, and accountability. It works best when participants have training and skills in communication, such as asking questions and probing the perspectives of others, as well as an understanding of the change process (Idol et al., 1995).

Collaborative consultation is guided by situational leadership, in which team members take turns acting as the leader depending on the situation (Idol et al., 1995). Situational leadership allows consultants to navigate a variety of people and relationships (Luckner, Rude, & Sileo, 1989). This is important because maintaining a good working relationship for the future is as significant as solving the problem at hand: "The team members must keep in mind two major concerns in any conflict: the first is to achieve the goal; the second is to maintain good working relationships with the other team members" (Idol et al., 1995, p. 341). The special educator can offer expertise and suggestions but general educators should maintain control over their classrooms (Reinhiller, 1999). The goal is to increase the capabilities of the consultee in order to improve outcomes for students (Idol et al., 1995).

Collaborative consultation may apply to deaf education, but with limitations. First, creative problem-solving may not be realistic when the classroom teacher and

TSDHH have limited time to consult. Secondly, if only one person in the model understands the consultation process, that person may assume a leadership role which could negate parity in the process. Finally, this model does not take into account the many variables exist that between the consultation session and the student's success. Organizational consultation may better address these variables, especially the challenges presented by the complex system within which students are educated.

Organizational Consultation

Collaborative consultation focuses on the client: The student who is DHH. This is necessary in order to individualize instruction and implement specific learning strategies. However, for students with hearing loss in typical school settings, a variety of environmental challenges exist, including fast-paced instruction, multiple speakers, and poor acoustics (Anderson, 2001; Berndsen & Luckner, 2012). Consequently, it is necessary for TSDHH to consult with general education classroom teachers on environmental considerations. Organizational consultation acknowledges that consultants work in “complex social systems” (Illback, 2014, p. 276) and thus shifts the focus away from the student and toward a “consideration of contexts, systems, and organizations in which the individual functions” (Meyers, Meyers, Graybill, Proctor, & Huddleston, 2012, p. 110).

Organizational thinking is appropriate when working with students who are DHH since the ecology of general education classrooms often presents a challenge (Berndsen & Luckner, 2012). Organizational consultation also recognizes the unique structure of school systems in which individuals such as teachers are not acting independently, but instead, as part of a larger, interconnected network. Creating change in this environment

requires increased and sustained effort since “schools often seek stability and equilibrium and are slow to change” (Illback, 2014, p. 279). It is tempting to believe that school interventions will be implemented as planned, but “in reality, systems tend to be far more complex than originally conceived, interventions rarely proceed as planned, extraneous events routinely surprise and undermine change efforts, change processes can be chaotic and discontinuous, and confusion often reigns” (Illback, 2014, p. 281). Many models and processes exist as ways of effecting change within organizations, but that topic is outside the scope of the current project.

Organizational and collaborative consultation share similar characteristics. Like collaborative consultation, organizational consultation seeks to improve the capacity of the system to solve future problems and to eventually diagnose problems (Meyers et al., 2012). Changing the environment has the potential to impact greater numbers of students, rather than only one student (Gutkin, 2012). This applies to the field of deaf education, in that organizational changes will not only improve the outcomes for one student who is DHH, but for all future students who are DHH attending that school. Additionally, TSDHH are in a unique position to engage in organizational consultation, since they work across many different settings, such as the classroom, family environment, and community, all of which impact the student who is DHH. It is not unusual for TSDHH to serve as caseworkers and facilitate communication among team members who otherwise may not communicate with one another. Successful organizational consultants have diverse skills, including an understanding of system dynamics and change management (Illback, 2014, p. 285). One way to measure the effectiveness of organizational consultation is to look at school sites as a whole in order

to see which factors lead some to respond favorably, and others negatively, to consultation (Illback, 2014, p. 295).

Situational Consultation

Consultation is a human endeavor and what works for one school or teacher may not work for another (Meyers et al., 2012). Context should always be considered when developing and implementing interventions (Ingraham, 2015). Consequently, situational consultation (SC) works as a consultation framework for deaf education. Single models and theories assume that the role of the consultant is static; however, in reality, the consultant's role is dynamic and constantly changing based on the situation. Even a single consultation session can contain different phases (Rimehaug & Helmersberg, 2010). Successful consultants are constantly evaluating the interaction and the process and making adjustments. Situational consultation recognizes that 'no one size fits all' and that different situations demand different models of consultation (Rimehaug & Helmersberg, 2010).

Consultee-Centered Consultation

The purpose of consultee-centered consultation (CCC) is "creating change in consultees' conceptualizations, behavior, and knowledge . . . through discourse, indirect challenges, and modeling" (Truscott, Kearney, Davis, & Roach, 2017, p. 126).

Consultee-centered consultation focuses on processes in consultation; instead of delivering advice to consultees, the consultant and consultees work collaboratively to identify and mutually solve problems (Knotek & Hylander, 2014; Newman & Ingraham, 2017).

In CCC, professionals work together to identify problems and to determine possible solutions, although the consultee generally implements the agreed-upon solution and assumes responsibility for its outcome (Knotek & Hylander, 2014). As a result, it is imperative that the consultee feels that the agreed-upon solutions are feasible (Newman & Ingraham, 2017). Consultee-centered consultation assumes a non-hierarchical relationship between consultant and consultee and the expectation that both professionals bring relevant knowledge to the interaction (Knotek & Hylander, 2014; Newman & Ingraham, 2017). It is critical that the consultant affirm the consultee's knowledge and experience and work with the consultee to develop solutions (Newman & Ingraham, 2017; Sundqvist & Strom, 2015).

Consultee-centered consultation applies to the field of deaf education in that TSDHH must create change that persists in the consultee and classroom even when the consultant is not there. Restoring the relationship between the classroom teacher (consultee) and student is part of this goal (Knotek & Hylander, 2014). One drawback of this model is that it lacks a comprehensive research base (Newman & Ingraham, 2017, p. 8). "Although the CCC approach has been advocated and discussed for over 40 years, little research exists about the basic tenets of the approach or the factors that may affect its acceptability to or effectiveness with consultees" (Truscott et al., 2017, p. 137). The CCC approach has no apparent flaws in terms of an application to deaf education, although lack of research on this model is a problem. Qualitative research of CCC involving TSDHH and general education classroom teachers is needed to better understand and critically evaluate the fit of this model for the field of deaf education.

Instructional Consultation

One model that emerged from CCC is instructional consultation (IC), which focuses on improving the ability of teachers to serve the students in their classrooms (Rosenfield, Gravois, & Silva, 2014, p. 249). A collaborative working relationship between consultant and consultee must be established before working toward consultee change (Rosenfield et al., 2014). Instructional consultation started as an individual model in the 1980s and continues to be used today (Rosenfield et al., 2014). Its central principles also shifted into interdisciplinary instructional consultation teams (IC teams) which combine “collaboration and consultation with a three-stage school-change model” that is increasingly used in school settings (Rosenfield, 1995, p. 326). Of particular interest is the inclusion of a change facilitator on IC teams; this professional coaches the other team members and has a thorough understanding of the factors involved in school change (Rosenfield, 1995).

Instructional consultation draws from an ecological perspective that focuses on interactions between the student and the environment, rather than simply studying the student in isolation (Rosenfield, 1995; Rosenfield et al., 2014). Rosenfield (1995) describes this “paradigm shift” as a movement from believing problems are student-centered to focusing on factors outside the students, such as interactions between the student and the classroom, teacher, and tasks. This model encourages consultants to consider not only the student, but also the environment within which the student is educated (Gutkin, 2012). Recommendations made by Gutkin (2012) are specific to the field of school psychology, but also apply to deaf education. According to Gutkin, “context counts” and the “profound impact of environmental factors is also undeniable”

(p. 12). Instructional consultation similarly focuses on “instructional context” rather than on the client in isolation (Rosenfield et al., 2014). Like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), typical *and* atypical students should be considered when designing instructional environments, rather than creating content and environments for typical learners and then retroactively making modifications for exceptional learners. The medical model focuses on how to fix or “cure” students, while the ecological perspective considers how to change the environment to better serve students (Gutkin, 2012). This is an important consideration for students who are DHH, because there is no cure for sensorineural deafness. The student who is DHH will always be deaf and will consistently need adaptations in order to achieve access and opportunity. Measurement of IC outcomes include changes in referral patterns, teacher satisfaction, and demonstrated change within teachers (e.g., use of new strategies) as a result of consultation (Rosenfield et al., 2014).

Consultation Research in Deaf Education

Although studies about consultation training and efficacy are common in the field of school psychology, there is a paucity of research on consultation within the field of deaf education. In this section I have included results from four current studies on consultation within the field of deaf education.

In a qualitative case study that explored perceptions of the DHH push-in model, three itinerant TSDHH and three general educators reported that it is preferable when the deaf educator “fits into the classroom” and provides support not only for the student with hearing loss, but other students as well (Rabinsky, 2013). The fact that TSDHH sometimes work directly with typical students in the classroom emphasizes the importance of a good working relationship between the TSDHH and classroom teacher.

Furthermore, participants in this study reported that collaboration skills such as “flexibility, compromise, and openness” were essential to making the push-in model work (Rabinsky, 2013). This study identified a need for further research on perceptions related to the push-in model of service delivery for students with hearing loss, especially the perceptions of general education classroom teachers. Having a better understanding of how educators perceive this model will identify areas of strength and weakness, and inform training and improvements.

A 2013 survey asked 365 itinerant teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing to rate the challenges they face in their job. Of the five highest-rated challenges, four involve collaboration with the classroom teacher: Scheduling, time constraints, resistance, and poor follow-through (Luckner & Ayantoye). Itinerant teachers rated direct service to students as the most important aspect of their job, followed by “consultation with other professionals and parents” (p. 413). When asked what type of coursework/experience itinerant teachers most need in order to be successful, itinerant teachers chose “collaboration and consultation” over every other topic, beating out FM systems/technology, assessment and data-keeping, and language and literacy, among others (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). The study suggested that future research consider “how best to consult and collaborate with general education teachers” (p. 416).

Similarly, a survey of 210 itinerant teachers found that the skills needed by an itinerant teacher “are often overlooked” (Foster & Cue, 2009, p. 437). Only 13% of participants said they learned collaboration skills in their teacher preparation program, and 74% expressed a desire to learn more about the topic through professional development and other learning opportunities (Foster & Cue, 2009). A similar finding

came from a qualitative study (2015) of seven itinerant TSDHH who said they learned collaboration skills mostly while on the job, or through “trial and error,” which is concerning given that they consider collaborative relationships “as essential to fulfilling their consultative responsibilities” (Compton et al., 2015, p. 255). Compton and colleagues (2015) deemed it “critical” that itinerant teachers better understand how to collaborate and consult with general educators and reported a paucity of research identifying the skills necessary to do this well. They concluded: “If pre-service teachers are to be better prepared to do itinerant teaching, research needs to identify the skills itinerants use to meet their job responsibilities” (Compton et al., 2015, p. 257).

Challenges of Teaching Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation and collaboration have been identified as important skills for the current role of TSDHH, however the “inexact nature of these skills” can make them difficult to teach (Dolman, 2010, p. 357). Consultation and collaboration “may not come naturally to a TSDHH” and may be especially challenging for TSDHH working with older and more experienced educators (Miller, 2014, p. 38). Additionally, TSDHH may think their time is better spent teaching students rather than educating adults (Miller, 2014). Furthermore, school professionals may believe students with hearing loss are doing fine, especially if the students use listening and spoken language and have age-appropriate articulation skills (Miller, 2014).

Additionally, recommendations made by TSDHH may be at odds with what general educators have learned as best practices in their teacher preparation programs, and it may be uncomfortable to make recommendations. For example, it is considered

best practice for the teacher to stand in one place when teaching a student with hearing loss so that the student can more easily track him or her. However, general teacher preparation programs encourage teachers to move around the room while teaching in order to hold students' interest and have proximity with multiple students.

These challenges between outside service providers/special educators and general education teachers are not unique to the field of deaf education. A national survey (2009) of 53 undergraduate pre-service special education training programs sought to understand “the often dysfunctional partnerships” between general and special educators within public schools (McKenzie, p. 389). McKenzie attributed this often-strained relationship in part to the “splintered manner” of collaboration coursework in graduate programs as well as the lack of “authentic collaborative” field work and experiences in training programs (p. 389). He concluded that “many of the concerns related to collaboration in public schools are paralleled by, and perhaps attributable to, those between special and general education in college and university training programs” (McKenzie, 2009, p. 380). In other words, the disconnect that exists between general and special education teachers in public schools begins when these educators are in their teacher training programs.

In a qualitative study, university faculty were asked to identify challenges of teaching consultation. Participants expressed wanting more “empirical research on consultation” and more concrete resources such as video clips (Sander et al., 2016) and suggested that “school-based consultation as a specialty area of training needs an updated comprehensive model” which may include the use of case studies and interdisciplinary partnerships (p. 233).

Hazel and colleagues (2016) offer that “consultation is a challenging topic to research” (Hazel, Newman, & Barrett, 2016, p. 111). It can be hard to observe consultation in natural settings, and consultation often involves variables beyond a consultant and consultee (Hazel et al., 2016). It can be challenging to control for extraneous variables in order to probe the effectiveness of consultation. Beidas and colleagues similarly stated that “consultation is an effective implementation strategy to improve uptake of evidence-based practices for youth. However, little is known about what makes consultation effective” (Beidas et al., 2013, p. 508). This sentiment was echoed repeatedly about consultation throughout the literature, including in the area of special education.

Summary

Learners who are DHH represent a diverse, low-incidence population who face a variety of challenges in classroom settings. As students who are in special education—including those who are DHH—are increasingly educated in general education settings, the need for consultation grows. Multiple studies report that TSDHH feel unprepared for the consultative aspect of their job (Compton et al., 2015; Foster & Cue, 2009; Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). Empirical evidence is sparse on consultation in the field of deaf education, and research is needed in multiple areas. There is a need for future research that explores perceptions related to the push-in model of service delivery for students with hearing loss, especially the perceptions of the general education classroom teachers. Having a better understanding of how general educators perceive this model will identify areas of strength and weakness, and inform training and improvements (Rabinsky, 2013).

Additionally, research is needed to identify how itinerant teachers can

successfully collaborate and consult with general educators (Compton et al., 2015; Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). Foster and Cue (2009) indicate a need for qualitative research, especially observations of itinerant TSDHH, as well as an exploration of the relationship between TSDHH and regular education teachers to determine “which consultative and collaborative strategies are most effective, and under what conditions” (Foster & Cue, 2009, p. 446). Research into best practices for consultation in deaf education will inform teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities for TSDHH.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine successful dyads of TSDHH and general education classroom teachers in an attempt to determine the contexts and qualities that make them work well together. The goal was to identify the often elusive characteristics of the partnership—rather than characteristics of each individual—thus acknowledging that in partnerships the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). Methodology is “a way of thinking about and studying social reality” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). Qualitative methodology was used to study successful collaborative relationships in order to capture the “magic” best told through the voices of participants.

Qualitative research is not meant to generalize across all participants; instead, the aim is to explore complex situations clearly so that others may see within them the essence of their own experience. In this project, I interviewed members of consultation partnerships that “worked” as a way to inform future dyads, deaf education teacher preparation programs, and professional development for TSDHH. Through the use of the portraiture research design (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997), this study is suited not only for readers in academia, but for a broader audience, including practitioners. Portraiture begins with unique, individual stories, which are later cross-

analyzed for themes (Cope, Jones, & Hendricks, 2015). This type of design combines other qualitative methods—including ethnography and case study—and like phenomenology, seeks to uncover the essence of a phenomenon by studying those who have experienced it (Cope et al., 2015). The TSDHH and classroom teacher dyads were viewed through a lens of appreciative inquiry (AI), which focuses on strengths (Calabrese, 2015). Multiple methods of data collection—including dyadic and individual interviews, observations of the dyad working together to respond to a case study, and researcher notes—were utilized in the analysis.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions.

- Q1 What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers regarding the consultation process?
- Q2 What are the qualities of successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers?

Rationale Behind Research Questions

The first purpose of this study was to learn more about how consultation between TSDHH and general education classroom teachers is currently happening. To answer this question, I probed teachers about the frequency of consultation sessions, the setting in which they occurred, the issues discussed, and what type of follow-up occurred afterward. (see Appendix E for interview questions.) The school setting, and the limited time to consult, are integral to the nature of consultation as it presents to the TSDHH and general education classroom teachers who engage in it.

Additionally, in an effort to explore the dynamics of the partnership, I took notes on the “silent” qualities of the joint interviews, including nonverbal cues such as body language. In order to probe the distinct perceptions of TSDHH and general education classroom teachers about the consultation process, in addition to joint interviews, I conducted separate interviews with each individual. Analysis occurred on both the individual and dyadic level as a way to further explore the relationship. I used portraiture as a means to uncover themes unique to individual partnerships as well as themes across dyads. This research design is a mix of art and science, which aligns with consultation and other dynamic human relationships.

Research Design

This qualitative study used portraiture design conceptualized through a lens of AI (Calabrese, 2015) with analysis on individual and dyadic levels. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “some problem areas clearly suggest one form of research over another . . . an investigator should be true to the problem at hand” (p. 40). The topic of consultation is suited for qualitative research, which explores and reports on the perspectives of participants as well as the context, organizational factors, and influences.

Study Sample

The unit of analysis for this study was dyads. Each dyad was made up of one TSDHH and one classroom teacher who worked together. The sample included five dyads—10 individuals—as a way to achieve balance between more perspectives and adequate depth in examination of each participant. Critics of qualitative research may see the limited number of participants as a limitation. However, qualitative research does not seek generalizability of results. Instead, the focus is to provide more information so that

readers can see which elements of the study apply to their own situations: “Because the goal is to develop a valid, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under local conditions, rather than create broad generalized findings, it is often appropriate to use small samples that are studied in detail” (Meyer et al., 2014, p. 114). This rationale guided sampling decisions for the current study.

