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Performing Identities of the Auditory-Verbal Deaf Students in the Classrooms: A Teacher's Performative Memoir

Tracy Edenfield

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PERFORMING IDENTITIES OF THE AUDITORY-VERBAL DEAF STUDENTS IN
THE CLASSROOMS: A TEACHER'S PERFORMATIVE MEMOIR

by

TRACY EDENFIELD

(Under the Direction of Ming Fang He)

ABSTRACT

My dissertation, that incorporated performative storytelling and dance, is a memoir reflecting over fifty years of my lived experiences related to deafness as a multidimensional illustration that spans from my experience as a young child with a family member affected by Usher's Syndrome; as an educational sign language interpreter; as a teacher of the deaf (TOD); and as an early intervention auditory-verbal therapist. Theoretically, my dissertation builds upon critical pedagogy (e.g., Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012; Freire, 1970/2009; McLaren & Crawford, 1998) and disability studies (e.g., Davis, 2002; Goodley, 2011; Siebers, 2008; Kitchens, 1998). The physical disability of deafness continues to be viewed with a rejection of personal identities and instructional methodologies that reflect academic abilities for diverse learners. With a new perspective on brain-based science along with advances in technology (cochlear implants), disabilities studies and critical pedagogy empower AVT deaf students to become agents of change.

Methodologically, I crafted a performative memoir, drawing upon the works of memoir (e.g., Berube, 1992; Karr, 2016; Zinsser, 1998) and artistic and performative aspects of dance and storytelling (e.g., Barone & Eisner, 2012; Pink, 2012), to engage the audience through auditory and visual deliveries to develop empathetic understanding towards AVT deaf students. Memoir transgresses traditional research inquiries to create space to tell silenced narratives of AVT deaf students and liberates academic writing solely relying on words.

Six observations have emerged from the study: The AVT approach, with technology and early intervention, creates opportunities for AVT deaf students to be liberated. A performative memoir is more compatible with the ways AVT deaf students express themselves. The different ways Deaf and AVT students interconnect with the hearing world disrupt the stereotypes of AVT deaf students and challenge the deafness of the hearing world. Place and space for AVT deaf students, which are *docile-bodied* (Foucault, 1977) by abled-bodied societies, are embodied in a *third space* (Soja, 1996). Performative memoir transgresses traditional research inquiries to create space to tell silenced narratives of AVT deaf. Recognizing *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) help develop culturally responsive curriculum which creates equal opportunities for the AVT students (Siddle-Walker, 1996).

INDEX WORDS: Deafness, Auditory-verbal therapy, Dehumanization, Critical pedagogy, Disability studies, Cochlear implants, Equality, Equity, Memoir, Interpretive dance

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DEDICATION

To my Aunt Ann, my Annabel, who exemplified how an individual with a sensorineural hearing loss can navigate the hearing world, I dedicate this dissertation memoir to you. You were my mentor, my friend, my supporter, and the voice in my head that continues to tell me there is so much to do in deaf education. I love you and I love this specialized field of deafness—you showed me the way. Thank you, my sweet Annabel.

To my wonderful, loving father, William “Billy” Long, who always called me his “Joe College,” I dedicate this dissertation to you. You have always been a guiding light for me and the rock I drew from for strength and determination. Even though you are no longer with us, I know you are celebrating this accomplishment with me. You always said that I was the apple of your eye; however, it is your love that taught me to value what is important in life. Never let a day go by that you don’t help someone in need, show kindness, and show mercy to the down-and-outer for one day it maybe you that needs a helping hand. I love you Dad.

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PROLOGUE

My passion for deaf education was nurtured at a very early age. My aunt was profoundly deaf. She had Usher's Syndrome which affects hearing and vision. Aunt Ann was self-taught and communicated with hearing aids and lip-reading. She set the bar for my aspirations in deaf education. I did not see her disability for her communication skills, intelligence, and drive would not have allowed one to view her by a disability label.

Through various lived experiences, my commitment to children with deafness and hearing loss shaped my educational philosophies that started my personal journey into this specialized field. I began my work as an educational interpreter in 1993 and one of my first Deaf students had recently undergone surgery for bilateral cochlear implants (CIs) as a post-lingual recipient. (Capitalized "D" refers to the mode of communication utilized and cultural association.) This student was twelve years old and his primary mode of communication was American Sign Language (ASL). This twelve-year-old Deaf student never became proficient in listening and spoken-language.

In 1998, as a first-year teacher of the deaf (TOD) at Ebenezer Elementary School, the insurmountable challenge to teach language, communication skills, and reading skills to profoundly Deaf elementary students using ASL began consuming me. The below average statistics related to academic achievement for deaf individuals only strengthened my drive. "It remains the case that 50% of deaf students graduate from secondary school with a fourth-grade reading level or less" (Ramsey, 1997, p. 34). This compelled me to evaluate the effectiveness of standardized teaching techniques for these atypical learners. Since intellectual ability is not a typical factor associated with this primary sensorineural deficit, I was motivated to be an effective teacher of the deaf (TOD), so additional training appeared to be the next most logical

step. Along with the speech pathology degree and the deaf education degree, I completed an M.Ed. in Reading, an Ed.S in Reading, and an additional M.Ed. in Adult Literacy. One may think that with all this training, I should have been able to adapt critical pedagogy philosophies to aid these unique learners in their struggles to become proficient communicators and readers.

In the past four years, I have been working to obtain an auditory-verbal therapy (AVT)-Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (AVT-LSLS) licensure/certification through the National Alexander Graham Bell Association. Technology such as cochlear implants now exists that can help people with profound deafness access auditory information. When auditory information is restricted, a child's academic success will be hindered and this will promote a domino effect for social, behavioral, and self-esteem issues.

This chosen methodology of performative memoir and dance is designed to foster awareness among educators that the Deaf student who utilizes sign language to communicate differs from the AVT deaf student who is being trained to develop spoken language. The AVT deaf student seeks to be independently mainstreamed into the academic spaces alongside their hearing peers.

The two variations within the scholastic schema of deaf education are both atypical learners. The Deaf student using ASL sign language as their primary mode of communication traditionally requires a sign language interpreter throughout the school day. This student is nonverbal and, for the most part, does not rely on technology such as cochlear implants. In comparison, the deaf AVT student utilizes technology to communicate verbally and has been trained in a private educational setting before entering public education. These specialized AVT services are not available in the public educational setting, currently, the AVT-LSLT specialist

teaches in a private setting. Many families began therapy in an AVT Parent & Infant program and advanced into an AVT/LSLT program by the age of two-years-old.

For some 25+ years, I have been in deaf education. From an educational interpreter to a teacher of the deaf, I just kept stretching myself academically for I knew there had to be more within this specialized field. When the opportunity to work at Savannah Speech and Hearing Center became available in 2011, I was intrigued. The Center's AVT preschool called Sound Start Auditory-Verbal Deaf Preschool targets two to six-year-old pre-lingual deaf students who have undergone cochlear implant surgery and are on a listening and spoken English (LSLT) track. Most teachers in this specialized field have earned an Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) licensure/certification. This three-to-five-year training is designed around the AVT approach for Listening and Spoken Language Therapy (LSLT). This approach incorporates strategic techniques to encourage communication skills for profoundly deaf students. I will be taking the national licensure test in July 2020. At this time only a minimal number of TODs, audiologists, and SLPs have earned this additional national certification in the United States.

During these past four years of pursuing AVT training, my teaching strategies outlined in the auditory training curriculum have been assessed by my mentoring supervisor at the Clarke School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, Florida. I noticed a pattern in her feedback in the area of wait-time along with a few additional areas of concern that I was not sure that I fully understood at that time. This began to alarm me. Was I narrating and depositing information in a banking system format? Was I embracing the teacher-talk time as more valuable and beneficial over student-talk time? Would Freire agree or disagree in my delivery formats—as an educator and a therapist?

Scholarly dialogue has the potential to create a forum to address disabilities and the associated discrimination that affects the deaf individual. There is a new deaf student in deaf education, and we must advocate for his/her place and space in the inclusion classroom as the typical deaf education curriculum will no longer address the needs of this unique learner.

With more than twenty-five years' experience in deaf education, I have worked in various capacities as an American Sign Language (ASL) educational interpreter, total communication (TC) teacher of the deaf (TOD), and an auditory-verbal therapist/teacher (AVT). Traditionally, deaf education has incorporated manual communication modes as in American Sign Language (ASL) coupled with lip-reading skills to aid in the instruction of deaf students. In addition, this total communication (TC) structure often includes a sign language interpreter within the regular educational setting. With many advances related to technology and specialized therapy within the deaf population, terminology and definitions are evolving. The physical disability that shaped the deaf students' language acquisition and learning skills of the past has reached a pivotal point in deaf education as well as in the regular educational setting. It is estimated, by the Bureau of Census (Harrington, 2018, Chart Line #53) that there are over 38 million deaf or hard-of-hearing people in the United States which is about 13% of the total population.

Since the advent of the newborn hearing screening in 2000, and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Reauthorization Act of 2008 more than 95% of newborns are screened compared to 45% only a few years prior. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2016) in the state of Georgia, 1,541 infants did not pass their hearing screening prior to one month of age and of this number, 217 infants were identified with a permanent hearing loss.

Through this early diagnosis, infants with deafness or hearing loss are being identified in infancy so amplification and communication options can be explored. Ninety-five percent of infants born with severe to profound deafness are born to hearing families and these families are researching new options in acquiring listening and spoken language (LSLT). In 1995 (Cole & Flexer, 2016), “only 40% of the families with deaf children chose auditory-verbal therapy (AVT); however, in 2005, 95% of the hearing parents with deaf children chose spoken language and listening therapy” (p. 87). With these statistics, the prevalence of a new type of deaf student is entering into the public-school system that will not require the traditional teaching format offered within deaf education.

Many students who are identified as medically deaf (Cole & Flexer, 2016) who have received cochlear implants and early intervention “label themselves as hearing” (p. 12). Traditional practices continue to support pedagogical methodologies that impede place and space within the educational constructs for deaf students who have been surgically implanted with cochlear implants and have undergone early intervention practices and intense auditory-verbal therapy (AVT). The AVT student is no longer considered deaf by the Deaf culture nor hearing by the hearing culture.

My dissertation research builds upon a multifaceted theoretical framework that includes critical pedagogy and disability studies. Historically, such terms as deaf-dumb, deaf-mute, handicapped and impaired have dehumanized the deaf population in limiting their worth and abilities to engage successfully in the regular educational setting. Educational philosophies continue to view only the physical disability of deafness with a rejection of personal identities and instructional methodologies that reflect academic abilities for these diverse learners. As critical pedagogy seeks to liberate the oppressed (disabled student) from the oppressor

(traditional ideologies), a search for critical analysis within an open dialogue has the potential to promote liberation for AVT deaf students.

Drawing from philosophies based on traditional curriculum, hegemony, and ideology, scholars examine critical pedagogy within the historically and socially structured educational setting to obtain transformation. Disability studies with an emphasis on equity, identity, and independence for AVT deaf students are now expanding (Cole & Flexer, 2016) to address “neurological development, and a preventative perspective rather than from a remedial, corrective one” (p. xi). With a new perspective on brain-based science along with advances in technology, such as cochlear implants—introduced in 1970 as a one-channel device, then a multi-channel device in 1980, and again redesigned in 1990—disabilities studies and critical pedagogy has become revolutionary for AVT deaf students desiring to become agents of change for equity within the educational setting.

In the chosen methodology, *A Teacher’s Performative Memoir*, this non-traditional construct incorporates a performative storytelling memoir and dance that illustrates over fifty years of my experiences of being raised and trained in various aspects of deafness. This performative memoir is designed to portray these lived experiences in an aesthetic approach to create awareness through exposure and education. In memoir writing, the writer must allow an innate voice to arise. A voice that allows the readers to see the writer and his/her character as their own interpretation allows them to see themselves through the writer’s lived experiences. “A story (Karr, 2016) told poorly is life made small by words...we need a special verbal device to unpack all that’s hidden in the writer’s heart so we can freshly relive it: a voice” (p. 45). The methodology is a personal expression of the journey that shaped my passion and my plight in critical pedagogy and disability studies for auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf students.

This memoir was structured in sections based on deaf education and how I connected to it personally and professionally: (1) as a young child with a family member affected by Usher's Syndrome; (2) as an educational sign language interpreter; (3) as a teacher of the deaf (TOD) in public education in a total communication (TC) setting utilizing sign language; and (4) as an early intervention AVT therapist/teacher working in listening and spoken language therapy (LSLT) with deaf students from the ages of two to six-years-old. The performative dimension of the written memoir included video narrative and interpretive dance with hyperlinks throughout the memoir to aid in the storytelling format. (Sample Video of **Meaning in Motion** <https://vimeo.com/383099228> all videos password protected: *peyton05*)

From my earliest childhood memories, I became accustomed to deafness as a difference but not a deficit through my aunt. My aunt had Usher's Syndrome which included profound deafness and vision loss. Since it was a part of my family dynamics, it felt very natural and at that age I never questioned the notable differences related to communication. This commonality became my foundation regarding deafness, and it remains my compass some fifty years later. I later had the opportunity to learn sign language and was hired as an educational interpreter for a newly implanted post-lingual middle school Deaf student. It was through this interaction that I began to desire to grow personally and professionally in this specialized field.

It was through these extraordinary experiences that I desired more in the field of deaf education. I earned two degrees in speech pathology and deaf education which became the catalyst for even a greater interest in various additional educational and training pursuits. There is still so much to be explored within research, technology, intervention and future implications. I want to be a proactive part of all the innovative spoken language approaches and

options available to deaf students and all the academic and social possibilities within the inclusion classroom learning independently alongside their hearing peers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION--WHY DEAF EDUCATION? WHY PERFORMATIVE MEMOIR?

Deaf Education: A Closer Introspective Look

I explore the situations of deaf education from the following areas: (1) children with hearing loss; (2) language acquisition and language delays associated with children with hearing loss; (3) technological advances related to severe to profound deafness; and (4) auditory-verbal therapy (AVT).

Children with Hearing Loss

The term deaf and hard-of-hearing (D-HoH/DHH) can collectively encompass all individuals with hearing loss without indicating the degree of severity or mode of communication utilized. Collecting and calculating data related to individuals with hearing loss is a challenging endeavor. Factors include the age of onset, degree of severity, type of hearing loss, primary versus secondary disability, infancy versus geriatrics, associated identity, as well as, unclear definitions within census surveys. Due to these challenges, the US Census Bureau has collected improved data through organizations like, The National Institution on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDID), The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Gallaudet University Library (Libguide-Deaf Statistics).

About 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders NIDCD, 2016) in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss. Throughout history, people diagnosed with deafness have been dehumanized with labels such as mute, deaf-dumb, dumb-mute, and impaired. These individuals have suffered societal rejection due to a sensorineural disability. Deafness is not a cognitive

disability; although, historically, individuals with deafness were placed in asylums and institutions and often considered cognitively disordered and unteachable.

“Hearing loss is the most common birth defect,” according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD, 2016) as 12,000 new babies are identified each year and an additional 4,000-6,000 are identified later between the ages of birth to 3-years-old. Ninety-five percent of these children are born to hearing parents.

In a concise explanation of the science of hearing, sound enters through the outer ear to the middle ear as a mechanical motion when the three tiny bones of the middle ear vibrate. The sound waves continue to the inner ear which stimulates the hair cells in the cochlea, converting the sound into an electrical current which signals the brainstem to activate the auditory cortex. The auditory cortex, which is responsible for speech perception and language processing, interacts with the auditory brain to receive and interpret sound.

The science of hearing once focused primarily on the ear; however, it has shifted to a more dominant neurological approach. “We hear with our brain” (Cole & Flexer, 2016, p. 42). The ear is the doorway to access the auditory brain to perceive sounds and develop language. The brainstem is activated to signal the auditory cortex in which the malleable auditory brain receptors synapse to receive sound.

Neuroplasticity—brain plasticity for auditory stimulation—is vital for detecting sounds which occur at 20 weeks gestation, so infants born with a hearing loss have already lost 20 weeks of hearing by full-term (40 weeks) gestation. Neuroplasticity is greatest during the first 3 ½ years of life. As a child matures the brain becomes less malleable which decreases the ability to develop listening and spoken language for children with hearing loss.

Hearing loss (Cole & Flexer, 2016) occurs when there is a problem with one or more parts of the ear. The outer, middle and inner ear is known as the “peripheral auditory system” (p. 33). The brainstem and the auditory cortex are called the central auditory system and are responsible for transmitting sounds to the brain. The type of loss may be related to the middle ear which is called a conductive loss because it is responsible for conducting the sound waves to the inner ear. In comparison, if related to the inner ear it is called a sensorineural loss as it is associated with the auditory nerve and is studied under the science of oto-neurology. Every aspect of this process must connect, or hearing will be disrupted. The severity of hearing loss may range from mild to profound deafness. The type of hearing loss and the severity are directly related to the degree of delay in developing language acquisition.

Technological Advances Related to Hearing Loss

The degree of hearing loss is no longer the nucleus of hearing science. With the universal newborn hearing screening, infants with hearing loss can be identified within the first few days of life. Commonly a 1-3-6 protocol is followed. Infants are identified within the first month, amplified by the third month, and by six months of age are engaged in early intervention programs. These programs educate and support the parents to make informed decisions for their infant and to explore the various educational, medical, and financial resources that are available.

Typically, infants with a hearing loss are fitted with hearing aids based on their specific needs (Automatic Brainstem Response -ABR) to evaluate the benefit of the chosen type of amplification. The ABR test is evaluated and the results are graphed onto an audiogram to chart the hearing loss. Hearing aids (HAs) differ from cochlear implants (CIs) in that hearing aids amplify sounds in the environment by programming the aid based on the audiogram (graphed

illustration) of the individual. It does not correct hearing loss but allows sounds to be intensified for improved speech and environmental sound quality. In contrast, a cochlear implant (CI) is a surgically implanted device that mimics the electrical function of the cochlea and the auditory nerve. (Appendix #4a)

Through a surgically implanted wire inserted in the cochlea, the CI bypasses the damaged hair receptors of the cochlea and works in conjunction with the acoustic nerve to transfer sound to the auditory brain. This device is designed for individuals with a sensorineural severe to profound hearing loss. Most infants are approved for this surgery by their first birthday; however, some research hospitals are collecting data on even younger patients for future implications. Yoshinaga-Itano, Baca, & Sedey, (1998) report that “children born profoundly deaf who obtain a CI before they are 18 months old attain intelligible speech and in contrast implanted by 2-4 years old, 80% obtain intelligible speech” (p. 9).

The cochlear implant (AG Bell Association, 2016) is an electronic medical device used by individuals with severe to profound hearing loss to restore the ability to perceive sounds and understand speech. Cochlear implants are designed to mimic the function of a healthy inner ear or cochlea. They replace the function of damaged sensory hair cells inside the cochlea to help provide a clearer sound than what hearing aids can provide. Unlike a hearing aid, which delivers amplified sound acoustically, a cochlear implant bypasses damaged hair cells in the cochlea through an electrical current to create stimulation of the auditory nerve. The nerve will then send the acoustic message to the brain for sound perception. (video- Hearing Loss and Technology <https://vimeo.com/388593344>)

Approximately 324,200 (NIDCD, 2012) cochlear implants have been implanted worldwide. In the United States, roughly 58,000 devices have been implanted in adults and

38,000 in children. The advent of cochlear implants in 1970 as a one-channel device for adults only became revolutionary for individuals with deafness. In 1980, the technology was redesigned as a multi-channel device and approved for adolescents and adults. In 1990, cochlear implants were again improved, and research supported that children two-years-old and older who were pre-lingual would benefit from this surgical implant thus the FDA approved this procedure for younger children but not infants. In 2000, twelve-month-old infants were approved with the requirement of a severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. Some research hospitals are currently collecting data on infants younger than 12-months-old to assess the benefits of early implantation. (Appendix #4b)

Of the 38 million people with hearing loss, 1.2 million potential implant candidates are severe to profound. However, only 100,000 undergo CI surgery (NIDCD-HI). The younger candidates for CI surgery must commit to full-time usage of the technology and enroll in Auditory-Verbal Therapy-AVT early intervention programs. The journey is not an easy undertaking. As the families make this commitment, it takes a team of specialists to redeem the lost acoustic time to close the language gap. The technology without the therapy will not promote targeted language development.

The degree of hearing loss as a limiting factor in auditory acuity is now an old acoustic conversation. When one uses the word 'deaf,' the implication is that one's brain has no access to sound. "The word deaf (Cole & Flexer, 2016) in 1970 or even in 1990 occurred in a very different context than as the word is used today" (p. 12). Children who once identified themselves as deaf have a new identity as hearing in a hearing society.

Language Acquisition and Language Delays Associated with Children with Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can have lifelong effects on a child's development when not identified, diagnosed and treated at an early age. "Advances in brain imaging have made it possible for scientists to identify a sensitive period for the development of central auditory pathways in the brain" (Fickenscher, Gaffney, Dickson, 2015, p. 3). We are neurologically wired to code sounds (speech and non-speech sounds), which allows spoken language to develop. If the auditory system is damaged at any stage, the coded data will not be transmitted for listening and spoken language acquisition. The first three years of life are crucial for maximum plasticity for central pathways in the brain.

"When auditory information is insufficient (Cole & Flexer, 2016), a child's speech, language, academic, emotional, and psychosocial development are compromised" (p. xi). Language acquisition is the process of building the ability to understand a language and using it to communicate with others. Learning language skills is a complex system described by many theorists in the field of cognition and language development. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) reports that there is a hierarchy of language acquisition and auditory processing skills. For example, "functions in auditory processing include awareness of sound, discrimination, patterning, identification, and comprehension" (Caraway & Madell, 2011, p. 29).

In understanding reading development for students with deafness, it is important to examine the structure of American Sign Language (ASL). The ASL format does not follow the grammatical format found in the English language. An example of the ASL format would be as follows, in English structure, we may say, "I am going to the store." But in contrast, an ASL format may be signed, "store I go." You can see in comparison that verb tense, syntax, articles

and other parts of speech are not utilized in ASL. There are many signed markers that indicate this information, but not what would be common in English reading passages. In addition, deaf students enter the public-school setting with a reduced vocabulary compared to their hearing peers. Also, phonemic awareness needed to decode words is not incorporated in the deaf curriculum. In various brain mapping studies, (Cole & Flexer, 2016) the research indicates that “reading is not just a visual skill, but it is an auditory skill as portions of the auditory cortex are engaged while reading” (p. 14).

In the following nursery rhyme, the spoken English syntax and the ASL syntax are compared to demonstrate how communication in ASL and reading in spoken English create a challenge when developing reading skills. (**Little Boy Blue: ASL and English Comparison** video <https://vimeo.com/389739206>)

Spoken English Syntax	American Sign Language Syntax
Little boy Blue	Boy + size marker +color
Come blow your horn	Horn +blowing action +come with hurry marker
Sheep is in the meadow	Meadow+grass marker +sheep +move sheep to field
The cow is in the corn	Stalk/corn + field + cow +move cow to field
Where is	Where + eye gaze
The little boy who looks after the sheep	boy +keep +person marker +sheep
He is under the haystack	Build h-a-y- stack +place boy under stack
Fast asleep	Sleep

Through this nursery rhyme, you can see that articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, verb tenses are often not utilized in the ASL format as exemplified within spoken English syntax. In addition, some nursery rhymes, idioms (let the cat out of the bag, two left feet), multi-meaning

words (tie shoes, neck-tie, equal score), metaphors (raining cats and dogs, my classroom was a zoo) and other figurative language within reading passages can become a difficult challenge in developing reading skills. Theory of mind, imagination, and inferences are difficult as many Deaf students are literal learners.

The hierarchy to develop reading skills begins with a constant flow that starts with hearing acquisition, then to spoken language development and then to reading and writing skills. It is reported (Hart & Risley, 1999) that deaf students in an AVT program need 46 million words by the age of four and (Dahaene, 2009) they need 20,000 hours of listening as a basis for reading. This is the premise of the listening and spoken language approach. The focus is to build listening skills and the brain will begin to follow the normal hierarchy.

Technology for amplification alone will not address the language delay associated with hearing loss. Early intervention is a key factor in developing listening and spoken language. The development of the auditory brain during the critical time period requires appropriate technology and appropriate auditory exposure and training to build listening skills and language acquisition. Incidental learning, learning through a non-structured listening environment, is not the same for children with severe language delays. When comparing hearing children with auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf children in the beginning years, “Children with hearing loss need three times the exposure to learn new words and concepts” (Caraway & Madell, 2011, p. 28). This may appear to be extreme; however, after implantation, the auditory cortex begins to develop in response to this new sound stimulus to build listening skills. If the auditory cortex is not stimulated, that area will be taken over by competing compensatory skills, primarily vision.

Along with technology and early intervention, auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) is beneficial for the acoustic brain to process auditory information to begin to learn to listen and

speak. Researchers (Yoshinaga-Itano, Baca, & Sedey, 1998) agree if the auditory brain is stimulated for speech sounds through advances in technology and early intervention, the infant has the potential to acquire listening and spoken language skills. If the auditory brain is not stimulated other parts of the brain will compete for that function and replace it with other compensatory neurological skills. Time is of the essence. How will regular education and special education teachers foster place and space in the educational setting for this degree of instruction?

Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT)

In the late 1880s, the father of oralism, Alexander Graham Bell, advocated for oralism which promotes speech production and reception of spoken language for deaf individuals without the use of sign language. The approach at that time incorporated breathing patterns, oral placement, and oral motor techniques to encourage verbal communication skills.

Alexander Graham Bell is known for the invention of the telephone which became the foundation of the hearing devices (hearing aids) used currently. He invented this amplification device to enhance the lives of deaf individuals as his mother and wife were both deaf.

Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) is a therapeutic method for teaching listening and spoken language to individuals with hearing loss. Listening and Spoken Language Therapy (LSLT/LSLS) is a national certification for educators, audiologists and speech pathologists working with D-HoH students under the AG Bell Association. This AVT approach (Cole & Flexer, 2016) focuses on auditory skills for infants, toddlers, and children which includes “auditory brain access, stimulation, and development” (p. 385). This approach utilizes technology along with strategies to strengthen auditory development and speech production without the reliance on lip-reading. The premise of this approach is early intervention (pre-

lingual) and family participation. In contrast, “auditory-oral allows lip-reading techniques to be incorporated within the therapeutic construct” (Sheetz, 2012, p. 99).

Professionals (AG Bell Association, 2016) who are certified in supporting families through parent and infant programs and training children in therapy interactions to develop listening and spoken language are known as Listening and Spoken Language Specialists (LSLST). An LSL professional is designated as either LSL Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators (LSL Cert. AVEd) or LSL Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapists (LSL Cert. AVT). LSL specialists concentrate on education, guidance, advocacy, family support, and the rigorous application of techniques, strategies, and procedures that promote optimal acquisition of spoken language through listening development.

Using auditory-verbal (AVT) techniques children begin to learn to listen to sounds and then to translate those sounds into spoken language. In a hierarchical fashion, infants learn to listen before they learn to speak. The AVT approach embraces this hierarchy in strategically targeted techniques. Before spoken language is attempted, typically all children require 10-to-12 months of listening. The implanted individual will also require about a year of hearing before words begin to form which often results in a language delay. Some techniques utilized within the AVT approach include wait-time and the listening sandwich. As the child is developing auditory skills, auditory processing may require additional response time. The therapist allows extra time as the student, who may know the correct response, processes the information. Therefore, a listening-first format is vital in the hierarchy of auditory development.

Another strategy is called the listening sandwich and it follows a three-part technique as the student listens, repeats, and listens again to strengthen auditory acuity. This intensive AVT

scaffolding is designed to aid in closing the language gap of deaf students. As the deaf student achieves age-appropriate language goals, it is further projected that these unique learners will find academic success within the inclusion classrooms alongside their hearing peers.

Why Deaf Education?

When I reflect over the past 25+ years related to my personal lived experiences in deaf education, I find it fascinating that the journey that paved the way to where I am today molded my educational philosophies, dedication, and passion. It is like I have been on the potter's wheel; I have been continuously transformed until I was fashioned for effectiveness. "Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection" (Freire, 1970/2009, p.88). I chose to write my memoir delivered in a performative storytelling format as the form of inquiry because my journey and experiences in deaf education are personal and educational. This platform is structured to aid in creating educational awareness for scholarly dialogue.

In *Deaf Republic*, (Kaminsky, 2019), the townspeople no longer hear with their ears, although their ears function properly, they choose deafness. "Deafness is a contagious disease...all contaminated people must be quarantined" (p. 22). The silence to oppose policies, and dehumanization, has now become their chosen voice. There is a sound so loud that it lifts the birds from the waters, but the citizens choose silence. The citizens create a new language to adjust to this chosen deafness, "language, see how deafness nails us into our bodies" (p. 63). In this allegory, the townspeople can see the nakedness of the nation, but they only watch, and they watch others watch. How can scholarly dialogue incite self-awareness, if educational scholars refuse to discuss critical pedagogy and disability studies? Deafness/silence is an "invention of the hearing society" (p. 79).

These firsthand accounts of my lived experiences focused on the successes, struggles, dilemmas, and discriminatory practices associated with hearing loss within society, education, and the struggle for equity. The intent of this study is to foster awareness of AVT deaf students and create an open dialogue to explore identity, acceptance, and teaching philosophies. It is the objective through this cross-section of critical disability studies with an emphasis on equity of power and a critical pedagogy theoretical framework to expose the hidden curriculum to promote an action-reflection process for dialogue. In scholarly dialogue, (Freire, 1970/2009) the word alone will not accomplish open dialogue, but when the word creates an action paired with a reflection or critical thinking, it has the power to transform the world. “To exist, humanly, is to name the world...once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming” (p. 88).

We live in a hearing society and ninety-five percent of the infants born deaf are born to hearing families. With these advances in technology, many hearing families of deaf infants/children are choosing cochlear implants (CIs) along with auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) to aid in the development of listening and spoken language skills for their child. The implants have improved over the years and children born deaf are now developing listening and spoken language with the potential to learn alongside their hearing peers in the grade-appropriate educational settings. In various respects, the AVT student is no longer considered deaf by the Deaf culture, nor hearing by the hearing culture. “Each (Kaminsky, 2019) of us is a witness stand...[but] no one stands up. Our silence stands up for us” (43). How can academic scholars create place and space within education for these atypical deaf students without being willing to stand up for the justice, equity, and independence? The practiced silence speaks volumes in the continuum of dehumanization.

How to Explore Deaf Education?

I explore deaf education through its history, theories, and inquiry method. Specifically, I explore: (1) history of education and disability laws for individuals with hearing loss; (2) theoretical framework of critical pedagogy and disability studies; and (3) methodology.

The History of Education and Disability Laws for Individuals with Hearing Loss

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), according to the Department of Labor (DOL, 2019), prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government' programs and services. Public education, which receives government funding, must adhere to the ADA guidelines to reject discriminatory practices.

Early intervention is vital in promoting a prevention philosophy as opposed to a remedial approach. Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI, 2018) provide formal programs for newborn hearing screenings, diagnosis, and early intervention support for infants with hearing loss. In 2016 (Center for Disease Control-CDC, Hearing Loss in Children), 65.0% of the babies with diagnosed hearing loss were enrolled in Part C Early Intervention Services. Among the 87.9% of those referred 92.8% were eligible for Part C -EHDI. In Georgia, these state-funded special needs programs include Babies-Can't-Wait and Georgia Pines assistance for children birth to three-years-old. After turning three-years-old, they are enrolled in public Pre-School Intervention (PSI) programs offered through public education for qualifying students. It is important to note, not all states have transition PSI intervention programs often served under special education services.

