

**Making Live Theatre more ACCESSIBLE and INCLUSIVE with
and for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; including their families and
friends:**

Design Proposal

by

Elizabeth Morris

Submitted to OCAD University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Design
in
Inclusive Design

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April, 2017

© Elizabeth Morris, 2017



Figure 1. Elizabeth Morris (as a child)

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this Masters Research Project (MRP). This is a true copy of the MRP, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize OCAD University to lend this MRP to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my MRP may be made electronically available to the public.

I further authorize OCAD University to reproduce this MRP by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature _____

Abstract

This Masters Research Project addresses the main research question, of how best to create an inclusively designed live theatre performance, in order to increase accessibility with and for a Deaf and Hard of Hearing audience, including their families and friends. This research uses a Mixed Methods approach—combining Autoethnography, Deaf History, Cultural Identity and Linguistics—along with a practical intervention that is designed to deconstruct barriers to inclusion within the live performance dynamic, all leading to a Design Proposal for a more inclusive and accessible form of live theatre. This proposed new design model was arrived at through an iterative research process that combined semi-structured interviews and live engagement in the theatre setting, informed by a program of reading and research. The new design was then tested through a staged mock-up/iteration, wherein different scenarios were tested in order to ascertain which might be most beneficial to improved accessibility standards for live shows.

This research derives from lived experience(s) –as a Deaf person. The purpose of the research is to make a direct intervention into the current state of theatre performance, where there are demonstrable gaps between the accessibility policies and practices of many theatres, with varying standards of accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HoH) audience members. There are also disparate practices in terms of theatres’ scheduling for accessibility provisions. As a researcher, I intend to propose accessibility supports and contribute to theatre experiences for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. I am motivated by this project because of my personal involvement both as a Deaf person and theatre participant

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge and thank my parents, Angela P. Morris and Phil Morris, for giving so freely in terms of support and meaningful dialogue during the process of researching and writing this Masters Research Project. I also want to thank them for taking me to see live shows when I was growing up, and for trying to make those shows accessible to me by signing about what was happening during the shows. I want to thank my sister, Catherine Crichton, for dialogues providing different perspectives about the topic. I want to thank my two brothers, Alistair Morris (who is Deaf and Autistic) and Stuart Morris (who is Hard of Hearing) for giving me the motivation to find creative ways of making the live shows accessible for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I also want to thank my American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, Elaine Corris and Delilah Simoes-Shand, for interpreting during many appointments and classes and tutoring sessions. I want to thank my primary advisor, Professor Lizbeth Goodman, and my tutor for the Graduate's Program, Dr. Jessica Wyman, for guiding me throughout the MRP. I would also like to thank the original fabricants of the RWC (Rear Window Captioning), Boston Light and Sound Inc for their donation of the reflectors that were once used in movie theatres. Thank you to John Kuisma who was instrumental in the fabrication of my reflector. I also want to acknowledge Young People's Theatre for the generous donation of the costumes that were used in my iteration/mock-up of a theatre stage. George Docherty deserves thanks for helping me to plan and devise the staged mock-up design that informs this research. Thank you to all the participants and visitors at Grad Ex 102, who experienced the IHUD design, and left with a new understanding of my vision! Lastly, I want to thank my OCAD U professors of Inclusive Design, for teaching me about Inclusive Design and helping me to make a successful MRP submission.

Dedication

For my family (Deaf, Deaf-plus, Hard of Hearing, and hearing members) and for the community of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing around the world, and their families.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Author's Declaration..... | iii |
| Abstract..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Dedication..... | vi |
| List of Figures..... | ix |
| Chapter One:..... | 2 |
| Introduction:..... | 2 |
| Autoethnography:..... | 3 |
| Chapter Two:..... | 31 |
| 2. Deaf History:..... | 31 |
| 2.1 Cultural Identity and Linguistics:..... | 57 |
| Chapter Three:..... | 65 |
| 3. Deconstructing Barriers:..... | 65 |
| 3.1 Live Theatre..... | 65 |
| 3.1.2 Theatres with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors:..... | 67 |
| Sign Language Theatre:..... | 69 |
| Deaf Theatre:..... | 70 |
| 3.1.3 Theatre companies with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors:..... | 72 |
| Deaf West Theatre..... | 72 |
| National Theatre of the Deaf:..... | 79 |
| Gallaudet University Theatre:..... | 82 |
| 3.1.4 ASL-Interpreted Performance..... | 86 |
| 3.1.5 Theatre Captioning..... | 89 |
| Chapter Four..... | 94 |
| 4. Methodology..... | 94 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 4.1 Background: Un/accessibility of Theatre..... | 94 |
| 4.2 Design Proposal..... | 95 |
| 4.2.1 Implementation of Rear Window Captioning..... | 95 |
| 4.2.2 Staged Mock-Up/Iteration..... | 98 |
| ASL Interpretation..... | 100 |
| Theatre Captioning..... | 105 |
| Chapter Five..... | 108 |
| 5. Analysis..... | 108 |
| 5.1 Results..... | 109 |
| 5.2 Conclusion..... | 110 |

List of Figures and Illustrations

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Elizabeth Morris | ii |
| Figure 2. Autoethnography: Siblings..... | 5 |
| Figure 3. Autoethnography: News Room..... | 6 |
| Figure 4. Autoethnography: Christmas pageant..... | 9 |
| Figure 5. Autoethnography: Playing violin..... | 10 |
| Figure 6. Autoethnography: Three Pigs and a Wolf..... | 11 |
| Figure 7. Autoethnography: Family..... | 15 |
| Figure 8. Autoethnography: Quest Visual Theatre..... | 18 |
| Figure 9. Autoethnography: Bird Brain..... | 21 |
| Figure 10. Autoethnography: Vibes! Feel it!..... | 22 |
| Figure 11: Autoethnography: Ultrasound..... | 24 |
| Figure 12: Autoethnography: National Arts Centre's flyer..... | 27 |
| Figure 13: Autoethnography: Jimmy Rankin..... | 28 |
| Figure 14: Autoethnography: Shakura S'Aida..... | 29 |
| Figure 15: Deaf History: Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet..... | 34 |
| Figure 16: Deaf History: Alice Cogswell..... | 34 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 17: Deaf History: Laurent Clerc..... | 36 |
| Figure 18: Deaf History: American School for the Deaf..... | 37 |
| Figure 19: Deaf History: Sir James Whitney school for the Deaf..... | 38 |
| Figure 20: Deaf History: Gallaudet University..... | 40 |
| Figure 21: Deaf History: Alexander Bell Graham..... | 42 |
| Figure 22: Deaf History: Martha’s Vineyard Island..... | 44 |
| Figure 23: Deaf History: Gary Malkowski..... | 51 |
| Figure 24: Deaf History: Deaf Culture Centre..... | 55 |
| Figure 25: Cultural Identity and Linguistics: Miranda..... | 64 |
| Figure 26: Cultural Identity and Linguistics: Alphonse..... | 64 |
| Figure 27: Live Theatre: Pepper’s Ghost..... | 67 |
| Figure 28: Theatre companies with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors: Spring Awakening..... | 76 |
| Figure 29: Theatre companies with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors: Spring Awakening..... | 78 |
| Figure 30: Gallaudet University Theatre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream..... | 83 |
| Figure 31: ASL Interpreted Performance: Munsch’s Time..... | 89 |
| Figure 32: Theatre Captioning:..... | 92 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 33: Theatre Captioning:..... | 92 |
| Figure 34: Theatre Captioning: Ultrasound..... | 93 |
| Figure 35: Theatre Captioning: RWC..... | 96 |
| Figure 36: Theatre Captioning: Capview..... | 97 |
| Figure 37: Theatre Captioning: Stagertext..... | 98 |
| Figure 38: Staged Mock-Up: LED Projector..... | 99 |
| Figure 39: Staged Mock-Up: Rear Projecting Screen..... | 99 |
| Figure 40: Staged Mock-Up: Maffer Clamp..... | 99 |
| Figure 41: Staged Mock-Up: Rod..... | 100 |
| Figure 42: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (video camera)..... | 101 |
| Figure 43: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (Interface Definition Media)..... | 101 |
| Figure 44: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (spotlight)..... | 102 |
| Figure 45: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (LED Data Projector)..... | 102 |
| Figure 46: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (rear projection screen)..... | 102 |
| Figure 47: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (projection)..... | 103 |
| Figure 48: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (projection)..... | 103 |
| Figure 49: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 103 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 50: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 103 |
| Figure 51: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 104 |
| Figure 52: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 104 |
| Figure 53: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 104 |
| Figure 54: ASL Interpretation: ASL interpreter (reflection)..... | 104 |
| Figure 55: Theatre Captioning: PowerPoint for captions..... | 105 |
| Figure 56: Theatre Captioning: PowerPoint for captions..... | 105 |
| Figure 57: Theatre Captioning: George adjusting the LED projector..... | 105 |
| Figure 58: Theatre Captioning: George adjusting the LED projector..... | 105 |
| Figure 59: Theatre Captioning: Projection of Captions..... | 106 |
| Figure 60: Theatre Captioning: Projection of Captions..... | 106 |
| Figure 61: Theatre Captioning: Actor (clear)..... | 106 |
| Figure 62: Theatre Captioning: Caption (clear reflector)..... | 106 |
| Figure 63: Theatre Captioning: Actor/Captions (black see-through)..... | 107 |
| Figure 64: Theatre Captioning: Reflection of Captions (black see-through reflector).. | 107 |
| Figure 65: Conclusion: GradEX- Display in the Hallway..... | 113 |
| Figure 66: Conclusion: Display in the Hallway..... | 113 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 67: Conclusion: Display..... | 114 |
| Figure 68: Conclusion: 2017 Medal Winner of Inclusive Design..... | 114 |
| Figure 69: Conclusion: Young People’s Theatre (costumes)..... | 114 |
| Figure 70: Conclusion: On the stage..... | 114 |
| Figure 71: Conclusion: Sound box..... | 115 |
| Figure 72: Conclusion: ASL Interpretation’s video..... | 115 |
| Figure 73: Conclusion: Perspective from the stage..... | 115 |
| Figure 74: Conclusion: Perspective from the audience..... | 115 |
| Figure 75: Conclusion: Perspective from a member..... | 116 |
| Figure 76: Conclusion: View of the reflector..... | 116 |

Chapter One:

Introduction:

This research proposes a new design specification intended to help to make live theatre more ACCESSIBLE and INCLUSIVE for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HoH), including their families and friends. This new design—which was developed during the research process for this MRP—proposes using a Rear Window Captioning reflector of the kind that has been utilised in movie theatres in the past. The original contribution to knowledge I am making in this MRP lies in my decision to add the reflection of a signer (a person using sign language for live interpretation during a live performance) to the image seen via the reflector. By adding this innovation, the result is that audiences of all levels of hearing/not-hearing can view the sign language live without disrupting the performance itself.

The research overall demonstrates the need for an innovation of this kind, and offers an overview of the state of the art to date in terms of accessibility tools and techniques common in live theatre settings. The research employs an element of autoethnography (based on my own experiences of attending and taking part in live performances) along with a brief history of the Deaf community's engagement with performance in terms of a cultural and linguistic analysis. Specific consideration is given to the existing barriers to inclusive engagement for all in live theatre settings (where the norm is often a total lack of supports for non-hearing audiences, resulting in a total lack of accessibility), and the gaps typical to the accessibility standards of live

theatre as planned and applied in common usage, including the use of American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and the use of captioning during live performances. The research process involved strategic interviews with actors and directors of Integrated performances and with experts in ASL-interpreted performance and captioning. The research also entailed planning, delivery and evaluation of a staged mock-up, with due consideration paid to the relevant pros and cons of each strategy for accessibility. All this work informed the written thesis as presented here.

What the research overall seeks to offer to future scholars is a Design Plan which could, if implemented in future, help to improve accessibility standards in live theatre for the benefit of Deaf and HoH audience members and their families and friends engaged in joint viewing of the performances.

Autoethnography:

My research is based in an Autoethnographic approach, which notes and situates the study in relation to the status and identity of the researcher as a member of the community to be studied. In this regard, I begin with a note about myself and my role as a researcher who is Deaf, offering information about myself, and explaining why this project was selected and developed as personal as well as academically significant.

Family Background:

I was born in England in 1978, the third of four children. I am Deaf and two of my siblings also have a hearing loss. Our parents are both hearing. My older brother is Hard of Hearing (HoH) and is oral; he has some basic sign language but prefers to communicate with speech. My older sister is hearing and also has some basic sign language. I consider American Sign Language (ASL) to be my first and primary language, but I also speak and can read lips. I prefer to sign because I am able to express myself most freely with sign language, when I don't have to struggle to find the right words to show what I mean. I have also had significant training in reading lips and speaking. This training has given me the privilege of being able to accommodate to which method I would like to use with each communication. Also, my younger brother is profoundly Deaf and on the Autistic Spectrum. He uses ASL for communication. He does not speak or read lips. He still struggles to express his thoughts in ASL, primarily due to his Autism. My mother explains this situation wisely, by saying that while my Hard of Hearing brother and I had to be given language, my Deaf Autistic brother had to be provided the very concept of language.



Figure 1. Siblings-

L/R: (Clockwise) Stuart Morris, Elizabeth Morris, Catherine Morris, Alistair Morris in Warren, Ohio (1984)

Photo: Phil Morris

Growing up, we lived in four countries: England (Banbury, Oxfordshire); Japan (Shimizu, Shizuoka); USA (Warren, Ohio); and Canada (Kingston, Ontario). I was born at a time before babies were routinely checked for hearing loss at birth. At first, my parents did not realize that I was Deaf. My older brother's hearing loss was presumed to be due to an outbreak of measles that had occurred early in my mother's pregnancy, when the disease spread at a school where she was then teaching. As a result, nobody suspected a genetic predisposition to hearing loss. When my mother first became concerned regarding my hearing, a nurse provided an assessment. The nurse stood behind me and clapped her hands to see if I responded in any way. She assumed that I had heard her because she thought I moved my eyes! She told my mother that she thought that I was able to hear. As she was presumed to be an 'expert', my parents accepted the 'medical diagnosis' —at first.

When I was eight and a half months' old, we moved to Japan. I am told that I was a very curious, social and very active child—in fact, my mother swears that one day she will return to Japan and actually look up at the mountains instead of running after such an active toddler! As I only had a few words by the age of 18 months, the doctor decided that I needed to have my hearing checked again. Electrodes were put on my head to monitor the brain's reaction to sound when I was asleep. My parents were shocked to find that, not only did I have a hearing loss, but I had less hearing than my older brother. I was then diagnosed as having a severe hearing loss. Looking back at photographs of me taken at that time, I can see that I was learning to use facial expressions and body language more in order to communicate. One picture shows me pretending to speak into a microphone during a trip to a television station: I was able to mime what a news broadcaster looked like when he/she was reporting the news.



Figure 3. News Room-

L/R: Stuart Morris, Elizabeth Morris at the NHK Newsroom in Shizuoka, Japan (1981)

Photo: Phil Morris

My parents used to make cassette tapes of the family, to send messages back to my grandparents in England. Listening to those tapes now I hear my older brother, speaking with a heavy British accent and my older sister, speaking very clearly in Japanese. As she was only three years old when we moved, and she was hearing, she was able to imitate the children who lived close to our house, and was speaking fluent Japanese within a few months. Mom said that she learned to speak Japanese by repeating sentences spoken by the other children when they were playing. In this way, she developed both the correct sound of the Japanese language, and the correct grammar. I could also hear myself babbling on the tape! Presumably, I saw my older siblings moving their lips into a microphone, so I thought I should do the same. My mother also explained to me that the first words I spoke were in Japanese: “Mata ne” which in English, means “Good morning.” My mother assumed that I had learned this expression by ‘reading’ and mimicking the lip movement of Japanese people I encountered.

School Days:

After two years in Japan, my parents learned that there was an opportunity for our family in America and we were transferred to Ohio. My father was employed as technical manager for an aluminum plant. We returned to England for only two months, to say our goodbyes to family and friends, and packed our belongings to be shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to America. Meanwhile, our belongings from Japan were in a ship on the Pacific Ocean! Like our possessions, we were traversing a new experience in our lives.

I was just three years old when we arrived in Warren, Ohio. For my parents to assess and select which schools we would attend, the local Board of Education sent someone to the house to discuss options. After meeting our family, she phoned someone in the Education office and was overheard saying that she was meeting with a family who had just arrived from England. My brother had a hearing loss and had apparently written his name in Japanese. My sister's Japanese was more fluent than her English, and I was deaf!! After the initial shock of meeting such a diverse family, she made some suggestions. My sister was to attend a local Catholic School, and my Hard of Hearing brother and I were to be enrolled in a school a few miles away that had a program for the deaf within the school.

The elementary, middle, and high schools in the respective jurisdiction, all had programs for the deaf. There was a great deal of flexibility. The deaf children received help in the deaf program, and were mainstreamed (in a public school) for different subjects. Every deaf child had time each day with a teacher of the deaf in their home room with other deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

At that school, we communicated with other deaf children in Signed Exact English (SEE), which was a sign language system with signs for every spoken word. Every part of English grammar had its own sign. In the beginning, I was fully enrolled in a deaf program for an entire school day. As I got older, I only went to the deaf program for "home room" for certain times of the day. Most of the day, I was in a regular class (at the mainstreamed school) with hearing peers and had a sign language interpreter in the classrooms as well. At the same time, I had regular

speech lessons; ironically, in the custodian/maintenance staff room! That was early in my childhood, learning how to speak and read lips. I had a wonderful experience, being a student at that school; my friends were diverse—those who were deaf, Hard of Hearing, and hearing; however, there were times when it could be lonely, trying to understand a hearing peer without an interpreter nearby. Life did present me with some communicative challenges. I would later realize that these were serendipitous moments that would later influence my research.

During that time, my family and I went to a church where there were other deaf members, with a hearing priest who communicated in Signed Exact English (SEE). I think he used his voice at the same time for hearing members of the congregation. This was the first time I had actually met adults who were deaf like myself. While in Ohio, there were Christmas parties where there were deaf children and adults. My classmates and I gave a performance at one of the Christmas parties. We signed and spoke the words “Santa Claus so big and fat in a bright red hat.” A teacher of the deaf sat in front of us and signed and mouthed the words to help us. It was the first time my parents had heard me speak that many words, and mom cried! It was a truly inclusive moment for my family and I enjoying the concert together.



