



*Deaf Literacy
Initiative*

Deaf Workforce

National Research Project

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Executive Summary

Research Question:

The rate of unemployment for Deaf Canadians is much higher than it is for the rest of the Canadian population. The gap in employment rates begs the research question:

Why are so many Deaf Canadians unemployed or underemployed?

Who are we Informing?

The study is intended to inform different groups including:

- The Deaf Literacy Initiative (DLI)
- Deaf Adult Literacy Providers, Employment Services Providers and Learning Centres across Canada
- Canadian employers
- Federal and provincial governments

Scope of Research:

The project focuses on five groups

- Deaf Community Members
- Deaf Adult Literacy Programs
- Employment Service Providers
- Employers
- Learning Centres

Methodology:

A variety of research methodologies, in both American Sign Language and English, were used to obtain data including

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups

Results:

Five key factors were revealed that influence the employment of Deaf Canadians including:

1. Deaf Employee Attitude
2. Employer Attitude
3. Communication
4. Accommodations
5. Interpreters

Recommendations:

The research findings were presented to the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members on March 4, 2011. The PAC members' top recommendation was to develop a **Deaf-lead Non-governmental organization (NGO)**. The NGO would focus on

- a. Employment
- b. Literacy
- c. Essential Skills

The mandate of the NGO includes

- Research
 - Systemic Barriers
 - Accessing 'Additional' Deaf groups
- Education Plan
 - Public relations campaign
 - Workshops on employment

- Partnerships
 - Employment Service Providers (ESPs)
 - The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC)
 - Federal Government, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Telecommunications Service Providers (TSP) and Deaf Associations across Canada
 - Employers

Implementation Steps:

The PAC recommended a three-staged approach to implement the recommendations.

Stage 1: The Establishment of a National Advisory Committee (NAC)

The PAC recommended developing a National Advisory Committee (NAC). The NAC would consist of

- Deaf professionals with expertise and experience with Deaf employment, research and Adult literacy needs
- Representation from each province and territory

The purpose of the NAC would be to plan, organize and host a National Deaf Employment Conference.

Stage 2: National Deaf Employment Conference

The National Deaf Employment Conference will address the 'recommendation' topics from the 'PAC 2010-2011 Deaf Workforce' meeting. The topics addressed include

- research
- education
- partnerships

The purpose of the National Deaf Employment Conference would be to develop the action plan for a Deaf-lead Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

Stage 3: The Establishment of a (NGO)

The NGO would then focus on the recommendations from the National Deaf Employment Conference and develop an action plan to address each of the topics discussed.

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List of Abbreviations

ASL	American Sign Language
CAD	Canadian Association of the Deaf
DALP	Deaf Adult Literacy Providers
DCM	Deaf Community Members
DLI	Deaf Literacy Initiative
ESP	Employment Service Providers
LC	Learning Centres
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
OLES	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

List of Definitions

Deaf	People that are members of the Deaf community consider themselves a linguistic minority and use a capital 'D' for Deaf.
deaf	People who are not culturally Deaf and instead consider themselves to be members of the hearing community use a lower case 'd' for deaf.

Deaf Workforce

[National Research Project]

1: Introduction

The cultural diversity of Canada isn't limited to different ethnic groups; it includes the culture of our Deaf community. People that are members of the Deaf community consider themselves a linguistic minority and use a capital 'D' for Deaf. People who are not culturally Deaf and instead consider themselves to be members of the hearing community use a lower case 'd' for deaf. The members within the Deaf community have a vibrant culture that includes

- language
- social beliefs
- values
- behaviours
- history
- art, theatre and poetry

While the Deaf culture is thriving, these Canadians aren't always successful in finding employment.

There is a significant number of Deaf Canadians who are a part of the Deaf culture. Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) defines Canadian Deaf culture as

“a healthy sociological community of Deaf people with their own unique language, values, behavioural norms, arts, education institutions, political and social structures, organizations and peripherals” (CAD, 2009).

CAD (2007) estimated that there are approximately 310,000¹ Deaf Canadians. CAD cautioned using estimates because there has never been a national census of Deaf Canadians. The lack of a census means that the true number of Deaf Canadians is unknown.

The Deaf population has rates of unemployment and underemployment that are much greater than the general population. This current study used CAD's definition of underemployment

“as work that may not be full-time or long-term (i.e., work which is insecure), or which involve barriers that interfere with the person's job satisfaction and/or accessibility” (Roots, Kerr, 1998, p.4).

According to CAD (1998)

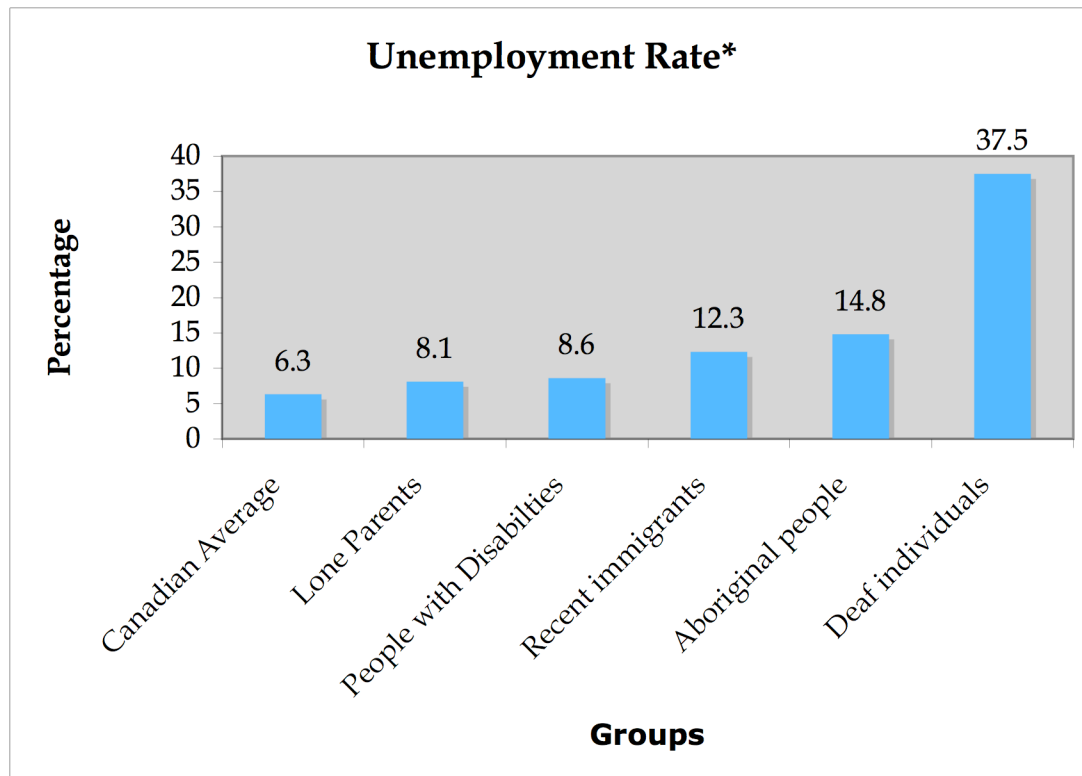
- 41.9% of Deaf Canadians were considered underemployed
- 37.5% were considered unemployed

In the same year (1998), only 8.1% of the general Canadian population was considered unemployed (CAD, 1998). Even more dramatic is the lack of Deaf people in 'high level' positions. In 1998, CAD found that Canada had “four Deaf lawyers, one Deaf doctor, one Deaf psychologist, and one Deaf university professor” (CAD, 1998). Since 1998 a full study of unemployment and underemployment of Deaf Canadians hasn't been done in Canada.

Table 1 compares the unemployment rate of Deaf people to the unemployment rate of different groups across Canada.

¹ CAD assumed that the Deaf Canadian population is related to the Deaf American population. Considering that the Canadian population is approximately 1/10th of the American population, the Deaf Canadian population is calculated by taking 1/10th of the population of Deaf Americans (based on the Deaf American population being approximately 31,000,000 and 3,100,000 being culturally Deaf)

Table 1: Unemployment rates across groups



*source: Statistics Canada Census data². (2006)

1.1 Research Problem

The employment potential of Deaf people looks at

- how employable they are
- what external factors exist - such as employer attitude

Services Canada looks at 12 factors to determine if a person is employable. Some of those factors include communication, managing information and teamwork skills (Service Canada, 2010).

² It should be noted that the statistics are from Statistic Canada Census 2006 for the unemployment rate of Canadian Average, Lone Parents, People with disabilities, recent immigrants and Aboriginal people. The statistics for the unemployment of Deaf Canadians is from CAD (1998).

On average Deaf people have IQ levels similar to the general population (Vernon, 2005). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms bans employers from discriminating against people with disabilities, this includes Deaf people. It isn't known how well Deaf people do in terms of being employable or the external factors that may affect their ability to be employed.

If Deaf Canadians have both the cognitive ability and the legal protection it begs the question:

Why are so many Deaf and Deafblind Canadians unemployed or underemployed?

1.2 Who We Are Informing

The study is intended to inform different groups. This report will

- help the Deaf Literacy Initiative (DLI) to better understand what Essential Skill³ and employment resources are the best fit for Deaf people
- provide information for other not-for-profit organizations, Deaf Adult Literacy Providers, Employment Services Providers and Learning Centres across Canada to help them provide better services for Deaf people
- inform Canadian employers of what needs to be done to increase the chance of Deaf Canadians finding or keeping a job
- identify factors that can help Deaf employees be promoted at work
- inform government policy

1.3 Organization of Research

The study examined 5 research groups. For most of the groups, interviews and

³ According to HRSDC (2009) There are 9 Essential Skills including: Reading skills, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, computer use.

surveys were done to gather data. After the analysis of the 5 groups, a summary of themes was pulled from the groups and then recommendations given. Table 2 illustrates the eight sections of the report.

Table 2: Report Sections

Section	Research Focus	Target Participants	Data Collection Method
One	Introduction		
Two	Deaf Community	Deaf Community members	Survey Interviews
Three	Learning Centres	Practitioners Professors Coordinators	Survey Interviews
Four	Deaf Adult Literacy Providers	Deaf Practitioners Deaf Coordinators	Interviews
Five	Employment Service Providers	Practitioners Coordinators	Survey Interviews
Six	Employers	Employers of Deaf people	Survey Interviews
Seven	Summary of Themes	All 5 groups	
Eight	Conclusion and Recommendations	All 5 groups	Focus Group

2: Deaf Community Members

The first group examined was the Deaf Community Members (DCM). DCM was the main focus of the study and include people that are

- Deaf (Deaf, Oral Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafened, Deafblind and other)
- currently live in Canada
- use ASL as a method of communication
- 15 years of age and older

2.1 Deaf Community Member Survey Methodology

A survey with the Deaf Community Members (DCM) was used to examine the current employment situation of Deaf Canadians.

The survey was promoted in a variety of ways, including

- Deaf Connect - an email directory of Deaf Canadians
- Deaf Blogs
- Deafliteracy.ca
- Mayfest - a conference for Deaf people
- Facebook

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members helped to distribute the survey in their communities and provinces. The PAC members are Deaf community members from across the country⁴. The role of the PAC is to provide input on the Deaf Workforce Project.

⁴ PAC members are from British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick

The survey

- had a total of 63 questions
- asked questions in both ASL and English
- had participants across the country
- was analyzed using a survey program called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

2.2 DCM Survey Analysis

The following are the results of the DCM survey analysis. Not all of the results were reviewed. Only the results of the questions that helped to explain why so many Deaf people are unemployed or underemployed were reviewed.

2.2.1 Self-Identification

The first question asked those responding to identify themselves as

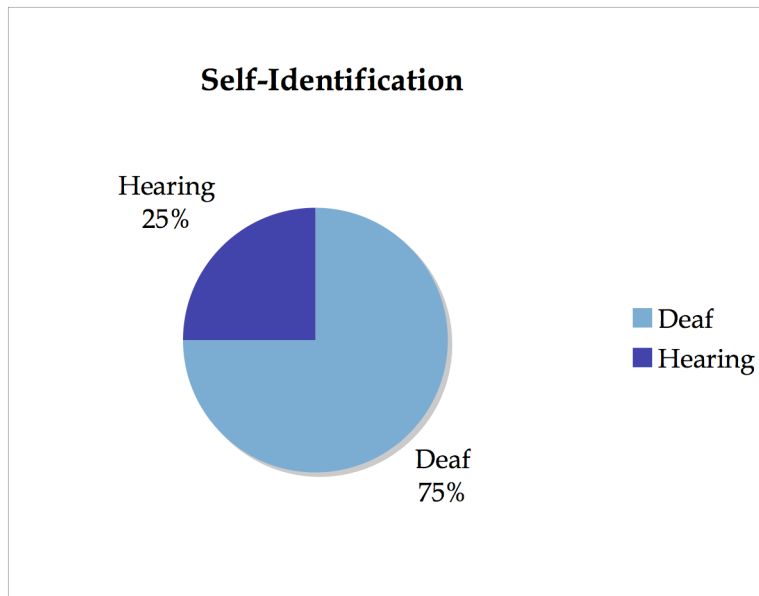
- Deaf (Deaf, Oral Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafened, Deafblind, Other)
- Hearing

It should be noted that 'Other' includes answers such as Ushers Syndrome (Deaf and have a degree of vision loss) and 'some hearing loss'.

In total 673 people answered the question (see Table 3)

- 505 Deaf people answered
- 168 hearing people answered

Table 3: Self Identification: Deaf or Hearing



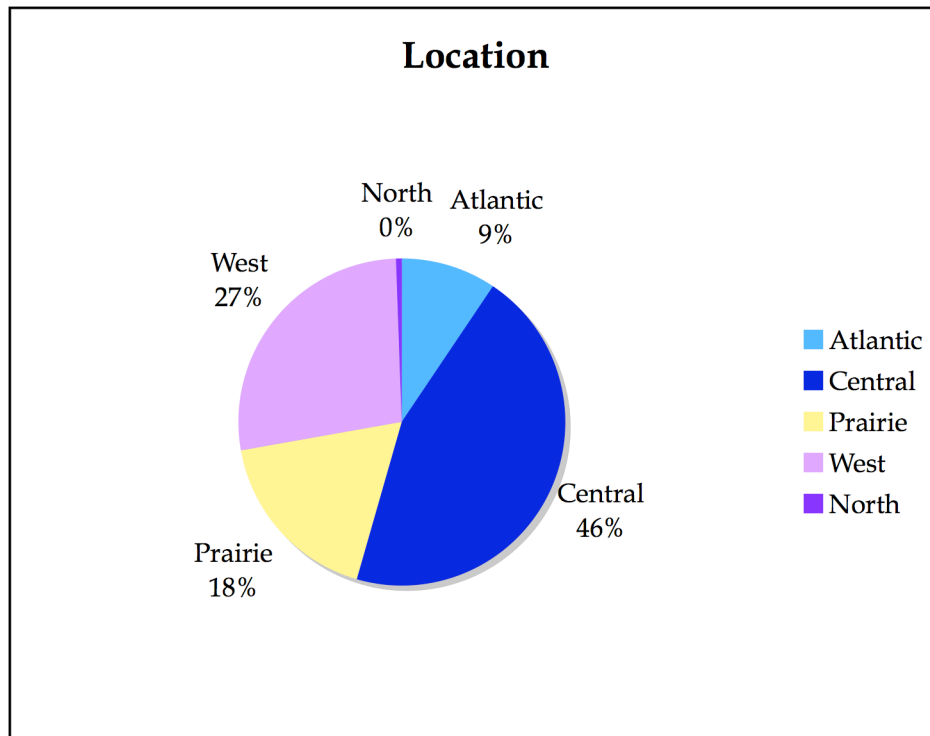
2.2.2 Location

The survey asked where those responding were currently living. Four hundred and two Deaf people gave their location. The data was then divided into regions of Canada

- Atlantic: NL, NS, NB, PE
- Central: ON, QC
- Prairie: AB, SK, MB
- West: BC
- North: YK, NT, NU

Table 4 shows the locations of the Deaf people that responded.

Table 4: Respondent's Location



2.2.3 Deaf Community

The survey showed that 80% of those responding consider themselves to be a member of the Deaf community.

About 63% of those responding are the only Deaf person in their family.

Four hundred and twenty eight of those responding stated how they communicated with their family members (see Table 5). The majority that responded stated they communicate with their family members with American Sign Language (ASL) & Other. ASL & Other is defined as using ASL alongside some other method of communication such as

- writing notes
- gesturing
- lip reading

Table 5: Communication Methods with Family members

	Frequency	Percentage
ASL/LSQ	68	15.9
ASL & Other	153	35.7
Orally	95	22.2
Home Signs	10	2.3
Writing	8	1.9
Combination without ASL	94	22

2.2.4 Work

The survey asked those responding (Deaf and the hearing) if they are working

- full-time
- part-time
- unemployed
- other (student, stay-at-home parent, retired)

Table 6 shows the different employment rates between the Deaf and hearing people. There was quite a difference in the levels of unemployment. The Deaf unemployment rate was at 18% with only 1% of the hearing group being unemployed.

Table 6: Employment Picture

	Hearing	Deaf
Working full-time	65.3 %	38 %
Working part-time	13.2 %	16.5 %
Unemployed	0.8 %	18 %
Other	20.7 %	27.5 %

2.2.4 School

The Deaf participants were asked to state the types of schools they attended. Keep in mind; some answered more than one type of school. The types of schools examined include

Deaf school:

The students are Deaf and the teachers are trained to work with Deaf students in American Sign Language.

Oral school: The students are Deaf and they are taught using an 'oral' method of instruction where they focus on developing speech and oral language skills.

Mainstream school: The Deaf students attend classes with hearing students and an interpreter.

Hearing school: The Deaf students attend classes with hearing students.

Home school: The student is educated at home.

Didn't go to school

Many Deaf people attend multiple types of schools such as a Deaf school and home school. Most stated that they attended a Deaf school (see Table 7).

Table 7: School Attended

	Frequency	Percentage
Deaf school	282	40.9
Oral school	50	7.3
Mainstream school	170	24.7
Hearing school	156	22.6
Home school	8	1.2
Did not go to school	11	1.6

2.2.5 Job search experiences

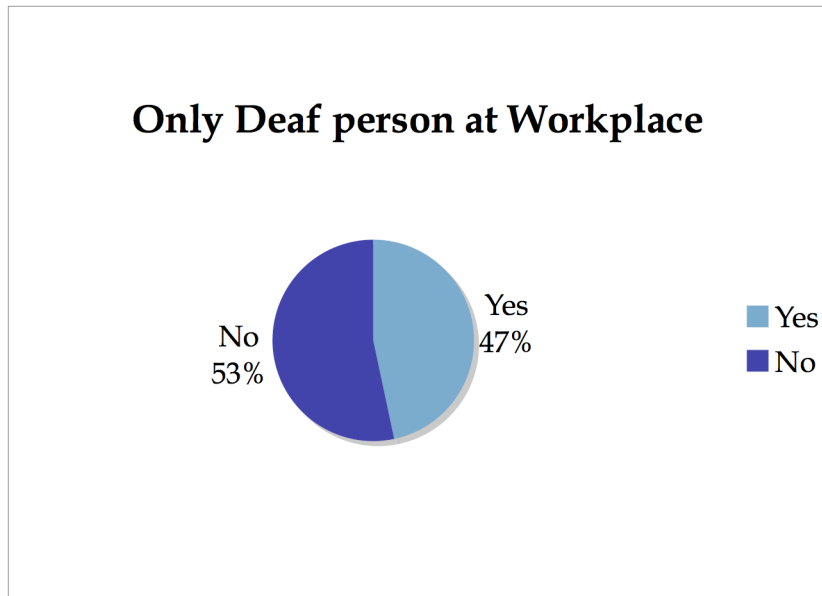
The survey asked about the experiences of Deaf people while looking for a job. From the perspectives of these Deaf people they felt that after an employer found out that they are Deaf, the Deaf person

- wasn't offered a job interview (55%)
- didn't get a job (60.5%)
- wasn't hired because of 'safety' issues (50%)
- wasn't hired because of high cost (46.7%)
- wasn't hired because they wouldn't 'fit in' (48%)

2.2.6 Job Experiences

The survey found that 47% of the Deaf people employed worked with hearing employees only. These people had no other Deaf person working with them.

Table 8: Percentage of only Deaf person at the Workplace



2.2.7 External Attitudes

Those interviewed were asked if they have had experienced negative attitudes from their co-workers and their boss. They were allowed to answer the question using the options of

- always
- often
- sometimes
- not at all

Table 9 shows the percentage of those responding that indicated they have at least sometimes (always, often, sometimes) or never experienced negative attitudes.

Table 9: Co-Worker and Boss Attitude

	Negative Co-Workers (%)	Negative Boss (%)
At least sometimes	60.7	56.5
Not at all	39.3	43.5

About 30% (85 responses out of a possible 302) of those responding felt that their co-workers are promoted more often than they are.

About 15% indicated 'not at all' when asked if their employer provides all of the accessibility services that they need.

About 40% stated that they are 'unsatisfied' or 'very unsatisfied' with the resources their employer provided at their last job.

2.2.8 Experiences with Employment Service Providers (ESP)

The survey asked questions about Deaf people's experiences with Employment Service Providers (ESP). The survey found that

- 49% said that ESP 'sometimes' or 'not at all' provided full access for their communication needs
- 32% felt that the ESP were familiar with the needs of Deaf people
- 66% stated that their experience with ESP was difficult and frustrating

2.3 DCM Survey: Discussion

Of the Deaf people responding to the survey

- most felt that they are part of the Deaf community
- most communicate with their family using ASL & Other
- 18% of Deaf people are unemployed
- about 50% felt that they weren't hired because they are Deaf
- about 50% felt they weren't hired because of safety, fit and cost issues
- about 50% are the only Deaf individual at their workplace
- about 50% felt that ESP didn't provide them full access

2.4 DCM Survey: Study Limitations

While the DLI used a careful process to ensure the most accurate results possible there are some limitations with the study.