The longer a child's peripheral auditory system remains unmanaged, "the longer data entry to the central auditory system (the brain) will be incomplete and inaccurate and impede

language development” (Cole & Flexer, 2016, p. 35). After a hearing loss diagnosis is determined, the next step is amplification. Following amplification, early auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) intervention is needed to help children learn to listen and speak. Speech development and language development are not the same; however, without speech development spoken language will not be acquired. Early intervention is crucial for developing age-appropriate language acquisition.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2019) ensures that all children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. Prior to IDEA, over 4 million children with disabilities were denied appropriate access to public education. Many children were denied entry into public school altogether, while others were placed in segregated classrooms, or in regular classrooms without adequate support for their special needs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

“It is not the English language that hurts me, but what oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, and colonize” (hooks, 1994, p. 168). By giving descriptors to disabilities, in essence, society is refusing to understand the disability and reject its humanness within society. The words strengthen the policies that govern and dictate educational philosophies. It may look to you like its only words, but perhaps the fragile neonate whose lives were impeded by the policies and conditions of institutionalization can testify...to the power of mere language, to intimate links between words and social policies. (Berube, 1998, p. 33)

How far have Deaf -Hard-of-Hearing (D-HoH) people come in their struggle for academic freedom? The Gallaudet University’s historical archives of History and Traditions

(nd, para 1) documents that in 1856 Miner Gallaudet was the first principal of the college called, The Asylum for the Deaf. Later it was changed to The Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind. In 1864, the college was renamed, The National College for the Deaf and Dumb. Then again renamed, The National Deaf-Mute College. Historically, terms like deaf-dumb and deaf-mute have dehumanized this culture by limiting personal worth and abilities to engage successfully in the regular educational setting.

Forefathers in the field of deaf education include Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Gallaudet, Miner Gallaudet, Helen Keller, and Lauren Clerc. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet became interested in educating deaf individuals in North America. He was inspired by Laurent Clerc, a British teacher, who although deaf himself learned spoken language and began to educate other deaf individuals. Alexander Graham Bell was considered the father of oralism and his invention of the telephone became the foundation of the hearing devices (hearing aids) utilized today. Helen Keller was a student of Bell and learned to communicate despite her deafness and blindness through tactile hand signs. The terms of deaf-mute, deaf-dumb, and impaired continue even today to echo throughout the educational corridors from the school system to the hallways to the classrooms. The pipeline, in this case, perpetuates the status-quo inferences from a political to a societal to the educational system's discriminatory philosophies and policies. The roots of hidden politics and an unjust educational system become the bedrock for critical pedagogy and disability studies scholars seeking to expose prejudicial practices.

There is a contradiction to integration of individuals with disabilities—which is normalization. Inclusion and exclusion (Ravaud & Stiker, 2001), is a reflection of the society's definition, “the mean [of normalcy] is compared to the deviations from the mean and trying to diminish such deviations to bring individuals closer to the mean” (p. 494). There are multiple

ways to define humanness; however, conformity to the central notions of being fully human is society's invention of inclusion, exclusion, and/or segregation. If disabled students desire integration, they attempt this within the rules defined by society. The center of the circle defines humanness, and the further one differs from the center prescribes otherness that cannot assimilate to the norm. The AVT deaf student, is an atypical listener who has developed listening and spoken language that compares to their age-appropriate hearing peers. Although medically deaf, they seek integration as verbal learners in the regular education classrooms. Educational scholars see deafness as an all-inclusive disability; however, the AVT deaf student—verbal communicator—seeks academic achievement, social integration, and independence in the hearing society.

Theoretical Framework--Critical Pedagogy and Disabilities Studies

My dissertation research builds upon a multifaceted theoretical framework which includes critical pedagogy (e.g., Freire, 1970/2009; McLaren & Crawford, 1998) and disability studies (e.g., Goodley, 2011; Siebers, 2008; Berube, 1992). Freire's philosophy is rooted in a self-awareness which promotes an action-reflection for teacher-student dichotomy. He expresses that we must read the language of society and enter their world to confront oppressive ideologies. The regular education teacher is not going to use the language of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, so the new AVT student must advocate for themselves using the language of the able-bodied. Berube, through lived experiences as a father of a disabled son, challenges the politics that drive the able-bodied society to dehumanize the disabled individual. The able-bodied are threatened by discussions and acceptance of the disabled student. In traditional deaf education, the regular education teacher is often detached and allows the interpreter and special education teacher full control as they practice unconscious exclusion.

The Deaf student becomes an invisible disregarded member of the inclusion classroom although, a conscious effort toward a least restrictive environment is integrated.

Critical pedagogy (McLaren & Crawford, 1998) seeks to expose the hidden curriculum that is instituted in traditional teaching methodologies. It looks at “schools in their historical context as dominant social, cultural, and political institutions” (p. 147). Critical pedagogy is concerned with the biased distribution of power. It considers how race, disability, class and gender subdominant groups have been denied equality, equity, and independence within the educational setting. The AVT deaf students seek autonomy, identity, and equity within the learning interaction. Historical curriculum regarding deaf curriculum can no longer address the AVT deaf students who have developed age-appropriate listening and spoken language skills. How does discrimination continue to dehumanize students as a reflection of their alterity?

Goodley (2011) rejects the association of labeling the disabled individual as a reject of society and instructs scholars to view the control that society is given to create discriminatory philosophies that perpetuate the justification to oppress. The AVT deaf student, who communicates verbally, is often denied equality and equity through their medical diagnosis. As deafness is generalized into one fixed ideology, the AVT student utilizing technology and spoken language continues to strive for identity and liberation. Two opposing dialoguers will not share the same objective. “Violence is initiated by those who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons—not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 11). An upset to the status quo makes many elitists feel threatened which is often combatted through violence and rejection.

Educators seeking to incorporate critical pedagogy must be empowered and equipped by an analysis of their own educational philosophies to create an atmosphere for learning that is

all-inclusive of both dominant and subdominant cultures—able-bodied and disabled. In critical pedagogy, pedagogues consider the how and why of teaching philosophies by comparing subdominant groups to the dominant culture. Discrimination within education is not neutral, it adapts to the language of the oppressor and those who continue to deny their participation, whether unconsciously or consciously, solidify, what Freire calls, the “culture of silence.” In an unconscious -or maybe conscious- rationalization, the AVT deaf student must prove their academic capabilities, as people are often judged by their language and communication proficiency.

Modification, accommodations, and technology make many regular education teachers apprehensive about the competence of this atypical learner. As seen routinely, it appears easier to pass this student than to invest in teaching methodologies that meet the student’s unique needs within the inclusion classroom. It is important to note, most of these accommodations require little effort from the regular education teacher. Modifications may include preferential seating and the use of an FM system, and accommodations may include extra auditory processing time through repeated directions or additional time for test-taking. In addition, this new AVT deaf student will receive only minimal resource services and at times will not even qualify for any resource services. (Appendix #4c)

Deaf education remains a fixed instructional approach within academia. When I tell people that I work in an auditory-verbal (AVT) educational setting teaching deaf preschoolers how to listen and speak, they typically respond in the same fashion that expresses their interest in sign language. I restate that this therapeutic approach does not utilize sign language for these deaf students, and that they have been implanted and are learning how to listen and develop spoken language. This statement appears to further evoke confusion and perplexity. These fixed

ideologies within society may be the expected norm, but in the educational arena with regular education and special education teachers, this fixed philosophy should not be the standard. I have attended numerous IEP and other transition meetings regarding my AVT students. The IEP team's concern founded on the traditional curriculum structure move me to educate those who can only see deafness through one narrow lens. "Deafness is not an illness (Kaminsky, 2019), it is a sexual position" (p. 52). Kaminsky purposely uses this wording to express that one chooses deafness (culture of silence) by a preference. This preference is founded in a pleasure and satisfaction to perpetuate the dehumanization of the oppressed. In this societal unity, silence is justified.

Freire's convictions lie with the reality of naming the world—naming the dehumanization of the nondominant group. We all are masters of our own house (mind) and our mind does not ask permission to have a thought. Using thought-provoking words—metacognition—to transform the reality of a politically oppressive society, scholars begin engaging in a conscious endeavor to seek open dialogue. "Education (Freire, 1970/2009) is suffering from a narrative sickness" (p. 71). Being disabled is a topic many shy away from, for to be disabled is unthinkable. It makes many scholars uneasy. It is easier to remove yourself from such tense conversations than to participate in dialogue that is unsettling.

The cross-section of critical pedagogy and critical disabilities theoretical framework of this research analyzes how discriminatory practices and traditional teaching philosophies must consider the political, social, and the local educational system for transformation regarding AVT deaf students.

Critical Pedagogy and Disability Studies Related to Politics

During the 1999–2000 school year (CDC, 2019), the total cost in the United States for special education programs for children who were deaf or hard of hearing was \$652 million, or \$11,006 per child. The lifetime educational cost (year 2007 value) of hearing loss (more than 40 dB permanent loss without other disabilities) has been estimated at \$115,600 per child. “Early diagnosis and effective intervention reduce special education costs by 36%, a reduction of \$44,200 per child” (Yoshinaga-Itano Baca, & Sedey, 1998, pp. 268-74).

If public education is the catalyst for post-secondary options, career choices, and independence; why continue to reject their membership in society through substandard teaching philosophies (politics) for marginalized groups? The outcome has the future potential to force individuals with hearing loss to seek limited employment options and the possibility of SSI government assistance. Is this the reality we—the scholars—have chosen for the student with deafness? The AVT deaf student who identifies as a hearing individual has the potential to become a productive member of society within the workforce, higher educational pursuits, and contributors.

The able-bodied society oppresses the disabled, and the accepted exercise their citizenship over the rejected. Curriculum studies seek to promote awareness of hidden curriculum with academia through theoretical frameworks that are ever evolving as a reflection of our society and politics that drive our educational philosophies regarding critical pedagogy and critical disability studies. “If we locate disability in the person, then we maintain a disabling status quo. In contrast by viewing disability as a cultural and political phenomenon, we ask serious questions about the social world” (Goodley, 2011, p. xi). Why is it the norm to continue the practice to dehumanize the disabled individual? Who wins when these individuals

are suppressed and forced to depend on government and other financial assistance? Can we continue to voice complaints, if we as educators allowed educational policies to prescribe definitions, philosophies, and fixed traditional curriculum to serve only the dominant groups? The AVT deaf student can successfully learn alongside their hearing peers in age-appropriate inclusion classrooms.

The able-bodied society perpetuates the dehumanization of individuals with disabilities. Society upholds the fixed standard that disability is defined by culture and not by the body. “Disability (Oliver, 1990) is about discrimination and prejudice, not physical or mental incapacity or limitations” (p. 100). The foundation of our society tolerates biases and prejudices where the oppressive reality of the disabled individual is considered an outcast. The oppressed individual is denied full citizenship based on society’s ideology for who belongs and who does not. “The oppressed (Freire, 1970/2009) are not marginals, are not people living outside of society. They have always been inside—inside the structure which made them beings for others” (p. 74). According to some academic scholars, alterity or otherness does not have to be conducted in a dialogue of disability studies. This continued resistance is upheld by society as it is rooted in the “psychological distance most people put between themselves and disability” (Davis, 2002, p. 35). There is a fear within the able-bodied society in that engaging in critical disabilities dialogue threatens deep-rooted fixed ideology.

Curriculum scholars are working to bring disability studies into academic discussions on difference and alterity. Without dialogue, “Disabled people are considered outcasts... [the society of ableism] contributes to the construction of a rigid, elitist, hierarchical, and inhumane academic system” (Price, 2011, p. 8). Any threat to the order within the social structure opposes fixed political doctrines. Students who do not master set age-appropriate milestones are often

segregated into resource classes. This segregation designed for *abnormal* students promotes feelings of rejection, isolation, and alterity. “Silence? (Kaminsky, 2019), it is a stick I beat you with, I beat you with a stick, voice, beat you until you speak, until you speak right” (p. 61). This speaks of conformity. Is this segregation or exclusion a manifestation of inequitable state-required standardized testing that dictates the policies to the educational system for unjust standards? How can unconsciousness transform into consciousness without open problem-solving dialogue?

Critical Pedagogy and Disability Studies Related to Society

People are not isolated nor unattached to society. Their relationship becomes their reality. It is the goal of disabilities studies and critical pedagogy to engage in open dialogue based on “critical thinking—thinking which discerns indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits their participation in perpetuating discriminatory philosophies” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 92). The objective of this dissertation project is to reveal the fixed ideologies that continues to fortify the struggle for disabled individuals seeking to find identity—place and space—within the public regular educational setting. The struggle lies within the traditional educational ideologies. Society defines the disability and the marginalized subdominant groups are required to conform to this oppressive practice. “Society (Berube, 1996) wants to ignore the issues and reduce the term disability to one generalized, special needs population within the educational space” (p. 45). As critical pedagogy seeks to liberate the oppressed from the oppressor, Freire suggests that critical thinking must be sought within an open dialogue.

The normal-abnormal binary is central to the problematization of disability, particularly as it has morphed into “the ability-disability binary central to the invention of categorical systems institutionalized by society” (Ware, 2001, p. 107). Labels (deaf-dumb), discrimination,

dehumanization, and fixed traditional philosophies perpetuate the deaf individual from becoming more fully human with full rights and acceptance of citizenship. It is like strict social constructionism (Berube, 1996), “where culture determines what the disability is, and biology becomes secondary to the cultural identities” (p. 66). The AVT deaf student is no longer considered Deaf by the Deaf society nor hearing by the hearing society. Like a third space, the AVT deaf student communicates through technology and spoken language and can achieve independent academic success within the mainstream classrooms.

Disabled versus ableism, typical versus atypical learner, and likeness versus difference require a third space for AVT deaf students seeking identity, acceptance, and independence. The concept of space (Shields, 1990), is structured in the dynamic ways we “understand, practice and live...in relation to our bodies, community and world as a changing space of distance and difference” (p. 147). As a social theory, place and space interact with and reinforces structures of power and personal and group identity. Space becomes the “spatial forces at work on people...which includes economics, politics, and culture” (Helfenbein, 2009, p. 400). In comparison, place is the interpretation and meaning associated within a space. Identity is derived from these interpretations (placed meaning) related to space. Foucault (1977) coins this the *docile-body* where individuals have been conditioned like a soldier-from birth-to function within society through prescribed spaces. The analogy of a machine is used to describe how there are many parts of a machine and each part (individual) must work within the union of the machine. There are higher ordered parts and lower ordered parts that make the machine operate properly as determined by society. Through discipline *-the docile-body-* can become “trained, pliable and capable of being shaped by society/institutions as defined” (1977, p. 135). In this case, the educational system would be what Foucault is calling the machine. This

remains political in that who has the power in education (space) to determine inclusion or exclusion—limitations, acceptance, and/or independence (place).

There is a first space (Soja, 1996) that is the physical tangible world and the second space is the interpretation or representation of that world, and the third space is the analysis of the first and second space. For the person who is fully human (Shields, 1990), the third space not only transcends but has the power to refigure the balance of the popular perceived (interpretation/meaning making) space and the official conceived (educational) space.

In reviewing the inclusion and exclusion philosophies shaped by society, there are many models to consider. In the normalization process (Ravaud & Stiker, 2001, p. 490), there is an attempt to qualify or integrate the disabled student closer to the accepted norm. In the assimilation model, this is a form of forced integration based on the nullification of otherness where identity is refined. Fukasawa and Morrison (2007) use this analogy to describe assimilation,

If you went into a shop looking for a dinner plate, it would be the most plate-like plate you could find. Even more plate-like than you could imagine a plate to be. What is good about a more than plate-like plate is that it will do its job without messing up the atmosphere in the way that designer tableware might do. (p. 169)

For the AVT deaf student, this normalization process actually has the potential to create an assimilated function and acceptance, but the otherness of the individual becomes identifiable only by the standard/characteristics of the norm— (plate-like plate). The standards of inclusion and exclusion are designed by society's beliefs and those beliefs are communicated in policies that are written by society. Who lobbies for the disabled individuals, disabled people or able-bodied people? Who writes educational curriculum, disabled educators or able-bodied

policymakers? Environment, school as space, plays a role in discrimination that includes categorizing a person's identity and, in the inclusion, and exclusion policies of the learning space. Geography, the learning space, influences the interpretation of the space based on the aesthetic quality of the space and the ability to independently navigate the space.

For the AVT deaf learner, inclusion with minimal accommodations and/or modifications promote liberation within the mainstream classrooms; however, the otherness within deafness remains a fixed ideology within the learning space. "Inaccessible environments (Kitchens, 1998) are more than physical exclusion, but also convey powerful messages about being and belonging" (p. 315). The degree of marginalization may be adjusted for this student; however, any degree from the centralized norm is deemed a difference that challenges the learning process.

The traditional practices that continue to preserve discriminatory policies that restrict the most powerless members of society must be examined. The dichotomy (Freire, 1970/2000) between them—"thinking which perceives reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity—thinking which does not separate itself from the action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved" (p. 92)

The action of scholarly dialogue for the AVT deaf student can foster the transformation needed for identity, validation, membership, and ownership within the educational setting in which acceptance, identity, and independence are achieved. The able-bodied society categorize and label individuals with terms to dehumanize the individual. In Berube's (1996) experience with his son, he states that terms like "Mongoloid, retarded, and handicapped are descriptors that society devises to group the disability collectively and to nullify the individual" (p. 180). In addition to disabilities like deafness, society uses terms like deaf-dumb, deaf-mute,

handicapped, and impaired to categorize the disability as “rejects of life.” They are non-members existing within an abled-bodied society that rejects citizenship based on how humanness is defined.

Disability Studies (Morris, 2016) are often not given the value and consideration that is needed to ensure that individuals with various disabilities are humanized within the academic space. Able-bodied people have great difficulty interacting in disability dialogue. Often termed the “politics of disavowal,” many able-bodied people are fearful and in denial of these unconscious reactions. “The ideology (Siebers, 2008) of ableism sets the measure of the body and mind that gives or denies human status to individual persons” (p. 8). This unjust practice is the foundational structure that gives the oppressor validity to justify these prejudices. The AVT deaf student no longer aligns with the Deaf student, and advocates for the AVT verbal student oppose set traditional special needs standards for these atypical learners. In Freire’s (1970/2009) philosophy, a word analyzed in an action and reflection process is accomplished within praxis or application, and this critical analysis approach promotes transformation. However, if the word or dialogue is sacrificed or the praxis is sacrificed, transformation will not be accomplished.

Critical Pedagogy and Disability Studies Related to the Educational System

Traditional educational philosophies continue to focus only on the disability of deafness, with the rejection of identity, and instructional methods that promote academic abilities for these diverse learners. By giving descriptors to disabilities, education is essentially refusing to understand the disability and reject its humanness within society. The inclusion classroom must seek to transform discriminatory practices for the two types of deaf learners. Both are still considered medically deaf. Under the same generalized term of deafness, both

have entered the public-school system with a fixed standardized curriculum. The pedagogy that worked yesterday is no longer applicable today. The educational practices of the past in deaf education will not address the unique needs of the AVT deaf student. Critical pedagogy is focused on exposing the traditional roots in educational practices and empowering students to become agents for transformation against commonly practiced historical restraints.

Critical pedagogy strives to understand the “world as it is and as it should be through problem-posing dialogue (McLaren & Crawford, 1998), a method that dissolves the teacher-student dichotomy and transforms all learners into agents of social change” (p. 14). In a recent study (Prentiss, 2019), researchers examined the views of audiologists, speech pathologists, regular education teachers, and teachers of the deaf in a review of AVT deaf students. The findings suggested that audiologists, speech therapists, and teachers of the deaf (TOD) were all supportive of the atypical AVT deaf students. In contrast, the regular education teachers held to the fixed disability descriptors of traditional deaf education as deafness has only one definition. In addition, the technology utilized by the AVT student made some teachers apprehensive.

Looking through a narrow lens of one concrete definition of deafness restricts the AVT deaf student from becoming more fully human within the educational setting. Communication skills of deaf children who have been identified early, utilize assistive technology, and are on a spoken and listening AVT track is quite different. The AVT student’s language development is designed within an auditory approach. There are many barriers within public education for AVT deaf students and the traditional deaf education curriculum. These barriers are often examined through a place and space philosophy.

In reference to place and space, geographers are exploring how the body and the mind can be considered the space in which the (embodied) disabled student forms meaning-making

interpretations of their acceptance and identity. Society and thus the educational system seek to (Tremain, 2005) “regulate the disabled body and its associated behaviors as a way of maintaining and managing societal norms...policy makers have created, classified, codified, and controlled abnormalities through which some people have been divided and objectivized as physically impaired, handicapped, retarded and deaf” (p. 32).

A difference becomes a disability (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012) “when people with particular characteristics are not able to access life opportunities and experiences as a result of inaccessible contexts or other related barriers related to the perceived difference” (p. 26). The difference—typical hearing versus atypical hearing is still hearing. In a socio-spatial construct, abled-bodied educators, determine the parameters for inclusion or exclusion based on otherness and difference that justifies integration or segregation. The AVT deaf student is cognizant of their physical disability; however, their self-awareness is shaped by their ability –hearing ability—to identify as a member of the hearing society as fully human.

Educators are often unaware that they are practicing fixed traditional philosophies. They must become enlightened to the unconscious educational practices that limit AVT deaf students in their rights to become fully human. Educators can continue to reject equality and equity where only the elite prosper in the fixed social order of education but how will achievement be defined within these walls? A teacher that is willing to become an agent of transformation will seek an action-reflection critical thinking process.

Often when discussing disability studies, society ignores the issues and reduces disability to one generalized special needs population within the educational space. Curriculum studies is an interdisciplinary field. There is a place called the “third space” (Morris, 2016, p. 4) which goes inside and outside of various positions—as now I am positioned within curriculum

studies while simultaneously I am in disability studies and then I travel back and forth to critical pedagogy. While in disabilities studies, I further delve into a more specific position of deafness—AVT deaf students. While engaged in this interdisciplinary navigating, I find that I must return to the original position to examine personal subjectivity and philosophies that influence my inquiry, analysis, and critical thinking. In understanding that everything is “unavoidably linked back to me” (p. 6), and it is in this personal knowledge that my political and philosophical viewpoints shape my interpretation of reality, social justice, and humanization. If disability studies is not relevant to you personally, it is easier to deny its existence or its influence in fostering educational philosophies. The normalcy (Titchkosky, 2011) of inaccessibility is the standard to which society has constructed policies without an attempt to collectively adjoin able-bodied and disabled accessibility. Guidelines to incorporate accessibility require those in power to comply as it relates to adjustments to the standardized norms. An example of this is noted in the “wheelchair icon as it suggests accessibility and is a standard icon that access was adjusted because the normed social expectation is inaccessibility” (p. 67). Again, if it is not personal to you (the educator)—you tolerate but deny its validity and accessibility to the autonomy in the learning space.

Dehumanization is a result of an unjust order. In Freire’s action and reflection, the essence of dialogue is the word. If traditional educational practices continue to reject open dialogue, how will transformation be achieved? Do the conscious or unconscious philosophies restrict any movement toward educational reform? Each student is an individual, and a one-size-fits-all philosophy will not produce an academic learning space that addresses each student as an individual member of a corporate-social group.

As the AVT deaf student begins to associate within a given space through personal lived experiences, interpretations of that space form place which forms identity, value, and independent thought. Place is shaped as a person begins to form social philosophies and identity to the interpreted place to find a voice, acceptance, and interactions within a shared community called place. “Apart from inquiry, apart from praxis (Freire, 1970/2009), men cannot be truly human” (p. 87). No longer finding space and place in the traditional deaf educational setting, how will the regular educational settings aid in fostering independence and identity for the new atypical deaf students?

The 2017 Disability Statistics Annual Report collected by the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the overall rate of people with disabilities in the US population reported in 2016 was 12.8%. Even with 12.8% of the population having a sensory, cognitive, or physical disability, scholars avoid topics within disability studies suggesting that the “majority of academics do not consider disability to be a part of their social conscience” (Morris, 2016, p. 330). Scholars may not want to directly discuss disabilities; however, when the topic of school budgets, financial demands related to special education, and taxpayers’ concerns regarding post-secondary employment, then many scholars have an opinion. It may be easier to say if you have never been affected by disability, then it becomes easier to disassociate. Not my problem, I cannot identify. In embodied geographies of place and space, the body and the mind of the disabled student encounter the imposed biases within the physical structure of the educational system (regular education and special education) and the curriculum design (policies and standards) as the presence of difference affronts status quo philosophies.

The inclusion classroom must transform to address the two types of learners, the Deaf student, and the AVT deaf student. Under the same generalized term of deafness, both have

entered the public-school system, and the curriculum and pedagogy that worked yesterday are no longer applicable today. The introspective evaluation followed by application creates an action-reflection critical thinking process that allows scholars to interpret their view of discriminatory reality. Freire's interpretation of a false fact demonstrates how the rationale of fixed ideology as a discriminatory practice becomes the compass of your reality. Children with hearing loss often struggle academically. Communication problems among children with hearing loss and language delays can lead to social problems, academic problems, and identity issues. For the AVT deaf student the academic and social potential is achievable.

Can you actually measure a child's value, worth, creativity, and individuality? These are the politics of an unjust social order—testing mandates, academic placement, and fixed ideologies. The educational systems (Delpit, 1995), the possibilities for poor and people of color (and those with disabilities) to define themselves (place), and to determine the self each should involve a power that lies outside of the self (space). “It is others who determine how they should act, how they are to be judged. When one “we” gets to determine the standards for all “wes,” then some “wes” are in trouble” (p. xv). The standards are set by the transfer of knowledge that pre-prescribes its meaning and defines our world and our place within the world or academic spaces. “The knowledge formation (Said, 1994) is political” (p. 217). The disabled Deaf and deaf student's identity is shaped by this knowledge, and this subdominant individual understands their lack of power, independence, and place within society.

Funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) that includes background, home-life, health issues, linguistics, and family values are not considered when the politics of standardized testing evaluations and teaching philosophies based on these test evaluations dictate student ability. In the case of the AVT deaf student, the medical, atypical hearing,

otherness, early intervention, technology, audiologists, and speech therapy are all an integral part of the student's prior knowledge. This knowledge base has shaped how the AVT student engages in the learning interaction. It is vital that scholarly educators incorporate an action-reflection critical thinking approach when creating an inviting learning environment for all students with disabilities. The AVT deaf student realizes that their difference as an atypical listener/learner can create biases and prejudicial teaching practices.

Disability studies seek to examine the politics of the educational system that is supported by society. People seek to distance themselves from such issues within educational systems without verbally stating the rejection—culture of silence. The oppressed are forced to conform to the discriminatory philosophies. The AVT deaf student “must take on a new form of existence [Deaf and deaf] a rebirth for they can no longer remain as they were” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 61).

Why Performative Memoir?

I chose a performative memoir as methodology for this dissertation inquiry. I incorporate performative storytelling and dance within my memoir ranging over fifty years of my experiences of being raised and trained in various aspects of deafness. “My words are glass made clear...by breath and hands” (Young, 2014, p. 119). A performative memoir through interpretive dance and storytelling is more compatible with the ways the AVT deaf students express themselves and has the potential to engage the audience through auditory and visual deliveries to develop empathetic understanding towards the AVT deaf students. This performative memoir is designed to portray my lived experiences in a creative manner to evoke awareness through exposure and education. In memoir writing, the writer uses the voice of memories, emotions, and interpretation to allow the readers to see the writer and his/her character as their own interpretation allows them to see themselves through the writer's lived

experiences. This journey reflected in my memoir formed my teaching philosophy within a critical pedagogy and disability studies framework for auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf students.

Storytelling relies heavily on the interpretation of the listener/reader. “Without (Davis, 1989) interpretation, an asserted history fails” (p. 79). When the writer makes connections based on their analysis of lived experiences within a memoir, the reader will soon encounter a new dimension of interconnectedness. In this aesthetic format, the inquiry exposes the hidden and “seeks to identify the experiential qualities that color the situation and govern our reaction to it as it becomes identified” (Vallance, 1991, p. 160). In this multifaceted dimension, the viewer can see past the surface to comprehend a greater depth of knowledge. “The sun (Young, 2014) is too bright, your eyes adjust, become like the night, hands covering the face...I could not see to see” (p. 154). When the written information is shared with an apathetic audience, the visual dimension invites the audience to see what they could not see before.

Many memoirists attempt to engage detached audiences into uneasy topics through their lived experiences. Coates’ writings focus on race discrimination, Berube’s writings focus on disability and social policy discrimination, Baldwin’s writings focus on social injustice, Westover’s writings focus on identity of difference—space and place and Kaminsky’s analogy focuses on the culture of silence. “In these avenues (Kaminsky, 2015) [of the dominant power], deafness is our only barricade” (p. 22).

Although, as memory fades and absolutes lose their authenticity which could only be captured within that moment, a reinventing nature to express my lived experiences must be recaptured (Zinsser, 1998) within the light that I am attempting to convey. Memoir, through a performative storytelling and dance delivery, adds a multifaceted perspective that utilizes

auditory, visual, and emotional connections. The words of the memoir become illuminated through meaningful movements, technological resources, musicality, and poetry.

As we are in the age of technology, media, videos, music, and communication are an essential component within our society. This is not lost on the younger population nor the disabled population. The AVT deaf student embraces this form of interaction to connect to the hearing world as texting, emails, Instagram, and chat rooms have redefined our social interactions. When educators are seeking to incorporate *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) into the learning space which integrates community and family-home environments to address all dimensions of a student's knowledge base, *digital funds of knowledge* (Paris, 2012) can be beneficial. In this performative memoir, the AVT deaf student is represented in the aesthetic styles they express themselves through auditory and visual—and now through digital technology.

The greater depth I revealed was based on a reflection of my years as a child being raised around the struggles of deafness through my aunt, and an educational sign language interpreter and how this skill transformed into additional opportunities. In addition, I shared my lived experiences as a teacher of the deaf (TOD) working in a total communication (TC) construct and as an auditory-verbal therapist/teacher (AVT) working on a listening and spoken language approach (LSLT).

“If you are going to be a writer; it is death” (Baker, 1982, p. 26). If you write to please a targeted audience and their acceptance of your lived experiences, your story will fail. You must listen to your inner voice and be “real” to yourself. Relive all the aspects of your experience until you are unwilling to fabricate your experience. Sometimes the events are not pretty and will not be embraced by all readers. If a book compels the reader to read it and reread it and

reread it again then you know that your life's stories have found an audience. You must die to the self that is preoccupied with how your experiences will be interpreted and start with a seed that sprouts a memory "into [thorns], vines and flowers until the old garden takes shape in all its fragrant glory" (Karr, 2016, p. 2). Initially, the hidden you desire to conceal will become exposed, but once you dismantle superficial writing, you will find freedom and permission to bring your lived experiences to each page. You will move from one dimension to another as telling your story forged a death to your fears, apprehension, and anxiety of your facts, memories, and interpretation.

In the poem, *Making Do* (Linda Hogan, 1991), she describes her heritage as a Native American and the challenge to preserve their memories, heritage, and traditions. Hogan used images and discarded objects to express the importance of Native American's experiences. Each image allows the reader to identify with how the writer found value in abandoned and devalued objects.