Many studies utilizing portraiture design have between 3 and 10 participants. Cope and colleagues included three participants in a study about resilience in residential aged care nurses (Cope, Jones, & Hendricks, 2016). A study by Sharkey and colleagues (2016) that drew from portraiture design focused on four teachers at a public school engaging in community-based pedagogies (Sharkey, Clavijo Olarte, & Ramirez, 2016). A study by Allred and colleagues (2017) studied seven female superintendents in rural Texas in an exploration of the experiences of females in educational leadership (Allred, Maxwell, & Skrla, 2017). Having fewer participants affords the researcher the time and resources to engage in more in-depth exploration of each case.

Data included individual interviews with each member of the dyad, joint interviews with both teachers present, and researcher notes. During the joint interview, I presented a case study to the dyad and asked them to problem-solve aloud. In this way, I attempted to observe the dyad’s strategies and processes for collaborative problem-solving (see Appendix E for the case study).

I utilized a research journal to take field notes on tone of voice, body language, and other non-verbal behavior expressed by participants during interviews. I utilized Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraiture design as a way to collect, analyze, and write up data. Portraiture design provides a way “to combine systematic, empirical description

with aesthetic expression . . . blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor” (2005, p. 3). The portraits created through this design—in this study, dyadic portraits—are created to “capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 3).

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The qualitative software NVIVO was used to analyze transcripts using the constant comparative method. There are some dangers in splitting data into smaller parts. According to Mello (2002), when we “divide data into discrete fragments . . . we run the danger of diminishing or misinterpreting the nature of the narrative as a whole” (p. 235). In order to avoid misrepresentation of complete stories, I also reviewed transcripts and notes in whole as a way consider the “big picture” of successful relationships. Analysis was informed through dyad-specific procedures, in which participants are interviewed separately and together, thus giving voice to the partnership as well as to the individual participants.

Qualitative Methodology

Through this study, my goal was to explore the real-life challenges and triumphs of TSDHH and general education classroom teachers working together. This called for qualitative methodology, which “can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), “Qualitative researchers are more likely than quantitative researchers to confront the constraints of the everyday social world. They see this world in action and embed their findings in it” (p. 5). In this study, I sought

the perspective of both TSDHH and their general education classroom teaching partners. Observing these teachers interacting with one another provided insight into the unique characteristics of the partnership. Incorporating the voice of both teachers in the partnership led to increased relevance to practitioners and program directors.

Portraiture Design

Portraiture was utilized as the design for this study. Portraiture pulls from traditional qualitative methods but is “far more assertive and interactive” (English, 2000, p. 22). Portraiture, a blending of art and science, was developed by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot in the 1980s when she was “searching for a form of inquiry that might capture the complexity and aesthetic of human experience” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 5).

Cope and colleagues (2015) describe the design:

Portraiture is a qualitative research approach that uses verbal “canvases” or “portraits”—complex narratives revealing the dynamic interaction of personality, values and history disclosed in the context of the research participants’ views and settings, with the context giving cues about how the participants deal with adversity. Portraiture enhances a reader’s ability to consider events from not only the participant’s viewpoint but also from the viewpoint of the active researcher, effectively pulling the reader into the storyteller’s point of view. (p. 10)

Portraiture provides more than participant quotations. It incorporates the context, personalities, and organizational influences that surround the independent and dependent variables. In this way, portraiture functions as a research logic model, widening the lens to look at more than only the variables under study.

Researcher stance. Unlike quantitative methods, the researcher is central within portraiture and “researcher visibility is valued” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 8). Creswell and Miller (2000) note that although participants are the “primary lens,” there is an “inseparableness of the researcher and the process of inquiry” (p. 129). Portraiture is a type of narrative inquiry, which, according to Mello (2002), “is an interactional experience that is constantly negotiated and manipulated by both listener and speaker” (p. 232). Portraitists not only acknowledge this inseparableness between researcher and participants, but capitalize on it; for example, in encouraging “portraitists to use their own educational and life experiences as starting points for narrating participants’ stories” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 7). Portraiture aligns with the “negotiated, nonlinear, and interactional nature of storytelling” (Mello, 2002, p. 232). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005), who created the design, “the identity, character, and history of the researcher are obviously critical to how he or she listens, selects, interprets, and composes the story. Portraiture admits the central and creative role of the self of the portraitist” (p. 11).

In this design, the researcher collects *and* interacts with data; thus, the design “allows the researcher to function both as researcher (following typical qualitative research protocols) and as artist (creatively painting word pictures and unapologetically using one’s own authentic voice)” (Matthias & Petchauer, 2012, p. 400). The researcher is “passionate, involved, and active” in the study (Cope et al., 2015, p. 8). The aim of portraiture is not objectivity; rather “this interaction considerably muddies, if not outright challenges, the ‘stance’ of objectivity” (English, 2000, p. 22). Instead, the construction of the portrait involves interaction between the researcher and the person being observed

(English, 2000). This approach depends on collaboration between researcher and participants, as well as participant involvement within the study, as a way to support rather than marginalize participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Researcher involvement—which is integral to data collection—carries over into the analysis. As Thomas (2012) explains: “There is no way that we can remove the ‘us’ from our analyses” (p. 215).

Researcher background. My background and experiences created the lens through which I conducted this research. I started my career in education as a second-grade general education teacher in Hartford, Connecticut. Education was not my original plan—I double-majored in English and journalism and fully expected to work as a reporter after college. However, a senior-year internship at a local newspaper made me reconsider this career path, leaving me wondering what to do after graduation. A recruiter from Teach for America came to speak in one of my lectures during my last semester in college, and I applied and was accepted to teach second grade in an urban district with a low-socioeconomic status where 100% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Teach for America provided a rigorous but unusual route into the classroom. I began my teaching career with only one summer of teaching experience—working in Philadelphia with students who were in summer school after failing first grade. Thus, my first few months as a classroom teacher represented one of the steepest learning curves in my life. I was learning day-by-day and was completely overwhelmed and consumed by the demands of teaching. When consultants came into my classroom to request accommodations for students, or to meet with me, I smiled and nodded but inside felt like

screaming because I couldn't fathom adding additional responsibilities and expectations to what I was already expected to do.

I also remember a huge disconnect between my goals and the goals of these consultants. As a Teach for America corps member, there was a huge emphasis on data collection and student growth. As teachers, we were expected to consistently use formative assessments to measure students' levels in reading, writing, and math and to use instructional strategies to help our students grow. We periodically had to submit our data for feedback. I was placed at this particular school because the majority of my students were months or years behind their targeted grade-appropriate levels. As the teacher, my role was to help my students "catch up" and thus to do my part to close the achievement gap. I explain this because it is the foundation for how my mindset differed from that of some of the related service providers who visited my classroom.

One consultant in particular stands out. She was a special education teacher in our school and was working with the lowest student in my class. James could not read a sentence. He could not write his last name. During reading center time, when students were supposed to work independently while I led a small reading group, James would wander around the room, bored by the activities I set out for him. I struggled to reach James as a learner and was constantly asking for extra support for him. Ultimately, he was pulled out of my classroom two times a week to work with our school's special education teacher. Upon returning James to my classroom, the special education teacher would routinely interrupt me during whole-class lessons to excitedly tell me about the progress James was making in his one-on-one sessions with her ("James wrote a sentence today! Today he wrote his last name!") It was hard for me to meet her level of

enthusiasm when I had 22 other students to worry about. I didn't have time to routinely work with James one-on-one in the classroom the way she did in her sessions. I also felt that she lacked understanding of the way my classroom was run and the structure of the second-grade schedule. And her descriptions of James' growth did not align in any way with what I had come to expect from my students and the expectations that I felt existed for me as a teacher.

After teaching second grade for two years, I went back to school to pursue a Master's degree in deaf education. I graduated and was hired as an itinerant teacher for students who are DHH. In my first year, I was provided a caseload of 12 students and assigned to five different school districts. I was prepared to spend part of my day driving across the state, ready to troubleshoot hearing aid issues on the fly, and eager to start lesson planning and designing activities for my students. What I was not prepared for was the "visitor status" inherent in the role of itinerant teacher and the resistance I felt from some of my students' general education teachers. The culture of every school, classroom, and teacher was different, and I was constantly struggling to work with all the personalities.

I remember the first time I met with my student's fourth-grade teacher, who promptly told me that contractually, she was not required to meet with me during any point in the day. A veteran third-grade teacher, who had taught in the same room for a decade, asked me why I really needed to be there since my profoundly deaf student was doing "fine." I worked in one school where the restrooms were locked and the office would not provide me a restroom key; instead, I had to go to the front office and request one any time I needed to use the restroom. During one IEP meeting, a guidance counselor

announced that she thought that the teacher of the deaf services should be cut entirely from a student's IEP—that was the first time myself or the parents had heard this news. Even after repeated meetings with me, a middle-school teacher continued to show movies without captions to my student with bilateral implants—and then test her on the information. I met with a high school history teacher to ask that he avoid singling out my student, and the next week he made students in his classroom raise their hand for each answer they got wrong on a quiz—my student essentially held up her hand almost the entire time, with me wincing from the back of the room. I found myself getting lost in the flood of issues that organically arise every time you work with someone who has different training from you, and realized that my training program, and professional development, were not adequately helping me meet this challenge. I reflected on my experience teaching general education, and my work in the field of special education, and saw a missed opportunity in how these two groups of teachers are trained and supported to work with one another. Ten years after entering the doors of that second-grade classroom, I enrolled in a doctoral program and decided to study how general education and special education teachers can successfully work together.

Narrative format. Portraiture uses a narrative format. According to Cope and colleagues (2015), “the term ‘narrative’ is often used synonymously for ‘story’ . . . in which the main character in the story is the main ‘player on the stage’ or main subject of the portrait” (p. 10). “Narrative is one of our most fundamental ways of making meaning from experience” (Thomas, 2012, p. 209). Using stories to teach and pass on information has deep roots (Mello, 2002). “Since narrative is a way of knowing, a tool for exploration, and a key component in the construction of knowledge, it is seminal to the

work of the researcher. (Mello, 2002, p. 240). Storytelling is an important way to share lived experience (Thomas, 2012). Portraiture takes advantage of the power of storytelling by using the voices of participants themselves (Cope et al., 2015) to create a “representation of the human experience” (Thomas, 2012, p. 209). Narrative inquiry does not seek one universal truth, but instead multiple perspectives and experiences. Narrative data collection is “transactional and developmental” and data analysis is “iterative and evolutionary” (Mello, 2002, p. 232). As a whole, the inquiry is “complex and multi-layered” (Thomas, 2012, p. 210).

Search for “goodness.” The traditional understanding of disability is rooted in a deficit perspective in which the problem is centered within the student “rather than attributed to lack of understanding, awareness, or acceptance among the nondisabled population” (Lalvani, 2015, p. 385). The deficit perspective deemphasizes strengths and deconstructs the whole person. The deficit perspective reduces students in special education to their perceived weaknesses rather than acknowledging the wholeness of their person and the talents and strengths within them (Anzul, Evans, King, & Tellier-Robinson, 2001, p. 236).

The deficit perspective centers disability within students and deemphasizes the role of culture and society (Lalvani, 2015). The deficit perspective can be applied to educational research. When searching for the cause of problems in schools, is the emphasis on the limitations of individual teachers? Or, is the focus more broadly placed on the structural and organizational weaknesses of the educational system within which teachers operate? Similar to the special education teacher looking for and capitalizing on students’ strengths, the educational researcher “searching for goodness” looks for areas of

strength—rather than weakness—within systems and people. According to Anzul and colleagues (2001), “Qualitative methods provide varied ways to gather information in order to discover what children can do and achieve unconstrained by defined variables and decontextualized settings” (Anzul et al., 2001, p. 247). A similar sentiment can be applied to teachers examined in research; rather than looking at barriers and limitations, researchers can examine what teachers *can* achieve *despite* the challenges. Following this logic, I examined successful dyads to see what was *working* within these relationships. This “search for goodness,” which is integral to portraiture design, pulls from a lens of AI, “an asset-based research method” (Calabrese, 2015, p. 215).

AI recognizes the unique and changing relationship between individuals. Social science research, especially research in schools, has historically focused on the negative—the barriers that exist in education. In using this negative lens, research has “denied the resilience and fortitude of those who have worked, lived, and managed in less than ideal circumstances” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 7). In contrast, portraiture “concentrates on success and positivity” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 6) as a way to inform other practitioners and settings. In this study, I sought to discover what *was* working well in school consultation, despite the ever-present challenges.

Theoretical Lens of Appreciative Inquiry

This study was conducted through a lens of AI. This is synchronous with the search for goodness, which is central to portraiture design. Through an “asset-based lens,” I investigated which qualities, actions, and dispositions led to successful partnerships. “As a theoretical research perspective, AI focusses inquiry on the

observation and sharing of successful practices/events in a school setting” (Calabrese, 2015, p. 214).

A great deal of writing authored by academics finds an audience of other academics. Portraitists seeks a broader audience and increased relevance:

Most researchers using this methodology probably hope that their work has direct or potential relevance for both nonacademic and academic audiences . . . this is because the methodology enjoins taking with great seriousness the words and actions of the people studied. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 6)

This study was designed and carried out with the goal of providing value not only to researchers, but to practitioners, program directors, and others actively working in the field.

Data Collection Procedures

“Some social science topics are inherently more dyadic than individual” (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010, p. 1642). Partnerships—between TSDHH and general education classroom teachers—certainly fall into this category. Thus, the unit of analysis for this study was the dyad, composed of one TSDHH and one classroom teacher who worked together. Five dyads—10 professionals—served as participants.

Setting. Interview settings included classrooms, bookstores, coffee shops, restaurants, and libraries, dependent on teacher convenience. Participants included five TSDHH and the five general education teachers who served as their professional partners. Data collection included semi-structured interviews with TSDHH, classroom teachers, and dyads (made up of one TSDHH and one classroom teacher working

together). Interviews lasted anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes, with most interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes.

Participants. Dyads of TSDHH and general education classroom teachers who were chosen through a two-step nomination process served as participants. A successful TSDHH and general education classroom teacher partnership is a collaborative, problem-solving relationship in which both professionals feel comfortable bringing up issues and working together to solve them. In a successful partnership, the sum is greater than the whole of its parts, and there is a feeling of synergy, rather than compromise.

Identifying Successful Dyads

Connected with programs and schools. After receiving approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study, I contacted organizations and school programs that employed TSDHH, and explained the study to the program director or supervisor. The title of the supervisor differed depending on whether the TSDHH was employed through a public school district, through a central program within the district (such as Boards of Cooperative Educational Services; BOCES), or through a separate non-profit organization. Schools hire TSDHH in many ways: by hiring a dedicated TSDHH for the building or district, by contracting with an outside organization that employs TSDHH, or through organizations such as BOCES that provide services such as TSDHH to two or more districts who cannot afford the services alone. Thus, supervisors included program directors, deaf/hard of hearing supervising teachers, and special education directors.

I contacted supervisors from six different organizations to ask them to participate in this study. Four supervisors agreed to participate. Each supervisor nominated one or

more TSDHH who fit the criteria for a successful consultant (see Appendix C). In order to be eligible for nomination, the TSDHH had to (a) have at least two years of prior teaching experience and (b) work primarily in an itinerant capacity (traveling from classroom to classroom).

Connected with teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Next, I emailed nominated TSDHH to explain the study and gauge interest in participation. Three TSDHH declined to participate, citing one or more of the following reasons: (a) because they did not feel that they had any current successful relationships with classroom teachers, (b) because they felt overwhelmed or busy, or (c) because they were not currently working in schools as a result of being on family leave. Five TSDHH agreed to participate. Of the five, four worked at organizations that contracted with multiple school districts, and one was employed by a single district.

Each TSDHH who agreed to participate in the study nominated one general education classroom teacher with whom she had a successful consulting relationship (see Appendix A for the definition of “successful consulting relationship”). Five general education classroom teachers were nominated. In order to be eligible for nomination, the classroom teacher had to: (a) teach general education at any level pre-K through grade 12, (b) be currently working with the TSDHH, (c) have worked with the TSDHH for at least two months, and (c) meet regularly with the TSDHH, at a minimum of once per month.

Connected with general education classroom teachers. I emailed nominated general education classroom teachers to explain the study and provided the “Classroom teacher consent form” (Appendix B). All five classroom teachers agreed to participate.

Identified time and location. Next, I communicated with each dyad (TSDHH and their general education teacher partner) to find a time and location that would work for the three of us to meet. This was the hardest part of the process, mainly because interviews took place in May and June, which is often a busy time for teachers. Additionally, classroom teachers' schedules differ from those of TSDHH, who travel from school to school and often end the day in a different location, often miles away from where they started. For three of the dyads, I conducted all three interviews (TSDHH individual interview, classroom teacher individual interview, and dyad joint interview) in the course of one day. For the two remaining dyads, I conducted the dyad and classroom teacher interview on one day, and the TSDHH interview at another time. Consent forms were collected from all participants prior to conducting interviews.

Researcher involvement. In contrast to other research designs, portraiture acknowledges—and invites—the researcher into the inquiry, not only physically but conceptually. “Researchers bring their historical, familial, cultural, ideological and educational backgrounds to enquiries, as well as themselves as voices” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 8). The researcher’s past experience is not data, but does inform the way in which the researcher interacts with new data as they are gathered (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is important that the researcher discloses past experiences and is aware of and considers the way in which her experience affects the research process. Self-disclosure is also important to help participants feel comfortable to invite the researcher to consultation sessions. This comfort depends on the researcher’s “building of trusting relationships with participants by showing a genuine interest in and understanding of their experiences” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 9). Portraiture design demands interaction between the

participants and the researcher (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). In portraiture, the researcher collects a plethora of data—observations, interviews, researcher notes—and decides what to include. Consequently, the background and biases that researchers bring shape data collection and analysis.

Interviews

All interviews were recorded using two devices, a digital voice recorder and a recording app on an iOS device. During interviews with dyads, I took informal handwritten notes on nonverbal information that passed between participants, details of the setting, and relationship cues between the teachers. Immediately after each interview, I typed my observations, which included notes on body language and emerging themes. Interviews, researcher notes, and observation notes from the meetings served as a way to triangulate and validate the data.

Analysis of Data

After conducting all 15 interviews, recordings were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analyzed alongside my notes, which provided context to the interpretation. While transcribing, I noted tone of voice, extended pauses, and sarcasm, and included these notes within the transcripts. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe analysis of qualitative research as “a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme” (p. 11). Data analysis took place at micro and macro levels.

