

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND INDEPENDENT LIVING OF YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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Note:

Little current information available concerning the education, employment, and independent living of young, post high school adults who are D/HH.

Purpose:

To report the post-secondary outcomes of young adults from a school program for the D/HH located in the northwestern part of the United States.

Results:

The majority of participants had finished high school, earned a college degree, were employed, and lived independently.

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth Have a Disability

- The definition of success when students with special needs are transitioning from high school to adulthood was defined by a national study at the turn of the millennium: National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET, 2004):
 - demonstrating self-advocacy
 - making decisions
 - expressing preferences

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth Have a Disability cont.

- NCSET researchers recommended that school administrators:
 - “ensure students have access to the general education curriculum” (p. 7)
 - “increase the school completion rates” (p.8)
 - “make school graduation decisions based on meaningful indicators of students’ learning and skills” (p. 9)
 - “ensure students access to and full participation in post-secondary education and employment” (p. 10)
 - “increase informed parent participation and involvement in educational planning” (p. 12)
 - “improve collaboration and systems linkages [with educationally relevant groups] at all levels” (p. 14)
 - “ensure the availability of a qualified workforce” (p. 15).

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth are Deaf/HH

- Convertino, Marschark, Sapere, Sarcher, & Zupan (2009) defined success as:
 - English language ability
 - “Clearly the most important predictor” (p. 337)
 - Motivation
 - Influenced by parental expectations, academic achievement, and self-esteem.

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth are Deaf/HH

- Weisel & Kamara (2005) defined success as:
 - Healthy self-esteem and well-being
 - Living independently
 - Full social integration with hearing peers

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth are Deaf/HH

- Stinson & Walter (1992) defined success as:
 - Development of social skills
 - Establishment of identity

Definition of Success When Post-Secondary Youth are Deaf/HH

- Schur, Shields, Kruse & Schriener (2002) defined success as:
 - Accepting the responsibility to vote as a sign of maturity.
 - Schur et al. called for further studies regarding relations among age, employment and efficacy as they relate to voter turnout.

NLTS2

- The NLTS2:
 - In 2001, the U.S. Department of Education funded a 10-year-study, the NLTS2
 - This study focused on gathering information about post-secondary citizens with special needs.
 - The researchers used a questionnaire that was completed by the youths or their parents/guardians.
 - Results were weighted to represent the various disability categories in the nation.

NLTS2

- Newman, Wagner, Cameto & Knokey (2009):
 - Participants who were D/HH were between 21 and 24 years of age with a mean age of 23.5 years.
 - High school graduation rate was 93.1%
 - Post-secondary enrollment was 66.5%
 - Certificate/degree receipt was at 29.7%
 - 63% of recipients were employed and averaged 34 hours per week of work.
 - Number of young adults living at home was 58.4%
 - Permit/drivers license holders were 79% while 63% voted

Washington State Survey

- Johnson, Iwaszuk, Johnston, Ostergren, Smith-Henry & Edgar (2011):
 - Three questions were used in the current study:
 - (1) Did you graduate from high school?
 - (2) Have you attended vocational training, two year community college, or college/university?
 - (3) Are you employed?
 - 76% graduated from high school.
 - 55% attended training or college after high school
 - 39% had been employed for some time period within the year of the interview

Participants

- Former students (N=46) at a non-public agency school specializing in deaf education, who had attended the school for a minimum of four years. Administrators of the school developed a specific philosophy and operationalized it in an academic and literacy-based curriculum that incorporated the use of a grammatically accurate signing system.

Method

- A survey for the present study was developed from the survey used in the NLTS2 national sample. It asked former students of the NW school to respond to questions related to their education, employment and independent living status. Information on participants, a description of the survey instrument, and an explanation of the data collection method follows.

Instrument

- A 15-item self-report online survey, based on the NLTS2 study, was used for this study.
- The instrument included objective questions used in the NLTS2 study that could be answered affirmatively, negatively, or with a single word answer.