We made music from the old [discarded] saltshakers, and now and again when some outsider decides we have no culture because we use store-bought shakers and they are not traditional at all. I defy them. Salt is the substance of our blood, sweat...it is the ocean of ourselves. (p. 34-35)

Writing a memoir cannot be written in an abstract fashion. Details that describe images, smells, and other sensory perceptions invite the reader "to enter the story rather than stay at a distance" (Barrington, 2002, p. 109). The story alone, the words, the mere experience alone will not convey your lived experiences. The "scene and the summary" (p. 91) is what makes a good story. Readers do not desire to read you old laundry list of all your trials, but they are interested in how those struggles challenged your character, philosophy, beliefs, and your identity—the

unmasked you. “The memoirist’s voice is an “operative mindset and a way of perceiving that naturally stems from feeling oneself (self-awareness) inside the past” (Karr, 2016, p. 36).

My experiences as a child exposed to deafness through my aunt, my years as a sign language interpreter, my years as a teacher of the deaf (TOD) in a total communication (TC) deaf education curriculum, and my years as an auditory-verbal therapist are the foundation of my memoir. My self-awareness as a critical thinker, agent of change, and AVT advocate through these personal stories connects each experience to a deeper awareness that this story—my journey—will find an inspired audience seeking an action-reflection reality.

I began learning sign language in the early 1990s at Savannah Speech and Hearing Center. This skill allowed me to learn the American Sign Language (ASL) utilized by Deaf individuals which permitted me an association into the Deaf culture. I later applied this skill as an educational sign language interpreter through Effingham County’s deaf education program. This morphed into an additional skill of interpretive dance where I incorporated signs and gestures to communicate a lyrical message. I realized quickly; I cannot interpret that which I do not understand. The old-adage states that to teach is to learn twice. This also applies to interpreting as one must process the meaning and then decide how to convey that meaning to the targeted audience through these specific signs. As a person lives their life, the lived experiences begin to create meanings in a particular space, causing it to become a place which forms identity.

In this modality of music and dance, apathetic topics can connect audiences into a more empathetic or even sympathetic emotional experience. Music (Morris, 2016) takes up space in the mind—hearing spaces. “Isn’t composing about putting sound in space and time and also the ability to capture what is heard in that space in the mind?” (p. 42). It is in the construct of sound

and space that encourages the viewers to make greater connections. Every soul (Harjo, 2012) has a “distinct song...because music is a language that lives in the spiritual realms...we can hear it, we can create it, music can help raise a people up or call them together for war” (p. 19).

To allow the message and research dynamics within the memoir to resonate with the reading audience, an additional feature of methodology is incorporated to encourage connections. A skillfully choreographed interpretive dance has the potential to deliver a visual aspect within non-traditional inquiry methodology. Within this delivery modality, I explore how AVT deaf students seek to find space and place in a traditional deaf educational setting, and how the regular educational settings could aid in fostering place and space for the new atypical deaf student. When the reading audience is unfamiliar with the topic—AVT or LSLT, a performative memoir has the potential to educate, expose, and create self-analysis within atypical topics. “I am you boy drowning in this country, who doesn’t know the word for drowning and yells—I am diving for the last time” (Kaminsky, 2019, p. 35). All is understood, even when the terminology is unknown as the message is not only captured in words but in imagery.

Through a theoretical lens of disabilities studies and critical pedagogy for educators working with students who are deaf but have been on a listening and spoken language (LSLT) track, the potential to create awareness is attainable. “Digital media (Pink, 2012) has inspired advances in research, media and art practice, which create new routes to knowledge and its representation, and new ways for an audience to engage with visual research” (p. 12). In addition, this methodology that incorporates technology as such must be structured through proficiency and effectiveness -its design is not entertainment but educational. “When stories are told (Doll, 2000), one sees ideas differently; when images are heard, one hears differently,

more introspectively” (p. xi). A memoirist starts with events, then transforms those events into meaningful passages—first for the writer and then for the reading audience. Writing without fear and without hesitation is a challenge.

“What would you write (Karr, 2016) if you weren’t afraid?” (p. 34). The AVT deaf student no longer fits into the traditional deaf education curriculum, but still will need assistance finding place and space in the regular educational setting. (This may include accommodations like preferential seating and/or modifications like repeating instructions.) As a teacher of the deaf (TOD) in total communication (TC), this allowed me an insider’s view of deaf students’ academic struggles that lead to an internal dilemma for finding place and space in the inclusion classroom. “Through art one is able to see things more clearly, to see them through the eyes of the artist, and thus to get a type of perception he is not likely to obtain in any other way” (Tyler, 2017, pp. 80-81). The interpretive dance format is videotaped into 4-6-minute demonstrations and uploaded to an online sharing option through hyperlinks via YouTube or Vimeo. The intent was to utilize this form of inquiry to communicate my experience in deaf education into a message that will become transformed through technology, musicality, and prose.

The message within the memoir has the potential to foster an additional perspective that invites the viewing audience to engage in critical analysis as music/musicality, dance, and stories unite to explore the cross-section of critical pedagogy and disabilities studies. When pairing curriculum studies research and theatrical arts, the researcher must adhere to the stringent accuracy of the research—the memoir and dance serves as the delivery for such research.

When people are committed to engaging in dialogue to address the reality of dehumanization and social injustice, then reality can be confronted. Zinsser advises to not leave portions out of your memoir or your lived experiences. When you leave details out of your experiences, the book becomes a half-truth. You cannot focus on who may or may not align with your experiences. “Tell your story without apprehension or your story will resonate dishonesty that makes the book in whole a lie” (Zinsser, 1998, p. 51). Social injustice, disability studies, and otherness are topics that make many scholars uneasy. The dominant class sees this unjust order through a murky glass and internalizes that all is well, and everyone has this shared perspective.

This interconnectedness with literature has the potential to help readers explore social justice, equality, and equity. A writing style that allows the reader to see viewpoints through a social justice lens projected by the memoirist involves a commitment to be transparent and exposed. Memoir and dance aids in creating awareness through a theoretical lens of critical disability studies and critical pedagogy for educators working with AVT deaf students. Memoirists can use imagery, senses, and tones to develop the message into deeper meaning throughout the memoir. Straus, in *Extraordinary Measures*, examines how music is interpreted differently by deaf individuals. As Beethoven was deaf, “it is noted that many deaf individuals listen to music as a vehicle to engage, produce, and gather meaning” (2011, p. 150) through a different lens. They connect to music and auditory aspects that the hearing audience often overlook. Music represents meaning, degree of emotion, instrumental variations, and prosody. It is as if they listen with their mind’s eye (embodiment geography).

Writing that evokes the five senses encourages the reader to become transformed into the storyline. For example, Coates (2015) writes with imagery in this analogy expressing historical injustice and discrimination.

The spirit and the soul are the body and brain, which are destructible that is precisely why they are so precious. And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings. The soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden. (pp. 103-104)

The writer must look inward before attempting to write for a wider audience. “The inner dialogue (Barone and Eisner, 2012) will uncover and disclose personal meaning, the freedom within this transparency will resonate the growth, insight, and change” (p. 65) of the researcher that will illuminate the targeted message. This delivery modality creates a visual message intertwined with feelings and interpretations. It has the potential to become the voice of the oppressed within society. Baldwin (1991) creatively transforms the interpretation for the reader describing the magnitude of the social situation through the oppressor’s viewpoint when the sky no longer is aligned in the set order, “You [white Americans] would be frightened because it is out of the order of nature. Any upheaval in the universe is terrifying because it so profoundly attacks one’s sense of one’s own reality” (p. 9).

The objective of this research is to explore critical disabilities studies with an emphasis on equity of power in a cross-section of critical pedagogy regarding AVT deaf students in the inclusion classroom. The aim is to create awareness of the various approaches in deaf education, and to introduce the AVT deaf student who no longer can adequately be served in special education domains. Scholarly dialogue for place and space is expressed in the

methodology of memoir reflecting on my 25+ years of collected lived experiences as a teacher of the deaf. Zinsser (2004) suggests that memoirists should not be afraid of the non-traditional path that may be laden with failures and side steps. The outcome could produce “their own sense of direction and beat the traditional format because they were better than the one they beat” (p. 40).

My experience in understanding deafness dates back over fifty years being raised around my Aunt Ann who was profoundly deaf. She was born in the 1930s and was diagnosed with Usher’s Syndrome at the age of two-years-old. She was self-taught in the area of lip-reading as she often rejected the bulky technology offered during her childhood. In Usher’s Syndrome, deafness is profound with an added progressive loss of vision. I often wondered, how was she able to verbally communicate even with some deaf speech tones that did not impede communication to become educated in a hearing world and develop into an avid reader? She set the bar for all that I believed could be possible for deaf individuals and their language development.

In Freire’s viewpoint, a dialogue is more than a conversation of lived experiences. Dialogue does not end but is continuous as is the ever-evolving knowledge that is sought after. Lived experiences must be transformed into knowledge that interconnects theory and practice. Memoir as a methodology has the potential to create awareness through a theoretical lens of critical disabilities studies and critical pedagogy for educators working with students who are deaf but have been on a listening and spoken language track. I chose this non-traditional format of memoir and interpretive dance to aid in the explanation of the struggle deaf individuals have encountered throughout history. Since intelligibility is often measured through language

assessments, historically deaf individuals had been institutionalized as they were deemed deaf-dumb and deaf-mute.

“Aesthetic inquiry demands good writing [skills]” (Vallance, 1991, p. 168). This inquiry seeks to inspire an audience to be captivated, motivated, as well as analytical, a good should writer reject rhetoric and jargon which could be interpreted as inauthentic and lessen the power of the context. The power of voice in writing a memoir is essential. If the voice is not distinct enough to sound alive and compelling or there are staunch limits to emotional tones, the sentences get boring and predictable. The reader begins to distrust the writer and will deem the whole as fiction. “Lying is done with words, but also with silence” (Rich, 2015, p. 163). If a memoirist decides to write only selected portions of his/her experience, the silence has the potential to be regarded as a deception even if portions penned are credible.

In a memoir, one reflects on a journey that leads him/her to a new awareness of self. A memoirist starts with events, then transforms those events into meaningful passages—first for the writer and then for the reading audience. A disability does not have to be considered a threat to society nor does it need to be determined by the abnormalities attached to individuals in a conscious or subconscious effort to dehumanize their value within society.

This memoir demonstrates how my first-hand experiences working with auditory-verbal deaf students have stretched and strengthened my understanding of the possibilities this approach affords. These past years in listening and spoken language early intervention and cochlear implants for deaf students acquiring language have created a greater awareness of the possibilities offered to these unique deaf students. In critical pedagogy, understanding dehumanization and humanization is “essential part of resisting corporate school reform. The

teacher notes that every human being has a unique and complex set of circumstances that make his/her life understandable and sensible, bearable or unbearable” (Ayers, 2016, p. 167).

I have often attempted to convey my passion in AVT education to others outside the field, but it always seems to be fixed in the traditional formats of this field related to sign language and Deaf culture. Within this performative memoir which illustrates the deaf history, traditional deaf education, and AVT advances, it is my goal to demonstrate the needed progression within deaf education to include the new atypical AVT deaf student that hears and communicates in spoken language. “Engaging in critical disability praxis involves striving to create an accessible collective learning space...where all participants are valued as knowledge holders and given accessibility beyond the physical access” (Nishida, 2019, p. 242). This research is designed to explore educational changes for diverse learners who are deaf and who do not require the traditional deaf educational curriculum of the past.

Often, special education teachers and regular education teachers have been trained to group all deaf learners into a specialized educational program that has been typically designed in a total communication curriculum that includes sign language as the primary mode of communication and typically does not incorporate speech therapy within its structure. The AVT deaf students no longer require this type of educational delivery and although atypical learners, they have the potential to find social and academic success within the hearing inclusion classrooms.

If we silence the scholarly dialogue, Freire (1970/2000) explains, we will not be able to form meaningful themes that create generative themes in a structured approach. When people are committed to engaging in dialogue to address the reality of dehumanization and social injustice then reality can be confronted. This written and narrated memoir and videoed

interpretive dance is designed to help scholars examine conscious and subconscious fixed ideologies of social justice, equality, and equity for students with disabilities. “Within the word, we find two dimensions, reflection, and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 87).

What Is It For?

The objective of this research expressed in memoir and interpretive dance is to encourage scholarly inquiry for an action and reflection process to address the realities of social injustice for AVT deaf individuals entering the general education setting. Children identified early through the universal newborn hearing screenings are now amplified in the first years of life with cochlear implants (CI) and begin an intensive, specialized AVT program. Many AVT deaf students are ready to advance into mainstream academic settings after their fifth or sixth birthday. This form of inquiry is designed to explore lived experiences of my twenty-five years in deaf education as an educational sign language interpreter, a teacher of the deaf (TOD), and an AVT specialist. The goal is to create—through the lens of critical disability studies and critical pedagogy—awareness for open dialogue to examine how the AVT deaf student can find place and space within the inclusion classroom.

Spoken language development, communication, social interaction, literacy, and learning are directly connected to the ability to hear and acquire language. Communication problems among children with hearing loss and speech delay can lead to social problems and feelings of isolation. Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) is a therapeutic technique centered in early intervention with parent/infant and teletherapy opportunities to ensure that newly implanted infants receive intervention before entering an AVT program at the age of two-years-old to six.

“Blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people” Helen Keller reflects in her personal writings (Gallaudet Library Archives, 1933). Since cochlear implants, as we know them today, are still in its technological infancy, research is limited. The AVT research supports the early diagnosis, and amplification as key factors to address language delays for profoundly deaf children.

With many advances related to technology and therapy within the deaf population, terminology and definitions are changing. Is a person born deaf but now implanted with a cochlear implant still considered deaf? How can regular and/or special education create space within educational settings for these atypical students?

In typical deaf educational settings, a deaf student depending on ASL is included in both a Hard-of-Hearing/Deaf Special Education resource environment and the mainstream environment for inclusion with the assistance of a sign language interpreter. This is not necessary for the AVT deaf student. A new type of deaf student is entering into the public-school system who will not require the traditional teaching format offered within deaf education. So how does this auditory-verbal deaf student develop space and place within the regular education setting? What role does identity play in the inclusion setting?

The AVT deaf students have the potential to integrate successfully in the hearing society. They have the potential to become contributors within society and to excel academically, socially, and productively. To ensure these capabilities, education must evaluate traditional educational practices and discriminatory mindsets to create an open dialogue for fostering place and space of the new AVT deaf student seeking identity and validation.

How is My Dissertation Organized?

My dissertation consists of a prologue, four chapters, and an epilogue. In the Prologue, I narrate my passion for my dissertation inquiry into deaf education. In Chapter 1, I portray the situations of deaf education, history of education and disability laws for individuals with hearing loss, theoretical framework of disability studies and critical pedagogy, and methodology—writing memoir through storytelling and dance. My memoir consists of 15 episodes ranging in two chapters. Chapter 2 consists of nine episodes of my memoir: (1) when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; (2) darkness is the absence of light; (3) just as I am; (4) check your biases at the door; (5) you don't know the cost; (6) the journey of one thousand miles; (7) even if I get stung, I will remain a beekeeper; (8) the sail is subject to the power of the wind; and (9) it's time to turn the page. Chapter 3 consists of six episodes: (1) the perfect job; (2) the leaves are changing colors; (3) interpretation and perception; (4) navigating the wilderness; (5) victory ahead; and (6) every day is a new page in my book. In Chapter 4, I make meaning out of my inquiry and narrate how I come to the meaning making outcomes. In the Epilogue, I compose prose in reflection of Deaf Republic (Kaminsky, 2019) and perform a lyrical song with the addition of (6) letters that are written to those who paved the way in this specialized field (Bell, Freire, Aunt Ann), people who were determined to embrace innovative options in deaf education (parents of AVT deaf students, AVT deaf students) and a letter written to myself noting how this EDD program encouraged self-awareness and critical thinking in critical pedagogy and disability studies.

CHAPTER TWO

MY MEMOIR—MY JOURNEY IN DEAF EDUCATION

Prelude

Like a thread that interweaves pieces of fabric, disabilities studies and critical pedagogy are tightly woven into one interrelated whole. When we attempt to compartmentalize each construct, we miss the critical elements of theorizing the union—like a marriage when the two become one. As I share my lived experiences throughout this memoir, if the stories are only perceived in isolation from the whole—25+ years of various lived experiences in deaf education— then this inquiry loses its meaning and impact.

The sections are not explored in a chronological format, but in various themes that emphasizes the history and evolution of deaf education and how it emerged to where it is today. As deaf education has expanded throughout the years, I too have evolved in my teaching philosophies, values, and responsibility as each season fostered a new dimension of myself. The life lessons I have learned over the past 50 years from my childhood to present day are listed throughout in a variety of personal stories to aid in expressing in-depth content with thought-provoking storylines that allow the reader a multifaceted view of these targeted themes for the auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf student seeking place and space within the mainstream educational settings.

Freire's philosophy is grounded in reading the word through the language of society that defines our world. The oppressor is not interested in the language of the oppressed for the oppressor only knows his own language and is unwilling to adapt to an unfamiliar way of viewing the accepted fixed order. It is the obligation of the oppressed to learn the language of the oppressor to challenge the status quo. How is this accomplished? In understanding what

drives the fixed society, as in money, politics, bureaucracy, and/or disassociation, the oppressed--disabled, marginalized, and rejected--can confront discriminatory practices on the oppressor's turf. This memoir is designed to encourage an open scholarly dialogue in critical pedagogy and disabilities studies for critical analysis related to deaf education and the new AVT deaf student. It explores how society uses their language and fixed ideology to preserve the rights and privileges of traditional educational policies.

This chapter consists of nine episodes of my memoir: (1) when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; (2) darkness is the absence of light; (3) just as I am; (4) check your biases at the door; (5) you don't know the cost; (6) the journey of one thousand miles; (7) even if I get stung, I will remain a beekeeper; (8) the sail is subject to the power of the wind; and (9) it's time to turn the page. Through these nine episodes of my memoir, I demonstrate several aspects of deaf education through an introspective interpretation of the deaf population, parents of deaf children in Total Communication (TC), the Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) deaf student, and teachers regular education teachers, as well as, teachers of the deaf (TOD). These episodes also encourage the exploration of multifaceted characteristics of deafness through their reality. As a whole-versus-parts philosophy, it is crucial to examine the various components of deaf education and more specifically the AVT deaf student and how those components are interdependent. Components include educational options, language modalities, identity (Deaf and deaf), and technological devices. In addition, this chapter analyzes how our self-awareness and personal biases drive educational philosophies.

When the Whole is Greater Than the Sum of its Parts

A frog! We watched and screamed as a small, green, slimy frog was jumping throughout the classroom, leaping from across the room, refusing to be caught. As the teachers

of Sound Start Auditory-Verbal Deaf Preschool tried to corner this slick creature, one of my four-year-old students exclaimed, “That’s my frog!” He picked up the out-the-door-bound frog as if it were his beloved pet and began to use his language skills to describe the Show & Tell item he had brought from home. This frog had traveled all the way from Hinesville to Savannah in the pocket of the student’s jeans. We all started belly laughing. The goal of this assignment was improving language development, and this AVT deaf student met the goal, so what can you do but find the humor in the manner it was achieved!

When you work in Auditory-Verbal Therapy with deaf toddlers and preschoolers, you need 20/20 vision. Seeing up close (the present) and at a distance (the future) is crucial. Communication skills do not develop overnight nor can they be forced by circumventing or skipping foundational benchmarks needed for language acquisition. These skills are not taught in isolation but as an interdependent methodology. A teacher once drew a small dot in the middle of a six-foot blackboard and asked the students what they saw. All replied that they saw a small dot. The teacher countered, “If you only see the dot in the middle of the board, then you missed all the other parts of the blackboard and the potential waiting to be explored.”

If I focus only on the established dot, I cannot discover all the unwritten possibilities for AVT deaf students. Tunnel vision grounded in a restricted disability perspective shapes educational philosophies and limits effectiveness. Deaf education is a specialized field, and it is a challenge to perceive how these atypical learners navigate the silent world in which they live. (video-**Does the Thunder Really Roar** <https://vimeo.com/383079414>)

This past Christmas holiday, another nonprofit organization, an animal outreach program, stated that they wanted to invite the Sound Start students to the local park to enjoy pony rides and other animal activities. In addition, they would be bringing a Deaf Santa that

would sign to our students so our students would be able to communicate with Santa. We quickly explained that Sound Start was an auditory-verbal (AVT) preschool program for deaf students learning to listen and speak through technology and therapy. This apparently did not resonate with them because on December 17th, there were ponies and other animals accompanied by a signing Santa.

Santa began to sign to the AVT students, and I signed to him and to his sign language interpreter that these students do not know any signs. They both looked at one another and through an objecting demeanor began to sign their disgruntled opinions to each other. Forgetting that I sign as well, every sign was understood! In an effort to help the sign language interpreter understand the AVT approach, I invited her to the class Christmas party that would be held on December 19th at our school.

My intentions in inviting the interpreter were genuine. It was my desire to educate this fellow professional that there are now two types of deaf students. Both have value and worth; however, their communication modes are quite different. As expected, the interpreter joined our party and appeared to be at least curious but not exactly open to this new concept in deaf education. In reflection, I can now say that she entered the room armed with an unwavering fixed bias that would not allow her to accept an approach other than the one that was familiar to her. In addition, she began to cross ethical lines as she approached many of my parents at the party declaring the injustice of not teaching their deaf child sign language. It was the deaf student's birthright to communicate manually and to adjoin themselves into the Deaf culture. These deaf students, your children, were being denied this privilege in the AVT setting. I learned a life lesson on this day—just because I think AVT therapy is essential in deaf education, not every hearing person/professional will understand its capabilities. Once again, I

was confronted with the narrow view in deaf education that I so passionately wanted to redefine. I can see through this event that her eyes were shut, and she only had one objective as she attended our party like a bounty-hunter searching for the one that got away.

A potter's wheel—yes, that is where I think I have been these past 25+ years in deaf education. Like a lump of clay, shaped and reshaped until I have been fashioned for effectiveness within this specialized field. I have always held to my deep-rooted convictions that there is so much more to do in this field. I have been anxiously awaiting, dreaming, seeking, and training for such a time as this! Shifting from a dream to reality—I am elated!

Darkness is the Absence of Light

Wake up! Wake up! It was only a dream! The same recurring dream. I am on one side of some great divide and the deaf students are on the other side. They are calling out to me, but I cannot understand what they are asking of me. The gulf is impassable—so vast, so deep. I want to help, but it appears my understanding to meet their needs is concealed. I know it to be possible. Sometimes your passion demands a deeper commitment—you cannot pour from an empty cup. What is in my cup, and what can I offer?

A memoir! What was I thinking? Do I really want to explore my experiences of the past 25+ years in deaf education for all to read? What if events are too emotional to relive? What if these lived experiences reveal a part of my character I would rather not expose? I am not just telling the history of my journey; I am unveiling myself to an audience who may personally connect or those who may adamantly oppose. Am I willing to risk telling my personal experiences in some internal search to locate the “real” me as I morphed from an educational interpreter to a deaf education teacher to an auditory-verbal therapist? “You (Karr, 2015) can’t sign up for football and whine that you have been hit” (p. 117).

Consciously or subconsciously—are educators perpetuating discriminatory philosophies within a hidden curriculum? Are educators allowing the unjust order within society to accept these practices as the norm by which the school system operates? We look through a glass that is full of murky water and tell ourselves that we can see clearly. The murky dark water has become the fixed standard that is now the lens that we measure equality, equity and justice. The marginalized can see the murky water for what it is because it is their reality. The darkness of this point of view justifies the ideology as the mutual acceptance dictated by the dominant society. As Freire expresses, our education system operates through an absence of scholarly dialogue and the culture of silence promotes a disassociation and lack of accountability. Darkness is the absence of light.

A five-year-old AVT student of mine, named Lucy, eagerly desired to share the single-pack of gummy bears that she had brought for lunch. This little girl, who was definitely ready to graduate from the program, began to give her gummy bears to her best friend, Susie. Another student, Jim had asked if he could have one, Lucy looked into the small pouch and seeing only one gummy bear left responded, “Susie, give him your gummy bear I don’t want to share anymore.” Signing up to write a non-traditional dissertation, in theory, sounded awesome! I teach in a non-traditional specialized field with non-traditional deaf students. I enjoy the road less traveled; however, what if I begin sharing my journey and realized that I have given all that was in my pouch away. I am left wondering if sharing made me full and satisfied or made me depleted and bare?

In an effort to reach heights, seeking the truth is complicated within writing your interwoven story. You must first search the foundations of why telling your reality of transformation is significant. Flowery passages and pretty words create a disconnect within the

story. I must uncover the complexity of my truth with all its positives and negatives that shape the reality of my lived experiences in deaf education.

The Individualized Disability Education Act (IDEA) prohibits discriminatory practices and protects the rights of students to a free and appropriate education (FAPE). I studied and upheld the various disability laws for deaf students never thinking that it could be used against me. As a teacher of the deaf (TOD) at the middle school level, I had a very bright middle-school deaf student who signed fluently; however, his anguished mother often found ways to conjure up complaints against me as the TOD and my team of interpreters. Any opportunity to criticize my teaching appeared to be her daily mission. As I reflect now, it seemed she was fighting her own internal struggles for wanting so much more for her son. I became her number one target on a routine basis. She had requested to be her son's personal sign language interpreter and when this was denied she became infuriated. Often as I would sign-in on the attendance sheet located in the principal's office, there she sat waiting for another occasion to express her grievances to a higher power. When this did not suit her any longer, she began to go straight to the special education director's office. When this no longer quenched her thirst for my blood, she began to write letters to the department of IDEA.

In response to the letters to the IDEA, the special education director was ready to combat this informal complaint with my team's credentials, letters of professionalism, and other parent's documentation that supported our level of expertise and commitment to students with disabilities. The department of IDEA stated this was not necessary as this parent did not have grounds to file such complaints. It was another life lesson that I learned quickly— many hearing parents, exasperated with the circumstances that their deaf child is experiencing, need someone to blame for their pain—their unplanned journey. Who can fight against a parent that

feels responsible and sometimes guilty for the challenges his/her child is encountering in education? If a TOD personalizes this attack, he/she will lose sight of the dynamics of teaching deaf students and meeting the emotional needs of the parents—they are a team needing a team approach.

I am not without emotions! This parent pushed every button within my personal and professional DNA. She went to lengths to sabotage my teaching efficacy. On one occasion, it appeared she instructed her son if he was interested in trying out for basketball that he could stay after school; however, he nor his mother shared this information with our teaching staff. On this afternoon, he went straight to the gym as if he were going to the bus. Of course, there wasn't an interpreter to meet him for we did not know his plans to tryout. It was only by coincidence, that one of our interpreters was signing her son up for the same tryouts. When the mother of our student appeared, she demanded to see the administration because he did not have an interpreter as she was oblivious to the fact an interpreter was there and working in that capacity for the deaf student. It only goes to show the lengths she attempted to discredit our TC program. There are always two sides to a coin and I can only reflect on my viewpoint.

I heard a story long ago about the Good Shepherd, as the Shepherd tends to his sheep, he has to watch for the adversary outside the flock, and the adversary within the flock, as well as, the insects that have penetrated and attached themselves to the sheep. I wanted to protect my students from the outside forces and keep a watchful eye out for the inside influences, but it was clear to me, I was no match for the parasite that was embedded and looking for blood.

I am reminded in this recaptured memory of Karr's (2016) words, "what would you write if you were not afraid?" (p. 34).

Just as I Am

Knowing who you are and how you react in certain situations, allows you to see why others react as they do. It is like a paradigm shift when knowing yourself allows you to see others and their behaviors through a new interpretation.

Westover (2018) reflects that being raised in an unconventional off-the-grid existence—with religious dogma adhered to by her father—shaped her into the person she could not shake. She recounts that as she looked into the mirror the little 16-year-old girl was always the image that locked her into her past. Working on her PhD, she looked into the mirror once more and notice the girl of the past was gone and that the decisions she made now were based off her self-transformation. “You could call this selfhood many things. Transformation. Metamorphosis. Falsity. Betrayal. I call it an education” (p. 329).

Many years ago, my husband and I went to a marriage enrichment seminar. In this seminar we completed self-evaluations to identify our love language and then compare it to your spouse’s love language. As was the case with many of the participants, no one shared the same language as their spouse. Our assignment was to learn key features of their language described in the handout and reflect on past examples that highlighted this language. That was many years ago; however, when we are not in agreement, I reflect back to this exercise to get a better picture of my spouse’s motive and behavior. Understanding who you are is only one aspect of understanding others.

In high school, I was required to create a Venn diagram of all the aspects that make me who I am. When I reflect on the assignment now, I realize that all the components that make up who I am affect me and others in my surroundings. Firstly, I am rooted in my faith and believe strongly in my convictions and commitment. Since my childhood, I have relied on the blessed principles of my faith. Secondly, I am a wife to my best friend and husband of thirty-one years

who makes me feel protected and cherished. Thirdly, I am a mother and grandmother four times over with one more grandchild on the way; I sometimes like the grandmother element the best! Fourthly, I am an auditory-verbal therapist/teacher of the deaf, and the journey to this place was paved with great passion and commitment—tears and joy.

In writing this memoir, I come just as I am, all the unique qualities that make me who I am. If I write to please the reading audience and lose my openness, then my shared experiences will become questionable and confusing to the reader. In a balance, readers begin to trust who you say you are. They don't desire to engage in stories that are full of sorrow and conflict, but for each event surveying how survival and persistence were pursued and have shaped you in the process.

I realize I have never walked in the shoes of a parent of a deaf infant nor have I ever depended on sign language as my only mode of communication. I have never felt isolated due to being non-verbal. I have never been frustrated because going to the movies (before closed captioning) nor using a regular telephone (before TTYs or texting) to call a friend, nor ordering food from a drive-thru restaurant. Although I am a TOD and an AVT therapist and have an association within the deaf society, I am on the outside of the deaf world. They face insurmountable challenges routinely and I cannot identify with their unique reality.

One afternoon at the playground at Sound Start, Lucy's cochlear implant battery died. She was so mad due to her inability to communicate with her friends. She approached me sitting on the bench and declared, "My battery is dead you need to go get me another one from the room!" I answered, "Lucy, I have to watch the other students, you will have to wait until we return to the classroom. I cannot leave all the other students." Lucy, in her mature mannerism

stated, “It is your responsibility to make sure my batteries are working! I’ll watch the students, she exclaimed, and you go get my batteries!”

In Lucy’s words, it is my responsibility. As an associated member of the deaf society, I can use my voice to advocate for the new AVT deaf student seeking place and space in the educational setting. It is not a soapbox mentality; it is a quest for equality, equity, and identity. As we look introspectively at our educational philosophies and discriminatory practices, our biases manifest, and scholarly dialogue can emerge. As Kaminsky (2019) illustrates “each of us is a witness stand, we don’t say anything, each of us a witness stand, and no one stands up. Our silence stands up for us” (p. 43).

It is my responsibility as an informed AVT therapist/teacher to educate, expose, and create a forum for special education and regular education scholars to stand up to the discrimination, inequality and inequity of AVT deaf students. How can they find place and space if we restrict the learning interaction for only the able-bodied students? Is this what Foucault (1977) was describing when examining the docile-bodied students being conditioned by set powers within the institution of the educational system? I was recently in a discussion with another educator who worked in special education. She shared what is called ability placement and/or academic tracking which groups all low-performing students, with and without IEPs, into one classroom without considerations for specific exceptionalities or deficits. Is this the inclusion that scholarly educators are seeking?

