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# Teacher Resource Reflection

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# SPED 404: Diversity, Families and School Collaborations in K-12

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Teacher Resource available from:

<http://prezi.com/kbh9rl27muly/teaching-the-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing/>

Teacher Resource Reflection

I created a technology product discussing deaf and hard of hearing students in the form of a Prezi presentation. This was my first experience using Prezi, so there was a significant learning curve with regard to the technology. Nevertheless, the information about working with deaf and hard of hearing individuals and families was very familiar to me because I have a minor in Deaf studies as part of my undergraduate degree from the College of New Jersey. It was easy to remember which aspects of working with deaf and hard of hearing students was most surprising to me, but difficult to make sure my information was as up to date as possible. I aimed to use many sources that I was familiar with from my undergraduate studies, but soon found out that many of those sources were no longer relevant in the eight years since I graduated.

I began by naming the three elements of working with deaf students that were most challenging for me: Deaf culture, reading instruction, and friends/role models. Often, people are not at all aware that Deaf culture exists and even more frequently they do not know to what it refers. Most of my information on Deaf culture was in notes or memories from school, so I needed to check my sources and found some online references for the information. I also recalled the film, *The Sound and the Fury*, which was what helped create my understanding of the culture best. I wished that I could link to people in the Deaf community to speak with, but that seemed an invasion of privacy for those individuals. Nevertheless, such conversations are truly the best way to get a thorough understanding of the Deaf, with a capital d, community and culture.

When considering reading instruction, I began by referring mostly to what I learned in class and cited my text book as a student. Unfortunately, much of this information seemed out of date. I could not find which techniques schools were currently using, but found some new research articles discussing effective techniques for teaching deaf and hard of hearing students to read. I was always flabbergasted by the challenge of not being able to refer to phonics or how letters sound, so I knew this would be an important consideration for future teachers. Fortunately, specialists with particular training in teaching those who are deaf or hard of hearing usually work with this population; so many teachers will not need to know the specifics of reading instruction. Nevertheless, knowing that different approaches are needed and that telling these student to sound words out is likely not effective will create more prepared teachers even without knowing what to say instead.

The final important consideration that I included in the teacher resource was that students who are deaf or hard of hearing need friends and role models. It’s often hard for these students to make friends when they speak American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary language. They cannot easily communicate with non-disabled peers with spoken language, and students that are younger often cannot communicate with written language yet. Similarly, there are not many popular deaf or hard of hearing role models. Since deafness is usually not inherited, many deaf children have hearing parents who do not fill this niche. With these important considerations, teachers need to provide role models to students and facilitate friendships. This is often done with extra-curricular activities such as role model development programs for deaf older students and adults or ASL clubs. Luckily, this information is largely unchanged, so many of the resources I’ve referred to in the past were still available and timely.

With all of these elements, I did not have to contact anyone for assistance; nevertheless, I needed help using Prezi. I watched some instructional videos and used some instructional Prezis, but I also spoke with friends and classmates that have used the software in the past. Talking with others was an invaluable resource for learning this new technology. Unfortunately, there were some limitations to Prezi that may have led me to choose a different program in the future. For example, I could not change the font styles and indentations to be in line with APA 6 standards as I would have liked. On the other hand, I got the chance to use a new program with plenty of exciting features such as zooming and creating a big picture and smaller points. This was particularly fitting for the concept of working with deaf students because I could allude to the deafness being just the tip of the iceberg visually and provide complementary information in a more meaningful manner.

Working on this teacher resource, was a great opportunity to recall and refresh my understanding of the important elements of working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. I am happy that I learned what parts of my previous knowledge were out of date and what information was still current. This also revealed that much of the information that I am learning now will follow the same pattern of becoming outdated. In such, I need to remember to update my knowledge on important issues (especially in diversity) whenever it needs to be applied. The teacher resource I created was a good learning experience in both technology and refresher in understanding the deaf and hard of hearing community.