Figure 4. Christmas pageant-

L/R: Elizabeth Morris & Jeremy Strong in a scene from *Christmas Pageant* at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Warren, Ohio (1983).

Photo: Steve Ilko, Tribune Newspaper

Also, during that time, my mother enrolled my sister and I in violin lessons. I think she thought that I would be able to feel the vibrations of the music on the violin; however, I remember not understanding what the violin instructor wanted me to do. She did not know any signs and, at that time, I did not speak much. One day, I gave a small performance for my deaf class. Most of them were not able to hear me play the violin, but they were able to see me play the violin.



Figure 5. Playing violin

Elizabeth Morris *playing a violin* at Kiser Elementary school in Warren, Ohio (1984)

Photo: Angela Morris

After a few months, it became clear that I was not enjoying the violin lessons and did not continue them. I must have been so frustrated, trying so hard to read the instructor's lips and struggling to understand what she wanted me to do with the violin. I was not fully able to understand the violin, or to hear the sound that it was making. I wonder now if I could have benefitted from the lessons had I had an interpreter, and/or if I had seen the teacher play the

violin. I always questioned if the experience could have been better had she found a way to make sound more accessible to me.

When I was in the first grade, I finally found something I loved to do - acting! We would perform a story from a book. One time, I played the role of the Big Bad Wolf from *The Three Little Pigs*. I remember this as if it were yesterday! I was so thrilled that I had the chance to perform. From that day on, every time I got the opportunity to perform, it was always an exciting moment for me.



Figure 6. Three Pigs and a Wolf-

Elizabeth Morris as a wolf in *Three Pigs and a Wolf*. Kiser Elementary school in Warren, Ohio (1986)

Photo: Angela Morris

I really enjoyed my years at that elementary school. When I was eight years old, the company my father worked for closed much of the aluminum plant in that town and he was transferred to Canada (Kingston, Ontario). I was saddened to leave the school and church. My older brother

took it harder than I did because that was the last time he was part of a community that included Hard of Hearing children, as the school was more accessible to his needs.

In Canada, I went to a school for the Deaf in Belleville, Ontario: Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf. I was eight years old when I started that school. Although it was a residential school, I lived at home and travelled daily to the school. At first, the school used Signed Exact English(SEE), and later the communication method changed to American Sign Language(ASL). My peers were either Deaf or HOH and, at that time, my teachers were hearing. The hearing teachers were not fluent in ASL because the language had only recently been introduced. Even though there were no hearing peers at that school, I had regular speech lessons with a speech therapist. It was surprising to me when I saw my peers signing in American Sign Language (ASL) with no accompanying voice. Also, their signing style made more sense than struggling to ‘speak’ English and signing in ‘broken’ signs. American Sign Language is a real language with its own grammar structures (for more information, see: 1.3 Cultural Identity and Linguistics). That was when I realized how important it is to sign in ASL without voice and having someone else voice for me. Both languages have their own structure, and need to be used separately. Also, to my shock, there were some Educational Assistants who were Deaf adults. It was my second time, seeing Deaf adults, this time working in the environment with us. Eventually, there were Deaf teachers. From then on, I realized that Deaf children can do anything they set their minds to! They were role models for me - a phenomenon that happens quite often for other Deaf students who go to residential school(s) for the Deaf. By the time I was in grade eight, I had to decide which high school to attend. At the time, I had two choices: I could have continued in the

high school that was a part of the same residential school for the Deaf, or I could transfer to a Catholic high school (where I would be their only Deaf student). I chose to leave that school and go to a Catholic high school, in Kingston. My reason was because the population of students at that residential school was diminishing; I did not feel comfortable in that environment. There was a lot of bullying from some of the students at the school based on identity, preference of communication, and family background. At that time, I felt it was best for me to leave and journey to discover my own individuality and identity, regardless of my family background and preference of communication. Although, I was sad to leave behind my Deaf role models and close friends, I was so ready to discover myself. I wanted to feel comfortable with myself and be autonomous.

At the age of 14, I moved to a hearing high school, Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School in Kingston, Ontario. I was the only Deaf student in that school. For most of the other students, I was the first Deaf person they had ever met! At first, I had an interpreter who was not fluent in ASL, and not professionally trained as an interpreter. It was difficult because she was not able to interpret the information clearly or fluently enough for me to understand. Also, she was not able to understand enough of what I was signing, to voice accurately for me. I experienced frustration and miscommunication for the next four years. Even though I passed my classes, my grades were lacking because of the communication problem, due to inadequate accessibility. In the last two years of high school, after a great deal of advocating from my family and myself, the school finally hired a certified ASL interpreter who happened to also be a “Child of Deaf Adults” (CODA)! When I interviewed her for the position, my first question was about her background. I

wanted to know how much she knew about Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community. Both of her parents were Deaf. She had a several aunts and uncles who were also Deaf, and who had attended a residential school for the Deaf in London, England. She grew up, signing in British Sign Language (BSL), which was a different language from American Sign Language (ASL). When she moved to Canada, she learned ASL and became a professional interpreter. That was good enough for me and I approved the school board's choice in hiring her to be my ASL interpreter. She became my interpreter in Grade 12. This was for four classes in a day and was very hard work for her as there was no interpreter to take over to give her a break. Today, we hire two ASL interpreters if the session is more than one hour. She listened to what the teacher said and then translated the message into American Sign Language. When I signed my answer in ASL, she watched me signing, and then translated my visual language back into voice. Not only did I need to know what those around me were saying, but they needed to know what I was signing too! At that time, she was one of my very few connections to the Deaf Community. I lost

that connection during my years at Holy Cross. It can be lonely, not being able to sign fluently to my peers, who are hearing and not familiar with ASL.



Figure 7. Family-

L/R: (Clockwise) Stuart, Elizabeth, Phil (father), Alistair, Angela (mother), Catherine in Kingston, Ontario (1994)

Photo: unknown

Actor:

In the summer of 1994, when I was almost 16 years old, I applied to Gallaudet University for the Deaf, in Washington, DC, to be part of their Young Scholarship Program (YSP). I was accepted and joined their summer drama program for Deaf high school students who wanted to train in drama. Gallaudet is the only Liberal Arts' University for the deaf in the world. My Deaf and hearing directors, peers and counsellors communicated in ASL or in SimCom (Speaking in English and signing in broken signs). I could be "Deaf" and be with other "Deaf" peers. Most of us shared the language and culture, as well as experiencing the struggles of being in the majority society (hearing world). It was an enriching experience. The program I took was based around the Japanese culture because the group was to perform in Japan a year later. I learned about

Japanese culture, finally understanding what my parents meant when they told me about our life in Japan. The class developed a story based on the relationship between the USA and Japan (before and after World War II). In our performance, we signed all pieces in ASL, voiced over by ASL interpreters. Hearing actors were learning ASL and acting with Deaf actors on the stage. In 1995, the next summer, we toured and performed in Japan. While we were touring, we met members of the Japanese Deaf Community. In their Community, they communicated in Japanese Sign Language (JSL). It is a completely different language from ASL and BSL!

During my high school years in Canada, I joined high school musical productions. My mother was thrilled to see me on stage with my sister. My mother came from a musical family who had a history of performing in amateur operatic productions in England. When she had three children with a hearing loss, she gradually distanced herself from her musical background; therefore, she was really thrilled to see me trying to sing on the stage! In 1993, I was in the performance *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*. I was in the chorus (mimicking singing by moving my lips!) Unfortunately, I had no interpreter for my rehearsals. I tried my best to understand what was happening and relied on my friends' help. For one of the last songs, I had the honour of teaching the chorus and cast members to sign, "Any Dream Will Do," with the help of a good friend. It was amazing to see the song signed to the music—very moving. That song will always have a special place in my heart. In 1994, I was in *The Pirates of Penzance*, playing a director's wife, who was watching her husband direct a show. I had no lines, but did lots of miming to make up for it! In 1995, I was in *My Fair Lady* as a Londoner and horse watcher. It was so much fun to be able to wear costumes that matched the 20th century in England. In 1996, I was in *The*

New World, as a dancer and as a cigarette server. Those musical productions helped me appreciate acting, and feeling the music. My experiences in the YSP and in the Holy Cross musical productions, made me realize that I wanted to become a professional actor.

In 1997, I enrolled at Gallaudet University, majoring in Elementary Education and Educational Drama. Originally, I wanted to be trained in theatre. But my advisor at the time felt that deaf people would not have much opportunity to be act as a career choice. While studying in school, I was in the Gallaudet University production of *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and *The Martian Chronicles*. In 2000, for *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, I played the daughter who was ‘mute’. I did a lot of miming for that role. In 2004, for *The Martian Chronicles*, playing several different roles—a wife, a human Martian, and an alien. In both productions, all Deaf actors signed their lines in ASL. Also, there were voice actors, sitting in the front row, voicing for Deaf actors. Besides acting, I was also the house manager, for a year, which required me to manage the theatre house and manage volunteers for each show. It was nice to get a different perspective on how live theatre operates.

During my university years, I was also a part of Road Sign, a theatre touring group of deaf and hearing actors. Most of the actors were a part of the Young Scholarship Program training camp. Our shows were comprised of performances of fairy tales, ABC stories, hip hop and jazz dancing, ASL poetry, and folklore stories deriving from the country we were performing in. We toured and performed in South Africa, Mexico, and Romania.



Figure 8. Quest Visual Theatre-

Road Signs (1999)

Photo: unknown

In 2005, our tour group changed its name to Quest for Arts. We did a show called, “Mosaic.” In this show, we were all dressed in black. We moved and danced according to various themes—Deaf (I was the main character who was Deaf, struggling to get noticed in the majority society as a Deaf signer;) women; slavery; Jews; and gay. We performed at the Deaf Olympics’ opening ceremony in Melbourne, Australia and at the event’s theatre festival. We signed the music of “The West” by The Village, with a well-known Australian musician, Sophia Monk.

In 2004, I graduated from Gallaudet University with a Bachelor of Arts in Educational Drama and Elementary Education. When I moved back to Canada, I was very sad to leave the Deaf community at Gallaudet University. I felt that I was leaving the Deaf world and returning to the reality of being the only Deaf person in my daily life back home.

After my university years, I became a professional actor (recognized by ACTRA, Canada’s union for film, and by the Canadian Actors Equity Association (CAEA) Canada’s union for theatre). I was very fortunate to have my family’s support. The relative lack of opportunity for

Deaf actors, in terms of few parts to play and few opportunities to participate fully in the theatre, made having this personal support all the more important and influential.

In 2006, I was part of the Canada Link Shakespeare Organization. We created a workshop based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, with Deaf and hearing actors. Some Deaf actors were playing a role in ASL, while others spoke some of the lines, and hearing actors played their role in SimCom. It was a great workshop; figuring out how to integrate Deaf and hearing actors, together, playing their characters. My character was "Juliet" who was a Deaf girl. The actor who played "Romeo" was a hearing actor. It was about a Deaf girl and a hearing boy who fell in love, though they could not communicate with each other. The boy learned how to sign, so that he could proclaim his love for her. Both families did not want them to be together because they were from different cultures and used different languages. We did several workshops over the years. The director of that project had a difficult time finding sponsors to fund this kind of production. The lack of support may have been due to a limited knowledge about Deaf culture and language, and versatility that exists. I also posit that some funders have limited experience(s) seeing live shows that are accessible or inclusive for Deaf and HOH audiences.

In 2007, I was part of the National Theatre of the Deaf, a touring theatre company in Hartford, Connecticut. We performed a children's show called, *Beware the Brindlebeast*. I was the brindle beast! I signed all of my lines in ASL. I also roared in my own voice! I had to wear a giant brindle beast costume while wearing a heavy head piece! Often, it would fall over my eyes, and I

was not able to see where I was going! Although, I had the experience of performing with the cast for a month and half, they had to let me go because my visa application was denied. Leaving the show was difficult for me. That company was really accessible because the majority of their actors were Deaf. The fact that my visa application was denied could have been because my acting resume did not show the same amount of professional acting experience as hearing actors tend to have, so it would be harder for me to get a visa to work at theatres in USA. Again, I experienced a huge obstacle in my path, trying to find more training that was accessible to me as a Deaf actor. If that was not the case, then I would have gotten the visa thus being able to perform in the USA.

In 2008, I was in the Young People's Theatre's production of *Bird Brain* in Toronto. This was a very difficult experience for me but I learned a great deal in the process. I was to play the roles of several different characters whilst working as an ASL coach for the show. I was soon to discover that professional actors do not appreciate being given acting advice by a fellow actor! The use of facial expressions are crucial linguistic cues when signing, so I needed to encourage them to use far more facial expression. They saw this as criticism, which created conflict within the cast members. I realized that I should not have been trying to be an actor and an ASL coach at the same time. I requested that a 'culturally' Deaf person come to one of the rehearsals. After watching the actors, he told them that they needed to use more facial expression! Another challenge for me was that a decision had been made that the actors would speak and sign at the same time. As ASL isn't designed to be voiced at the same time, I found this very difficult. We had to use SimCom (sign language and voice simultaneously). As my native language is ASL,

this experience was not natural for me at all. At that time, I was a new actor who finally was recognized by the professional actors' union. I did not have as much training as other hearing actors, because many opportunities for actors in Canada are not made accessible for Deaf person. All of my training had been with Deaf theatre companies. Both hearing and Deaf theatres have developed a different language system and culture which has guided them to use different methods. I think it would have been beneficial to have discussed Deaf culture with the actors, but we only had two weeks of rehearsals. Even though the process was challenging, I developed a strong relationship with the theatre and they have been very supportive in my career. It was a lovely surprise to find out that the show was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding production in Canada for that year!



Figure 9. Bird Brain

L-R: Sanjay Talwar, Sean Baek and Elizabeth Morris in a scene from *Bird Brain* at Young People's Theatre (2008)

Set and Costume Design: Patrick Du Wors; Lighting Design: Kimberly Purtell

Photo: Daniel Alexander

In 2010, I was in a show for Nuit Blanche, in Toronto, called, *Vibes! Feel it!* I was a part of an ensemble, painted with neon colours and clothes that shone in black light. We were a part of a performance that presented vibration through music, at the Deaf Culture Centre in Toronto. We improvised dance and sign based on the vibration of the music. It was a challenge because the purpose of this project was not to hear the music, but to feel it! Unfortunately, we were not able to get any feeling of the music because the only way one could feel the music was by touching a device consisting of a swimming foam noodle with some kind of stereo inside, thus feeling the beats. We were performers and we were not able to touch the noodle. In the end, they decided to use sounds to provide cues.

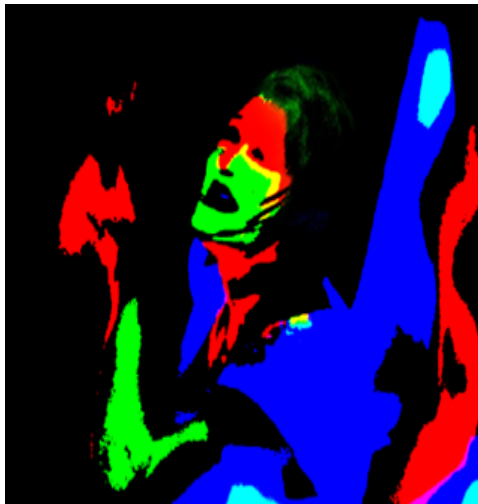


Figure 10. *Vibes! Feel it!*

Elizabeth Morris in a scene: black light from *Vibes! Feel it!* At Deaf Culture Centre (2010)

Photo: Miguel Aguayo

In 2016, I was in a production called *Ultrasound*. It was directed by Marjorie Chan of Cahoots Theatre, and was performed at Theatre Passe Muraille (Toronto, Ontario). It was a production in

SimCom and ASL. I played the lead role of Miranda, who grew up as a hearing person and lost her hearing in her teen years. My character learned ASL when she met her husband as an adult; therefore, she was not as fluent as her husband is in ASL. Conversely, my husband in the performance (played by Chris Dodd) grew up culturally Deaf and fluent in ASL. This was very challenging for both of us because, in reality, we were polar opposites to our characters—I grew up culturally Deaf and fluent in ASL and Chris lost his hearing as a young child, grew up as an oralist, and learned how to use SimCom. This script was a big challenge for us all. It was written by a hard of hearing oral man, Adam Pottle. It was directed by a hearing person, who is learning about Deaf culture. Most of our creative team were still new to Deaf culture. Luckily, we had the program manager and Deaf Community Consultant helping and educating everyone about Deaf culture and language. The play delved into attitudes about deafness both in the Deaf community and for those who are ‘deafened’ later in life. Unlike *Bird Brain*, this show was all about the culture of the Deaf community and there was a Deaf Community Consultant helping and educating everyone about the Deaf culture and language. The theatre wanted to make the play accessible for everyone and used several different techniques. There were surtitles displayed on the stage walls capturing what Chris and I expressed in the show. I had a fear that hearing audience members would listen to what I was saying and watch the surtitle to make sure I was following word for word! To date, it was one of my best and most challenging experiences in my theatre career. We, as ONE creative team, made the show successful. After three weeks of rehearsals, the show went on for two and half weeks.



Figure 11. Ultrasound

Left Photo: Elizabeth Morris (2015)

Photo and illustration: Tanja Tiziana

Right Photo: Elizabeth Morris and Chris Dodd (2016)

Production Image: Michael Cooper

ASL Coach/Consultant:

In 2007, I was hired by the Young People's Theatre in Toronto to be an ASL coach for their production of *I Love You Forever and more....* Based on Robert Munsch's books. Three actors in the show used SimCom for their characters. As part of my job, I taught them some signs and facial expressions. With ASL, the grammar is on the person's face their eye brows, eyes, lips etc. Also, I led an intensive workshop on Deaf culture and language. In the end, this production won a Dora Mavor Moore Award for an outstanding production in Canada.