Check Your Biases at the Door

Biases are not like some coat that can be put on or taken off at the discretion of the owner. I recognize that I have a few biases regarding AVT deaf students. I am quite aware that I can become indignant if you attempt to dehumanize one of my beloved students. About a year

ago my class went to a local community park to hunt Easter eggs and enjoy a picnic. I had about eight students on this outing, they were talking and playing and laughing as typical preschoolers would do. A young mother with her younger child approached the monkey bars where my students were playing. She saw their cochlear implants and various levels of language development and quickly removed her child to another part of the playground as if her child was going to catch the disease of deafness!

I wanted to yell, “We are not contagious!” I actually thought very unprofessional expletives would have best suited this level of ignorance, but my internal fortitude gave me better reserve, for I know I represent my school and the nonprofit organization I work for—Savannah Speech and Hearing Center. I guess people would forgive her silly actions, but I better restrain, or I would be the one suffering the consequences of my reaction to her behavior! I don’t think this is what Freire meant when speaking of the action-reflection process in interpreting reality?

Would you want to walk a mile in the shoes of a parent that has just received the news that her newborn is deaf? Consider for a moment, the parents’ reaction to hearing their child has a sensorineural deficit, the decisions they have to make with no time to spare, and the unknown of a new world of specialists and medical teams that now become a critical part of their daily operations. This is their new reality. One parent shared with me that when her child was denied enrollment, she actually got on her knees and began to beg the administrator to please reconsider.

Mothers start to wonder, “will I ever hear my child speak?” Will I ever hear the words, “I love you, mommy?” These hearing parents are devastated and the task before them appears

insurmountable. These feelings are beautifully expressed in a poem by Kinsley (1987) entitled Welcome to Holland. (video <https://vimeo.com/389027385> & Appendix #3)

My AVT student, Susie was talking to a newly implanted four-year-old student, Kim. Susie was nodding her head to every unintelligible word Kim expressed. Another student, Lucy who was sitting on the opposite side of Kim, leaned over towards Susie and asked, “What did she say?” Susie said, “I don’t know, I can’t understand her.” Lucy, shaking her head in agreement said, “I never know what Kim is saying.” In memoir, if no one understands what you are saying—what good is it? If you attempt to hide behind your biases, that mixed message resonates beyond the printed words you have chosen to say or not to say. I have biases in deaf education; however, I am questioning if these opinions will be understood?

I am an advocate for parents making informed decisions after finding out their newborn is deaf. These choices include total communication (TC) along with a manual communication system (American Sign Language -ASL), or another option would be an auditory-verbal therapeutic (AVT) approach along with technology such as cochlear implants (CIs). Whatever they determine is best for their family, it remains their personal decision and is not to be questioned. With 95% of hearing parents choosing the AVT option, many of these families will start the AVT journey equipped with knowledge and an understanding of the level of commitment required to support their child in listening and spoken language therapy (LSLT).

Firstly, in an AVT approach, the child by the age of one year old will undergo surgery for the CI and begin therapy immediately through a parent and infant program. This journey is not for the half-hearted for the undertaking at the onset is a continuous unrelenting commitment. Many parents will start out strong with full intentions to see their child develop spoken language and function verbally in a hearing society. It is so important to stress that

technology does not work without the AVT therapy. When you—the teacher—start to see familiar patterns as in poor CI usage, broken or missing CIs, absentees, reduced teacher-parent communication, and /or complaints and excuses; know that the parent has already mentally switched to a less involved approach.

One mother told me a few years back, after choosing for her infant daughter an AVT approach and undergoing surgical implants, stated that her now two-year-old toddler really wanted to communicate in sign language so they would not be attending the program any longer. It is difficult for me to understand when parents start this intensive process which was explained at length and they chose implants, that they can now become indifferent to seeing it through. The mother explained to me that she would be continuing to have the child wear the CIs but would no longer be participating in the AVT program.

We live in a small community, so I would often see the family out at the grocery store or at a gas station. The child would never have on the CI device. When I would ask about this concern the mother always had an excuse. On another occasion. I was at a funeral and the uncle of this child was there. He excitedly announced that the family has now decided to wear the CIs again and start the AVT program again so she could learn to talk since this now eight-year-old was neither talking nor signing. I explained that there is a critical time period and I am not sure that the AVT approach would be of any benefit at this late stage. I was professional, but I wanted to scream, “You cannot ride the fence between the two communication options without impeding the child’s progress!” The brain’s neuroplasticity will slow down as the child matures and as a result auditory skills will suffer. Therein lies my bias, my frustration, and my controversy.

I am reminded of Karr's (1995) reflection as she describes vividly of the time her grandmother was in the hospital due to cancer and how gangrene had set in her leg and it had to be amputated. The hospital room was filled with the stench of rotten flesh. It was exposed and she questioned why the doctors did not try to bandage the remaining portion or cover it up. "Real suffering has a face and a smell. It lasts in its most intense form no matter what you drape over it. And, it knows your name" (p. 49). These words caution me as I am writing this memoir. Do I expose the portion that stinks? I will never forget the face and smell of anger that ignites within me as I recall this story of this undervalued deaf student.

What would I have said to this family if I weren't afraid? I would have started with the history shared by the mother that her controlling husband made all the decisions in their household. He did not like his wife to travel to Savannah and the cost and time was not something he would support. In addition, I know your non-verbal toddler never told you that she wanted to communicate in sign language. I also never believed you were going to continue to be diligent for your child in wearing the selected technology (CIs) you chose for her. Furthermore, when you became disillusioned with your child's progress at the later age, even if it wasn't too late, you would have not embraced the commitment needed to prosper. You started a journey and then determined the cost, time, and effort was more than you were willing to invest for your child's communication development. If there were a license that allowed me to say all that is on my mind within this specialized field, I cannot align with a wishy-washy parent. Oh, don't open the floodgate because if opened I may never be able to close it again—and keep my own self-respect based in my professionalism and reserve! You devalued your deaf child, when within this age of technology, she could have soared.

I waited for this day to come when research and technology combined with therapy supported listening and spoken language for deaf individuals. What a time in medical history that we are seeing such advances for deaf children and I get to be a part of this experience!

As one of my four-year-old deaf students said the other day, “Ms. Tracy, I have a secret I want to tell you.” I love when this happens because they usually cup their small hands over their mouth and talk into your cheek, as to imitate others that tell secrets. “I got you a present and I am going to tell you what it is!” I discouraged this, and stated, “If you tell me the gift, it will no longer be a secret.” She responded, “I don’t care, I just want you to know.” Like my student, I could say my biases are a secret, but it’s more important to me that the reader knows my private peeves. I really don’t think biases are concealed for they have a way of manifesting themselves in your words and actions. Biases know your name and if they are exposed it will stink!

You Don’t Know the Cost

As a student in Speech Pathology at Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU) in 1996, I spent many summers at the Jewish Educational Alliance Center (JEA) in Savannah. Dr. Goldsmith and his speech and audiology team from The Georgia Ear Institute at Memorial would conduct a summer camp for deaf students over the age of twelve-years-old who had been implanted with cochlear implants. Since this was in the late 1990s, this technology was fairly new. The camp’s daily agenda included speech and language therapy along with many fun activities, such as swimming. The cochlear implants were not waterproof as they are now, and the students had to take off their devices while swimming. During these activities without the devices, we relied on sign language to communicate; as we were the only ones in the pool at this time, sign language was quite natural. While we were all swimming, a deaf young girl,

maybe 14 years-old, whose nickname was Peaches, signed that she wanted both of us to jump into the deep end of the pool. I signed back, “Yes.” Peaches weighed approximately 150 pounds, and she loved to laugh. She jumped in first, and then I jumped in right after her. Before I knew it, she had the tightest grip around my neck. The fright that was on her face instantly revealed to me that she could not swim. I could not get her off of me, and signing was not even a possibility. Her grip continued to choke me as we would go to the bottom of the pool and rise up again. I screamed for help but remember everyone is deaf! Again, down, down, down to the bottom of the pool. My cries for help through a water-filled mouth seemed hopeless.

On the third attempt to rise from the bottom of the pool, I said to myself that we will not make it back to the top again for her hold on me left me breathless. I am going to die at the bottom of the JEA pool and no one hears my cry for help—everyone is deaf to my cry! Then out of nowhere, a young girl—blonde, thin, and weighing about 100 pounds, the lifeguard on duty that I had not noticed before—came up under me like an angel with Herculean strength and pushed me to the top! I did not die that day!

You would think I could remember the words I expressed to Peaches or the appreciation I bathed onto the lifeguard; however, I do not remember. Somehow my sole memory of that event centers around me and attempting to survive. I was drowning and all my hopes, aspirations and future were going to die and all I wanted to do was fight for another day.

“Everyone (Karr, 2015) who wades deep enough into memory’s waters drowns a little” (p. 27). If you want to learn to swim, you will eventually have to remove the protective swimmyies. I had plans! Although I was a speech pathology student, I always knew my passion was in deaf education. I wanted to be the best—yes, the best—teacher of the deaf. Not for some superficial title or misdirected praise but to truly help deaf students learn to communicate in a

hearing world. I wanted to be a trailblazer in the field of deaf education. Even before I began teaching auditory-verbal therapy with students who had been implanted, I dreamed of the day deaf students would learn to listen, speak, and verbally communicate with their hearing peers. Dying at the bottom of the JEA pool in 1996 was not an option for me. I had plans!

The Journey of a Thousand Miles

I hunger. I thirst. It is unquenchable. This past summer, I was taking numerous online audiology and auditory-verbal therapy continuing education (CEU) courses for an auditory-verbal therapy (AVT)-AG Bell Association national certification. I was absorbing the information like a sponge. I could not learn it fast enough and I wanted more! I would sit there for hours taking course after course, enjoying each moment like a kid in a candy store. As I was in the middle of a course that was targeting the benefits of cochlear implants for deaf individuals, I began to cry. The tears were not pretty little misty tears but more like a river that ran down my cheeks that dropped onto the wooly blanket I had wrapped myself in that afternoon. Since I was a child, my desire has been to work within the deaf population. This passion and commitment have enveloped me and my relentless dream for what the deaf education field could offer for deaf students consumes my thoughts day and night. My daughter jokingly says that, while in a group conversation, I have a knack for somehow steering the discussion to my passion related to this zealous devotion. When people ask how I got interested in sign language, I love to share this story of how one Sunday morning in 1989 changed everything for me, and my course was set.

As the cliché states the journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. We all have that moment that we can pinpoint that changed our course and future and this is mine. This is my first step. I was in church one morning, and we had a visiting college that ministered in sign

language and interpretive dance. I was like a wide-eyed child. I have never been the same since then as something kindled in my soul that day that set my course for training in this field of deaf education. My first introduction to sign language. This was not within an educational design, but through a creative performance.

The whitest white I think I had ever seen. If I had to estimate, I would guess that there were a dozen Emmanuel College students wearing glowing white angelic-like robes that seemed to glisten with every movement. These ladies ministering at my church in September of 1989 aligned themselves across the platform in two rows with the old piano on one side and the traditionally centered wooden podium was moved to the other side giving each lady space to dance. I was mesmerized. I was enthralled. The music, the lyrics, the facial expressions, and the movements captivated me. I tried to think of the most perfect definition to describe how I felt as I watched each lady move in synchronicity with the rhythm of the song and with one another, which illuminated the atmosphere of our small rural church in Garden City, Georgia. It was like watching a leaf as it flows in the swirling summer breeze and although you know it is a leaf in the wind, it transformed into past the set object and spoke to you. I heard songs like, *How Great Thou Art*, *Amazing Grace* (video -**Amazing Grace** <https://vimeo.com/383083934>), and *The Old Rugged Cross* that resonated throughout the congregation with every note being matched with facial intensity and every silent pause charged the sanctuary as people stood to worship. I wanted to dance like that! It was not a performance but was captivating and powerful. The message of the lyrics was transformed to such a depth that it crossed over from a song to sing into a message delivered non-verbally but profoundly understood. This event powerfully impacted my life in such a way that sparked an unrelenting interest in sign language and later led me to this journey in deaf education. And so, my story begins.

I started taking classes at Savannah Speech and Hearing Center with Hazel Davis who has a son with hearing loss. After sensing my eagerness, she took me under her wing to train me in developing sign language skills. I went week after week to each class—I could not wait for the weekly class to gather. I became immersed in the deaf community attempting to learn the language as efficiently as a hearing person could. I began to understand the Deaf culture and their challenges and their successes. I was allowed limited membership into their guarded world. My instructor Hazel stated that the best way to develop sign language skills is to learn it in connected speech as in storytelling or song lyrics. The first song I choreographed was Sandy Patty's, *We Shall Behold Him*. Along with Hazel, my Deaf friends helped me create a piece they were accepting of, and I found that I enjoyed this type of presentation and performative ministry. (video-**We Shall Behold Him** <https://vimeo.com/383073627>)

The performative interpretation later developed into an interpretive dance that may or may not utilize sign language. If I continued to associate with the Deaf culture, I was accepted. If I chose a more verbal path in deaf education, I would lose the friendship status and become a foe. My passion, respect, and commitment have never wavered; however, my choices and training allowed me to explore other options within deaf education and oralism. A few years back, I was interpreting for a few of my friends at church, and as we were talking later the deaf wife told the deaf husband that I was a traitor. If I supported cochlear implants for deaf infants, then they felt disrespected by this choice. This was the first time in my career that I realized that my goals in deaf education had great potential to create a discord between me and the Deaf population I so respected.

I understood that the Deaf culture utilized American Sign Language (ASL) and I was taught in a total communication (TC) format. Total communication allows sign language, lip-

reading, and hearing aids but not cochlear implants. Most post-lingual adolescent deaf students who were implanted in the advent of this technology had already embraced ASL as their first language and have since returned to a TC approach and are discouraged by the Deaf community to embrace the previously implanted CI technology. Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) or oralism existed but not within public education, not as an early intervention program, and not as we know it today. Those who have been implanted in infancy and follow a listening and spoken language (LSLT) track may be considered deaf without the capitalization which indicates that they are verbal and do not rely on a manual communication system to converse.

I am recalling a story from over twenty years ago when one of my middle-school Deaf students was attempting to express herself. She was frustrated due to a homelife that was affected by alcoholism. She went to a basketball game with some of her friends and desiring to convey her level of anger exclaimed, "I just want to die!" The sign language interpreter sitting nearby, who was there supporting her fiancé, the basketball coach, heard the student's exclamation. As a mandated reporter she told the proper authorities.

The next thing I know my student was placed in a mental hospital on a suicide watch. She was given a sign language interpreter which she had no relationship with, and she refused to talk to the hospital staff. Her mother and I were not allowed to be a part of her initial care. This was quite frustrating, and this is not the first time this student had experienced confusing situations. About a year prior to this, this student was kissing a boyfriend and wanted to talk to me about having a physical relationship with her boyfriend. I discussed this with the school counselor that she needed a sex education class that was explained through sign language. He said I would not be allowed to discuss her concerns any further and if she had questions, she could make an appointment with him along with her interpreter. My point in telling these

stories is that deaf students have had to fight for place and space in the educational and social constructs. And the able-bodied society does not understand their struggle. Their language is at times their barrier and their literal thinking an additional obstacle.

There is a social, cultural and political process that lays claim on controlling the ability of people with disabilities to perceive place and space only within the parameters the set powers determine appropriate for their given disability. Most of this is a given at birth. The body-mind as space is only allowed to operate independently as the dominant society imposes. The disabled person learns early that their bodies (space) are only permitted to navigate (place) within oppressive limits.

Another Deaf student in a post-secondary placement who had turned 19 years-old, started dating an underaged girl. The relationship progressed to a physical relationship and later the girl's family pressed charges. My student did not understand the legal ramifications of this relationship as it was a mutual physical relationship. He was put on house arrest with an ankle bracelet. The lack of understanding fostered such a fear of actually going to prison that the student some 15 years later refuses to leave his home and will only travel with his parents if they are going to a non-public location as in other family members' homes. The language barrier comprised of ASL sign language, the physical appropriate/inappropriate sexual exchanges, and vocabulary challenges made it impossible to use society's language to object to the criminal charges. It is not an easy task to utilize the dominant language that is foreign to the subdominant population to combat oppressive domains. This is expressed by embodied geographies as socio-spatial constructs for "the abled-body shape particular environments to serve to exclude the disabled from society, marking them out as different in particular spaces whilst simultaneously rendering them invisible" (Edwards, 2014, p. 33-34).

As I considered both stories of my students needing to know more about the legal system and sex education, I began to incorporate targeted lessons that addressed terminology and relativity. In various approved thematic units, I designed curriculum in a hierarchical format. I started with something more interesting that would allow the students to take part in the lesson—a pre-planned wedding ceremony. One student was the bride, another was the groom, others were the wedding party. The vows and targeted vocabulary were the legal focus of these lessons. A reception followed that included all the parents and marked vocabulary was stressed.

The next lesson would be targeting simplistic medical vocabulary. Using a TTY which is a special type-to-voice telephone system connected to Georgia Relay, the students ordered a pizza, and each had to know their home address. Next, we advanced to call a pre-planned 911 emergency call. In addition, we visited the local hospital and a nurse guided this field trip to focus on the pre-selected medical terminology. The nurse put one of my students on a gurney and wrapped him in gauze. It was an exciting proactive lesson and all the students wanted to have their blood pressure checked and lay on the hospital bed.

The next lesson involved our school's resource officer who came to my room and arrested me. The officer placed me in the back of his police car. The students were cheering this officer on to keep me and take me to jail! The officer read me the Miranda Rights and that became the focus of the next lesson within this legal theme. Later that week, we received permission to visit the local courtroom and observe an actual trial. We sat in the balcony so interpreting would not be distracting from the official procedure.

This new level of knowledge and empowerment is a proactive example in addressing the interconnectedness of critical pedagogy and disability studies. As each lesson incorporated

new vocabulary within context through hands-on learning experiences, the Deaf student had a better understanding of the legal system through a functional-independent approach.

Through a Freire-like critical-thinking analysis, I began to develop more specific curriculum that could be delivered through the ASL language which included hands-on, visual, and relative lessons. The Deaf student struggles in reading so I knew I could not use a textbook to teach this information. Once at an IEP meeting, I explained that the reading deficits reflected the student's ASL structure as it does not follow the written English structure. The student, although very bright, had a below grade average in reading development. I began to share that this is often seen in Deaf students, when out of nowhere the six foot-7 inches tall enraged father slammed his fist on the table—the jolt to table shook the water glasses that were placed in front of each IEP participant—as he exclaimed he was tired of hearing these statistics and there was no reason his son could not achieve age-appropriate reading skills! I countered; “I did not write the research. I did not create the statistics. I did not set these as my guidelines in teaching!” Isn't it funny how some people are allowed to lose their temper and others must remain calm to give a façade of balance?

This parent demanded normalcy. He demanded a conformity that placed his son toward the center of the circle and not on marginalized realms. Otherness and alterity would not be traits he was willing to accept for his son. He knew he had a very intelligent child so why was reading skills such an obstacle? This enraged father was looking at me for the answers, but my responses only solidified that his son was not a part of his parent's culture—the hearing culture.

Zinsser (1998) states that “objects suggest narrative” (p. 19). As I recall the quaking water glasses placed on the table at this IEP meeting, it conjures up memories and emotions, but to put those memories into words is quite difficult. Who can explain anger –my anger—to

actually capture the magnitude of that moment? It is like being stung by a swarm of bees and then you realize you are not wearing any protective gear and you want to run—escape—but the bees are intent on injecting their venom and the stingers have left a lasting effect.

Even If I Get Stung, I Will Remain a Beekeeper

With this training in sign language, I had earned some local certifications and was working on the state certification through Georgia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (GRID). I was offered a job as an educational sign language interpreter in Effingham County. My duties included interpreting for a post-lingual deaf twelve-year-old middle school student who had just been implanted with cochlear implants (CI). Cochlear implants were first introduced in 1970 as a one-channel device that restricted the effectiveness of the implants. Later in 1980, the device was redesigned for a multi-channel option and was approved by the FDA for adults only. Cochlear implants are a device that is surgically inserted into the cochlea to replace the damaged hair receptors and restore the function of the inner ear. Throughout the years, cochlear implants have been improved and became available for deaf adolescents. In 2000, the FDA approved cochlear implants for toddlers one year of age and older; however, some research hospitals are implanting infants as young as six-months-old in an effort to collect data for evaluating the benefits of early implantation.

In 1992, researchers explored the benefits of cochlear implants for post-lingual deaf individuals—those who communicated in sign language as their primary language. It was not until later that researchers concluded that pre-lingual deaf infants achieved greater success from cochlear implants compared to post-lingual older students due to the brain's neuroplasticity. As a deaf child matures, the brain will create new pathways to receive information when hearing accessibility is inadequate.

The student who received cochlear implants at the age of twelve never became proficient in spoken language. He was not in an auditory-verbal therapeutic (AVT) setting but received weekly speech and language therapy; however, the challenge was too demanding with minimal communication gains. He became frustrated and often took it out on me. I have had to dodge erasers as the chalk dust left its imprint through the room every time as he missed his target—me. School desks, profanity expressed in signs, and soaring-through-the-air cochlear implant devices were a typical routine during this student-interpreter relationship. He would take his cochlear implants (CIs) off and close his eyes so he could not hear me via implants or signs. I could see past these behaviors, and this student is my beloved friend to this day. He, as he often reflects, will laugh about his middle-school behavior now and I guess it's better for me to laugh with him than to rehash the unpleasanties.

I enjoyed this career as an educational interpreter; however, I had the most creative teacher of the deaf training me, and I wanted to be like her. She would bring in her keyboard and teach lessons through music as she was the music minister at her church. She once gave me a lip-reading lesson to teach as she was instructing others in the classroom. At that time, I did not know I had a southern accent or a southern ear. I looked at her list of words which included pin/pen, win/when, pill/peel, get (git)/wet, and for/fur—easy enough I had seen the TOD do this many times. I began to teach the lesson when the speech pathologist entered the room and started laughing at my accented pronunciations. Life lesson—do not mispronounce words in front of a speech pathologist! The TOD began to instruct me on correcting my accented pronunciations and I learned so much from her.

In writing memoir, one memory beckons me further into another memory and the thread that is ever-present is not linear but intertwined; however, it remains one thread. I feel like a

rubric cube in that I need to solve the puzzle within my memories to show one solid picture. The journey of matching each cube will resonate from the smaller stories “anecdotes (Karr, 2015) into an overarching capitol-S Story that will come into view as memories connect to memories” (p. 148).

Through the leadership and devotion of this TOD, I soon desired my own deaf education classroom, and I saw a field that was wide open as even now educators of the deaf are in limited supply. The decision to leave this interpreting position and pursue a teaching degree became my new goal. Scared? Yes, but not enough to stop me from obtaining this goal.

The Sail is Subject to the Power of the Wind

I set a course but could not fathom where I would land. My Aunt Annabel was the voice in my head that navigated my passion in deaf education. Her sister, my Aunt Ruth, had always said my love for Annabel set me on this course from my childhood. Life lessons for understanding the deaf population were taught to me at a very young age through my Aunt Ann, who we called Annabel. She was born in the 1930s with Usher’s Syndrome, which is a progressive disease that involves a profound hearing loss and deteriorating progressive loss of vision. Of course, not having the technology we currently have, she had to endure bulky chest-worn hearing aids and other ostracizing technology offered to her in elementary school. Refusing to conform or be labeled, she became an excellent lip reader and soared academically which allowed her to function successfully in the hearing world. She became the bar to which I measured all other deaf students’ potential for communication and language skills.

I cannot remember a time in my early childhood that I thought about her deafness as a deficit. I knew that I had to face her when I spoke. I was also aware that my uncle Douglas had rigged their house with home-made devices to signal alarms, phone calls, and doorbells by

using various light sensors that would indicate the source of the sound. Actually, as a child, I thought that it was quite interesting how their house contained all these unique gadgets. I also noted that she had speech differences reflective of deaf speech, but it never bothered me. She was my Annabel, and she was perfect in my eyes.

Aunt Ann worked in accounting for a lady's clothing store and was a seamstress on the side. She had a high-frequency hearing loss and could hear some lower voices better in comparison. My uncle and my cousin learned to speak from a lower register in deep manly tones. I, on the other hand, as a female have a higher pitch in my voice quality, so she had to work even harder to talk with me and other females like me. She once told me that when my cousin Duggie was a baby, she would keep her hand on his chest as they slept in order to detect any (high frequency) cries during the night. She learned how to navigate her world to accomplish each task with liberation and independence. As technology improved, she began to wear behind-the-ear hearing aids, which allowed her even greater auditory access.

I routinely referred to her as the greatest listener I had ever talked to. She fixated on the speaker's communication delivery through the words, expressions, body language, and tone for the communication exchange. I see now that she had to work harder at communication than those with hearing if she wanted to be a proactive communicator. I watched as she would engage in conversations. Firstly, she would assess the location of the speaker and adjust her position through a natural manner that never stalled the conversation. Then she assessed the body language, the tones of the voice, the language structure, and the eye gaze of the speaker. All this while attempting to gather information from the environment as it yielded information about the topic. When I reflect on how intense this communication effort must have been for my aunt, I think of the day my husband decided he would teach me how to drive his '69

Camaro with a stick shift. I had to listen to the roar of the car as the RPMs became less intense, I had to push in the clutch and at the same time shift the gears. All this while watching the road and actually driving. It was an all-consuming task; it demanded all my attention and faculties, and I would even say it robbed me of the joy of driving this classic car. Is that the level of consciousness she required to communicate effectively—did it rob her of the communication pleasure?

In a better attempt to demonstrate her conscious communication efforts that were often witnessed routinely at restaurants, I am reminded of this example. Annabel would start conversations by looking at the menu and talking specifically about the meal choices. Waiting until all the others at the table had closed their menu, she would resume the conversation past the meal topics. She often would restate the sentence of others to ensure she heard them correctly. She relied on all these communication parameters to immerse herself into the conversation. Through her diligence and hard-work she became a good listener and speaker.

I often thought that if she can do it, why can't others? I pondered on what would be the vital keys to living a successful life in a hearing society as exemplified by Annabel. Were there more Annabels in the world? Could I be trained for this level of intervention? With this calling before me, what training would I need to equip deaf students desiring to be trained in oralism? This is not typically related to cognitive ability; I could not comprehend why students with this primary sensory deficit were being solely placed in special education. The traditional stereotypes of deaf-dumb, deaf-mute, and impaired continue to dehumanize this unique learner. Historically, individuals were placed in asylums or institutions due to their inability to verbally communicate. Annabel demonstrated great tenacity, and I was her student in these life lessons albeit unaware of its importance to me at the time.

I did not see otherness or difference, as she operated within the set mean of the abled-bodied sphere. She may have understood embodied geography for identity, place and space, but I was unaware of any struggle to identify place and space. Teather (1999) explains that the body is like a vehicle that travels in and out of different spaces. The disabled body understands that space is not passive or neutral but is subjective to the policies (place) that include or exclude the independent navigating within society. In this reflection, I am now quite aware we all have a need to belong, interpret our identity, and develop independence; however, how much more demanding is it to the disabled individual seeking to become fully human?

I was at a women's meeting with my Aunt Ann some twenty years ago when two ladies were talking about other ladies within the group, they looked up and saw my aunt nearby and said, "It doesn't matter, she cannot hear us anyway." This infuriated my aunt, who heard every word from, as she put it, "those gossiping bitties." This was the first time I encountered such stereotypical thinking, but I quickly realized it was not her first.

My Annabel is no longer with us and my heart has never gotten over this great loss. I lost my aunt, my mentor, my friend, and my advisor for this plight in deaf education. I am still waiting for the day that death will lose its sting. I wish she were still here. I often feel that the advice that was based on her lived experiences as an individual with deafness motivated me for greater success within this field.

It's Time to Turn the Page

There is a story (Luke 10) that refers to Lazarus and his two sisters. One sister was *named* Martha and the other sister was *called* Mary. When I think on this passage, it appears that Martha's birth name was as stated, but Mary's name was changed. Mary could be derived from Miriam which means sorrowful. When I ponder further, could her passion have become

how people recognized her? She was called by her identity. I wear many hats in deaf education as do others in the field. I am a TOD educator. I am an auditory-verbal (AVT) specialist. I am a mentor to GSU students in Communication Disorders as well as Valdosta State University-TOD graduate students. I am an advocate for parents and AVT students. I am a team member. So, could I too be identified by my passionate position in auditory-verbal therapy and all that is required of me in the field?

When I started in education, I pursued a Speech-Language and Hearing degree because I wanted to work with students with hearing loss. I was offered an opportunity through Valdosta State University (VSU) to pursue Deaf Education based on the Speech-Language-Hearing Pathology (SLP) degree I had already earned at Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU). As I worked in deaf education for a few years, I became very aware that these students had severe reading deficits, so I continued my education to pursue an M.Ed. in Reading and a Reading Specialist Ed.S. degree at Georgia Southern University (GSU). In addition, I earned an Adult Literacy M.Ed. degree from Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU). Daily, I would passionately evaluate how I could be a better teacher to meet the specific needs of these profoundly deaf students. It's not like I could have asked Alexa-Echo this question as easily as one of my two-year-old students did when she asked Alexa, "Alexa, do you know the song, *Baby Shark*?" and instantly she received a blissful answer.

I became frustrated in the pursuit to improve communication and reading skills for Deaf-Hard-of-Hearing (D-HoH) students. I did not adhere to the typical deaf education statistics for reading and academic achievement. Having academic challenges is one thing; being satisfied with this standard is unacceptable. I was dissatisfied, and I became weary in the fight. It's actually sad to write these words on paper. How could I say it was my passion and motivation

and at the same time waving the white flag to surrender to the set philosophies? In one sentence, all I can say is I was done! I am out of here! I quit! Deafness looks a certain way, and who was I to think I could be a trailblazer in this specialized field. I wanted more, and somewhere in the fight of wanting more for these students I relinquished the torch and allowed the status quo my victories! (YouTube video **Deaf Education**- <https://youtu.be/AQat4Dtc62g>)

Self-actualization, achieving one's full potential through creativity, independence, spontaneity, and a grasp of the real world, is the term hooks (1994) uses to describe the body-mind split. Freire's teaching shaped her pedagogical philosophies which set her on a journey to foster "education as a practice of freedom" (p. 14). This is where the body-mind split comes into play—if the helper/healer (teacher) is unhappy or sick how do they help others? "Teaching is a performative act...it offers space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that serve as a catalyst drawing out unique elements in each classroom" (p. 11). The body went to class, but the mind must desire to engage in the learning process through rich critical thinking mediums. We open our minds to challenge status quo boundaries so that we can "transgress against boundaries" (p. 12) through independent thought and self-awareness we become open to dialogue that questions oppressive teaching practices.

My body and mind, in deaf education, was physically present, but my mind was unhappy, even exhausted as everyday begin to look like an assembly line of a set routine that lacked critical independent thinking.

Postlude

When examining the topic of deaf education, the theoretical frameworks of both disabilities studies and critical pedagogy are intertwined. Deaf students have a sensorineural disability and traditional fixed curriculum will not address the new AVT students entering the

public-school system. Before we, the scholarly educators, can begin to engage in critical thinking and reflective discourse, we need to look introspectively at who we are and what drives our educational philosophies. We must evaluate our biases and the principles that shape our teaching methodologies. If we are to become agents of transformation, we must begin with ourselves, if not we will not understand the injustice practiced within our school system regarding disabled students seeking place and space within the regular educational setting.

Geographical space is “fundamentally social and space is not a given nor is the city an object” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 45). It all concentrates around society and society’s inclusion or exclusion of citizenship. It cannot be stagnant, but it forces otherness into stagnant identities as it attempts to control difference and otherness from the dominant society.

