

ACE-DHH 2011  
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**Project VOTE:  
Virtual Observation in  
Teacher Education**

## Purpose

- The purpose of this presentation is to present the results of a national survey of teacher education programs in deaf education.
- The purposes of this study were to (1) further the distance education baseline data obtained by Stryker (2010) with a focus on university supervision of student teachers, (2) determine how many programs involved in DETP use a form of technology to conduct distance observations of student teachers and (3) what technologies are utilized. Ancillary objectives of this study were to obtain data on university supervisors, the number of student teachers they observe each semester, how many times they observe their student teachers and the distance a supervisor travels and cost-saving technologies.

## Abstract

- Little information is available on deaf education teacher preparation programs and their use of distance or virtual technology to accommodate supervision of student teachers. The purpose of this study was to further the distance education baseline data obtained by Stryker (2010) with a focus on university supervision of student teachers. The concept for a questionnaire arose from the success of Sam Slike's creation of online courses which were equally accessible to deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing students. Questionnaires completed by 37 professors representing 29 education of the deaf and hard of hearing programs across the United States indicated that thirty percent (n=11) use a form of distance technology to observe student teachers.

## Methodology

- **Questionnaire**
  - 40-item & 4 sections
    - Teaching and Distance Learning Experience
    - Distance Observation Technology
    - Observation of Student Teachers
    - Suggestions for Observing/Evaluating Student Teachers from a Distance
- **Data Collection & Participants (N=37)**
  - ACE-D/HH 2010 conference – 28
  - Email for more comprehensive geographical cross section – 9

## Demographic Results

- *Number of years teaching at the college level (N = 28)*

Years teaching	%	N
1-5 years	32	12
6-10 years	8	3
11-15 years	16	6
16-20 years	8	3
21-25 years	14	5
26-30 years	3	1
31-35 years	11	4
36-40 years	8	3

## Demographic Results

- *Number of year teaching online courses (N = 28)*

Years teaching online	N
First online course	1
1-2 years	8
3-5 years	7
6-8 years	6
9-11 years	5
12 years	1

## Demographic Results

- Teaching preference (N = 28)

Format of course offering	%	n
Traditional	46	17
Hybrid	22	8
Distance Learning	8	3

## Results:

### Distance Observation Technology

- Preferred technologies for observations at a distance (n = 37)

Type of technology	%	N
Laptop-webcam	68	25
Flip cam/DVD/CD-ROM	59	22
Skype/NVivo	59	22
Videoconferencing	59	22
PolyCom or Via Video	51	19
Video Relay Conferencing	49	18
Wiki	38	14
Microsoft Windows Live Messenger/AIM	35	13
iVisit	30	11

## Results:

### Observation of Student Teachers

- 30 faculty reported 8.8 student teachers a year
  - Supervised an average of 6.2 times a semester
- Average number of miles to supervise 804
  - Ranged from 3-4000 miles
  - Of the 263 student teachers reported to be observed annually by these 30 faculty, 29% (n=77) were over 100 miles from university
- 11 of 30 faculty incorporated distance technology when observing
  - 2 of 11 reported the distance of travel as unlimited
  - 9 of 11 reported an average of 89.4 miles away from university

## Results:

### Suggestions for Observing/Evaluating student Teachers: **Advance planning and preparation**

- Always have a back-up plan for the unexpected.
- . . . must practice with all parties involved before actual observations.
- Be sure to have sufficient communication time for both student and cooperating teacher – you may need more than you need for face-to-face supervision.
- Send all PowerPoints, DVDs, etc. for classes ahead for students to follow.
- Require 3 DVDs to be sent to university per 7 weeks – of course we are in weekly
- contact with students.
- Send reflection questions in advance.
- Have students provide lesson plans and lesson materials (PowerPoints and worksheets) to supervisor before lesson.
- . . . need to [require] reflection on what they learn.

## Results:

### Suggestions for Observing/Evaluating student teachers: **Teachers, Staff and Classroom Environment**

- Try to limit classroom distraction.
- Take into consideration special needs of students.
- Recognize that the technology MAY change the classroom dynamic for the student teacher (and the children).
- Designate one person in the classroom who can adjust the camera as need be for classroom activities.
- Establish specific list of expectations for work.
- Use site-based supervisor
- Video your meetings on a regular basis

## Results:

### Suggestions for Observing/Evaluating student Teachers: **Encouragement and Flexibility**

- Be flexible and encourage student and cooperating teacher to be flexible and
- relaxed about the technology.
- Recognize that it may not be exactly like face-to-face observations – but that's OK.

## Results:

### Suggestions for Observing/Evaluating student Teachers: **Technology Best Practices**

- Determine the best placement for technology in the classroom.
- Train student teachers in basics of how to fix & connect & what to do if things go down.
- Don't assume students learn/understand technology.
- Be able to accept technology isn't perfect.
- Have a tech person on each end & [one who] . . . can travel.
- Fit [the] technology with . . . [each individual] school.
- Try to schedule observations that are not during a peak time when the network is in use.
- Have a flip camera in place in case you experience difficulty with the connection.
- Make sure the student and supervising teacher know technology.
- . . . utilize CD chapters for easier viewing of student teacher videos
- . . . video [sometimes] allows for better reflection and analysis because of the permanent nature of the record.
- . . . a combination of on-site visitations and technology [is best]. Even though technology enhances the process, it does not take the place of the on-site visit.

## Conclusion

Distance education has made a powerful start in addressing the personnel needs of rural areas and offers a promising future in improving not only the accessibility of preservice and inservice training programs for rural teachers and therapists, but also the quality of the services they provide to children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities in rural schools and community agencies (Ludlow & Brannan, 1999, p. 14).

## Conclusion

- Finding ways to meet the geographic and economic challenges of observing student teachers of the deaf at distances of more than 100 miles away or in rural areas has been and continues to be a necessity in our field. The use of distance observation technology can help with this area of need. The creation of technologies to conduct distance observations of student teachers, like Polycom and Skype, provides university supervisors a way to observe and thus spend less time on the road and more productive time focused on tasks other than driving. It is encouraging to learn that DETP faculty are becoming more innovative in preparing future teachers.