In 2012, I worked in the Stratford Festival's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written by William Shakespeare. The director for that production proposed that one character as a Deaf father and another character as his interpreter. So, with another ASL coach, we taught several actors how to perform their lines in ASL. It was challenging because most of them did not have knowledge of

the Deaf culture or the language. Also, there was no way we could teach an actor how to ‘act’ like a ‘Deaf’ person. The only people who would know how to act like ‘Deaf’ are people from the Deaf community! The few hearing people who are enculturated are either CODAs (Children of Deaf Adults), or those who grew up in the Deaf community. It was a great experience, coaching and having this project realized! That same year, I was also hired as an ASL coach for a television show called, *Flashpoint*. It was for the episode “A World of their Own.” I coached three actors for the characters of a Deaf teen, uncle of the teen, and a teacher from the school for the Deaf. It was a great experience, working with these actors

In 2014, I worked at Canadian Stage, on their production of *Tribes*, written by Nina Raine. They managed to get a Deaf actor from New York City to play the role of “Billy.” I was very thrilled that they actually hired a Deaf actor, to portray the Deaf character. By having a Deaf actor, the performance was more authentic because the actor understood Deaf culture and ASL. They also cast a hearing actor, who was losing her hearing as an adult and being a CODA, to play the character of “Sylvia.” I taught the actor about Deaf culture and ASL. It was a good experience. She was nominated for best actress in *Tribes*.

In the same year, I worked as a Deaf Community Consultant, at Native Earth Performing Arts, with their production of *The Spirit*, written by Jeff D’Hondt. This show hired two ASL interpreters to integrate with the show itself and interpret throughout the show. As part of my role, I created an ASL trailer video to promote the show to the Deaf community. Also, I

supported the ASL interpreters, ensuring that their signs were clear and correct. It was a bit of a challenge because they were shadowing each hearing actor on the stage.

In 2016, I worked with Spiderbones Performing Arts, on their production of *Everything I Couldn't Tell You* written by Jeff D'Hondt. For this show, he also wanted ASL interpreters to integrate in the show with actors to interpret the lines in ASL. This was my second time working with the same director. I was very pleased that he was open to my advice and thoughts. Also, it was important for Jeff to be inclusive of Deaf and HoH audiences as well as the hearing audience members.

Deaf Interpreter:

In 2014, as a Deaf Interpreter, in 2014, I interpreted for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, for their production of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Even though I had been an unofficial Deaf interpreter for my younger brother, who is Deaf and Autistic, it was my first official and professional experience in that production role. It was very challenging because I was the only Deaf interpreter and two hearing ASL interpreters. We had to sign facing the audience without looking at the stage. We stood at the far end of the stage. I interpreted for one character throughout the show, who played "Alice". One of the ASL interpreters sat opposite from me, in the audience, giving me cues about which line the actor was at for her character. The other ASL interpreter was standing next to me, signing for another character. Being a Deaf person, I need to see what is happening on the stage in order to know what to sign and match the tone of each line.

I had to look over at the stage – I wanted to be integral to the performance. I memorized the whole script for Alice’s lines. Usually, ASL interpreters review the script multiple time, then rehearse with the cast, but they try not to memorize the lines because there is a possibility that the actor may divert from script lines. I did not have that privilege. But luckily, my ASL interpreter, who was sitting opposite from me, let me know if the actor diverted from the script. It was a wonderful experience that I would welcome again.



Figure 12. National Arts Centre

Flyer for ASL interpreted show of *Alice Through the Looking Glass* at National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario (2014).

Music Signer:

As a music signer, in 2012, I was honoured to sign next to Jimmy Rankin, a Canadian musician, at his Christmas concert at the National Arts Centre, in Ottawa, Ontario. It was a part of CBC’s, *All in a Day* special episode on what kind of special dreams we have. I was one of their selected interviewees to go on the radio. I spoke for myself, on the radio, saying it was my dream to be able to sign next to a musician in ASL (not as an interpreter, but as a Deaf artist). So, they made

my dream come true and I got the chance to sign next to a well-known musician in Canada! It was definitely a challenge because I only had one chance to sign the music, being next to Jimmy before the concert opened. As a Deaf person, I need to rehearse a lot in order to understand the instrumental nuances of the score, the meaning of the lyrics, the blocking on the stage, the lighting of the stage, etc. It was even a challenge for the stage managers because they forgot to cue when I was to perform the stage! The audience had to wait several minutes before I arrived on the stage! Luckily, the audience was forgiving, and laughed when I mimed that no one gave me the cue: there I was twiddling my thumbs waiting! Even Jimmy Rankin laughed and thought I was humorous!



Figure 13. Jimmy Rankin

L/R: Jimmy Rankin and Elizabeth Morris at his *Christmas concert* at National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario (2012)

Photo: Angela Morris

I also had the honour to sign next to a well-known vocalist at the ACTRA awards night on two occasions. This is something I love to do.



Figure 14. Shakura S' Aida

L/R: Shakura S'Aida and Elizabeth Morris at ACTRA award in Toronto, Ontario (2014)

Photo: Ranjit Banja

Audience member:

I have always loved to attend live performances. When I was growing up, I attended productions of Broadway shows that were not accessible for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing. My mother, who is hearing, tried to interpret what she heard, while she was sitting next to me. I would have to turn and watch my mom trying to sign. Not only was this not ergonomically feasible as I had to watch both my mother and the performance; my mother missed the following scene information because she was busy focusing on translating a part of the performance into sign language. I missed the next part because my mother missed it. It was not accessible and inclusive for both of us! Plus, we paid full price for our tickets even though we missed the majority of the performance. We were not able to enjoy the show like other people. There were a few shows that were ASL-interpreted (i.e., with ASL interpreters, interpreting the show, from far end of the stage). When I was able to see the show, ASL interpreters were at a distance from centre stage; therefore, I had to alternate between the performance and the ASL Interpreter. As a result, in a

situation like this, there are disparities in what I observe(d). Also, there were few ASL-interpreted shows that I had to miss because I had a conflicting schedule. Another problem is that each ASL interpreter has a particular style when they interpret a show. Some ASL interpreters are really skilled in expressing the tone and character in ASL while others may not have the same skills or be able to provide the linguistic nuances. I tend to tolerate the discrepancy because at least there is some accessibility for the show, though it is rare. Also, it is rare to see professional Deaf actors, signing their character in ASL on stage.

Overall, based on my experience as a Deaf actor, a Deaf Community Consultant, and a theatre-goer. These experiences prove that there are gaps in the provision of supports in order to make live theatre performance(s) more accessible and inclusive.

I decided, based on my lived experiences, and by identifying the gaps in provisions, that there is important work to be done in this area of practice-based research. This realization, combined with a personal determination to make a difference for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, led me to apply to become a graduate student at OCAD University, in Toronto, in Inclusive Design. My decision to undertake this Master of Design was motivated by the urgency to improve designs to make live theatre more accessible and inclusive for the Deaf and HoH, their families and friends.

Chapter Two:

2. Deaf History:

Before engaging in a brief history of the Deaf community, there is the need to understand the medical definition and cultural definition of Deafness. Medically, the definition of ‘deaf’ (lower case d) is: a range of hearing loss and reliance on visual communication. Culturally, “Deaf” (upper case D) is a sociological community with a language, culture, value system, ethos, behavioural norms, and its own art forms and forms of cultural expression (Issues & Positions, Canadian Association of the Deaf). The definition of “hard of hearing” is generally applied to an individual with a mild to moderate hearing loss who relies on their hearing to process speech and language (“Deaf TEC: Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Definition”, n.d.).

The Canadian Hearing Society states that “Nearly 1 out of 4 adult Canadians reports having some hearing loss, although closer to 10% of people actually identify themselves as culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or Hard of Hearing. 530,210 people in Ontario (4.74% of the population) are deaf or Hard of Hearing” (“Facts and figures”, CHS). The National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) states: “More than 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents” (“NIDCD Quick Statistic”, 2015).

Every individual with a hearing loss may have similar or different experiences. It really depends on the person's lived experience, onset of hearing loss, family background, preference of communication, and range of experience being in the Deaf community or Hard of Hearing community. Society should not see all individuals with a hearing loss as one mass. Therefore, accessibility really depends on each individual.

In this research, I intend to provide an intensive explanation Deaf History specifically in the North American diaspora. The reason for choosing this specific topic is because Canada and USA share the same sign language. It is to help the reader understand why there are different kinds of deaf people, and each one may have a different kind of need than other deaf people.

In France in the 18th century, the French had been encouraging the manual method of deaf education. In Paris, Abbe Charles-Michel de l'Epee, who was a teacher, began to teach the deaf community years before the French Revolution had begun. He was credited with inventing the manual method of deaf education, communicating in a sign language and gestures without any speech. He disagreed with the oral method for the education of the deaf (which was used mainly in Germany and England). l'Epee published several of his works about the manual method (a sign language). including "The Method of Educating the Deaf and Dumb Confirmed by Long Experience." Published in 1789, in 1801, it was translated into an English version. In 1784, before his death, he received support from the emerging revolutionary government, who promised that his private school for the deaf would not end after his death. In 1791 in Paris, the

National Institution for the Deaf, funded by the government, opened their doors for deaf students. Even the American press at the time, gave more attention to the manual method and the National Institution for the Deaf, rather than oral education and schools in England (dominated by the Braidwood family). However, wealthy American families still sent their deaf child to the Braidwood Academy, in Britain (Edwards, 2012).

In the beginning of the 19th century, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. He was a hearing American, training to become a minister, and a Graduate student in Master of Arts at Yale University (Edwards, 2012). In 1814, Gallaudet came home to his family in Hartford (Connecticut, USA), from a seminary. He saw his young brothers and sisters, playing outside, with other children. He noticed that there was a young girl who was not participating with other children. Her name was Alice Cogswell, a neighbour's daughter who was deaf. He tried to communicate with her by pointing at an object and writing the word in the sand with a stick. Dr. Mason F. Cogswell, Alice's father and a Hartford surgeon, was thrilled to know that Gallaudet was trying to communicate with his daughter. Dr. Cogswell discussed with Gallaudet the idea of starting a school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut (Gannon, 2012). At that time, wealthy American families sent their deaf children abroad, to a deaf school, mostly to an oral school, Braidwood Academy (one was located in Edinburgh, Scotland, and another in London, England). But Dr. Cogswell was not willing to send his daughter abroad. At that time, families with less wealth developed home signs with their deaf child, in order to communicate (Edwards, 2012).

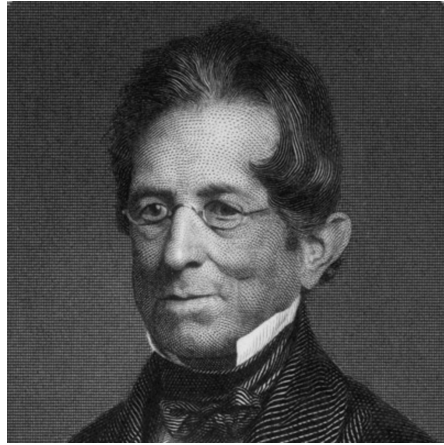


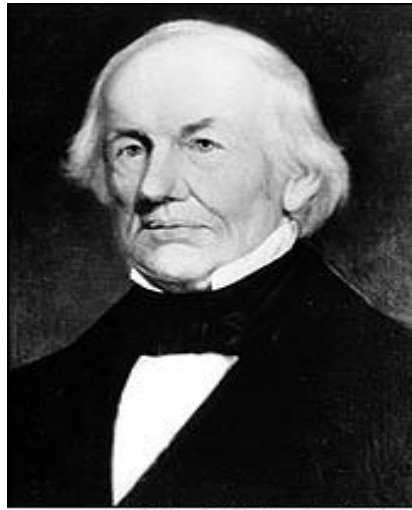
Figure 15. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet
<http://www.biography.com/people/thomas-gallaudet-9305354>



Figure 16. Alice Cogswell
https://www.startasl.com/challenging-society-alice-cogswell_html

In 1815, after lots of consideration, Gallaudet decided to take a trip to Europe, to learn how to teach deaf children and how to start a school for the deaf (Gannon, 2012). At that time, he was embracing the idea of educating deaf children by combining two methods, oral and manual. He was offered an opportunity by Braidwood to be their apprentice at their London school, teaching students how to do handwriting. At the same time, he would learn about their oral method of communicating. He was expected to stay abroad for three years, but he was not willing to accept these terms. At that time, Abbe Sicard, Abbe Charles-Michel de l'Epee's successor, happened to be in London (England), giving a speech about the manual method. Gallaudet met two of Sicard's best former students who were deaf, Jean Massieu and Laurent Clerc. Gallaudet met with Sicard in private at the presentation. Sicard encouraged him to visit the school in Paris and told him that he was willing to instruct him in the manual method. Yet, Gallaudet still wanted to visit the Braidwood Academy, in Edinburgh (Scotland). When he was in Edinburgh, he met a

Scottish philosopher of the common-sense school, whose name was Dugald Stewart. This philosopher opposed the idea of oral education. He felt that it was like trying to teach a parrot how to speak. In 1815, at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Stewart gave a speech, criticizing oral schools in Britain. He explained that he supported Abbe Sicard's manual education and its purpose: "not to astonish the vulgar by sudden conversion of a dumb child into a speaking *automaton* but... to convert his pupil into a rational and moral being" (Edwards, 2012, p.15). Although, he did admit that the idea of the manual method was not be as exciting as seeing a deaf child speak, Stewart encouraged Gallaudet to abandon the whole plan of learning oral methods. Instead, he encouraged him to go to Paris to learn the French method of manual education and to adopt its method for the American school. It was then that Gallaudet was motivated to start the new journey of learning about manual education and to bring the method back to America. That was when he decided to abandon his early idea of combining two methods—speaking and signing (Edwards, 2012).



Gallaudet University Archives

Figure 17. Laurent Clerc

Courtesy of the Gallaudet University Archives

After two months of studying abroad in Paris, Gallaudet realized he could not learn French Sign Language and the French educational method within a short period of time. His benefactors were not able to pay for a long stay abroad. It was then that he decided to ask Laurent Clerc to accompany him back to Hartford, Connecticut (USA), to help him to open a new school for the deaf. Clerc was a Deaf person, who was a fluent signer in French and a teacher at the National Institute (Paris, France). He was also one of their alumni. At that time, he was already 30 years old. He had been at that school as a student since the age of 12. Not only was Gallaudet asking him to leave his job, but also to leave his home. Luckily, Clerc wanted to have an adventure and he felt obligated to make the move for the benefit of deaf people in America. Both agreed, for him to be on a three-year contract in America. At first, Sicard did not approve of the idea, but in the end, he supported Clerc's decision to move and to teach in America. On June 18, 1816, Gallaudet and Clerc sailed off to America. During the trip, Gallaudet taught Clerc how to write

in English. Also, Clerc taught Gallaudet the French Sign Language. They finally arrived at the dock in New York, and arrived in Hartford on August 22nd, 1816. (Edwards, 2012).

On April 15th, 1817, after Gallaudet and Clerc raised some funds. They finally opened the Connecticut Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, a residential school in Hartford, Connecticut. Gallaudet became the principal of the school. At the same school, Clerc became America's first deaf teacher of the deaf. There were seven pupils, ranging in age from 12 to 51 years old. Four of those pupils eventually became teachers at the same school. Later on, the school changed its name to the American School for the Deaf. It was America's first permanent public school for the deaf (Gannon, 2012).

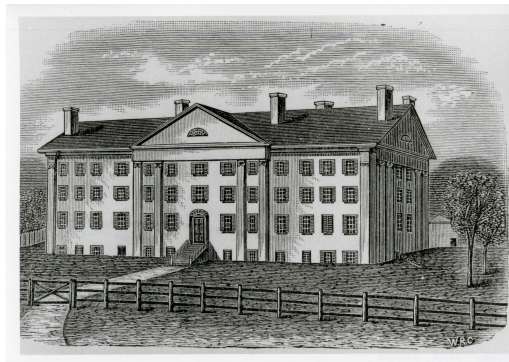


Figure 18. American School for the Deaf (Hartford, Connecticut)

Courtesy of the Gallaudet University Archives

In 1831, while in Canada, they opened their first school for the deaf on rue d' Auteuil, a street on the Esplanade, in Quebec City. Two years later, a former student became the first deaf person to

teach deaf children; his name was Antoine Caron (1813-47). The Catholic Church opened two francophone schools in Montreal. The Institution Catholique des Sourds-Muets, opened one school in 1848, for boys, and another school in 1851, for girls. A Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes was founded in Montreal, in 1870, by a deaf Englishman, Thomas Widd. Over the century, other schools for the deaf were established across Canada. In Ontario, the first school for the deaf children in Ontario was opened in Toronto, called Upper Canada Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (1864-70). In 1870, the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb was opened in the city of Belleville. Their first deaf teacher was Samuel Thomas Greene (1843-90). In 1886, Green also cofounded the Ontario Deaf-Mute Association (which is now known as the Ontario Association of the Deaf). In 1913, the school was renamed as the Ontario School for the Deaf. In 1963, the province opened a second school, known as the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, in the city of Milton. In 1974, the province opened a third school, known as the Robarts School for the Deaf, in the city of London. At that same year, the Ontario School for the Deaf (Belleville) changed their name to the Sir James Whitney school for the Deaf (Carbin, 2006).



Figure 19. Sir James Whitney school for the Deaf (Belleville, Ontario)

<http://psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html>

In 1850, back in America, a group of deaf people had gathered together in Hartford, Connecticut, to discuss the need for having a national association of the deaf. At that time, there was no newspaper dedicated to the needs of the deaf community, and travelling was slow and difficult for deaf members of the community. In 1853, the New England Gallaudet Association of the Deaf was founded, in honour of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. It was founded by Edmund Booth, Robert P. McGregor and Edwin A. Hodgson. The Deaf community felt that it was important to have a national organization, for them to be able to resolve their own issues within the community. At the time, they were concerned about several things; e.g., educational conditions in schools for the deaf, and specifically the method of instruction—Oralism. It was thought this was threatening the freedom of children’s learning and the employment of deaf teachers. There was some discrimination towards the deaf community due to limited understanding about the community and its capabilities (Gannon, 2012).

In 1864, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a charter to authorize the opening of the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf, in Washington DC. It was an institution allowed to grant a college degree to deaf persons. This charter led to Edward Miner Gallaudet, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet’s son, to found the National Deaf-Mute College. Then, in 1887, deaf women were allowed to enroll as students at the college. In 1891, a department was added to the college to train teachers. In 1894, the name of that college changed to Gallaudet College (Gannon, 2012).