Micro-Analysis

For the micro-analysis, I analyzed the 15 transcripts using NVIVO, a software program used to code qualitative data. The constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized (Glaser, 1965). First, I uploaded all transcripts into NVIVO. Then, I read the first transcript, and pulled out “codes,” or salient ideas. “Coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks” and choosing a word to represent or “code” each chunk (Creswell, 2014, p. 197). Then, I read the next transcript using the same process. Each subsequent transcript was compared to all previous transcripts. Each emerging code was compared with existing codes and either added to an existing code, or included as a new, emerging code. After reading and coding each transcript, I condensed codes to create themes. Themes were included in the analysis, alongside salient quotations to give voice to the participants themselves.

Macro-Analysis

Data were also analyzed at a macro, or “big picture” level, as a way to address critiques of data deconstruction, such as that made by Mello (2002) who cautions allegiance to a “cut and paste style of data manipulation” that can detract from the coherence and cohesion of the stories themselves (p. 235). Thus, in addition to using the constant comparative method, vignettes and longer quotations were included within the analysis. “Once the dialogue is complete, the construction of the cohesive aesthetic whole involves finding linkages and connections among all the different issues and concerns highlighted by the participants” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 10).

Iterative nature of data collection and analysis. Portraiture requires constant reflection on the part of the researcher (Cope et al., 2015) because the process of the

design is iterative and evolving. “Each day the memos and reflections—and ultimately the portraits they paint—continue to grow, build, change and increase in complexity, as reflection and meaning are attributed to them” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 10). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998): “It is the analysis that drives the data collection. Therefore, there is a constant interplay between the researcher and the research act” (p. 42). For example, research questions evolved throughout the course of the study. Although I started with a list of questions to guide the semi-structured interviews with the TSDHH and classroom teacher (see Appendix E), I refined and added to these questions after conducting initial interviews (Meyers et al., 2014).

In the research community, there is division regarding the analysis of narratives. “A contentious issue in the field of narrative inquiry relates to the analysis (or interpretation) of narratives” (Thomas, 2012, p. 213).

Organizing, analyzing, and discovering theoretical meanings from storied data can be challenging due to the nature of narrative because, like qualitative inquiry itself, it is iterative and evolutionary. The stories represented in our data are also highly eclectic and varied, and they leave us with questions concerning how best to work with, preserve, and respect their content and meaning. (Mello, 2002, p. 232)

I pulled from micro- (constant comparison method) and macro-analyses (vignettes and participant voice) to appeal to both criticisms. I paid attention to the details provided by interviewees: “what they say, how they say it and the meaning of their words in the context of a holistic portrait” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 10). This allowed for creation of an “aesthetic whole that conveys the full reality of the responses” (Cope et al., 2015, p. 10).

Along with this attention to detail, analysis includes sections of longer quotations as a way to “preserve the integrity of the narrative while at the same time offering greater opportunities for understanding” (Mello, 2002, p. 241). In at least one section of the findings, I placed similar vignettes next to one another, “not unlike group conversation, where the control of a narrative jumps from teller to teller and subjects range widely and, like many conversations, global experience is often more meaningful than any one select tale” (Mello, 2002, p. 238).

An important consideration within qualitative research is the role of the resonant and dissonant voice. The resonant voice is the “common thread” or tone taken by the majority of participants, while the dissonant voice represents the minority, and takes on a different—less common—perspective. Qualitative researchers must involve this dissonant voice; “indeed, he or she is encouraged to actively listen for it” (Matthias & Petchauer, 2012, p. 406).

Researcher in data analysis. Qualitative research invites the researcher to actively participate in the process of both data collection and analysis. Researchers are invited to pull from their own experiences when engaging in data analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative researchers “are unafraid to draw on their own experiences when analyzing materials because they realize that these become the foundations for making comparisons and discovering properties and dimensions” (p. 5). Thus, data analysis within portraiture design becomes an interactive process, similar to the interaction between artist and painting, so that “by the end of the inquiry, the researcher is shaped by the data, just as the data are shaped by the researcher” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 42). There is no way to remove the influence of the researcher from data

analysis. What is necessary then, is transparency in the process: “Although a researcher can try to be as objective as possible, in a practical sense, this is not entirely possible. Thus, it is preferable to self-consciously bring disciplinary and research experience into the analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 59).

Examining dyads. According to Eisikovits and Koren (2010), although qualitative studies using dyad interviews have increased, methods for analyzing this type of research have not kept pace. The researchers suggest going beyond individual analysis of interviews and “identifying overlap and contrast in the couple data on various levels” in order to explore “a dyadic version that is more than the sum of two individual versions” (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010, p. 1642).

Some topics are better suited to dyadic rather than individual data collection and analysis. Partnerships fall into this category. According to Eisikovits and Koren (2010), although “individuals still constitute the basic unit of analysis in most qualitative research . . . this has built-in limitations, given the one-sided perspectives provided on phenomena that often involve two sides” (p. 1642). Dyadic research should be intentional from conception to analysis, and relationships—rather than individuals—should be a focus throughout, understanding that “the dyadic version is more than the sum of two individual ones” (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010, p. 1652). This relationship focus is reflected in the current study in sampling, data collection, and analysis and interpretation. I interviewed individuals and dyads and analyzed data following recommendations set by Eisikovits and Koren (2010) in order to “capture a third dyadic one (created by the researchers), without losing or corrupting the individual ones. This enables the readers to follow the process of constructing dyadic versions, while keeping the individual ones

intact for purposes of possible comparison” (p. 1652). Analyzing data at a dyadic level leads to a better understanding of the relationship (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). Overall areas of understanding were drawn within each portrait and across all portraits.

Trustworthiness

Collecting and analyzing narrative data, characteristic of many qualitative studies, presents a plethora of unique challenges. (Carlson, 2010, p. 1102)

Trustworthiness—a measure of trust in how data were gained and explained by the researcher—is a crucial element for every rigorous qualitative study. According to Carlson (2010), “trustworthiness is gained when researchers show that their data were ethically and mindfully collected, analyzed, and reported” (p. 1110).” The onus is on the researchers to prove to their readers that ethical considerations and appropriateness guided the research study. A trustworthiness protocol should be developed before conducting the study, not as an afterthought once data collection is complete (Amankwaa, 2016). There are multiple ways to show trustworthiness. The methods chosen depend on the specific researcher and unique confines of the study.

Some possible ways to ensure trustworthiness are through member checking, triangulation, and thick description (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, I achieved trustworthiness through triangulation, member-checking, reflexivity, thick description, and an audit trail. Additionally, dyadic analysis was utilized as a way to increase trustworthiness in that versions were compared and contrasted against one another (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). For example, some TSDHH mentioned specific things they did in the classroom that they said were appreciated by the classroom teacher. When I interviewed their classroom teacher partner individually, I listened to see whether this sentiment came across.

According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “the choice of validity procedures is governed by two perspectives: the lens researchers choose to validate their studies and researchers’ paradigm assumptions” (p. 124). I utilized constructivism and the critical perspective to guide this study. Constructivism values perspectives that are “pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended, and contextualized” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). I utilized thick description to capture context, and included dissonant voices to reflect the pluralistic viewpoints of participants. Triangulation was used to achieve interpretive perspectives that took into account multiple voices. The critical perspective also informs trustworthiness procedures in that “researchers should uncover the hidden assumptions about how narrative accounts are constructed, read, and interpreted” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “researchers need to be reflexive and disclose what they bring to a narrative (p. 126). In response to this call, I used reflexivity to disclose the biases and experiences that I brought to the research process. I used an audit trail to bring transparency to the process. To sum, I achieved trustworthiness through reflexivity, thick description, disconfirming evidence, member-checking, an audit trail, and triangulation. These five methods are described in greater detail below.

Reflexivity

All researchers are subject to biases that can color their data collection and analysis (Carlson, 2010). Consequently, reflexivity is a validity procedure that calls for self-disclosure of researchers on “personal beliefs, values, and biases that may shape their inquiry” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). As I shared earlier, my interest in this topic started because I have worked as both a general education classroom teacher and a

TSDHH. I lived the challenges inherent in each of these roles and saw the way in which teacher intent did not always align with results. I had the sense of wanting to do better in each role—in terms of working with other teachers—but not knowing how to accomplish this. I was upfront with my participants about my background and that I have held both of these roles, and I spoke honestly about the experiences and difficulties I faced. This disclosure helped participants feel more comfortable and encouraged them to share openly about themselves and their experiences. Thus, my background did not serve as a limitation but instead as a source of strength in inviting quality information from participants.

According to Creswell and Miller (2000) there are multiple ways to engage in reflexivity. Amankwaa (2016) suggests a reflexive journal, or diary, within which the researcher chronicles the process. “In these entries, the researcher records methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study and reflection upon what is happening in terms of one’s own values and interests” (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 122). Carlson (2010) suggests researchers use a journal “specifically for recording thoughts, feelings, uncertainties, values, beliefs, and assumptions that surface throughout the research process” (p. 1104). Some of this information should be reported within the manuscript to show “how one’s preconceptions, beliefs, values, assumptions and position may have come into play during the research process” (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 122). I also used an audit trail to document the research process.

Thick and Rich Description

Researchers must take detailed notes on the setting and participants in order to offer thick and rich description (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Qualitative research does not

seek generalizability; instead, it provides copious details so that consumers of the research can determine whether findings from a study will apply to their unique environment (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This is a strength, given that “larger populations are not homogenous. Larger populations represent difference and diversity—qualities that a narrative approach attempts to highlight” (Thomas, 2012, p. 212). Thick, rich description also aligns with constructivism in that all findings are firmly rooted within the context of the place and people.

Qualitative inquiry involves the investigation of uniqueness—unique individuals, groups, and phenomenon—each situated within unique contextual settings.

Although qualitative researchers are not concerned with inter-study replication, they are concerned with corroborating or substantiating findings over time across similar situations. Corroboration is not possible without in-depth understanding of commonalities that may exist among situations. This is one of the main functions of thick and rich description—to provide understanding of relevance to other settings. (Carlson, 2010, p. 1104)

Member-Checking

Member-checking is one of the most important ways to show trustworthiness within the research process. It is also one of the most difficult. In member checking, “the validity procedure shifts from the researchers to participants in the study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). The participants serve as a new lens through which the study can be validated. Member-checking aligns with constructivism in that reality “is what participants perceive it to be” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). Thus, member-checking is a way to “talk-the-talk” and to actively engage participants within the research process.

Member-checking can take multiple forms, such as focus groups, presenting participants with raw data, or sharing emerging themes and categories with participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I utilized the third option, and shared themes, categories, and sections of narratives and quotations with participants, following guidelines by Creswell and Miller (2000): “The researchers ask participants if the themes or categories make sense, whether they are developed with sufficient evidence, and whether the overall account is realistic and accurate. In turn, researchers incorporate participants’ comments into the final narrative” (p. 125).

During member-checking, “participant rapport can be especially tenuous” (Carlson, 2010, p. 1102). According to Carlson, many researchers hold “the misinformed belief that good qualitative research . . . [means] using consistent and rigid procedures for every participant” (Carlson, 2010, p. 1112). Instead, Carlson argues for procedures that are appropriate and ethical given the unique participant. For example, some participants might receive partial transcripts so that they do not feel bad about going off-topic during the interview. Similarly, before including long, direct quotations in the manuscript—inclusive of participant grammar mistakes—it may be wise to check in with participants and to correct grammar usage. Whatever the case, participants should be clearly instructed of their expectations through the member checking process as well as how their input will show up in the published study (Carlson, 2010).

For this study, I compiled emerging themes and salient quotations and emailed teachers to ask whether the ideas/themes resonated with their experiences, and if they had additional information and examples to share. Out of 10 participants, 8 responded to member checking, representing an 80% return rate. Participants’ responses indicated that

the data accurately captured their experiences. For example, TSDHH responses included: “This looks great and VERY accurately describes my experience as a TOD” and “I think this sums up everything perfectly.” Responses from classroom teachers included: “The themes resonate with me. I think that they are realistic” and “The information you summarized looks very accurate and resonates with me and my experience.”

Audit trail

An audit trail is a way for the researcher to document the research process. It can be established in multiple ways, through use of a research journal, logs, or systems for collecting and recording data. “In establishing an audit trail, researchers provide clear documentation of all research decisions and activities. They may provide evidence of the audit trail throughout the account or in the appendices” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128). An audit trail allows readers and reviewers to follow the research process from beginning to end, inclusive of decisions made by the researcher: “Creating an audit trail refers to keeping careful documentation of all components of the study . . . keeping field observation notes, interview notes, journals, records, calendars, and various drafts of interpretation are all parts of creating audit trails” (Carlson, 2010, p. 1103). Keeping audio recordings and transcripts for a period of time is also part of the audit trail.

Triangulation

Triangulation means collecting data in numerous ways (Carlson, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This can mean different types of data, sources, or use of multiple theoretical perspectives (Amankwaa, 2016). The goal of triangulation is to achieve a better understanding of what is being studied (Amankwaa, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

This study used interviews, observations of problem-solving within dyads through use of a case study, and researcher notes as a way to triangulate data and “search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Credibility is increased when “findings rely on multiple forms of evidence rather than a single incident or data point in the study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Participants

Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

This study explored the relationship between general education classroom teachers and TSDHH. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing were the first point of nomination, and five TSDHH were included. Their ages ranged from 29 to 62 years old. All were certified teachers who worked in multiple schools. All participants were white females. Nomination criteria stated that TSDHH must have worked at least two years in the field to be included in the study. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing had experience ranging from four to 40 years, with a total of 75 years of experience as a group. For more information about TSDHH demographics, see Table 1.

Table 1

Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Demographics

Demographic	April	Jamie	Helen	Jordyn	Annie
Age	29	37	62	47	29
Location of caseload	Multiple districts	Multiple districts	One district, multiple schools	Multiple districts	Multiple districts
Years experience	4	15	40	10	6
Caseload	20 students	18 students	31 students	7 students	15 students
Driving time/weekly	5 hours	15 hours	1.7 hours	20 hours	10-12 hours
Dedicated consult time/weekly	2.5 hours	1.8 hours	2.5-3 hours	2 hours	2-4 hours

Classroom Teachers

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing nominated one classroom teacher with whom they worked well. The criteria for general education classroom teachers included the following: (a) they needed to have an established relationship with the TSDHH (at least two months working together); (b) they needed to work with the TSDHH at least once per month; and (c) they could not work as specials teachers (e.g., art, PE) or special education teachers. Nominated classroom teachers ranged in age from 37 to 62 years old. All participants were white females. They had teaching experience ranging from 10 to 23 years. The combined experience of the five teachers totaled 93 years. For more information about classroom teacher demographics, please see Table 2.

Table 2

Classroom Teacher Demographics

Demographic	Autumn	Justine	Mary	Briony	Jessie
Age	37	45	45	62	43
Years teaching	10	19	23	22	19
Title	Third grade teacher	Second grade teacher	First grade teacher	Second grade teacher	First grade teacher
Class size	19 students	26 students	27 students	21 students	18 students
# of IEPs/504 Plans	7 IEPs/504 Plans	2 IEPs/504 Plans	7 IEPs/504 Plans	3 IEPs/504 Plans	3 IEPs/504 Plans
Type of school	Public	Private	Public	Public	Public

Setting

Data were collected from the northeast region of the United States. Five classroom teachers, from five different schools, located in five different towns, were included in this study. Of the five schools, four were public schools and one was a private school. Schools were relatively small; the smallest school had 250 students and the largest had 550 students. The towns represented were also small; the smallest town included had 6,200 residents, and the largest town included had 25,000 residents. The percentage of adult college graduates (a measure used to indicate wealth) in the represented towns ranged from 24% to 84%. This is above the national average, which is 22%. In each of the towns included, the majority of residents were white.

Analysis is broken into two parts. The first part is “portraits” of each dyad, which include my observations from the interviews, interactions between participants, and

preliminary conclusions based on interviews. This section serves as a mini macro-analysis of the dyad as a cohesive unit.

Macro-Analysis: Essence of Consultation

Dyad One

TSDHH	Jordyn
Classroom teacher	Autumn
Combined experience	20 years
Years working together	2 years
Type of school	Public school

You have so much passion and drive for what you do. (Jordyn)

It's just easy. (Autumn, describing the consulting relationship)

I met with Autumn and Jordyn at a large bookstore in a shopping plaza. It was misty when I walked into the store and thunder-storming when I left. When I arrived, I commandeered as many footstools as I could and corralled an area in the upper level where we could talk quietly. Autumn arrived late, in the familiar flurry of a teacher pulling herself away from her classroom at the end of the day.

Autumn sat in a large, cushioned armchair, while Jordyn sat in a simple wooden chair. I put the two recording devices on the stool in front of us. Jordyn was easygoing and friendly, and laughed easily. Autumn had short blonde hair and looked younger than her years. She was passionate about teaching and talked about her responsibility as a teacher and what students could—and should—expect from her. Autumn was easy to get to know, and after Jordyn left, our conversation flowed easily from school, to summer

plans, and back again. The two of us talked about our classroom experience, lamenting about students who needed more support and didn't receive it, and the challenge of leading classrooms in which there were so many individual needs. Autumn's passion for teaching shone through our conversation. She had taught for almost 10 years, but still stayed at school until 5 pm every day. In fact, the traffic patterns coming to the bookstore surprised her, since she was usually in her classroom—and not on the road—at 4 p.m. She was the kind of teacher who did not stop with one strategy or suggestion for a particular student; she tried everything. She saw another adult in the room as a resource and an opportunity for synergy. She was open to teaching others and being taught. She came across as practical and dedicated.

The three of us ended up talking casually for over 20 minutes before starting the dyad interview. Jordyn and Autumn had good rapport; Autumn mentioned spending time with her niece and nephew this summer, and Jordyn turned and said to me, "They're so cute, you should see them!" In hushed tones, they filled each other in on events from the week, "Oh he struggled with that assignment, but did well with that other one."

Throughout the interview, the two teachers answered questions easily, with few pauses. They often added to one another's responses, and nodded in agreement while the other spoke. On many points, they echoed the refrain; "It's easy . . . we're flexible." They were alike in their flexibility, their openness, their dedication to the students, and their desire to keep things simple. As Autumn explained of collaborating and sharing ideas: "Teaching is hard enough. Why would I make it harder?" Their mutual approach was one of openness, ease, and ongoing suggestions rather than demands. Their answers made it clear that they were both excellent teachers who recognized the other's expertise.