The survey was

- completed only by people with access to a computer
- completed only by people with computer skills
- mostly answered by Deaf people that have high-skilled jobs

Note: It's assumed that the majority of Deaf Canadians don't have high-skilled jobs. Therefore the responses from the study don't represent the average Deaf person.

The project staff were

- unable to access people that are isolated from the Deaf community
- unable to get more than a few contacts in the territories

The project

- changed from looking at both Deaf and Deafblind Canadians to Deaf people only
- recognized that an entirely separate study would need to be done to reflect Deafblind Canadians

2.5 Deaf Community Member Interview Methodology

Eight Deaf people were selected for the DCM interview. Those interviewed were Deaf Canadians who were

- 15 and older
- had been employed at least once

Fake names have been used to protect the identity of those interviewed. They are represented as DCM (Deaf Community Member) with a number, for example DCM 1, DCM 2 and DCM 3 (see Appendix 1).

2.6 DCM Interview Analysis

The DCMs had both positive and negative experiences while searching for a job and being employed. The 7 themes pulled out from the interviews include

- employer attitude
- Deaf employee attitude
- co-workers
- opportunities
- Employment Service Providers (ESPs)
- interpreters
- communication

2.7 Employer Attitude

The attitude of employers has an impact on the employment potential of Deaf Canadians. During the interviews the DCMs showed that the negative attitude of employers is based on

- perception of Deaf 'Can't'
- communication problems
- fear

Revising resumes was as strategy identified to get around employer's negative attitudes about Deaf workers.

Finally the interviews provided a more favorable outlook on employers by examining their positive attitudes.

2.7.1 Employer Attitude: Perception of Deaf 'Can't'

Those interviewed stated that there is a perception among employers that Deaf people 'can't'. Deaf 'can't' is the perception that Deaf people aren't able to perform job duties. DCM 5 stated, "hearing people look at us and see what we

can't do, rather than what skills we do have. They don't see what our resume shows". DCM 7 is frustrated that employers view Deaf as not being able to do the required work duties. DCM 4 and DCM 2 said that employers don't understand that Deaf people are capable to do different jobs. The view that Deaf people aren't able makes employers unwilling to hire Deaf people (DCM 2, DCM 4).

2.7.2 Employer Attitude: Communication Problems

Trying to communicate with their boss can be difficult for Deaf employees. DCM 5 said that trying to communicate with their boss was stressful because the boss wasn't friendly. DCM 3 was also frustrated by their boss because of problems in communicating. DCM 3's boss would require DCM 3 to attend meetings where an interpreter wasn't provided. DCM 3 explained that not having an interpreter meant that they would be forced to sit in a meeting and not be able to participate in the discussion.

2.7.3 Employer Attitude: Resume Revisions

DCM 8 said that it was helpful to have a 'hearing' resume to stop employer discrimination. DCM 8 stated that after university, they applied to a lot of jobs with their regular resume. DCM 8's regular resume had indications that they are Deaf such as

- TTY
- high school graduation from a Deaf school

After not receiving any responses DCM 8 decided to make a 'hearing' resume that showed nothing indicating that they are Deaf. With the 'hearing' resume, DCM 8 got an interview. After this experience DCM 8 believed that to get blue collar work, it's important not to mention that you're Deaf on the resume.

2.7.4 Employer Attitude: Fear

Those interviewed stated that fear makes employers reluctant to hire Deaf people. DCM 2 said that employers who have experience with Deaf employees are more likely to hire new Deaf people. Employers without experience with Deaf people are fearful to hire them. DCM 2 said

“Employers may be afraid to hire people who are Deaf. Perhaps employers think it will be expensive and a lot of work to accommodate the accessibility needs of a Deaf employee and that’s something they don’t want to deal with”.

DCM 2 said that fear comes from the lack of employer education about Deaf people.

2.7.5 Employer Attitude: Positive Attitudes

Those interviewed also have had good experiences with their employers. DCM 7 said that one of their jobs was easy to get because of the good attitude of the employer. DCM 7 stated that the supervisor liked Deaf workers and was willing to hire a new Deaf person. DCM 7 said that in the jobs where they had supportive bosses they were able to be comfortable and successful in their work duties. DCM 2 said that the supportive bosses would listen and provide solutions to any problems that came up.

DCM 8 suggested a strategy to improve the attitude of employers. DCM 8 had a Deaf organization come into the company to make a presentation about Deaf culture. DCM 8 said that after the presentation the boss became more understanding and it improved their relationship.

2.8 Deaf Employee Attitude

The personal attitude of Deaf people affects their employment success. The Deaf Community Members (DCMs) gave examples of positive and negative attitudes which had an impact on the employment potential of Deaf people.

2.8.1 Deaf employee attitude: Positive

A good attitude is important to the employment success of Deaf people. DCM 3 suggested that Deaf people on the job should

- be well-mannered
- present a nice personality
- take initiatives
- be kind
- smile
- be honest

A positive attitude is important in the interview process. DCM 8 said that it's important for Deaf people to be prepared for job interviews. DCM 8 stated that, during job interviews Deaf people must avoid showing that they

- are nervous
- have low self-esteem

By hiding these feelings Deaf people will be more likely to get the job (DCM 8). DCM 7 stated that it's important for Deaf people who want a job to show that they are serious about wanting the job during the interview. DCM 4 stated that there are jobs where Deaf people are qualified. Deaf people can get these positions with a good attitude (DCM 4).

A positive attitude also includes having reasonable expectations. DCM 3 said that the employment expectation of some Deaf people is too high. DCM 8 stated

that Deaf people must understand that they may not get some jobs. It's important for Deaf people to know that when they don't get a job it's not always because they are Deaf (DCM 8). Deaf people must understand that hearing people also get denied some jobs (DCM 8).

2.8.2 Deaf employee attitude: Negative

Those interviewed shared situations where the negative attitude or unrealistic expectations of Deaf people created a barrier for their employment potential while

- searching for jobs
- on the job

DCM 8 stated that the negative attitude of Deaf people causes problems when they are being interviewed. DCM 8 said that some Deaf people make demands during the interview that aren't appropriate. When these people don't get the job they want, they blame it on discrimination (DCM 8). This can result in a negative cycle where these Deaf people don't want to apply for a job because they assume they will face discrimination (DCM 8).

DCM 3 stated that some employed Deaf people have bad attitudes and refuse to help in the workplace. DCM 3 said that it's important for Deaf people to understand that hearing people don't always discriminate against Deaf people. DCM 4 said that some Deaf employees "are looking to fight with the hearing". DCM 4 said that it's important for Deaf people who get upset easily to focus on their ability to finish their job tasks.

DCM 8 stated that Deaf people become frustrated when they are denied a raise that they were expecting. As a result, they slow down their work pace. DCM 8 says that

“You should keep working hard and bear with it, regardless of whether the pay hasn’t been raised or not. If you work fast and progress quickly, your pay could increase. If not, when they’re looking for a reference at another job, they’ll get a negative reference.”

In summary, the Deaf Community Members (DCMs) stated that Deaf people

- must have a positive attitude
- need to have reasonable work expectations
- should realize that not all hearing people discriminate against the Deaf

2.9 Co-Workers

The topic of co-workers was a common discussion from the interviews with the Deaf Community Members (DCM). Co-workers were discussed in terms of

- being helpful
- working as a team
- working with other Deaf co-workers
- having workplace issues

2.9.1 Co-workers: Being Helpful

Hearing co-workers of the Deaf employees are often helpful. DCM 3’s employer didn’t provide an interpreter for meetings and instead suggested someone take notes. DCM 3 said that one of their co-workers was eager to help provide notes during the meetings. On occasions where notes weren’t permitted, DCM 3’s co-workers would provide updates after the meeting.

2.9.2 Co-workers: Teamwork

DCM 3 stated that they felt part of the team with the hearing coworkers. DCM 3 said

“If we didn’t like our boss’s attitude, together we would tell them that we weren’t comfortable with this, that and the other. Having that consensus was very important. If there weren’t meetings, that would have been very difficult to do”.

Being part of a team resulted in DCM 3 feeling supported and protected by their co-workers. The team environment also resulted in friendships for DCM 3. DCM 3 said that being Deaf didn’t matter to their co-workers. The co-workers were friendly and treated DCM 3 like family.

2.9.3 Co-workers: Working with other Deaf co-workers

Those interviewed showed that working with other Deaf co-workers was helpful. DCM 4 had a job and worked with a more experienced Deaf worker. DCM 4 said that they felt relieved knowing that another Deaf person worked there. After the other Deaf employee left, DCM 4 felt alone and frustrated trying to communicate with the hearing staff.

2.9.4 Co-workers: Issues

The Deaf people also discussed problems that occur with hearing co-workers. DCM 3 said that friendships between the Deaf and hearing employees weren’t automatic. DCM 3 said that learning understanding of one another took time.

For DCM 4 the problems with co-workers reached the point where they quit their job. In one instance DCM 4’s co-workers took credit for work that DCM 4 did. Before quitting the job DCM 4 tried to discuss the issues with their boss. DCM 4’s boss believed the hearing co-workers and ignored DCM 4’s concerns.

When Deaf employees are having conflicts with hearing co-workers, there are solutions. DCM 8 used the help of a Deaf organization to teach their co-workers

about Deaf culture. After the workshop, the hearing co-workers became more accepting of DCM 8.

2.10 Opportunities

The interviews also shared opportunities and tips that can be used by other Deaf people seeking employment. The tips offered include

- volunteering
- persistence
- support from others

2.10.1 Opportunities: Volunteer

Two Deaf Community Members suggested volunteering as a way to get a job. DCM 2 said that volunteering gave them the opportunity to meet new people which helped to increase their network. DCM 8 stated that volunteering helps improve self-esteem. Improving self-esteem is important because “when people aren’t working, their attitude and self-esteem declines” (DCM 8).

2.10.2 Opportunities: Persistence

Persistence is a ‘don’t give up attitude’. It helps Deaf people to keep going until they find a job. DCM2 stated that Deaf people must not give up when looking for a job. They suggested going beyond the basics in the job search. They said that it’s important to

- do preliminary research
- visit the company to find out the kind of qualifications the company wants

DCM 8 stated that persistence got them a job. After finding out that they are Deaf, the employer was hesitant to hire DCM 8. DCM 8 said

“just give me a chance and I’ll prove to you what I can do....Sure enough, I came back the next morning and ended up being

successful in that job. I was the first Deaf person to work at that factory; there were about two hundreds employees there”.

2.10.3 Opportunities: Support from Others

Getting help from others can also help with employment. DCM 2 reported that a good network provides a support system that will help you when looking for a job. Having a support system is also important while working. DCM 8 experienced discrimination at work and used the support of a Deaf organization to get help. The Deaf organization offered a workshop, on Deaf culture to the hearing people at the workplace. DCM 8 said that they experienced less discrimination following the workshop.

DCM 3 stated that having contact with both Deaf and hearing people can help Deaf people become more experienced at working in both worlds. DCM 3 stated “experience in the Deaf world and my experience in the hearing world shaped how I think, how I act. The feedback that I got from both sides was for the better”.

2.11 Employment Service Providers/Counselor

The Deaf people discussed their experiences with Employment Service Providers (ESP) in regards to ESPs being

- not Deaf-friendly
- not helpful
- offering only basic jobs

2.11.1 ESP: Not Deaf friendly

One common complaint among those interviewed was that hearing ESPs aren’t Deaf-friendly. DCM 5 said that they have tried a variety of ESPs but they haven’t helped. DCM 5 suggested 3 issues with ESPs that include

- conflicts in communication

- being told that their education at Gallaudet⁵ isn't good enough
- not being Deaf-friendly

DCM 2 said that it's important for ESPs to develop relationships with Deaf-friendly organizations. DCM 2 stated that companies that have previously hired Deaf people are more likely to hire again. The ESPs, that DCM 2 talks to, don't have any existing relationships with Deaf-friendly employers. As a result, DCM 2 feels that they end up "looking at thousands of jobs and not knowing which companies are the best to apply to. I can send resumes forever doing that".

DCM 2 has also experienced barriers with Employment Service Providers (ESPs) because of their lack of experience with interpreters. DCM 2 said that meetings with the agencies have been postponed because the agency didn't hire an interpreter in advance. DCM 2 had previously informed the ESPs that they need to book the interpreter in advance but their advice was ignored.

2.11.2 ESP: Not helpful

The DCMs stated that the ESPs haven't been helpful. DCM 5 stated, "the job agency wasn't really helpful; they rejected me, so to speak". DCM 5 felt that the ESPs weren't actively looking for jobs and the process was slow. DCM 1 felt that the time between appointments was too long. The long wait between appointments decreased their motivation to find a job (DCM 1).

DCM 2 said that the low employment rate of Deaf Canadians is partly the fault of ESPs. DCM 2 stated that ESPs don't encourage or provide the necessary support that Deaf Canadians need. DCM 2 stated that ESPs should make more effort to educate employers on the value of Deaf people.

⁵ Gallaudet University is located in the United States. It is the only university where all of the programs are designed for Deaf students.

2.11.3 ESP: Basic jobs

Another complaint was that ESPs only presented low paying or entry-level jobs (DCM 4, DCM 5). DCM 5 expressed that jobs presented were below the skill levels shown on their resume.

2.12 Interpreters

Those interviewed discussed how interpreters affect their work. They discussed 4 areas:

1. Why interpreters are needed
2. The cost to use interpreters
3. Fear to request interpreters
4. Co-workers not familiar with using interpreters

2.12.1 Interpreters: Why they are needed

While discussing interpreters those interviewed stated that they need the service for

- clarity
- discussing concerns
- actively participating in meetings

DCM 7 stated that their English isn't strong. DCM 7 felt that it's difficult to explain their problems through written English and be clearly understood. As a result DCM 7 stated that they used interpreters whenever there were concerns. The use of an interpreter allowed DCM 7 to clearly present any issues to the boss. The interpreter also allows for solutions to be discussed in detail.

Many of those interviewed stated that their employer had a monthly meeting. During the monthly meetings the Deaf employees can actively participate using an interpreter. At DCM 7's organization they hired an interpreter in advance for

the monthly meeting. At DCM 4's and DCM 6's organization their employer wouldn't provide an interpreter for the monthly meetings. DCM 6 attended the monthly meetings and stated that they couldn't understand the discussion and would "just sit there and look around". DCM 4 also didn't understand what was being discussed at the monthly meetings. Their employer would provide meeting notes after the meeting. However, DCM 4 often wouldn't understand the notes and would have to ask their spouse to translate the notes into American Sign Language (ASL).

Interpreters are also important during job interviews. DCM 8 had the best interview when the interpreter was part of the interview.

2.12.2 Interpreters: Cost

Those interviewed shared that the cost of interpreters makes employers hesitant to hire them. DCM 3's organization temporarily hired interpreters for training as per the request of several Deaf employees. After finding out the actual cost of using an interpreter the company didn't keep them. DCM 2 suggested the government provide funding to companies to help with the cost of interpreters. DCM 2 said the funding

"would help to even the playing field, because hiring a Deaf employee would cost no more than hiring a hearing employee. I think that would add to incentive to companies to be more open to hiring Deaf applicants"

2.12.3 Interpreter: Afraid to request them

Those interviewed said that they were afraid to ask their boss for an interpreter. DCM 3 stated they had seen Deaf employees fired for requesting interpreters. As a result, DCM 3 was careful about asking for interpreters. DCM 8 stated that they should have requested an interpreter for interviews. Instead DCM 8 said

“I was afraid that if the company knew an interpreter was needed, they wouldn’t interview me so I chose to go without one”.

Both DCM 3 and DCM 1 did ask for an interpreter but they were denied. DCM 3 asked for an interpreter during important meetings and was offered a note-taker instead. DCM 1 requested an interpreter for their Saturday morning meetings but was refused. When DCM 1 did attend the meetings they couldn’t follow the conversation. DCM 1 stopped attending the meetings.

2.12.4 Interpreters: Co-workers not familiar with using them

The hearing co-workers are often not familiar with the use of interpreters. This can cause problems. At DCM 8’s company, interpreters would come in so that DCM 8 could discuss issues. DCM 8 stated that the hearing co-workers were suspicious of the interpreters. DCM 8 said

“sometimes coworkers would look at me and question whatever I said was actually correct...they were unfamiliar with using an interpreter. Sometimes my signing would be short and the interpreter voicing would be longer than my signing, and others would be puzzled about that. Because of the time needed to expand on sign concepts, which can be short.”

DCM 8 would then be forced to explain how the interpreting worked. After the explanation the co-workers were still doubtful and they would assume that the interpreter was talking on behalf of DCM 8.

To help the co-workers understand the role of interpreters DCM 8 asked a Deaf organization to offer a workshop. The workshop improved the hearing co-worker’s understanding of the role of interpreters and Deaf culture. The hearing boss also became more willing to hire an interpreter for important meetings.

2.13 Communication

Communication in the workplace impacts the employment potential of Deaf people. Communication was discussed in a positive manner in terms of

- innovation
- methods
- tips

The interviews also examined communication issues confronted by Deaf people.

The research considered communication

- innovation, methods and tips
- problems
- support by employers
- literacy skills

2.13.1 Communication: Innovation

Those interviewed said that they are able to communicate effectively in their hearing work environment by

- being innovative
- having innovative co-workers

The innovation of the hearing people, in terms of facilitating communication was also discussed. At both DCM 4's and DCM 6's work, there was another Deaf co-worker. The more senior Deaf co-worker was able to communicate with the hearing co-workers and then translate the message into American Sign Language (ASL) for DCM 4. When the Deaf co-worker was no longer available, DCM 4 would communicate long messages to their spouse regarding the work situation. DCM 4's spouse would translate the message into English and write it down. They would then bring the note to their boss. This permitted DCM 4 to

communicate their concerns to their boss. DCM 4 didn't like the lack of independence they felt by using their spouse to communicate.

2.13.2 Communication: Methods

Those interviewed shared methods that can be used to support communications including

- notes
- gestures
- visual demonstrations

DCM 8 communicates in the work environment primarily through gesturing and writing notes. DCM 2 writes notes by hand and uses the computer to write messages with their co-workers. DCM 7 used notes and text messaging to communicate with their co-workers. DCM 6 said that it's difficult to communicate at work however they 'made do' through gesturing and acting out visually words.

The use of visual demonstration was used to communicate between Deaf and hearing employees. DCM 8's boss visually instructed DCM 8 on how to perform job duties. Through this method DCM 8 was able to successfully complete their duties.

DCM 8 stated that the visual awareness of many Deaf people also helps to ensure safety. When asked how they would hear an employee in an accident, DCM 8 said

"I also mentioned that the factory is a noisy environment so hearing people would just be as likely to miss hearing that; Deaf people are better at watching their surroundings".

2.13.3 Communication: Tips

Those interviewed shared a few tips to help communication through improved literacy. DCM 6 and DCM 1 said that it's important for young Deaf people to improve their written English and their American Sign Language (ASL). By improving their ASL and English, they would be able to communicate more easily on the job (DCM 6).

2.13.4 Communication: Miscommunication

Miscommunication in the work environment was a minor topic in the discussions. DCM 8 said that the negative experiences at his work were mostly caused by communication problems with the hearing co-workers. DCM 5 also had some negative experiences at work that were caused by communication issues. When miscommunications did occur DCM 1 would ask for clarification and it would be resolved through visual demonstrations (DCM 1).

2.13.5 Communication: Problems

When communication in a work environment isn't clear, it causes problems. DCM 6 stated that they feel awkward and guilty because of the communication problems. DCM 6 said that there are other Deaf employees that are able to communicate with hearing co-workers freely. Others aren't able to communicate well due to communication barriers. Those who communicate well can start working immediately upon arrival but DCM 6 must wait for clarification.

DCM 7 stated that communication issues have prevented their employment growth. DCM 7 said that the more advanced positions within their career path require the use of phones. DCM 2 said that having to use phones for many jobs, has limited their ability to get a job.

2.13.6 Communication: Employer

The interviews showed that employers could strongly influence clear communication between Deaf and hearing co-workers. DCM 2 said that some of their bosses in the past have been supportive by providing all accommodation resources to facilitate communication.

DCM 2 said that many employers would rather not hire Deaf people. DCM 2 stated that employers “prefer to rely on speech, rather than coming up with other ways to communicate like writing back and forth”. DCM 6 and DCM 2 stated that the communication barrier is why Deaf people aren’t hired for jobs. Employers feel that it wastes time trying to communicate with Deaf people (DCM1).

2.13.7 Communication: Literacy Skills

The importance of literacy skills was also discussed in the interviews. DCM 1 said that literacy is a weak area for Deaf people. DCM 1 suggested that Deaf people spend extra time on literacy during school to make sure they develop their literacy skills. DCM 5 stated that their literacy skills prevent them from fully understanding job applications. DCM 4 felt that they needed to improve their literacy skills to move to a higher job position.