Figure 20. Gallaudet University

Left: College Hall (Gallaudet University), 1895

Right: Chapel Hall (Gallaudet University), 1980

Courtesy of the Gallaudet University Archives

In 1880, during the summer, the National Association of the Deaf hosted their first convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Deaf people from different parts of America came to the convention to discuss deaf people's needs. Robert P. McGregor, who was a Founder and Principal of Cincinnati Day School for the Deaf, became the Association's first President. He was a great speaker who could convince the deaf audience to support his ideas. At that convention, educators of the deaf wanted to eliminate the term "Deaf-Mute," which was considered offensive. It was at this time that teaching speech to the deaf was spreading across the country. George W. Veditz, a deaf teacher who advocated for signing and lipreading stated: "If oral magicians who yank educational rabbits out of silk hats and pearls of speech out of the mouths of those who have never heard, choke over it, why bless 'em!" By their third convention, the term Deaf-Mute was eliminated (Gannon, 2012, p. 62).

In 1880, coincidentally, while deaf educators were at the convention in Cincinnati, hearing educators of the deaf went to the Second International Convention in Milan, Italy. Among those

participants were Edward Miner Gallaudet and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. Out of 164 participants, there were five Americans, eight English, 56 French, 87 Italians, and eight others. However, only the Americans were the duly elected representative group, because they were chosen (at a previous conference that occurred in May, 1880) to speak for the Conference of Principals of American Instructors for the Deaf and Dumb. At that meeting, the overwhelming number of voters favoured the pure oral method. They even opposed the idea of combining the oral and manual methods, which was favoured by the Americans at the time, depending on the needs of a child. This vote caused a change that profoundly impacted on the lives of deaf people across the world and continued to do so for generations (Gannon, 2012).

During that time, the world already knew Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. At the Milan conference, Bell was one of the biggest influences who advocated the oral method for education of the deaf. His mother was deaf; His wife was also deaf. His father advocated the oral method for education of the deaf. Bell knew how to communicate in sign language, but he did not agree with the method of sign language as a method of communication. He blamed the deaf person's speech as the rationale for separating deaf and hearing people. He felt that deaf people should only be taught speech and speechreading. Also, he was against the idea of intermarriage between deaf people because he was concerned that they would produce deaf children due to their heredity. He felt that putting a deaf child in a school with hearing children would help the child to experience "the normal condition of life" (Gannon, 2012, p.76). He believed that it was cruel to put all deaf children under the same roof, because it created lifelong bonding and dependence. He saw deaf intermarriage as detrimental and as another

manner of promoting sign language. He opposed having deaf teachers at the school for the deaf, fearing that they would also promote the use of sign language. He was concerned that deaf people were socializing with other deaf people in reunions, social gatherings, clubs, associations, and through the hosting of newspapers, religious worship, and conventions. He wanted a law that would prohibit a deaf person from marrying another deaf person (Gannon, 2012).

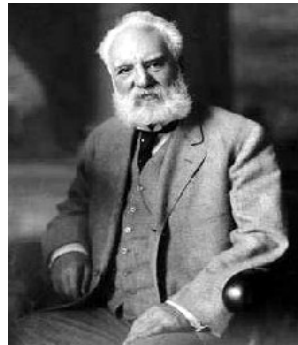


Figure 21. Alexander Bell Graham

<http://www.nndb.com/people/851/000026773/>

At the third convention of the National Association of the Deaf, President Edwin A. Hodgson, who succeeded McGregor, brought up a concern and wanted to get statistical information about the deaf, to either confirm or deny Alexander Graham Bell's theories. President Hodgson grew up as a hearing person, but lost his hearing at 18 years old due to spinal meningitis. George W. Veditz saw Dr. Bell as the person most feared by the deaf community, stating: "...he comes in the guise of a friend, and [is], therefore, the most to be feared enemy of the American deaf, past and present" (Gannon, 2012, p.77).

One of Dr. Bell's concerns, deaf couples producing a deaf child, was not substantiated. Dr. Philip G. Gillet, the superintendent of the Illinois School for the Deaf (at the time, it was the largest residential school for the deaf), studied 1,886 students and alumni of the school. He estimated that out of all students, less than two percent were deaf children from deaf parents. He disagreed with Dr. Bell's concern about heredity in deafness. He argued that if it becomes illegal for a deaf person to marry another deaf person, then this should apply to their hearing relatives as well, since they may have deaf heredity:

There are other inconveniences that descend by heredity that we might quite as well combat through matrimony as deafness. Baldness is a physical defect that is often (in fly-time and in cold weather, or when sitting in a draught, for instance) a great inconvenience, but who ever thought of classing the bald-headed among the defective classes, or of regarding baldness as a crime or a disgrace? Near-sightedness is a physical defect that is often very inconvenient; but who ever thought to trace the pedigree of bald or near-sighted people, to see if they might enter into wedlock? (Gannon, 2012, p.76).

Although many deaf people did not agree with Dr. Bell's philosophy, Albert Ballin, who was a deaf businessman and an artist fluent in sign language, was one of Bell's few friends. He lost his hearing at the age of three. He did not agree with all of Bell's views. He supported the idea of using sign language to communicate. He felt that if all public schools were taught in sign language, a deaf child would be able to go to a public school and there would be no communication problem. He believed that if Bell did not have fame and wealth, his philosophy on Oralism would not be as successful (Gannon, 2012).

Another important part of the American history of the deaf occurred on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. This was the largest island located off the coast of New England. Indigenous peoples had lived on the island for the last 4,000 years. In 1644, European settlers migrated to Martha's Vineyard. For over two and half centuries, especially in the towns of West Tisbury and Chilmark, on Martha's Vineyard, there was an unusually high proportion of deaf people, dating back to 1714, when there was a deaf man, whose name was Jonathan Lambert, living on the island (mentioned in a written record by Judge Samuel Sewell, who came from Boston to the island). Lambert married a hearing woman (according to the author's knowledge). They had seven children together. Two out of the seven were deaf. Due to lack of historical records, there was no proof of other deaf people living there before Lambert. Several of his descendants were deaf. Based on the study from the late 1700s, Groce calculated over 96% of married couples on the island were already related to each other, such as cousins and double cousins (Groce, 1988).

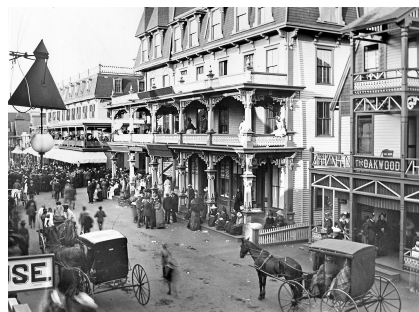


Figure 22. Martha's Vineyard Island

<http://www.vineyardvisitor.com/a-brief-but-comprehensive-history-of-marthas-vineyard/>

In the 19th century in America, there was one person in every 5,728 who was born deaf. On the island, there was one in every 155 who was born deaf. The islanders invented or borrowed a form of sign language, to communicate with deaf islanders. The last known deaf person who knew the island's sign language, passed away in 1952. Her name was Mrs. Abigail Brewer (Groce, 1988).

Nora E Groce, the author of *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*, interviewed many of the older generation of islanders who remembered the time when deaf people lived on the island and when sign language was the method of communication. In late October of 1978, one of the interviewees was Gale Huntington. He grew up on the island and his memory went back over 80 years. He mentioned that no one knew why there were more deaf people on the island and thought maybe deafness was inherited. He noted that everyone thought deaf people were just like everyone else. Hearing islanders were bilingual in English and the island sign language (Groce, 1988):

A deaf person's greatest problem is not simply that he or she cannot hear but that the lack of hearing is socially isolating. The deaf person's knowledge and awareness of the larger society are limited because hearing people find it difficult or impossible to communicate with him or her. Even if the deaf person knows sign language, only a very small percentage of the hearing population can speak it and can communicate easily with deaf people. The difficulty in communicating, along with the ignorance and misinformation about deafness that is pervasive in

most of the hearing world, combine to cause difficulties in all aspects of life for deaf individuals- in education, employment, community involvement, and civil rights (Groce, 1988, p. 4).

On Martha's Vineyard, however, due to everyone being able to communicate in sign language and being comfortable about deafness, barriers were non-existent for all deaf islanders. Deaf islanders grew up, got married, had children, and earned a living, just like their hearing family and neighbours (1988). Groce stated that, in general, research indicated the deaf children of deaf parents progressed well socially and academically, compared to the deaf children of hearing parents who did not know a sign language. Deaf parents were able to accept the child's deafness, having the ability to communicate in a sign language, surrounding the child with the deaf community, being role models, and showing how to manage life's daily problems. However, on the island, this was not the case. Hearing islanders already know about deafness and were fluent in a sign language. A deaf islander was born in a place where being deaf is accepted; therefore, that islander has the same advantages as the deaf child of deaf parents (1988).

Before the 17th and 18th centuries, it was unknown if deaf children on Martha's Vineyard went to school. There were public schools on the island, but only the few hearing children went there. After 1817, all but one of the deaf islanders went to the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, in Hartford, Connecticut. At the time, islanders were poor. Many hearing islanders left school at the age of 10 or 12, to help out at home or on the sea. Deaf islanders were able to continue their education longer than hearing islanders. This meant that, there were times when

less educated hearing people brought an newspaper to their deaf neighbour, so that they were able to understand what was written in it (Groce, 1988).

Before 1817, 73% of deaf Vineyard islanders were married. Out of that percentage, only 35% were married to other deaf islanders. For the national average in America, at the time, 79% of deaf people were married to other deaf people. While Groce stated that Schein and Delk (1974) estimated that, currently, 80% of deaf people are married to other deaf people, and only 7% of deaf people married to hearing people. The author felt that the bilingualism of the community made it more common for deaf islanders to marry hearing islanders than on the mainland (1988, p.79). Also, the island's fertility rate was higher than the mainland's fertility rate; during the late 19th century in Massachusetts, the average for a married couple was to have 4.11 children (Fay, 1898). For islanders, the average for a married couple is to have 6.1 children. For deaf islanders, it was 5.9 children (1988).

In 1980, another interviewee (in her mid-eighties) stated how she remembered her mother mentioning a professor from Boston who came to talk to her. Her mother thought it was strange that someone would come all the way from Boston to hear about the deaf people on the island. After that interview, the author discovered a paper from the Dukes County Historical Society Library, written by Alexander Graham Bell. His notes were dated in the early 1880s. At that time, he was a professor of Elocution at Boston University. He wrote many notes and manuscripts about the island's deafness. In 1883, he decided to investigate whether deafness was

inherited or not. If so, he wanted to know the reason behind it. Bell noticed that the highest incidence of deafness in new England was on the island. Also, that families with a deaf member from another area in New England would somehow be related to islanders on Martha's Vineyard. Over that four-year period, he went to the town of Chilmark on the island several times, interviewing deaf islanders and their families. In his conclusion, he was not able to explain why hearing parents had several deaf children. Because of this failure to prove his theory, he decided to abandon the study of island genetics altogether. Groce knew that Bell's original work, though it was not published, was recorded in Charles Banks' book *The History of Martha's Vineyard*. That book was published in 1913 and includes a thank you to Bell from Groce for giving him access to his notes. Groce found a reference in one of Bell's private papers which led her to the John Hitz Memorial Library, at the Alexander Graham Bell Foundation in Washington, DC. There, she found Bell's notes packed up in a warehouse. Bell's notes had information that went way back to the 1730s. It also provided some names for several dozen Deaf islanders who were alive much earlier than the memories of some of Groce's interviewees (1988). Perhaps Dr. Bell did not publish his notes because he realized that there might be the possibility of an error in his theory about deaf people carrying deaf genes that would be passed on to the next generation?

After the Second International Convention (Milan, Italy), the Oralism method became very popular and was being followed by schools over the world. The London Times newspaper, followed the convention, reporting on what was happening day by day. A report was written and declared that "deafness is abolished" (Ladd, 2003, p.28). During this time, the use of sign language was banned schools and deaf educators were also prevented from teaching in the school

(of the teachers, 40% were deaf educators). This method was not researched by anyone professionally across the world. However, in 1974, a team started to do research on Oralism led by Reuben Conrad, at Oxford University. At that time, the Deaf community did not know about the research. They discovered the result of Oralism, but their findings were swept away. Finally, their findings were published, a century after Milan. It produced different reactions within the deaf community—from shock to knowing that the method did not work. Based on the research, the author Paddy Ladd stated:

The English literacy level of the profoundly Deaf school-leveiler was 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ years, enough to comprehend a tabloid headline, but little more. In most cases, their speech—the very raison d’etre of Oralism—was unintelligible to all but their teachers and families. Even their ability to lipread was found to be no better than that of hearing people who had never been exposed to it before. The study did not examine mental or psychological health, but it did not take much imagination to envisage the scale of the damage wreaked on that score alone. These results were published in 1979—to a deafening media silence (2003, p.28).

Deaf people across the world, began to get angry, describing Oralism as a “Deaf Holocaust” (Ladd, 2003 p.28). Many deaf people across the world who shared a similar experience of the Oralism method, felt the status of Holocaust to be correct (2003, p.28).

“A few people are aware that this continuing acceptance of benevolence is partly why the gulf between awareness and action exists. Some might fairly say that ‘until Deaf organizations take

an aggressive political lead and then specially ask for our support, we do not really know what our place should be in this struggle” (Ladd, 2003, p.32).

In 1988, at Gallaudet University (the world’s only Deaf university) in Washington DC, 2000 students took over the campus for 10-day long campaign, fighting for their first “Deaf President Now.” During that time, they gained much media coverage, and attracted lots of public support. Some examples of public support included, being loaned Martin Luther King’s banner stating “We Still Have a Dream”; receiving donations from unions; and having hearing volunteers taking phone calls. “If Deaf communities select the right leadership which will take the ‘right’ kind of action which will unlock the editorial doors of the media” (Ladd,2003, p. 32).

Meanwhile in Canada, in late 1980s and early 1990s, the Deaf community demanded having an education in their preferred language, American Sign Language (ASL)—or Langue des Signes Quebecoise (LSQ). This struggle was successful, a few schools became bilingual (ASL and English) and bicultural (Deaf and hearing cultures). A few legislatures finally recognized ASL as a language for the Deaf community in Canada, starting in Manitoba (1988) and Alberta (1990). In 1993, Ontario was the first province to pass a law, the Ontario Education Act, which recognized ASL and LSQ as languages for teaching deaf children. Besides education, the Deaf community had been fighting for certain human rights and privileges, such as: being able to drive an automobile, having sign language interpreters for medical and legal situations, choosing

which language to get training in; being allowed to use sign language in the classroom, having closed captioning on television programs, etc.

In 1990, Gary Malkowski, a Deaf community advocate originally from Hamilton, had become a MMP for York East (Toronto, Ontario) of the NDP (New Democratic Party in Canada) (Egan, 1991). He was the first Deaf parliamentarian in Canada and in the world, who addressed a legislature in American Sign Language. During his term (1990-1995), he was Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education and Training (“CHS: Gary Malkowski- Biography”, 2017). The government approved and supported cost of paying for six sign language interpreters, annually (Egan, 1991). In 1994, he proposed a bill for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which led to AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) in 2005. Malkowski was a member of several projects, committees, organizations, including the Board of Directors of the Broadcasting Accessibility Fund (BAF). He was also a Vice-Chair of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Alliance (“CHS: Gary Malkowski- Biography”, 2017).



Figure 23. Gary Malkowski

https://www.thestar.com/life/2011/04/30/henderson_its_time_to_make_polls_fully_accessible.html

Accessibility Ontario stated:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or AODA, aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The AODA became law on June 13, 2005 and applies to all levels of government, non-profits, and private sector businesses in Ontario that have one or more employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract) (“Accessibility Ontario: About the AODA”, n.d.).

Malkowski was named a recipient of the ADOA 10th Anniversary Champion (2015); received an honorary degree from Gallaudet University (the L.H.D. Doctor of Humane Letters Degree); the Canadian Association of the Deaf Henry Vlug Award for Political, Legal, and Advocacy Action (July 2010); and the Queen’s Golden (2002) and Diamond (2012) Jubilee medals in recognition of his community service. He has also received the 1996 Canadian “Who’s Who” Award; the 1989 Ontario Government Community Action Award; the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Program’s Outstanding Contribution to the Mental Health Communities Award; and many other honours provincially, nationally and internationally (“CHS: Gary Malkowski- Biography”, 2017).

In 2004, Malkowski also advocated for movie theatres to provide captions for their deaf audience members. With Scott Simser (a Hard of Hearing civil rights lawyer) and Nancy Barker (a University of Toronto student), “[t]he three have launched a total of nine complaints with the Ontario Human Rights commission alleging that the movie theatre industry discriminates

against moviegoers who are deaf and Hard of Hearing. They claim that their constitutional rights to equal access are being denied.” (Abbate, 2004). Those complaints were against the major theatre chains and film distributors (Cineplex Galaxy LP; Paramount Pictures Canada; Famous Players; Alliance Atlantis Cinemas; and Universal Studios Canada). At that time, the issue was whether all films that were shown in Ontario should be equipped with the technology of rear window captioning (RWC). With RWC, each viewer had a small portable reflector screen that fits into a seat’s cup-holder. It generated a reflection of the captions that it was projecting, backwards, on a 10-foot wide teleprompter screen, on the back wall of the auditorium. A lawyer for the University had mentioned that 80 to 90% of films included RWC. But the problem was that the movie theatres did not have the equipment to play the CDs (that projects subtitles onto the small screen that the viewer places in the cup holder). Gary had felt that it would be beneficial if they added captions across the bottom of the screen, for everyone, including to help improve children’s literacy and helping other people who were ESL (English as Second Language) (Abbate, 2004).

Previously, Famous Players (now called Cineplex Entertainment) was the only movie theatre company that offered rear window captioning technology for their deaf viewers. It was commercially available in 1997, when the movie *Titanic* was shown. Then, in 2001 and 2002, Famous Players finally installed RWC systems in 56 auditoriums, across Canada! (“Ontario Human Rights Commission: Background/Settlement with respect to the exhibition of movies with closed captioning”, n.d.).