Procedure

- Two types of data were collected for this study. Using standardized achievement test results and curriculum based test results obtained from the participants cumulative files, reading and math abilities were averaged across the sample, which provided “a framework for understanding the match or mismatch between expected performance and students’ actual proficiency” (Blockorby, Chorost, Garza, & Guzman, 2009, p. 3).

Procedure

- The second type of data collected was the survey described above. Responses to the survey were electronically submitted to the survey data bank maintained by SurveyMonkey. Survey responses for Questions 2 to 15 were obtained from 46 participants (70%). Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) with averaged percentages reported for nominal data.

Results: *Reading and math achievement discrepancy between tested and actual grade levels in reading and mathematics for NW and NLTS2 national school participants*

Grade Level	Reading		Mathematics	
	NW%	NLTS2%	NW%	NLTS2%
Above to less than 1 level behind	73.9	19.4	78.2	21.7
1 to 2.9 grade levels behind	23.9	13.1	19.6	17.6
3 to 4.9 grade levels behind	2.2	34.9	2.2	37.8
5 or more grade levels behind	0.0	32.6	0.0	22.9

Results: *Post-Secondary outcome data from NW school, national NLTS2 and Washington state: Education*

Achievement Indicator	NW School %	NLTS2%	WA State%
Graduate from high school	100	93.1	76
Attend post-secondary school	87.8	66.5	55
Receive degrees or certificates	66.7	29.7	NA

Results: *Post-Secondary outcome data from NW school, national NLTS2 and Washington state: Employment*

Achievement Indicator	NW School%	NLTS2%	WA State%
Employment for post-secondary students no longer in school	85.3	63.2	39
Average number of hours worked per week	38.1	33.8	NA

Results: *Post-Secondary outcome data from NW school and national NLTS2: Independent Living*

Achievement Outcome	NW School%	NLTS%
Receive SSI	15	22.9
Have a case manager	13.3	61
Live with parents	22.2	58.4
Have a driver's license	93.3	79
Registered to vote	88.9	62.7

Comparison

- NWSFHIC responses were compared to a national sample of young, deaf adults who were the same age and gender, and who had about the same levels of hearing loss.
- NWSFHIC alumni were significantly better educated, were employed to a higher degree, and were more independent than those represented in the national sample.



Northwest School for Hearing Impaired Children

- Founded 30 years ago with the goal of grade level achievement by students who are D/HH.
- It is not private- special education directors in 20 neighboring school districts contract with the program to serve children most appropriately.
- The curriculum includes Signing Exact English, a grammatically-correct English.
 - The dictionary of SEE is visible and used as a daily reference- each student is required to have his/her own copy.
- The staff's receptive and expressive SEE skills are evaluated regularly through observations and feedback.

Northwest School for Hearing Impaired Children

- Each student receives 15-minutes daily individualized tutoring of speech, listening, vocabulary, sentence patterns, and social sentences.
- Children are educated in small groups by grade level for academic and literacy training.
- Staff give children choices, model and encourage decision-making, and provide consequences for actions/choices.
- Philosophy: Promotion of self-determination and self-advocacy, access to general education curriculum, graduation requirements based on meaningful indicators of students' learning and skills.

Northwest School for Hearing Impaired Children

- All communication from the teacher to the child is signed and spoken concurrently in complete English.
- Children are assisted in communicating using complete English, with concurrent speech and S.E.E. Mastery is encouraged through the "Again Technique", to aid children in practicing their communication skills. The "Again Technique" is also used to develop the speech potential of children.
- SEE mastery is encouraged through the "Again Technique" which develops the speech potential of children
- A sequenced curriculum of practical sentence patterns, which deaf and hard of hearing children do not usually learn, is also taught.
- A comprehensive academic program is provided, which keeps DHH students on academic grade level (with the exception of those who have additional learning problems).

Data from 70% of NWSFHIC Graduates
Indicates...



Most of the students at the NWSFHIC reading at or above grade level; the expectation is a year's progress in a year's time.

Questions?

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