2.14 DCM Interview: Conclusion

In conclusion, the Deaf Community Members had both positive and negative views and experiences with employment. The positive discussions regarding employment centered on

- helpful co-workers
- positive Deaf employee attitudes
- volunteering to help employment prospects
- resourcefulness with communication

The problems that the Deaf Community Members experienced are in regards to

- employer's perception of Deaf 'can't'
- negative Deaf attitudes
- cost of interpreters
- employers unfamiliarity with interpreters
- ESPs not meeting the needs of Deaf people

3: Learning Centres Analysis

The next group examined is the Learning Centres. Learning Centres are centers for skill improvement and educational institutions such as universities and organizations that teach Essential Skills.

3.1 LC Survey: Methodology

The National Needs Assessment Preliminary Survey was used to show the interactions between Canadian Learning Centres and Deaf and Deafblind people.

The survey

- was done nationally through telephone interviews - Yukon didn't participate
- had four questions and a short demographic section
- was completed by 203 literacy agencies
- focused on hearing individuals - this is the student makeup of Canadian Learning Centres
- was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)-a research software program

(SPSS was used to determine the basic frequencies and to show how the literacy agencies in different province/territories answered the questions.)

3.2 LC Survey Analysis

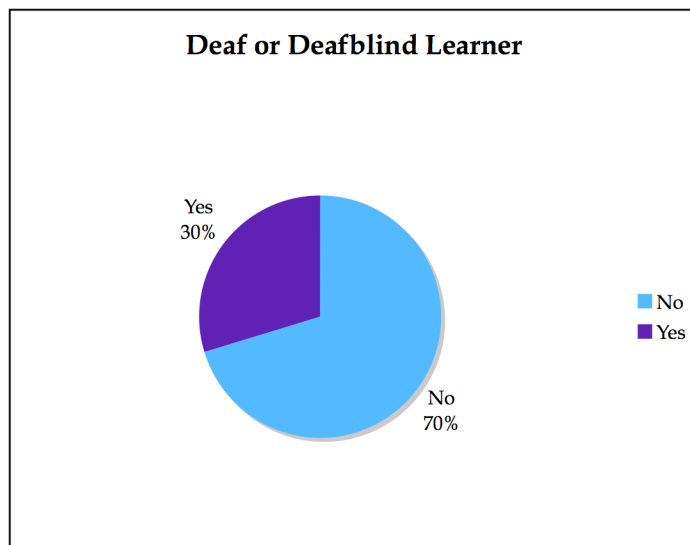
The first look at the survey data showed that few Deaf and Deafblind people are in learning programs. It also showed that there are few programs designed for them.

Most Learning Centre employees feel that they would be able to meet the needs of Deaf and Deafblind learners. The following shows the results from each of the 4 survey questions in more detail.

1. Have you ever had a learner in your program that was Deaf or Deaf and blind?

Table 10 shows that few Deaf and Deafblind people are in learning programs across Canada.

Table 10: Deaf or Deafblind Learner



Out of the 203 responses only 30% stated ever having a Deaf or Deafblind learner in their program.

Programs in all of the provinces, other than Quebec and Nova Scotia, on average stated they have never had a Deaf or Deafblind learner. For example, 95% of those surveyed in Alberta said that they haven't had a Deaf or Deafblind learner. In New Brunswick 85% stated that they have never had a Deaf or Deafblind client.

There were few provinces stating that they have had at least 1 Deaf or Deafblind learner. Quebec was the only province in the survey stated that they have had a least 1 Deaf or Deafblind learner. Out of the 10 organizations surveyed, in Nova Scotia, 50% stated that they had at least 1 Deaf or Deafblind person seeking their help.

Table 11 Deaf or Deafblind Learners in Program

	Have you ever had a learner in your program that was Deaf or Deafblind?			
	No	No %	Yes	Yes %
Alberta	19	95%	1	5%
British Columbia	19	73%	7	27%
Manitoba	16	62%	10	38%
NWT	1	100%	0	0%
New Brunswick	11	85%	2	15%
Newfoundland & Labrador	7	70%	3	30%
Nova Scotia	5	50%	5	50%
Nunavut	1	100%	0	0%
Ontario	50	65%	27	35%
PEI	2	100%	0	0%
Quebec	0	0%	1	100%
Saskatchewan	12	75%	4	25%

2. Do you currently have a learner in your program that is Deaf or Deafblind?

86.7% No

13.3% Yes

The majority of the Learning Centres surveyed stated that they don't currently have any Deaf or Deafblind clients.

Newfoundland and Labrador, at 20%, is the province that currently has the most Deaf or Deafblind learners.

The learning programs in the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, PEI and Quebec all said that they currently don't have any Deaf or Deafblind clients in their programs (see Table 12).

Table 12: Current Deaf or Deafblind Learners in Program

	Do you currently have a learner in your program that is Deaf or Deafblind?			
	No	No %	Yes	Yes %
Alberta	19	95%	1	5%
British Columbia	23	88%	3	12%
Manitoba	23	88%	3	12%
NWT	1	100%	0	0%
New Brunswick	12	92%	1	8%
Newfoundland & Labrador	8	80%	2	20%
Nova Scotia	10	100%	0	0%
Nunavut	1	100%	0	0%
Ontario	62	80%	15	15%
PEI	2	100%	0	0%
Quebec	1	100%	0	0%
Saskatchewan	14	87%	2	13%

3. Do you offer any programs that have been specifically developed and designed for learners who are Deaf or Deaf and blind?

88.7% No

11.3% Yes

88.7% of Learning Centres stated that they don't have any programs designed for Deaf or Deafblind learners (see Table 13).

In all provinces and territories at least 80% of agencies surveyed stated that they don't offer programs for Deaf and Deafblind learners.

100% of agencies in 5 provinces and territories (Alberta, NWT, Nunavut, PEI and Quebec) stated that they don't have any such programs. This may be due to lack of

- demand for these services
- accessible programs in these provinces and territories

Table 13: Programs for Deaf or Deafblind Learners

	Do you offer any programs that have been specifically developed and designed for learners who are Deaf or Deafblind?			
	No	No %	Yes	Yes %
Alberta	20	100%	0	0%
British Columbia	25	96%	1	4%
Manitoba	22	85%	4	15%
NWT	1	100%	0	0%
New Brunswick	11	85%	2	15%
Newfoundland & Labrador	8	80%	2	20%
Nova Scotia	9	90%	1	10%
Nunavut	1	100%	0	0%
Ontario	66	86%	11	14%
PEI	2	100%	0	0%
Quebec	1	100%	0	0%
Saskatchewan	14	88%	2	12%

4. If someone who was Deaf or Deaf and blind was in need of services offered by your program would you be able to accommodate them?

47.8% No

52.2% Yes

Although many of the Centres have never had Deaf or Deafblind people seek their services most felt that they would be able to accommodate them (see Table 14).

- 60% of programs in British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia felt they could meet the needs of the Deaf or Deafblind.

- Less than 50% of programs in Alberta, New Brunswick, Ontario, Nunavut and PEI felt they could meet the needs of the Deaf or Deafblind.

Table 14: Accommodating Deaf or Deafblind people

	If someone who was Deaf or Deaf and blind was in need of services offered by your program would you be able to accommodate them?			
	No	No %	Yes	Yes %
Alberta	14	70%	6	30%
British Columbia	8	30%	18	70%
Manitoba	5	19%	21	81%
NWT	0	0%	1	100%
New Brunswick	9	69%	4	31%
Newfoundland & Labrador	3	30%	7	70%
Nova Scotia	4	40%	6	60%
Nunavut	1	100%	0	0%
Ontario	44	57%	33	43%
PEI	2	100%	0	0%
Quebec	0	0%	1	100%
Saskatchewan	7	44%	9	56%

3.3 LC Survey: Discussion

In summary there is not a great outlook for Deaf or Deafblind people seeking the services of Learning Centres.

- The Deaf or Deafblind don't appear to be accessing Learning Centres now or in the past.
- There are few programs designed specifically for Deaf or Deafblind people.
- 60% of programs in British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia felt they could meet the needs of the Deaf or Deafblind.

3.4 LC Survey: Future Research

It is unclear why there is a lack of demand for learning services by Deaf and Deafblind people. The additional interviews and the analysis below offer some insight. Future research could focus on learning why the Deaf and Deafblind aren't using the services of learning agencies.

3.5 Learning Centres Interview Analysis

Interviews with Learning Centres were completed to add to the information provided by the surveys. The Learning Centres interviewed were chosen based on having experiences with Deaf learners.

3.6 LC Interview: Methodology

The seven Learning Centres interviewed were selected based on their responses to the survey. Individuals with knowledge of the Deaf community were also selected to give further information.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the participants. In the report, those interviewed are shown as LC (to indicate Learning Centre) and a number (examples LC 2, LC 6 - see Appendix 2).

3.7 LC Interview: Analysis Results

The analysis of the interviews revealed several themes that showed consistent issues across the country. The themes are shown in table 15, seen below.

Table 15: Interview Categories

Internal	External
1. Literacy	4. Education
2. Deaf Employee Attitude	5. Isolation
3. Understanding of Workplace	6. Attitudes towards Deaf people
	7. Services

3.8 Literacy

The interviews showed that low literacy levels of many Deaf Canadians limits their ability to get jobs or stay in their current jobs. The interviews showed that there are problems because of

- lack of command of the English language
- lack of access to literacy skills
- inappropriate employment placement

3.8.1 Literacy: Lack of command of English

The Learning Centres stated that many of the Deaf population lack a solid command of the English language. LC 3 demonstrated that many Deaf people, even with a solid understanding of American Sign Language, are confused by English words that have more than 1 meaning. One example is the term 'run'. Run can mean move faster than a walk but in English it has a variety of meanings including

- a tear in a pair of stockings
- a dripping nose
- dripping water

With American Sign Language each of these terms has a different sign that is used for the right context. However, because when you see the word 'run' your

first thought is to move faster than a walk, many Deaf clients will only understand the term in the sense of moving fast.

3.8.2 Literacy: Lack of access to literacy

To develop literacy skills one must have access to literacy resources. Many Deaf people don't have access to literacy upgrading. This is true specifically for Northern Canada. For those living in the north who want to improve their literacy skills they have to move south to cities such as Edmonton or Vancouver (LC 1). However, many Deaf northerners choose to stay up north (LC 1).

3.8.3 Literacy: Inappropriate Employment Placement

Deaf people with low literacy skills are often put into employment placements that aren't right for them. LC 2 stated that some secondary students who struggle with print literacy are put into programs that won't help them meet their full potential. For instance, they may have the aptitude to be successful in university but they are sent to vocational schools because of their lack of literacy skills (LC 2). These learners should be given the chance to improve their literacy skills so that they can go to university. Their limited literacy skills affect their employment potential. LC 2 stated

“I think they [Deaf Canadians] are underemployed because they don't have literacy abilities...so I think that many of the individuals who are unemployed and underemployed are ones that struggle with written English”.

3.8.4 Literacy: Success

Access to literacy upgrading can be improved by making Deaf-appropriate programs. LC 3 explained that the major focus at their Learning Centre is on literacy and numeracy for Deaf consumers. The Deaf coordinators in LC 7's organization choose the curriculum they feel is most appropriate for the Deaf people in the area. LC 3's program is also designed to meet the specific literacy

needs of each individual Deaf client. For instance, LC 3 will help their clients read recipes and fill out forms or focus on areas of English where they need help.

Literacy skills are important to the employment success of Deaf Canadians. When comparing their literacy levels to the rest of Canada, we find they are often below the average literacy skills level. Without access to literacy upgrading many Deaf people will not reach their employment potential. Through the use of Deaf counselors, programs can be designed to meet the specific needs of the Deaf consumers helping them succeed.

3.9 Deaf Employee Attitude

The personal attitude of Deaf people also affects their employment potential. Those interviewed stated that a

- positive attitude helps Deaf employees succeed
- negative attitude can restrict the Deaf from seeking employment

3.9.1 Deaf Employee Attitude: Negative

Those interviewed stated that negative attitudes of Deaf people are caused by the negative attitudes others have towards them. LC 6 explained that Deaf and Deafblind people are frequently not offered job opportunities and this in turn affects their morale.

“You keep getting the door slammed in your face long enough and you start feeling like you deserve to have that door slammed in your face” (LC 6).

LC 6 revealed that these individuals adopt a state of defeat. They no longer try because they feel that employers won't hire them.

3.9.2 Deaf Employee Attitude: Positive

A positive attitude is important to employment success. Having a positive attitude creates confidence in a person's ability and desire to succeed.

LC 2 described a successful Deaf employee in his office. LC 2 attributes part of the success of the employee to her ability, they stated "she's very active advocating for herself in order to get the supports that she needed in the provinces that she acquired her degrees" (LC 2).

Other people are driven by the need to prove that they can be successful. After being told by others that he was not capable, LC 1's client sought to improve his writing and reading skills to show others that he was able.

Because Deaf people face negative responses over and over again, this can lead them to give up on the job search. However, a positive attitude, with motivation and the desire to advocate for oneself, can help a person succeed.

3.10 Understanding of the Workplace

How a Deaf worker understands or doesn't understand the workplace affects their employment success. Deaf people sometimes

- lack transitional readiness – for example from high school to college – or - from high school to work
- don't understand workplace rules

The Learning Centres interviews also showed that lack of independence, of Deaf people, is a factor that limits their understanding.

3.10.1 Understanding: Lack of Transitional Readiness

Deaf people sometimes struggle with transitional phases between secondary school to post secondary school and secondary school to work. LC 7 stated that Deaf people often miss the skill set needed for the transitional stages. This is true for those stages between leaving school and entering either the work force or post-secondary education. The key to success in the post-secondary environment is being prepared. LC 2 stated “some of the most unsuccessful learners have come unprepared”. LC 2 also stated that the most successful students are those that prepare for the transition by

- taking tours
- planning their course
- using tutors
- determining the services they may need

3.10.2 Understanding: Lack of Understanding of Workplace Rules

Not understanding workplace rules is another area where some Deaf people struggle. Often these rules are not clearly explained. Examples of workplace rules include

- informing their boss if they are sick and not able to
- asking permission to leave work early

LC 7 stated that they see gaps between what the employers expect and what Deaf people see as their responsibilities. For example, LC 7 has clients that do not inform their employer if they are sick. These Deaf individuals make the assumption that their boss will know the Deaf individual’s reason for not going to work.

LC 7 has clients who complain that their job isn't fair because other employees in the office are making more money than they are. These Deaf people don't understand that different positions pay different wages.

LC 7 expressed that it is important for Deaf people to understand that "it's not always about what the employer is going to do for me but it's about what I can do for the employer".

Those interviewed said that unless workplace rules are clearly stated some Deaf employees don't understand some of the 'common sense' components of employment.

3.10.3 Understanding: Lack of Independence

Not understanding the workplace or being prepared for employment and post-secondary education may be due to lack of independence. LC 3 explained that Deaf people have been treated as if they don't have the necessary skills to be fully independent. They stated, "There are some individuals who have had everything done for them their entire lives. Mom's done it, dad's done it". Once they are given the opportunity to be independent they struggle because they have not

"had the opportunity to practice independence skills, and the learning that goes along with that is missing. Basically these individuals have to go back to square one and fill in the gaps they have been missing for years" (LC 3).

Without having experienced the trial and error that goes along with independence, Deaf people struggle with it in the work environment.

3.10.4 Understanding: Solutions

LC 7 mentioned the importance of mentorship to help future generations handle independence. Little mentoring currently happens in the Deaf community between young adults and life or work mentors. LC 7 explained that mentors in the hearing community are common but because the Deaf community is so spread out there is a lack of Deaf mentors. LC 7 stated that it would be very helpful for the youth in the Deaf community to see examples of successful Deaf mentors and to see their career paths. By 'engaging' young Deaf people with mentors it would help them

- develop their independence
- prepare for transitions
- teach them workplace skills.

3.11 Education

The Learning Centres often mentioned the Canadian education system during the interviews. While the education system is not the focus of this research, it greatly influences the employment success of Deaf people and should be discussed. Deaf children have a different educational system than hearing children. Deaf children can be placed in

- an oral school
- mainstream school with an interpreter
- Deaf school
- combination of oral school, mainstream school and Deaf school

This next section will

- discuss the gaps in mainstream and Deaf schools as reported by those interviewed
- mention strategies for success

3.11.1 Education: Mainstream school

The mainstream education system has many gaps that prevent the success of Deaf students. The gaps in the mainstream system include lack of

- trained teachers
- support services
- encouragement

3.11.2 Education: Lack of Trained Teachers

To ensure that a teacher can effectively work with a language assistant they need to be trained (LC 2). LC 2 revealed that teachers aren't trained to work with a language mediator assistant, such as a sign language interpreter, which makes communication a barrier. LC 1 showed that "the mediated education is a very challenging one and it's one that's not done well, teachers could do things differently but they often don't know how to do that".

3.11.3 Education: Lack of Support Services

Deaf students in the mainstream educational setting often lack the support needed for their success. In the northern territories, Deaf educational providers travel throughout the territories to provide services to Deaf students. LC 1, the only full-time Deaf learning provider in the north, travels throughout the Yukon to different mainstream schools. The provider assesses students and gives support.

Other learning providers come from Manitoba to provide services in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon (LC 1). The learning providers are only able to provide services to the students for short periods of time before they must move on to help another student in another community.

The lack of Deaf schools is not exclusive to the north, this is an issue found throughout Canada. School children with cochlear implants are confronted with additional difficulties as described by LC 2...

“some provinces where kids were implanted are told that they can no longer use support services and yet the reality is that most classrooms are very discourse-based...and it becomes difficult to follow 25 different voices in the classroom, let alone the teachers voice for so many of those Deaf students, they require interpreters as well even though they have a cochlear implant. Yet we have policies that prevent them from having access to those support services”.

By discourse-based, LC 2 is explaining that classes are often based on discussions and conversations. Deaf students, even those with cochlear implants, are visual learners and do discourse-based teaching makes it difficult for them to learn.

3.11.4 Education: Lack of Encouragement

The interviews also revealed how many Deaf students aren't academically encouraged. LC 2 stated that teachers in hearing schools don't always see the potential of a Deaf student. The student may not be encouraged to follow further academic training. LC 2 revealed “one of the vocational counselors said that he doesn't ever counsel the Deaf kids to go to post-secondary, really they should just live on welfare”.

Teachers and counselors need to encourage Deaf kids so they will get further academic training.

3.11.5 Education: Deaf schools

Hearing schools aren't the only schools that are inadequate. Deaf schools also have problems. For instance, Deaf schools have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified Deaf teachers (LC 2). The gaps include

- small number of Deaf schools
- Deaf school viewed as a last option
- children with multiple disabilities placed with other students

3.11.6 Education: Small number of Deaf schools

In Canada there are only a few Deaf schools and, in the Northern Territories, there are none. To receive an education in a Deaf school, northern students must travel south.

LC 1 stated that students sent south develop higher literacy skills. This increases their education levels. However, there is a downside to leaving the territories. LC 1 recalled an Inuit boy who was sent south to a Deaf school. When he returned he had missed out on his Inuit culture, language and traditions. LC 1 suggests linking a Deaf school with a mainstream school up north to keep the Deaf children in the north. However, to date, LC 1's suggestions haven't been listened to.

3.11.7 Education: Last option

LC 2 showed that the Deaf schools are often viewed as the last option. If a student fails in the mainstream school system they are 'dumped' into the Deaf schools. After having failed at the mainstream school they may believe they are a failure.

LC 2 expressed that Deaf schools should be the first option for Deaf children, not the last.

3.11.8 Education: Children with multiple disabilities placed with Deaf students

The demographics of the Deaf schools aren't the same as it was 20 years ago (LC 2). Many students attending schools for the Deaf often have multiple disabilities (LC 2). As a result, teachers must provide a learning environment that is suitable for both those with multiple disabilities and fully able Deaf students.

3.11.9 Education: Successful Strategies

There are a variety of methods that can help improve the educational success of Deaf individuals. At LC 2's university, they offer support services and advocate for their students to help them succeed. In the secondary education system, LC 2 showed what is needed to help Deaf students succeed, they stated that

“Deaf students and Deafblind students needs education that works for them; critical masses of students, direct instruction, qualified interpreters, curriculum that works for them, vocational counselors who see their potential and encourage them to go to post-secondary education”.

Through the combination of services and supportive teachers and counselors, Deaf students are more likely to succeed.

3.12 Isolation

Isolation experienced by Deaf individuals is another theme that frequently appeared in the Learning Centres interviews. Isolation is an issue in terms of

- critical mass – the number of people required before services are offered
- lack of social support
- limited access to services

3.12.1 Isolation: Critical Mass

Critical mass is the amount of individuals required for services to be offered. The Deaf community outside of larger urban centers can be very small and spread out. The lack of critical mass means that there are

- not enough individuals for services to be offered
- less opportunities for language development
- less opportunities for social skills development
- educational opportunities

Without enough individuals, full support services aren't provided (LC 2). LC 1 explained that isolation is a big issue in the north. In places like Nunavut, many of the communities are only accessible by plane and the Deaf don't have access to the wider Deaf community. LC 1 has difficulties attempting to meet the demand of the Deaf students in the Yukon. They are forced to travel around the province and spend short periods of time in each community.

Another type of access that is limited by isolation is the access to language models. Without other individuals with whom to communicate, Deaf people don't have the opportunity to practice American Sign Language. Consequently, LC 1 explained that the more isolated a person is, the more home signs they use.

3.12.2 Isolation: Social Support

Social support is critical to the success of individuals. When a person is isolated they often lack social support. LC 2 showed that in the university setting the Deaf student is often the only Deaf student in their program. This creates a lonely environment.

LC 2 explained “it’s the social support network that I think keeps many of our learners successful especially on the first and second year on campus” (LC 2). Without this network students are at a great disadvantage.