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) stated:

Under the settlement, AMC Entertainment International Inc., Cineplex Entertainment LP and Rainbow Centre Cinemas Inc. have agreed to the installation of new closed captioning systems in many Ontario theatres, when such new technology becomes commercially available, on a phased-in basis. While each RWC unit provide accessibility for a single auditorium, it is anticipated that the new technology will provide accessibility to many, and in some cases, all, of the auditoria in a movie complex through a central server that will allow digital dialogue to be displayed on handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs) (“Backgrounder: Settlement with respect to the exhibition of movies with closed captioning”, n.d.).

In 2006, Malkowski became the founding member of Captioning Movies Now Coalition (“CHS: Gary Malkowski- Biography”, 2017).

Another important part of Deaf history in Canada was happening in Toronto, Ontario. On May 14th, 2006, the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CSSD), a non-profit and only national cultural organization for Deaf Canadians, opened the first Deaf Culture Centre, globally, in Toronto’s Distillery District. It was an Interactive Museum, exhibiting artifacts of national and global relevance, including art work by international celebrated Deaf artists. Also, it included Research and Archive facilities, and a multi-media Production Studio (featured on DeafPlanet.com). This centre was funded by private donations and public monies, including \$175,000 from the Department of Canadian Heritage and Cultural Spaces Canada Program

(Canada Newswire, 2006). The dream of opening the Deaf Culture Centre began with CCSD's first president, Forrest Nickerson, who was one of several Deaf leaders across Canada, who founded the organization in 1970. After 1998 and before the opening of the centre, with the direction of CCSD's board, Helen Pizzacalla (President), Joann Cripps (Deaf leader), and Anita Small (hearing sociolinguist), were responsible for a study about establishing the centre:

Having worked together to create sign language products and programs of the CCSD since 1998, we knew that of key importance was a shared vision, showcasing 'a celebration of Deaf life' and working closely with the Canadian Deaf community first to determine priorities and then to design and establish the Deaf Culture Centre (Cripps & Small, 2016).



Figure 24. Deaf Culture Centre

Photo: Anita Small

In 2015-2016, with the support of Deaf Culture Centre, Cahoots Theatre and its staff, with Anita Small (Project Manager), Catherine MacKinnon (Deaf Community Consultant), and Joanne Cripps (their External Deaf Consultant), developed a free resource online called, "Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit" (DATT). It was launched in September of 2016. This online guide was

also based on the development of a production called, “Ultrasound” (mentioned in Chapter One: Autoethnography), co-produced by Cahoots Theatre and Theatre Passe Muraille (shown in May of 2016, in Toronto, Ontario). This toolkit is a resource that helps the collaboration between professional theatre companies and Deaf artists, as well as engaging a Deaf audience to see the show. Also, there are lots of great tips on how to make the theatre and production more accessible for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing artists and audiences:

A company interested in working with a Deaf artist or engaging with Deaf audiences can use these online resources for insights, processes, tips and templates, to sensitively and comprehensively navigate the development and production of a work involving Deaf artists and Deaf audiences in Canada (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Introduction”, 2016).

Based on “Deaf Artists and Theatre Toolkit” definition, a Deaf Community Consultant is Deaf, fluent in ASL, well known in the Deaf community, and is also familiar with the theatre’s work. It’s the consultant’s job to be a team member with the company, providing information on services for the Deaf community (during the audition process, selecting Deaf cast and/or crew, hiring interpreters, creating posts/promotion and an environment accessible for the Deaf, and the production). The goal is to create an accessible and supportive kind of environment for Deaf artists and the Deaf community (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Pre-Production”, 2016).

2.1 Cultural Identity and Linguistics:

The author, Paddy Ladd, mentioned three kinds of groups with hearing loss. There is a group of deaf people who grow up, experiencing the same values, beliefs and language, they are considered to be 'Deaf' with a capital 'D'. There is a group who becomes hearing impaired later in life, they are considered to be 'Hard of Hearing'. Lastly, there is a group who loses their hearing during working, they are considered to be 'deafening' (Ladd, 2003).

Before the middle of 20th century, there was a higher percentage of deafness during childhood, which led to greater potential for the Deaf community. It was likely that the community was predominant because hearing aides did not exist at the time. When hearing aides were invented, Oralists started to isolate partially deaf students from their deaf peers and put integrate them into mainstream schools (a deaf program in a regular school). Some students "found their way back home" into the Deaf community, in their late teens or young adult life. However, some with more hearing, continue on in the majority society (Ladd, 2003, p.34).

With the medical or social models, it leaves the Deaf community vulnerable to an "audiological" grey area, which is difficult to see the degree of difficulty in accessing society. For example, a partially deaf child may have the appearance of coping, mainstreaming in the majority of society. It is only later in teen or as an adult, the truth comes out. Many are isolated from any community, Deaf or hearing. Over the last 100 years, "medical" and "social" models viewed Deaf people as

disabled; however, recently with the “culturo-linguistic model” deafness was denied as a “disability,” stating that the level of hearing loss is not relevant to Deaf membership (Ladd, 2003).

In the population of deaf people, 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. Only 10% of deaf children are born to deaf parents. Those 10% of deaf children pass along the sign language and culture to the next generation of Deaf children. To-day, interventions are proposed to “normalize” children, by introducing hearing parents to the Oralist method and cochlear implants, etc. Inventors impose fear into parents, fear of “abnormality” guiding their desire for the deaf child to be normal and disengaged from deafness and the Deaf community:

This profoundly anti-democratic policy has been enacted throughout the world for the 120 years and shows little sign of waning in power. It has created immense psychic damage for both children and parents, in family bonding, social relationships and even marital relationships. And inevitably as it was designed to do, it has severely impaired linguistic minority recognition, for in the cases of language minorities who have won their rights, it is of course the parents of minority children who fought those battles (Ladd, 2003, p35).

The author, Paddy Ladd, stated:

This discourse goes on to point out that suffering oppression does not entice Black people to wish to become white (with the occasional notable exception), Jewish people to become

Gentiles, nor women to become men. In each case, what is wished for is simply the removal of oppression. And so it is with Deaf people. It is having a cultural community, a high quality collective life, that marks the difference (Ladd, 2003, p.37).

Beside the Deaf networks, the first Deaf cultural site would be at the Deaf residential school. To many Deaf students, the school environment was the primary familial connections (a family of brothers and sisters). Some students feel that interacting in sign language with their peers was engaging; however, at home, they get bored, and long for their 'school family'. Based on Ladd, interviews with Deaf alumni of residential school (students from 1945 to 1960), several interviewees mentioned that in their time, Deaf children went home much less and for shorter periods of time, more than nowadays. The reason for shorter visits to their family is because these children wanted more time to build on their own group's experiences (for example: activities, hobbies, sports that happen after lessons are finished). Several interviewees emphasized how residential school experience established the deaf identity and community, as well as built a person's individuality, while also helping the individual to be independent and rely on him/herself (Ladd, 2003).

Many Deaf clubs were founded in the 19th century. They had their own history and traditions. They are very important for the community life. It is where Deaf values are passed on to each generation, throughout the history of the club. They used to be open two or three times a week, one or two days for social activities and one day for church. At night, there were trade

workshops, acting groups, lectures, etc. Nowadays, many of those clubs would be open several times a week for meetings and special interest groups for youth, seniors, sports, and women. Also, Deaf sports teams are another place that originated with the club. (Ladd, 2003).

As a part of cultural identity, there is also a linguistic part that plays a big role in it. There is not just one sign language across the world that is universal. In other countries and regions, they also have a different sign language (“NIDCD Quick Statistic”, 2015). During the 19th century, at the American School for the Deaf (Hartford, Connecticut), there was a diverse group of deaf children who came to the school. As diverse, some students were older than other students, some never knew a sign language, some were from deaf families and already had a sign language, and many of those students were from Martha’s Vineyard Island and communicated in Martha’s Vineyard Sign Language (MVSL), along with gestures that hearing people used in America and Europe (Shaw & Delaporte, 2010). During the 19th century in Canada, deaf immigrants brought their own sign language to the country. From England, deaf immigrants brought their British Sign Language (BSL). From France, deaf immigrants brought their Langue des Francaise (LSF). Some students and teachers returning to the country from America, brought their American Sign Language (ASL). Over time, BSL and LSQ disappeared. Most Canadian signers communicate in ASL. However, in Quebec, they communicate in Langue des Quebecoise (LSQ) (Carbin, 2006):

“American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that employs signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and postures of the body. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and is one of several communication options used by people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing” (“NCDID: Quick Statistic”, 2015).

Some suggestions are that sign language arose over 200 years ago, mixing with local sign languages and French Sign Language (Langue des Francaise or LSF). Over the years, it evolved into a language of its own, as ASL. Although ASL and LSF are distinct languages, and each language’s signers would not understand each other (NIDCD, 2017). In America and Canada, signers communicate in ASL. This language has its own language, separate entirely from the English language (ASL University, 2015).

In 1960, William C. Stokoe devised the first system to describe signs. Before his time, signs were considered to have no internal structure. Stokoe suggested that sign could be analyzed in the same way that spoken language can be analyzed. He suggested that there were three parts in American Sign Language: the location of a sign, the handshape, and the movement (Valli & Lucas, 1992).

Also, ASL contains all kinds of fundamental features of language; such as: word order, grammar, and rules of pronunciation (“NIDCD Quick Statistic”, 2015). Even in grammar structure, the language has its own rules for phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. These rules

would depend on whether the audience is familiar with the topic and what you want to do. The word order for ASL tends to follow as Subject-Verb-Object or Subject-Verb word order. This language does not use words before verbs, such as: am, is, are, was, were. Also, this language does not use words after verbs, such as: a, an, the (ASL University, 2015):

When talking about a topic, it can be either a subject or object of the sentence:

A. If you use the subject as your topic, then you are using an active voice.

ASL: BOY THROW BALL. English: The boy threw the ball.

B. If you use the object as your topic, then you are using a passive voice.

ASL: BALL, BOY THROW. English: The ball was thrown by the boy.

A. The BOY can be:

- The subject of the sentence: **BOY** THROW BALL.
- The object of the sentence: **BALL**, HIT BOY.

B. The BALL can be:

- The subject of the sentence: **BALL**, HIT BOY.
- The object of the sentence: **BOY** THROW BALL. (ASL University, 2015).

Also, we use Time-Subject-Verb-Object or Time-Subject-Verb word order. When we are talking about the timeframe, we establish it at the beginning of the sentence. Often ASL signers would sign “WEEK-PAST I WASH MY CAR” or “MY CAR? WEEK-PAST I WASH” (ASL University, 2015).

Each language (spoken and signed) has its own way of signaling different functions. For example, while asking a question, hearing speakers would ask the question in a higher pitch in their voice. ASL signers would ask the question with their face and body; such as, raising their eyebrows and leaning forward with their body. Also, ASL signers have different regional accents and dialects from each other; such as, difference of variations in the rhythm of signing, form, and pronunciation. Besides those factors, ethnicity and age are also factors affecting language cognition (“NIDCD Quick Statistics”, 2015).

Children who grow up in Deaf culture and Deaf community, tend to have a sign name.

This link stated:

North American Deaf people have two sets of names—their English name given by their parents and their ASL name sign. Upon first meeting, Deaf people exchange their first and last English name through fingerspelling followed by their ASL name sign. Name signs are a bit like a relationship map within the Deaf community and so carry much meaning. They may reflect whether someone has grown up in a school for the Deaf or a mainstreamed school. They may also represent groups. For example, name signs may all be on the same location of the body

(such as all on the chin or all on the chest) or have the same movement or use the same handshape to unify family members. Name signs are given by members of the Deaf community to each other and to hearing people they live with (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Cultural Context: Name Signs”, 2016).

There are two categories of sign names; Arbitrary Name Signs (ANS) and Descriptive Name Signs (DNS). ANS is when a person (in the U.S. or Canada) who has a sign name given by the Deaf community, fingerspells out the first letter of their written name, placing in a location. There is no additional meaning to the sign. Usually the Deaf person receives the sign name at the Deaf school. DNS does not use a fingerspelling, but uses the person’s personal characteristics as a sign name for that person (depending on the ASL rules of handshapes, movement and location) (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Cultural Context: Name Signs, 2016).



Figure 25. Miranda Elizabeth Morris (Ultrasound, 2016)
Arbitrary Name Sign – Miranda
Photo: Dahlia Katz



Figure 26. Alphonse Chris Dodd (Ultrasound, 2016)
Arbitrary Name Sign – Alphonse
Photo: Dahlia Katz

Chapter Three:

3. Deconstructing Barriers

To make a live show accessible and inclusive, it is necessary to deconstruct the barriers that Deaf and Hard of Hearing audiences experience. It is also important to deconstruct barriers for their hearing families and friends who attempt to translate, or ‘help’ them to understand the show. As part of the research for this MRP, investigation of methods being used in communication, consolidate the deconstruction of the barriers that currently exist during live shows.

3.1 Live Theatre

Before deconstructing barriers, it is necessary to understand what live theatre is and its history. The word “theatre” comes from the ancient Greek word *heatron*, which means “the seeing place.” The history of theatre can be traced back to 2500 BC in Egypt, where they had the first performances held at annual festivals. These performances were based on the sacred play of the myth of Osiris and Isis. Live theatre is also rooted in ancient Greece, where people were known to be pioneers of creating theatre as arts. In the Eastern part of the world, the history of theatre can be traced back to 1000 BCE, with ancient Indian and Chinese theatre. While in 17th century CE, other Eastern countries formed live theatre. In modern history, live theatre performances have been adapted into new ways of interpreting the story, being presented in many ways to

service the needs of the time. Western theatre continued to develop in the Roman Empire and Medieval England, throughout the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries in European countries such as Spain, Italy, France, and Russia (“Dragonflytheatre.com: Live Theatre”, 2011).

There are various types of live theatre. The following are three of the main kinds of live theatres: Drama, Musical, and Comedy.

The term “Drama” comes from the Greek word for *action*. Drama is a fiction presented in a performance. For instance, the example of works by William Shakespeare that are still very popular in the contemporary world. Musical theatre combines several components such as music, songs, dance routines, and spoken dialogue. Some musical performances are *Show Boat*, *Les Miserables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Rent*. Comedy Theatre use humour to tell the story. If it tells a story of a taboo subject or controversial matter, it is known as a “black comedy” (Dragonflytheatre.com: Live Theatre”, 2011).

There are various technical aspects involved in live theatre, which encompass/support performances; such as, a director, playwright, actors, set designer, lighting designer, costume designer, sound designer, stage manager, props manager, and production managers (Dragonflytheatre.com: Live Theatre”, 2011).

A brief history of “Pepper’s Ghost, a live theatre technique, inspired my design proposal. It was invented by John H. Pepper, who was Professor of Chemistry of a British Polytechnic. He was born in Westminster England, on June 17, 1821 (Cane, 1975). In the 1850s, Pepper invented Pepper’s Ghost. The Pepper’s Ghost startled theatregoers at the time with an effect that allowed people or objects to slowly materialize into a scene. In this illustration, the “ghost” is an actor located in the foreground of and below the stage floor. The glass pane creates a reflection that gives the perception that a ghost is on the stage.

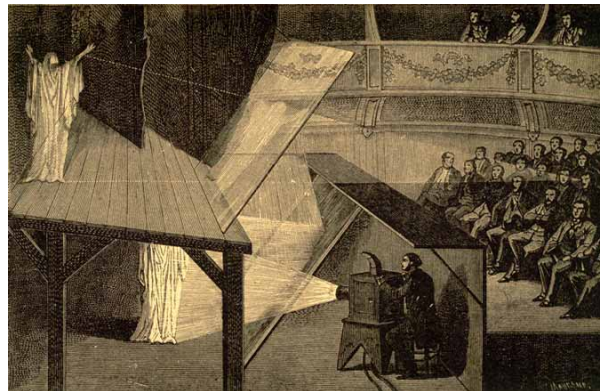


Figure 27. Pepper’s Ghost

<http://users.telenet.be/thomasweynants/peppers-ghost.html>

3.1.2 Theatres with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors:

History:

Deaf theatre has existed since the late 19th century. Deaf clubs traditionally included performances, during festivals. In the UK during the 1960s, the National Theatre of the Deaf was

founded and strongly influenced by hearing directors. Deaf audience members complained that their work was unintelligible; consequently, this theatre lasted only until the early 1980s (Ladd, 2003). (Discussion of the National Theatre of the Deaf, in the USA, will be mentioned in the section, “Integration of performance”).

Although, this theatre managed to have impressive numbers of quality performers, they still received the same criticism as the UK theatres. In other countries that were formerly Communist, their governments sponsored Deaf arts which led to strong traditions of Deaf performance; however, Ladd states that Oralism had become influential, as many of these performers specialized in mime, rather than using their own sign language (Ladd, 2003).

In the early 1970s in the USA, and in the late 1980s in the UK, plays were both written and directed by Deaf people; however, with fewer young people joining the Deaf “club” over time, Deaf theatre gradually began to disappear. Another reason for the decline was because of “integrated theatre.” This involved a hearing group learning some basic signs and establishing a signed theatre. They had the knowledge of the grant systems (i.e., funding possibilities) and these groups received money, which could have gone to a Deaf drama group (Ladd, 2003). During this decade, Deaf-Oriented Signed poetry became prevalent in Deaf theatre. British-born Dorothy Miles was a pioneer in this kind of work. Though her poetry combined English and ASL, her work inspired other Deaf people to develop their own visual sign poetry without English

grammar (Ladd, 2003). Deaf clubs also hosted Deaf Cabarets, where anyone could get up on the stage and perform a skit, tell jokes, or tell stories (Ladd, 2003).

In late 1970s, several Deaf people started to develop their own interpretation of pop songs. In 1990s, they started to adapt the lyrics of vocal songs, and compose their own music. This was controversial, since only Deaf people who have some residual hearing can fully appreciate this kind of work (Ladd, 2003). The implementation of the ADA law (Americans with Disabilities Act) in the 1990s, Deaf theatre members saw performances that included accessibility, and found more job opportunities in theatre (Linza, 1999). In the 20th century, there was a decline in the Deaf performance arts due to incidents of oppression of Deaf language and culture, by Oralists in the Deaf community (Ladd, 2003).