Auditory-verbal therapy for pre-lingual children is still in its infancy, research, technology, early intervention, and therapy are interdependent within the AVT approach. The AVT therapy cannot be viewed in an isolated mentality as each skill is reliant on the hierarchy of language acquisition. Navigating this innovative structure in auditory-verbal therapy takes years of commitment, training, and diligence. Developing language acquisition for deaf students is a timely task, and at times, parents and teachers alike want to rush this process.

A five-year-old AVT student of mine refused to eat the cafeteria-prepared chicken and rice. He pushed his plate away, clenched his teeth, put his hand over his mouth, and even decided a tantrum of throwing his utensils and drink would be appropriate for expressing his unwillingness to eat this lunch. The threat of lost playground time, time-out, and no dessert had no effect on the student. He was grounded in his fixed position and was like a deeply embedded root refusing to be nudged. Without open dialogue, many scholarly educators refuse to adapt, adjust, modify, and/or accommodate the disabled student, this student doesn’t navigate the

inclusion learning space like the normed student. The student becomes invisible and disregarded as a potential learner. It is like pushing the plate away and refusing to participate because it is not your chosen dish.

The deaf education of the past will no longer address the academic needs of the AVT deaf student entering the public-school system. The advances in technology and therapeutic approaches for profoundly deaf students who are developing listening and spoken language skills make many educators, both special education teachers and regular education teachers, skeptical. This chapter explored the various components within deaf education and how the new AVT deaf students differ from the traditional deaf student who communicates through sign language. Communication modalities, the utilization of a sign language interpreter, verbal versus non-verbal, accommodations and modifications, and resource support differ for the Deaf student in comparison to the AVT deaf student.

As I share my lived experiences as an educational interpreter, total communication teacher (TOD) and an AVT therapist, each experience shaped my educational philosophies for an action-reflection critical thinking process through my interpretation of each personal experience. The interpretations foster my reality within deaf education. It is not long before your reality becomes your compass by which you navigate your world.

Freire (1970/2009) states that as we engage in critical pedagogy that we must read the reality of the world through the lens of independent thought. Reading the world is based in praxis as an action-reflection process for the objective of naming the reality in order to transform the status quo and set standards that confine the subdominant society into marginalized spaces. When I reflect on equality and equity, I think of this simplistic analogy; everyone may be given a steak at a restaurant, but does everyone have teeth to chew the steak?

This again reminds me of the ability tracking segregated grouping of lower performing students practiced in public education. Everyone is given the same information, but can all students digest and interpret the information properly? If ability grouping is supposed to make students successful without consideration of their specific learning needs, how is success measured?

CHAPTER THREE

MY MEMOIR CONTINUED

Prelude

This chapter consists of six episodes of my memoir: (1) the perfect job; (2) the leaves are changing colors; (3) interpretation and perception; (4) navigating the wilderness; (5) victory ahead; and (6) every day is a new page in my book. These six episodes illustrate the approaches in deaf education and advances in technology. These episodes also help compare and analyze Total Communication (TC) and Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) along with statistical outcomes related to each educational option. Hearing aids differ from cochlear implants in that hearing aids amplify sounds—both speech and environment. A cochlear implant in comparison is surgically inserted into the inner ear and restores the function of the cochlea. Severe to profound deaf students are candidates for cochlear implants. The auditory-verbal therapeutic journey is a huge undertaking. Parents are a vital part of an AVT approach.

Networking in a team approach is crucial—it does truly take a village. The parents, medical team, audiologists, speech therapists, AVT specialists, and public resource agencies are all necessary members of the networking team. As the AVT deaf student prepares to transition from the program into the local public education system, networking with the IEP team is another vital component of the team approach. Many times, this is the first encounter members of the public-education system have been exposed to the AVT approach and often see deafness through a fixed traditional lens.

An AVT therapist/teacher becomes a proactive advocate for the student and the parents. Parents choosing a Listening and Spoken Language (LSLT) approach have strong desires that

their child will be successful in a mainstream class learning alongside their hearing peers. The early commitment has taught many parents to fight for their child's right for justice and equity within the inclusion classroom.

And lastly, this memoir examined AVT students' reading and academic achievement scores achieved within the inclusion classroom through this LSLT approach. This chapter addresses the future implications for AVT deaf students entering public education that will no longer require the traditional curriculum practiced within deaf education.

The Perfect Job

The most soothing breeze danced around my face and hair simultaneously as I rode in my husband's red 1999 Dodge hunting truck on an old dirt road in Effingham County. We had been discussing the topic of my returning to work after I had been on a somewhat sabbatical from teaching deaf education. For a few years now, we had this same repetitious discussion. Why would I complete all this education if I had never planned to go back into the teaching field? I cannot say why I could not articulate this internal struggle, for how can I convey the frustration of my desire to attain the unattainable?

On this summer afternoon in 2011, with the warmth of the swirling wind caressing my inner and outer being, my husband changed his tactic and asked, "Explain your perfect job." After a small pause, I bitterly countered with, "It does not exist." He pressed, "Yes, but if it did, what would it be?" As the words began to form, tears paralleled every attempt as if the tears became the vehicle that allowed my deepest thoughts to be voiced. "It's a place where deaf students learn to talk, listen, read, and communicate alongside their hearing peers." Like the old song states, "To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe, to bear the unbearable

sorrow, to run where the brave dare not go” (Williams, 1971). This is my story, and this is my dream.

Frost states, in *The Road Not Taken* (1916), “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I- I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference.” Can one phone call actually change your trajectory? For many years while on a somewhat sabbatical from deaf education I had been working as a youth minister, a fine arts coach, a Sunday School teacher, and a Bible Quiz coach within my church. In July of 2011, I was in Kentucky with my youth group as we were competing at the National Fine Arts Festival when I received a phone call from my Speech Pathology (SLP) friend stating that Savannah Speech and Hearing Center was looking for a preschool teacher of the deaf (TOD) for their auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf preschool. Auditory-verbal therapy is based in research, technology like cochlear implants, and early intervention programs for pre-lingual deaf students choosing a listening and spoken language track (LSLT). I debated over accepting this position. It's not like I had not been offered a few job positions during this temporary sabbatical, but nothing ever felt right, and I quickly rejected these offers. This opportunity appeared different, but I needed to be sure.

Like Frost's (1916) poem, I was standing in the valley of decision—a crossroads where the possibility of making no choice at all seemed to be the safest option for my restless spirit. Was this what I had been longing for? It sounded perfect—deaf students on a listening and spoken language track (LSLT). I had worked in a total communication (TC) approach within deaf education for about seventeen years, but how would this compare and was I the right (TOD) teacher for these precious preschoolers? The job sounded perfect, but I am imperfect, and the challenge stirred a great fear within.

With extreme apprehension, I made the call. I was just going to ask specific questions to guide my decision, leaning more to solidifying reasons that supported my reluctance to make this commitment. The Executive Director of Savannah Speech, highly professional yet compassionate when discussing the Auditory-Verbal Deaf program and the students, somehow knew the exact words I was waiting to hear. I stated that I typically become deeply attached to the students since deaf students have the same teacher year after year and she stated if you didn't become attached something would be wrong! I expressed my knowledge in AVT was based on teaching post-lingual deaf students and they did not become successful verbal communicators. She explained how this was a different approach and that they teach pre-lingual deaf students in a listening and spoken language format. I wanted to say "yes," but an internal struggle had become the resonating voice that was directing me. You know the saying, "Be careful what you wish for?" Now, all that I had wished for in deaf education was within my reach, and I was terrified! If the job is the perfect job for me; what if I am not the perfect teacher for the job? (video-**Two Roads** <https://vimeo.com/383095880>)

The Leaves are Changing Colors

In writing a memoir, the writer must remain subjective so that the reader can find meaning for themselves through the writer's words and lived experiences. "[Memoir] allows the writer to go back and recover some lost aspects of the past so that it can be integrated into current identity" (Karr, 2015, p. 92). My mother called me and could not understand why I was conflicted about accepting this position at Savannah Speech and Hearing Center. She had always been my sounding board but in this matter, I could not verbalize my hesitation. My husband said, "Isn't this what you have always wanted? It sounds perfect!" My mother called again and said your dad wants to talk to you. He has always allowed me to be an independent

thinker, but I had a feeling this would be an out-of-character conversation. He said, “Tracy, you think ministry has to be behind a pulpit and I know that this has been your heart’s desire; however, what if your classroom and the deaf students are your ministry? Don’t dismiss this opportunity.” I replied while demanding that the quiver in my voice to stop and attempting to hold back the tears, “Dad, I am afraid!” There—I said it! “What if these students depend on me and I fail them?” He gave one last comment, “Don’t put your faith in your abilities.” My dad is no longer with us but his words of wisdom on this day gave me the courage to accept the AVT position at Sound Start.

After starting this new job at Savannah Speech and Hearing Center–Sound Start Auditory-Verbal (AVT) Deaf Preschool (2011), I met a seven-year-old student that had just graduated from this AVT program. Profoundly deaf with bilateral cochlear implants, this young girl was being showcased in the United Way’s annual fundraising campaign. With cameras rolling in my classroom after all the other students had left, this seven-year-old with long blonde hair wearing a pink dress with white tennis shoes began to read Dr. Seuss’ *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* To my amazement, I heard vocabulary, fluency, prosody, and language development that mirrored typically developing hearing peers. In the corner of the room, my tears began to fall like a river that was no longer restricted by a dam. Like the lifted dam, there was a great level of amazement and release as this student was reading and my ears heard the sound I had longed to hear. Through my astonishment, my internal voice was screaming, “How could this be happening—she is profoundly Deaf?”

I like the quote expressed by Thomas Edison (late 1800s), “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work” (online resource, 2020). Although I had been exposed to advances in technology within the deaf population, research was now supporting early

implantation of the cochlear implant paired with early intervention in order to facilitate listening and spoken language for deaf students. For the first time in twenty years in this profession, I heard a profoundly deaf student reading with ease. Every *ed, ing*, irregular verb, nonsense word, and expressive inflection resonated throughout the room or at least it resonated through my heart! Is this the deaf education of my education, training, and experience?

It's like I had awoken to find that my dream of profoundly deaf students being able to read and surpassing traditional milestones for deaf readers was becoming a reality. I no longer lived in the land of unbelief where deaf students could not master above an elementary reading level. I now could see the endless possibilities that were laid open for these students. This became my pivotal point; I knew this could be done within an auditory-verbal (AVT) program, now I had to learn how to achieve this level of mastery. (video -**To Dream the Impossible** <https://vimeo.com/383069292>)

Westover (2018) recalls the day she sang a solo at church. Her mother played the piano and she imagined the voices of the Brooklyn Tabernacle choir, “the sound was soft like a warm wind, but so sharp it pierced” (p. 82). She imagined the sound and thought in her mind that it was so natural and that by just thinking it she willed the sound into voice and voice into song. I can say on this day, hearing this deaf student read felt so natural. It was like all sounds came together in a song.

One of my four-year-old AVT student's cochlear implant had a damaged coil, which is easily fixed and quickly replaced by the manufacturer. It was the Christmas break and most offices were closed. The student had the replacement coil, but the audiologist specializing in mapping cochlear implants was out-of-state. The student hated being without access to sound and I received call after call from the parents and grandparents and other family members

demanding I intervene in this matter. I called the local audiologist who had already been on the phone with the manufacturer. The audiologist who recorded the mapping for this cochlear implant was out for the holidays, but they were trying to reach her. The student was frustrated, confused, and inconsolable. The family decided to take the child to the local mall and when the child entered through the automatic glass doors with white tile flooring and a desk-like counter, she was excited. She thought she was finally at the doctor's office and her cochlear implant would be mapped and her hearing restored. Through her narrow lens, all doctor's offices looked alike and all doctor's offices fixed cochlear implants. The familiar deaf education had the same look on the surface as the AVT approach; however, the objectives were quite different.

Interpretation and Perception

I cannot interpret that which I do not understand. Interpretation of an event leads to analysis and perception of an event leads to self-awareness. So, in using these descriptors, analysis leads to self-awareness. “[Through] decoding, people exteriorize their view of the world...to investigate reality and people's action upon reality... [through this coding and decoding process] they deepen their critical awareness of reality” (Freire, 2009, p. 106). In my self-awareness, I imagine that the unreachable star is only a star that—at that given time—has not been grasped. Every dream starts with the unattainable for how could it be considered a dream if so easily achieved? Vision is for those who are willing to dare to challenge the status quo and allow an inner voice to drive the fight.

Reality—your interpretation—is shaped by personal lived experiences. “All too often educators have found a will to include marginal [disabled students] without a willingness to accord their work the same respect given to others [able-bodied]” (hooks, 1994, p. 38).

Memoirists must stay true to their character and writing style; to deviate would bring a dishonest tone that causes readers to decide which parts are true and which are false. As hooks reflects, we have a sense of willingness, but lack all the components to create a liberation, independence, and identity.

An AVT student, Logan said he heard his dad calling his name from outside and demanded to meet him on the walkway, I let Logan go, and I was going to follow right behind him. He instantly reopened the door and brought in a nice-looking older gentleman. The older man was tall, thin, and had gray hair. Logan was holding his hand and was smiling from ear to ear as he was talking to this older man and introducing me. “This is Ms. Tracy! This is Ms. Tracy!” I told this gentleman it was nice to meet him. I had not gotten the pleasure of meeting this student’s grandfather before but welcomed him to our classroom. Almost simultaneously, Logan’s father entered the room. I cordially said to the father that I had just met your dad and Logan is so happy to have him in our class. The father disturbingly stated that his dad was in California, and we all looked at this older man with a puzzled gaze. The older man said the student invited him into the class and as a chairman of the Calvary’s school committee, he likes visiting the classrooms. We all laughed—at least outwardly. All the elements of being a grandfather were there; however, he was not this student’s grandfather, and we were all confused. In a memoir, you can include all the elements but if it's not your reality, it will suffer. Your memoir needs both ownership and trustworthiness. Reality—well it is real to the person who believes in the honesty that each experience exposes—becomes the well you draw from. These are sacred experiences that mold the lens in which you view your purpose for existing. The old adage states, “what is deep in the well, will come out in the bucket.”

The road to AVT is a collective memory I like to recall in great fondness. The highs outweighed any lows of this journey. The lows, if expressed, felt like a disrespect that nullified the AVT students, their families, and the specialist and medical teams all driven to see these deaf students achieve listening and spoken language. As Karr (1995), *Liars' Club*, expresses, my lows are like the ghost of specific events that stay in your head. “This ghost can call undue attention to itself by its very vagueness” (p. 9). Things I find hidden deep within are like impacted wisdom teeth—you are aware of their present and their pain, but to extract them feels more painful than the impacted pain. I can recall as a memory, but not an actuality; feeling like I would never be enough for these AVT deaf students. All the challenges of the past in Deaf education followed me like a lost dog. I wanted them to be successful communicators. I wanted the family members to want it more than me. I wanted them to learn to read! I wanted the AVT student to find their identity, their place and space, in the hearing society without discrimination or rejection. At times, what you don't want to remember seems to have the loudest voice by demanding to be exposed. My inner voice was screaming—see my student not their disability!

I dreamed of a day when deaf people could learn to listen and speak and read and have full citizenship into the hearing society. It was my vision and my hope that one day soon deaf AVT students would be accepted and besides the noticeable CI on the side of the head, able-bodied people would not see the disability but see the student and their otherness would be an accepted part of their identity. The dream was never a hope fashioned in a desire to diminish their otherness or alterity, but to allow educational freedom and independence within the hearing society. They have atypical hearing and they embrace this aspect of their identity.

About two years ago (2018), one of my three-year-old students was spotlighted for the United Way Campaign as they are a vital contributor to our nonprofit organization. The room was being set-up and they were waiting on the cameraman to begin filming. He was late, and the students were very energetic with all the activity within the room. As the cameraman was organizing his equipment, the AVT deaf students began various conversations with him. They were laughing as they were calling out his name, “Bob, hi Bob!” The conversations were lively, and Bob appeared to enjoy the interactions with the students. The administrative director asked the cameraman, “Is your name *Bob*?” He said, “no it was actually *Rob*.” She explained these students are deaf and as she was going to continue to expound on our AVT program, the cameraman exclaimed, “but they have been talking to me!” (video – **HA & CI AVT Technology** <https://vimeo.com/388593344>)

It truly baffles people when they hear the term deaf that there is only one lens in which these students can be viewed—disabled. My goal in curriculum studies with an emphasis on critical pedagogy and disability studies is to educate and foster awareness for society’s traditionally marginalized population. And on this day in 2018 through the words of the United Way camera man; my hope, my vision, my dream became a reachable star that I would be able to attain!

Does this mean they are no longer deaf? If you are speaking medically, they remain deaf. If you are speaking to the Deaf community, they are not one of them. If you are speaking to the hearing society, they remain skeptical. If you are speaking to the AVT deaf student, they identify in a third space that reflects the able-bodied center. Their known difference does not exclude them from becoming fully human—in their viewpoint. They may encounter various cynical educators, willing to include the presence of the body, but the mind and independent

thought are questionable. The *Roots* (Mitic, 2018) video describes looking for a place of acceptance beyond the traditional discrimination. (Video **Roots Carmanah**

<https://vimeo.com/397103203>)

Do all deaf learners, collectively, navigate the learning environment in the same manner? Will the roots of traditional deaf education impede the atypical AVT deaf student? A four-year-old AVT student was pulling his lunch out of his lunchbox and I noticed that he had a large bag of Doritos to go with his sandwich. Something inside of me became uneasy as he opened his chips. He started stuffing the chips—one, two and three chips at one time—then he began to choke! I leaped across the lunchroom table grabbed my choking student as the chips began to block his airway. Trained in CPR, I was ready to start the Heimlich technique when he began to dislodge the non-masticated chips. Like this story, I am trained and ready to administer the life-saving techniques that will aid the AVT deaf students against the potential of being placed in generalized special educational settings or the inclusion classrooms that disregard their value, identity and independence. All the chips cannot be placed into one small mouth as some chips will be chewed to follow the digestive process and others will get stuck without the ability to be digested.

Navigating the Wilderness

If a home is more than bricks and mortar, or a church, or a hospital—then how is a school more than the building itself? The traditional curriculum in special education remains a fixed philosophy. I had an AVT student graduate from the program and was entering into a K-5 educational setting. His home district was a very rural community and they appeared to have little knowledge regarding auditory-verbal therapy. They could not organize an IEP meeting

before the new school year started in August which I routinely attended with all my transition students. This helps the IEP team understand the student's prior training.

The school year started on a Friday and the administration stated that they would place the student in special education with some pull-out as in P.E. with an interpreter if necessary. The educational team would adjust the student's placement as the IEP team deemed appropriate at the upcoming meeting. The mother tried unsuccessfully to express that her deaf child could verbally communicate and that he had been trained through a listening and spoken language program. This was to no avail. That afternoon to her surprise this mother had gotten a call from the administrator stating that they changed their mind and that her son would be placed in regular education and only pulled out for resource classes as in speech therapy. It took only seven hours to see for themselves the typical needs for Deaf students were not required for AVT deaf students!

Although an interpreter or language facilitator is not necessary and the dependency from special education resource teachers decreases, there are still obstacles for AVT deaf students mainstreamed into the inclusion classroom. These are not hindrances that would have to impede independent learning and academic achievement as most challenges can be addressed with minimal adjustments and support. For example, to foster place and space a blue-tooth FM system may be necessary to hear the teacher's voice over competing environmental sounds throughout the classroom. Directions may need to be repeated for clarification as auditory processing may still be at a delayed status in the elementary years which will develop as the student progresses. In addition, more opportunities to practice a new skill should be implemented through support tutorials and/or small group interactions.

Students with deafness are literal learners and this is also seen in auditory-verbal students. It is a challenge to teach the theory of mind, imagination, and inferences. Once I told an AVT student as we were drawing our body parts on a long sheet of paper, that he had left off his eyes and needed to put his eyes on his drawing. He lowered his head and literally put his eye on the paper questioning why he had to do this! Another student had the hardest time understanding a capital "A" written smaller was not the same as a lowercase "a." She also attempted many times to transfer the big "A" and little "a " concept to numbers as she would write the same number as a big number and smaller number (Zero -O/o). As these students learned to expand past the literal thinking and adapt to higher-order reasoning, they can take ownership of the learning process. I am so glad I continue to experience these unique students as they develop into independent learners. It is my aim to educate, through scholarly critical thinking dialogue, others in education to become open to the AVT student in *funds of knowledge*, identity, and independence within the mainstream classroom.

At the beginning of this school year, a new mother entered my AVT classroom with her six-week-old deaf daughter. She put her in my arms, so small with big eyes, and patches of blonde hair; I began to talk to the baby she had laid in my arms. With tears streaming down the mother's pale skinned cheeks, she desperately asked me, "Can you help my daughter?" I am sure that there are no words that can convey the level of emotions that permeated throughout my classroom on this day. You write from memory; however, my memory is enveloped in the despair that cannot be described for anguish is set in moans not words.

It was at that moment I remembered a prayer my mother-in-law prayed over me before I began this AVT career. She prayed that I would always remember that I was only the vessel that was being used, I was not the miracle worker. I had been placed in this position for parents

seeking hope, direction, and encouragement as they sought different options for their deaf child. Like a soldier commissioned, I am trained, equipped, and dedicated to what lies ahead.

Memoir, “what would I write if I were not afraid?” (Karr, 2016, p. 34). About four years ago, I enrolled in Georgia’s Southern University’s (GSU) Curriculum Studies doctorate program. I was so unsure of my abilities at this higher level of education. I had enrolled in two online classes in addition to onsite classes. I know the specialized field I teach in is unique and I did not want to come across as a square peg among a room full of round pegs. The online professor noticed my unconventional teaching position and started to adjust assignments to stretch my skills. Through his insight and support, I developed personal ownership in this higher-level educational pursuit. I began to believe I was in the right place and my reservations diminished after that first semester.

Why memoir? As Westover states, “I have fashioned a new history for myself...I thought I was being honest about my experiences...the past was a ghost, insubstantial, unaffection. Only the future had weight” (2018, p. 273). I am not the anxious student as I was four years ago as a curriculum studies doctorate student. Through this program I was given the keys to move forward in the areas that empowered me in the specialized field I so passionately teach in. When I began to write this memoir, I chose the safe stories and/or left out portions to remain concealed in an effort to dodge painting the negative lived experiences in the field that I love. I did not desire to go on the roller coaster ride of highs and lows of emotions that many of these memories evoked. But after many drafts, I have penned the memories as honestly as I could recapture from the past. My journey in deaf education is unlike any that I have ever heard before, my stories are personal and the roads that led me to where I am today are my lived experiences. I have a significant message to share regarding deaf education and more

specifically the AVT deaf student, and it is my intent that educators will read this memoir and be able to view deaf education through a broader lens.

Victory Ahead!

I am awake! The giant within has awakened! My dream is no longer an impassable divide between the hearing society and the non-hearing society. The majority of our AVT students transition into public education and become successful A-B students (Appendix #4d). Recently I was looking at the night sky with innumerable stars and the crescent of the moon. My spirit was moved in some profound revelation; just because I could only see a small portion of the moon, I had no doubt the full sphere was actually there.

The AVT students are individuals that have their own personalities, interests, and talents. In the plight to become fully human, they desire acceptance. I was praising one of my older students after reading a book so fluently. I was hugging her, and giving her high fives, and applauding her reading skills when a younger student picked up the same book and started verbalizing unintelligible speech as if she were reading. With great joy, I began picking up the younger child and gave her a big hug and said, “look at you, you are an awesome reader!” Maybe only the crescent of the moon was visible at that given time; however, I have no doubt that the full sphere would eventually appear. I get so much pleasure going to work at Sound Start each day, they make me laugh, smile, and I feel like I am making a difference for their future.

One student put on my reading glasses and lowered them on her nose while she asked the other students in a stern voice “Are you ready to listen?” “Would you like to go to time out?” and “Would you like to sit with me during recess?” Well, that was a hard pill to swallow when this student thought that was the best way to imitate me! I want to be remembered as the

teacher that longed for a brighter day for these atypical learners. I personally want to remember when each student was first implanted and how they would constantly ask, “What is that sound?” It is a bird singing. It is an air conditioner. It is a cricket. It’s the school bell ringing! I was once asked as a dog was barking, “What is he saying?” I am inspired by the AVT students and all that they continuously teach me in deaf education.

Along with teaching the AVT students, I have the pleasure of teaching students from Georgia Southern University (GSU)-Armstrong campus, Communication Sciences and Disorders program. If the students desire to earn AVT volunteer hours, they come to Sound Start and learn an innovative approach in deaf education and speech and language pathology. In addition, I am a mentor to VSU’s Deaf Education graduate students. In the past, while working in total communication I had up to five sign language interpreters under my supervision per school year. This was a bit more challenging as they were already established as skilled sign language interpreters, so the dynamics were quite different. By this I mean that many certified interpreters are very immersed in the Deaf community and view their profession with an elitist barometer. They demand top pay for their assignments, and they negotiate terms for mileage, travel and meals if necessary. Recently when I told someone I would fill in for their interpreting assignment, she reminded me that I was not qualified nor nationally certified and the Deaf community request only certified professionals.

This comparison of the interpreters and the GSU and VSU graduate students became clear to me one day while conversing with a five-year-old AVT student. This curly-haired little girl who was extremely talkative said, “Ms. Tracy, I love you!” With a huge smile and while sipping on my ginger ale, I joyfully responded, “I love you!” Then the student repeated the statement, “Ms. Tracy, I really love you!” Still enjoying my ginger ale, I again gleefully

expressed, “I love you!” The student then looked into my eyes and then glared at the ginger ale and said, “Can I have your ginger ale?” I realized she may love me, but she loved what I had to offer her even more! The GSU and VSU students, like my AVT student, may have respect and admiration for me, but they are eager to learn the techniques that I could offer them in listening and spoken language therapy. It was this drive that motivated many GSU volunteers to continue to work within our program staying past the required mandated hours and staying throughout the duration of the speech disorders program.

Reflecting back to my beginning years as a TOD, I had the pleasure of networking with regular education teachers as well as special education teachers. In preschool intervention (PSI), many of the teachers and paraprofessionals desired to utilize sign language with their non-verbal students as in autism and Down Syndrome. As paraprofessionals demonstrated a deeper interest, I decided to design a paraprofessional certification program with an emphasis in introductory sign language for non-verbal students not related to deafness.

I presented my plan to Ogeechee Technical College so the paraprofessionals could earn college credits and it was accepted. I would be the instructor and the classes would be held at our school to benefit our teachers. It was a success as over twenty paraprofessionals enrolled in the class. As it began to grow, the Ogeechee Tech administration wanted the program to be offered to other paraprofessionals and the target now would be a certification in sign language and ASL exam preparation. It quickly branched out to include instructors who were national ASL certified interpreters (Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf-RID), and the location was moved to Ogeechee Tech in Statesboro. It may be important to note national certified ASL interpreters can make 20-60+ dollars per hour according to their assignment. My vision was based on helping the students with disabilities in PSI and empowering paraprofessionals with

credentials to include introductory sign language as a means to build communication for non-verbal disabled students. Life lesson learned—do not take it personally if someone with more expertise and greater plans expands your vision to redefined heights. I did not take it personally for I understood it was a much-needed program, but I am still confused on how one program automatically cancelled out the other when the objectives were quite different.

Perhaps, as memoirists (Barrington, 1997), we have to “make our peace with the possibility that there is no more an absolute truth...every attempt to produce a memoir amounts to falsification” (p. 65). As our truth lies in the actual moment of each event and as we attempt to recapture the memory, the mind can only play it back in fragmented pieces. As in the case of the Ogeechee Tech program, in the moment I may could have expressed greater anger as I had encouraged these paraprofessionals, who were afraid of higher education, to enroll in this program. The program’s objective had been altered, and my co-workers were apprehensive. However, now I look back on this event and the memory does not spark the same emotion it did in that moment. I did not falsify the memory; I just cannot attach to it in the same manner I did in the moment that it happened.

Every Day is a New Page Within My Book

As new students are entering into deaf education in public school settings, critical pedagogy principles are necessary to address the unique needs of both the traditional Deaf learners and the AVT deaf learners. This population of non-traditional learners must find their place in the learning environment through effective pedagogy—critical pedagogy that embraces linguistically diverse learners. Having a sensorineural hearing loss is a physical deficit but being reminded of your physical challenges wounds the spirit of the learner. Coates (2015) writes,

I saw that what divided me from the world was not anything intrinsic to us, but the actual injury done by people intent on naming us, intent on believing that what they have named us matters more than anything we could ever actually do. (p. 120)

The deaf learner is an individual with personal identity, cultural heritage, values, and a voice—whether they communicate through sign language or spoken language. The deaf education environment must transform to address the two types of learners that being the Deaf individual who communicates in sign language and the AVT deaf student who through technology communicates verbally. Both are still considered students who are profoundly deaf. Under the same generalized term of deafness, both will enter the public-school system (K-5) and the curriculum and critical pedagogy of both the general education and special education needs to be reconstructed to meet the unique needs of these diverse learners.

There is much work to do after receiving an implant. The plow in the field is only the means to till the ground in an effort to create a harvest. Technology, as in the cochlear implant is only the instrument that allows access to sound. The auditory-verbal deaf student who has been implanted starts on a journey of hearing aids or cochlear implants. They engage in early intervention through infant-and-parent programs and then they progress to an AVT listening and spoken language approach from the age of two-years-old to a kindergarten (K-5) readiness status. This is a huge family commitment and partnership with therapists, specialists, and medical teams. The goal is to encourage listening and spoken language development for success in an age-appropriate regular education classroom with hearing peers.

Research findings support that statistically Deaf students that rely on sign language and non-verbal communication skills develop below-average reading skills. They rarely master past a fourth-grade reading level. As more research is focusing on brain-based auditory reading

development, brain mapping demonstrates that the auditory receptors are ignited while the reading interaction is engaged. The AVT deaf student differs from these typical reading scores. There are many factors associated with achievement such as late implantation, cochlear implant usage, and enrollment in an AVT program. As seen in Appendix #4g, when students are given grade level material, they are proving to achieve scores aligned with hearing peers. When combining averages of the small sample of five AVT deaf students, they received an overall Language Arts score of 77% and an overall Reading score of 79%. Individual student growth is also evident. Looking at student J (Appendix #4e), a 17% increase was indicated between the first quarter at a 75% and second quarter at an 88%. This provided an overall semester score of 82% in the area of Language Arts, including areas of reading.

In comparison to in-class interactions and success rates, many criterion-norm or state standardized tests, as in Measurements of Academic Progress (MAP) that is given twice a year, demonstrates achievement inconsistencies (Appendix #4f). This could possibly be explained by addressing the procedural mandates required by the state. The standardized testing procedures do not allow for the same accommodations and/or modifications incorporated within the classroom. For example, many tests require school-provided headphones for testing, however this will not provide easy access for AVT students wearing CIs. The only accommodation that would align would be teacher-read test, if test allows for this modification, and pulled out in a one-on-one setting, in many ways this could be interpreted by the student as being singled out. As many may internalize this accommodation as penalizing and could be carried over as a negative distraction during the testing taking process, this could demonstrate performance scores that do not actually represent the student's ability. (Appendix #4f)

Although the previous scores were within average range, they were the scores of AVT students that received late surgical implantation or exhibited poor usage of their cochlear implant but received early interventions by the age of three-years-old. When delving further into research, early surgical implantation in collaboration with early intervention programs beginning from birth indicates a much higher language and pre-reading score. The following students, student K and student J (Appendix #4b), were both students with early implantation and enrollment in an early intervention, Parent & Infant, program prior to one year of age. Currently, these students do not exhibit a language delay and are functioning within normal age equivalence. We have also seen students that leave this intensive program and transition to public education and do not qualify for any additional resource services (Appendix #4c grade K-4) even if it is requested.

