

Postsecondary Education for People Who are Deaf in China: An Interview Study

Patricia A. Mudgett-DeCaro, Yufang Liu, James J. DeCaro and Jun Hui Yang

Abstract

Research purpose: At the request of Director Bao of Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf of Tianjin University of Technology, PEN International began a series of interviews in China in order to gather ideas that can be used to improve post-secondary education of deaf persons in China. These suggestions will be used by the leaders in deaf education in China to help in the formulation of their proposal for the 11th Five-year Plan for education.

Respondents: In-depth interviews began in November of 2002 with a group of administrators from the college programs for deaf students who had gathered in Tianjin for PEN-International regional training seminars. In addition a group of administrators and teachers from one of the China schools for the deaf was interviewed. Further, a Deaf community leader was interviewed by teleconference, and two members of the Tianjin China Disabled Person's Federation (CDPF) in December of 2002 were interviewed during a later visit to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester NY, USA (NTID at RIT). A total of 20 interviews are completed to date. Additional interviews are now being planned Deaf community leaders and college faculty.

<u>Methodology</u>: Semi-structured pilot interviews were conducted before the trip with Chinese college students, deaf and hearing, at NTID by Patricia Mudgett-DeCaro, a qualitative researcher, and Yufang Liu, a PEN-International research associate, fluent in Chinese and English. Interview questions were honed and research interview procedures rehearsed during these pilot interviews. The final interview protocol was approved by Dr. J. DeCaro, director of PEN-International and by Director Bao.

The same two researchers conducted the interviews in China with Yufang Liu acting as both colleague and interpreter. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed by Ms. Liu. The interview with the Deaf community leader was conducted with Junhui Yang, a doctoral student at Gallaudet College who is fluent in Chinese Sign Language who assisted with interpreting and interview analysis.

Questions were framed as a result of a review of literature regarding deaf education in China. Interview questions focused upon: a. the histories of each institution with regard to deaf education programs; b. the role of government in the educational process; c. the uniqueness of the college and the programming, including rationale for the majors offered; d. college entrance process; e. faculty characteristics and qualifications; f. support services, communication, and teaching approaches; g. partnerships with schools for the deaf, other university programs, employers, and/or the Deaf community; h. characteristics of deaf college students; and i. jobs obtained and the job acquision process. Respondents were queried as regards challenges that they face in the education of deaf college students. They were also asked to suggest improvements that should be made in the future. Analyses were performed using standard interview coding procedures and Atlas-TI software.

<u>Findings</u>: The following PowerPoint slides offer a summary of the interview results to date. These findings reflect primarily the views of college administrators. Findings were grouped into the following categories: a. perceptions and definitions of deafness/people who are deaf; b. programs and majors; c. college entrance; d. college, faculty, and government roles in deaf education; e. accommodations; f. relationship to other disability groups; g. jobs; and h. challenges/goals.

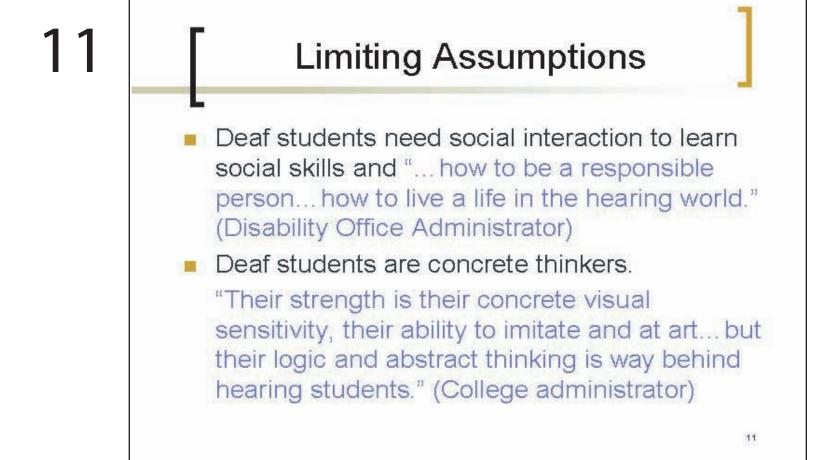


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Majors and Jobs Why are choices of a Major limited? 1. "Suitability" Visual Communication Academic ability (lack of high school level knowledge) 2. Low expectations, but sometimes deaf students' achievements surprised the faculty: "College teachers now know that deaf students study skills are very strong. They have a new way of looking at deaf students." (Deaf respondent)







Accommodations

Segregated classes
Curriculum modification
Interpreting /Signing in class only
Tutoring by hearing peers and faculty
Programming for social interaction
Highlighting deaf role models
Orientation for hearing faculty and students (be patient and helpful)

Majors and Jobs (cont.)

3. Majors tied to market demands

"At the beginning when we are thinking about majors we are taking the employment situation and what is suitable for them into consideration."

(College administrator)

4. Government quotas (each unit must hire about 1.5% of employees with disabilities)

Goal: Improve college 16 entrance exams "The college entrance exam is Need to increase the the directing stick." level of college (College administrator) entrance exams "As a college we want students with comprehensive knowledge Because teachers while high schools focus on having more students pass the teach only what is on college entrance exam." the exam, exams (College administrator) designed by each college need to be broadened.



Goal: National & International contacts

"Increase the interaction and cooperation of local, regional, and international cooperation in the field of deaf education."
(College administrator)

Teacher/faculty exchanges
Connect with Deaf community organizations
Research initiatives