Sign Language Theatre:

Sign Language Theatre, based on Miles and Fant's definition:

The term sign language theatre is used here to describe any production which begins with a text originally written for spoken theatre (such as Hamlet, Death of a Salesman, Fiddler on the Roof, and so on), or with selected items of literature, and arranges this work for simultaneous presentation in spoken language and in the sign language used by deaf persons in that country or locally. In the United States, the sign systems include American Sign Language (known by the acronyms Ameslan or ASL), Manual English and Signed English (which use Ameslan signs in

English word order), and a number of offshoots aimed at a precise visual representation of English parts of speech (Miles & Fant, 1976).

Deaf Theatre

Based on Miles and Fants' definition, Deaf theatre is a company of Deaf actors who are performing in a sign language. It is possible to have hearing actors who are performing in spoken and sign language (broken signs). Deaf actors are portraying Deaf characters. Hearing actors are portraying Hearing characters: "The objectives of *deaf theatre* are: to entertain and enlighten both deaf and hearing audiences with realistic portrayals of the lives of deaf persons, or with real or imaginary representations drawn from the deaf person's unique perception of the world; to provide both deaf and hearing playwrights with models from which to develop further creations; and to bring to the deaf public a theatre with which they can truly identify. *Deaf theatre* uses sign language as a means of communication, first, and as an art form, second. Its aim is to be fully comprehensible without dependence on the spoken word, and where one or the other must be sacrificed for the sake of artistry, it is speech that is abandoned before sign language" (Miles and Fant, 1976).

In 1988, Rusalyn Andrews wrote a thesis, building on the work of Miles and Fants, *Deaf Theatre Performance: An Aristotelean Approach*. In her thesis, she divided Miles and Fants' definition of Deaf Theatre into two subgroups: "Theatre *for* the Deaf" and "Theatre *of* the Deaf." "Theatre *for* the Deaf" may have many same elements as Deaf theatre, but the target audience is for the Deaf

audience, performed by a Deaf company. The Hearing audience is required to know American Sign Language and Deaf culture. This kind of show rarely uses spoken interpretation:

The main difference between Theatre for the Deaf as defined by Andrews, and Deaf Theatre as defined by Miles and Fant, is that Theatre for the Deaf rarely provides spoken interpretation. The material used in Theatre for the Deaf is much like that used for Deaf Theatre, in that it is either written by a deaf playwright, or adapted from a conventional play so as to incorporate the deaf experience (Tracie, 1998, p.38).

The author, Tracie, quoted after Andrews (1988, p.37), *Theatre of the Deaf*, “goes beyond sign language theatre by either initiating original scripts or translating existing scripts from English into sign language and altering them to reflect those elements integral to Deaf Culture”:

Much like Theatre for the Deaf, Theatre of the Deaf seeks to make sure that "deaf issues are incorporated into the framework of the action" (Andrews 37). The primary difference between the two types of theatre is in the target audience. Theatre of the Deaf seeks to be accessible to both a hearing and deaf audience. Because of this, simultaneous interpretation is provided for both deaf and hearing members of the audience. I will undertake in Chapter Three a detailed study of the National Theatre of the Deaf, which is one of the most successful theatres of the deaf in North America (Tracie, 1998, p.39).

3.1.3 Theatre companies with Deaf signing actors and hearing actors:

While there are several theatre companies in North America, I chose only few companies that I am familiar with; Deaf West Theatre (DWT), National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD), and Gallaudet University Theatre.

Deaf West Theatre (DWT) is still an active theatre company. I am familiar with this company because I attended two respective Broadway shows: *Spring Awakening* in New York City and *The Big River* in Washington, D.C.

First, here is a brief history of Deaf West Theatre. In January of 1991, funded by the United States Department, Deaf West Theatre (DWT) was established at the Fountain Theatre (Los Angeles, California). Two years later, they relocated to North Hollywood in Los Angeles. The purpose of founding this theatre was to serve the cultural needs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people of Los Angeles community. According to the author, Linz, Ed Waterstreet (Artistic Director of DWT) stated that DWT wanted to be a professional theatre that was available and accessible for Deaf artists and audiences (Linz, 1999).

Waterstreet is a pioneer and founder of the Deaf West Theatre. Before this, he was a member of the National Theatre of the Deaf for 12 years. With DWT, under his direction, DWT presented 40 plays and four musicals, including a Broadway show of *Big River: The Adventures of*

Huckleberry Finn. With the production of *Big River*, they earned two Tony nominations and a Tony honour for “Excellence in Theater”. In the past, DWT produced shows that included some characters who sign only, while others voice for them; some characters’ sign and voice at the same time; and some voice only while others sign for them. In other words, they included Deaf and hearing actors in the show. Ed Waterstreet had preferred to keep the on-stage interpreters (voice actors) offstage. According to Linz, he told a reporter, Condon, about his concern with having interpreters on the stage, that audience would be too busy look at them and missing the action. Also, the goal was to allow Deaf actors have more control on the stage. DWT wanted to explore more innovative ways to present the production and to provide a theatrical experience for everyone involved (actors and audience). It was DWT’s vision to have hearing people come to see the Deaf show while not relying on hearing the translation. In order to make the show accessible for the hearing audience, their first strategy was to provide them with the Sennheiser Infrared Audio Headset System. Voice actors were in a soundproof booth, interpreting for Deaf actors and the hearing audience wearing the headset. It helped for the hearing audience to appreciate the beauty of ASL while hearing the translation. According to Waterstreet, it worked best for a show with a small cast; however, this system had been tried in other theatres and it was found to create some barrier for hearing audience members who knew ASL. They were able to hear the voice actors and were distracted from watching the show (Linz, 1999). According to Waterstreet, there are a variety of opinions from audience members - some may prefer Supertitles, or Sennheiser, or all actors on the stage. Some audience members may object when actors are signing and voicing at the same time (Linz, 1999). In 2012, Ed Waterstreet retired from the DWT. His successor for the artistic director was David J. Kurs (“Deaf West’s Ed

Waterstreet retires; new artistic director named”, 2012). The DWT continues to produce shows that are now becoming prevalent in mainstream theatre setting. The Broadway production of *Spring Awakening* is one such example.

In the fall of 2015 to January of 2016, the Deaf West Theatre performed on Broadway in New York City. This was an integrated show with ASL and English. *Spring Awakening* was written by Frank Wedekind, in the year 1891. This play is a dark tragic drama based on teenagers’ sexuality in a repressive community. In 2006, this play was adapted into a rock musical by Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik. The Deaf West theatre had developed this play with Michael Arden as their Director; before that, in 2003, they had collaborated on their first Broadway play, *Big River*. Arden was one of the actors in that production. Both productions started in Los Angeles, before transferring to Broadway. For *Spring Awakening*, there are eight Deaf actors, eight hearing actors, and seven onstage musicians.

“Without altering the Sater-Sheik book or lyrics, Mr. Arden has added a new context for the story. The deaf actors portray deaf students in a school that does not allow the use of sign language, implicitly nodding to a historical event (contemporaneous with the play’s setting in late 19th century Germany) in which an international conference of educators called for the mandatory and exclusive use of Oralism (lip reading and speech) when teaching deaf students” (

On the stage, the Deaf characters are played by Deaf actors who signed their lines in ASL; at the same time, hearing actors voice for these Deaf actors. When the hearing actors voice for the Deaf

actors, they remain in the shadow or dark sections of the stage. At other times, the hearing actor was being revealed as the inner self of the character being portrayed by a Deaf actor, who did not show this to the other characters. For example, the character of “Mortiz” played by a Deaf actor, was awkward, fidgety, and afraid. For his voice, a hearing actor voicing as a young-Bob-Dylan with a cloud of hair, acts with a rock star’s posturing. When actors were either only singing, or signing only, there would be text, that was projecting onto a chalkboard (as subtitles). This way, none of the audience members, hearing or deaf, would be excluded.

On January 18th 2016, I went to see DWT’s *Spring Awakening* Broadway show in New York City. I was sitting on the last row of Rear Mezzanine. Unfortunately, I was not able to see Deaf actors’ signs. My friend, who was a freelance ASL interpreter, happened to sit next to me at that time. I asked her to

interpret what was going on because she was able to hear what the hearing actors were saying (voicing for deaf actors).



Figure 28. Spring Awakening

L/R: Sandra Mae Frank and Austin P Mackenzie in Spring Awakening

During the performance, I saw many lights and costumes and actors and musicians playing on the stage. Actors wore period costumes from the 19th century. There was a flight of stairs, being moved on wheels. There were actors standing on a second floor of the building, on the stage. I really enjoyed the visual part of the play, though I was not able to see signs. I decided it was important for me to contact the box office and see if I could get another ticket, sitting closer to the stage, where I would be able to see the signs. With their help, I bought a ticket for the first row. Instead of sitting too far away and not seeing signs, I was sitting too close and looking up the stage. I was able to see most actors' signs; however, I was not able to see actors or actions happening behind the actors who were standing downstage on the stage. But, I was able to see signs, facial expression, and body language of actors who were standing downstage, which help me "feel" their emotions in the story. Besides seeing the show two times, I had the honour to interview four actors, on January 19th, 2016; two Deaf actors, Sandra Mae Frank (playing the role of Wendla) and Alexandria Wailes (playing the role of the adult woman). Also, two hearing actors, Alex Boniello (playing the role as voice of Moritz) and Katie Boeck (playing the role of Wendla). Also, on January 20th, 2016, I interviewed David J. Kurs, Deaf West Theatre's artistic director.

In an interview with David J Kurs, he explained in ASL how the whole Broadway show with Deaf West Theatre started. Michael Arden and Andy Mientus came to Kurs had the idea to do a production of *Spring Awakening* paralleling the story of the Deaf history of the Milan

Conference. Ironically, the script and Milan Conference were based on events that took place at the end of 19th century. In the script, it was about teenagers not allowing to explore their sexuality. To this, they added the storyline of Deaf students not being allowed to sign in the school. They did not change one word in the script, but added the concept of Deaf culture and sign language to the story. In 2014, they had their first production at the Rosenthal Theatre, in Los Angeles, California. Then, in 2015, they had their second production at the Wallis Annenberg Centre for the Performing Arts. During the same year, they had their third production at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre. When I asked him about why they chose to use SimCom for this play, he explained that there were hearing audience members who did not know ASL. Also, this method purports that in reality, many hearing parents of deaf children, would sign in SimCom—which would fit the timeframe of the story and was a part of our reality as well (Kurs, 2016).

During my interview with Sandra Mae Frank (the role of Wendla), she explained in ASL that Deaf actors in the show had to sign using some old signs from that century, in conjunction with contemporary signs (Frank, 2016). I posit that they wanted to immerse the audience in the period while making sure they can follow the story. She was one of few Deaf actors that had a hearing actor, voicing for her (speaking and singing), while they sign out their lines.



Figure 29. Spring Awakening

Katie Boeck and Sandra Mae Frank

Media: The Guardian; Photograph: Joan Marcus/Supplied

During my interview with Katie Boeck (voice of Wendla), she voiced, translated by an ASL interpreter, she felt that she and Sandra were a great team, working together to project the character of Wendla. Katie felt that her character was like an inner voice for Wendla, as an angel (Boeck, 2016). In my interview with Alex Bioniello (voice of Moritz, a character who played by a Deaf actor, Daniel N. Durant), he explained in voice, translated by an ASL interpreted, that he had to show about 100-200 small visual cues to let Daniel know, so that both actors can be on the same page on where they are at in the story (Bioniello, 2016). When I saw the show, I saw Alex as a rebellious soul that was inside Moritz, waiting to come out.

Alexandria Wailes (the role of Adult Deaf Women) explained that she replaced Marlee Matlin during the last few weeks of the production (because Matlin already had another commitment for that period). Before, she was the Associate choreographer. I asked her what the reason was for a song that they performed called, *Mirror Blue Night* with all actors standing in the dark, wearing gloves with lights that glow from their fingertips, and why they did not try to sign the song out? She explained that the song was about masturbation. The song was not very clear for hearing

people to follow. The song sounded beautiful and created the visual effect for the music by using gloves with glowing fingertips (Wailes, 2016).

During my corresponding emails with David J Kurs (Deaf West Theatre's artistic director), he mentioned that *Spring Awakening* Broadway was actually in the category of Deaf Theatre and Sign Language Theatre. In my opinion, I agree that this kind of show belongs in both categories. The *Spring Awakening* story was a written script for the play to be spoken, about teenagers struggling with sexuality; however, Deaf West Theatre added the concept of Deaf students being oppressed by the Oralist method- without changing a word in the script. For Deaf Theatre, the script can be conventional, but it should be based on Deaf people's experiences. For Sign Language Theatre, the script is written for speaking purposes, but the theatre is portraying the story in sign language.

National Theatre of the Deaf is still an active theatre company in USA. In 2007, I was an actor for National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD). Plus, I grew up hearing so much about this theatre company. In 1967, the National Theatre of the Deaf was established in Waterford, Connecticut (USA). David Hays founded the Theatre—through the funding support of the U.S. Department of Education. The journey began when David worked as a lighting Designer for the Broadway show called, *The Miracle Worker* (NTD, 2014-2016). This play was written by William Gibson, based on a true story about a tutor, Anne Sullivan, who was hired by a family to work with a deaf and blind girl, Helen Keller (Playbill, 2017). David felt that sign language could be captivating on the stage, as an art form. When the show ended, it took David nearly 10 years to obtain the

funding to open the NTD. At first, it was hard for David to book the first theatre tour. Sponsors were finding it hard to conceptualize a performance by deaf actors, and questioned what audiences who would attend possible shows. Fortunately, some sponsors accepted the challenge and it was well received. Audience members were fascinated with the deaf actors' performances. Some of the audience members were influential members of the public. It really empowered Deaf actors. This touring company has continued for the last 50 years—the longest existing touring company in USA. They have been touring and performing in 50 states and on seven continents. In addition to Broadway, they have performed on the Disney Channel, the Sesame Street television show, and at the White House—to name a few.

“Through power of example and role model, NTD has been instrumental in fostering: Removing stigma from Sign Language, Legitimizing the use of Sign Language on television, stage, and movies, popularizing Sign Language, providing professional training and employing deaf artists, invigorating the entertainment industry to consider and use deaf artists, Deaf pride of self and culture to all members of the deaf community” (NTD, 2014-2016).

Before this company was established, there were barriers for the Deaf population, such as: No closed captioning on television, No captioning for televised emergencies, or weather advisories. Telephones for the deaf were just invented—they weighed around 300 pounds, were costly, and most deaf people did not have them. No 911 number—deaf people would rely on hearing neighbors or their hearing children to place emergency calls for them, no interpreter telephone services, and qualified interpreters were rare. No such thing as the American

Disabilities Act that would guarantee equal opportunities, or prohibit them from being discriminated against because of being deaf, slim job choices, stereotypical jobs were janitor, seamstress, baker or printer—jobs that required little interaction with other people. (NTD, 2014).

“The National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) has historically demonstrated English-like signing that does not reflect the natural communication that Deaf people use daily. NTD, discussed elsewhere in this paper, exemplifies the concept of the theatre of the deaf. Theatres of the deaf such as NTD usually develop productions that do not typically deal with deafness. Instead, they usually attempt artistic techniques that provide entertainment for both Deaf and hearing audiences” (Linza, 1999, p.8)

Based on my experience with the National Theatre of Deaf (mentioned in Chapter One: Autoethnography), there were three Deaf actors (including myself,) and one hearing actor in the show. Our show was based on a script that was written in a format for speaking in English. We translated the story into ASL. The hearing actor had a big task: She had to voice for three Deaf actors and use SimCom for her lines in the play! Our show was not based on Deaf people’s experiences. Looking back to my experience with the National Theatre of the Deaf, it helped me to understand the importance of Sign-Language Theatre.

Gallaudet University Theatre is at Gallaudet University, in Washington, D.C. I mentioned in my autoethnography 1997, I went to Gallaudet University as an undergraduate student, majoring

in Educational Drama (Theatre Arts of Gallaudet University) and Elementary Education. I performed in several of their productions, during my years as an undergraduate student. Linz states, “Deaf theatre has its origins at Gallaudet, dating back to 1884. Many earliest productions at Chapel Hall were performed in mime and sign language on a poorly constructed and poorly lit stage. Pantomimes, melodramas, burlesques, and skits were early types of productions staged by inexperienced student actors” (1999).

On November 3rd, 2016, I went to Gallaudet University, to see a show called, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (Shakespeare’s play, directed by Ethan Sinnott). Sinnott is an Associate professor for Department of Art, Communication and Theatre. The whole play was with Deaf actors, signing their lines in American Sign Language. They wore period costumes from the 1950’s. They represented different social groups during that time. For example, as fairies, they wore black leather jackets and black outfits. Other actors, they wore 1950’s high school students’ kind of clothing (boy with white t-shirt and greasy hair, girl with skirt that open out in the air with curls in their hair). Other actors, they wore suits with ties. Also, they had voice actors sitting in the back of the room, behind the audience, voicing for Deaf actors into spoken English. The play was not about Deaf people’s lives. So, that’s why this play is in the category of Sign Language Theatre. It was shown in a black box. There were about 90 seats positioned on a slope. This design allows the audience members to be closer and to see the show without barriers to line of sight. The set design was three-dimensional, and some actors ascended to the stage through the floor opening. The actors’ clothing represented different social groups.



Figure 30. A Midsummer Night's Dream

L/R: (Clockwise) Brandon Holst, Ryan Barrett, Britton Auman, Nathaniel Eubanks, Dae-Kun Kim in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Gallaudet University's theatre in Washington, D.C. 2016

Photo: Tate Tullier

On November 2nd, I had an interview with Ethan Sinnott. He is Deaf. He was the creative director, setting designer, producer, translator of the script and more, for this play. For this play, he explained that he wanted Deaf actors (Gallaudet university's students) to be the focus of the show. He truly believed that having a good culturally Deaf play would draw hearing audience members to see the show. Sinnott posits that Deaf people are visually- based communicators. For this reason, he wanted the lighting to be a visual orchestra. In a perfect world, his vision would be that all theatre companies would instinctively work with Deaf and hearing actors; mixing the cast for any kind of characters- not because the character has a specific requirement (Ex. Deaf actor playing a role that was not even a Deaf character). He wants to be able to go to any live theatre to see a show anytime, and anywhere in the audience (without requiring specific sitting areas).