Many parents that have gone through this AVT program have stated their goals were different and came from a mother's heart. One stated, "I wanted my daughter to talk to her siblings and cousins as we are a big family and do many family-oriented activities." Another parent stated, I could not bear the thoughts of my daughter feeling isolated as we did not sign and though even if we did learn how proficient would we be in this language? Would my child be separated from the hearing world we live in? Would this create a reliance on family members that signed? Another mother stated, "I searched all over the Internet to find a school for my daughter and even though there were more renown schools, I saw the Sound Start students and I could envision my daughter learning spoken language in that setting, so we packed up the family and moved here from out-of-state to attend Sound Start." Another mother and father had to move since they were military and made the decision that the mother and two deaf sons would remain in Savannah to finish the program. I do not take it lightly that these

families have made huge sacrifices based on personal objectives for they have uprooted their families, moved away from family in whom they need at this stage, and became focused in this temporary pursuit to allow their deaf child opportunities in a hearing society. I am honored and touched as each family shares their stories and commitment in an AVT program designed for their deaf child learning listening and spoken language.

As various families have moved, many report great success in the public-education setting while others express numerous challenges. One family moved to a rural area in Georgia and since the school system had not been exposed to a listening and spoken language approach placed the child in special education but served him through the traditional deaf education curriculum. He was not encouraged to wear the CIs, so by the time the family moved back to Savannah, the student had not worn the CIs for over one and a half years and had regressed considerably.

Another family moved to north Georgia, and her deaf son who was implanted late was denied placement in the school's AVT program due to achievement scores but was encouraged to begin their deaf education program. They suggested the family start to learn sign language. With this information, the family decided to home school the student along with receiving AVT tele-therapy and speech therapy. The student progressed and entered another AVT program outside their district with notable success. (Student Report Cards -Appendix #4g)

In looking to the future with the advent of AVT students who are deaf but use verbal language to communicate, it is very possible that the school systems will begin to look for AVT specialists as either contract employees or as employed AVT educators working in the elementary schools. This would appear to align with a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. There are some local schools currently in legal situations for not

offering an AVT specialist for deaf students who have been on a LSLT track from birth. This will not affect the infant AVT programs or two to four-year-old AVT intervention programs as they remain a vital service for training and preparing deaf students for the transition into public school (K-4 or K-5). In addition, other special education specialists may require assistance from an AVT therapist.

I recently attended an IEP meeting via FaceTime. The Speech Pathologist stated that the AVT student who was bilaterally implanted was still having problems with the sounds /s/ and /sh/ but concluded that was to be expected because he was profoundly deaf. I interjected, the CIs are designed to correct the function of the inner ear and with this technology and proper mapping, the student has access to all the speech sounds. The AVT approach remains an innovated approach and many educators define it under their prior known experience working with Deaf students. Wouldn't it be more beneficial to learn the premise of the AVT approach, instead of, generalizing the disability into familiar spaces?

A GSU professor who was interested in my AVT work wanted me to share my work with the class. She asked me to explain the demographics within the program, and could I explain the lack of diversity within my program. I stated that the program changes from year to year as students graduate and new students enter the program. She probed further by asking me to explain why people do not choose AVT options and why some people start and opt out? Although I internalized that she was asking if socioeconomic status was a factor, I stated that our nonprofit organization has written grants for gas and transportation waivers. In addition, the tuition is on a sliding pay scale based on family income, and the educational level of the parents have not been an issue I have encountered. In my eight years of being the teacher and now the program director, the executive program director has never turned any family away—although

we do at this time only have capacity for eight students. This does not include the infant and parent program.

Sound Start has been located at a local private school, across the street from Savannah Speech and Hearing Center, where they have given us a room free of charge for the past twelve years as to align with the state educational mandates. In addition, they offer lunch for our students free of charge. At present our classroom demographics are comprised of three Hispanics students, four Caucasian students, and one African American student. The larger AVT schools I am familiar with as in Atlanta and Jacksonville have greater diversity as they have greater capacity for more students. This professor advised me that this would be an advantageous research project if I was desiring to reach more students. If I could identify the issues, I could then devise a plan to combat these targeted obstacles for greater impact. In a Freire-like mentality, this would be like reading the world and then through reading the language of society I could explore potential students and families' choices if choosing or rejecting AVT therapy.

I serve an atypical population in an atypical educational field—why not embrace an atypical dissertation? Memoir of my lived experiences as a deaf education teacher paired with interpretive dance is the medium for creating an awareness among educational scholars and society that deafness is no longer confined to a single lens interpretation. The auditory-verbal (AVT) deaf student has arrived and they are seeking place and space within the educational setting and within the hearing society.

Jump frog, jump! My AVT student who had a fixation with all animals -especially frogs and bugs, found a small frog outside our class one afternoon. He wanted to put it in our insect aquarium to bring it into our classroom. I saw no harm in it as I thought maybe I could use this

as a teachable moment and evoke targeted communication goals. The student would not put the box down and the movement within the box was proving too much for this little frog. When we went to recess, I told the student he had to let the frog go. He replied I do not want to because he is sleeping, and I do not want to wake him. As I looked at this motionless frog, I knew he had jumped for the last time. “Ms. Tracy, my animal lover exclaimed, he is only sleeping!” When we got to the playground, I demanded that he let him go and with crocodile tears the student turned over the box to release the frog. To my surprise, the frog laid there for a second to see if it was safe to escape and vigorously jumped away to freedom! Another life lesson taught to me by my loving student—when you think all hope is gone and you are questioning how will these students learn all they need to learn before they transition into public-education; on a day when you least expect it, they will jump! You cannot predict when it happens all students develop at a different pace, but it happens they start communicating in age-appropriate language. It is like they have been asleep and are now awake and ready to communicate. And they are seeking to become free and independent communicators.

As I reflect on these memories from my childhood to where I am today, it’s not until you write the stories that you realize that all your training, choices, passion, beliefs, and vision shaped you into the teacher you are today. An AVT seven-year-old student said when he was asked about his father who was deployed to Afghanistan, “I don’t know where he is or what he is doing, but I think he is shopping because he always brings me a toy when he comes back home!” Maybe only the one in the fight can truly understand the mission. Even if I cannot find the perfect words to describe my commitment to deaf students and their families adhering to auditory-verbal therapy (AVT), I am commissioned. I don’t want to close my eyes, I don’t want

to slumber, I don't want to sleep because I don't want to miss the next chapter that is waiting to be penned.

Postlude

In comparing traditional deaf education and the AVT approach there are many factors that make each unique. Traditional deaf education is taught through total communication (TC) and utilizes sign language, interpreters, and some technology as in hearing aids. The auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) is an approach designed for language delayed deaf students through early intervention, intensive therapy, and technology as in cochlear implants. The traditional Deaf student is a non-verbal communicator and the AVT student is a verbal communicator. Both are still considered medically deaf; however, there are options now available to parents choosing a different option than that of the past. Parents are a vital part of an AVT approach which involves an extensive commitment to the intense progress of language development.

As the AVT deaf student prepares to transition from the program into the local public education system, networking with the IEP team is crucial. It is often the first encounter members of an IEP team, made up of regular and special education teachers, have heard of an AVT approach. The AVT students are often served in deaf education resource classes as this new AVT deaf student does not fit the typical norms of the traditional deaf education construct.

As explained throughout this chapter and explored through appendix #4 student progress reports, many of the AVT deaf students find academic success as A-B students. Modifications and accommodations may be necessary, but often require minimal adjustments within the mainstream classroom. These may include an FM system, preferential seating, repeating directions, and tutorial sessions or small group learning interactions.

Reading development has been a continuous challenge for most deaf students. As noted on the progress reports, language arts, vocabulary, and reading skills remain an area of concern (Appendix #4d); however, their B-C status for these skills improve over time. The AVT approach is a temporary therapeutic approach. As students begin to progress within the early years of elementary school, they usually find academic and social independence by the fourth to sixth grade. The AVT deaf student entering public education has the potential to excel academically and progress into a productive member of society. The possibilities for these AVT deaf students are endless when we breakdown fixed standards and stereotypes in education, in society and within discriminatory philosophies. This can be achieved through scholarly open dialogue that encourages an action-reflection process that creates self-awareness and critical analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

REFLECTIONS ON INQUIRY

In this chapter, I summarized and reflected on how the Auditory-Verbal Therapeutic (AVT) deaf student learns listening and spoken language (LSLT) and how this training equips the deaf student to learn alongside of their hearing peers in mainstream classrooms. I summarized the difference between the traditional Deaf student and the AVT deaf student and explained through comparison how the AVT student can no longer be served under the traditional deaf education construct. I reflected on how 25+ years in deaf education has shaped my educational philosophies for deaf students seeking place and space in the inclusion classroom, as well as, how critical pedagogy and disability studies can incite scholarly dialogue for educators seeking to become agents of transformation. In addition, I summarized my live experiences delivered in a performative storytelling memoir and dance and how this form of inquiry has future implications in our world of technology and digital research.

Of these 25+ years, one memory beckons me further into another memory and the thread that is ever-present is not linear but intertwined; however, it remains one thread. It is like a seed when it is planted remains the seed but takes on another dimension. It evolves from a recognizable seed to a sprout, to the roots, and to the visible crop ready to be harvested.

These Days

Whatever you have to say, leave the roots on, let them dangle

And the dirt [too]...Just to make it clear where they [the roots] come from.

(Charles Olson)

I use the harvest metaphor to summarize the six theoretical and methodological observations that emerged from my dissertation work. These observations are based on the

AVT deaf student's desire for place and space within the regular inclusion classroom, and to create an awareness of the arrival of the new deaf students that will no longer benefit from the constructs of traditional Deaf curriculum, and to redefine deafness within critical responsive pedagogy and disability studies, educational scholars can through open dialogue begin to understand the AVT deaf student's need for academic, emotional, and psychosocial identity. Through this performative memoir, reflecting over 25+ years of my lived experiences as a teacher of the Deaf and an auditory-verbal therapist, the educational scholar can make personal connections through this illustrated storytelling medium. Disclosing my perspective throughout numerous shared memories, along with the added dimension of interpretive dance and musicality, the audience can confront conscious and unconscious apathetic viewpoints. Music (Harjo, 2012) is a startling bridge between the familiar and the strange. You can hear a message in "music because it speaks beyond the confines of ordinary language" (p. 18).

The seed of deaf education was planted within my spirit long ago through my experiences with my aunt who was profoundly deaf. Once planted, the seed germinated into a shoot and roots which were produced by years of training in sign language and my experiences within the Deaf community. The dream of listening and spoken language for deaf students was my intended crop. I have gone through many transformations; although I am still connected to the seed, the sprout, and the crop, I have morphed externally and internally. And I recognize that all these evolutions prepared me for such a time as this. It is harvest time!

In this chapter, I summarize six theoretical and methodological observations that emerged from my dissertation inquiry: (1) The AVT approach, originated over 100 years ago from oralism as its foundation and incorporated with technology and early intervention, creates opportunities for AVT deaf students to be liberated in independent thinking and to thrive in

learning. (2) A performative memoir, through storytelling and dance, is more compatible with the ways AVT deaf students express themselves and has the potential through auditory and visual delivery to engage an empathetic understanding towards deaf students. (3) The different ways Deaf learners and AVT deaf learners access and interconnect with the hearing world disrupt fixed stereotypes and stigmas of AVT deaf students and challenge the deafness of the hearing world. (4) Place and space for AVT deaf students, which are *docile-bodied* (Foucault, 1977) by abled-bodied societies, are embodied in a *third space* (Soja, 1996). (5) Performative memoir transgresses traditional research inquiries to create space to tell silenced narratives of AVT deaf students and liberates academic writing solely relying on words. (6) Recognizing and valuing *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) of AVT students help regular education and special education teachers to develop deaf culturally responsive curriculum where the AVT students are able to bring their experience from their families and communities into mainstream classrooms, which creates equal opportunities for AVT students to reach their highest potential (Siddle-Walker, 1996).

The AVT approach, originated over 100 years ago from oralism as its foundation and incorporated with technology and early intervention, creates opportunities for the AVT deaf students to be liberated in independent thinking and to thrive in learning (Observation 1). In deaf education, the activist/farmer (Freire, Shapiro, Cole & Flexer), must start with a vision, a yearning, a relentless desire (equity for the AVT deaf student). Long before I started the endeavor in an auditory-verbal approach, the seed of oralism was planted by various forefathers (AG Bell, Gallaudet, Clerc) and those most affected (Aunt Ann). Oralism was an innovated approach developed by Alexander Graham Bell, the father of oralism. Although he invented the hearing device which is the prototype of the hearing aids we use today, oralism of that time

period did not include technology nor sign language. Speech production and reception of spoken language (lip-reading) for deaf students was Bell's mission. He recognized the importance of how breathing patterns, oral placement, and oral motor techniques could encourage non-verbal students to develop verbal communication skills. Thomas and Miner Gallaudet, the founders of the first college for the deaf, may not have shared AG Bell's oralism approach for developing language; however, they were trailblazers in the field of educating the deaf. Prior to their vision, deaf individuals were placed in asylums and institutions and thought to be cognitively challenged and unteachable. After training under the British teacher, Lauren Clerc, Thomas Gallaudet brought sign language to North America and began teaching deaf students through a manual communication system--now called American Sign Language. Although labels like deaf-dumb and deaf-mute continue to dehumanize this atypical communicator, Deaf students were learning academically and forming new social communities that challenge stereotypical boundaries.

With the advent (1970) of the one-channel cochlear implant device, deaf individuals were given access to sound. This was followed by a two-channel device and later a multi-channelled device. At the onset, only deaf adults were potential candidates; however, as research began to support a pre-lingual criterion, twelve-month-old infants became the new norm for undergoing implant surgery.

Cochlear implants are designed to replace the damaged cochlea receptors to operate like a properly functioning ear. As sound enters the outer ear and travels to the middle ear, the sound waves are converted into an electrical conduit to the cochlea which activates the auditory nerve and carries the sound to the brain for perception and interpretation. This differs from

hearing aids in that the hearing aid amplifies the sound and the cochlear implant works to correct the sound receptors.

After undergoing surgery for a cochlear implant, early AVT intervention and intensive therapy must be embraced to develop listening and spoken language. Degrees of language delays correlate with age of implantation, usage, participation in an AVT program, and family as crucial team members. The AVT approach focuses on the hierarchy of listening and auditory processing first which includes “awareness of sound, discrimination, patterning, identification, and comprehension” (Caraway & Madell, 2011, p. 29). There are many techniques and strategies utilized by the AVT/LSLT specialist to train pre-lingual infants/toddlers in listening and language acquisition. The AVT deaf student has the potential to become academically and socially successful within the regular education inclusion classrooms learning alongside their hearing peers. Researchers (Yoshinaga-Itano Baca, & Sedey, 1998) agree if the auditory brain is stimulated for speech sounds through advances in technology and early intervention, the infant has the potential to acquire listening and spoken language skills. If the auditory brain is not stimulated other parts of the brain will compete for that function and replace it with other compensatory neurological skills. Time is of the essence.

Freire, was an advocate for the illiterate, rejected and dehumanized societal outcast which includes individuals with disabilities. He proposed that as we ponder our certainties, that curiosity will become activated to cognitively search the uncertainties. This is not achieved through a question and answer hierarchy, but through a natural process of inquiry. For the oppressed, an activist should become educated in learning how and what the oppressed individuals know and to use this knowledge as the catalysis to understanding the “indispensable ropes of their resistance” (1987, p. 79). In this inquiry, a concrete question demanding a

concrete answer will not result in the targeted dialogue needed. Educators may be knowledgeable of the traditional deaf education constructs (certainties); however, the uncertainties lie within the AVT approach for listening and spoken language for implanted AVT deaf students.

With the arrival of the AVT deaf students into public education, the traditional deaf education curriculum can no longer address the non-traditional specific needs of this atypical deaf student. Otherness and difference are often topics the able-bodied society denies and avoids. There is a social, cultural and political process that lays claim on controlling the rights of people with disabilities to perceive place and space only within the constraints the set powers determine appropriate for their given disability. Most of this is assigned at birth. The body-mind as space is only allowed to operate independently as the dominant society imposes. The disabled person learns early that their bodies (space) are only permitted to navigate (place) within oppressive limits.

How will scholarly agents of transformation carry out this passionate commitment in cultivating the sprouts (breaking new ground in deaf education), the roots (innovative approaches in listening and spoken language therapy), the gathering (future research and technological advances)? When the envisioned harvest is the focus, what are the necessary tools needed to see the full potential of the harvest?

A performative memoir, through storytelling and dance, is more compatible with the ways AVT deaf students express themselves and has the potential through auditory and visual delivery to engage an empathetic understanding towards AVT deaf students (Observation 2). A performative storytelling memoir has the capability to engage the reader to expose and analyze conscious and unconscious fixed ideologies related to pedagogy and disability. This is the seed

that has been planted long ago and the unrelenting deep roots in the established oppressive garden that refuse to renounce traditional ideologies. Freire examines why the dominant must perpetuate this fixed social order and the rationale supporting and justifying discrimination. There is a contradiction to integration of individuals with disabilities--which is normalization.

There are multiple ways to define humanness; however, conformity to the central notions of being fully human is society's invention of inclusion, exclusion, and/or segregation. Inclusion and exclusion are based on the central point of ableism as it is compared to the deviations from that set point. If disabled students desire integration, they attempt this within the rules defined by society. The center of the circle defines humanness, and the further one differs from the center prescribes otherness that cannot assimilate to the norm. "Silence? (Kaminsky, 2019) It is the stick I beat you with, I beat you with a stick, voice, beat you with a stick until you speak, until you speak right" (p. 61). If you will not conform to the norm, society controls who is included and who is excluded. The puppets do not have a voice. Kaminsky hangs the puppets on the porches of the houses to represent lack of power. These set powers resist otherness to demand conformity--speaking right.

Delpit (1995) examines the "silenced dialogue" (p. 23). The one-sided dialogue expressed by the dominant power nullifies a contrary philosophy or methodology that is reflected by the subdominant students' perspective. Through this rejection, the dialogue is silenced, and the dominant internalize that they have won due to the silence. Even with ears that have the ability to hear, the dominant refuse to hear contradictions to their set ideologies. The dehumanized invisible students deem these attempts for equality to be useless when addressing the dominant power.

Memoirists can use imagery, senses, and tones to develop the message into deeper meaning throughout the memoir. Straus, in *Extraordinary Measures*, examines how music is interpreted differently by deaf individuals. As Beethoven was deaf, “it is noted that many deaf individuals listen to music as a vehicle to engage, produce, and gather meaning” (2011, p. 150) through a different lens. They connect to music and auditory aspects that the hearing audience often overlook. Music represents meaning, degree of emotion, instrumental variations, and prosody. It is as if they listen with their mind’s eye (embodiment geography).

The AVT deaf student, is an atypical listener who has developed listening and spoken language that compares to their age-appropriate hearing peers. Although medically deaf, they seek integration as verbal learners in the regular education classrooms. Educational scholars see deafness as an all-inclusive disability; however, the AVT deaf student—verbal communicator—seeks academic achievement, social integration, and independence in the hearing society.

Kaminsky (2019) states, “Silence is the invention of the hearing” (p. 79). Those who are able to hear but choose to become silent to the discrimination and injustice that individuals with disabilities are subjected to by society foster the continuation to perpetuate fixed ideologies. The AVT deaf students identify with their otherness through the lens of potential and capability to achieve academic and social success.

The performative storytelling is designed to address the complex nature of the resistance exhibited by the regular education and special education teachers. Through this abstract inquiry, audiences enter with a noncommittal viewpoint and as the stories resonate within each participant, the interpretations are no longer my private sacred stories but now a transfer of ownership ensues. Many regular education teachers are skeptical of the new AVT

deaf students. As deafness is viewed within a one-dimensional lens, the resistant roots will refuse and fight against the uprooting process. The CI technology poses an uncomfortable position for a teacher reluctant to be responsible and/or knowledgeable. Often an alarming pattern is observed, as mainstream teachers not willing to invest or practice culturally responsive pedagogy, find it easier to give passing grades to students with disabilities without understanding their academic potential to be independent learners.

Freire & Macedo (1987) explain that to read the word, one must read the world. As you understand how society supports and shields the fixed ideologies, you can engage in opposing the world through the word and the language of society. This is not a stagnant process but is continuous as the world is ever-changing. You must expose the root by loosening the surrounding soil. You dig until you see roots that can be extracted, and the process continues.

Interpretive dance has future implications for non-standardized dissertation inquiries as technology and social media are advancing and replacing spaces of traditional knowledge domains. If we are reading the language of the world before we can read the word, technology is society's language. Chat rooms, blogs, videos, search engines, accessing information, Facebook, Instagram, and texting/emails are the tools utilized to communicate within society—a digital society. It is a second dimension to the verbal voice, face-to-face conversations, and verbal phone interactions. Like these examples, interpretive dance is an added dimension of this performative memoir. “Digital media (Pink, 2012) has inspired advances in research, media and art practice, which create new routes to knowledge and its representation, and new ways for an audience to engage with visual research” (p. 12). In addition, this methodology that incorporates technology as such must be structured through proficiency and effectiveness—its

design is not entertainment but educational. “When stories are told (Doll, 2000), one sees ideas differently; when images are heard, one hears differently, more introspectively” (p. xi).

At times the sun will be scorching, the animals and insects will seek to destroy your crop, and you may find the field laborers are in short supply. Many will say, this type of harvest is unnecessary, the traditional approach of tilling the ground with a horse and plow and handpicking the harvest worked yesterday and should remain the acceptable standard today. How will new technology (cochlear implants) work in this agricultural pursuit (auditory-verbal therapy)? It is now your job, as you sit behind the tractor, to continue to educate, create awareness, and advocate for this new crop (individuals with deafness trained in AVT).

The different ways Deaf learners and AVT deaf learners access and interconnect with the hearing world disrupt fixed stereotypes and stigmas of AVT deaf students and challenge the deafness of the hearing world (Observation 3). Deaf (manual communicator) learners and AVT deaf (verbal communicator) learners differ in the ways they access and interconnect with the hearing world. The two variations within the scholastic schema of deaf education are both atypical learners. Deaf students using ASL sign language as their primary mode of communication traditionally require a sign language interpreter throughout the school day. They are nonverbal and, for the most part, do not rely on technology such as cochlear implants. They have formed a manual language, relationships, and function independently within the Deaf society.

In comparison, AVT deaf students utilize technology to communicate verbally and have been trained in a private educational setting before entering public education. These specialized AVT services are not available in the public educational setting, currently, the AVT-LSLT

specialist teaches in a private setting. Many families began therapy in an AVT Parent & Infant program and advanced into an AVT/LSLT program by the age of two-years-old.

With the advent of technology such as cochlear implants, the opportunities are endless for AVT deaf students entering the public educational setting. Auditory-Verbal Therapy is an innovative approach to deaf education. Hearing aids amplify the sound; however, cochlear implants allow the inner ear to function correctly by replacing the damaged receptors located in the cochlea. In an interdependent approach, technology, early intervention, and AVT therapy, deaf students can develop listening and spoken language. They function as hearing individuals within a hearing society and find identity within the hearing population. They do not identify with labels such as disabled, deaf, or language delayed. They are, however, aware of their otherness and difference from able-bodied individuals, but do not see the alterity as a deterrent towards academic achievement. Through the intensive AVT process--diagnosis, amplification, and early intervention--deaf students are developing listening and language acquisition.

In considering AVT deaf students, who have atypical accessibility to sound, who are different from Deaf individuals and hearing individuals, how could a scholarly dialogue be achieved? Knowing this is a constant evolution and agents of transformation must understand the knowledge and the language of the oppressor, you start with the certainties as described by Freire. Within the scope of disabilities, AVT deaf students cannot be funneled into an all-inclusive special-needs population. Deafness is a sensorineural, but not cognitive, disability.

Although unconventional, AVT deaf students learned to listen and speak through technology, early intervention, and intensive therapy. They do not utilize sign language nor lip-reading strategies to communicate. They have the potential to excel academically, socially, and function as an independent learner. They can achieve grade-appropriate reading skills and

through minimal accommodations and/or modifications, require very little extra attention from the regular education inclusion teacher. They may continue to need some resource services such as speech therapy, but often do not qualify for further resource assistance. These are the certainties that describe their humanness.

The uncertainties that must evoke critical analysis may include, traditional deaf education curriculum that generalizes all deaf students into one educational domain. This is a pipeline effect from a political and social viewpoint that is the conduit for educational teaching philosophies. Traditional Deaf students, who utilize sign language and lip reading and struggles academically and within reading development, are not the same as AVT deaf students. Technology, as in, cochlear implants make many regular and special education teachers apprehensive. AVT deaf students have the potential to become productive citizens through higher education, the workforce, and independence.

Deaf education remains a fixed instructional approach within academia. Predetermined ideologies within society may be the expected norm, but in the educational arena with regular education and special education teachers, this oppressive philosophy should not be the standard. “Deafness is not an illness (Kaminsky, 2019), it is a sexual position” (p. 52). Using crude language, Kaminsky is able to express that one chooses deafness (culture of silence) by a preference. This preference is founded in a pleasure and/or satisfaction to perpetuate the dehumanization of the oppressed. In this societal unity (the educational setting), silence is justified (academic discrimination and the disregard of disabled students seeking to become fully human).

According to some academic scholars, alterity or otherness does not have to be conducted in a dialogue of disability studies. This continued resistance is upheld by society as it

is rooted in the “psychological distance most people put between themselves and disability” (Davis, 2002, p. 35). There is a fear within an able-bodied society in that engaging in critical disabilities dialogue threatens deep-rooted fixed ideology. Curriculum scholars are working to bring disability studies into academic discussions on difference and alterity. Without dialogue, “Disabled people are considered outcasts... [the society of ableism] contributes to the construction of a rigid, elitist, hierarchical, and inhumane academic system” (Price, 2011, p. 8). Any threat to the order within the social structure opposes fixed political doctrines.

Students who do not master set age-appropriate milestones are often segregated into resource classes. This segregation designed for *abnormal* students promotes feelings of rejection, isolation, and alterity. Freire’s philosophy is rooted in a self-awareness which promotes an action-reflection for teacher-student dichotomy. He expresses that we must read the language of society and enter their world to confront oppressive ideologies. Regular education teachers are not going to use the language of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, so the new AVT students must advocate for themselves using the language of the able-bodied.

In traditional deaf education, regular education teachers are detached and allow the interpreter and special education teacher full control as they practice unconscious exclusion. The Deaf student becomes an invisible disregarded member of the inclusion classroom although, a conscious effort toward a least restrictive environment is integrated. Goodley (2011) rejects the association of labeling the disabled individual as a reject of society and instructs scholars to view the control that society is given to create discriminatory philosophies that perpetuate the justification to oppress.

The AVT deaf student, who communicates verbally, is often denied equality and equity as a reflection of their medical diagnosis. As deafness is generalized into one fixed ideology,

the AVT student utilizing technology and spoken language continues to strive for identity and liberation. Educators seeking to incorporate critical pedagogy must be empowered and equipped by an analysis of their own educational philosophies to create an atmosphere for learning that is all-inclusive of both dominant and subdominant cultures—able-bodied and disabled.

Discrimination within education is not neutral, it adapts to the language of the oppressor and those who continue to deny their participation, whether unconsciously or consciously, solidify, what Freire calls, the “culture of silence.” In an unconscious—or maybe conscious-rationalization—the AVT deaf students must prove their academic capabilities, as people are often judged by their language and communication proficiency. Modification, accommodations, and technology make many regular education teachers skeptical about the competence of this atypical learner. As seen routinely, it appears easier to pass the disabled student than to invest in teaching methodologies that meet the student’s unique needs within the inclusion classroom.

Place and space for AVT deaf students, which are *docile-bodied* (Foucault, 1977) by able-bodied societies, are embodied in *a third space* (Soja, 1996) (Observation 4). In embodied geographies of place and space, the body and the mind of disabled students encounter imposed biases within the physical structure of the educational system (regular education and special education) and the curriculum design (policies and standards) as the presence of difference affronts status quo philosophies. To say it is grounded in society reflects the human need to belong and be accepted as a member of society--whether able-bodied or disabled. The *docile-bodied* (Foucault, 1977) individuals have been conditioned like a soldier--from birth-to function within society through prescribed spaces. The analogy of a machine is

used to describe how there are many parts of a machine and each part (individual) must work within the union of the machine. There are higher ordered parts and lower ordered parts that make the machine operate properly as determined by society. Through discipline *-the docile-body-* can become “trained, pliable and capable of being shaped by society/institutions as defined” (1977, p.135). In Freire’s words individuals become “beings for others” (1970/2009, p.74). A machine that has been conditioned to operate within the set order prescribed by society-institutions. The educational system would be what Foucault is calling the machine. This remains political in that who has the power in education (space) to determine inclusion or exclusion—limitations, acceptance, and/or independence (place).

Looking through a narrow lens of one concrete definition of deafness restricts the AVT deaf student from becoming fully human within the educational setting. Communication skills of deaf children who have been identified early, use assistive technology, and are on a spoken and listening AVT track is quite different than the traditional Deaf student. There are many barriers within public education for AVT deaf students and the traditional deaf education curriculum. These barriers are often examined through a place and space philosophy.

In reference to place and space, geographers are exploring how the body and the mind can be considered the space in which (embodied) disabled students form meaning-making interpretations of their acceptance and identities. Society and thus the educational system seek to (Tremain, 2005) “regulate the disabled body and its associated behaviors as a way of maintaining and managing societal norms...policy makers have created, classified, codified, and controlled abnormalities through which some people have been divided and objectivized as physically impaired, handicapped, retarded and deaf” (p. 31).

A difference becomes a disability (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012) “when people with particular characteristics are not able to access life opportunities and experiences as a result of inaccessible contexts or other related barriers related to the perceived difference” (p. 26). The difference—typical hearing versus atypical hearing is still hearing. In a socio-spatial construct, abled-bodied educators, determine the parameters for inclusion or exclusion based on otherness and difference that justifies integration or segregation. AVT deaf students are cognizant of their physical disability; however, their self-awareness is shaped by their ability--hearing ability--to identify as a member of the hearing society as fully human.

Educators are often unaware that they are practicing fixed traditional philosophies. They must become enlightened to the unconscious educational practices that limit AVT deaf students in their rights to become fully human. Educators can continue to reject equality and equity where only the elite prosper in the fixed social order of education but how will achievement be defined within these walls? A teacher that is willing to become an agent of transformation will seek an action-reflection critical thinking process.

Often when discussing disability studies, society ignores the issues and reduces disability to one generalized special needs population within the educational space. Disabled versus ableism and typical versus atypical learner require a third space for AVT deaf students seeking identity, acceptance, and independence. The concept of space (Shields, 1990), is in the dynamic ways we “understand, practice and live...in relation to our bodies, community and world as a changing space of distance and difference” (p. 281). As a social theory, place and space interact with and reinforces the structures of power and personal and group identity. Space becomes the “spatial forces at work on people...which includes economics, politics, and culture” (Helfenbein, 2009, p. 400). In comparison, place is the interpretation and meaning

associated within a space. Identity is derived from these interpretations (placed meaning) related to space. This remains political in that who has the power in education (space) to determine inclusion or exclusion—limitations, acceptance, and/or independence (place). There is a first space (Soja, 1996) that is the physical tangible world and the second space is the interpretation or representation of that world, and the third space is the analysis of the first and second space. For the person who is fully human (Shields, 1990), the third space not only transcends but also has the power to refigure the balance of the popular perceived (interpretation/meaning making) space and the official conceived (educational) space.