I left buoyed by finding positivity in what can be a contentious relationship. I was inspired by this dyad's ability to be smart while keeping it simple, and to avoid over-complication while collaborating. My takeaways from the interview included simplicity, flexibility, openness, shared goals, and mutual gain.

Dyad Two

TSDHH	Annie
Classroom teacher	Jessie
Combined experience	25 years
Years working together	2 years
Type of school	Public school

I don't know how to describe it . . . you need to know how to work the room. (Jessie on the need for TSDHH to work with all the students in the classroom)

Since I started this job, a lot of teachers of the deaf where I work have left . . . and I think it's because they don't like that part of it [consultative aspect of the job]. (Annie)

I met Annie and Jessie at a surprisingly nice 24-hour chain coffee shop, complete with couches and two TVs. During the two-hour 15-minute drive to get there, I ordered a large iced coffee to stay awake; when I arrived, I ordered another for good measure. Jessie arrived first and introduced herself. Annie entered a few minutes later, smiling and poised, despite hitting traffic. We talked easily for about 20 minutes, and Annie and Jessie caught up. Jessie filled Annie in on what happened after she left school, which included a student running out of his classroom and then out of the school building. The

two laughed and talked easily; it was clear that they were familiar with many of the same people at school.

During the course of the interview, the two teachers often looked at one another while speaking; sometimes it felt like I was out of the equation. They took extra time to fill out the demographic questionnaire and talked to and checked in with one another before answering questions. It was common for Jessie to pause as she formulated a response, and then reflected on her answers afterward to make sure she answered the question. At one point, she said she was unsure if she gave the “right” answer; I told her there was no one right answer, and that my questions were simply to solicit her opinions.

Similar to the first dyad, Annie and Jessie had worked together for two years. Also similar to the first dyad, they had no set time to consult nor regular meeting agendas. No one person led the meetings. Instead, the two checked in with each other when Annie was providing support in the classroom or right before she pulled the student out. Annie appreciated Jessie’s openness and the way she welcomed Annie into the classroom; she introduced her to the other students, gave her jobs, and invited her to contribute. Jessie appreciated Annie’s ability to quietly enter and “work the room” by checking in with other students, offering help as needed, and adding to the sense of community in the classroom. Jessie contrasted this to a paraprofessional who competed with her; finishing her sentences and loudly answering questions asked of the students. It was clear that there was a fine line for TSDHH involvement—TSDHH should avoid being loud and overbearing, but should also avoid quietly hovering. They should get involved, but only to a certain extent.

My takeaways were that Annie was naturally friendly and outgoing and Jessie was a good teacher. Beyond that, Annie’s success came from her ability to tailor her consultation to meet the style of the person with whom she was working. She learned to rely on data, rather than “hunches,” and had perfected a style of giving advice that didn’t sound preachy, but instead came across as encouraging and helpful.

Dyad Three

TSDHH	Helen
Classroom teacher	Briony
Combined experience	62 years
Years working together	5 years
Type of school	Public school

The interview took place in Briony’s second-grade classroom, a cozy space filled with buckets of brightly colored school supplies and posters hanging from a clothesline over the teacher’s desk. Briony and I sat at a student table in tiny chairs that were more comfortable for seven-year-olds. I moved a box of tissues and tray of markers to the side in order to make space for my binder. Briony and I talked easily until I realized 35 minutes had passed. She had taught for over 20 years and had been in the same classroom for nearly 10. During our casual conversation, she talked about the changes she implemented since working with the TSDHH, Helen. For example, she said she became more mindful of not talking while facing the whiteboard and developed a better understanding of the importance of the FM system.

Once Helen arrived, the three of us talked easily over a large bowl of green grapes. Helen and Briony were exactly the same age—which they found out when filling out the demographic form—and saw each other every day. Earlier in the school year, the teachers had regular morning meetings, which tapered off in favor of informal conversations when school got busier. During our conversation, the two teachers alternated answering questions, sometimes one teacher started a thought and the other interrupted to provide an example.

They were the first partnership to talk about a disagreement they faced; an argument about reading expectations that brought them both to tears. Although the situation sounded challenging, it seemed to have positively affected the relationship. The two teachers were strong-willed and passionate, and unafraid to stand up for what they believed was best for the student. Briony explained that when someone was telling her she had to do something, she needed to know why to really buy into it. Helen talked about she and Briony having mutual respect for one another. The two spoke candidly about the differing expectations for general education teachers and special education teachers. Classroom teachers often feel that they must teach to the curriculum, they may be stressed about student achievement since it can be tied to their evaluations, and they often expect to see immediate and consistent growth, which may contradict goals set by teachers who serve students with disabilities. Briony talked about being “afraid” when she found out she was going to have a student in her class who was deaf—she wasn’t sure what to do and didn’t want to make a mistake.

As the interview concluded, the two teachers quickly filled each other in on what was coming up at school (“The end-of-year party is on what day? When are they making

their scripts for the project?”). They didn’t have much time to meet one-on-one, and took full advantage of the last precious minutes.

Dyad Four

TSDHH	April
Classroom teacher	Justine
Combined experience	23 years
Years working together	>1 year
Type of school	Private school

When I first heard about the FM system, and the receivers, and the accommodations, I was afraid I would forget. And [the TSDHH] said you will! We all do. And that’s okay. (Justine)

You have to read people. I’ve gotten better at that. (April)

I drove two hours to meet April and Justine at one of the most beautiful libraries I had ever been to. It was a hot day in May, the kind where you could feel the air, and the temperature went from sticky to cold the second I walked into the air-conditioned building. I drank a large iced coffee on the way (seemingly a theme of all my interview journeys) and arrived 30 minutes early to scope out the building. A kind librarian let me use the conference room, and we had a bright space with a large mahogany table all to ourselves.

Even though it was the end of a long day in the last month of the school year, Justine arrived smiling and energetic. I shared my background and introduced the study. Justine spoke honestly about what she wished she had done over the year, including regret for not holding a midterm and final meeting with the TSDHH. Reflection is crucial

for adult learning and I was struck by how powerful it might be to more informally incorporate it into the TSDHH and classroom teacher relationship.

Justine had a student with hearing loss in her class six years ago without the support of a TSDHH, and the student decided not to utilize his FM system. Now that she had experience working with the TSDHH with her current student, she was struck by all she learned and the accommodations put in place—she wished she had had similar support in the past. Justine was passionate about accommodations and spoke strongly about the need to use the FM system.

Justine appreciated that April was transparent, open, and friendly. April likewise appreciated Justine's openness. They both talked about having a sense of humor. When they talked about situations with their student—an especially tough day or a celebratory moment—their tone of voice and body language revealed that they were fully on the same page. Justine said working with April brought a sense of consistency that she did not have with other service providers whom she saw less often.

During the interview, it was common for Justine to turn and tell April, "This is what I appreciate about you," and for April to do the same. It was refreshing that the two finally had an opportunity to tell each other what they had appreciated all along. After the interviews, Justine sent a group email, "Wishing you luck Brittany! April it was so nice getting to pause and reflect with you. Thanks, Justine." Classroom teachers and TSDHH work together closely, but rarely get the time and space to look back at their relationship, express gratitude, and reflect.

Dyad Five

TSDHH	Jamie
Classroom teacher	Mary
Combined experience	38 years
Years working together	>1 year
Type of school	Public school

When I heard I had a kid who was DHH in my classroom, “I was scared shitless.” (Mary)

Scheduling the last interview reminded me of how crazy things are at the end of the school year, and how difficult it is to get two teachers in one place in mid-June. However, once we had set a day and time, the rest was easy. My drive to the interview site was lovely, with windy country roads and misty mountain views. We met in the town library, which was an old converted mansion, complete with fireplaces, loveseats, and even a dining room table. I wandered around the first floor and up a spiral staircase before I snagged a table right off the children’s department.

When Jamie and Mary arrived, they immediately started up a hilarious banter, and I felt like they were old friends at a restaurant rather than interviewees. When I offered snacks from my bag (fruit, cheese, and crackers) Mary jokingly asked, “You got any wine in there?” She started with Jamie: “You won’t believe what happened,” and the two swapped stories about the afternoon. Mary mentioned that their student had a tough afternoon; Jamie immediately shared a bit about his home life this week to explain why things may have been tough. Together, they pieced together a fuller picture of their student.

Mary gushed about Jamie. Specifically, she appreciated the way Jamie melded into the classroom community. Mary talked about feeling like the entire classroom was a team, the students as well as the adults. Jamie's professional approach at the beginning of their relationship organically turned into a friendship, suggesting that TSDHH should start professionally and allow the relationship to progress naturally as trust and respect build. Sometimes when things got super crazy in the classroom (there were 27 first graders, after all), the two said they communicated simply through eye contact.

Mary said that while some adults just stand in the classroom and do nothing, Jamie stepped in and helped out. Mary focused on Jamie as an individual; as I listened, I had trouble generalizing what she said in order to provide suggestions and strategies to other TSDHH.

As I drove home after the interview, I felt a sense of disappointment—there were no new findings from the interview. I realized that this was a result of reaching the point of saturation. Themes that surprised me during the third individual interview were brought up again in the tenth (e.g., the TSDHH helped all the students in the classroom and a sense of flexibility was key). After talking with 10 people about this topic, it made sense that many ideas had already been said.

Case Study

During joint interviews, I presented dyads with a case study and asked them to respond (see Appendix E for case study). My intention was to observe the way in which teachers worked together to problem-solve. However, the case study did not yield the results for which I was hoping—an insider look into the teachers collaborating in real-time. Instead of talking to one another, participants in four out of the five partnerships

turned and looked at me to talk about how they would proceed in the presented situation. TSDHH were likely to jump in first to answer the question, sometimes providing answers before conferring with their classroom teaching partner. When classroom teachers weighed in, their responses revealed a surprising amount of insight. This reiterated to me the importance of TSDHH avoiding the expert role, checking in with classroom teachers, and valuing their responses when it comes to shared decision-making in the classroom. This is especially true regarding situations that take place in the classroom, where the classroom teacher has a greater understanding of the context and what has already been tried.

Micro-Analysis: Themes from Interviews

The present study used interviews with consultation dyads, TSDHH, and classroom teachers to answer the following research questions:

- Q1 What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers regarding the consultation process?
- Q2 What are the qualities of successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers?

This second section is designed to share how participants similarly perceive and experience the consultation experience. Interviews were coded at the level of each question. Emerging codes were compared to existing codes and condensed as appropriate. Results include the perceptions and experiences of each population regarding consultation (RQ1) and the qualities that make the partnership work (RQ2). Results are grouped as follows: (a) dyads, (b) classroom teachers, (c) TSDHH, (d) current and future

teacher preparation (current landscape and possible changes) and (e) advice from the field.

Themes arose in each group. For dyads, themes included flexibility, shared goals, and mutual respect. For classroom teachers, themes included flexibility, a welcoming nature, and “good” teaching. For TSDHH, themes included flexibility, positivity, an ability to read the teacher, and an ability to work the room. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of themes that arose for each group (dyads, classroom teachers, and TSDHH). Each of the themes identified is elaborated on within this chapter. Additionally, responses about preparation and advice from TSDHH are included at the end of the chapter.

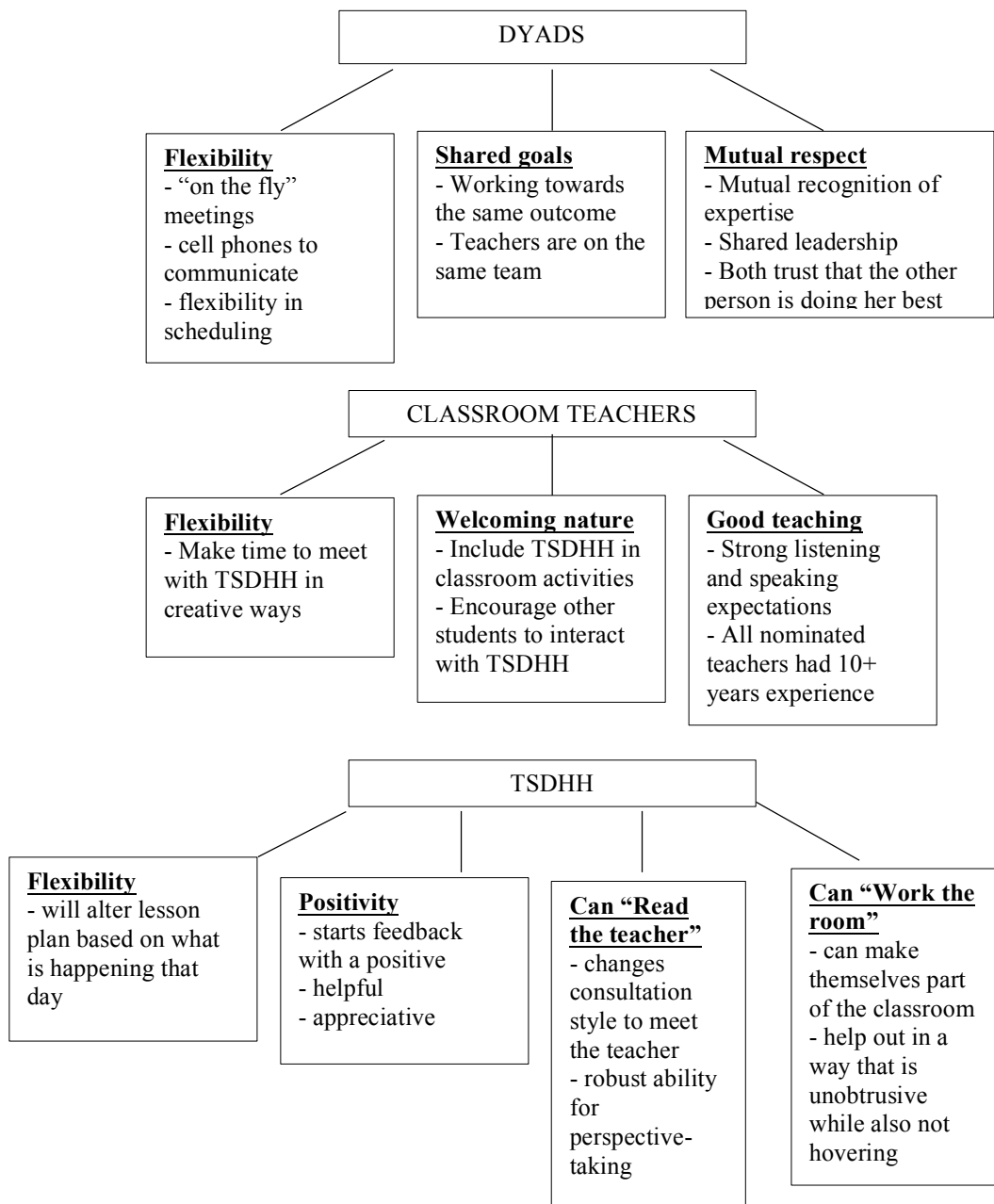


Figure 1. Groups and themes.

Dyad Theme 1: Flexibility

Flexibility was identified as an important characteristic of successful dyads. Both teachers needed to be flexible, the TSDHH especially. In most cases, this meant completely reevaluating the idea of consult—not insisting that it happen every Monday at 3 p.m., but instead allowing it to happen piecemeal throughout the school day. Additionally, flexibility in terms of working with the student was necessary; TSDHH had to arrive with a plan for their student, but also be willing to abandon the plan in favor of something more pressing.

Flexibility extended to the consultation style of TSDHH. There was *no one consultation style* that worked for all classroom teachers. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in this study tailored their approach to each teacher with whom they worked. This was evident in the way that TSDHH hesitated when asked to describe their consultation style; they were less likely to describe one style and more likely to explain that they shifted their style to meet the needs and personality of each classroom teacher. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing talked about growth in this area throughout their career, suggesting that this skill is developed through practice.

I think putting myself in the teacher's shoes, I've done a lot more of. I think when I started I was like okay, this is what I'm here for, this is what I'm doing, and that's that. And I think now I'm able to read the situation better, read the student, read the teacher, read the class.

Another aspect of flexibility related to consultation meetings. The majority of dyads said consultation meetings happened “on the fly,” rather than at scheduled times. According to one teacher, “A lot of times it's on the fly, but we've kind of made an art of

that I think.” This differed for students who had no direct service and were consult only; in these cases, TSDHH would deliberately set up times to meet with classroom teachers. However, for students with whom TSDHH worked directly at least once a week, consultation tended to happen in a more fluid way, likely because classroom teachers were so busy and TSDHH were traveling between schools. One TSDHH said, “These [classroom] teachers are stretched so thin already that finding the time is sometimes impossible . . . finding the time that they can do and then being able to be there at that time.” As a result, most meetings consisted of “quick updates” that happened while passing in the hallway or during transitions. One classroom teacher explained:

If I see her in the hall, I’ll grab her attention because I want to give her information about something, or if she has something to share with me, and she sees that I’m in the room and my kids aren’t there, that they’re at recess or specials, she’ll pop in and I feel like it’s just a mutual conversation.

The meetings themselves, when they happened, were rarely scripted. Instead, they tended to represent “an open line of communication” for teachers to talk about upcoming meetings, things they tried in the classroom, or other pressing information. One TSDHH talked about the level of honesty inherent in these check-ins. For example, meetings were more fruitful when both teachers were comfortable expressing when they changed a plan or didn’t have time to follow through on something they said they would do. When major issues arose, some TSDHH sent an email letting the teacher know that the issue would be a topic of the next consult. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing also used consult time as a way to establish a relationship with the classroom teacher.

If there's a major issue—which sometimes things come up that are a really big deal—I'll just email or “Hey when we meet tomorrow, can we talk about this,” but generally it's pretty casual. I try to chat a little bit, ask about their kids or their dogs or their travel or whatever it is, so that we have some relationship outside of just . . . hearing aids.