Watching the show of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, I felt that this kind of production incorporated both styles - Deaf Theatre and Sign Language Theatre. In this production, all actors were signing in American Sign Language. All voice actors were sitting behind the audience. Ethan wanted this production to put Deaf actors centre stage. This show was based on a script written by William Shakespeare (written in old English). It did not parallel the Deaf culture and lived experiences:

“However, theaters for the deaf, especially academic theatres, have confronted difficulty in developing appropriate artistic elements for appeal to Deaf audiences. Even though productions at Gallaudet and NTID Performing Arts (National Technical Institute for the Deaf Performing Arts, in Rochester, New York) are primarily developed for the benefit of Deaf audiences, these theatres occasionally use material derived from texts for spoken theatre as they rarely come by original scripts from Deaf writers. They also incorporate hearing actors or translators for the benefit of hearing audiences, depending on the goals of productions” (Linz, 1999).

My experience with the Road Sign Theatre’s group (with Quest for Arts, mentioned in Chapter One: Autoethnology), this group involved Deaf and hearing actors for Deaf theatre and Sign-Language Theatre. Categorizing this theatre group is difficult. There were lots of short skits within the same performance. Some of our skits were translated from English into ASL, which had nothing to do with Deaf people’s experiences (Fairy Tales etc.). For some of our skits, the

script was originally performed in ASL, written about Deaf people's experiences. We performed those stories in ASL (Dorothy Miles' poem of "The Language of an Eye"):

However, theaters for the deaf, especially academic theatres, have confronted difficulty in developing appropriate artistic elements for appeal to Deaf audiences. Even though productions at Gallaudet and NTID are primarily developed for the benefit of Deaf audiences, these theatres occasionally use material derived from texts for spoken theatre as they rarely come by original scripts from Deaf writers. They also incorporate hearing actors or translators for the benefit of hearing audiences, depending on the goals of productions...Deaf theatre has its origins at Gallaudet, dating back to 1884. Many earliest productions at Chapel Hall were performed in mime and sign language on a poorly constructed and poorly lit stage. Pantomimes, melodramas, burlesques, and skits were early types of productions staged by inexperienced student actors (Linz, 1999).

Therefore, my conclusion would be that Deaf theatre may also do some productions in the Sign Language Theatre style, or even do both kinds of theatre.

3.1.4 ASL Interpreted Performance

Some live theatres have American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation at some of their shows. When a show is interpreted, the ASL interpreters translate the literary and musical works into sign language. The interpreters are to the side of the stage, away from the performers on the

stage; therefore, the interpretation is not integrated with the performance. ASL interpreters usually work in a team of two or more for a single ASL-interpreted show. They need to spend dozens of hours, or even hundreds of hours, preparing (“Chapter VII Interpreting settings”, James Stangarone and Suzie Kirchner, n.d.).

Based on Cahoots Theatre’s “Deaf Artists and Theatre Toolkit,” there are two approaches to staging ASL interpreters: Zoned Interpreting and Shadow Interpreting. With Zoned Interpreting, the interpreter is located at a specific location on the stage. They can move from one location to another location, usually during the change of scene(s) or specifically for a dramatic effect. With Shadow Interpreting, the interpreter shadows the actor, and moves freely on the stage (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Production Cycle: Production”, 2016).

When hearing interpreters are interpreting a performance, the English-written script that needs to be translated into an ASL version, should be consulted on by a culturally-Deaf person who has a linguistic knowledge and experience of the culture. It could be a Deaf Community Consultant and/or an ASL coach. If theatres want an ASL-interpreted performance, they need to hire ASL interpreters and ASL coaches who can give feedback to the interpreters, based on the linguistic and delivery of their interpretation (“Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit: Production Cycle: Pre-Production”, 2016).

When there is an ASL-interpreted show, the theatre usually positions the interpreters on the end of stage left or right. The interpreters are not able to move from that spot throughout the show.

The audience member(s) requiring interpretation would also need to be seated on that side of the theatre, where the interpreters are. This scenario is problematic for the Deaf audience members, who inevitably miss integral parts of the performance. One reason, the Deaf audience looks away from the performance on the stage, to watch the interpreters. Similarly, some theatres pick less popular seats or specific dates for these ASL-interpreted shows. Depending on the prior experiences with providing accessibility for the Deaf, at some theatres, the lighting on the interpreters can be an issue. Some productions will not add lighting on the interpreters because they feel it would interfere with the essence of the show and the respective performances. Also, for some hearing audience members, they may find interpreters to be distracting (“How/Round: Where Do We Look? Going to the Theater as a Deaf Person”, 2015).

Growing up in Canada and the USA, I had seen many ASL-interpreted performances. To name a few, as an audience member I saw *Kinky Boots* (Mirvish Theatre, Toronto,); *The Wizard of Oz* (Mirvish Theatre, Toronto); *The Spirit* (Native Earth Performing Arts, Toronto); *Tribes* (Canadian Stage, Toronto); *Shakespeare in Love* (Stratford Festival, Stratford, Ontario); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Straford Festival, Stratford, Ontario). During those productions, they were ASL-interpreted by a team of two. Not all productions are interpreted by the same ASL interpreters. Based on my experiences, the ASL interpreters were interpreting for too many characters. It was hard for me to identify which character they were interpreting for at respective moments. Also, they were in a position in front of the stage, but still almost at the far end of the stage. Based on assumptions, it was possible that those ASL interpreters did not have an ASL coach to help and give feedback (according to translation of lines into ASL, specific signs, and

location of ASL interpretation). As an Deaf actor, I prefer an ASL coach to help give me feedback, knowing that I cannot see myself signing in ASL. I praise to ALL ASL interpreters for helping to make the story more accessible and inclusive for the Deaf and their families.

On September 20th, 2016, I did an interview with a Deaf actor, Modela Kurzet (from Poland and Canada, who resides in Los Angeles). She mentions that in Los Angeles, for some ASL-interpreted performances, ASL interpreters usually invite the Deaf community to attend the theatre before the show. ASL interpreters explain what the show is about and describe each character. Also, they identify each character's sign name. By doing this, the Deaf audience watches the show effectively. They follow the show and know which character the ASL Interpreters represent in the performance(s).

Other kinds of ASL-interpreted performances include a Deaf interpreter, who is Deaf and fluent in American Sign Language: "Deaf interpreters are deaf individuals who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and have interpreting experience. They work together with a hearing interpreter to facilitate communication between a deaf person and a hearing person" (CHS, 2017).

"A Deaf interpreter and a hearing interpreter work as a team. The hearing interpreter interprets from spoken English to ASL. The Deaf interpreter then translates what the hearing interpreter says using an appropriate level of ASL, sign, gesture or other communication strategies to convey the message to the deaf consumer. The Deaf interpreter will interpret the deaf

consumer’s remarks into ASL. The hearing interpreter then interprets from ASL into spoken English” (“CHS: What is a Deaf interpreter”, 2017).

In 2017, I experienced as a Deaf interpreter, for a show at Young People’s Theatre (Toronto, Ontario). It was for a show called, *Munsch’s Time*. It was based on five books by Robert Munsch, a famous writer of children’s books in Canada. An ASL interpreter and I, as a Deaf Interpreter, were shadowing actors on the stage (rather than standing off the stage, being too far away from actors). We were as close to the actors as possible and signed their spoken lines into American Sign Language. It was a great experience!



Figure 31. Munsch’s Time

Flyer: *Munsch’s Time* at Young People’s Theatre, Toronto, Ontario (2017).

3.1.5 Theatre Captioning

Theatre captioning involves subtitles for live shows. Actors' lines appear on LED caption units, which are placed near the stage or on the set. They are shown at the same time as the actor is speaking or singing lines. With this captioning, it adds more information—such as, who the speaker is, what sound effects are being used, and offstage noises. A Captioner prepares the captioning in advance of the performance. S/he has a DVD of the production, so that s/he can see it several times. The script is then formatted into the captioning software. The captions are cued, simultaneously, when actions occur on the stage: "Captioning has made it possible for me to go to the theatre again. I no longer feel left out," anonymous user (Theatre Captioning, Stagertext).

In 1997, DWT started to include Supertitles, a device that was hung on the ceiling of the stage, showing the transmission of the script in English. It accommodated audiences who were Hard of Hearing, deafened, and non-signers. They used the real-time captioning for a production of George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*. According to Linz, the Silent News' Deaf writer, Lawrence Newman quoted (March, 1997): "A large and clear body of captions were strategically located and in no way interfered with the visibility of the stage activities." Based on Deaf audiences' remarks, seeing DWT's productions with a real-time captioning was more effective for bringing more non-signers to the show (Linz, 1999).

On December, 2016, Peter Feltham, the director for the IT office at the Federal Parliament of Canada, invited my father, Phil Morris and I to go on a private tour in Ottawa (Ontario). The

purpose of this tour was to help me see how they can add open captions for the House of Senators' meetings. Feltham explained that several Senators were deafened and needed some captions to help them to follow the Senators' meeting. His office employed several professional stenographers, to type the meeting discussion into captions. Stenographers use a technology called real-time captioning which permits them to type the captions out on a machine in shorthand, which is then converted into longhand within one to two seconds through a computer based dictionary. The standard steno machine has only 21 keys. So, each stenographer needs to develop his/her own dictionary that would recognize specific keys and print into a specific word. If the speaker was speaking in French, a French/English translator would listen and then translate into spoken English, then the English stenographer would type the caption in English. If the speaker was speaking in English, a French/English translator would listen and then translate into spoken French, then the French stenographer would type the caption in French. When I went into the room where the House of Senators were having their meeting, I sat upstairs in their viewing room. Sitting in the audience section, on my left side, there was a large television screen that projected open captioning in English. On my right side, there was a big television screen that projected open captioning in French. With the open captioning accessible to me, I followed the meeting. I was surprised that in the House of Commons' meeting room, there was no open captioning, in English nor French. Captioning is made available on television, in private homes.



Figure 32. Theatre Captioning

<http://www.stagetext.org/about-stagetext/theatre-captioning>

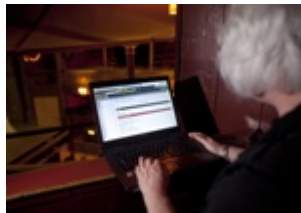


Figure 33. Theatre Captioning

<http://www.stagetext.org/about-stagetext/theatre-captioning>

During the Cahoots production of “Ultrasound” (2016), there were surtitles (dynamic titles) that were projected on the walls and on to settings on the stage (variety of areas). The surtitle design includes colour, font size, type of font, position, and visual esthetic. The projections followed our characters’ movements on the stage, staying as close to us as possible. “So much visual information is provided through the actors’ bodies; so, it is important to maintain a visual relationship between both the performer and the dynamic surtitling provided” (Cahoots, 2016).



Figure 34. *Ultrasound*
Elizabeth Morris in *Ultrasound* (2016)
Photo by Dahlia Katz

Captions would be good for people who are fluent in the language, and if people read quickly.

For some people, it may take time to read the captions. If they take more time to read the caption, they might miss a caption thus creating a gap in the content of the performance(s) and characters.

Notwithstanding, some people may not be able to read the caption from a distance, depending on their visual ability.

Chapter Four:

4. Methodology:

For my research, I have created an autoethnographic documentation; interviews with experts; attending performances in various theatre scenarios - Deaf West Theatre's integrated performance and, at Gallaudet University, their ASL performance; doing research; making a design proposal based a prototype, iteration, and evaluation of the respective prototype option(s); and establishing a conclusion about how this design can be consolidated.

4.1 Background: Un/accessibility of Theatre

Before 1990 in the U.S. and before 2005 in Ontario, Canada, live theatres were not required to make their shows accessible for the Deaf and hard of hearing. Then in 1990, the U.S. approved the Americans with Disabilities Act, which forbade any discrimination against Americans with disabilities. On June 13th, 2005, The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA) required theatres (and other public places) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Still, in many live theatres, there is still no minimum of accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing audience members. Or, they may only have the accessibility that is suitable for one specific group; such as Hard of Hearing (i.e., using hearing devices).

4.2 Design Proposal

For my research, I refer to an older device that was used for movie theatres: a Rear Window Captioning (RWC) reflector. Movie theatres used this device to mirror captioning on the viewer's reflector, which they had with them at their seat. With the device, the viewer could see the movie and read the captioning at the same time. This device is no longer being used in movie theatres. For my design proposal, I am borrowing this idea of the Rear Window Captioning reflector, for projecting a reflection of an American Sign Language signer, or captioning in English, on the reflector during the viewing of a film.

4.2.1 Implementation of Rear Window Captioning:

The Rear Window Captioning system was co-developed by WGBH and Rufus Butler Seder of Boston, Mass. They worked closely with the Rear Window Captioning Reflector's manufacturer, Boston Light & Sound, and Multi-Design for People, an industrial design firm (specializing in inclusive built environments). The Rear Window Captioning system would display a reversed light-emitting diode (LED) text of film captions, which would be situated at the rear of a theatre. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing users would sit anywhere in the theatre, having a reflector (transparent acrylic panel) attached to their seat. They would see the reflection of the movie captions on the reflector, coming from the RWC system at the rear of the theatre (How it Works, MoPix- Motion Picture Access).



Figure 35. RWC

<http://videotechnology.blogspot.ca/2010/12/rear-window-captioning.html>

Movie theatres used this device to caption their movies without interfering with the hearing audience members' viewing experience; however, use of this kind of device has stopped. It has been replaced with CaptiView:

Cineplex Entertainment is pleased to offer its guests CaptiView, a digitally compatible closed caption viewing system, created by Doremi Cinema. The CaptiView™ system consists of a small captioning display unit with a flexible support arm that fits into the theatre seat's cup holder. The high contrast onscreen display is easy to read and comes with a privacy visor so it can be positioned directly in front of the theatre guest with minimal impact or distraction to neighbouring guests (Closed Caption "CC" viewing system, Cineplex).

The detriment of using this device is it partially blocks one's view of the screen, depending on how you position the device. If the viewer wants to make sure it does not block the screen, then

the captioning would be a bit too far away from the screen to read and watch the action. Again, with this device, the viewer may miss some captioning and actions.



Figure 36. Capview

<http://www.hearingloss.org/content/hlaa-and-amc-theatres-reach-landmark-agreement>

Other alternatives would be Open-Captioning, which involves the text of a play or musical being shown on a screen, located either on, below, beside or above the stage. Open-Captioning is helpful for people with a hearing loss, English as a Second Language users, or people who are not able to understand actors who speak with an accent, or speak off stage. This technology is more inclusive for a variety of groups. This is a simple and cost-effective way of providing more accessibility for audience members. In this circumstance, these audience members do not need to get a device or sit in a specific area and are able to sit with their families and friends (Open or Closed Captioning, Stagertext).



Figure 37. Stagertext

<http://www.stagertext.org/about-stagertext/info-and-services/open-or-closed-captioning>

4.2.2 Staged Mock-Up/Iteration:

On October 25, 2016, with the help of OCAD University's Integrated Media studio technician, George Docherty, we created an iteration using a Rear Window Captioning reflector that created a reflected image of ASL interpreter signing, and captioning. The intent of the iteration was to project the interpretation and captioning onto the audience member's reflector. For the purposes of the iteration, the research does not use the RWC but the new method is known as the IHUD (Interpretive Heads Up Display).

The following equipment was used in the iteration/mock-up process:

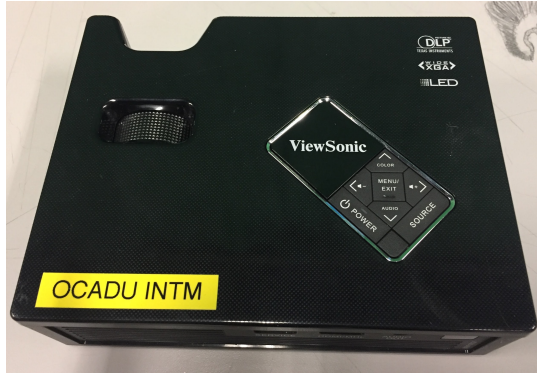


Figure 38. LED Projector

LED (Light Emitting Diode) Data Projector

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 39. Rear Projecting Screen
(LEE Filter 216 White Diffusion)



Figure 40. Maffer clamp

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 41. Rod

Rod ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch width), Maffer clamp, Wood frame, Rear Projecting
Screen (attached to the ceiling)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

ASL Interpretation:

For this staged mock-up, we used a video camera to record the signs of the ASL interpreter. The video camera was connected to a High Definition Media Interface television, to see if she was within the frame of the video and that her signs were not out of the frame (recorded from above her head, down to her waist). The television was also connected to an LED (Light Emitting Diode) Data Projector. The projector was on a tripod (leveled) and projecting the recording of the interpreter's signs, upward to the screen (a rear projection screen—LEE Filter 216 White Diffusion, one metre roll). That screen was attached with a Maffer clamp to a rod (half an inch wide), which connected to the ceiling.

When the ASL interpretation played through the screen, on its other side, it showed the image in reverse. This reversed image is then being played downward to a reflector; on the reflector, the image was mirrored correctly to be legible. The purpose of projecting an ASL interpretation through a screen and down to the reflector, was to avoid creating any light that shines in the theatre, which would have distracted other audience members who were not using the reflector. Also, this arrangement is necessary to project the ASL signer inverted, which mirrored the image correctly.