Access to social situations is important in the development of social skills. LC 3's emphasized this point “learners can spend time in the classroom then sit in the kitchen or another room and socialized while they are having their lunch. They also have opportunity to help each other”. LC 1 has a young Deaf student who attended a Deaf camp to socialize with other Deaf children. LC 1 also had a client who had difficulty socializing and attended LC 1’s class to participate in social situations.

For those students considering post-secondary education, social support networks are very important. Hearing students often take advantage of a social support system that isn’t available to Deaf students. LC 2 revealed “there’s a network of support and encouragement that just assumes all of us are going on to go to post-secondary, we’re going to find something to do. Whereas I don’t know if that social-support network exists for many Deaf students and very little of that exists for Deafblind students”.

3.12.3 Isolation: Limited access to services

Isolation also limits the access that Deaf students have to academic programs.

LC2 stated that

“when the population is really dwindling then it means that they’re not able to offer the full range of academic programming for Deaf students. So ultimately these kids are faced with even going to a mainstreamed school in order to access a range of classes that they want that could prepare them for post-secondary. Or they don’t get those options” (LC 2).

When asked how those living in rural New Brunswick get services, LC 7 stated that they simply don't. Without funding to physically visit the consumers, Deaf individuals are left without services unless they move to one of the four major cities in New Brunswick.

3.13 Attitudes towards Deaf people

Attitudes towards Deaf people affect the employment prospects of Deaf Canadians. Positive attitudes can encourage Deaf workers while negative attitudes can prevent their progress. LC 7 expressed that the biggest challenge to Deaf Canadians is the attitudes of employers and coworkers in the workplace.

3.13.1 Attitude: Positive

Positive attitudes towards Deaf individuals create an environment where Deaf people are more likely to succeed. LC 2 attributed the positive attitude at their institution to the long period of time that Deaf people have used the centre. LC 2 revealed

“I think there's an attitude, an experience-base across many faculties, where our profs get the fact that Deaf students are going to be on campus and interpreters are going to be in the classroom”.

3.13.2 Attitudes: Negative

During the interviews several themes came up relating to negative attitudes of employers including

- failing to see the value of a Deaf employee
- not giving potential Deaf employees a chance
- seeing the disability instead of the person
- only looking at the challenges of hiring a Deaf employee

One point that was emphasized by many of those interviewed was that employers don't understand the value of Deaf employees. LC 6 expressed "we still find that there are a lot of employers that just don't understand how much a person with a disability can put into their organization". The employers don't put in the effort to see what the Deaf individuals can do; instead they just look at what Deaf individuals can't do (LC 6). LC 1 also states that employers don't understand that Deaf people can do the job.

Deaf Canadians are often not given a chance. LC 2 explained that when Deaf people are applying for a position with hearing individuals with the same skills and work experience, employers often hire the hearing person. They go with what they know, and that means the Deaf person doesn't get a chance. LC 6 stated that many of their Deaf clients have the skills sets required for their desired jobs however employers are unwilling to give them a chance. They feel that employers need to be more open-minded to hiring Deaf employees. LC 1 confirms LC 6's perspective and stated that Deaf people just need to be given the chance to prove that they can be successful.

Deaf people are fed up by the stereotypes of hearing individuals. They don't like it when hearing individuals see them as a disability rather than as a person. LC 1 explained that employers must look past the disability and actually view the person. Similarly, LC 6 expressed

"it's just getting employers to see past the disability and to see the person...what they can do and what they can bring to your organization. It is a struggle for a lot of individuals with disabilities to get them to see the person and not the disability".

Employers' focus on the possible difficulties associated with hiring a Deaf individual rather than what they have to offer. LC 6 stated that many employers don't consider Deaf employees for the job because they assume that the

accommodations will be too difficult and expensive. As a result, many employers will not consider the skills of Deaf people and instead will automatically hire a hearing individual with equal skills.

3.13.3 Attitudes: Solution

Options were suggested to help improve the attitudes of hearing individuals regarding Deaf people. LC 1 stated that training is important for businesses and various levels of governments to change their views on accessibility and equal opportunities. Through educational forums, businesses and the government can learn that, with the right skills, Deaf people are fully capable. LC 7 stated that employment retention improves by increasing

- cultural sensitivity
- comfort levels of the employers

3.14 Accessibility Services

To have success, there must be access to services. However the lack of these services is a leading theme in the interviews. Common themes include

- lack of interpreters
- lack of qualified teaching assistants
- technological barriers
- restricted funding

Those interviewed also stated that some organizations are employing effective strategies to successfully provide accessibility services.

3.14.1 Services: Lack of Interpreters

Those interviewed agreed that there aren't enough good interpreters. The lack of interpreters affects the education of Deaf students. This in turn affects their opportunity for employment. LC 1 revealed that in both the Yukon and

Nunavut there are no trained interpreters and there are only a couple of skilled signers in the area.

3.14.2 Services: Lack of Qualified Teaching Assistants

LC 2 stated that in secondary schools unqualified teacher assistants are often hired to assist Deaf students. Many of these assistants only have a basic grasp of ASL or none at all. Without qualified interpreters, students are left without the academic support that they need (LC 2). The lack of qualified interpreters also affects the post secondary experience of Deaf students. LC 2 explained that their university

“probably could take in many more qualified Deaf students if there were actually interpreters available who could do the post-secondary work. But we’re challenged every year to find sufficient number of qualified interpreters”.

3.14.3 Services: Technological Barriers

Technological barriers affect the employment potential of Deaf Canadians, these barriers include the lack of

- video relay service
- basic accommodations
- Deaf human resources.

Both LC 1 and LC 2 feel that the lack of access to video relay services for Deaf Canadians stops equal access to communication. Video relay is a service that allows Deaf people to communicate via American Sign Language with hearing individuals through the use of a videophone and an interpreter. LC 2 explained that once Deaf Canadians have full access to video relay services, it would break down barriers. To date Vancouver is the only city that has started offering this service (LC 2).

While Deaf Canadians in the southern part of Canada find the services provided to accommodate their accessibility needs isn't good enough, the situation is much worse in the north. LC 1 explained that Deaf northerners struggle for basic accommodations such as

- flashing alarms
- flashing lights
- captioning

Many isolated northerners don't have access to computers which isolates them from the Deaf community even more. Also, the lack of reliable Internet service up north restricts Deaf individuals' ability to communicate.

LC 7 stated there aren't enough

- Deaf human resources for rural areas
- Deaf professionals to meet the needs of the Deaf consumers across New Brunswick

3.14.4 Services: Restricted Funding

LC 7 stated that the government doesn't provide funding for the practitioners to travel to rural areas to meet with Deaf people. As a result some Deaf people are denied access to service. LC 2 also stated that the lack of funding prevents Deaf people from accessing services in their community. LC 2 explained that the school districts don't want to pay for interpreters "so they hire teacher's assistants who may or may not use any sign language".

3.14.5 Services: Successful Accessibility Services

The services across the country aren't all unable to provide for their clients. Some organizations use successful strategies to ensure accessibility for their consumers.

LC 2 showed that his centre offers lectures series on topics that affect the Deaf community. They also have ASL immersion programs and advocacy support.

LC 3's centre also ensures that their services are accessible to Deaf consumers through a variety of technologies with an emphasis on visual resources.

LC 6's Learning Centre ensures that its services are accessible before accepting Deaf applicants. LC 6 explained "it doesn't do the person any good to plunk [put] them into something that they can't get anything from".

The majority of LC 7's staff are Deaf. These instructors choose the curriculum that they feel will work best for Deaf learners.

In summary, the interviews showed that there is a lack of accessibility services. These inadequacies are far worse in the north and in rural areas than the rest of Canada. However, Learning Centres are able to provide services that are specific to the needs of their Deaf consumers when there are sufficient

- Deaf professionals
- technologies
- accessibility services

3.15 Learning Centre Interview: Conclusion

The interviews with the Learning Centres revealed a few key problems and some positive revelations. Some negative issues revealed include

- low literacy levels
- inappropriate employment placements
- lack of support in mainstream schools

The factors that help to increase the employment success of Deaf people include

- Deaf-specific programming

-
- visual accessibility services
 - Deaf mentors
 - supportive teachers

4: Deaf Adult Literacy Providers Analysis

In this study the interactions between Deaf Adult Literacy Providers and Deaf clients were examined.

4.1 DALP Interview: Methodology

Deaf Adult Literacy Providers across Canada were chosen for this study. Because there are only a small number of Deaf Literacy Providers in Canada this study used interviews to get information. Six participants across the country were chosen and interviewed using video-internet programs including

- ooVoo
- Skype
- MSN Messenger

All of those interviewed and those who did the interviews were Deaf. The interviews were done in American Sign Language (ASL) and the videos were recorded. The video recordings were then translated and transcribed into English. Pseudonyms have been used to hide the identity of the participants. Those interviewed are referred to as DALP (Deaf Adult Literacy Provider) with a coordinating number for example DALP 1, DALP 2, DALP 3 (see Appendix 3).

4.2 DALP Interview: Analysis

The constant comparison method was used to analyze the information. Seven themes were identified in the analysis.

1. Collaboration
2. Deaf employee attitude
3. Social isolation
4. External attitude

5. Low-level jobs
6. Accommodations
7. Literacy

4.3 Collaboration

The importance of collaborating was discussed during the interviews. This discussion included how collaborating results in referrals. Those interviewed stated that collaboration is important between

- government and Deaf agencies
- employers and Literacy Providers
- Deaf practitioners

4.3.1 Collaboration: Government and Deaf agencies

Collaboration between Deaf agencies and the Canadian government is essential if Deaf people are to be successfully employed.

DALP 6 stated that collaboration helps the government understand the needs of Deaf Canadians. All levels of the government need to be open-minded when working with the Deaf community and focus on improving the Deaf employment situation.

DALP 4 stated that there are gaps in the collaboration between the Deaf community and the Alberta government. Deaf people don't communicate their needs to the government. Instead others are talking on behalf of Deaf people. A list of those talking on behalf of Deaf people includes

- interpreters
- people who can sign
- hearing people who are knowledgeable about the Deaf community

DALP 4 stated that Deaf people should be communicating with the government themselves. They recommended a Deaf liaison to work between the Alberta

government and the Deaf community. Having a Deaf liaison between the government and the Deaf community would give Deaf people the chance to share their concerns with the government.

4.3.2 Collaboration: Deaf Literacy Providers and Employers

Those interviewed stated that partnerships between Deaf Literacy Providers and employers are essential to the employment success of Deaf Canadians. DALP 5 identified the importance of “clearly defined partnerships so potential employers know what needs to be done”.

DALP 1 stated that Deaf employees can become successful if there is teamwork in place between

- deaf employees
- employers
- deaf adult literacy providers

4.3.3 Collaboration: Deaf Literacy Providers and Employer Service Providers

Having partnerships in place between Deaf agencies and hearing Employment Services Providers (ESP) is key to the employment success of Deaf people.

DALP 5 stated that

- the partnerships between DALPs and ESPs are weak
- Deaf people often get employment services from agencies that aren't equipped to serve Deaf people
- hearing people at Employment Services Agencies often don't know that there are Deaf agencies which can help them serve the deaf clients

DALP 1 stated the importance of having flexibility in place when partnering with ESPs.

DALP 1 goes beyond their role to help ensure the employment success of their clients. They help their clients with resumes and cover letters while their clients are waiting for services from the ESP. DALP 1 stated they will continue to do part of the role of the ESP until the ESPs offers more reliable and accessible services to the Deaf community.

4.3.4 Collaboration: Deaf Literacy Providers and Practitioners

It is important that Deaf Adult Literacy Providers form partnerships with other Deaf practitioners to share resources and determine best practices (DALP 3, DALP 5).

DALP 5 stated that for a partnership to be successful, they would need to “agree to work together as professionals in our respective fields...we can both advise each other about the respective needs”.

DALP 3 said

“I would like to meet with people from within the Deaf stream that share a common interest in making changes to programs so that there is more focus on workforce literacy”.

Other partnerships have been formed by government agreements. To avoid duplication of funds, the government requires DALP 3’s agency and another agency that services the Deaf community, to work together in partnership. The government requires that each of these agencies have unique programs. Their services must not be the same as any other agency in their community. These agencies don’t have a formal agreement in place. The lack of a formal agreement causes both agencies to be unsure of what the other agency is doing. DALP 3 “would like to see something where we work together”.

DALP 4 works with 3 other agencies, without a formal relationship agreement. The informal relationships allow DALP 4 to have a better understanding of the Deaf services available. DALP 4 can then present information on these Deaf services to their students.

During the interviews with practitioners the DALPs shared stories of successful partnerships with ESPs. DALP 5 mentioned that successful employment with one Deaf person was due to having a good working partnership with the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). DALP 5 stated that

“they [Deaf client] experienced success because of a partnership we had with ODSP...they [ODSP] were adamant that interpreters were provided...they also stressed that if there were any problems, that the programs would work with us...to resolve them”.

DALP 5 stated that their contact at ODSP was in place for a long time. The ODSP contact clearly understood the details involved with working with Deaf people.

4.3.5 Collaboration: Referrals

Those interviewed discussed the importance of referrals. The Deaf Adult Literacy Providers said that many Deaf people come to their offices with a variety of issues that may not relate to literacy. DALP 1 said that their office doesn't have all of the solutions for the different issues that their clients face. Instead they make referrals when needed.

Those interviewed stated that referrals are great when Deaf Adult Literacy Providers (DALPs) and Employment Service Providers (ESPs) refer to and from each other. When dealing with an employment issue DALP 2 will refer their clients directly to an ESP located nearby. In turn, this particular ESP will refer clients in need of improving their English to DALP 2.

Some of those interviewed are concerned that referrals may not be returned because of the lack of formal agreements. DALP 3 refers clients with employment needs to other Deaf-focused agencies. They aren't certain that the other Deaf agencies will refer clients to them when appropriate.

4.4 Deaf Employee Attitude

Those interviewed discussed the attitudes of Deaf employees in terms of

- frustration
- lack of motivation
- low self-esteem
- methods to improve attitudes

4.4.1 Deaf Employee Attitude: Frustration

Many Deaf people experience internal frustration when they are

- looking for work
- attending literacy programs
- getting help from ESPs

Not surprisingly Deaf people become frustrated when they are told that they aren't eligible for a job because they can't hear even though they have the skills to do the job (DALP 3). Other Deaf people, such as those looking to become forklift operators, are frustrated when they aren't given the chance to prove that they can be successful (DALP 3).

Many Deaf people become frustrated when attending literacy programs. DALP 3 stated that students enter the program expecting to get a job right away. They must tell students that they need to be patient. Other students feel overwhelmed with the amount of work involved in the literacy classes. To ensure that the students are at ease, DALP 3 has a process that they guide the students through.

DALP 1's clients are frustrated by the amount of paperwork involved with getting employment support from hearing agencies. DALP 1 stated

“they would much prefer sitting down with someone with whom they can discuss their wants and goals and then that information can be recorded, as opposed to having to fill out all of these forms on their own. The language and the English terminology is often just too challenging”.

4.4.2 Deaf Employee Attitude: Lack of Motivation

Within their literacy classes the DALPs stated that there is a lack of motivation by Deaf people. DALP 2 estimated that only 30% of their Deaf clients are motivated to work.

DALP 2 made several comments about motivation. They

- have had many students in their program with low motivation
- stated that keeping the students motivated has been a big challenge
- stated that they have had students for 3 years that haven't made any progress
- stated that lack of progress is caused by the student's lack of motivation
- suggested that many students attend the classes for the money and supports that they are offered while attending
- described other students as troublemakers who negatively influence learning in the class
- stated that many students are often absent from class and this affects lesson planning as they have to make sure the absent students catch up

DALP 5 stated that in some cases the age of the student causes their lack of motivation in the classroom. Younger clients tend to be more motivated to learn than older clients.

DALP 6 attributed the low motivation to the way that these Deaf people were raised. They stated that

- these people “aren’t willing to try something new, they are afraid of that - they keep things familiar”
- if the students would focus more then they would be successful.

DALP 2 attempts to encourage their students to be positive but admits that they don’t have the training to change attitudes.

4.4.3 Deaf Employee Attitude: Low self-esteem

DALP 2 stated that

- many Deaf people have low confidence and low self-esteem
- Deaf people need to be encouraged

DALP 4 said that

- students easily accept the negative views of others
- deaf people gain self esteem when they understand their own culture

DALP5 stated that students can be encouraged through classes that

- include the opportunity to learn about Deaf culture
- help students gain awareness and understanding of their own culture

4.4.4 Deaf Employee Attitude: Methods to Improve

DALP 6 showed that job coaches are helpful in improving the attitude of Deaf learners. The job coaches help to explain appropriate behaviours. Job coaches can also explain how behavior that isn’t appropriate can result in the loss of a job.

DALP 3 stated that many Deaf people don’t know that they can succeed. They said that it is important for successful Deaf people to share their stories. By

hearing Deaf-specific success stories, Deaf people can see that they can have success.

The literacy providers stated that it is important to develop relationships with their clients. “Deaf people have very good ‘gut feelings or intuition’. They know when they aren’t fully accepted in the hearing world” (DALP 1). To make sure that they feel fully accepted DALP 3 said that at their agency

“there is a lot of time spent in the beginning phases developing a rapport with the client. That’s the most important thing”.

4.5 Isolation

Isolation is another theme that emerged during the interviews that impacts the employment-potential and education of Deaf Canadians. Social isolation occurs at

- school
- work
- self-imposed

4.5.1 Isolation: School

DALP 3 stated

- that Deaf people, in hearing schools, experience social isolation from an early age
 - “many of the kids...are isolated and have no idea about what is around them...as they enter adulthood, the hearing move on, leaving the Deaf person alone and isolated”.
- the lack of a social environment prevents these
 - young people from learning social norms
 - Deaf people from developing a solid understanding of what occurs after school is finished

4.5.2 Isolation: Work

In their past work environments, where the majority are hearing, many Deaf people have experienced social isolation. DALP 1 stated that Deaf people don't want to experience isolation again. To avoid feeling isolated they avoid working in hearing environments. Avoiding work with hearing companies limits the employment opportunities.

4.5.3 Isolation: Self-imposed

Deaf people also socially isolate themselves. DALP 3 stated that many Deaf people stay at home and don't interact with the outside world. As a result, many Deaf people don't have a good understanding of the work world. Their ideas are often out of date. Deaf learners frequently ask DALP 3 about printing jobs - jobs that haven't existed for 20 years.

4.5.4 Isolation: Education

The lack of a social environment in general can also affect the education of Deaf people.

DALP 5 said that many of their clients don't have any goals of gaining employment. Instead of employment goals they attend the classes for social time, which is frustrating to the program. DALP 6 stated that many of their clients attend the classes for social time instead of trying new things or attempting to gain employment. Attending classes solely for social times negatively impacts education experience of other motivated students (DALP 5, DALP 6).

4.6 External Attitudes

Negative attitudes, from professionals and employers, affect the employment success of Deaf people. Negative attitudes can result in discrimination. DALP 2 feels that the main reason so many Deaf people are unemployed or

underemployed is because of discrimination. The main negative attitude is the belief that “Deaf can’t”. These beliefs may be held by

- teachers
- family members
- employers

The interviews discussed three topics in regards to attitudes from others including

- “deaf can’t”
- society’s misconceptions
- solutions

4.6.1 External Attitude: Deaf can’t

“Deaf can’t” is the belief that Deaf people have limited abilities and aren’t able to be successful on the job.

DALP 1 stated that

- hearing people have developed an opinion that “Deaf can’t” - it is important to remove this myth
- “Deaf can’t” by employers is the main problem keeping Deaf people from succeeding in employment
- Deaf employees are often not promoted when the norm would suggest their work time and skills would lead to promotion

DALP 3 stated that many teachers and family members have told Deaf people that they ‘can’t’. In turn, these Deaf people accept this and believe that they actually can’t have employment success.

DALP 1’s agency frequently meets with employers to encourage them to hire Deaf workers however they stated

“it’s always the same thing. We’ve been rehashing the same topics at these meetings for the last few years, in terms of employment. We try to encourage them to open up to hiring Deaf and Deaf-blind employees, but they are resistant in that they don’t seem to be flexible in broadening communication strategies that suit Deaf and Deafblind people”.

DALP 6 stated that many employers are “stuck in their old ways” and aren’t willing to hire because they believe that Deaf people can’t speak or write.

4.6.2 External Attitude: Societies Misconceptions

DALP 5 stated that the problem with Deaf employment lies with the belief that Deaf people are the problem. Instead it’s important to be “looking at society as a whole and fixing what’s wrong there”.

A common belief is that Deaf people can’t drive a forklift (DALP 3). Employers think it would be unsafe in the workplace to have a Deaf person driving a forklift. Many Deaf people do drive forklifts; they just need a work environment that allows them the opportunity to show their employer that they can do the job.

4.6.3 External Attitudes: Solutions

During the interviews the DALPs have shared methods that will help change others’ attitudes including

- self-advocating
- educating employers

Negative attitudes of Deaf people can be removed when Deaf people advocate on their own behalf. Deaf people can learn to self-advocate with the help of literacy providers.

DALP 4 stated that literacy providers could help learners develop self-advocacy skills by showing them DVDs on the topic. DALP 4 stated that

“society needs to see Deaf as valuable assets and this can be achieved by Deaf people advocating for themselves.

Another method to remove negative attitudes is by educating employers and exposing employers to the barriers and needs of Deaf people so that “they know what to expect” (DALP 6).

4.7 Low-level jobs

Another theme discussed in the interviews was the fact that many jobs in the Deaf population are low paying. The interviews discussed low-level jobs in terms of

- past
- present

4.7.1 Low-level jobs: Past

The interviews revealed that there were more positions for Deaf people in the past, specifically in the government, than there are today.