One idea that arose organically was communication between teachers via cell phone—an extension of the idea of flexibility. Classroom teachers appreciated this mode of communication as a way to quickly and efficiently reach out. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing reported that texting worked well with some classroom teachers. One TSDHH stated: “I find most teachers actually appreciate it, and it makes our relationship better if I give them my number, because they know they can text me when there's a problem right then.” Classroom teachers in these partnerships appreciated easy access to the TSDHH “lifeline,” especially for equipment issues:

I have [the TSDHH's] email but I also have her cell phone number, so I've messaged her in the past—I don't know what's wrong with the Roger, can you come help us . . . legitimately that's how it unfolded, we had these little things happen and I'd be like I don't know what to do, here's this bag of stuff, okay I'm opening things up, talk to me. And [the TSDHH] has been very responsive in that way, like hey try this, if that doesn't work, I'm coming over. And I know with her crazy schedule, just the fact that she's willing to take the time to do that and work with us, it's meant a lot.

Dyad Theme 2: Shared Goals

Teachers were asked to collectively, and then individually, share their goals. One TSDHH described her goals as two-fold; to support her student and to help the classroom teacher:

Obviously the first goal is to make the academic day better for the student. So you want to make their life as accessible as possible. The other goal is to make that day easiest for the teacher . . . [addressing teacher] let me help you figure that out, and you tell me what you need, or what's not working, or what the problem is, and just make it so that you don't feel overwhelmed by having the student in your classroom.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing set goals related to helping the DHH student build confidence, increase independence in using equipment, and improve self-advocacy skills. General education teachers identified "following accommodations" and "learning from the TSDHH" as their goals. One classroom teacher said, "I never had a student with hearing loss in my room, so I think for me, basically, it was like I'm going to leave it up to her and follow [the TSDHH's] lead . . . my goal was to basically learn from her."

Some dyads shared goals for self-advocacy and worked together to help the student develop independence in managing his or her hearing loss. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing often took the lead in explaining accommodations, with classroom teachers expressing a desire to carry out accommodations appropriately and consistently. One classroom teacher expressed the dyad's goals in the following way, "I think that our goal first [for] our student [is] to make sure that he's comfortable in the

classroom with his peers and academically able to work to his ability, [turning to classroom teaching partner] wouldn't you say?" The teacher's use of the word "our" was important as it implied shared goal-setting, which is an important characteristic of successful working relationships (Dorn, 2018). According to one classroom teacher, shared goals are "when both people have the same attitude, of observing, helping each other out, being a team, and you're in that classroom together to achieve goals, not just for that one student with hearing loss but for everybody in general."

Dyad Theme 3: Mutual Respect and Recognition of Expertise

When asked, "What makes the dyad work?," teachers identified the following qualities: humor, flexibility, openness, shared leadership, mutual respect, and consistency. It helped when TSDHH understood the inner workings of primary classrooms. One classroom teacher explained:

You just have to have an open mind and understand what kind of setting you're in, which we do. We're in a first-grade setting, we have a lot of kids with different abilities in there, some emotional, some may be upset. . . . I don't have an assistant with me so if [the TSDHH] comes in, sometimes I'll just [say to a student] "Can you go over and talk to [the TSDHH] for a second?"

Partnerships worked best when teachers saw and recognized each other's expertise. Oftentimes, the classroom teacher was seen as the content expert with the TSDHH seen as the expert on deafness. One teacher explained, "I think we saw this, going into this, as a working relationship, it's not one person who knows more than the other; we both have our expertise." Classroom teachers said they had consistency with

the TSDHH that they lacked with other school-based consultants. Time spent together led to a stronger bond between teachers.

Because [the TOD] comes every week and we do our quick little check-in, I feel like there's a consistency there. . . . I think it comes down to communication and if you have face time with someone, then you're able to develop that relationship, and that's a big piece of it.

Classroom Teachers

Initial Feelings

When they first found out they would have a student who was DHH in their classrooms, classroom teachers reported emotions that ranged from fear to apprehension and nervousness:

I think when I first heard that I was getting a student who needed to have hearing aids and to have this device, I think was a little bit nervous . . . part of me was kind of like hey how is this going to work, are we going to be on top of it enough, is he going to buy into this? I think for me it was just—this is a deficit area for me. That's how it felt as a teacher. Like, yup, I don't know enough about this.

One classroom teacher attributed her apprehension to the unknowns surrounding technology: "I was scared. And I felt very, extremely stressed out. I knew that he had some type of apparatus but I didn't know the technology, I didn't know the name of things . . . it was just overwhelming." Teachers also expressed concern that they might "mess up" equipment or fail to appropriately accommodate the student. They appreciated when TSDHH allayed those fears.

When TSDHH identified ingredients for successful classroom teachers, three themes emerged: (a) strong teaching skills, (b) a welcoming nature, and (c) flexibility.

Theme 1: Strong teaching skills

Nomination criteria did not stipulate how much experience classroom teachers needed to have, but all classroom teachers nominated for this study had over 10 years of experience. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing said that “good teaching” on the part of the classroom teacher made their jobs easier. Effective classroom management and strong speaking and listening expectations were identified as crucial.

One TSDHH described her student’s classroom:

I mean, it’s scaffolded, it’s layered, it’s individualized, it’s everything. I could come in and teach for the day, there’s routine, the kids know the routine, I know where the folders are. . . . I know where everything is. And that makes it easy for the kids as well. The whole class is just very . . . it just runs. There’s not chaos in the classroom where you just walk in and you’re like “Woah,” it’s just a very easy thing, and you don’t want to leave that classroom. I want to stay in this classroom all day (laughs).

On the other hand, TSDHH expressed frustration with classrooms that were poorly managed or noisy, as they recognized the challenge this posed for their students.

And I think with the less structured classrooms, the ones where the kids are going wild and stuff, I think that that’s hard especially because you know that your kids—the deaf and hard of hearing kids—are just drowning in there, because it’s so loud. When I go into those kind of classrooms, I get frustrated because I want

to fix it—not that I’m any professional in classroom management—but I want to teach the teacher how to manage the kids.

Theme 2: Welcoming Nature

Nominated general education teachers welcomed TSDHH into their classrooms. This happened in many ways. For example, classroom teachers introduced TSDHH to all the students, and invited TSDHH to work with everyone, not only the student with hearing loss. They saw another adult in the room as a benefit rather than an inconvenience. This positive attitude challenged the “visitor status” that TSDHH sometimes feel when moving among classrooms (Antia, 1999). One TSDHH explained this “welcoming nature” in the following way:

I’m a member of the classroom. Whenever [the teacher is] surrounded by kids with problems, she’ll say, “Oh, go tell [the TSDHH] about that” and it’s not in a bumping them off kind of way. They’ll approach me too for things—the kids all know who I’m here to see and they’ll call him when I walk in the room, they’ll be like “Oh, [the TSDHH’s] here,” but they’re equally comfortable coming up to me; they want to share things.

Another TSDHH expressed a similar sentiment:

I think that one of the main things is that when I go into her classroom, she welcomes me. I always feel welcomed. And the kids know who I am; she’s always making me a part of the conversation, or saying “Ms. X, did you see our new project?” So, making me feel like I’m part of the class, and then the kids, in turn, are asking me questions, or asking me for help or directions. I think in a

sense it's nice too for the student that I'm in there for, because she doesn't feel so singled out and it's almost like I'm there for all of them, when really I'm not.

Hospitality in nominated classrooms contrasted the feeling of being “an inconvenience” in other classrooms. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing reported that some classroom teachers were defensive about having another adult in the room and regarded the TSDHH as a supervisor rather than collaborative partner. When this happened—and the classroom teachers felt that they had to “put on a front”—the TSDHH was positioned as an outsider rather than part of the classroom.

I think a lot of teachers come in with like, “Oh, I have to put on a front, I have to impress this teacher of the deaf, I have to do things that they want me to do,” and that's their focus, so you're not really a part of the class, you're more like an outsider observing.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing appreciated when the classroom teacher allowed them to participate, whether in small ways such as answering student questions, or in big ways, such as team teaching. One veteran TSDHH, who was also a certified reading specialist, described her favorite classroom teacher as someone who “used me to the max:”

I was in there four times a week, and again it was like a team-teaching kind of thing, and she just used me to the max . . . so I would say, “Let me take them for reading,” but I will take two or three other kids, because I don't want to just work alone with my kid; I want to have a group.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing appreciated feeling valued and enjoyed contributing to the classrooms in which they worked.

Theme 3: Flexibility

Successful classroom teachers were flexible. This was an especially important quality given the varied and sometimes unpredictable schedule of TSDHH. As discussed earlier, finding times to meet was often challenging, a situation that was made easier by classroom teachers who were adaptable. One TSDHH described this flexibility.

This year we don't have a set meeting for the child, who has so many needs, but again, the structure of the school day doesn't make [consultation] work, but you heard—it would just happen. Do you know what I mean? She would make it happen. She's willing to say, "Okay, I'm going to eat, but go ahead and talk to me" or "Yes, it's gym and this is my planning period, but come in and talk," which is something you don't get from a lot of teachers as well. They're like no, that's my time, you can't interrupt it. And that's fair. I mean I would expect that and I try to respect it. But [this teacher] has always been very willing. Like if this is the time we can get, yup, come on in and let's chat. So, the school doesn't necessarily make [consultation] happen, but she does.

Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

For successful TSDHH, themes included positivity, an ability to read the teacher, flexibility, and an ability to work the room. These themes are described here.

Theme 1: Positivity

Embedded within the theme of positivity was the ability to deliver information well, a friendly personality, and a helpful and appreciative demeanor. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing saw the importance of positivity (even when things were a mess), compliments (even when changes were needed) and targeted,

constructive suggestions (even when many things needed to change). One TSDHH shared:

I try to keep it kind of light and upbeat, and even if I know . . . like, I've walked into classrooms that are disastrous and everything feels wrong, and like oh my gosh, I would never put the deaf kid there, he can't see you or hear you, and everything is wrong and bad. And I'll start with something that went well. Even if it's just like, "Oh you read that book, and I love that book, like I remember reading that," and—and kind of sandwich the thing that needs to happen. Like you, I was a regular classroom teacher before doing this job and I had that experience of people coming into my room and just tearing everything down and I didn't want to work with them. And maybe they had good information but all I was hearing was criticism. And so I try to do the same, and keep it positive as much as I can, while still being honest, but then weave in the things that need to be changed.

Information delivery. Often, the way a request is made is just as important as the request itself. One teacher explained, "It's all in your delivery . . . I think teachers don't like to be told." Classroom teachers appreciated when TSDHH operated "in a way that's collaborative and not top-down."

I think the way she introduces it is just a suggestion. Like, for example, when someone comes in and says "Oh my god this is all wrong"—it's not like that at all. She comes in and says, "Hey, I noticed that he's doing this. Have you ever tried this? Or, have you had a student with this before, I've tried this in the past and it's worked." So just little suggestions.

Classroom teachers experienced many emotions the first time they had a student with hearing loss in their class. These emotions included fear or anxiety about “messing up.” Successful TSDHH helped alleviate these fears by telling classroom teachers they would mess up—and that it was okay. They said this when introducing equipment, creating a safe space for use of technology from day one. One classroom teacher said:

I think one of the things [the TSDHH] did right off the bat is [she said] . . .

“You’re going to mess up at least once, you need to know that, everybody does.”

And I think those kinds of things, and the humor, and just—the mess-ups aren’t going to break you and your relationship with this kid. It’s going to happen, he’s going to think it’s hilarious, try not to curse. All of those little things that I think help allay any concern.

Personality. Finally, and perhaps hardest to replicate, was the personality of successful TSDHH. Embedded within this was the idea of positivity. One classroom teacher described her TSDHH partner as “just being happy, coming into a classroom and smiling at the kids.” Another, speaking of her TSDHH partner, said, “You can’t help but like her. You would want to work with her, you know? I think her whole mannerism and—just that she’s so pleasant—I think makes it so much easier. But how do you teach that?” Attempts have been made to “teach” social skills and kindness to teachers who need to interact with others as part of their jobs (Long, 2011); however, it is possible that these are partly inherent qualities that one either has or does not.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in this study saw the need to start small and build to a larger classroom presence.

I feel like you want to be friendly, you want to be open, and you want to be unobtrusive to start. You do not want to get in their face. So, there are teachers that I'll say, "When can we talk, you tell me a good time" . . . and they'll say, "Oh ok, because not now." They can't make a decision now.

Helpful. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing were willing to help out classroom teachers even if tasks were outside what was traditionally considered the TSDHH's role. In their interviews, classroom teachers expressed appreciation for this help. One veteran TSDHH said:

Just be ready to help out, when she's "frazzly-wazzly" in the morning, and you're going to take the student out and she's like, "Oh my god, this printer didn't print the right thing,"—let me take it down and I'll print it really quick because I have that option and it's just to support her. So I think there's an element of trust there and cooperation and collaboration . . . we're there to work together . . . not like I'm her para, it's more like we are on the same level and we're trying to get it all done and how can we help each other.

Appreciative and open. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing avoided the "expert role" by recognizing the knowledge and value of classroom teachers. One TSDHH described this as "seeing each person and team for what they bring to the table. And appreciating that." Mutual respect was regarded as a prerequisite to successful relationships. Keeping an open mind and avoiding defensiveness were identified as important for cultivating successful relationships.

You have to go into this type of consultant job just being open to what everybody has to say and not being defensive if somebody says something that you feel is

wrong. You have to be like—okay, well that’s okay, I didn’t realize that I saw it that way, but you guys are seeing something different—just kind of keeping an open mind.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing attempted to be available, through phone and email, whenever teachers had questions.

I know that if anything ever were to come up when it’s not during our consult time, they can reach out to me, I’m always available, I always have my phone—so keeping it always an open flow of communication.

In her individual interview, this TSDHH’s classroom teacher partner said she appreciated this availability.

Theme 2: Ability to “Read the Teacher”

Successful TSDHH were able to “read the teacher,” a skill that improved with experience. When asked about their consultation style, most TSDHH said they had no set style, *but changed their approach depending on the classroom teacher with whom they were working*. Of her style, one TSDHH said:

It depends on the teacher I’m consulting with. Honestly. Because if the teacher is kind of laidback and needs that, then that’s what I do, and if the teacher needs me to come in with very specific time frames, and like one question or two questions, or one suggestion, then I do.

Another TSDHH explained:

You just get a feel for the person. . . . I’ve been doing it for long enough to kind of figure it out . . . there’s nothing in particular that I do, talking to them I guess,

mostly it's just talking, seeing their style of teaching, watching them, watching them with other people, talking to other people around them.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing said they were different in every classroom—structured and strict in some, friendly and easygoing in others, following the tone set by the classroom teacher. It sometimes took a month or longer to figure out the tone of the classroom and determine what the classroom teacher needed in a collaborative partner. As one TSDHH explained, this included understanding that everyone is guided by different internal motivations.

Well I think it's first reading the teacher. I think one thing I'm able to do is I put myself in their shoes and see me from their shoes. Like switch the roles, so I think what I try to do and then depending on their personality, I try and guide my behavior and words—I feed off of them. So with someone like [this classroom teacher] I know I can joke with her and I know that she's not going to get offended whereas other teachers I know would take it personally and might be more sensitive.

Part of being able to read the teacher was taking time to observe in classrooms in order to see the teacher's personality and teaching style. According to TSDHH, observation was also important for the following reasons: (a) to see the expectations held of typical students, (b) to assess the student's ability to advocate and to help the student see which accommodations are helping him or her, and (c) to hear the language being used in order to later review with the student. Sometimes, special education directors fail to see the importance of these observations. In making the case for including observations on students' IEPs, one TSDHH said:

You have to sell yourself. They want to know why you're just going to sit there for an hour. And you have to say it's a critical part of the consultation; it's a critical part of working with the kids.

Theme 3: Flexibility

Flexibility has been called the hallmark of the itinerant teacher (Kluwin, Morris, & Clifford, 2004). Perhaps not surprisingly, then, it was mentioned multiple times as a trait of successful TSDHH. According to classroom teachers, TSDHH demonstrated flexibility in scheduling and a willingness to work in or outside of the classroom depending on what was happening that day.

And her flexibility, she'd come in and if we were doing a certain activity and I really didn't want him to leave the room because I felt like he was really going to miss out or it would be hard for him to catch up later, she would be like, "Sure, we'll stay in this time." So having that flexibility, not this rigid schedule of coming for this amount of time, on this specific day, to do this specific activity—that way you're able to meet that kid's needs in a way that works for both the classroom and the teacher of the deaf. And he's still getting everything he needs, but we're not sticking to this rigid schedule. So being flexible and open to different times, different ways of doing different things, maybe he'll be pulled out twice this week instead of once, whatever it was, but having the flexibility I think is number one, to make it work. If you're not flexible, it's not going to work.

Theme 4: Ability to “Work the Room”

Classroom teachers recognized the ability of TSDHH to “work the room.”

Participants struggled to concretely define this concept, but provided multiple examples.

Below are three ways classroom teacher participants expressed this idea.

- I feel like what works is that second person somehow has to almost—I don’t know how to phrase it—I think you have to know almost how to work the room. Like I think [the TSDHH] knows—like you *insert yourself where you think other kids might need help*, and I appreciate that. She doesn’t have to; I mean [turning toward TSDHH] you don’t have to help me (laughs).
- Being able to look quickly, assess what’s going on and what can I do to help, whether it be the student, a group of students, the teacher, whatever it might be. But that *ability to observe, assess, and act—within a really quick period of time*—is huge.
- Being someone who can make themselves a part of the classroom environment for the time they’re in there . . . she’ll walk in, and she checks in with her student . . . but if they’re working independently on something, and she also doesn’t want to sit next to them the whole time—especially in third grade, because we’re trying to build independence—she’ll start to walk around; she’ll answer their questions. So I feel like, *being able to feel comfortable in a classroom and be able to walk around and help others and make yourself a part of that room while you’re there*, is really important.

Preparation

Teacher Preparation: Current Practices (RQ1)

Most TSDHH felt that their graduate education did not adequately prepare them to consult with other adults. Instead, much of their skillset came from prior classroom experience or from observing classroom teachers' strategies while working as TSDHH. One TSDHH said experience in early intervention (EI) in graduate school helped improve her skills for working with adults in their "territory"; homes for EI work, and classrooms for general education teachers. Some TSDHH interviewees were pioneers in consultation before guidelines were in place. As a whole, TSDHH reported that they had "to learn on the job."