Figure 42. video camera
ASL interpreter (Elaine Corris), interpreting
to the video camera



Figure 43. Interface Definition Media
Recording of live ASL on Interface Definition Media

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 44. spotlight

ASL interpreter (Elaine) in a spotlight



.. Figure 45. LED Data Projector

LED (Light Emitting Diode) Data Projector

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

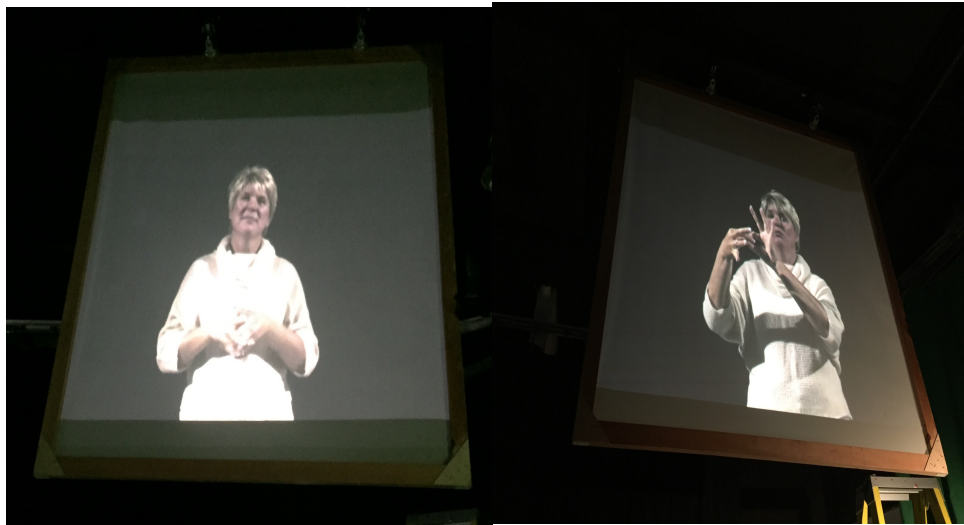


Figure 46. rear projection screen

Projection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on rear projection screen

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 47. projection
 Projection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on screen and spotlight
 for actor who performs on the stage



Figure 48. projection
 Projection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on screen,
 reflecting downward to George Docherty's clear
 reflector

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 49. reflection
 Reflection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on the clear reflector



Figure 50. Reflection
 Reflection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on the
 clear reflector, next to actor on stage (George)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 51. reflection



Figure 52. reflection

Reflection of ASL interpreter (Elaine) on the clear reflector, next to an actor on stage (Delilah Simoes-Shand)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 53. reflection

Reflection of actor (Delilah) on clear reflector, next to ASL Interpreter on the stage (Elaine)



Figure 54. reflection

Reflection of ASL interpreter (Delilah) on clear reflector, positioned on the actor (George)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

Theatre Captioning:

For this staged iteration, we connected my Apple laptop to the LED projector. For the purposes of captioning experimentation, I created a simple caption on Microsoft PowerPoint: black background with white font. The captions were projected upward to the screen. Then, captions appeared on the other side of the screen, as a backwards image; this was then projected downwards, creating an inverted reflection on the device direction. On the reflector, you would see the caption.

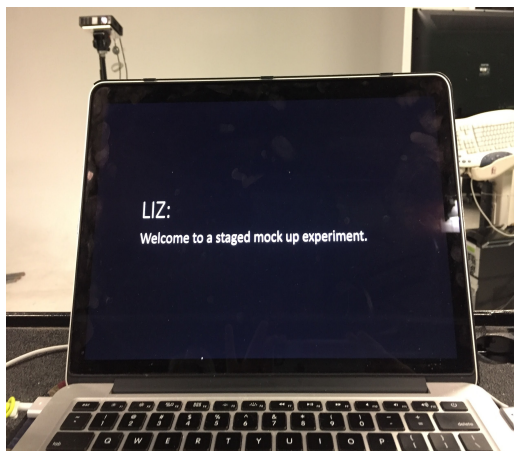


Figure 55. PowerPoint for captions
PowerPoint for captions (on an Apple laptop)

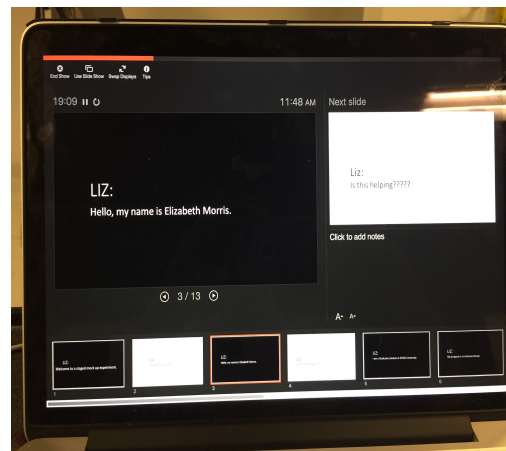


Figure 56. PowerPoint for captions
PowerPoint for captions (on an Apple laptop)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 57. George adjusting the LED projector



Figure 58. George adjusting the LED projector

George adjusting the LED projector to relay the captions upward on the rear screen

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

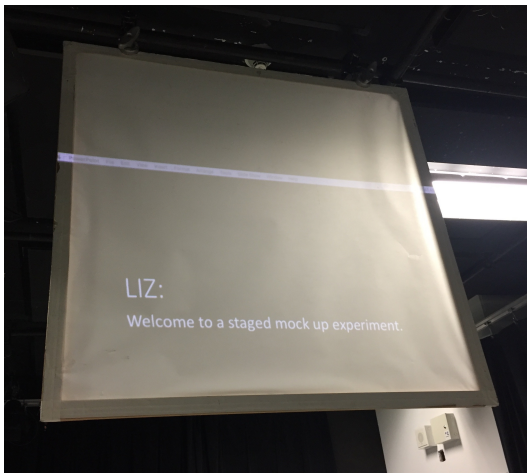


Figure 59. Projection of Captions
Projection of caption on rear projecting screen



Figure 60. Projection of Captions
Projection of caption through rear
screen (on the other side of the screen,
are seen as an inverted image)

Photo: Elaine Corris

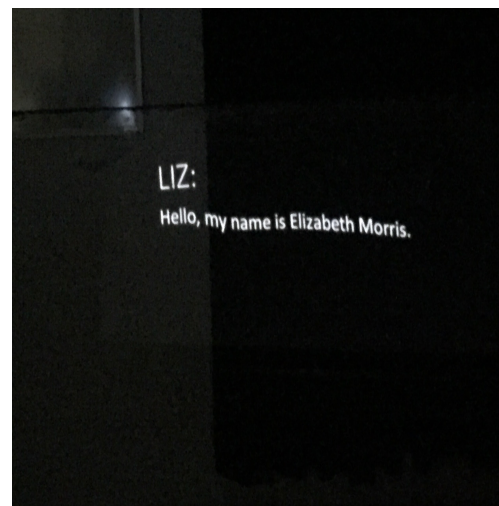


Figure 61. Actor (clear reflector)

An actor performing (Elaine) on the stage. Image of captions on the clear reflector

Figure 62. Caption (clear reflector)

Image of captions appear on the clear reflector

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 63. Actor/Captions (black see-through reflector)

An actor (Elaine) performing on the stage, with reflected text

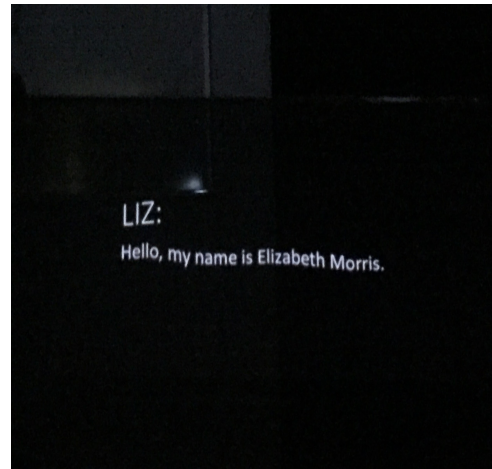


Figure 64. Reflection of Captions (black see-through reflector)

reflector)

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

Chapter Five:

5. Analysis:

Doing the staged iteration, I analyzed the benefits and disadvantages of this design using the Rear Window Captioning reflector. The clear reflector dimensions are 24in x 18in (width x height) and the black see-through reflector measures 13in x 3in.

Clear reflector measures (24in x 18in):

Benefits- For ASL interpretation, the reflector user would see an ASL interpretation of a live play, closer to the action on the stage. The person would be able to read the ASL signer's face and body, indicating the tone of the actor. If this design is being used in a smaller theatre with less seats, then it may work to use this design to make the show more accessible. The size was in good proportion to allow a view of the ASL signer's face and body, as well as actor's face and body. For Captions, the user would be able to see and read the captions positioned closer to the actor.

Disadvantages- ASL interpretation: Conversely, to see the ASL signer, the background needs to be dark. This means that the actor would need to perform on a stage with less light on the left or right side for the person to be able to see the ASL signer. For Captions, the user would need a darker background for the captions, to see and read them because some words may blend into the background of the stage (i.e., harder to see and read).

Black see-through reflector dimensions (13in x 3in):

Benefits- For ASL interpretation, in my opinion, it is possible that the user may see the ASL signer easier due to the black see-through making the background darker (unfortunately, I did not try this kind of experiment due to the size of the reflector). For Captions, it was easier to see and read them when using a black background.

Disadvantages- For ASL interpretation, the size of this reflector was too small to try the experiment out. Also, based on my prediction, the projection of interpretation would be brighter than the performance seen on the stage. It would be projecting onto the reflector, while the actions on stage would be shown through the reflector. This would also apply for captions on this kind of reflector.

5.1 Results:

In this staged iteration/mock up, the ASL signing occurred live. The reason for this was, if the ASL signer was to be recorded ahead of time and played back for each show, it may not correspond to the spontaneity of live theatre. Each show is a bit different, each time, depending on the actor. For example, what if the actor forgot his/her lines and omitted several lines? It would not coincide with the timing of the recorded interpretation. If the proposed design is used, the ASL signer would be off stage, perhaps in a small room, with a monitor showing the performance, live. The ASL signer would watch and sign at the same time, whilst the

performance is in progress. For Captioning, it would be good if the Captioner were in a small room, listening, and able to convert the recording of captions by typing to actor dialogue at that respective moment.

As for using either a clear or see-through reflectors, each user should be able to choose which reflector meets their needs. Also, all reflectors should come in a bigger size (for example: 24in x 14in). There should also be a black see-through reflector in a smaller size, if the user prefers to read captions in a small sized reflector while also being able to see the actor in a brighter light. Each user will have a personal preference.

5.2 Conclusion:

The proposed design posited in this MRP is to implemented a design, like the Rear Window Captioning (RWC) glass, to provide two options (ASL interpretation and captioning) that would improve accessibility andq inclusion for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities attending live theatre performances. The use of the Interpretive Heads Up Display (IHUD) would not need to interfere in any way with the experience of other hearing audience members, who do not need to use the IHUD. Use of the IHUD by Deaf and HoH audience members would allow them to see the ASL interpretation or captioning as part of an integrated experience of the live performance, creating an increased sense of inclusion in the whole experience presented on stage.

With the use of the IHUD, it becomes possible for the Deaf or HoH audience member to engage in the performance, to understand and follow the action of the play by using a combination of interpretive cues in the moment, without relying on a separate asynchronous feed of information in text or visual formats. The immersive experience is achieved; therefore, establishing accessibility and availability to all audience members equally, with everyone being able to choose whether to use the additional tool. The introduction of the new technology support of the IHUD as an optional accessibility support tool, presents greater benefits for audience member(s) who are Deaf or HoH, but also help families and friends to engage fully in the shared experience of their group. The very definition of Inclusive Design, in this MRP, as a methodology is to ‘level the playing field’ and ‘raise the bar’ of expectations and possibility for all members of society.

OCAD University had its 102nd GradEx exhibition where undergraduate and graduate students had the opportunity to showcase their art and designs. My design is the *‘Interpretive Heads Up Display (IHUD)*, and it was shown at GradEx 102. Together with my consultant, we decided to adjust and improve the design, to create more accessibility and inclusive. Instead of using a LED projector and rear projecting screen, we played the ASL and Captioned recordings on an Interface Definition Media television (flipped ASL interpretation and captions in backwards). For ASL interpretations, I signed a monologue from William Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”, the balcony scene. I wore a light green dress that Juliet would wear in the story. Two costumes were provided by Young People’s Theatre in Toronto, Ontario. One costume for ‘Juliet’ and the other costume for ‘Romeo’. Those costumes were put on two mannequins, representing the

actors who would normally perform on stage - for the purposes of the Exhibition, I created an iteration/ mock- up of a theatre stage. I added the recording into the iMovie program. I added captions to the recording. Subsequently, reversed the clip, so that the ASL interpretations and captions would be inverted. Then, the video was reflected on a person's reflector. We had two acrylic reflectors made by John Kuisma, Technician of Plastics Studios. A plastic coil was added using methylene chloride (Rez-n-Bond) for each reflector- to allow a person to adjust the reflector to his/her/their preference (seeing ASL interpretation and captions wherever they want it to be located at). Also, I used 400 grit green sandpaper to dull the edges of the reflector. I painted the edge of both reflectors, with Tremclad oil-based rust paint (flat black paint). The purpose of the paint is to keep the light from bouncing into the reflector. Reflectors were held by a generic microphone clip that was hooked on weighted microphone stands. We also added an amplifier to the centre of the stage, so the sounds came from the direction of the stage, rather than behind the seating section (hearing audience members would look behind if they feel that the sound is coming from behind). My display was honoured with an award for the Inclusive Design's program as part of the GradEx 102 exhibition! During the four and half days of exhibition, I met many people who were intrigued by the display. Many felt that it would benefit them as well, even though they do not have a hearing loss. For example, one person mentioned that she has Auditory Dyslexia. She feels that the captions would help her focus and retain more information. I posit that it would benefit people who use English as Second Language (ESL). Being at the GradEx, I interacted with many individuals who expressed interest in how this kind of design would benefit them as well. The intent of my work is also to create awareness about Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. For these reasons, this design is important for me to develop.

It was an amazing experience for myself as a designer, and for other individuals to recognize that there are disparities in accessibility and inclusivity for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I hope that this work will be of use to future scholars, future designers of assistive technology tools, and to current and future groups of Deaf, HOH, and hearing families, their friends and communities of shared interest and experience.

I hope that this work will be of use to future scholars, future designers of assistive technology tools, and to current and future groups of Deaf, HOH, and hearing families, their friends and communities of shared interest and experience.



Figure 65. GradEx- Display in the Hallway

Photo: Elaine Corris



Figure 66. Display in the Hallway

Photo: Elaine Corris



Figure 67. Display
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 68. 2017 Medal Winner in Inclusive Design
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 69. Young People's Theatre (costumes)
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 70. On the stage
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 71. Sound box
Photo: Elizabeth Morris)



Figure 72. ASL interpretation video with Spirit Synott
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 73. Perspective from the stage
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 74. Perspective from the audience
Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 75. Perspective from a member

Photo: Elizabeth Morris



Figure 76. View of the reflector

Photo: Elizabeth Morris

Bibliography

Accessibility Ontario. *About the AODA*. Retrieved 10 April 2017, from <https://accessontario.com/aoda/>

Abbate, Gay. (2004, October 28). Advocates for deaf want movie theatres to provide captions. *The Global and Mail*. Retrieved 10 October 2016, from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/advocates-for-deaf-want-movie-theatres-to-provide-captions/article1005951/>

Backgrounder: Settlement with respect to the exhibition of movies with closed captioning. *Ontario Human Rights Commission. (OHRC)*. Retrieved 9 April 2017, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/backgrounder-settlement-respect-exhibition-movies-closed-captioning>

Baker-Gibbs, Ariel. (2013). Where Do We Look? Going to the Theater as a Deaf Person. *How/Round*. Retrieved 8 November 2015, from <http://how/round.com/where-do-we-look-going-to-theater-as-a-deaf-person>

Canadian Hearing Society. (2017). *Gary Malkowski- Biography*. Retrieved 10 April 2017, from <https://www.chs.ca/gary-malkowski-biography>

Cane, R.F. (1975). *John H. Pepper- Analyst and Rainmaker*. The Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane.

Carbin, Clifton F. & Smith, Dorothy L. (2006). Deaf Culture. *Canadian Encyclopedia*. 1-5.

Retrieved 8 April 2017, from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/deaf-culture/>

Closed Caption “CC” Viewing System. *Cineplex*. Retrieved 6 April 2017, from <http://www.cineplex.com/Theatres/ClosedCaption>

Cripps, Joanne & Small, Anita. (2016). DEAF CULTURE CENTRE: How the Community Takes Its Rightful Place in History. *American Journal Article (Sign Language Studies)*. Retrieved 9 April 2017, from <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-4257312431/deaf-culture-centre-how-the-community-takes-its-rightful>

Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit. *Cahoots Theatre Company*. Retrieved 1 December 2016, from <http://cahoots.ca/datt/>

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing: Some Definitions. In Employer Resources. *Deaf TEC*. Retrieved 14 December 2015, from <https://www.deaftec.org/content/deaf-definitions>

Fant, Louie J Jr. & Miles, Dorothy S. (1976). *Sign-Language Theatre and Deaf Theatre: new Definitions and Directions*. Northridge, California: California State University.

*Edwards, R.A.R. (2014). *The History of Disability: Words Made Flesh: Nineteenth-Century Deaf Education and the Growth of Deaf Culture*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Gannon, Jack R. (2012). *Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Groce, Nora E. (1988). *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ladd, D. Paddy. (2003). *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood (1)*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Linza, Pamela R. (1999). *Deaf Theatre: Audience Appeal*. New York, NY: Department of English of the State.

Live Theatre. *Dragonflytheatre.com*. Retrieved 8 April 2017, from <http://www.dragonflytheater.com>

Lucas, Ceil & Valli, Clayton.(1992). *Linguistics: A Resource Text for ASL users of American Sign Language*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press

Paulson, Michael. (2015). Lights, Gestures, Action! How to Stage a Broadway Musical with Deaf Actors. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 8 November 2015, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/theater/lights-gestures-action-how-to-stage-a-broadway-musical-with-deaf-actors.html>

Stangarone, James. & Kirchner. *Chapter VII: Interpreting Settings Section H: Performing Arts*. Retrieved 21 November 2016, from http://www2.palomar.edu/users/lmendoza/documents/Performing_Arts_Interpreting.pdf

The National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) has a history that is proud and groundbreaking.

Natioal Theatre of the Deaf (NTD). Retrieved 10 April 2017, from http://www.ntd.org/ntd_about.html

Tracie, Rachel E. (1998). *Deaf Theatre in Canada: Signposts to an other Land*. Edmonton, Alberta.

Quick Statistic about Hearing. In Health Info. *National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorder (NIDCD)*. Retrieved 14 December 2015, from <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/pages/quick.aspx>

When to use a Deaf interpreter. (2017). *Canadian Hearing Society*. Retrieved 6 April 2017, from <https://www.chs.ca/search?sq=deaf+interpreter>

StageText: Every word counts. (2003-2017). Retrieved 6 April 2017, from <http://www.stagetext.org/about-stagetext/theatre-captioning>

Motion Picture Access Project. *The CPB/WGBH: National Centre for Accessible Media*. Retrieved 6 April 2017, from http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/ncam_old/mopix/aboutproject.html