DALP 1 stated that

- it was easy for Deaf people to obtain a position with the government in the 70s and 80s - jobs were being given out like candy
- it is because of changes in technology and computers that there are less jobs available now

4.7.2 Low-level jobs: Present

In more recent times, there are few positions available for Deaf people. Many of the positions available are low-level. DALP 1 stated, “Now we prepare our

learners to become cleaners instead of helping them find more advanced work...nowadays, there are so many frustrations. We've been reduced to being janitors and working fast food restaurants".

Many Deaf people have goals of having a professional career. Instead of a professional career these Deaf people are forced to accept positions that are below their abilities due to survival or pressure by family (DALP 5).

Other skilled Deaf people are forced to accept government assistance because they aren't able to get any job. DALP 5 knows one young woman with a degree from Gallaudet University. The Gallaudet graduate hasn't been able to find work during the past 3 years of active job search. DALP 5 stated that this young woman has strong English skills and is fully able to work. The graduate has been forced to receive financial support from 'Ontario Disability Support Program' because she can't get a job.

4.8 Accommodations

The literacy levels of many Deaf Canadians aren't at a level where they can be successful in the work-world. Deaf Literacy Providers are trying to increase their literacy levels of Deaf students. DALPs aren't able to fully meet the needs of their clients because of the lack of accommodation tools including

- Interpreters and Intervenors
- Deaf-specific
- video-communication
- resources spread thin
- lack of funding available
- lack of assessments tools

4.8.1 Accommodations: Interpreters and Intervenors

The need for interpreters and intervenors was an ongoing issue within the interviews. DALP 1's agency isn't able to provide enough appointments to meet the demand. According to DALP 1 as recently as 3 years ago, in Nova Scotia, DALPs weren't given funding to hire intervenors for Deafblind clients. They said that now they do receive limited support for intervenors but not enough.

There are also situations where interpreters are available but Deaf people refuse their services. DALP 5 stated that when Deaf people reject an interpreter the hearing staff usually respects their wishes. They also stated that the interpreter is for the benefit of both the Deaf person and the hearing professional. Often the staff at the agencies "viewed the interpreter as the Deaf person's issue, not theirs". DALP 5 acts as an advocate explaining to the employers that the role of the interpreter is to make sure that communication between both parties is clear.

4.8.2 Accommodations: Deaf-Specific

Those interviewed stated that in order to have successful literacy programs for Deaf clients there needs to be Deaf-specific resources. DALP 1 stated that many of the resources available are "geared towards hearing people, filled with complex English, idioms, and so on".

Similarly, DALP 6 stated that the majority of literacy resources available are related to the needs of hearing people.

The Deaf community needs literacy resources that are specific to Deaf people and are created by the Deaf community (DALP 1). DALP 2 stated that their agency currently has good books but they don't have enough. They need more resources that are suited to the needs of Deaf people. Other literacy providers

stated that they would be more effective doing their job if they had readily accessible Deaf-appropriate resources (DALP 5).

Literacy providers need more Deaf-specific resources. The lack of funding means that literacy providers stretched to such an extent that they aren't able to develop these resources themselves. DALP 5 spends a great deal of time developing their own Deaf-appropriate resources and stated that

“this causes a lot of stress, leads us to give up...yes, it is part of our job but it would be great if some appropriate resources were ready for us to use, this would allow us to do our jobs more effectively”.

DALP 4 also stated that they spend a lot of time adapting hearing materials. They would like to have tools that have been developed for American Sign Language (ASL).

4.8.3 Accommodations: Access

For accommodation to be obtained there needs to be access. Those interviewed suggested that access can be achieved

- online
- Video Relay Service
- videoconferencing

Finding new and innovative ways to connect with the Deaf community is important for the Deaf Literacy Providers. DALP 3 stated that

“there is a growing presence of the Deaf community online. We are looking for easier ways to get in touch with the Deaf community online, like Facebook, Youtube, and so on. We're still trying to learn how to reach the Deaf community online”.

Those interviewed stated that accommodations could also be done through Video Relay Service and videoconferencing if these services were available. Video relay service is a system where an interpreter translates a conversation, between a Deaf person and a hearing person, through the use of a video. DALP 1 stated that the

“blocking of VRS [Video Relay Service] has been a huge issue. VRS was fantastic; you could sign and communication is clear. Now we’re stuck using TTYs, taking lots of time to make sure there are no misunderstandings. VRS was an amazing technology but not in service at the moment, so this is a significant barrier”.

DALP 5 stated that videoconferencing can be used to connect with learners in isolated communities. They suggested the following as steps to make this successful, including

- determining appropriate videoconferencing technology
- establishing contact
- establishing an assistant to administer the technology
- testing and recruiting Deaf learners

4.8.4 Accommodations: Resources Spread thin

The lack of accommodation is one reason current Deaf Literacy Providers are overloaded within their position.

DALP 1 stated that they are overwhelmed with their duties because of the multiple jobs they have to do. They try to help facilitate interactions between hearing Employment Service Providers (ESPs) and their Deaf clients, however, sometimes issues are overlooked.

DALP 2 is also overwhelmed with the amount of work that is required of them. They stated that an aide would assist in the process but they don't have the resources available to hire more staff.

DALP 6 is currently doing four jobs in an attempt to meet demand and is overwhelmed in the process. Without more resources they can't provide the best quality of service for their clients.

4.8.5 Accommodations: Lack of funding available

The lack of accommodations can be partly caused by the lack of available funding. Many of those interviewed stated that there would be demand for additional services if there were only money to pay for it (DALP 2, DALP 6, DALP 5). DALP 1 stated that there are even less resources for Deafblind people than there are for Deaf people. The lack of resources makes it challenging to deliver services.

While some funding is available, employers frequently don't access them (DALP 5). They stated that funds from the workplace can often be

“topped up with funds from another source specifically earmarked for accessibility but this is never considered. I often have to explain this idea over and over”.

4.8.6 Accommodations: Lack of assessment tools

Those interviewed also stated there is a lack of ASL-based assessment tools to measure learners' progress. DALP 4 stated that they

“need an assessment tool for ASL. We also need an assessment tool to measure a person's ability to work between both languages, English and ASL”.

DALP 4 stated that the Deaf stream needs a tool similar to the Canadian Language Benchmarks. It is a huge barrier not having “a tool to measure ASL progress”.

4.9 Literacy

Not surprisingly, the topic of literacy was a common topic during the interviews with the Deaf Literacy Providers. Literacy was discussed in terms of

- importance
- link between literacy and work
- low literacy skills
- disconnect between Employment Service Providers (ESPs) and literacy providers

4.9.1 Literacy: Importance

Those interviewed stressed the importance of workforce literacy. To date there is a gap between literacy education and workforce literacy education. DALP 3 said that it is important for members in the Deaf literacy stream to meet. During the meeting the DALPs can make changes to the current literacy programs. The end goal of the meetings would be to make literacy programs more work-focused (DALP 3).

4.9.2 Literacy: Link between literacy and work

DALP 3 and DALP 1 stated that many Deaf people don't understand the connection between literacy and work. Without strong literacy skills, Deaf people don't meet the minimum requirements for many jobs. While many Deaf people want to work they aren't willing to put in the effort in literacy courses to get the job they want (DALP 1).

4.9.3 Literacy: Low literacy skills

Those interviewed stated that the average literacy levels of their clients are low.

Deaf people in their community who have low literacy levels have been recently laid off. To get a new job they must upgrade their literacy levels. Many of these laid off people have difficulty developing new literacy skills (DALP 3).

4.9.4 Literacy: Disconnect between ESPs and Literacy Providers

A problem stated in the interviews was the gap between employment services providers and literacy providers. DALP 3 stated that

“literacy focuses on education while employment counselors focus on employment. We need to merge the two together”.

Proper documentation is required when interacting with ESPs. DALP 1’s client often don’t provide the appropriate paperwork, they stated “sometimes the clients will say they didn’t understand or that they can’t do the necessary paperwork”.

4.10 DALP Interview: Conclusion

In conclusion the Deaf Adult Literacy Providers stated several factors that are preventing the employment success of Deaf Canadians including

- internal issues
- social isolation
- external attitudes
- lack of accommodations
- low literacy amongst Deaf people

These factors are preventing Deaf people from entering the workforce. The factors also force Deaf people to accept low-level and low-paying jobs. The interviews showed that the situation can be improved through collaboration and partnerships between

- Deaf people,

-
- Deaf agencies and
 - hearing agencies.

Partnerships can open doors and opportunities for Deaf people to obtain and keep jobs based on their skills and abilities.

5: Employment Service Provider Analysis

Employment Service Providers (ESPs) was the next group examined.

ESPs help people find and keep work. Examples of ESPs include

- career centers
- employment service agencies
- employment program agencies
- employment counseling centers
- employment offices

ESPs provide a variety of services including

- resume writing
- mock interviews
- employment readiness workshops

This study examines how

- ESPs interact with Deaf clients
- employers interact with the Deaf

The following looks at the methodology used for the study of the ESPs and it presents the results for the ESPs survey and the ESPs interviews.

5.1 ESP Interview: Methodology

The ESP survey administered through a web-based survey program called SurveyGizmo. There were a total of 22 questions in the survey including demographic questions (male or female etc.). Most questions in the survey were

closed ended. There was one question that allowed those responding to give information they thought relevant to the study.

DLI developed a database of ESPs. To determine who should answer the survey, DLI took a random sample of the database. A total number of 285 ESPs across the country completed the survey (see Appendix 4).

Using several research assistants, DLI surveyed the ESPs over the phone. If there wasn't a response, the research assistant would call back, up to 3 times, before that ESP was removed from the survey list. If there was a response the research assistant

- presented a background on Deaf Literacy Initiative
- explained the current research
- asked for verbal consent
- asked each survey question

A total of 188 ESPs responded to the survey.

5.2 ESP Survey Analysis

The ESPs survey was used to determine whether Deaf Canadians are seeking the services of the ESPs. The survey also examined whether the ESPs are able to meet the employment needs of Deaf clients. The following examines

- location of respondents
- skills training provided
- Deaf services

5.2.1 Location

For this study 300 ESPs were contacted. The DLI used the percentage of Canadians living in each province to decide the number of calls made in each

province. For example, about 40% of the Canadian population is in Ontario therefore 120 ESPs were called in Ontario.

The majority of responses came from the largest province. The second most responses came from Quebec and a much smaller province, Nova Scotia (see Table 16).

Table 16: ESPs' Location

	Frequency	Percent
Ontario	49	26.1
Quebec	20	10.6
Nova Scotia	20	10.6
British Columbia	18	9.6
Manitoba	16	8.5
Saskatchewan	16	8.5
Alberta	14	7.4
Newfoundland & Lab	12	6.4
PEI	11	5.9
New Brunswick	8	4.3
Northwest Territories	2	1.1
Yukon	2	1.1

N=188

5.2.2 Skills

The survey showed that the majority (62.6%) of ESPs provide skills training. The most offered skills training is for computer use and communication. The following table (Table 17) shows the number of ESPs that provides training for each of the skills in order from highest to lowest.

Table 17: Provision of Skills Training

Skills	Frequency
Computer Use	97
Communication	82
Continuous Learning	66
Thinking	65
Document Use	60
Writing	56
Working With Others	53
Reading Text	40
Numeracy	28

5.2.3 Deaf Services

When asked if their services focus on Deaf or Deafblind client

- 87.3% of the ESPs don't have services that focus on these clients
- 26% dedicate at least some of their resources towards these clients
- 1.1 % responded that 'most' of their services are dedicated towards these clients
- 25.1% stated that they dedicate 'some' of their services towards these clients
- 73.8 % stated that they dedicate 'none' of their resources to these clients
- 0% stated that 'all' of their resources are dedicated to this group

When asked, if there was at least 1 person in their organization fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), only 6.4% answered yes. Out of a possible 188 ESPs, only 3 stated that they have at least one employee that is Deaf or Deafblind.

The survey revealed that few Employment Service Providers (ESPs) have

- services for Deaf or Deafblind people
- individuals at their workplace that are Deaf or fluent in ASL

Almost 40% stated that they have had at least 1 Deaf or Deafblind person use their services. Out of the ESPs that have had at least 1 Deaf or Deafblind client, 64.4% stated that they had some problems providing services to these clients.

Within the group of ESPs that have not had at least one Deaf or Deafblind client, about 46.1% believe that they would not be able to accommodate a Deaf or Deafblind client.

5.3 ESP Survey: Conclusion

The data from the ESPs survey reveals that the majority of ESPs do not have programs designed for Deaf people. The survey showed that ESPs do not have employees that are fluent in ASL. However, the survey revealed Deaf people are seeking their services.

Within the group of Deaf people that are seeking the services of ESPs, almost 65% of the ESPs explained that they sometimes, often or always have problems providing services. This difference between the lack of service available and the demand for services indicates a gap in services for Deaf people.

5.4 ESP Interview Analysis

Interviews were conducted with the ESP to help enhance the information retrieved from the survey.

5.5 ESP Methodology

The interview questions were partially based upon the results of the survey. A flexible questionnaire was used for the interview with the majority of the questions being open-ended.

The sample for the interviews was primarily based upon the survey. To increase the number of Deaf respondents the DLI interviewed two Deaf Employment Service Providers (ESPs) that had not responded to the survey. A total of 7 ESPs participated in the interviews. Pseudonyms (fake names) were used to protect the identity of the respondents. The fake names are associated with the province where the ESP is located (see Appendix 5)

The phone interviews lasted anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour. Deaf research assistants had interviews with Deaf ESPs using video-based chat software programs. Hearing research assistants had interviews with hearing ESPs using Skype.

5.6 ESP Interview Analysis

Using the constant comparative method of analysis, several themes emerged from the interviews. The themes, as seen on table 18, have been divided into internal and external factors.

Table 18: Interview Themes

Internal	External
1. Literacy	5. Supportive Employers
2. Communication	6. Misconceptions
3. Attitude	
4. Self-esteem	

5.7 Literacy

A common theme noted in the interviews with the Employment Services Providers (ESPs) was the low level of literacy among Deaf Canadians. The ESPs are confronted on 2 levels with issues related to low literacy skills among Deaf Canadians.

- On the first level, the lack of basic literacy skills affects how ESPs and deaf clients interact.
- On the second level, the ESPs noted that key issues between their clients and employers are caused by the clients' low literacy skills.

An ESP in Ontario shared the issues of low literacy among Deaf Canadians by stating "the way I see it, when it comes to getting a job, being Deaf is not the problem anymore, it's literacy" (ESP 4).

The following sections focus on literacy skills among Deaf people and includes the

- current situation
- problems that arise
- reasons the issue needs to be resolved

5.7.1 Literacy: Current situation

On average, literacy levels among Deaf people are low. In ESP 4's office the ESP records all of the Deaf clients that seek its services. ESP 4 estimates that out of all of the Deaf clients approximately 97% have low literacy skills. ESP 4 has divided the literacy skill levels of her clients into 3 categories:

- 1) "The first category consists of those who can recognize a word or two but will not understand the message.
- 2) The second category contains those who look at a word and take it literally.
- 3) The third category contains those who can read and comprehend it but their writing/grammar skills are not always the strongest".

ESP 4 did not express a fourth category where the literacy skills are entirely satisfactory. The other ESPs also stressed the lack of literacy skills among their Deaf clients.

5.7.2 Literacy Problems

The ESPs stated that there are numerous issues when the literacy skills are low.

In relation to the workforce the ESPs stated that the low literacy skills of their Deaf clients causes problems. The low literacy skills make it difficult for the Deaf individuals to get information and to interact with hearing individuals.

Low literacy skills amongst Deaf Canadians make communication difficult. ESP 4, giving handouts to their Deaf clients has proven ineffective because the majority of their clients are unable to read them. Being Deaf and proficient in ASL, ESP 4 was able to communicate the handouts using ASL. However, the majority of ESPs don't know ASL therefore their ability to share employment-search information is usually limited to handouts and written documents.

ESP 3 explained that having low literacy skills makes online education difficult to access. ESP 3 stated that

“it's easy to say that there are continuing learning opportunities online, they are convenient and easy to sign up for but what good are they if you can't read the content?”

Having low literacy skills makes interacting difficult between Deaf and hearing individuals. The ESPs explain that hearing individuals, who don't know ASL, are willing to work with Deaf people. The hearing individuals need some form of communication, which in this case would be written information. Without the ability to read and write, Deaf people tend to avoid communicating with many hearing individuals.

Even those that have a decent grasp on reading and writing are still falling behind because of their inexperience with literacy tones. ESP 4 has been confronted with the issue of tone within their writing:

That was my last real challenge with literacy. I would write something thinking it was fine but it offended a hearing person because the tone was too blunt...I explain to my clients that with the technology of emails, they need to work on their 'soft English' skills, they can't be blunt as it may be offensive and could destroy the relationship.

ESP 4 explains that Deaf clients often miss the subtle literary cues within emails. Their clients will receive emails from bosses or job coaches that require immediate attention however; the clients frequently miss the tone of the message and do not reply immediately. ESP 4 sums up the literacy issue amongst Deaf individuals by explaining, "being Deaf is not the issue, literacy is the issue. It's like a handicap - a 'literacy handicap'".

5.7.3 Literacy: Importance

ESPs see how improved literacy can help clients find jobs and protect themselves at work.

Searching for a job most often requires an individual to read job ads and review company information. Without adequate literacy skills, it is difficult to

- search for a job
- write resumes and cover letters

Having the required literacy skills is very important to the Deaf person's entire job search process. ESP 4 states that part of their job is to explain to her Deaf clients the importance of literacy skills...

"many people just wanted a job, and had no interest in improving their literacy skills. But once they understood the importance of literacy...more and more doors opened for them and more people got jobs".

ESP 6 stated that low literacy skills of Deaf people in rural areas face additional difficulties in their job search. ESP 6 explained that having the ability to read emails, notes and signs would increase the chances of Deaf clients finding jobs.

ESP 4 explained that having strong literacy skills will help people protect their rights. Without reading skills, Deaf employees cannot understand posters that give information about the grievance process. Without understanding the grievance process Deaf people cannot determine if their rights have been ignored. On the other hand, Deaf employees with literacy skills are able to document when their rights have been ignored. These documents can later be used to support their argument. ESP 4 stated

“I’ve noticed a huge connection between literacy and assertiveness. The better a person’s literacy skills, the more assertive they are-the more they will stand up for themselves. Those that have lower literacy skills tend to be more passive. I think it’s more a matter of people who don’t know if they have the right to do this or that, and not knowing the procedures to address the issue”.

Having literacy skills not only helps an individual to understand and document their rights, it also helps to ensure that an individual knows how to demand that their rights be respected.

5.7.4 Literacy Conclusion

Not having the required literacy skills affects Deaf people greatly by limiting their access to information and restricting their interactions with hearing individuals. Additionally, without literacy skills Deaf people have more difficulty searching for jobs and protecting their employment rights.

5.8 Communication

For Deaf Canadians, the preferred method of communication is usually American Sign Language (ASL). The majority of hearing Canadians don’t know

ASL. This results in limited communication between Deaf and hearing individuals. The majority of the Employment Service Providers (ESPs) stated that poor communication restricts the interactions between their clients and both employers and the ESPs.

5.8.1 Communication Issues

Communication is the key to finding and retaining employment. The limited English communication skills that many Deaf people have as well as the lack of available communication accommodations prevent them from succeeding in employment. The following looks at communication barriers in regards to

- lack of interpreters
- lack of advancement
- employer expectations

The following sections also examine how communication personally affects Deaf employees at the workplace in terms of

- miscommunication
- feeling left out
- self-consciousness

Communication can be facilitated between Deaf and hearing individuals through the use of interpreters. The lack of interpreters has been noted as a problem for both rural and urban ESPs. ESP 6 notes that there are no interpreters in his rural area. The closest available interpreter lives over 2 hours away, which makes it hard to access them. Even at ESP 4's urban office, where interpreters are available the lack of funding prevents the agency from using them.

Communication barriers often prevent Deaf employees from taking on additional responsibilities in the workplace. Employers have prevented Deaf employees advancing because of oral communication limits. ESP 5 had a client

working in a bank whose boss refused to advance her because she could not answer the phone. The boss did not take the initiative to find an alternative solution. Employers need to be educated on the accommodation needs of Deaf employees. Only then will deaf employees have an accessible work environment and equal opportunity to advance.

To be successfully employed Deaf people must meet a variety of expectations including

- responding to emails in a timely manner
- meeting the changing requirements of the employer

ESP 4 explained that their clients frequently don't respond to her/the job team's emails and they further expressed their concern that

“if you [Deaf client] can't meet my expectations how can you match an employers”?

ESP 4 revealed that many Deaf people don't understand the importance of replying to emails on time and quickly. As a solution, ESP 4 teaches their clients the importance of developing good habits in email communications so they will be better prepared for employer expectations.

Communication barriers do affect how Deaf employees meet the expectations of their employers. Changing expectations in the workplace must be communicated to the Deaf employees. ESP 4 explained that employers often feel unable to communicate the new expectations to the Deaf employees. Without having the new expectations communicated to them, how are the Deaf employees expected to meet them?

Miscommunication between Deaf workers and hearing bosses is another problem in the workplace. ESP 5's Deaf client went to visit a job site to decide

whether he was interested in the position, when he got there, the boss began directing the client to work. The boss thought that the client was there to immediately start work; the client thought he was merely viewing the job site.