If disability studies is not relevant to you personally, it is easier to deny its existence or its influence in fostering educational philosophies. The normalcy (Titchkosky, 2011) of inaccessibility is the standard to which society has constructed policies without an attempt to collectively adjoin able-bodied and disabled accessibility. If it is not personal to you (the educator) --you tolerate but deny its validity and accessibility to the autonomy in the learning space.

In embodied geographies of place and space, the body-mind of disabled students is expressed within socio-spatial constructs as abled-bodied societies shape “particular environments to serve to exclude the disabled from society, marking them out as different in particular spaces whilst simultaneously rendering them invisible” (Edwards, 2014, p. 33-34). The mere presence of disabled individuals makes society uncomfortable. This does not go unnoticed by disabled individuals. As an internal understanding is stirred, the disabled student must seek a third space for existence. “The oppressed are not marginals, are not people living outside of society. They have always been inside—inside the structure which made them beings for others” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 74).

The significance of open dialogue would allow AVT deaf students to find place and space within the inclusion classrooms learning alongside their hearing peers. No longer oppressed but human without discrimination, labels, and the societal dictation of identity. Open dialogue based in humanization (Freire, 1970/2009), leads to an analysis of dehumanization. How has tradition and historical dehumanization shaped the non-disabled society to reject otherness? The struggles of disabled individuals against the status quo incite violence in the oppressor. The violence perpetuates the fear of the oppressed and the unjust order remains a fixed standard upheld by society. Why does alterity evoke fear, rejection, and discrimination?

The body (Teather, 1999) is like a vehicle that travels in and out of different spaces. The disabled body understands that space is not passive or neutral but is subjective to the policies (place) that include or exclude the independent navigating within society.

Where will my harvest best thrive as all soil will not nourish this precious seed? The scholarly farmer understands plants need the rich soil to create deep roots to anchor and feed the plant. Zinsler (1998) states, "it is like building a house, you get to a certain part and you realize that you need a different gauge of lumber or something [tool] and you have to go get it" (p. 19). As scholars we must critically analyze if space (inclusion classrooms) is aiding AVT deaf students for their academic success (curriculum) and identities through independence and critical analysis (third space).

Performative memoir transgresses traditional research inquiries to create space to tell silenced narratives of AVT deaf students and liberates academic writing solely relying on words (Observation 5). A performative memoir of lived experiences evokes the audience to connect to the memoirist's interpretations through a safe, yet paradoxical, exploration. The open dialogue can promote a self-awareness and independent thought for an action-reflection

process. For if we did not understand our own biases and prejudices, how can we encourage others toward this goal of scholarly dialogue? Memoir, through a performative storytelling and dance delivery, adds a multifaceted perspective that utilizes auditory, visual, and emotional connections. The words of the memoir become illuminated through meaningful movements, technological resources, musicality, and poetry.

Performative storytelling allows space for interpretation, objectivity, and relativity. As we are in the age of technology, media, videos, music, and communication are an essential component within our society. This is not lost on the younger population nor the disabled population. The AVT deaf students embrace this form of interaction to connect to the hearing world as texting, emails, Instagram, and chat rooms have refined our social interactions. When educators are seeking to incorporate *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) into the learning space which integrates community and family-home environments to address all dimensions of a student's knowledge base, *digital funds of knowledge* (Paris, 2012) can be beneficial. In this performative memoir, AVT deaf students are represented in the aesthetic styles they express themselves through auditory and visual—and now through digital technology.

In this modality of music and dance, apathetic topics can connect audiences into a more empathetic or even sympathetic emotional experience. Music (Morris, 2016) takes up space in the mind—hearing spaces. “Isn’t composing about putting sound in space and time and also the ability to capture what is heard in that space in the mind?” (p. 42). It is in the construct of sound and space that encourages the viewers to make greater connections. Every soul (Harjo, 2012) has a “distinct song...because music is a language that lives in the spiritual realms...we can hear it, we can create it, music can help raise a people up or call them together for war” (p. 19).

A skillfully choreographed interpretive dance has the potential to deliver a visual aspect within non-traditional inquiry methodology. Within this delivery design, I explore how AVT deaf students seek to find space and place in a traditional deaf educational setting, and how the regular educational settings could aid in fostering place and space for the new atypical deaf student. When the reading audience is unfamiliar with the topic—AVT or LSLT, a performative memoir has the potential to educate, expose, and create self-analysis within atypical topics. “I am you, boy drowning in this country, who doesn’t know the word for drowning and yells--I am diving for the last time” (Kaminsky, 2019, p. 35). All is understood, even when the terminology is unknown as the message is not only captured in words but in imagery.

Once an open dialogue is initiated it has the potential to evoke critical thinking. It is not a question and answer exchange, it is where one is thinking about the other through a critical analysis lens. What is *A*’s viewpoint on said topic and what shaped that viewpoint and *B* evaluates the *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005)— home life, knowledge base, life experiences, and beliefs that created this viewpoint? Together *A* and *B* explore various viewpoints and the foundation which form such. This dialogue is not constructed in a sterile interaction, but to gain information and insights to reshape your thinking regarding biases and prejudices—in this case, for this memoir, it is within the disability of deafness. The goal or significance of this chosen inquiry is to explore discriminatory educational practices related to disabilities and more specifically to deaf education for the AVT deaf student. The chosen inquiry, performative memoir, is designed through the philosophies described by Freire (1970/2009), but the discourse is demonstrated through lived experiences, performative storytelling, and dance. The topic of disability studies makes many scholars uneasy and through

this uneasiness, they form a safe disconnection from the topic. My lived experiences are illustrated through my eyes in the hope that my interpretations incite a broader lens for those desiring to become agents of change.

This form of inquiry seeks to expose the hidden covert policies embedded in society's definition of disability. This performative memoir has the potential to break down fixed stigmas regarding disability and create a forum for honest dialogue to achieve problem-solving critical analysis that can alter the narrow lens accepted by the able-bodied society. Each lived experience reveals my evolution and personal and professional interpretations that foster a transformation of my fixed philosophies. As a scholarly educator, I too bring my prior knowledge, lived experiences, and beliefs to the open discussions while simultaneously adhering to the home life, prior knowledge, values, and lived experiences of each participant. That is why it is considered open dialogue as we must be open to see various angles of viewpoints.

Recognizing and valuing *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) (Observation 6) of AVT students help regular education and special education teachers to develop deaf culturally responsive curriculum where the AVT students are able to bring their experience from their families and communities into mainstream classrooms, which creates equal opportunities for the AVT students to reach their highest potential (Siddle-Walker, 1996). The regular education and special education teachers have an important role. *Funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) is an essential aspect in helping AVT deaf students integrate the non-school environment—family, the hearing society, their medical world, technology, and related experiences to deafness—into mainstream classrooms. “No

matter what background students have, there is a knowledge base structured within their home, that can be tapped into and used in the classrooms” (Amanti, 2005, p. 132).

How we view the learning process, language, social interactions, and personal identity is shaped within the non-school environments. Teachers seeking to transform the learning experience must take in all components of a child’s cultural, language, and personal viewpoints. In critical pedagogy, understanding dehumanization and humanization is an “essential part of resisting corporate school reform. The teacher notes that every human being has a unique and complex set of circumstances that make his/her life understandable and sensible, bearable or unbearable” (Ayers, 2016, p. 167). For the AVT deaf student, the CIs, technology options associated with audiology, audiologists, FM systems and/or Bluetooth accessibility, speech therapy, strong visual acuity, listening for information strategies, communication strategies, and otherness are all intertwined in the student’s knowledge base. This differs greatly from other typical students within the inclusion classroom. “Teachers who consider *funds of knowledge* to be an essential part of optimizing learning must be prepared to analyze, understand, synthesize, and leverage non-traditional literacy practices” (Razfar, 2012, pp. 127-140).

Like the Little Red Hen in the classic children’s tale asks, “Who will help me gather the crop?” and “Who will help me eat the bread?” As agents of transformation, can we sit in idle places and refuse to work the fields thinking all is just, equal, and fair? Berube (1989) became frustrated when public education policies required his son who was diagnosed with Down Syndrome to be tested. The norms were aligned with non-disabled students so why evaluate how close or far away he is from the accepted standard. He fought the system in advocating for tests that reveal strengths, interests, and potential to grow (*funds of knowledge*). Was this some

form of justification that perpetuated the school system's right to segregate and to ability group?

The *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) construct supports identity for space and place for non-traditional students. It is comprised of cultural and linguistic identities, beliefs, home-life, abilities, and otherness that every student brings into the learning space. As marginalized and minority students continued to be “subjected to standardized tests...the issue of whose knowledge and whose voice are embedded in these test mandates” (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 42) dictates inclusion and exclusion policies. What is the benefit of testing to record how far from the norm each marginalized student is and how does that determine placement? We acknowledge that a state-mandated normed test is a bank of curriculum knowledge and it cannot in the nature of the format incorporate *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). However, much credence is given to these scores to assess ability levels.

This is what hooks (1994) explored as she reflected on the marginalized black female student. In a class taught by another black female, students' *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) --background, homelife, culture, linguistics, beliefs—were incorporated in the learning exchange. However, in comparison, when these students were in other classes, traditional banking system teaching was practiced. The students were active participants when they were permitted to approach learning holistically, instead of through a denial of who they were and how their prior knowledge encouraged independence, critical thinking skills, and creativity.

Students cannot come to the classroom in a compartmentalized manner. The background knowledge and experiences allow opportunities to scaffold new knowledge in order to make associations—not recall, recite, and record information.

When you examine culture under the lens of *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), we see that culture is a dynamic concept and not a static stereotypical all-inclusive category. In traditional Deaf culture, the *funds of knowledge* may include language modality, hearing aids, literal thinkers, vocabulary and syntactical differences, vertigo, lip-reading, personal space differences, and non-verbal communication. Their families may also be Deaf and digital technology as in TTY-telephones, light sensors, closed captioned CC television, and music interaction/tactile-vibrations shape their interaction in the learning space.

Since culture is not stagnant, this culture is also changing through technology and AVT training. Those who at one time may have identified as Deaf are now redefining their identity as a hearing person. The diagnosis is the same; however, how they interact within the non-school environment varies from Deaf to deaf. If scholars are seeking to incorporate *funds of knowledge* into the curriculum, “this is not about replacing what students have learned at home, but about using student’s knowledge and prior experience as a scaffolding technique for new learning” (Amanti, 2005, p. 135).

In Freire’s explanations of the banking system, teachers adhere to the notion that a student comes to class as a clear slate and the empowered teacher deposits information onto the slate. They do not encouraged students to participate and prior knowledge is not considered. This remains in many ways the fixed teaching philosophies practiced today in classrooms within the educational setting.

Old roots, deeply entrenched into the soil, are the most difficult part of the tilling process. You cannot plant a seed in this soil for the territorial root will choke the upcoming sprout. You thought the old rotten root was dead, it served its purpose yesterday but now must be uprooted; however, somehow its depth gives it the power to exist. It's ingrained into the soil, so the struggle is overwhelming. The roots are entangled. You are not just removing one root but an interconnected system of anchored webbing.

The dialogue is structured by the social exchange of the individual, and the knowledge gained is, in essence, a reflection of the society. In critical consciousness, the oppressed individual understands the reality that is shaped by the dominating class. In the politics of identity, once you have identified the elements of your dehumanization, it is up to you to challenge this reality to reshape your identity for societal membership. The desire to challenge this reality results in a "fear of freedom" (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 36). This fear of freedom creates apprehension that reduces the subject to submit to the acceptance of security over liberation. (Humanness video <https://vimeo.com/400392607>)

The new crop, the AVT deaf student, can no longer be served within the traditional deaf education curriculum. Their roots are in listening and spoken language through an auditory-verbal approach. They are seeking place and space to deepen and strengthen their roots within the public education inclusion classroom. Their *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) differ from other able-bodied and disabled students. The roots fashioned within traditional domains are deeply embedded and the attempt to create a new crop creates an upheaval within the fixed order. A respect of otherness and difference through a *funds of knowledge* scope leads to an action-reflection process that incites critical thinking and independent thought.

If educational scholars remain threatened by otherness, they will reject open scholarly dialogue that can broaden the scope for critical pedagogy and disability studies. When a deaf child and their family choose the AVT approach, their goal is to develop listening and spoken language. Once that choice has been embraced, you as the agent of transformation are supporting their endeavor to learn and navigate successfully within a hearing society. Inclusion and special education teachers can incorporate and respect the difference of the AVT deaf student. Dialogue (Freire) is not some technique to engage in for the mere sake of getting to know others. It is an action-reflection construct “as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing” (1970/2000, p. 17).

Disability studies and critical pedagogy seek to expose traditional philosophies for an action-reflection dialogue within critical thinking analysis. In my own self-analysis, reflecting over my fifty years understanding deafness through a multifaceted lens, I thought my roots were supported by the richness of the most nutrient soil in which the first seed of deafness was planted. From my earliest childhood memories, I became accustomed to deafness as a difference but not a deficit through my aunt. Since it was a part of my family dynamics, this experience became my foundation regarding disabilities. I was not exposed to the stereotypes, the prejudices, the predispositions upheld by society. We all adjusted to specific modifications that never seemed to impede communication.

This performative memoir demonstrates how action-reflection and open dialogue that promotes critical analysis has the potential to move us closer to the goal of equality and equity for individuals with disabilities and confronting the dehumanization of the invisible members of society. The world is not some space (Freire, 1970/2009) that the “oppressor and the oppressed must adapt to, but through open dialogue, it transforms into a scope that takes shape

as I act upon it” (p. 92). When the storm winds blow and the branches start to bend, if the roots are anchored firm into the soil it will withstand the winds. Does a performative memoir have an impact to address educational biases? Can educational scholars participate in critical thinking to foster educational freedom for disabled students?

The seed, the sprout, the root, the crop, it is now the season to harvest. Since technology, early intervention, and intensive therapy are the key components of the AVT approach, this approach within this hierarchy is still in its infancy. Oralism has been practiced for years with and without amplification. Research is now focused on the benefits of early amplification, early intervention, and therapy for pre-lingual deaf students. Research concentrations are also investigating the potential benefits of early implantation for acquiring language and communication skills.

Although this performative storytelling inquiry seeks to expose the hidden within the curriculum, as researchers explore the listening and spoken language methods to advance communication skills the public-school system will begin to be confronted with the arrival of these atypical learners. Many schools have not embraced the AVT approach to employ AVT therapists or contract these specialists. They often adhere to the traditional standards as they explain that they offer speech and language therapy through the speech teacher and the traditional deaf education teacher along with the sign language interpreter. The impact and future implications of this inquiry within the framework of critical pedagogy and disability studies is innovative. The AVT approach for deaf students is an unconventional approach which through this study can be discussed by educators seeking to broaden their scope of disability studies and more specifically the AVT deaf student. It is my hope that the impact of

my shared lived experiences will encourage scholars to see themselves and create their own interpretations related to the marginalized subdominant population.

Every harvest is created through an interdependent process. As the vision of a harvest stirs within your being, the envisioned wheat field or cornfield or sunflowers begin to consume you. You till the ground removing withered crops and their embedded roots. You start with a tiny seed. You plant the seed and hope that it will germinate. You expectantly await as the roots grow deep into the soil and begin to anchor the developing plant. The roots are a crucial element of this process as it feeds, strengthens, and nourishes the new growth. It has the potential to die if not nurtured for this is not a stagnant process. You have put on the farmer's straw hat and your knowledge of agriculture has been passed down by the farmers before you. The anticipated outcome of a healthy harvest all depends on the preparatory design and your commitment to your bountiful envision harvest.

The music attracts me...I am entrusted to share the voices, songs, and stories to grow and release them into the world...to be of assistance and inspiration (Harjo, 2012, p. 20).

EPILOGUE SILENCE

This epilogue is structured into two parts: (1) a reflection in prose reflecting silence as described by Kaminsky in *Deaf Republic* along with a performative lyrical dance; (2) six letters written to those who refused to conform to the silence which perpetuates the dehumanization of individuals with disability--respectfully the AVT deaf students. This epilogue incorporates narrative, lyrical dance, prose poetry and spoken word (personal letters). It is the final portion of this dissertation as it continues to incite empathetic critical analysis and self-awareness.

Reflections in Prose

Deaf Republic (Kaminsky, 2019)

Kaminsky's (2019, *Deaf Republic*) is an allegory that illustrates the *culture of silence*. In the design of this storyline, our country is the stage in which puppet shows and the puppets represent a powerless class. The townspeople of Vasenka are subjected to the injustice of set powers that restrict their rights and freedom as citizens. After a deaf boy is shot at a public gathering by soldiers, the entire town becomes deaf. This is not due to the inability to access sound, but a chosen silence. "The ears have not weakened, but silence is strengthened" (p. 14). This silence furthermore requires them to form a new manual language through new and borrowed signs and gestures. The deafness nails them into their bodies (p. 63). They become *docile-bodied* choosing silence that like a "feather on the tongue ends the argument" (p. 15), but continuously kindles a fire within the spirit and body that is not quenched. The puppets represent the shell of a person as there are "too many bodies, but not enough people...too many people, but not enough hands" (p. 70). When one citizen stands up and revolts by luring and killing soldiers, the town's citizens become incited through both rejection and violence and they end up killing her. They prefer the peacefulness of the bright sky while inwardly asking

for forgiveness. Societal injustice for the dehumanized subdominant groups will continue to exist if we choose to reject open dialogue and practice silence which brings only a temporary façade of peace.

Lyrical Dance Performance (video <https://vimeo.com/397103591> Kaminsky in Prose)

The Sound of Silence, Paul Simon (1964) Universal Music Publishing Group

Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again

Because a vision softly creeping Left its seeds while I was sleeping

And the vision that was planted in my brain, Still remains-Within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone, Narrow streets of cobblestone

'Neath the halo of a street lamp, I turned my collar to the cold and damp

When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light-That split the night, And touched the sound of silence

Prose:

The power of the word.

Voice without word? A flagpole without flag.

In the mouth is the nakedness of the whole nation

Deafness. I thought I knew you.

The ears have not weakened, but silence is strengthened.

Who gathers in your circle?

Do you know them by name -Petya, Sonya, Alfonso, Gayla,

Or labels...

Autistic, paralyzed, blind, handicapped, Down syndrome, learning disabled, hearing impaired,
deaf

Deafness thy name is barrier. Silence thy name is choice.

Knock, Knock, Knock.

Deafness is at the door and he is a welcomed guest of injury.

Deafness as barrier? Silence as shield?

Docile-Bodied. Geographical embodiment. Third space.

Body (space)—the skin color, the disability, the difference—they blame you (place) for all
things and they seek in the body what does not live in the body (third space).

Society locates race, disability, and otherness within the body.

At birth, this was a given, like some societal contribution.

And in the naked light I saw, ten thousand people, maybe more

People talking without speaking, People hearing without listening

People writing songs that voices never share—No one dared

Disturb the sound of silence

"Fools" said I, "You do not know, Silence like a cancer grows

Hear my words that I might teach you, Take my arms that I might reach you"

But my words like silent raindrops fell, And echoed in the wells of silence

We watch. We watch others watch.

My body, I testify from, is a binoculars through which you watch.

Deafness nails us into our bodies. Body (space)-you must see-what I see (place).

I am of deaf people and I have no country (third space).

Discrimination, dehumanization, oppression, dominance and supremacy—characterizes the unjust order.

Masking behind puppets and signs – an indirect resistance.

Anguish teaches us to make a language. A borrowed-invented language.

Dialogue constructed in embodied silence is the third space.

Read the world. The language of society speaks in dominance.

And the body of the boy lies on the pavement exactly like the body of the boy.

Even dead, the body incites your violence.

With no camouflage of speech; We watch. We watch others watch.

And the people bowed and prayed, To the neon god they made

And the sign flashed out its warning, In the words that it was forming

And the sign said, "The words of the prophets, Are written on the subway walls

And tenement halls," And whisper'd in the sounds of silence

Your dear neighbors shut their windows—a silent message. A message understood-- ignore, evade, surrender.

In the valley of decision – defend or surrender -doing nothing is a decision within itself.

Surrender.

Forgive me. The sun is bright, and I do not hear the gunshots. I do not hear the discrimination of race, disability, culture, language, otherness.

My weapon, oh forgive me, “the sky is so bright.

The puppets said it never happened.

Survival is a song only the silent can sing (third space).

In the sound of silence

Letters

This epilogue incorporates six letters expressing the appreciation of people who did not practice silence but were within their scope of influence agents of transformation. There is an appreciation within each heartfelt letter that highlights various contributions in the field of AVT deaf education for new deaf students entering the public-school system seeking identity through place and space as a disabled atypical learner. These (6) letters are written to those who paved the way in this specialized field (Bell, Freire, Aunt Ann), people who were determined to embrace innovative options in deaf education (parents of AVT deaf students, AVT deaf students) and a letter written to myself noting how this Curriculum Studies EDD program encouraged self-awareness and critical thinking in critical pedagogy and disability studies.

The letters summarize the history of deaf education and the struggles that people with disabilities faced for centuries. The letters are written to those who contributed to the field of deaf education, disability studies, and critical pedagogy. The personal journeys of others, who being affected by deafness, challenged the status quo within traditional education to develop listening and spoken language acquisition to function within their otherness in a hearing society. As they sought space and place in unfamiliar territory, they rejected traditional ideologies of the past to create a third space for full membership and humanness in the hearing society. Their disability and/or difference shapes their identity and sense of inclusion, as it is viewed through a larger scope of self-awareness and independence.

The letter written to me- a Curriculum Studies EDD student, an AVT teacher, a TOD, and an agent of transformation- describes how critical pedagogy and disability studies has produced within me a broader lens for critical thinking, self-awareness, and as an agent of transformation. In what authority am I now an agent of change in reflection of who I was

before entering this EDD program? “Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 88). It is through action, word, critical analysis, praxis and reflection that scholarly teachers can become empowered to engaged in open dialogue for the transformation of the disabled students seeking space and place.

Letter 1

Dear Alexander Graham Bell (1880),

Thank you for your commitment to the disabled individual. You held to your convictions that one day, deaf individuals would learn to hear and speak. You knew the hardship they faced in an oppressive society and within your scope of knowledge and influence, you chose the road less traveled for that time period. As the father of oralism, you realized that speech production and reception could be achieved for deaf individuals. The hearing devices you invented over one hundred years ago while exploring various ways to transmit sound (i.e. the telephone) are the foundation in which hearing aids are designed and utilized today. It was personal to you for your mother and wife were both profoundly deaf, and you became driven to give them the gift of accessing sound. When it is personal, it has a way of becoming a life mission.

Once I knew only darkness and stillness... my life was without past or future... but a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living. (Keller, 1933)

You taught those who were deaf –and blind—to read, learn, and communicate. As you passionately taught Helen Keller, you exemplified a commitment to deaf people and their ability to live within society. Without your vision and without your attentiveness, advances in technology related to benefiting those with deafness may not have shaped the potential they are

experiencing today. Because you refused to be silenced by society's definition of disabled deaf individuals and that their place was confined to asylums and institutions, you demonstrated to all that deafness is not associated with cognitive deficits.

Critical pedagogy (McLaren & Crawford, 2010) looks at the world as it is, in the case of deafness, how individuals with disabilities were deemed cognitively impaired and unteachable due to their inability to communicate through spoken language. You sought to redefine the world -the dehumanization of individuals with deafness within education-through problem-posing dialogue. You, along with others in the field in the late 1880s, like Thomas and Miner Gallaudet, knew these individuals with disabilities were restricted by society's definition of being human.

Although as speech, language, and hearing therapists, drill-to-skill is often the design when attempting to development oral motor function and oral motor memory. Students who are deaf, through this repetitious articulation drill, begin to memorize tongue-mouth placements (/th/ between the teeth and /t/ -/d/ behind the teeth). This is not what Freire was describing when he rejected the banking system philosophy. Dr. Bell, you desired deaf students to learn spoken language so they could be active participatory learners within the educational setting. This was exemplified through the teacher-student exchanged demonstrated with Helen Keller and countless others desiring the oralism techniques in the late 1880s. As Keller stated, "blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people" (Gallaudet Library Archives, 1933).

I know you would be amazed in the development of auditory-verbal techniques. You would also be elated with the advances in technology. You stated that, "When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that

we do not see the ones which open for us” (Bell, 1880). I do not want to miss the open doors in this specialized field. I am now training under the organization that bears your name, and in July 2020, I will be taking the national AVT test to carry on your legacy and commitment in language acquisition for AVT deaf students.

The AVT option in listening and language acquisition has the potential to aid deaf students in communication skills. As 95% of the infants born deaf are born to hearing parents, they now have options that no longer align with the traditional options as in a manual communication modality. Statistical data supports a positive correlation with early implantation and language acquisition. Students can now enroll in an AVT parent and infant program designed to foster listening and spoken language which decreases the association between deafness and severe language delays. It is the age of technology and thanks to your insight and mission, deaf students can achieve academic success and independence in mainstream classrooms.

Thank you for the vision,

Tracy

Letter 2

Dear Paulo Freire,

You did not remain silent to the dehumanization projected by the dominant society, you were committed to the illiterate, rejected, outcast members of society—the disabled, marginalized, and invisible members. As the father of critical pedagogy, your philosophy—supported within an open scholarly dialogue—addresses societal resistance within disability studies. It incites critical analysis. The resistance in accepting otherness and difference upheld by the able-bodied society creates a justification to dehumanize. The dominant society controls

and perpetuates the subdominant individuals. They are beings for others, and they must transform their reality. You encourage educational scholars not to locate the disability—within the individual—but to look for it within society’s fixed position.

Within the scholarly dialogue, words become powerful if spoken to evoke an action-reflection critical inquiry. The gained word creates work that fosters praxis, in other words, the word produces an action that must be explored within an application through a continuous process. This action-reflection approach generates problem-solving critical analysis for scholars desiring to become agents of change.

Since being introduced to your works within the Curriculum Studies doctorate program, I became an instant admirer and student. I was unaware of why the AVT deaf student was often met with such opposition and skepticism. How are these atypical—yet successful—learners rejected by both the Deaf community and the hearing society within the educational setting? How is their otherness or difference related to diverse listening and spoken language acquisition viewed through such a narrow traditional scope? If the AVT deaf student functions successfully why is their difference still deemed a threat to the social order? How close to the normalized mean do you have to be to be accepted? The AVT student is aware of their difference and atypical language acquisition; however, they are seeking the equality and equity shared by the abled-bodied society.

You taught that the fear of liberation reduced some to remain in the oppressive state as it was some façade of security. I have first-hand experiences regarding both the Deaf learner (ASL) and the AVT deaf learner (utilizing technology); however, conscious and unconscious ideologies continue to dictate the parameters of dominant and subdominant groups. Both the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire, 1979/2009) are “manifestations of the dehumanization.

Liberation is painful and he who emerges is a new person-a new being” (pp. 48-49). Both the oppressed (the disabled individual) and the oppressor (regular and special education teachers) merge into a new being. You explained how the oppressed must define their value, identity, and independence outside of the parameters of the oppressor. I am a student of your philosophies among others desiring to become agents of transformation.

As you state, “Education is suffering from a narrative sickness” (p. 71). If open dialogue is to be achieved, all participants must be willing to engage in scholarly dialogue. If the dialogue is one-sided as when the dominant power will not entertain a different interpretation or methodology to include the subdominant students’ viewpoint, *silenced dialogue* (Delpit, 1995, p. 23) will be cultivated. Even with ears that have the ability to hear, the dominant refuse to hear contradictions to their set ideologies and the oppressive powers continue to marginalize and control subdominant groups.

For the AVT deaf students, society defines the unjust fixed order and locates the disability within the disabled individual. Without open dialogue, individuals with disabilities will be subjected the parameters that control who is accepted and who is rejected. Even if the otherness or difference is close to the normed central notion, scholars may remain skeptical regarding their academic abilities and success within the mainstream classrooms.

Freire, you suggested that to begin a dialogue, you must start with the certainties and then examine the uncertainties. For the disabled students, they seek to become fully human in a society that restricts their ability to interpret personal identity reflected in space and place. It is this critical analysis that shapes scholarly dialogue for transformation.

Thank you for your insight,

Tracy

Letter 3

Dear Aunt Ann—My Annabel,

Silent, not you! Annabel, you showed me the way in deaf education. Because of you, I could view deafness as a difference and not as societal parameters that constrain disability. You were self-taught and developed spoken language and lip-reading skills. You integrated into the hearing society flawlessly—as viewed through my eyes of childhood. You are an overcomer and it was for your tenacity and drive that my philosophies were molded regarding disability, deafness, and language acquisition. Maybe I did not internalize your struggles then as I was too young to understand, but now I am aware of how your struggles shaped your determination to be a proactive communicator. You refused to be defined by a label, or a stereotype. You defied the odds and broke through fixed ideologies to become all you desired.

You were my teacher even though I did not realize I was in class. You were my friend, my mentor, my advisor, and the voice in my head that continued to say forge ahead there is much to do in this field. Because of you, I learned acceptance, respect, commitment, resilience, and self-worth. Your world of technology to function independently at home was designed by my uncle Douglas. Light sensors for telephones, doorbells, and smoke alarms were incorporated throughout your house. My uncle made an amplification device for your telephone and I could hear the conversation throughout the house. He even created an amplification device on the TV through headphones he had specially designed so you could enjoy listening and engaging in television programs. My uncle Douglas did not wait until someone created such technology, he saw a need and went to work.

Although these devices were not available outside your home, you learned how to navigate within the hearing society through a different lens. You adapted to conversations by

engaging all your senses. You watched the body language, eye gaze, and environmental cues to gather additional information needed for the targeted conversations. Being raised around deafness was very common to me, so maybe I didn't see all the challenges that you must have faced to be the effective communicator you exhibited. Through this intimate viewpoint, it is how I view deafness and other disabilities today. Aunt Ann, my foundation in deaf education was shaped by you. Because it was personal to you, through your example, it became personal to me. When it is personal you operate on another level of self-awareness.

When I think of you my sweet Annabel, I am in awe at all you overcame when technology and educational resources were limited. Amazing! Amazing! You are amazing! Thank you, dear teacher, your niece and admirer,

Tracy

Letter 4

Dear AVT Parent,

Thank you! Thank you! You definitely chose the road less travelled. You had to silence the nay-sayers who opposed you and your family for choosing this innovative AVT approach. I am sure you struggled through an inner debate –spoken language or sign language? Oh, how you must have felt to hear the words, “your baby is deaf.” Something you did not plan for, nor even imagine. After hearing this diagnosis, you are asked to move quickly, but the emotional aspects of this news create shackles that impede moving forward. Your mental and emotional state must align to move onward.

Ayers (2016) suggests that you have chosen an alternative option to the status quo in deaf education. The winds of change brought a new revolution. And what was the “accepted lot in life as the inevitable for centuries begin to lose its power as glimpses of a new approach

became acutely clear” (p. 17). Without hope, without determination, without possibilities, we feel trapped in the traditional parameters of the past that can no longer serve the emerging new being. Your AVT deaf child is the alternative to traditional options in deaf education. It was and remains a struggle to resist the known and explore the innovative unknown. You are your child’s greatest advocate; you will help them to internalize all their academic and social potential in mainstream classrooms. You have rejected to conform to society’s definition and categories that reduce disabilities to a marginalized status. Your child has been in therapy since birth, you have continued to defend their right to become fully human within a dominant abled-bodied society construct. I do not know what struggles you will encounter, but I know you did not start this endeavor in AVT listening and spoken language therapy to give up now!