I would say [grad school] didn't prepare me at all. And then I was asked to, all of the sudden, be an itinerant. It was just like here you go, go do this. And it's like, what is an observation, what is a consult . . . luckily, there was another person who was starting at the same time I was, so the two of us kind of figured it out. And then we started to try to set up, okay this is what this means, and this is what that means, and just did a lot of calling each other back and forth and texting and saying what are you doing, and I actually had a really tough time for the first several years and still do once in a while.

Two TSDHH participants with prior classroom teaching experience felt that it was crucial to have previously led a classroom in order to be effective TSDHH. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing participants without prior teaching experience said they learned on the job through observing classroom teachers with whom they

worked. It is possible that TSDHH without prior teaching experience can learn through observation, but this may take years. A TSDHH with prior classroom experience said:

I think it's really important to have regular ed. classroom teaching experience, not just a degree in education and student teaching, but actually being the classroom teacher, prior to being a specialist. I really think it should be a requirement. Even if you just do it for a year. Because you can't understand what it's like to be a classroom teacher if you haven't done it. And being a student teacher is not the same thing, because that's not your room, you're in another teacher's room doing what they do the way they do it because that's how they told you to do it. But when you have your own space, and you have people coming in and giving you information like crazy, and you have stacks of IEPs in the hall, you can't read them, it's virtually impossible, I don't know how you could. And unless you've had that experience. . . . I know just from mentoring a lot of the newer staff in my department. They just don't understand.

The second TSDHH with classroom experience said:

I always try to be pretty open, because I had the classroom teaching experience, which I think significantly helped. I'm not sure how I would have been at the beginning had I not been on the other side of the desk first and understood what it's like to teach . . . and knowing what it's like to be a teacher, and have a full classroom, and have people come in and interrupt that, or not, I think helped me. One, to understand it, and two, to be able to say to the teachers, "I get what it's like, I'm asking you for the world, but I understand reality is such and such, or I

understand your time is limited,” so I can try to relate to them that way, so I think that definitely helped.

Teacher Preparation: Ideas For Improvement (RQ2)

Participants agreed that the itinerant role demanded working with a variety of adults, which was a skill often overlooked in preparation programs.

If you’re a classroom teacher, you have to be able to work with kids. If you’re an itinerant teacher, you have to be able to work with adults, as well as kids. I mean you have to work with the secretaries, and the sped directors, and the principals, and the classroom teachers, and with everybody. The janitor, to get your room. The audiologists, and the parents, you have to be able to work with all of those people, and then the kids, as well . . . you have to be able to ask for what you want, to convince people of what you want, without them knowing you’re doing it.

Certain traits and skills were needed to do the job well. Ideas for cultivating these traits in teachers during teacher preparation programs are discussed in the next section.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing said certain personality traits were needed for the job, including independence, the ability to advocate, and finally, possession of internal motivation without a need for external validation. On the importance of advocacy and speaking up, one TSDHH said:

My job is to stand up for my kids who don’t know what they need, or as they get older, do know what they need, but are intimidated by their teachers and can’t say it. And so I don’t know how you would teach that, but I think it should be very clear that if you’re going to be an itinerant, there’s certain personality traits that

you have to have because you can't be meek, and shy, and uncomfortable, and quiet . . . nobody tells you you're doing a good job because nobody knows what you're supposed to do. So, you have to be independent.

One TSDHH said that colleagues who started the job with her six years ago no longer work in this field because they struggled with the interpersonal aspects of the role.

I think luckily I'm a pretty friendly, outgoing person . . . but I have a lot of people that I started with that are no longer in the job because I think that's where it fell apart. So they were itinerants and then they just suffered the whole time they were doing it.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing suggested ways to prepare future TSDHH, including scripting role-plays, providing practicum opportunities, case studies, and observations, including exploration of personal communication styles, and finally, explicitly defining and teaching consultation.

The first suggestion was "scripting," or having pre-service teachers predict and prepare interactions they might have with classroom teachers. For example, the pre-service TSDHH could observe in a classroom (or watch a video of a classroom observation) and then script the conversation with the classroom teacher that might follow. Scripting involves planning both sides of the interaction, so the graduate student would anticipate what the classroom teacher might say, and then consider how they would respond. Similar to a "choose your own adventure" novel, the pre-service teacher would plan multiple conversations to incorporate different classroom teacher attitudes, including planning for a teacher who is defensive, one who is aggressive, or one who is

overly apologetic. This activity would help teachers-to-be practice changing their style to fit the person with whom they're working. One veteran TSDHH described this.

I'm finding graduate students that come through with me, the hardest part is, I keep saying to them, is scripting. Pretend you need to talk, and write it out or script it out or role play, because what are you going to ask, how is this conversation going to go, what if the teacher is really defensive, and then what would your follow-up be afterwards? Are you going to email them in a week and say "How did this go?" Or are you going to give them a form, is it a checklist, are you just going to wait until the next time you see them?

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing saw a need to practice these interactions in graduate school because "the more time you have talking to people, the more experienced you get, the more comfortable you become." Another suggestion was facilitating exploration by graduate students of their personal communication style as a way to improve their self-awareness of how they came across to classroom teachers. The field of psychology has resources, including scales and checklists, that graduate students could use for this purpose.

Finally, TSDHH suggested explicit teaching of consultation to TSDHH-to-be. Rather than talking about consultation generally, this practical discussion would include defining consultation, providing examples and expectations for the role, and comparing and contrasting consultation to direct service. Finally, being able to succinctly explain hearing loss and modify classroom content was seen as crucial. One TSDHH said, "being able to explain hearing loss and technology in two sentences [is crucial]. Because that's

all anyone's going to listen to. Take all this information and if you can't summarize it in two sentences then think about how you can and still get the main points across."

An understanding of the scope and sequence of curricula was also important so that TSDHH could integrate classwork with IEP goals. One TSDHH explained that teachers would often ask her to complete worksheets with her student. In her view, this was not a good use of service time, but integrating class content with IEP objectives made the task productive: "I'm not going to do the worksheet. What I am going to do is look at the question forms, maybe ask different questions, or maybe require them to write out responses that include whatever language structure I'm teaching." Years on the job led TSDHH to increase their confidence and skills, because they were able to talk from their own experience with students.

My confidence has grown a lot, because the first year I was like I don't know what I'm doing, I'm reiterating everything I learned from grad school. It's different now because I've actually had experiences with what I'm talking about, beyond grad school, so I can say something and feel like I'm really meaning it and feel really heartfelt because I know I've been through that with another student, or I know I've seen this somewhere else.

Advice from the Field

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in this study were recognized as successful consultants. My goal was to quantify what these TSDHH did naturally into concrete advice to inform the practice of future TSDHH. Advice emerged as five suggestions: (a) don't assume, (b) listen first, (c) ask guiding questions, (d)

understand where teachers are coming from, and (e) facilitate communication among the team. These five tips are elaborated on in this section.

Tip One: Don't Assume

As much as possible, TSDHH entered classrooms and meetings “free of assumptions,” especially at the beginning of the school year.

Having no preconceptions about what it's going to be like when you start in a classroom, because the first couple weeks of school too are not what it's going to be—that's setting up routines, that's setting expectations. So as the teacher of the deaf, I need to know those things but I can't just decide that this is going to be great or it's going to be terrible or I should do this or that, but kind of waiting it out to see what's going to happen, and building that trust.

Avoiding assumptions was especially important when conducting and consulting following classroom observations, which can sometimes cause classroom teachers to feel defensive. When TSDHH observed classrooms and then met with teachers, they prefaced their observation. This set the stage for parity, cooperation, and partnership:

For example, one TSDHH would start by saying something like the following.

I want you to understand—that I understand—that this is just a snapshot in time. So when I come in and do an observation and the kid is either really great that day or really bad that day, and neither one of those things is typical, you need to just let me know that. Because I get that. You're the most important person in this relationship, you've got to tell me . . . you know, this is what I see, do you see that also?

Tip Two: Listen First

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing echoed the importance of listening first, especially at the beginning of relationships. One veteran TSDHH said, "One piece of advice about how to come in and talk to adults: Listen first. Don't go in charging and command that they do everything, and set yourself up to fail because you're going to be seen as this little dictator coming in. Come in, ask a question about how it's going, and listen first to what they have to say. And then go from there. And your first consult might not have anything to do with what you want it to do with, it might not have anything to do with your kid! It doesn't matter. It's all about listening first, and how can I help you?"

Listening was necessary for building trust. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing took time to observe in classrooms and build trust before making suggestions. One TSDHH said, "At the beginning you have to build the teacher's trust, that you're not there to spy . . . you're there to help, you're not going to step on their toes and take over their class." Part of trust-building was taking time to observe before offering suggestions. One classroom teacher described the way her TSDHH partner spent time in the classroom before offering advice:

The first two times you were there, you just came in and observed. I think to get a feel for what our classroom is like, what is the third-grade expectation . . . so she's observing my classroom and the kids and the routines and the work. I'm also observing her and how she works with that one student and what she's here to do, and the kinds of things that she's able to help with. So I think if you're both open to that, that makes it much more easy to then come together.

Another aspect of building trust and setting the groundwork for strong relationships was the ability of TSDHH to follow the teacher's lead rather than her own personal agenda at the start of the school year. One way to do this was by "solving little problems" identified by the teacher.

The student that we had in common I had worked with previously, and she had not . . . even though he was only in first grade, he had a really difficult home life, and he struggled a lot. So, rather than starting with the hearing loss, which I'm obviously there for, her concern was his behavior, and I knew what to do for his behavior because I knew him really well. And so I worked with that, I solved little problems for her, and she began to see that I was helpful. . . . And so from there, we could then focus on the hearing loss, and I could actually do what my job really is. But she trusted me with what she viewed as a problem, and then, over time, realized that oh, the hearing loss is actually a problem.

In this way, TSDHH *followed the lead of the classroom teacher* to build trust before working toward other goals they had set for the student.

Tip Three: Ask Guiding Questions

Classroom teachers said that successful TSDHHs observe, ask questions, and make suggestions, rather than demands. I wanted to probe this process from the perspective of TSDHH. How do TSDHH frame their suggestions in this way? One TSDHH described the process:

I ask a lot of guiding questions that lead at the answer that I already know. So for example, oftentimes we talk about preferential seating and teachers put kids front and center, and that's not necessarily the best spot for a student with hearing loss,

because they don't have access to any peers . . . a myriad of reasons. So, if I knew that was wrong, rather than just saying, "Move her to the left," if that's already the conversation that we've had, I could say: "Huh, you know what I observe in the other classes? I know that she participates a lot, but when I come into this class, I notice that she really doesn't participate, she's hyper-focused on you, she's really not attending visually to peers, what do you think that's about?" And then the teacher will give me whatever the response is, and then I can ask follow-up questions that lead them to recognize, oh maybe it's the seat . . . because sometimes you can say that a million times and they're not hearing you, but if they come to the conclusion, "Oh yeah, that is her good ear and maybe she should be over there," they're more likely to do it.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing acknowledged that it would be easier and faster to simply *tell* classroom teachers what to do—such as where to seat the student—but that approach was not as effective nor as permanent as asking guiding questions that *led teachers to draw conclusions themselves*. People are more willing to support a solution that they helped create (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). Thus, the guiding-question approach, while more time-consuming, leads to increased buy-in and effort in the long run. One TSDHH's strategy for guiding teachers was filling out scales and checklists alongside the classroom teacher. This conveyed information in an objective way. For example, rather than tell a classroom teacher that she needed to help foster age-appropriate advocacy skills for the student, in filling out an objective checklist on self-advocacy, the teacher would recognize that her student was behind in these skills and needed more support.

Tip Four: Respect Limitations

Successful TSDHH understood and respected the limitations of classroom teachers. As one TSDHH put it:

You just want to be really respectful of these people that are working with 23, 24, 25 kids, and I come in and I want them to focus in on one. And I've had teachers over the years say to me, "You know what, I'm not worried about the kid that you're working with, I'm worried about six other kids I wish you could work with them." And I go, "But they're not deaf and the reason is that your kid is doing so well is that you're putting all these things in place." You've just got to make them feel successful and I think that's kind of been the theme all along.

Successful TSDHH were able to put themselves in the shoes of classroom teachers and understand the high expectations and pressures of the job. This allowed them to frame their suggestions through an empathetic lens. One classroom teacher commented on how helpful this understanding was to setting a strong foundation for the relationship.

Right from the beginning, [the TSDHH said], "Hey, I know this is your busiest time of year, you're literally trying to unpack a brand-new classroom in a brand-new space, but this is going to be worth your time for [the student]." I think you were very clear on that [addressing TSDHH]. And his mom was very gracious too. But you know, recognizing, hey we do have these busy things, but this is a priority and why carving out this time is going to help us in the long run, to kind of establish the relationship. I feel like you did a really nice job with that.

Tip Five: Facilitate Team Communication

Sometimes, it fell to the TSDHH to take an active role in facilitating communication among members of the team. Some TSDHH front-loaded this communication at the beginning of the year as a way to set a strong foundation for the coming months.

In some of my students' cases where there has been a lack of communication between the team, I've gone in and been like, "We all need to talk, I can't have you talking to this person, and then this person talking to the parent, and then I'm talking to everybody but nobody else is talking to each other." So I think that's made me a good consultant because I want to know what's going on with everybody, because I'm outside—they're all in the school together. So in order for me to make sure, I need to go in and say—kind of take a little bit of a leadership role to say—let's all meet, and talk about this.

Once the groundwork for strong relationships was established, TSDHH could default to email communication.

Once there's a good communication flow, I can back off on the personal meetings and we can have email exchanges. But for the first four months of school, I want to see those people once a month, or whatever the grid allows. As often as I can.

Summary

Data collection for this study included semi-structured interviews with TSDHH, classroom teachers, and dyads. Interviews were analyzed using the NVIVO software, and the constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized (Glaser, 1965). There were five groups: (a) dyads, (b) classroom teachers, (c) TSDHH, (d) teacher preparation, and

(e) advice from the field. Themes arose in each group. For dyads, themes included flexibility, shared goals, and mutual respect. For classroom teachers, themes included flexibility, a welcoming nature, and “good” teaching. For TSDHH, themes included flexibility, positivity, an ability to read the teacher, and an ability to work the room.

Most TSDHH felt that their graduate education did not adequately prepare them to consult with other adults, and said that most of their skills came from prior classroom experience or from observing classroom teachers’ strategies while working as TSDHH. Suggested ways to prepare future TSDHH included scripting role-plays, practicum opportunities, case studies, observations, exploration of personal communication styles, and finally, explicitly defining and teaching consultation. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing advice emerged as five suggestions: (a) don’t assume, (b) listen first, (c) ask guiding questions, (d) understand where teachers are coming from, and (e) facilitate communication among the team. In the following chapter, these findings are integrated with research, and limitations and future directions are discussed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Because he deals with children who have a complex problem and with educators and parents who may not fully understand this problem and are limited in their abilities to help, the [TSDHH] will need special insights. He should have a well adjusted personality able to cope effectively with personal frustration. (Mackie & Harrington, 1959, p. 7)

Summary of Research Findings

Chapter IV introduced portraits of five teacher dyads and themes gleaned from dyadic and individual interviews with TSDHH and general education teachers. This chapter integrates findings with prior research, discusses implications for practice, identifies possible limitations, and suggests future research needed on this topic.

The purpose of this study was to probe how consultation is currently happening and to identify qualities of successful consultation relationships between TSDHH and classroom teachers. Participants were selected through a two-step nomination process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with each of the 10 participants and then with each of the five dyads, which were made up of one TSDHH and one classroom teacher who worked together. Thus, 15 interviews served as the primary mode of data collection. Interview notes were also utilized as data. Qualitative analyses were used to answer the following research questions:

- Q1 What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers regarding the consultation process?

Q2 What are the qualities of successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and general education classroom teachers?

Findings were grouped as follows: dyads, classroom teachers, TSDHH, preparation, and advice. Themes arose in each group.

For dyads, themes included the following: (a) flexibility, (b) shared goals, and (c) mutual respect. Dyads reported that meetings happened “on the fly” rather than at scheduled times. Cell phones were helpful for more flexible communication between TSDHH and classroom teachers. Dyads stated that humor, openness, and shared leadership made the relationship work. Setting shared goals for students, and respecting each other’s knowledge and expertise, led to a strong relationship.

For classroom teachers, themes included (a) flexibility, (b) a welcoming nature, and (c) “good” teaching. Some classroom teachers initially felt fearful, apprehensive, or nervous about teaching students with hearing loss for the first time, especially about using technology such as FM systems. These feelings were quelled by TSDHH. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing said partnerships worked best when classroom teachers were flexible with meeting times, welcomed them into the classroom and introduced them to students, and held high listening and speaking expectations for all students.

For TSDHH, themes included (a) flexibility, (b) positivity, (c) an ability to read the teacher, and (d) an ability to work the room. Positivity was reflected in the way TSDHH delivered information and suggestions, helped out around the classroom, and interacted with students. An ability to read the teacher enabled the TSDHH to craft a consultation style that met each teacher’s unique needs. Finally, an ability to work the

room meant the TSDHH was able to walk around the room and help all students, without creating a distraction or detracting from the classroom teacher's leadership.

Most TSDHH felt that their graduate education did not adequately prepare them to consult with other adults. Most of their skills came from prior classroom experience or from observing classroom teachers' strategies while working as TSDHH. Some TSDHH with prior classroom teaching experience felt that it was crucial to have previously led a classroom in order to be an effective TSDHH. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing said certain personality traits were needed for the job, including independence, the ability to advocate, and finally, internal motivation without a need for external validation. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing suggested ways to prepare future TSDHH, including scripting role-plays, practicum opportunities, case studies, observations, exploration of personal communication styles, and finally, explicitly defining and teaching consultation.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing were asked to indicate what they did that worked. Advice emerged as five suggestions: (a) don't assume, (b) listen first, (c) ask guiding questions, (d) understand where teachers are coming from, and (e) facilitate communication among the team.