Another issue relating to English communication is the misconception that Deaf individuals, who use their voice, are mentally delayed because of the sound of their speech. This has caused some Deaf people to worry about the sound of their voice. ESP 2 had a pair of clients that had completely isolated themselves from society because of their anxiety to communicate only using their voice. They feared that hearing individuals would think they sounded strange. ESP 2's clients began a janitorial business and had their hearing son make the contacts. After having developed relationships with their clients, they became more comfortable communicating with their clients using their voice.

Loneliness is experienced by Deaf workers who do not communicate using their voice and in situations where their co-workers are not fluent in ASL. ESP 3 illustrated that their clients feel like his co-workers don't like him. Hearing co-workers state that because they can't sign they feel unable to communicate with their Deaf co-workers. The lack of communication methods makes it difficult to interact. This prevents both hearing and Deaf co-workers from communicating with each other.

5.8.2 Communication Solutions

The interviews also revealed solutions to help overcome communication barriers including

- ESPs acting as communication facilitators
- Hearing ESP's learning ASL
- Hearing job search team communicating with employers

The Employment Service Providers can help improve communications between the client and the employer. ESP 4 occasionally acts as a communication facilitator between their clients and hearing individuals to help clarify communication.

The hearing ESPs at ESP 4's office have begun to learn some basic American Sign Language. By understanding some ASL, the counselors make Deaf employment-seekers feel more comfortable in the office.

To allow for a clear and accessible job-search process, at ESP 4's office, there is a hearing job search team that communicates directly with employers. ESP 4 explained that with the hearing job search team

“bosses are more ‘accepting’ because communication takes place between two hearing people, so it is an easier, smoother process”.

While miscommunication can lead to confusion for both employers and Deaf clients, ESP 5 explained that job coaches have reduced the confusion. Job coaches can visit the workplace for a while after the Deaf employee has begun working to clarify any issues.

5.8.3 Communication Conclusion

Having a clear communication process between employers and employees would help Deaf employees to be successful in the workplace. While there are many issues due to barriers in communication, the ESPs have developed a list of solutions and strategies that can reduce these types of problems.

5.9 Attitude

Having a positive attitude is important to have while searching for work or while on the job. Interviews with the ESPs revealed that many Deaf clients have developed or kept negative attitudes that block their ability to succeed.

5.9.1 Attitude: Negative

A negative attitude can limit employment success. There are some Deaf individuals who have a negative attitude towards seeking employment. They know employers will not hire them because they are Deaf and so consider it a waste of time to seek employment (ESP 4 and ESP 3). ESP 3 recognizes that the possession of a positive attitude does improve employment amongst Deaf Canadians.

Interviews revealed that some Deaf people use their disability to gain sympathy. ESP 4 said that some of their clients use 'the Deaf Card' as an excuse to why they don't complete their tasks or not show up at work. To discourage her clients from using the 'Deaf card', ESP 4 uses their workshops as a tool and explained, "you want to be treated as an equal? You need to act as an equal first".

5.9.2 Attitude: Positive

The ESPs help their Deaf clients understand that it is very important to have the right attitude during the job seeking process. The right attitude during job seeking has a positive outcome in finding employment. When describing the success of one client in the medical field, ESP 3 explained that the client's success is mostly because of her

- personal drive
- energy
- effort

At ESP 4's organization, the pre-employment preparation workshops provide resources and tools to help clients to be job-ready and have positive attitudes during the job-search process.

5.9.3 Attitude: Conclusion

Having a positive attitude is important in the employment success of Deaf individuals however ESP 4 revealed, “they [Deaf individuals] just can’t see for themselves what they are capable of”. By encouraging a positive attitude and helping Deaf people see their potential; Employment Service Providers can help Deaf employees succeed in the workplace.

5.10 Self-Esteem

To have successful employment, it is important to have good self-esteem. During the interviews it was mentioned that it is common for Deaf clients to have low self-esteem.

5.10.1 Self-esteem: Issues

To successfully gain employment, a person must believe that they deserve the position but many Deaf people have low self-esteem, which prevents them from getting the job. ESP 4 revealed

“the most damaging thing I’ve seen is the lack of confidence. It’s like a bottomless abyss. This makes the Deaf passive. I try to counteract the damage but often there is too much. And the clients don’t realize the connection between self confidence and employment”.

ESP 1 explained that some clients will get a job that requires them to do duties that they are unable to do. When they fail to do their job, it damages their self-confidence.

Often, Deaf people work in toxic environments where they’re not supported by their employer and are frustrated by not being able to work at their full potential. This further damages their self-esteem (ESP 1).

Low self-esteem can also limit the relationship between the ESPs and the Deaf clients. ESP 4 explained that “they don’t value themselves, therefore they don’t value us”. Clients who feel this way may not appreciate the effort it takes to find them work and often quit after not fully enjoying their first day on the job. Quitting on the first day is a frustration that ESP 4 sees too often.

5.10.2 Self-esteem: Solutions

ESPs should address issues of low self-esteem before helping clients with the employment search. “Sometimes they don’t have a sense of empowerment. We try to empower them, we give them what we can but it takes time” (ESP 4). To help empower her clients, ESP 4’s organization has developed a 2-day program for their clients to examine self-esteem and gain self-confidence.

5.10.3 Self-esteem: Conclusion

ESPs will have Deaf clients with low self-esteem. ESP 4 explained that “there is no reason for these people not to aspire to be more but they have bought into what society has told them they can and can’t do”. Aspiring to be more means aiming for work-related goals that are beyond what other people expect them to do. Deaf people need to realize their own value to appreciate how they can contribute to the work-world.

5.11 Supportive Employers

There are many factors that limit the employment success of Deaf people. One key factor is the lack of support from employers; many interviewees stated that unsupportive employers contribute to the high level underemployment and unemployment of Deaf Canadians.

5.11.1 Supportive Employers

The lack of support from employers often prevents Deaf people from finding employment or limits their ability to do the job. ESP 3 shared that employers feel that hiring Deaf employees is a burden that they don't want to have, they stated that "the [employers] may feel it's too much trouble that they have to make too many adaptations for them [Deaf employees]".

During the interviews, it was shared that many employers are unsupportive with their Deaf employees. ESP 5 revealed that some employers expect their Deaf employees to overcome their own barriers by themselves. ESP 5 expressed the importance of the employer and employee working together to overcome any barriers related to their hearing ability. ESP 5 also shared that the employer shouldn't totally depend on the employee to solve communication barriers. Instead, the employers need to be equal partners with their Deaf employee; they cannot expect their Deaf employees to develop the tools required for success on their own (ESP 5).

Employers can provide the necessary tools and support to the Deaf employees that would help them to succeed. Many interviewees have stated that there is the need for their Deaf clients to 'be given a chance' to show the employers what they have to offer. ESP 5 said that employers need to give Deaf people the opportunity to demonstrate that they can do a good job. Employers often don't understand the value of Deaf employees therefore they don't give Deaf people the opportunity to work. ESP 2 stated,

"it's just a mindset you have to defeat when you're trying to employ a person with one of these impairments. I think the largest success is just getting someone to give them a chance".

5.11.2 Supportive Employers: Solutions

The ESPs were able to offer solutions to help resolve issues. One method offered is to encourage employers to use a job coach. A job coaches' role is to assist clients in numerous ways such as

- helping them acquire work-specific skills
- assisting them in their job search
- working with employers and Deaf clients
- providing ongoing support on the job

ESP 3 explained that job coaches would give Deaf clients the opportunity to address any misconceptions that employers may have.

Another solution offered by ESP 3 would be a forum to educate employers on the potential of Deaf workers. The forum would illustrate the successes of Deaf individuals as well as illustrate how Deaf workers can contribute in the workforce.

ESP 2 has a multi-step process that they use to increase the prospect of employers hiring individuals with disabilities.

First, they introduce the idea of why hiring a Deaf person would be beneficial to an employer and allows time for the employer to think about it.

Secondly, they prepare a list of solutions for when the employer says 'I'd really like to but'.

Thirdly, they negotiate with the employer using her pre-planned solutions.

By expecting employers to be reluctant ESP 2 prepares creative solutions that would grab the employers' attention as to why hiring a Deaf person would be an asset to their company.

5.11.3 Supportive Employers: Conclusion

The interviews revealed that many employers think that hiring a Deaf employee would cause too much trouble. Those employees that do hire Deaf people often expect the Deaf employee to overcome any barriers on their own. However, the research revealed that the best outcomes are achieved when employers and Deaf employees work together to overcome barriers.

5.12 Misconceptions

Misconceptions by society are often the reason why many Deaf Canadians are either underemployed or unemployed. Some of the misconceptions include

- look only at 'disability'
- 'can't' operate forklift
- cost

5.12.1 Misconceptions: Look only at 'Disability'

ESP 7 stressed that there are a lot of misconceptions in society about why Deaf people fail to get and keep their jobs. ESP 7 explained,

“people are often looked at as a disability rather than as individuals who have particular challenges but who also have unique skills and experiences that they can be highly productive and can enhance a workplace”.

ESP 2 felt that

“there's a lot of misunderstanding about how well a blind or a Deaf person can function. Employers, since they aren't very well educated about the lifestyle and lives of people who are seeing or hearing impaired...think it's going to be a huge process or problem

integrating Disabled people into their business and they just want to avoid that, what they perceive as a problem”.

Basically, employers don't make any effort to realize the potential of having Deaf employees in the workplace.

5.12.2 Misconception: ‘Can’t’ Operate Forklift

An example of a misconception from hearing employers is that they assume that Deaf people are unable to operate a forklift based on their inability to hear. ESP 3 had several Deaf people apply for a forklift job but they were excluded from the pool of candidates. The employer thought it was an unsafe position for a Deaf person to have. To defeat this myth, ESP 4's Deaf client

- took a forklift training course
- passed the training course
- got a license to operate a forklift
- within one week he secured a position as a forklift operator

5.12.3 Misconception: Cost

Other misconceptions are often around the financial costs with hiring Deaf workers. ESP 7 revealed that “a lot of employers seem to be scared by what accommodation for a disability entails, they assume it's going to be expensive”. There are a variety of financial incentives offered by the government or agencies that would subsidize the costs. ESP 2 mentioned that there are wage subsidy programs available for employers as a financial benefit to hire individuals with disabilities. ESP 2 said that these financial benefits don't help because employers often forget that they are available or don't use them.

ESP 2 mentioned the HRSDC Opportunity Fund is available. The Opportunity Fund is offered by the federal government and provides funding for accessibility opportunities such as training and ergonomics for people with various degrees of disabilities. ESP 1 explained that there are numerous grants and tax write-offs

designed to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. The interviewees revealed that while there are potentially extra costs associated with hiring Deaf people there are also a variety of financial opportunities to offset these costs.

5.12.4 Misconceptions Conclusion

Employers need to recognize that

- it is a misconception that hiring a Deaf employee causes difficulties
- it does take determination by both the Deaf employee and employer to provide equal access and opportunities
- financial benefits are available for employers to compensate for any financial burden

5.13 ESP Interview: Conclusion

The ESPs showed that there are negative factors that prevent the employment success of Deaf people including

- low literacy levels of Deaf people
- lack of interpreters
- misconceptions

There are also positive factors that are helping Deaf people succeed in the work-world including

- supportive employers
- drive and effort by Deaf people
- programs to improve self-esteem

6: Employers Analysis

The next group interviewed was Canadian employers. Employers included all businesses, of all sizes, in all sectors and not limited to organizations that hire Deaf employees. Employers were interviewed to determine their experiences with hiring and employing Deaf people.

6.1 Employer Survey: Methodology

A survey was conducted with employers across the country. The survey can be broken down into 3 sections

1. Demographic and preliminary questions
2. Questions specifically asked to businesses that had hired a Deaf or Deafblind person in the past 5 years
3. Questions related to Essential Skills use on the job

The survey included 24 questions. The majority were closed ended questions with a few open-ended questions. Demographic questions were asked to determine the size of the organization and its industry. Most of the questions were focused on the experiences of having employed Deaf or Deafblind people.

6.1.1 Survey Sample

A random database of employers was developed based on Scott's Info - an online directory of Canadian businesses (Scott's Info, 2010). The businesses represent organizations across all sectors and industries. The database was designed to ensure that the number of businesses in each province or territory was proportional to its size. If the population of a particular province was 10% of the Canadian population then 10% of the business contacted would be from that

province. Additional organizations in the North were contacted to ensure that DLI received a total picture of Canadian employers.

6.1.2 Survey Administration

The survey was uploaded on an online survey program called SurveyGizmo. Using the database, DLI’s research assistants called each business up to 3 times asking if they would answer the survey. If the businesses agreed, the research assistants would then do the survey over the phone. A total of 184 businesses answered all of the questions, and 196 partially answered (skipped some questions).

6.2 Employer survey results

The majority of those surveyed stated that they don’t currently have Deaf employees working for them. The following describes in detail the results of each question asked during the employer survey.

Section 1: Demographic and Preliminary Questions

Approximately how many regular full-time staff do you employ?

The majority (75.9%) of the businesses that answered the survey were small businesses of 50 people or less (see Table 19).

N=187

Table 19: Business Size

	Frequency	Percent
50 people or less	142	75.9
Between 51-499 people	36	9.3
500 or more people	9	4.8

Which province is your business located?

The number of businesses called in each population was based on the population size in each province. Many of the businesses chose not to respond. As a result there isn't even representation of the distribution of businesses across the country. Table 20 shows the amount of business contacted in each province.

Table 20: Business Location

	Frequency	Percent
Newfoundland and Labrador	11	5.6
Nova Scotia	9	4.6
New Brunswick	16	8.2
Prince Edward Island	4	2.0
Quebec	29	14.8
Ontario	61	31.1
Manitoba	7	3.6
Saskatchewan	6	3.1
Alberta	21	10.7
British Columbia	16	8.2
Nunavut	3	1.5
Northwest Territories	1	0.5

Does your organization primarily serve the Deaf or Deafblind community?

None of the businesses surveyed primarily serve the Deaf or Deafblind community.

How do you primarily advertise job vacancies?

This question was asked in order to compare with the results from the survey results of the Deaf Community. In that survey, Deaf people were asked where they primarily go to look for job postings. It may be found that one reason Deaf

people aren't getting jobs is because they aren't looking for postings where the majority of employers advertise.

The survey revealed that the majority of employers primarily advertise their jobs online and in newspapers (see table 21).

Table 21: Advertise Job Vacancies

	Frequency	Percent
Online job search	59	33.9
Newspapers	44	25.3
Other	22	12.6
Word of mouth	17	9.8
Job Bank Canada	12	6.9
Employment Counselors/Job Centres	12	6.9
Networking	5	2.9
Recruiters	2	1.1
Career fairs	1	0.6

In the past 12 months has at least one Deaf or Deafblind person applied for a job?

The survey revealed that the majority (96.8%) of the businesses haven't had any Deaf or Deafblind people apply for a job in the last 12 months. When asked if a Deaf or Deafblind person had applied for a job in the last 5 years, 90% of those surveyed said 'no'.

In total, only 6.1% of those surveyed stated that they had hired a Deaf or Deafblind person in the past 5 years.

Section 2: Questions specifically asked to businesses that had hired a Deaf or Deafblind person in the past 5 years

Only 12 organizations of the 190 businesses answered the questions in this section. Because such a small number of businesses were able to answer these questions, their replies haven't been analyzed. The reason for this was because relevant statistical meaning can't be pulled from 12 answers. To see the answers to these questions, please look at appendix 7.

Section 3: Questions related to Essential Skills use on the job

The final group of questions was for all organizations answering the survey. The questions looked at the importance of the 9 Essential Skills as defined by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The 9 Essential Skills are

- Reading
- Document use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Communication
- Working with others
- Thinking
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

The purpose of these questions was to examine the Essential Skills that employers viewed as important and compare these to the answers from the survey of Deaf Community members (Survey 1). A complete list of the employers' answers can be seen in Appendix 8.

Table 22 shows the percentage of employers that felt that Essentials Skills were ‘very important’ and ‘important’.

Table 22: Percentage of employers that feel the skill is important

Skills	Skill is ‘very important’ and ‘important’
Thinking	94.6
Communication	93.5
Working with others	91.4
Reading	86.5
Document use	85.0
Numeracy	80.0
Continuous learning	81.6
Writing	76.8
Computer use	70.8

6.3 Employer Survey: Conclusion

The survey revealed where businesses advertise job postings and what Essential Skills employers view as important. These results can then be compared to the results from Survey 1 to see if there is a difference between where Deaf people

- search for jobs and where employers advertise
- rate their skills compared to the expectations of employers

The survey results of a random sample of businesses showed that the majority of Canadian businesses don’t currently employ Deaf people. What the survey didn’t show was the type of interactions between employers and Deaf people. To provide some insight about this, the survey was followed-up with interviews with employers. The analysis of these interviews can be read below.

6.4 Employer Interview Analysis

Employers were selected based on the recommendations by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The employers include organizations that have experience

with Deaf employees. The DLI chose to examine employers to determine their experience with Deaf workers. The categories examined include

- a. What is working
- b. What isn't working
- c. What can be done to make the situation better

6.5 Employer Interview: Methodology

The employer survey revealed only a few employers with experience with Deaf employees. Rather than choose participants based on the survey, the PAC provided a list of potential employers to interview. The PAC selected employers that are

- well known in the Deaf community for hiring Deaf people
- have practices in place for working with Deaf employees

Six employers across the country were chosen from the list that the PAC developed.

To protect the identity of the employers, the employers are referred to as Employer followed by a number, for example Employer 1, Employer 2, Employer 3. The province where the employer is located can be viewed in Appendix 6.

The analysis of the interviews revealed 6 key themes including

- interpreters
- communication
- accommodation
- employer understanding
- supportive co-workers
- Deaf employee attitudes

6.6 Interpreters

The employers interviewed felt part of their success with Deaf employees is because of the use of interpreters. When discussing the topic of interpreters, 6 main themes were found including

- importance
- common interpreted situations
- experiences
- trust
- lack of availability
- cost

6.6.1 Interpreters: Importance

The use of interpreters is important to facilitate communication between hearing people and Deaf employees. Employer 4 stated that interpreters are a very important factor in their success with Deaf employees. The employers said that it's

“the fact that we've given our Deaf employees the same opportunities and the same ear, I'll say, to vent, to talk and ask, that any employee has. I think that has been the best thing we've done”.

Employer 4 stated that satisfactory interactions between

- employer
- hearing employees
- Deaf employees

The employers attribute the positive interactions to the use of interpreters.

6.6.2 Interpreters: Common Interpreted Situations

The interviews revealed that interpreters aren't used at all times. Interpreters are commonly used for specific situations. These situations include

- interviews
- training
- large meetings
- performance appraisals
- personal situations

Employer 1 explained that interviews were done with the help of an interpreter. During interpreted interviews, Employer 1 is able to look for the same qualities in their Deaf applicants as they do with hearing applicants. Without an interpreter, Employer 1 stated that it would be difficult to learn about the applicant's qualities.

The employers also used interpreters for training purposes. Employer 5 said that interpreters were used occasionally for training but not all of the time. Instead interpreters tend to be used for large training sessions (Employer 5). At Employer 1's organization, interpreters are used in training along with the assistance of another Deaf employee.

Most of the employers interviewed stated that interpreters were used for large meetings. At Employer 1's organization they have an interpreter come in for their monthly meeting. The large meeting gives the Deaf and hearing employees the chance to talk about any problems that have happened during the past month (Employer 1). Employer 1 stated that the monthly meeting also gives the Deaf employees the chance to talk about their frustrations through the use of the interpreter. The use of the interpreter allows the Deaf person to contribute in a meaningful way (Employer 1). Employer 2 said that their organization has an unwritten interpreter policy. The policy is that an interpreter must be used for any group meeting where a Deaf employee is present. Employer 2 stated that problems sometimes come up because the interpreter doesn't show up. The

group must then reschedule the meeting and at a time the interpreter is available. (Employer 2).

Employer 3 stated that an interpreter was present for specific situations. The situations included

- performance evaluations
- times when the Deaf employee needs to fully understand information

Employer 3 said that interpreters were used for cases involving both constructive evaluations or in situations where a performance issue needs to be addressed.

Employer 4 stated they also use interpreters for more personal situations. After their monthly meeting, Deaf employees and the interpreter often go into Employer 4's office to talk about personal situations. Additionally, Employer 4 said that if

“an employee needs to deal with something we'll bring her[interpreter] in specially, we've used her in terms of things like funerals. When there's been a funeral or a Deaf on our staff, or staff's family and Deaf employees have wanted to go. We bring her so that there's equal opportunity”.

6.6.3 Interpreters: Experiences

Those interviewed said that overall their experiences with interpreters have been positive. Employer 3 stated that they hadn't had any problems or issues with the interpreters. Employer 5 said, “In all my years here I can only remember once where the Deaf staff asked not to use a certain interpreter”.

6.6.4 Interpreters: Trust

The employers interviewed also brought up the importance of trust in regards to interpreters. Employer 4 said, "I think the most successful thing that we've done is incorporate a constant use of a Deaf interpreter that my Deaf employees all trust so that the discussions are very open" (Employer 4). Employer 4 stated that their employees say things in private. The employees need to trust that the interpreter will not relay the private information to other people.

6.6.5 Interpreters: Lack of availability

The lack of available interpreters was a problem experienced by many of the employers interviewed. When questioned what would make hiring and keeping Deaf employees easier, Employer 2, Employer 4 and Employer 5 all said there needs to be more interpreters. Employer 5 stated that there are few interpreters available to do freelance work. Employer 4 said their city lacks a good system of finding available interpreters.