Integration of Findings with Research and Implications for Practice

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing regularly engage in consultation as part of their jobs. Consultation often includes (a) assessment and progress reports, (b) parent communication, (c) teacher communication, (d) facilitating accommodations and use of technology, and (e) IEP development, IEP meetings, and

in-services (Davison-Mowle, Leigh, Duncan, & Arthur-Kelly, 2018). This section integrates findings from the current study with consultation research and implications for practice.

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in this study saw themselves as observers who took time to listen before offering suggestions. According to Harris and Ueda (2017), “observing in classrooms is one of the richest sources of information” (p. 169). Understanding the setting is necessary to guide consultation. Additionally, observing and listening can shed light on the teacher’s perspective of the situation, the setting, and his or her role within it. Understanding the teacher’s mindset is the first step in consultation. According to Hylander (2017): “The only way to proceed is to start where the teacher is. That means listening to his or her representation of the problem and trying to negotiate a contract on what to do right now” (p. 28).

Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing advised new TSDHH to “listen first.” According to Hylander (2017), the reasoning for this is twofold: to understand the teacher’s mindset and to move correctly through consultation phases. Taking time to listen sets the foundation for a successful consultation relationship. This is essential to establish before offering suggestions (Hylander, 2017, p. 29). Thus, even though TSDHH have limited time to meet with teachers, they should allow time for listening, confirmation, and feedback, before any advice is prescribed. Additionally, TSDHH and classroom teachers benefit from opportunities to reflect on their relationship. Check-ins in the middle of the school year and again at the end of the year would provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the relationship, and to consider positive aspects and aspects that could be improved.

“A genuine understanding of teachers’ work situations is key” to successful consultation (Hylander, 2017, p. 27). Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing should observe in classrooms *before* offering suggestions. Additionally, TSDHH should ask teachers guiding questions rather than simply telling them what to do. A person’s mind cannot be changed in a lasting way by simply telling them to change. Instead, they must make the change themselves after being repeatedly presented with information and situations that contradict what they believe to be true. This can be understood in relation to paradigm shifts in scientific understanding. “Scientists have to confront and address anomalies in the currently accepted paradigm. When enough significant anomalies have occurred . . . motivation exists to examine new ideas, even ones previously discarded, in an effort to build a new model.” (Sandoval, 2014, p. 16)

This phenomenon can be explored in the example of a teacher who believes she does not need to use the FM system. The TSDHH simply telling the teacher the system is necessary is unlikely to lead to lasting change. Instead, presenting the teacher with numerous examples that disrupt her existing belief may lead her to *change her mind herself*. These examples may include (a) simulations of classroom listening with a hearing loss with and without an FM system, (b) having the teacher wear earplugs to take the “unfair spelling test,” or (c) the student with hearing loss explaining herself why she needs the FM system. After one or more of these activities, TSDHH can lead classroom teachers down a path of questioning to help them reach the conclusion that the FM system makes a positive impact. Successful TSDHH consultants show rather than tell why accommodations and modification are important.

Flexibility is also an essential quality, both for successful TSDHH and for classroom teachers (Engler & MacGregor, 2018; Johnson, 2013). Teaching often has surprises and unpredictability, especially for TSDHH, for whom flexibility is often a daily requirement. “Teachers learn to predict and prepare for the ‘frequently encountered challenges’ (FECs) that impede the success of their students. The deaf education literature is replete with examples of FECs, for example, amplification systems that do not work properly” (Johnson, 2013, p. 446). Engler and MacGregor (2018) conducted a phenomenological case study of one graduate preparation program for TSDHH. Flexibility emerged as a dominant theme and “essential skill.” “Teacher candidates demonstrated flexibility when they were able to monitor and adjust throughout their lessons and day” (Engler & MacGregor, 2018, p. 400). Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in particular must be flexible when it comes to scheduling and mode of service delivery (i.e., whether they are providing service within the classroom or in a separate setting).

“What to say and how to say it has always been the main source of anxiety for consultants” (Hatzichristou, Lampropoulou, Georgouleas, & Mihou, 2017, p. 76). How consultants deliver a message is often as important as what is said. Delivery of information is an important process component of consultation that should be taught and practiced (Hatzichristou et al., 2017). Implicit in successful delivery of information is avoidance of the expert role. Information is better received when it is provided as a suggestion rather than a demand, especially given the collaborative relationship inherent in the classroom teacher and TSDHH relationship. The psychology field teaches avoidance of the expert role: “In order for psychologists to function effectively as

consultants in this collaborative model, they must avoid presenting themselves as experts or being cast into such a role by educators” (Cole & Wiener, 2017, p. 40). Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing are often trained to be “experts on hearing loss” even though assuming the expert role is detrimental to consultation success. Although TSDHH bring specialized knowledge to consultation, they must learn strategies for how to infuse parity into the relationship. For example, when classroom teachers congratulate or offer compliments to consultants, consultants should reflect compliments back to the cooperating teacher (Sandoval, 2014). “Consultation is not *supervision*, because collaborative consultation cannot function freely if the consultant is also viewed as a supervisor or evaluator” (Sandoval, 2014, p. 3). As part of their training, future TSDHH should learn the rationale of, and strategies for, avoiding both the supervisor and expert role.

Classroom teachers in the current study struggled to define what they saw as an important yet amorphous quality of their TSDHH teacher partner—that she was likable. Although this quality may feel hard to define, the field of psychology provides examples: “the ability to work effectively with other adults, to share expertise, to facilitate during meetings, to empower others to come to decisions, to synthesize complex and sometimes contradictory information, and to help the consultees formulate a plan of action” (Farrell & Woods, 2017, p. 225).

According to Ingraham (2017), consultants need to have a “disposition that invite consultees to participate in the consultation process” (p. 294). Are traits and dispositions inherent or learned? While innately having certain dispositions is helpful, communication skills, social skills, and leadership skills can be improved through skill work and practice

(see Dweck's work on fixed vs. growth mindsets, 2006). Because some people are born with these skills, it may appear that some people have them and others do not. However, the challenge is making implicit skills explicit, and finding ways to teach them.

For example, I am friends with a group of Ph.D. students who are studying to be psychologists. One day, one of these students mentioned to me that she took a consultation course as part of her course of study. Because consultation is my dissertation topic, I was excited and started asking about the specifics of the course. However, I soon realized my friend was not impressed with the class at all—she saw it as busy work. When I probed more deeply, and she described her learning in the class, it dawned on me that the course learning objectives and activities were new to me and likely to other TSDHH—but were old hat to this former therapist. This is because many consultation skills mirror what is taught in the mental health field. Active listening, asking questions, repeating and rephrasing—the skills important in consultation—are taught to pre-service therapists and psychologists. Professionals who will consult as part of their job (e.g., TSDHH) also need these skills.

Psychologists who understand consultation theory, and effectively communicate with diverse people, could teach this content. According to Farrell and Woods, “the consultant needs to possess excellent interpersonal and facilitatory skills and a high level of professional credibility among those with whom he or she is consulting, all of which are psychological in nature” (2017, p. 226). Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing pre-service programs might consider collaborating with psychology departments to offer courses to teach this content.

Preparation of Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The current study explored what *is* working in consultation in the field of deaf education. The next step is to determine how to incorporate this content into teacher preparation programs for future TSDHH, and professional development opportunities for current TSDHH. This section includes the following: (a) an overview of the current landscape of deaf education teacher preparation programs; (b) an exploration of topics that may be useful to teach pre-service teachers; and finally, (c) examples of innovative deaf education preparation programs.

Professional standards. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council on the Education of the Deaf (CED) are recognized leaders in setting professional standards for TSDHH. According to CEC, “One of the significant changes in education over the past several decades is the rapid growth of collaborative educational teams to address the educational needs of students” (CEC, 2015b, p. 9). The CEC Initial Preparation Standards include the following objectives under the collaboration strand:

- (a) Beginning special education professionals use the theory and elements of effective collaboration;
- (b) Beginning special education professionals serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues;
- (c) Beginning special education professionals use collaboration to promote the well being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and collaborators. (CEC, 2015b)

The CEC’s advanced preparation standards call for collaborative skills and that teachers “promote understanding, resolve conflicts, and build consensus” (CEC, 2015a). The CEC’s “Initial Specialty Set: Deaf and Hard of Hearing” lists skills related to collaboration, interpreting data, participating in professional networks, providing

impartial information to families and helping team members work with students who are DHH (CEC, 2018). Though CEC acknowledges increased collaboration in special education, the standards do not mention consultation, which is the mode of service delivery most often utilized by TSDHH.

The CED standards better align with current expectations for itinerant TSDHH in general education settings. They suggest that TSDHH in training should learn: (a) models of consultation; (b) group problem-solving skills, (c) ways to coach others; and (d) how to adequately communicate with school professionals (CED, 2012).

Prior teaching experience. Some TSDHH in the current study suggested that prior teaching experience is necessary before entering the field of deaf education as an itinerant teacher. Veteran TSDHH with prior classroom experience saw their classroom experience as crucial to helping them perform the itinerant TSDHH role.

Some preparation programs are uniquely structured to build off teachers' prior experience. For example, Utah State University offers a DHH endorsement for licensed special education teachers and speech-language pathologists to help them in "serving children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) in general education settings" (comdde.usu.edu). This represents an example of leveraging prior teaching experience to prepare TSDHH. However, teachers who enter this program may have experience working with students one-on-one or in small groups, not in whole-class settings. Additionally, many programs have no requirements for prior teaching experience. University programs may consider adding classroom teaching experience as a component of, or prerequisite to, preparation programs for TSDHH.

Current landscape. When proposing components to add to TSDHH preparation programs, it is important to note the current national landscape of deaf education preparation. The number of deaf education programs is decreasing (Dolman, 2010). According to deafed.net, there are currently 56 graduate programs for deaf education, down from 83 in 1986 (Johnson, 2013). Many of these graduate programs focus on early intervention, even though the majority of children with hearing loss are school-age (Johnson, 2013). According to researchers, there is reason for concern around deaf education teacher preparation programs. In 2013, Johnson sounded the alarm: “Changes in student demographic characteristics and educational settings, combined with the rapidly diminishing number and diversity of deaf education teacher preparation (DETP) programs, indicate that the field of deaf education may be at a tipping point” (Johnson, 2013, p. 439). Thus, in the near future, there may not be enough preparation programs, to prepare enough teachers, to meet the need of students who are DHH.

Preparation activities. Research suggests that TSDHH would benefit from increased content on the public school system taught within their preparation programs. Engler and MacGregor (2018) conducted a phenomenological case study of a graduate preparation program for TSDHH. One theme for program improvement was for “Public School 101” to help pre-service TSDHH learn how to best navigate the public school environment (p. 402). “Teacher candidates needed a better understanding of the public school system and an increase in knowledge and methodologies related to subject content areas” (Engler & MacGregor, 2018, p. 400). Ironically, in 1956, Mackie was calling for the same: “These specially trained teachers [of students who are DHH] should possess not only the competencies to be described in this report, but should also possess

knowledge of the philosophy, organization, curriculum, and methods of general education” (p. 5). The CED program standards also state that TSDHH need familiarity with general education settings.

Teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing increasingly need to have both the broad general education background described above and expansive professional preparation for teaching. They should acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students without disabilities prerequisite to or concurrent with their preparation to teach students who are deaf and hard of hearing . . . consequently, prior to, or upon completion, of a program in education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, candidates also should have completed the course work generally required for a regular state teaching credential in early childhood, elementary, or secondary education. (CED, 2018, p. 8)

According to the CED program standards, “No less than one-third of a four-year curriculum should be devoted to the studies of a general nature” (CED, 2018, p. 8).

Participants in the current study suggested explicitly teaching consultation within teacher preparation. According to Sandoval (2014), a leader in consultation in psychology, consultants must possess knowledge of the consultation process, not only knowledge of their discipline.

If the consultee brings work problems to consultation, what does the consultant bring? In addition to contributing a particular set of knowledge from his or her discipline, as outlined previously, consultants also take responsibility for the consultation process . . . thus, in addition to information from their field, the

consultant must also be knowledgeable about the techniques and the process of consultation. (p. 4)

One example is the school and clinical child psychology preparation program at the University of Toronto. This program teaches consultation models (including collaborative and conjoint behavioral consultation), strategies for culturally diverse collaboration, and includes case studies, videotapes of classrooms, simulations of teacher interviewing, and reflections and discussions of experiences within its training (Cole & Wiener, 2017). Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing preparation programs might consider including similar components.

Engler and MacGregor (2018) identified the importance of future TSDHH “watching experienced teachers teach” (p. 400). Knowledge and experience woven together create a richer and more authentic learning experience (Engler & MacGregor, 2018). “Practicum, observation, participation, and student teaching are an essential and integral curriculum component for prospective teachers” (CED, 2018, p. 3). Another teaching tool, scripting, helped encourage flexibility and critical thinking. “Critical thinking was also expected while the teacher candidates were developing lesson plans. They were expected to anticipate potential challenges and think through potential solutions” (Engler & MacGregor, 2018, p. 401). Pre-service TSDHH should practice anticipating reactions and preparing responses to situations that may arise. Also, it is critical that programs preparing future itinerant TSDHH offer robust practicum experiences with knowledgeable and skilled teachers. Three innovative preparation programs that incorporate these elements are shared in the following section.

Citing the “changing role of teachers of the deaf,” Furlonger and colleagues (2010) designed an interdisciplinary program to teach graduates to work successfully not only with students, but with other teachers (Furlonger, Sharma, Moore, & Smyth King, p. 292). The program focused on reflective practice and providing indirect service through collaboration. This programmatic “structural change” included “moving from a predominantly non-inclusive pull-out paradigm to that of a pattern of service delivery that centers on strategies that assist in developing productive relationships with other adult educators and support professionals” (Furlonger et al., 2010, p. 294). The goal of the program was to increase the ability of graduate students to successfully provide indirect service through collaboration. Thus, this model mirrors inclusive trends in deaf education.

Smith (2010) evaluated one university’s interdisciplinary approach to train early interventionists to work with young children who are premature and/or medically fragile. Students were taught by instructors from the university as well as taught by members from the community, including a pediatrician, neonatal nurse practitioner, preschool coordinator, and parents of children with disabilities. This interdisciplinary approach led graduates to develop an increased knowledge of competencies; the university also strengthened relationships with community organizations (Smith, 2010). A project goal was to “model interdisciplinary teaming” (Smith, 2010, p. 133). The program uniquely used a collaborative training program to model the collaborative nature of the job of an early interventionist.

A third example is the graduate program at Fontbonne University, which prepares graduate students to work as TSDHH in inclusive settings where the majority of students

who are DHH are now taught. The university partners with Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech to provide practicum field work. In order to reach teachers in different locations, the program is primarily delivered through synchronous distance learning and video conferences and webinars.

Professional Development

“Learning to become an effective consultant is a complex and ongoing task” (Ingraham, 2017, p. 291). Consequently, ongoing professional development is essential (Wilson, Nevins, & Houston, 2010). According to Cawthon (2009), professional development can take the following formats: “(a) peer mentor relationships; (b) formal training usually provided by the school, district, or facility; and (c) local, state, or national conferences” (p. 54).

Professional development opportunities may counteract the sense of isolation that TSDHH often feel in their role. Almost six decades ago, Mackie and Harrington noted this aspect of the job. “Because he is often the only teacher with this specialty in a school system, and has only limited opportunity to obtain help from discussion with fellow specialists, he must be resourceful in using his own abilities and judgments” (Mackie & Harrington, 1959, p. 7). Sandoval (2014) called professional isolation dangerous since “working with people is too complex a process for consultants not to be able to have ongoing help and support” (p. 159).

Today, there are platforms for itinerant TSDHH to connect. For example, the *Online Itinerant* hosts a monthly virtual meet-up in which participants have an opportunity to interact. Virtual meet-ups are increasingly appropriate for a population so geographically dispersed. Blogs are another way to stay current. “Hear me out,” produced

by Clarke Mainstream Services, offers bimonthly posts about topics such as school safety, collaboration, and teaching strategies, all through the lens of deafness.

Graduate school cannot fully prepare TSDHH. In-service professional development is one way to fill in knowledge gaps (Wilson et al., 2010). However, there are a paucity of relevant and accessible professional development opportunities for TSDHH. While all teachers are required to continue their professional development, most TSDHH lack consistent access to the in-depth learning opportunities they need to meet the learning and instructional strengths and weaknesses of their students (Johnson, 2013).

Some examples of in-person conferences appropriate for itinerant TSDHH include the biannual Alexander Graham Bell Convention (held in different cities), the annual Clarke Mainstream Conference (held in Massachusetts), and the biennial *Best Practice in Mainstream Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students Conference* held at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Annual Meeting may also be applicable to some TSDHH. Because the population of TSDHH is so dispersed, there is a need for professional development delivered remotely, such as through an online format. One example of virtual professional development is the *Online Itinerant*, discussed previously, which offers webinars and synchronous workshops (note: *The Online Itinerant* is the work of Stefanie Kessen). Another example is resource compendiums, such as the website produced by Karen Anderson (successforkidswithhearingloss.com).

There remains a need for professional development in deaf education directly related to consultation. Collaboration and consultation was rated most highly in a survey that asked TSDHH “to provide suggestions for coursework and experiences that future

itinerant teachers need in order to be well prepared for the job” (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013, p. 415). Consultation is rarely the focus of deaf education professional development; however, the psychology field has resources in this area. Lam (2017) describes a two-part three-hour professional development workshop on consultation. In the first part of the workshop, participants shared consultation challenges they had faced on the job. In the second part, participants were divided into groups and brainstormed possible solutions to challenges. Participants were asked to structure responses according to whether challenges arose from the environment, from other people, or from themselves. Environmental challenges included lack of time and lack of space. Challenges from other people included weak administration/leadership and teachers with unrealistic expectations. Lastly, difficulties arising from consultants themselves included lack of knowledge, lack of preparation, and lack of strategies needed to work toward systemic change.

Summary

Findings from the current study suggest that successful TSDHH consultants are positive, helpful, strong observers who are flexible, able to “read the teacher,” “work the room,” deliver information effectively, and who have likable personalities. These characteristics should be nurtured during preparation programs and fostered while on the job. Training could include observations of excellent itinerant TSDHH, an introduction to consultation models, scripting of consultation scenarios, and increased experiences within, and content about, public schools. Furlonger and colleagues provide a useful model (2010). Even with robust preparation, professional development is necessary to help teachers troubleshoot challenges and avoid professional isolation while on the job.