6.6.6 Interpreters: Cost

The cost of interpreters affects the employer's ability to use them. Employer 5 stated that their biggest challenge with Deaf employees is the thousands of dollars that they must spend annually on interpreters. Employer 2 stated that their organization would be encouraged to hire more Deaf employees if the government provided subsidies for interpreters. Employer 5 stated that it would be easier for their organization to hire and keep Deaf employees if they didn't have to pay for an interpreter. If interpreters were free, Employer 5 would have interpreters full-time for their Deaf employees in supervisory roles. When asked why they think so many Deaf and Deafblind Canadians are unemployed and underemployed Employer 2 said that it could be the cost of interpreters especially for smaller companies that may not be able to absorb the cost.

6.7 Communication

Those interviewed said that Deaf people with strong communication skills are more likely to succeed in the work environment. The employers discussed communication in regards to

- hiring
- tools
- miscommunication
- literacy
- hearing responsibilities

6.7.1 Communication: Hiring

When deciding whether they will hire a Deaf person, the employers consider the ability to communicate by the potential employee. For example if a potential new hire has low reading skills then they may not be appropriate in an environment where writing notes is important. Employer 3 would hire another Deaf person but it would depend on the type of work. They stated that if there was a position that didn't need a great deal of communication then they would hire a capable Deaf person.

6.7.2 Communication: Tools

Different communication tools were also discussed during the interviews. Employer 3, for instance, has been examining a software program that translates talk to text. They stated that this program would be particularly helpful for the hearing employees that can't sign. Employer 4 said that one of their Deaf employees carries a pager. Carrying the pager allows Employer 4 to contact the Deaf employee no matter where they are on the job site.

6.7.3 Communication: Miscommunication

The employers stated that miscommunication between the Deaf employee and the hearing boss is a big challenge. At Employer 3's organization the Deaf employee is responsible for receiving information from other departments and putting the information into a system. Employer 3 said that there are problems if the information that the Deaf employee received isn't complete. When the information isn't complete it becomes difficult for the Deaf employee to communicate the errors. Often the Deaf employee must depend on a hearing employee to speak on his behalf. Employer 3 sometimes sees the Deaf employee making the same errors again and again. Other employees becoming frustrated but most of these errors occur because the information wasn't clear in the first place. While miscommunication does occur, Employer 5 stated that communication problems don't cause problems that can't be overcome...

“obviously the communication barrier is difficult because, of course, ASL isn't an English equivalent language. It's its own language. And as with any person who has English as a second language there's gonna be miscommunication. Even with interpreters, at times, there's miscommunications”.

6.7.4 Communication: Literacy

The employers stated that Deaf employees need strong literacy skills to communicate well in a hearing work environment. Employer 5 and Employer 1 said that they don't always use interpreters. For day-to-day issues, the Deaf and hearing staff usually communicate through pen and paper. During small training sessions Employer 3 depends on hand written instructions to communicate the messages to the Deaf employee.

Employer 3 uses a laptop to write back and forth with their Deaf employee, this helps them to get to know each other. Through these conversations on the

laptop, Employer 3 determined that the literacy skill of the Deaf employee was low. Employer 3 went on to state that the Deaf employee's low literacy skills negatively affect the communication between them. Employer 3 is currently looking for programs that will help the Deaf employee improve their literacy skills.

6.7.5 Communication: Hearing responsibility

The employers stated that everyone in the workplace is responsible to make communication clear. Employer 4 said that the employment of Deaf people would be easier if the hearing employees and employers were more able to communicate with their Deaf co-workers.

6.8 Accommodations

Employers discussed proper accommodations for Deaf employees. The employers discussed accommodations used on the job in regards to

- safe work environment
- communication strategies
- using hearing co-workers
- attitudes about accommodation for Deaf people

6.8.1 Accommodations: Safe Work Environment

There were a variety of types of accommodations mentioned in the interviews. The types of accommodations for Deaf employees are tied to a safe work environment. Employer 4 stated that they

“work very closely with them [Deaf employees], first of all to make sure that they are aware of what could be hazard and secondly then they are able to see the hazard”.

Employer 4 said that the beeping sound on the forklifts doesn't help Deaf people. Instead of beeping sounds Employer 4 attached additional strobe lights to alert

the employees. Other accommodations are used primarily in the case of fire and include

- strobe lights
- flashing lights
- floor wardens

6.8.2 Accommodations: Communication Strategies

During training Employer 1's organization accommodates their Deaf employees by

- emphasizing visual demonstrations
- writing instructions in pen and paper

Employer 3 stated that their organization is looking into communication software. The software will transfer voice to text as a way to facilitate communication between the

- employer
- hearing employees
- Deaf employees

It's important for employers to be aware of the needs of their Deaf employees. This helps the Deaf employees to be successful at their jobs. Employer 2 stated that their organization always meets the accommodations needs of the Deaf employees so that they can fully participate.

6.8.3 Accommodation: Using Hearing Co-Workers

Hearing co-workers are also used as an accommodation for the Deaf employees. At Employer 1's organization they have a 'buddy system'. With the 'buddy system' a hearing partner is paired with a Deaf partner and in the case of an emergency the two will help each other. At Employer 3's organization, hearing co-workers will help Deaf workers during team meetings by writing down what is being said. Employer 4 stated that hearing co-workers are trained to be

attentive to the safety of the Deaf workers. Those interviewed said that co-workers are usually more than happy to support the Deaf workers.

6.8.4 Accommodation: Attitudes about Accommodation Deaf Employees

Those interviewed felt that accommodating their Deaf employees doesn't have a negative impact on the organization. Employer 4 stated that it's standard practice to accommodate hearing employees when they have an appointment or if they have a sick child. They asked "why wouldn't we make the same sort of accommodations for someone who is Deaf". Employer 2 stated that their accommodations procedures have been in place for many years. They rarely have issues but when an issue comes up, they deal with it immediately (Employer 2).

When asked why they think the unemployment rate of Deaf Canadians is high, Employer 3 stated that other employers think it will be too difficult to provide the accommodations. Those interviewed stated that accommodations can easily be provided and that co-workers are often willing to help. Employer 3 said that the

"coworkers are pretty open to taking the time to make sure that the person [Deaf co-worker] is involved in what they're getting at".

6.9 Employer Actions

The action of employers can affect the employment outcome of Deaf people. Those interviewed discussed a variety of positive actions including

- promoting teamwork
- ensuring Deaf representation in committees
- endorsing American Sign Language and Deaf culture

The employers interviewed said that their positive attitude towards Deaf employees is based on their good experiences with employees.

Employers with a negative attitude can block the employment success of Deaf people. The employers interviewed discussed negative employer attitudes in terms of

- fear and ignorance
- lack of Deaf awareness education for employers

6.9.1 Employer Actions: Promoting Teamwork

Employers stated that promoting teamwork was helpful to the success of their Deaf employees. Employer 5 said that a good way to create success is to encourage the Deaf and hearing staff to work together. Employer 5 explained that the Deaf employees were isolated in another building. After some time Employer 5 put hearing and Deaf employees in the same office. By being in the same office, the Deaf employees participate as part of the bigger team (Employer 5).

6.9.2 Employer Actions: Deaf Representation in Committees

Deaf representatives on different work committees helped the success of Deaf employees. Employer 5 encourages Deaf staff to join various committees so the Deaf staff has the same opportunities as the hearing staff. Employer 5 stated that some Deaf staff aren't motivated to join committees. For these Deaf staff that are less motivated to join, Employer 5 encourages them so that there is accurate representation of the Deaf community. Employer 2's organization has developed a committee that is responsible to address issues that affect the Deaf employees. They stated that the committee meets to talk about different issues before these issues become problems.

6.9.3 Employer Action: Endorsing ASL Classes and Deaf Culture

Many of those interviewed stated that their organizations support

- American Sign Language (ASL) classes

- Deaf culture classes

Employer 5 explained that their organization encourages the hearing staff to take ASL training. They do this by paying up to half of the cost. At Employer 2's organization one Deaf employee teaches level 1 ASL classes to all of the hearing co-workers. A Deaf employee at Employer 4's organization teaches ASL-basics during lunchtime hours. Employer 3's organization doesn't currently teach ASL however they are in the process of finding a teacher to come into the office to teach the language. Employer 3 stated that learning ASL would facilitate interactions between their Deaf employee and the co-workers, especially those that work closely with the Deaf employee. Employer 3 plans to provide the classes during work hours, which they feel would be an incentive for all of their employees to participate.

The employers interviewed shared how they present opportunities for their staff to learn about Deaf culture in Canada. At Employer 5's organization, some of the Deaf employees offer 1-hour Deaf culture training sessions. Employer 5 found the training sessions helpful and said that the hearing staff was pleased to participate. At Employer 2's organization Deaf cultural awareness was a piece of their diversity days. Their managers, the communications department and Deaf employees also participate in a Deaf conference where they are taught about Deaf history and culture.

6.9.4 Employer Actions: Good experiences

The employers interviewed stated that, in general, they have good experiences with their Deaf employees. These good experiences positively affect their attitude towards these workers.

Employer 1 stated that the greatest success has been that Deaf people have proven to contribute to the business to the same degree as the hearing

employees. Employer 5 said that their organization is willing to hire Deaf employees because they realize that Deaf people can perform the same jobs to the same degree as hearing staff. They stated that they are proud of their Deaf staff many of whom have moved into senior roles.

Employer 4 had an employee who started with the organization at an early age. This employee has now been with the organization almost 10 years and is one of Employer 4's best forklift operators. Employer 4 says that this employee's success is due to patience and understanding. They have another Deaf worker who has been with the organization 10-years. The 10-year veteran works with the Deaf employees through mentorship and guidance. Overall, the employers who were interviewed said that they have had good experiences with their Deaf employees. Employer 4 stated that

“I have had very few Deaf people that I haven't or wouldn't rehire if they left me. If we had a good applicant that is Deaf, we'll hire them just as we would anyone else”.

6.9.5 Employers Actions: Fear and Ignorance

When asked why they think that so many Deaf people are unemployed and underemployed many of the employers who were interviewed felt that it was because of the attitude of employers. Employer 5 said that employers without experience with Deaf employees often lack understanding and willingness to hire. Employer 4 stated that many employers have a fear of the unknown about Deaf people. The fear of unknown can also cause employers to use untruthful stereotypes about the intelligence of Deaf people. Similarly Employer 2 stated that many employers aren't willing to hire Deaf people because of the 'unknown'. The inexperienced employers fear that there may be a great deal of work involved with hiring a Deaf person such as building various types of accommodations (Employer 2).

6.9.6 Employer Actions: Lack of Deaf Awareness Education for Employers

The fear of hiring Deaf employees by employers may be due to the lack of awareness education for employers. Employer 2 stated that the lack of education causes employers to be fearful of the unknown. Employer 4 said that there is an untapped workforce that isn't being utilized because many employers don't understand the value of Deaf employees.

Employer 2 suggested that employers can access education on Deaf people by attending career fairs. Deaf conferences have also been shown to help employers understand Deaf history and culture. In Alberta, Employer 4 said that they are involved in a workforce diversity committee. This committee is responsible to educate other employers on the value of people with various types of abilities such as Deaf people. Employer 4 promotes the workforce diversity committee by offering tours in their workplace to show that Deaf employees have the qualities that employers need.

6.10 Supportive co-workers

The employers interviewed showed that it's important for the Deaf employee to be supported by their co-workers. The employers interviewed stated that this support can take many forms such as

- American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf education
- hearing co-workers helping Deaf workers
- Deaf workers helping Deaf workers
- positive interactions

6.10.1 Supportive Co-workers: ASL and Deaf education

The employees stated that their hearing workers are enthusiastic about learning ASL and eager to develop a better understanding of Deaf culture. Employer 3 stated that their organization is examining the idea of offering ASL classes. They

expect that the hearing co-workers working directly with the Deaf workers would be excited to learn ASL. Employer 5's organization currently helps subsidize ASL classes and the hearing employees have taken advantage of that. Many of Employer 4's employees have also learned ASL. The Deaf employees at Employer 5' organization have also offered Deaf culture classes to the hearing staff. They stated that the classes have been helpful and the hearing employees are more than willing to participate.

6.10.2 Supportive Co-workers: Hearing Co-Workers Helping Deaf Workers

The employers also stated that the hearing co-workers are willing to provide additional support to their Deaf co-workers. Employer 3 said that during meetings the hearing co-workers take the time to make sure that the Deaf co-worker is involved. Employer 3 stated that it's generally the same hearing workers that assist the deaf workers. They said that the hearing workers that are keen to help are normally the leaders in the group. Employer 2 also stated that the hearing co-workers are helpful with the Deaf co-workers.

6.10.3 Supportive Co-workers: Deaf Co-Workers Helping Deaf Workers

The employers interviewed also discussed how the Deaf employees are willing to provide additional aid to their Deaf co-workers. One of Employer 4's more experienced employees has been with the organization for over a decade and this employee helps other Deaf employees and teaches them patience and understanding. Current Deaf employees are willing and able to help in the training sessions for new Deaf employees (Employer 4). Employer 2 also has an experienced Deaf employee who goes beyond the call of duty to help other Deaf co-workers. Employer 2 stated that this employee acts as a mentor and helps the other Deaf people work co-operatively.

6.10.4 Supportive Co-workers: Positive Interactions

Overall the employers interviewed stated that the interactions between the Deaf and hearing staff are simply the normal interactions that you would expect between any staff. Employer 4 said that issues between the workers do happen, just as they happen in any normal workplace.

When asked if there are any particular issues between the Deaf and hearing employees, Employer 5 said that issues do happen but “the Deaf part [being Deaf] really doesn’t have a whole lot to do with it”. If there is a ‘Deaf issue’ it usually happens between a new hearing employee that doesn’t have any past experience working with a Deaf employee (Employee 5). Employer 5 stated that these ‘issues’ are quickly resolved once the new hearing employee realizes that they can communicate with pen and paper.

6.11 Deaf Employee Attitudes

The employers also stated that the attitudes held by Deaf people impact their employment success. Some of the common topics that came up in the interviews are

- self-esteem
- excuses
- expectations

6.11.1 Deaf Employee Attitudes: Self-esteem

Employer 5 said that employers rejecting potential Deaf employees leads to low self-esteem of Deaf people. The constant rejection causes many Deaf people to feel defeated and they no longer try for positions. Employer 5 has also seen Deaf employees at his organization that should be applying for more advanced positions in the organization, not applying. Employer 5 felt that these people lacked the confidence to apply.

6.11.2 Deaf Employee Attitudes: Excuses

Employer 1 has experienced Deaf employees who use their inability to hear as an excuse for not completing a task. Employer 1 finds the excuses particularly frustrating when they see other Deaf employees completing their task to the same standard of work as the hearing employees.

6.11.3 Deaf Employee Attitudes: Expectations

The employers stated that the Deaf employees simply have the same expectations as hearing employees. Employer 1 said that

“Deaf workers want to be treated fair and with respect, they want reasonable and competitive wages for the work they perform and they expect a safe and healthy workplace”.

Employer 4 confirmed that Deaf employees want to be treated with the same degree of respect that is shown to all of the co-workers. They stated that their organization has been successful in this manner because they no longer have to advertise job openings. Instead Deaf people come seeking work because they have heard that the organization is respectful toward their Deaf employees.

6.12 Employer Interview: Conclusion

In conclusion the employers have a positive outlook in regards to their Deaf employees. The employers expressed that

- accommodating their employees isn't difficult
- co-workers are supportive
- experiences have been positive

The main issues that came up were

- cost and availability of interpreters
- low literacy and lack of communication
- uneducated employers in terms of Deaf employee

7: Summary of Themes

The study examined five groups

1. Deaf Community Members
2. Learning Centres
3. Deaf Literacy Providers
4. Employers
5. Employment Service Providers

Once the analysis was done for each of the 5 groups individually, the Deaf Literacy Initiative (DLI) examined all five groups together. The purpose was to find the common themes. The common themes are

- employer attitude
- Deaf employee attitude
- communication
- accommodation
- interpreters

7.1 Employer Attitude

The attitude of an employer influences whether a Deaf person gets the job and successfully keeps the job. The topics discussed about employers include

- Deaf can't
- general misconceptions
- fear
- positive attitudes
- initiatives or actions

7.1.1 Employer Attitude: Deaf 'Can't'

A common theme that came up in all interview groups was the employer attitude of Deaf 'can't'. Deaf can't is the perception that Deaf people aren't able to perform job duties. Table 23 shows a summary of employers attitude around the concept of Deaf 'can't'.

Table 23: Employer Attitude: Deaf 'Can't'

Summary of Employer Attitude: Deaf 'Can't'
<p>There is a view among employers that Deaf 'can't' - meaning that Deaf people aren't able to perform job duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deaf people need to be given the opportunity to show that they can successful at work.• Deaf people become frustrated by employer's assumptions that Deaf people aren't able to perform job duties.• With the right tools Deaf people can be successfully employed. <p>Employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• must look past the disability and see the value of the Deaf person• assume that Deaf people have limited abilities• assume that Deaf 'can't' because some Deaf people don't speak or write• need to be educated on the abilities of Deaf people• need to be confident that Deaf people are able to do the job tasks• look at what Deaf people can't do rather than what they can do• are hesitant to hire Deaf people until they can see the abilities of a Deaf person• incorrectly assume that Deaf people aren't able to operate a forklift• need to give Deaf people the chance to prove that they can be successful• need to understand the value that a Deaf person can add to a workplace

7.1.2 Employer Attitude: Misconceptions General

Employers have some general misconceptions about Deaf workers. These misconceptions interfere with the employment success of Deaf people (see Table 24).

Table 24: General Misconceptions

Summary of Employer Attitude: Misconceptions
<p>Some employers assume that Deaf people will come into the workplace with all of the accommodation tools that they need.</p> <p>Employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assume it will be too costly and too much of a problem to hire Deaf employees• assume that Deaf people will be more likely to get hurt in a factory• assume that there will be safety issues with Deaf employees• look at the disability rather than focus on the ability of the person• feel that they if they hire a Deaf person they will have to make a lot of accommodations and it will be too much trouble

7.1.3 Employer Attitude: Fear

One issue that prevents employers from hiring Deaf employees is fear. Hearing employers tend to develop their fear because they don't understand how to work with Deaf people (see Table 25).

One employer in Alberta is trying to help other employers develop confidence to hire deaf employees by visiting other workplaces and sharing their experiences.

Table 25: Employer Fear

Summary of Employer Attitude: Fear
<p>When a company has never employed a Deaf person before, they are afraid and hesitant to hire them.</p>
<p>Companies that have already hired Deaf people are more likely to hire more in the future.</p>
<p>Not understanding a Deaf person causes employers to do the easy thing and hire a hearing person instead.</p>
<p>Employers are afraid of potential accommodation costs connected with hiring a Deaf person.</p>

7.1.4 Employer Attitude: Positive

Employers have also proven that they can help Deaf employees be successful by showing a positive and supportive attitude towards them. Table 26 shows a summary of positive employer attitudes.

Table 26: Positive Employer Attitude

Summary of Employer Attitude: Positive
<p>Employers with Deaf employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• realize that Deaf people are different from hearing people but their qualities are the same• can create a positive relationship with Deaf employees by making sure that their needs are met• are successful with their Deaf employees when they show both hearing and Deaf employees the same amount of respect• will hire more Deaf employees in the future• help Deaf employees be successful when they are supportive• help young Deaf employees be successful when they are patient and reward the employees when they do their job well
<p>Deaf employees can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• successfully do the same jobs as hearing employees• make sure that their demands and needs are met by participating in various work committees• make a positive influence on the perceptions of employers when they work hard
<p>Team work and clear communication must happen for a Deaf employee to work well with hearing staff.</p>

7.1.5 Employer Attitude: Actions

Employers can take action that will improve the employment success of Deaf people (see Table 27). Employers need to understand that Deaf people have qualities that can add to the workplace.

Table 27: Employer Actions

Summary of Employer Attitude: Actions

Over time employers become more comfortable and successful working with their Deaf employees.

A forum would present the opportunity for employers to learn about the abilities of Deaf workers.

Employers can

- reduce the number of Deaf employees who leave the workplace by training employees in cultural sensitivity
- offer interpreted 1-on-1 meetings with Deaf employees
- increase success of the Deaf employees' by thinking of their needs when making decisions
- encourage hearing employees to attend American Sign Language (ASL) classes and pay for the costs
- offer basic ASL classes to help improve communication between the Deaf and hearing staff
- host meetings for a Deaf Issues committee to address issues before they become problems
- attend Deaf workshops to learn more about Deaf culture
- host Deaf workshops to improve the relationship between Deaf employees and hearing employers and employees
- allow Deaf employees to offer training on Deaf culture

7.2 Deaf Employee Attitude

The type of attitude that a Deaf person has influences their employment potential.

7.2.1 Deaf Employee Attitude: Positive

A positive attitude can help a Deaf person get and keep a job. The interviews made a variety of recommendations about attitudes for Deaf people. In Table 28 those interviewed recommended and discouraged actions in the workplace.

Table 28: Action: Recommendations and Discouraged

Recommendations Actions (Do)	Discouraged Actions (Don't Do)
Deaf Employees should <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be well-behaved• have big smiles• have a nice personality• take initiative• be active• be kind• have a pro-work attitude• advocate for oneself	Deaf Employees shouldn't <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make unnecessary noise• lie• be mediocre• be nervous for job interviews• show low self-esteem during job interviews

7.2.2 Deaf Employee Attitude: Negative Attitude

The interviews revealed a variety of negative attitudes that aren't helpful on the job or while looking for a job. Table 29 shows the types of attitudes that are discouraged.

Table 29: Discouraged Attitudes

Not helpful
Deaf people must show that they are interested in the job because otherwise employers won't hire them
Some Deaf people
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· have the required skills but their negative attitudes get in the way of their success· assume that all hearing people don't like them· reduce their work effort after not being promoted which can result in not getting a positive work reference

7.2.3 Deaf Employee Attitude: Attitudes and Consequences

Table 30 shows the variety of negative attitudes and possible consequences as explained during the interviews.

Table 30: Attitudes to avoid and consequences

To avoid	Consequences
Unrealistic expectations Some people made unrealistic demands during job interviews.	Employers are aren't willing to hire people with unrealistic demands.
Paranoia Some Deaf people assume that others are talking about them when they saw their name being mentioned.	Employers aren't willing to hire people with this type of personality.
Grouping Deaf people sometimes group together only with other Deaf people and avoid their hearing co-workers.	Deaf people isolate themselves from the bigger picture.
Excuse Some Deaf people use their disability as a reason to not complete a task to an acceptable standard.	Employer loses confidence in the performance of the Deaf person.

7.2.4 Deaf Employee Attitude: Low Self esteem

Low self-esteem doesn't help when a person is on the job or seeking work. The interviews showed why some Deaf people develop low self-esteem and some of the consequences. Table 31 shows how Deaf people are frustrated on the job.

Table 31: On the job problems

On the job
Deaf employees are frustrated when they are <ul style="list-style-type: none">• constantly confronted by their limitations in their workplace• limited by their hearing ability in the workplace - self esteem is negatively affected• given limited job opportunities

Table 32 looks at how negative attitudes affect Deaf people while they are seeking work.

Table 32: Negative Attitudes: Seeking work

Seeking work
Being rejected causes Deaf people to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• believe they deserve to be rejected• think 'why bother' after being constantly turned down
Lack Independence - some Deaf people <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have had everything done for them in the past by their family members• haven't had the opportunity to practice their independence skills

Seeking work...continued

Value

Some Deaf people don't value themselves so they don't value the effort that Employment Service Provider's (ESPs) put into finding work for them.

Deaf Can't

Many Deaf people have been told what they can't be successful so they don't try to do more.

Importance

Don't understand the connection between self-esteem and employment.

7.3 Communication

Clear communication is important in the workplace. Communication between Deaf employees and their hearing employers and co-workers can be limited at times. The following looks at

- problems with communication
- methods to improve communication between Deaf people in their hearing workplaces

7.3.1 Communication: Problems

Communication is important in the workplace. When there are Deaf and hearing employees in the workplace, different methods of communication need to be used to prevent problems. The interviews showed that without good communication practices a variety of problems come up (see Table 33).

Table 33: Communication Problems

Communication: Problems
<p>Communicating through written English can be difficult for some Deaf people.</p> <p>Communication problems in the workplace may</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cause problems at work that aren't the fault of the Deaf employee• make Deaf employees feel awkward and guilty• delay the work of a Deaf employee• result in employers not hiring Deaf people• restrict the amount of jobs available to Deaf people• create an environment where there are negative feelings between Deaf and hearing co-workers• make Deaf people feel oppressed at work

7.3.2 Communication: Methods

Methods to communicate must be set up between

- employees
- hearing co-workers
- employers

Initiatives in communication methods used to exchange information between Deaf and hearing people includes

- writing
- visuals
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Lip-reading

Table 34 looks at the writing methods used for communication between Deaf and hearing people.

Table 34: Writing

Writing
<p>Writing can be used for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hand written notes• complaints being translated from American Sign Language (ASL) to written English• text messaging• email• computer messages - taking turns writing on a computer

The use of ASL helps communication at work. Table 35 looks at the benefits of ASL in the workplace.

Table 35: ASL

ASL
<p>ASL in the workplace can help Deaf employees communicate by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having Deaf employees with strong literacy skills adapt written instructions into ASL for those with low literacy skills• using Deaf employees to interpret for those Deaf employees needing help <p>Multiple Deaf employees in a workplace gives Deaf employees the chance to use ASL.</p>

Table 36 shows that using visuals can help the message to be clearer, such as visually showing the steps needed to complete a task.

Table 36: Visuals

Visuals
<p>Using visuals can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help present clear messages• be used to give feedback• increase understanding of job duties for some Deaf people <p>Deaf people watch their surroundings and are likely to see hazardous situations.</p>

Table 37 looks at the possibility of lip reading in the workplace.

Table 37: Lip Reading

Lip Reading
<p>Some Deaf people chose to communicate through speaking and reading lips.</p>

7.4 Accommodations

Accommodations support Deaf employees on the job. The interviews showed a variety of accommodations that are used to improve the employment success of Deaf employees. When employers and co-workers are involved in accommodation practices the transfer of information to Deaf employees improves. Some accommodations aren't satisfactory or not available.

Table 38 looks at the types of accommodations used in the workplace.

Table 38: Accommodation Types

Accommodation Types
Different accommodations can be used in the workplace such as <ul style="list-style-type: none">• making potential hazards visible to Deaf employees• using strobe lights on forklifts• using strobe lights and flashing lights for fire alarms• having Floor wardens in case of fire• using communication software that transfers voice to text• using TTY for communicating• using computers for communicating• using text telephones

There is a list of accommodation tools available that aren't use. Table 39 shows a list of what those interviewed said about the lack of accommodations.

Table 39: Accommodation: Lacking

Accommodation: Lacking
There is a lack of <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpreters• Video relay service• Smart boards• Deaf-specific literacy tools - curriculums and literacy assessment tools

In some cases, employers have policies and procedures in place to make sure there is appropriate accommodation. When a Deaf member is at a meeting and an interpreter isn't available, team meetings are delayed until an interpreter is booked.

Table 40 looks at accommodation practices in place by employers.

Table 40: Employer Practices

Accommodation: Employer Practices
Employers use different accommodations in the workplace such as <ul style="list-style-type: none">• making Deaf employees aware of potential hazards• focusing on visual demonstrations during training• using pen and paper during training• providing training to hearing people so they understand the role of an interpreter

Table 41 shows how co-workers help accommodate their Deaf co-workers.

Table 41: Accommodation by Co-Workers

Accommodation by Co-workers
Co-workers can support Deaf employees by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• using the buddy system - hearing employee is paired with a Deaf employee in the case of an emergency• taking notes during team meetings• being trained to watch for safety issues for Deaf co-workers• being more than willing to assist

7.5 Interpreters

The topic of interpreters was at the center of discussion with all of the groups interviewed. The interpreter discussion focused around

- cost
- importance
- experiences
- availability

7.5.1 Interpreter: Cost

The interviews looked at both problems and solutions that happen with the cost of interpreters (see Table 42).

Table 42: Interpreters: Problems

Problems	Solutions
<p>Thousands of dollars spent annually on interpreters.</p> <p>Employers would hire more Deaf employees if government funding was available for interpreters.</p> <p>It would be easier to hire and keep Deaf employees if employers didn't have to pay for interpreters.</p> <p>If interpreters were subsidized some would hire interpreters full time for those Deaf people in supervisory roles.</p> <p>The cost of interpreters is too high for small companies to absorb.</p> <p>The cost of interpreters is too high even for companies with large budgets.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Stage 1</div> <div style="background-color: #D9E1F2; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">The government could provide funding to help with the cost of interpreters (DCM 2)</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; color: #4F81BD; margin-bottom: 10px;">↓</div> <div style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Stage 2</div> <div style="background-color: #D9E1F2; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">The help with the of cost would mean that hiring a Deaf employee would cost the same as hiring a hearing employee (DCM 2)</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; color: #4F81BD; margin-bottom: 10px;">↓</div> <div style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Stage 3</div> <div style="background-color: #D9E1F2; padding: 5px;">The help with cost the of the interpreter would provide a reason for more companies to hire Deaf applicants (DCM 2)</div> </div>

7.5.2 Interpreter: Importance

The interviews looked at how important interpreters are in the workplace. The interviews also described examples of where interpreters are needed (see Table 43).

Table 43: Need for Interpreters

Need for Interpreters
<p>Interpreters are needed for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monthly meetings to<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ discuss any problems with co-workers◦ allow Deaf employees to discuss problems in general◦ make sure that Deaf employees get involved in the meeting in a meaningful way• meetings with the employer to give them a chance to discuss any concerns and problems• performance appraisal to make sure the Deaf employee fully understands any concerns or issues that need to be addressed

Interpreters on the job means there is accessibility. Table 44 summarizes what those interviewed said.

Table 44: Interpreters Allow

Interpreters Allow
<p>Accessibility allows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• access to information within the workplace• clear communication for Deaf people that don't have strong written English abilities• equal opportunities for Deaf employees with those of hearing employees• clear communication between Deaf and hearing employees

7.5.3 Interpreter: Experiences

Experiences with interpreters have been shown to be both positive and negative.

Table 45: Positive and Negative Experiences

Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences
Employers are satisfied with their experience using an interpreter.	Co-workers doubt what is being said by interpreters.
Employers experienced increased communication during job interviews.	Deaf staff have asked not to use a particular interpreter.

7.5.4 Interpreter: Lack of Interpreters

The lack of interpreters was a common theme throughout the interviews. Without available interpreters, Deaf employers can't fully participate in discussions. Table 46 examines what those interviewed had to say about the lack of interpreters.

Table 46: Lack of Interpreters

Lack of interpreters
<p>Critical shortage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There aren't enough interpreters.• Hiring and keeping Deaf employees would be easier if there were more interpreters available.• There are no interpreters in the Yukon.
<p>Hiring System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There lacks a system for locating available interpreters.• There are very few freelance interpreters available.
<p>Rural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are few or no interpreters available in rural areas.
<p>Last Minute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's very difficult to find an interpreter last minute.• One must book an interpreter 1 to 2 months in advance.

7.6 Conclusion

In conclusion there are five main factors that explain why so many Deaf Canadians are unemployed including

- employer's attitude
- Deaf employee's attitude
- communication barriers
- accommodation barriers
- lack of Interpreters

7.7 Employer's Attitude

Many employers don't understand how to work with Deaf people and have misconceptions regarding their abilities. Together, misconceptions and lack of understanding, causes employers to be afraid to hire Deaf people.

7.8 Deaf Employee Attitude

Many Deaf people don't try to find work because of low self-esteem and the feeling of 'why bother'. If the Deaf person develops a positive attitude and thinks positively it helps them get and keep a job.

7.9 Communication

Employers and Deaf employees have taken action to make sure there is successful communication. Visual demonstrations and American Sign Language (ASL) classes help to allow communication between Deaf and hearing people. The main problems with communication happen when an employer doesn't make an effort to support their Deaf employee(s).

7.10 Accommodation

Accommodations for Deaf people, in the workplace, are easy for employers to do. Co-workers are helpful in making sure that their Deaf co-workers are both safe and are able to participate in discussions. More interpreters and a nation-wide video relay service would help to make the workplace more successful.

7.11 Interpreters

Interpreters are needed in the workplace, but the high cost and the lack of interpreters makes this difficult. When interpreters are available both employers and Deaf employees are happy with the outcome.

8: PAC Recommendations

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was established to provide feedback and guidance for the 'Deaf Workforce' research project. The PAC members were Deaf professionals from

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Ontario
- New Brunswick

The research findings were presented to the PAC members on March 4, 2011. The PAC members' top recommendation was to develop a Deaf-lead Non-governmental organization (NGO). The NGO would focus on

- a. Employment
- b. Literacy
- c. Essential Skills

The mandate of the NGO includes

- ongoing research activity
- providing education about Deaf employment
- developing partnerships

8.1 Research

Research should examine

- a. Systemic Barriers impacting employment, literacy and Essential Skills.
- b. Accessing 'Additional' Deaf groups.

8.1.1 Research: Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers have prevented the Deaf from advancing in employment. The PAC recommended that additional research should be done to examine systemic barriers in detail.

8.1.2 Research: Accessing ‘Additional’ Deaf groups

This research project was not able to reach other Deaf people. Some of these Deaf groups are

- Deaf people who are not part of the Deaf community
- Deaf people who are isolated from the Deaf community
- First Nations
- Deafblind
- those with cochlear implants

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) stated that the employment picture of the ‘Additional’ Deaf groups must be examined further. To examine the ‘Additional’ Deaf groups, researchers should use creative ways to reach these groups.

8.2 Education Plan

The education plan should target

- hearing employers
- Deaf employees

The education plan should include

- public relations campaign
- workshops for Deaf employees or those seeking work

8.2.1 Education: Public Relations Campaign

The PAC recommends a public relations campaign be developed. This campaign will increase hearing employer awareness about Deaf employees and include both media and an information package.

The purpose of the Employer Awareness Program will be to teach hearing employers

- that Deaf people have qualities that can add to the job
- about Deaf culture
- about the roles of interpreters
- about the rights of Deaf people

8.2.2 Education: Deaf Workshops

The research showed that many Deaf people don't have the attitude to be successful at work. The PAC recommended developing Deaf Workshops to improve the attitudes of Deaf people who are

- employed
- looking for work

The PAC recommended a variety of Deaf workshop topics including

- leadership programs - leadership camps
- advocacy courses - how to self advocate in the workplace
- workplace rules
- motivational speakers
- job coaches - role-play real job situations
- mentors
- Deaf-specific job-readiness programs
- job-shadowing

8.3 Partnerships

Partnerships must be established between the Deaf-lead Non-governmental organization (NGO) and

- Employment Service Providers (ESPs)
- The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC)
- Federal Government, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Telecommunications Service Providers (TSP) and Deaf Associations across Canada
- Employers

8.3.1 Partnerships: Employment Service Providers:

The research showed that Deaf people aren't getting the services they need from Employment Service Providers. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) suggested that the NGO should partner with ESPs to

- define relationships between the NGO and the ESP
- discover resources in communities with training, employment and labour force information
- determine the employment issues
- provide training for ESPs
- have ESPs that provide services designed and developed for Deaf people

8.3.2 Partnerships: Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and Interpreter Training Programs

The research showed that there is a lack of interpreters. Developing partnerships with the AVLIC and Interpreter Training Programs will increase the number of interpreters available. The PAC recommended changes to the current interpreter system including

- improving the dropout rates of current interpreter programs
- developing a Bachelor interpreter program

- developing a National funding base for employers to access interpreters
- developing National interpreter certification guidelines
- teaching employers to be able to identify qualified interpreters

8.3.3 Partnership: Federal Government, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Telecommunications Service Providers (TSP) and Deaf Associations and Organizations from across Canada

VRS is an important service because it provides a more equivalent form of communication than Teletypewriter (TTY). For a National Video Service to be successful there must be partnerships between

- Federal Government
- Canada Radio-television and Telecommunications Commissions
- Telecommunication Service Providers
- Deaf Associations and Organizations from across Canada

There is currently a VRS pilot project in British Columbia and Alberta. The PAC recommends that the VRS service be expanded to include all Canadians.

8.3.4 Partnerships: Employers

The research showed that Deaf people are not getting the employment opportunities they need from employers. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) suggested that the Deaf-lead Non-governmental (NGO) and Deaf organizations should partner with employers to

- identify skill gaps
- determine Essential Skills needed
- provide training opportunities for Deaf employees

8.4 Steps to Implement Recommendations

The PAC recommended a three-staged approach to implement the recommendations.

8.4.1 Stage 1 The Establishment of a National Advisory Committee (NAC)

This committee would consist of

- Deaf professionals with expertise and experience with Deaf employment, research and Adult literacy needs
- representation from each province and territory

The purpose of the NAC would be to plan, organize and host a National Deaf Employment Conference that addresses all of the recommendations made in this report.

8.4.2 Stage 2 National Deaf Employment Conference

The National Deaf Employment Conference will address the 'recommendation' topics from the 'PAC 2010-2011 Deaf Workforce' meeting. The topics addressed include

- research
- education
- partnerships

Participants in the conference will include

- Deaf practitioners
- Leaders within the Deaf community
- Employment Service Providers
- Employers

The purpose of the National Deaf Employment Conference would be to develop the action plan for a Deaf-lead Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

8.4.3 Stage 3 The Establishment of a (NGO)

The NGO would then focus on the recommendations from the National Deaf Employment Conference and develop an action plan to address each of the topics discussed.

9: Appendix

Appendix 1

Deaf Community Member: Interview Participants

Deaf Community Member	Province
DCM 1	Alberta
DCM 2	Ontario
DCM 3	British Columbia
DCM 4	Alberta
DCM 5	Ontario
DCM 6	Alberta
DCM 7	British Columbia
DCM 8	Ontario

Appendix 2

Learning Centre: Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Province
LC 1	Yukon
LC 2	Alberta
LC 3	Ontario
LC 4	British Columbia
LC 5	British Columbia
LC 6	Saskatchewan
LC 7	New Brunswick

Appendix 3

Deaf Adult Literacy Provider: Interview Participants

Province	Pseudonym
NS	DALP 1
QC	DALP 2
ON	DALP 3
AB	DALP 4
ON	DALP 5
NB	DALP 6

Appendix 4

Employment Service Providers: Interview Participants

Province	Number of ESPs contacted per province
ON	122
QC	44
NS	9
MB	6
BC	11
PEI	54
SK	3
AB	4
NFL	14
NWT	12
NV	3
YK	1

Appendix 5

Employment Service Providers: Interview Participants

Province	Pseudonym	Deaf Yes/No
British Columbia *2	ESP 1, ESP 2	No
Ontario	ESP 3	No
Ontario*2	ESP 4, ESP 5	Yes
Alberta*2	ESP 6, ESP 7	No

Appendix 6

Employer: Interview Participants

Employer	Province
Employer 1	British Columbia
Employer 2	Manitoba
Employer 3	New Brunswick
Employer 4	Alberta
Employer 5	Alberta
Employer 6	Nova Scotia

Appendix 7: Employer

How many Deaf or Deafblind people currently work for your organization?

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent
0	3	1.5
1	5	2.6
2	2	1.0
6	1	0.5
12	1	0.5
No answer	184	93.9

Appendix 8: Remainder of Employer questions

Do you have good retention rates with Deaf or Deafblind employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	184	93.9
Yes	11	5.6
No	1	0.5

Do you feel like your Deaf or Deafblind employee(s) fit in?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	184	93.9
Yes	11	5.6
No	1	0.5

Has your organization undertaken initiatives to increase the understanding of Deaf and Deafblind culture?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	184	93.9
Yes	5	2.6
No	7	3.6

Do you feel your Deaf and Deafblind employees contribute as much as their coworkers?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Yes	10	5.1
No	1	0.5

Has your experience with Deaf or Deafblind employee(s) been positive?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Strongly Agree	5	2.6
Agree	5	2.6
Strongly Disagree	1	0.5

Would you consider hiring another Deaf or Deafblind person in the future?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Yes	8	4.1
Maybe	3	1.5

Did you make accommodations for your Deaf or Deafblind employee(s)?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Yes	4	2.0
No	7	3.6

Approximately how many hours per week does each Deaf or Deafblind employee have person access to an interpreter/intervenor?

Hours per week	Frequency	Percent
No answer	189	96.4
0	5	2.6
40	2	1.0

Do you provide interpreters/intervenors for informal office situations?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Sometimes	3	1.5
Never	8	4.1

Has the cost of accommodation made you reluctant to hire Deaf or Deafblind workers in the future?

	Frequency	Percent
No	11	5.6
No answer	185	94.4

How satisfied are you with the thinking skills of your Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very satisfied	7	3.6
Satisfied	3	1.5
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	0.5

How satisfied are you with the document use skills of Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very satisfied	6	3.1
Satisfied	4	2.0
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	0.5

How satisfied are you with the numeracy skills of Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very satisfied	7	3.6
Satisfied	3	1.5
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	0.5

How satisfied are you with the writing skills of Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very satisfied	7	3.6
Satisfied	3	1.5
Completely unsatisfied	1	0.5

How satisfied are you with the oral skills of you Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	187	95.4
Very satisfied	1	0.5
Satisfied	3	1.5
Unsatisfied	2	1.0
Very unsatisfied	3	1.5

How satisfied are you with the working with others skills of your Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very Satisfied	7	3.6
Satisfied	3	1.5
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	0.5

How satisfied are you with the computer use skills of your Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	187	95.4
Very satisfied	6	3.1
Satisfied	33	1.5

How satisfied are you with the continuous learning skills of your Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	6	3.1
Satisfied	3	1.5
Somewhat unsatisfied	2	1.0

How satisfied are you with the reading skills of Deaf employees?

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	185	94.4
Very satisfied	7	3.6
Satisfied	3	1.5
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	0.5

Appendix 8: Essential Skill: Importance

Reading		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	134	72
Important	27	14.5
Somewhat important	21	11.3
Not important at all	4	2.2

Document use		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	114	61.3
Important	44	23.7
Somewhat important	22	11.8
Not important at all	6	3.2

Numeracy		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	104	56.2
Important	44	23.8
Somewhat important	30	16.2
Not important at all	7	3.8

Writing		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	93	50.3
Important	49	26.5
Somewhat important	32	17.3
Not important at all	11	5.9

Communication		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	134	72.4
Important	39	21.1
Somewhat important	9	4.9
Not important at all	3	1.6

Working with others		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	126	67.7
Important	44	23.7
Somewhat important	11	5.9
Not important at all	5	2.7

Thinking		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	138	74.6
Important	37	20
Somewhat important	7	3.8
Not important at all	3	1.6

Computer use		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	83	44.9
Important	48	25.9
Somewhat important	29	15.7
Not important at all	25	13.5

Continuous Learning		
	Frequency	Percent
Very important	88	47.6
Important	63	34
Somewhat important	24	13
Not important at all	10	5.4

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