Professional development on consultation in deaf education is lacking. It may be useful to borrow consultation training models from the field of psychology (Lam, 2017) and to tailor them to meet the needs of TSDHH.

Limitations

Some limitations may have affected this study. One potential limitation was the nomination process. Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing were chosen based on nominations by program and district supervisors. Some supervisors are removed from the day-to-day work of TSDHH. Consequently, it is possible that supervisors nominated TSDHH whom they believed to be successful consultants, but who did not meet the listed quality indicators (see Appendix C). Similarly, for the second phase of the nomination process, it is possible that—despite the criteria listed—TSDHH chose classroom teachers who were easy to work with rather than those with whom they had a successful consulting relationship.

A second limitation of this study was the lack of diversity of participants. All 10 participants were white females. This is not surprising given that the vast majority of TSDHH are white, hearing females (Cannon & Luckner, 2016). However, lack of participant diversity leads to a lack of insight into how consultation relationships are perceived by males or by people of color, especially when the dyad is made up of professionals from two different demographics. Future researchers should consider recruiting from underrepresented groups. Also, all classroom teachers nominated for this study had over ten years of teaching experience. This was not part of the nomination criteria, but instead happened organically based on TSDHH nominations. Future research

should consider intentionally including classroom teachers with less experience as a way to explore how that dynamic affects the partnership.

The following grade levels of teachers were included in this study: two first-grade teachers, two second-grade teachers, and one third-grade teacher. Thus, this study lacked participants who taught at the middle and high school level. It is possible that because middle and high school teachers work with a greater number of students, they have less time to meet with TSDHH. According to one TSDHH, “The high school teachers never want to take a minute, and we chat in the hall between things. But the elementary kids, usually I can get it built into the contracts easier, and people really will meet with me.” Teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing also said that middle and high schools had a different culture than their elementary counterparts. “A lot of those [schools] are not as welcoming. And they get more of that like—“I’m doing everything, I don’t need you here” that kind of thing, kind of attitude. And you’re like, “I’m not here to criticize you.” This may be due to the nature of older students with hearing loss. While elementary students may be more accepting of their hearing loss and eager to work with TSDHH, middle and high school students tend to be more self-conscious of their differences and possess a desire to blend in. Consequently, they may resist the TSDHH, who they see as representative of their differences. However, it is important to study how consultation occurs at the middle and high school level, and this should be a focus of future research.

This study included teachers employed by individual school districts and teachers employed by outside agencies. It did not include TSDHH employed by BOCES or those in private practice, which could be seen as a limitation. Finally, these 10 teachers came

from one region in the United States. Findings can be understood only in light of that region, since other regions may operate under different state funding and guidelines, and thus experience consultation differently.

As with all qualitative research, findings cannot be generalized to all TSDHH or all general education classroom teachers. Instead, findings should be interpreted only in light of the experience of the teachers involved. Rich description is included so that readers can determine to what degree the described experiences mirror their own.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study adds important insight to the limited research base on consultation in deaf education. Future research should expand this research line. This section describes possible methodologies and research designs that could be used to garner more information about this topic.

First, findings from this study should be tested with a larger sample size, using a survey derived from the present study. A Likert scale could be used to show to what degree participants agree with the findings. For example, participants might be asked to mark the importance of certain qualities on a scale of 1 to 5. This survey design would allow for a greater number of participants, more diversity within the sample, and higher generalizability of results.

Secondly, future consultation research should include first-year TSDHH. This could be done in a variety of ways. First, the current study could be replicated with first-year TSDHH, whose perspectives could be compared to those of veteran TSDHH. Secondly, a pre/post assessment could be used to explore the perceptions of TSDHH prior to their first year in the field, and then again at the end of their first year, as a way to

examine how their ideas and perspectives changed. A third study could incorporate interviewing first-year TSDHH about their concerns (replication of Guteng, 2005) to see how perceptions of beginning TSDHH have changed since the original study was published 14 years ago. Concerns of first-year TSDHH should inform content included in TSDHH preparation programs.

Focus groups could be used to explore common consultation experiences among TSDHH. Hearing others' experiences may lead TSDHH to more deeply process and share their own experiences. Interviewing groups of TSDHH about problem-solving current problems and brainstorming ideas for preparing pre-service teachers could lead to synergy in responses.

Finally, information gleaned from the aforementioned studies could be used to design an intervention to include in pre-service courses or within professional development for in-service TSDHH. The intervention could incorporate the ideas of participants from the current study, including videotaped classroom observations, scripting of conversations with teachers, an introduction to consultation models, an exploration of participants' communication styles, and finally, insights from the field about what classroom teachers want from the consultation relationship. Participants' understanding could be measured at the beginning and end of the intervention, perhaps through their responses to consultation case studies. A control group would show how TSDHH improved their consultation skills in the same amount of time without the intervention.

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APPENDIX A

**TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF
OR HARD OF HEARING
CONSENT FORM**



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Successful Partnerships Between Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and General Education Classroom Teachers

Researcher: Brittany Dorn, Doctoral Candidate

Email: Brittany.Dorn@unco.edu

Research Advisor: John Luckner, Professor, School of Special Education, (970) 351-1672

Congratulations!

You have been identified by your supervisor as a successful consultant. As a result, I would like to ask you to participate in a study I am conducting on successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH) and classroom teachers.

My name is Brittany Dorn and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Before attending UNC, I worked as a TSDHH, and before that, as a second grade classroom teacher.

For my dissertation, I am conducting a study to determine the qualities of successful partnerships between classroom teachers and TSDHH. I am conducting this study through a “lens of appreciative inquiry,” which means I am trying to find out *what works* in terms of these two professionals working together.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to choose one classroom teacher with whom you currently work and have a successful problem-solving partnership.

When choosing a classroom teacher, please keep in mind the following quality indicators of successful partnerships. Choose a general education classroom teacher with whom:

- You have regular communication through scheduled meetings, quick in-person check-ins, phone calls or emails;
- You feel a sense of parity or equality in the relationship;
- You feel comfortable bringing up issues that may be difficult to talk about or work through;

- You feel that the synergy—or combined energy and expertise of yourself and the general education classroom teacher—benefits your student who is DHH;
- You feel that consultation time is well-spent and productive rather than a waste of time or a hang-out and/or gossip session;
- You believe the relationship is grounded in mutual trust and respect.

Choose a general education classroom teacher with whom:

- You have been working with for at least two months;
- You see in person at least once per month.

The general education classroom teacher can teach any grade and any academic subject, but can not be a special education teacher or a “specials” teacher teaching art, music, or PE. The general education classroom teacher can be in his or her first year of teaching or have many years of experience.

Once you nominate a general education classroom teacher, I will reach out to that teacher to explain this study. If s/he agrees to participate, I will interview each of you separately and then together. I will audiotape the interviews so that I can later listen to and analyze the data, and I will take notes during the interview on the setting and context. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

Data will be stored on a personal computer that is password-protected. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings and transcripts. Participant consent forms will be retained for a period of three years. Recordings will be erased three years after the study concludes and all identifiable forms, such as the consent forms, will be destroyed. When data are analyzed and written up, all names will be removed.

You will receive a \$10 reward for participating in this study. Additionally, you will be contributing to an understudied area—consultation—in an under-researched field—deaf education! Your input will be used to inform future teacher training and professional development opportunities for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Thank you for taking the time to add to the research base in our field! Please reach out to me with any questions. I look forward to talking with you more about my research.

Brittany L. Dorn, MED, SLP-A
 Doctoral Candidate | University of Northern Colorado
 Greeley, Colorado

Participation is voluntary. You may decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of

Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO,
80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM TEACHER CONSENT FORM



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Successful Partnerships Between Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and General Education Classroom Teachers

Researcher: Brittany Dorn, Doctoral Candidate

Email: Brittany.Dorn@unco.edu

Research Advisor: John Luckner, Professor, School of Special Education, (970) 351-1672

Congratulations!

You have been nominated as a successful consultation partner by the following teacher for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH):

As a result, I would like to ask you to participate in a study I am conducting on successful partnerships between TSDHH and classroom teachers.

My name is Brittany Dorn and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Before attending UNC, I worked as a TSDHH, and before that, as a second grade classroom teacher.

For my dissertation, I am conducting a study to determine the qualities of successful partnerships between classroom teachers and TSDHH. I am conducting this study through a “lens of appreciative inquiry,” which means I am trying to find out *what works* in terms of these two professionals working together.

You will receive a \$10 reward for participating in this study. Additionally, you will be contributing to an understudied area—consultation—in an under-researched field—deaf education! Your input will be used to inform future teacher training and professional development opportunities for TSDHH.

If you choose to participate, I will interview you separately and then together with the TSDHH who nominated you. I will audiotape the interviews so that I can later listen to and analyze the data, and I will take notes during the interview on the setting and context. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

Data will be stored on a personal computer that is password-protected. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings and transcripts. Participant consent forms

will be retained for a period of three years. Recordings will be erased three years after the study concludes and all identifiable forms, such as the consent forms, will be destroyed. When data are analyzed and written up, all names will be removed.

This research will not involve any interaction with, or observation of, students. I will ask that you avoid using last names of students during our conversation. The focus of this research is not on students, but rather on you and the TSDHH with whom you work.

I hope that you will agree to be a part of my research! I invite the opportunity to talk with you and answer any questions you may have.

Brittany L. Dorn, MED, SLP-A
Doctoral Candidate | University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, Colorado

Participation is voluntary. You may decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO, 80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

**LETTER TO PROGRAMS THAT EMPLOY
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE
DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**



Greetings!

My name is Brittany Dorn and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Before attending UNC, I worked as a teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH), and before that, as a second grade classroom teacher.

For my dissertation, I am conducting a study to determine the qualities of successful partnerships between classroom teachers and TSDHH. I am conducting this study through a “lens of appreciative inquiry,” which means I am trying to find out *what works* in terms of these two professionals working together.

I am writing to ask you to nominate TSDHH in your program—one or more—whom you believe to be successful consultants. When deciding who to nominate, please consider the following description:

“TSDHH who are successful consultants are able to thoughtfully navigate different classrooms and work with a variety of general education classroom teachers in order to cultivate problem-solving relationships that benefit students who are DHH while also respecting the value and expertise of the general education classroom teacher.”

Please nominate TSDHH who have at least two years of prior experience working as a TSDHH. Nominated TSDHH must have an itinerant (traveling component) of their job. Itinerant will be defined as a teacher who travels between different districts, travels between schools within one district, or travels between classrooms within one school. Teachers who work primarily in a resource room or co-teaching model will not be eligible to participate in this study.

Please base your decision to nominate TSDHH on your observations of them or on your interactions with professionals at the schools in which they work. Once TSDHH are nominated, I will reach out to ask them whether they are willing to participate in this study. If they accept, I will then ask them to nominate one classroom teacher with whom they have a successful partnership. If both teachers agree to participate, I will interview each of them separately and then together. I will audiotape the interviews so that I can later listen to and analyze the data, and I will take notes during the interview on the setting and context. My goal is to try to uncover the “magic” behind the partnership and to use this information to inform teacher preparation programs and professional development for TSDHH.

Thank you for taking the time to add to an understudied area in our field! Please reach out to me with any questions. I look forward to talking with you more about my research.

Brittany L. Dorn, MED, SLP-A
Doctoral Candidate | University of Northern Colorado
Brittany.Dorn@unco.edu
Greeley, Colorado

APPENDIX D

**LETTER TO DISTRICTS THAT EMPLOY
CLASSROOM TEACHERS**



Congratulations!

A classroom teacher in your school has been recognized as being a successful partner to a teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (TSDHH). Successful partnerships are essential for supporting students with disabilities, and these partnerships are also the subject of my dissertation research.

My name is Brittany Dorn and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Before attending UNC, I worked as a TSDHH, and before that, as a second grade classroom teacher.

For my dissertation, I am conducting a study to determine the qualities of successful partnerships between classroom teachers and TSDHH. I am conducting this study through a “lens of appreciative inquiry,” which means I am trying to find out *what works* in terms of these two professionals working with one another.

In order to explore this question, I will interview the general education classroom teacher individually and then together with the TSDHH. I will audiotape the interviews so that I can later listen to and analyze the data, and I will take notes during the interview on the setting and context. I am conducting ten interviews for this particular study.

There will be no students involved in any part of this process. My interaction will only be with the teacher at your school and the TSDHH. No student names or identifying student characteristics will be typed into any transcripts.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my research. I invite the opportunity to talk with you and answer any questions you may have.

Brittany Dorn
Brittany L. Dorn, MED, SLP-A
Doctoral Candidate | University of Northern Colorado
Brittany.Dorn@unco.edu
Greeley, Colorado

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

- Tell me about your relationship with the general education classroom teacher. When did you first meet?
- How often do you consult? Where? When? For how long? How do you prepare for meetings and what do you bring? What might a typical consultation session look like?
- What do you usually discuss?
- Do you create an agenda for consult meetings? Who generally leads the meeting?
- How many consultations do you have in a typical week? Describe them.
- Can you talk about a time in which you disagreed with the classroom teacher? How did you work through this disagreement?
- How has your relationship with the classroom teacher changed from the beginning of the year until now?
- Do you ever observe the student who is deaf or hard of hearing in the general education classroom? If so, how often? If not, why not?
- Tell me about your consultation style.
- Has your style changed since your first year as a TSDHH? If so, how?
- Do you feel prepared for the consultation aspect of your role?
- Do you feel that you are a successful consultant? Why or why not?

CLASSROOM TEACHER

- Tell me about your relationship with the TSDHH. When did you first meet?
- How often do you consult? Where? When? For how long? How do you prepare for meetings and what do you bring? What might a typical consultation session look like?
- When you first learned that you would have a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in your classroom this year, how did you feel?
- Have your feelings changed since then? If so, why?
- Describe your relationship with the TSDHH.
- How often do you meet with the TSDHH?
- What do you usually discuss?
- Do you create an agenda for consult meetings? Who generally leads the meeting?
- Can you talk about a time in which you disagreed with the TSDHH? How did you work through this disagreement?
- Has your mindset on deafness, inclusion, or special education changed since you started working with the TSDHH? If so, please describe this change.
- How has your relationship with the TSDHH changed from the beginning of the year until now?
- How many other professionals do you consult with in a typical week? Describe them.
- Do you feel that the TSDHH is a successful consultant? Why or why not?

DYAD QUESTIONS

- How long have you known each other? When did you first start working together?
- As a dyad, what do you see as your goal(s)?
- Can you share an obstacle or challenge that you faced? How did you work through it?
- What was your first consultation meeting like?
- Who sets the agenda for meetings?
- How do your meetings together compare with your meetings with other teachers? (e.g., for the TSDHH, how does your meeting with this teacher compare to your meetings with other general education classroom teachers?)
- How does the administration or organizational structure at the school support or hinder your ability to consult?
- As a dyad, what do you see as your strengths? (e.g., what makes it work?)
- What advice would you give to other dyads who are struggling to develop a successful collaborative relationship?

CASE STUDY

During dyad interviews, I will read aloud the below case studies to the teachers (one or both, as time permits). I will ask the dyad to work through the case study aloud. This will provide insight into the way in which the teachers work together. I will cross-analyze this process among dyads.

a. You have a shared student, June, who is in fourth grade, profoundly deaf, and uses bilateral implants. For the last three years, she has been using her FM system and doing well academically. Now she is starting fifth grade and saying that she won't use the FM anymore. Her mother and audiologist insist that June continue to use the FM system. As the general education fifth grade teacher and the student's TSDHH, what do you do? What steps do you take?

b. You notice that Harry, who has just started third grade and wears hearing aids, often does not talk to anyone else in class. At lunch, he tends to sit alone. You ask him why and he shrugs and says that the other kids don't like him. As the general education third grade teacher and the student's TSDHH, what do you do? What steps do you take?

APPENDIX F

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL LETTER**



Institutional Review Board

DATE: April 11, 2018

TO: Brittany Dorn
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1214220-3] Effective Partnerships Between Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Classroom Teachers

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: April 11, 2018

EXPIRATION DATE: March 30, 2022

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX G

NOMINATION CRITERIA

“Successful Partnerships”

A successful partnership between a TSDHH and general education classroom teacher is a collaborative, problem-solving relationship in which both professionals feel comfortable bringing up issues and working together to solve them. In a successful partnership, the sum is greater than the whole of its parts, and there is a feeling of synergy—rather than compromise—felt throughout the process.

Nomination of TSDHH

Please nominate TSDHH (one or more) whom you believe to be successful consultants. When deciding who to nominate, please consider the following description:

“TSDHH who are successful consultants are able to thoughtfully navigate different classrooms and work with a variety of general education classroom teachers in order to cultivate problem-solving relationships that benefit students who are DHH while also respecting the value and expertise of the general education classroom teacher.”

Inclusionary Criteria for TSDHH Nomination

- Must have at least two years of prior experience working as a TSDHH
- Must have an itinerant (traveling component) of their job. Itinerant will be defined as a teacher who travels between different districts, travels between schools within one district, or travels between classrooms within one school. Teachers who work primarily in a resource room or co-teaching model will not be eligible to participate in this study.

Exclusionary Criteria for TSDHH Nomination

- Can not be in their first or second year of teaching
- Can not be primarily based in one classroom acting as a co-teacher or resource room teacher

Quality indicators of successful partnerships:

- Regular communication through scheduled meeting, quick in-person check-ins, or communication through phone calls or emails
- Sense of parity or equality in the relationship; recognition that both people bring value to the partnership
- Commitment to bringing up issues that may be difficult to talk about or work through
- Feeling that the synergy—or combined energy and expertise of the two teachers—benefits the student who is DHH
- Sense that consultation time is well-spent and productive rather than a waste of time or a hang-out and/or gossip session
- Relationship is grounded in mutual trust and respect

Inclusionary Criteria for General Education Classroom Teacher Nomination

- They must have an established relationship with the TSDHH (at least two months working together)
- They must work with the TSDHH at least once per month
- They may teach pre-K through grade 12 and may specialize in any subject

- They may be in their first year of teaching or they may have more experience

Exclusionary Criteria for General Education Classroom Teacher Nomination

- They must not be working as a special education teacher
- They must not be a “specials teacher” (teaching art, music, PE, etc.)