Your commitment to auditory-verbal therapy is a huge undertaking. It is not easy. Although it is a temporary journey to build the foundation for the listening and language acquisition skills needed to advance, it will feel like an eternity. There is a pay-day coming! Keep holding on and keep your eyes on the mark! You are a mother/father, a language coach, a shuttle service to endless medical and specialist appointments. You have developed medical terminology few of your friends share. There will be days you will scream and cry, “I have had enough!” But for your investment...there is a new day coming ...a new deaf child, a verbal communicator and he/she depends on you! Hold fast! You will reap all that you have sown!

One of my AVT students had to eat the cafeteria lunch which was lasagna. She was crying and did not want to eat but understood she would not be allowed to play during recess if she did not eat her lunch or at least try a small amount. Through crocodile tears and a forced smile, she declared, “This is so good.” Like this analogy, you have had to work through the undesirable times to get to the objective. You may be crying on the inside, but you trudge

through each milestone until the day when your deaf child says, “I love you, Mommy!” or “Let me read this book to you!” You wait anxiously for the day they graduate our AVT program and enter the public educational setting and you hold your breath hoping your deaf child finds space and place. They have prepared for this day and yes, they are ready for the next page of their life. I say thank you for your commitment and dedication for your child to learn listening and spoken language.

Your AVT therapist, and supporter of your beautiful commitment,

Tracy

Letter 5

Dear AVT deaf student,

I am so proud of you! It was your family’s goal that you would not remain silent but be equipped with listening and language skills to navigate the hearing world. At birth society determined your lot in life--disabled. Yes, you are different with atypical hearing, but that will not stop you from learning and interacting within the mainstream public education classrooms. You have already demonstrated your drive to learn to listen and speak. Every day since you were only a few months old, you were in therapy. You might say you have been in school longer than most students your age. You are prepared for the next step to advance to public education. You have been trained in listening and spoken language therapy and you are ready to soar.

No one is trying to take your otherness away even though you may have audition challenges, you are ready to leave our program and excel in mainstream classrooms. You can measure success by your own barometer. You may get asked, “what is that thing on the side of your head?” With pride you answer, “it is the device I use to hear!” Every morning think of

things you want to hear that day. Is it a train, or a bird singing, or your friends laughing, or your teacher's voice calling on you for the answer? You know the answer so stand up and speak.

You do not have to conform to a set standard of normalcy. Your physical disability is the way educational policies will determine your placement. Be an advocate for your rights. If the oppressor cannot see your potential, stand up for yourself. You are a successful learner, a friend, and you have *funds of knowledge* that will help you navigate the learning experience. You are remarkable! Thank your family, your medical team, your AVT team, and your audiologist and speech teacher for all have prepared you for this graduation day! I hope you dance. I hope you fly. I hope you achieve more and more in language acquisition and academic accomplishments. This memoir is a celebration of you, my dear AVT deaf student!

Sincerely,

Tracy

Letter 6

Dear Tracy, Auditory-Verbal (AVT) therapist, Teacher of the Deaf,

You have grown. Within this Curriculum Studies EDD program, you have stretched yourself from safe spaces to spaces that challenged your educational philosophies, and self-awareness. Through the scope that looks inward before looking outside, I have transformed from a sideline team member to an on-the-field member. Always a team member, but rejecting uneasy topics, topics of controversy, and the alignment outside of the dominant society. Through this self-awareness, my conscious and unconscious biases became transparent. The lens through which I viewed disability studies and critical pedagogy has been redefined. One dimensional vision places me in the oppressor's seat.

As I write this letter, I am reminded of the day as a TOD teaching middle school when the end-of-the-year sports competitions were underway. My students were so excited, as anticipated they would not be grouped but would be allowed to play with their hearing classmates. The special education teachers had already informed me that my students needed to compete with their regular education classmates. And as my students signed-up for various activities within their interests, we were informed that they would not be able to compete with their regular education classmates neither. I wanted answers! I was furious! Not special education nor regular education, then how can they be included in these non-academic activities? Everyone just overlooked my attempts to include my deaf students! This is utterly unfair!

In this EDD program, I shifted through scholarly teaching, professor and student dialogues, literature, and targeted assignments, I became acutely aware I have had an egocentric (self-interest) vision. I understood what I understood and to see it from a different perspective led me to a paradigm shift. Critical analysis has guided me to exploring dimensions of my participation to dehumanize and accept status quo ideologies. I was not previously aware of my participation to dehumanize.

Often in AVT therapy, public school IEP team members want to know if they should have a sign language interpreter attend the meeting. At a local mall, we scheduled pictures with Santa and explained the premise of our AVT program. When we arrived, the staff greeted us with gleeful expressions, as they signed “Good morning and Merry Christmas.” In addition, Santa stated that he had learned some signs to be more accommodating for our deaf students. I must learn the language of society and combat fixed biases. Read the world first and then read

the word in its connection to the world. It is not accomplished in isolation as it is interconnected.

Again, another memory surfaces, once when I was nominated for teacher of the year, the committee deemed since the special education deaf population was so small in comparison, that it was insignificant to represent this award. Maybe those were not the exact words or maybe it was the hidden message that I internalized on that day. Not important and insignificant due to a limited number. This is reading the word through the language of the world. This encourages me to become an agent of transformation.

I am excited to write the next page in my memoir. I desire to be on the cutting edge of all that is offered in the AVT approach. I want to continue to collect data and research within this innovative approach. I desire to share my passion and education with those who are unfamiliar with the AVT deaf students. It is like I am at a buffet and I want it all and want to go back for seconds. People may not hear your words, but your passion will always make room for your message.

I look at disabilities, action reflection analysis, critical pedagogy, and what it means to become fully human through a different lens than before. It is through education, praxis, and commitment that your lens begins to broaden, and you see clearer than you have prior to this experience. I was reluctant to explore past memories that brought back negative reflections, but I was determined if my lived experiences in deaf education were worth writing, they were worth writing them well and through an unveiled perspective. My goal is to become an agent of change for individuals with disabilities through the critical disability studies and critical pedagogy scope. No longer submitting to the status quo of traditional hidden curriculum but seeing the world as it is and as it should be through critical analysis, reflection, praxis, and self-

awareness. If I am not aware of my biases, then how can I educate others desiring to become agents of transformation?

Sincerely, an agent of change and equipped for an action-reflection commitment,

Tracy

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APPENDIX ONE

Terminology

Americans with Disability Act (ADA)- adopted in 1990, it protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination.

American Sign Language (ASL) - a manual form of communication utilized by individuals with hearing loss. This modality does not follow the semantic and syntactic patterns of spoken English

Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) -a therapeutic method for teaching listening and spoken language to individuals with hearing loss.

Audiogram -a graph of a person's peripheral hearing sensitivity with frequency (pitch) on an axis and intensity (loudness) on the other.

Automatic Brainstem Response Test (ABR) -An objective test that measures the tiny electrical potentials produced in response to sound stimuli; assessing the response of the auditory nerve and brainstem.

Cochlea- The inner ear comprised of the organ of Corti and hair cells where sound reception occurs

Cochlear Implant (CI)- a biomedical device that delivers electrical stimulation to the eighth cranial nerve (auditory nerve) via an electrode array that is surgically implanted into the cochlea.

Conductive Hearing Loss-associated with the middle ear.

Deaf Culture -signified by the capital "D"; a group of deaf individuals that rely on American Sign Language to communicate and most often do not embrace aggressive technology.

In comparison, those individuals who are medically deaf but communicate verbally are signified by the lowercase “d.”

Deafness- a severe to profound hearing loss. Sometimes noted as D-HH or HoH to denote hard-of-hearing.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) - formal programs within the United States for newborn hearing screening, diagnosis, and early intervention support for infants with hearing loss. In Georgia, these special needs programs include state-funded Babies-Can't-Wait and Georgia Pines assistance.

Hard-of-Hearing (HoH)-Mild to moderate hearing loss that can include Deaf culture of all-inclusive all forms of hearing loss.

Hearing Age (HA) - after a child receives amplification the age is compared to their chronological age.

Hearing aid (HA)- an electronic-programmable device that amplifies and shapes incoming sounds to make them audible for sound perception.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - a federal education law ensuring that all students with disabilities receive free and appropriate education services that meet the individualized needs of the student. It is aligned with the no child left behind law.

Listening and Spoken Language Therapy (LSLT) - Follow an AVT approach this is a national certification for educators, audiologists and speech pathologists working with D-HoH students.

Otoneurology -oto means ear and neurology is the study of the nervous system (auditory nerve).

Sensorineural -hearing loss associated with the inner ear and auditory nerve

Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) - specialized training for educators working in the field of deafness.

Tele-therapy /Tele-practice- therapeutic services delivered via online as opposed to face-to-face interactions. It is designed to meet the needs of clients that have concerns based on medical, financial, travel, or mobility restraints.

Total Communication (TC) - an educational approach within deaf education that incorporates sign language, technology, lip-reading, and if needed a sign language interpreter. This approach does not follow the oralism approach.

Usher's Syndrome - a recessive genetic disorder affecting hearing and vision loss.

Universal Hearing Screenings - hospital screening of newborns in the first days of birth through a non-invasive hearing test.

APPENDIX TWO

Does the Thunder Really Roar? by Tracy Edenfield

So many sounds -from loud to soft

From intense to gentle

So many sounds- we take it for granted the beauty of a sound.

The rain as it drops on a metal roof as if it were picking out isolated piano notes.

The lightning as it crackles like fireworks exploding to ignite the sky.

The harsh whooshing of a tornado, the alarming whistle of a hurricane, the ocean as the waves crash one upon another.

Sounds -words cannot begin to convey their uniqueness -their gravity.

Does the owl really hoot? Does the snake really hiss, does the cat really purr, does the hyena really laugh? Do the fish in the ocean talk, do the worms in the earth talk, do the giraffes of Africa talk?

Only the people with hearing can testify.

And the bell -how does one discriminate from the friendly tones of a bicycle bell, the notifying chime of the doorbell, the church bells resonating its twelve noon throughout the city! From the liberty bell, to wedding bells, to jingle bells, to a dinner bell -how do they resemble and how do they contradict?

Does a bird truly sing? Does a bee buzz out a lyric? Does the frog perform for a night audience? Does the elephant trump a tone? How does a soloist sound differ from a quartet or the harmony of a choir? How do voices differ? How does a man's vocal sound different than

female, how does a child's vocal sound different from an adult? And what is an accent when the same word is spoken by various speakers? How does one know by the first hello of a telephone conversation who is on the other end?

The voice -it's amazing! In a yell, a whisper, in a cry all is communicated by the beauty of the sound. Messages are understood by tones, degrees, intimacy or distance. How interesting that communication parameters are implemented when speaking to a coworker, a telemarketer or a lover -so much power is given to the voice!

Only the people with hearing can testify to the beauty of a sound.

The voice connects us to people and our surroundings in such a dynamic way -

I cannot take it for granted the authority of the sound of the voice, the sound of nature, the sounds of the environment, and the sounds of creation. It is not in solitude but in unity.

I really want to know for myself -does the thunder roar?

APPENDIX THREE

Welcome to Holland by Emily Perl Kingsley (1987)

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland." "Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy." But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place. So, you must go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met. It's just a different place.

It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned." And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very, very, significant loss. But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

APPENDIX 3-A

Reflection in Prose

Deaf Republic (Kaminsky, 2019)

Lyrical Dance Performance (video - <https://vimeo.com/397103591>)*The Sound of Silence*, Paul Simon (1964) Universal Music Publishing Group*Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again**Because a vision softly creeping Left its seeds while I was sleeping**And the vision that was planted in my brain, Still remains-Within the sound of silence**In restless dreams I walked alone, Narrow streets of cobblestone**'Neath the halo of a street lamp, I turned my collar to the cold and damp**When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light**That split the night, And touched the sound of silence*

Prose:

The power of the word.

Voice without word? A flagpole without flag.

In the mouth is the nakedness of the whole nation

Deafness. I thought I knew you.

The ears have not weakened, but silence is strengthened.

Who gathers in your circle?

Do you know them by name -Petya, Sonya, Alfonso, Gayla,

Or labels...

Autistic, paralyzed, blind, handicapped, Down syndrome, learning disabled, hard of hearing,
deaf

Deafness thy name is barrier. Silence thy name is choice.

Knock, Knock, Knock.

Deafness is at the door and he is a welcomed guest of injury.

Deafness as barrier? Silence as shield?

Geographical embodiment. Docile-Bodied

Third space.

Body (space)—the skin color, the disability, the difference—they blame you (place) for all
things and they seek in the body what does not live in the body (third space).

Society locates race, disability, and otherness within the body.

At birth, this was a given, like some societal contribution.

And in the naked light I saw, ten thousand people, maybe more

People talking without speaking, People hearing without listening

People writing songs that voices never share-No one dared

Disturb the sound of silence

"Fools" said I, "You do not know, Silence like a cancer grows

Hear my words that I might teach you, Take my arms that I might reach you"

But my words like silent raindrops fell, And echoed in the wells of silence

We watch. We watch others watch.

My body, I testify from, is a binoculars through which you watch.

Deafness nails us into our bodies. Body (space)-you must see-what I see (place).

I am of deaf people and I have no country (third space).

Discrimination, dehumanization, oppression, dominance and supremacy—characterizes the unjust order.

Masking behind puppets and signs – an indirect resistance.

Anguish teaches us to make a language. A borrowed-invented language.

Dialogue constructed in embodied silence is the third space.

Read the world. The language of society speaks in dominance.

And the body of the boy lies on the pavement exactly like the body of the boy.

Even dead, the body incites your violence.

With no camouflage of speech; We watch. We watch others watch.

And the people bowed and prayed, To the neon god they made

And the sign flashed out its warning, In the words that it was forming

And the sign said, "The words of the prophets, Are written on the subway walls

And tenement halls," And whisper'd in the sounds of silence

Your dear neighbors shut their windows—a silent message. A message understood;

ignore, evade, surrender.

In the valley of decision – defend or surrender -doing nothing is a decision within itself.

Surrender.

Forgive me. The sun is bright, and I do not hear the gunshots. I do not hear the discrimination of race, disability, culture, language, otherness.

My weapon, oh forgive me, “the sky is so bright.

The puppets said it never happened.

Survival is a song only the silent can sing (third space).

In the sound of silence

APPENDIX FOUR

AVT Students Report Cards and Progress Reports, and Audiograms

Appendix #4a

SAVANNAH SPEECH & HEARING CENTER
 1206 East 66th Street, Savannah, GA 31404 Phone: 912-355-4601
 www.speechandhearingsav.org

AUDILOGICAL EVALUATION

Sample of audiogram

Hearing aid test

AGE: [redacted] SEX: [redacted] DATE: [redacted]

Audiologist / Dispenser - GA License #
 Sheana Richardson, AuD - AUD003583
 Caroline Zuck, AuD - AUD003660
 Leigh Ann Burke, BC-HIS - HADS000700

Audiometer
 GSI 61(A) Ser#AA073789
 GSI 61(B) Ser# 20010150
 Maico MA 41 Ser# 73660

Transducer
 Headphones
 Inserts
 Soundfield

Test Reliability
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

PURE TONE AUDIOMETRY
 Frequency in Hertz - Reference ANSI 1969

SPEECH AUDIOMETRY

	MCL UCL	SRT	SPEECH DISCRIMINATION/ WORD RECOGNITION			
			%	HL	SN	TEST
R		5560	/			
L		4045	/			
SF						
CI/ AID						

LIVE VOICE _____ CD _____

IMMITANCE MEASUREMENTS
TYMPANOMETRY

Volume _____
 Pressure _____
 Compl. _____
 R L

ACOUSTIC REFLEX THRESHOLDS

REFLEX DECAY
 500 1000

COMMENTS:

AC UNMASKED O UNSPECIFIED X

AC MASKED Δ □

IC UNMASKED < >

IC MASKED []

IBST IONE II

OUND IELD S

IDED A

DCHLEAR C

CAMPLES
 * NO ISPONS? X

See Report

Scanned with CamScanner

Nemours Children's Specialty Care

5.7.19

Sample of audiogram

Pediatric Audiology

Date of Visit

4a cochlear implant test

Children's Way, Jacksonville, FL 32207 (904) 697-3707
 47 Baptist Clay Dr., Suite 130, Fleming Island, FL 32003 (904) 697-3600
 785 Old St. Augustine Rd., Suite 200, Jacksonville, FL 32258 (904) 697-3600
 19 Dunn Ave., Daytona Beach, FL 32114 (904) 697-3600

AUDIOGRAM
FREQUENCY IN Hz

SPEECH AUDIOMETRY		Right	Left	Sound Field	SCALES
No. Answered Threshold	SAT				15
No. Reception Threshold	SRT				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spoken Music <input type="checkbox"/> Pointed to Pictures		<input type="checkbox"/> Identified Body Parts <input type="checkbox"/> Repeated Tones			
Speech Discrimination (SD)	In-Gate				
W-22	W-11				
PSI	Other				

TYMPANOMETRY		Right	Left	OTOSCOPIC INSPECTION	
Type				Right	Left
A	Normal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unobstructed	<input type="checkbox"/>
A _s	Stiff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	non-obstructed	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	otitis media	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Max. Comp. at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	P.E. tube	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Visible				abnormal	<input type="checkbox"/>
				did not evaluate	<input type="checkbox"/>
				uncooperative	<input type="checkbox"/>

AUDIOGRAM KEY		Right (Red)	Left (Blue)
INDUCTION	Unmasked	○	×
	Masked	△	□
RE RESPONSE	ST	ST	ST
HE INDUCTION	Unmasked	◀	▶
	Masked	◁	▷
LINEFIELD		R	L
LINEFIELD AIDED		A	L
I RESPONSE		↓	↓
T - Did Not Test		○	○

TESTING METHOD		TEST RELIABILITY		LOCALIZATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BCAA		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Dying	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	
<input type="checkbox"/> CPA		<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Inattentive to task	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard		<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> False Positives	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	
<input type="checkbox"/> ABR		<input type="checkbox"/> Uncooperative		<input type="checkbox"/> ONE	

ACOUSTIC STAPEDIAL REFLEX THRESHOLD				
	300 Hz	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz
Probe Right				Soft
Probe Left				Soft

History: **CI - right ear AB CI**

Nextborn Hearing Screening:
 Pass Refer
 Unknown Not done
 Birth Hospital

TE OAE'S: _____ DF OAE'S: _____

AD: _____ AS: _____

Auditory Brainstem Response:
 AD: _____ AS: _____

DIAGNOSTIC RESULTS / IMPRESSIONS
 Observed responses are appropriate for a child of this developmental age.
 Hearing is within normal limits R L Soundfield
 Hearing loss is present at this time R L Soundfield
 IE: _____
 E: _____
 IF: _____

Impaired to previous audiogram responses are: Unchanged
 Improved Poorer Could not assess

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Medical Management / Evaluation
- Developmental Assessment
- Speech / Language Evaluation
- Continue w/ Speech / Language Therapy
- Auditory Processing Evaluation
- Hearing Aid Consultation/Fitting
- Consideration of classroom amplification/FM
- Speech-Language Guidelines were provided

Retest: **retest 2-3 weeks**

- PFIH
- Post medical mgmt.
- Per ENT
- Per Oncology
- with ABR
- with OAEs
- Practice play audio techniques
- Continue daily HA use
- Preferential seating

SERV: _____ COMMENTS: _____

#46 student JS

Parent + Infant Program
Implanted 7 mo.

Lesson plan for: [redacted] Age: 1 year, 2 months (CI Hearing Age: 4 months) Date: 8-20-19

Goal	Activity/Procedure (Include sample target items)	Strategies (To promote auditory learning)	Progress Towards the Goal
<p>Parent Report: Ling six: Present:</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ah <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> oo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sh <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> nothing</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> child <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mother <input type="checkbox"/> father <input type="checkbox"/> other</p>		
<p>Auditory Goals: [redacted] will identify 5 Learning to Listen sounds. [redacted] will participate in songs and rhymes by imitate actions.</p>	<p>Materials: Blocks, L to L sound toys</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted] will play with the L to L sounds and be given encouragement to imitate the sounds during turn taking activities She will also be given an opportunity to identify the L to L sound in a set of 2 or 3 toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiting Pausing Producing the sound before she sees the object Calling her to "listen" 	<p>[redacted] has mastered this Sh:ll. she will do the following:</p> <p>- Meow- Cat</p> <p>- woof woof- dog</p> <p>- neigh- horse</p> <p>- moo- cow & choo- train</p>
<p>Speech Goals: [redacted] will imitate a variety of vowel/oh, oo, ee, u, a as in "quack", oh, oo as in "out".</p> <p>[redacted] will imitate early developing consonants /m, b, d, w, n, h, p/ during play with Learning to Listen Sound Toys</p>	<p>Materials: L to L sound toys</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted] will be encouraged to request the toys and to imitate the vowels and / or consonants using turn taking strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn taking Use of the hand cue to encourage imitation Pausing and waiting to give her time to process and repeat 	<p>[redacted] has already mastered this Sh:ll. She will do the following:</p> <p>- n-no - hi-help</p> <p>- m-mama d-ball d-dada</p> <p>- [redacted] has mastered lot power words: hi, more, bye, up, baby, mama, open, down and down</p>
<p>Receptive Language Goals: [redacted] will comprehend 10 power</p>	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of toys: cars, balls, bubbles, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the auditory sandwich or circle of listening 	

I
M
E
N
A

4b Student K

Source: www.CivSource.com

Initial Eval Re-Eval

Savannah Speech and Hearing Center
1206 E. 66th Street
Savannah, GA 31404
912-355-4601

Implanted @ 8 mo.

MD

History

Significant History: [redacted] was referred by Dr. Behm due to speech and language concerns. [redacted] failed her birth screening, and 3 weeks later failed an ABR. She has a profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. She was initially aided bilaterally at age 2 months. She had no response to sound aided. She received her first cochlear implant (CI) in the right ear at 8 months of age. The left CI was implanted shortly after her first birthday. Due to a fall in November 2018, [redacted] left CI magnet shifted, which resulted in an infection. She had the left CI explanted on March 5, 2019. The new left CI was implanted July, 2019. [redacted] wears her CIs during all waking hours. She has attended Sound Start, an auditory/oral preschool for the hearing impaired, since she was a few months old. She is at Sound Start 5 days weekly, from 9 till after lunch. She has responded very well to the full-day language enriched program. [redacted] receives speech therapy 2x weekly, at Sound Start, from Savannah Speech and Hearing Center.

Medical History: Refer to previous reports.

Medications: None reported at this time.

Other Therapies: [redacted] was enrolled in the Babies Can't Wait program for speech therapy for a few sessions. Teletherapy through the Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech in Jacksonville, FL, has also been utilized. [redacted]'s sister, [redacted], who is 4 years old, also has a profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. She received her CIs at an early age as well, and attended Sound Start since before her 2nd birthday. Having consistently attended Sound Start, received speech therapy 2x weekly, worn her CIs all waking hours, and parent's follow-through, [redacted] now attends a regular prekindergarten classroom in the Effingham County Public School System.

Behavioral Observations

Attending Skills:	Adequate
Response Rate:	Appropriate
Level of Activity:	WNL
Cooperation:	Adequate
Social Interactions:	WNL
Communicative Intent:	Present

[redacted] is a very pleasant 2 year old female, who easily entered into the testing setting. She sat at the table, and completed all requested tasks. The results of today's evaluation are considered to be VALID.

Pragmatics

Strengths:

- Appropriate use of eye contact
- Responds to greetings
- Easily separated from parents
- Interactive
- Takes turns

Formal Tests

PLS-5	Subtests	Raw Score	Std. Score	%ile	Age Equiv.	Severity
	Auditory Comprehension	36	118	88	2:11	
	Expressive Communication	34	113	81	2:8	
	Total Language Score	231	117	87	2:10	

The Preschool Language Scales-Fifth Edition (PLS-5) indicated AGE APPROPRIATE receptive and expressive language skills. [redacted] has consistently worn her CIs during all waking hours. She has consistently attended speech therapy and preschool at Sound Start, an auditory/oral program for the hearing impaired that is language and literacy based. The family has also completed all homework. Due to the known language struggles for children with a hearing loss, [redacted] will continue to benefit from attending Sound Start and speech therapy.

Oral Peripheral Speech Mechanism

Drinking: Absent

Deviation: Unremarkable

Other: An oral evaluation indicated structures and functions adequate for the production of speech. [redacted] has no reported problems with chewing, sucking, or swallowing.

Articulation/Phenology

The Articulation Screener for the PLS-5 indicated "Performance Typical of Age-Level Peers." Her errors included /l/, /g/, /r/, "sh", /v/, /h/, /z/, "th", /h/ and /r/ blends in words. Her spontaneous speech is intelligible.

Other

Intelligibility: Adequate for age and gender.

Vocalization: Adequate for age and gender.
Resonance is considered to be appropriate for her age and gender.



#4c Narrative Summary

Period 1 2019/2020

P4 Teacher: Kate Blaske
School/Program: South Effingham High School
5th Edition Date of Report: 01/21/2020 Days Present: 70

For the family of [REDACTED]

Student - C.

Age: 5 years 0 months
Primary Language: Not Specified
Days: 2 Days Absent: 2 IEP: No

Page 1 of 1

I Personal and Social Development

- A Self-Concept
- B Self-Control
- C Approaches to Learning
- D Interaction With Others

Teacher Comments:

We are continuing to work with [REDACTED] to encourage social interactions and communications. She happily plays by herself on the playground and will occasionally join in a group play, but will quickly move out of the play and return to alone activities. She will respond to familiar adults when asked a questions, and she easily transitions through the day and follows rules.

II Language and Literacy

- A Listening
- B Speaking
- C Reading
- D Writing
- E Listening for English Language Learners
- F Phonological Awareness for English Language Learners
- G Speaking for English Language Learners

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] demonstrates strong language skills. She recognizes all the letters (upper and lowercase) and their sounds. She can identify rhyming pairs of words and sound words out. [REDACTED] enjoys writing and often uses the white boards during free choice times. We will continue to provide conversation opportunities and encourage verbal responses.

III Mathematical Thinking

- A Processes and Practices
- B Number
- C Operations and Algebraic Thinking
- D Measurement
- F Geometry

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] recognizes her numbers and can count large quantities. She accurately compares measurements and understands the "math" language being used to describe amounts. She recognizes basic shapes and can identify patterns.

IV Scientific Thinking

- A Inquiry Skills and Practices
- B Physical Science
- C Life Science
- D Earth Science

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] has participated in a variety of science activities. She will provide written documentation of her observations and actively participate in problem solving activities. We will continue to encourage shared verbal observations and working discussions during problem solving challenges.

V Social Studies

- A People, Past and Present
- B Human Interdependence
- C Citizenship and Government
- D People and Where They Live

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] loves to draw pictures of her family! She is keenly aware of everyone and their role. She has provided drawings and given descriptions of community helpers and demonstrates a good understanding of the world around her.

VI The Arts

- A Expression and Representation
- B Understanding and Appreciation

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] creative activities. She often works with play dough and paints pictures at the easel. She appears to be engaged in dramatic scenarios during playground time because her face is expressive and her actions deliberate. When [REDACTED] chooses to, she will participate in group music and movement activities.

VII Physical Development, Health, and Safety

- A Gross Motor Development
- B Fine Motor Development
- C Self-Care, Health, and Safety

Teacher Comments:

[REDACTED] demonstrates appropriate physical development. She moves with strength, balance, and control, and she easily completes bilateral movements. She produces accurate letters shapes and purposeful artwork. [REDACTED] can take care of personal needs at school.

* See teacher notes describing mastered objectives.

- Implanted 8 mo.
- Did not qualify for any resource services.

#4d
AE

#4d

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Excellence Educational Resources
5543 Edmondson Pike, Suite 309, Nashville, TN 37211
Phone: (224) 229-0809 ~ Web site: www.AcademicExcellence.com

Student B
7th Grade
Implanted
@ 3yrs. old

Student Name: [REDACTED]
Date Test Taken: July 16, 2019
Test: CAT Test
Grade: Grade Level 7 - Not Timed

Subject	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	Percentile Rank	Stanine
Reading Vocabulary	29/40	8.9	74	6
Reading Comprehension	26/45	8.4	68	6
Mathematics Computation	38/48	10.4	93	8
Mathematics Concepts & Problems	26/50	8.0	69	6
Language Mechanics	52/72	10.0	83	7
Language Usage & Structure	21/50	5.6	31	4
Language Spelling	20/32	8.3	67	6

CS Scanned with CamScanner

* The test taken by this student was not timed.

Student J
Improved scores

#4e

2019 - 2020 Report Card
Grade: 03 Student ID: [REDACTED]

Guyton ES
P.O. Box 9
Guyton, GA 31312
(912)772-3384

Attendance Summary By Term:

1		2		3		4		Total	
Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Grade Report:

Course	Task	1	2
233034000-23 Penmanship / Grade 03 [Parker, Courtney Brooke]	9 Week Grade	5	5
233040000-21 Language Arts / Grade 03 [Blair, Allison]	9 Week Grade	75	81
	Semester		82
			83
278140000-21 Mathematics / Grade 03 [Blair, Allison]	9 Week Grade		83
	Semester		83
350840000-21 Computer Literacy / Grade 03 [Royal, Isabella G.]	9 Week Grade	5	5
360640000-21 Physical Ed - 180 / Grade 03 [Humphries, Lauren Conner]	9 Week Grade	5	5
410140000-25 Science / Grade 03 [Parker, Courtney Brooke]	9 Week Grade	79	84
	Semester		87
430040000-25 Social Studies / Grade 03 [Parker, Courtney Brooke]	9 Week Grade	85	88
	Semester		84
830540000-21 Visual Arts / Grade 03 [Crosby, Marie L.]	9 Week Grade	5	5
830640000-21 Music / Grade 03 [Scarborough, Lindsey]	9 Week Grade	5	5

Academic Performance Level for S-N-U

S	N	U
Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory

#4 f In-Class Scores MAP Scores



Howard Elementary
 Report Card Second 9 Weeks 2019-2020
 Dr. Ann Levitt, Superintendent of Schools

Principal: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

MAP Reading RIT Score: 151
 MAP Math RIT Score: 160

Grade: 1
 Homeroom: Donner, Bernadette

P	COURSE	TEACHER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Yr Avg	Abs	Tdy/ Eridis	CNDT	Comments
00	Homeroom 1	Donner, Bernadette		E				6	2	E	
01	Reading/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	89	90				0	0		
02	Language Arts/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	94	93				0	0		
03	Mathematics/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	86	92				0	0		
05	Vis Arts/Grade 1	Whitcomb, Mary E	E	E				0	0		
06	Science/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	100	100				0	0		
07	Social Studies/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	100	100				0	0		
04	Health/Grade 1	Donner, Bernadette	100	100				0	0		
05	Physical Education/Grade 1	Sauer, Joseph G	E	E				0	0		
05	Music/1	Littrell, Iris	E	E				0	0		
07	Spanish/Grade 1	Magana, Israel	E	E				0	0		

Marking Period End Date: 12/20/2019

Grading Legend: Numeric Grading Legend:
 E-Excellent/A- 90-100
 S-Satisfactory/B- 80-89
 N-Needs Improvement/C- 70-79
 U-Unsatisfactory/F- Below 70

#4 f

#4g

A-B Grade Scores

The screenshot shows a mobile dashboard with the following data:

Subject	Room	Score
Writing Standards 1	156	DNM
Social Studies 1	156	96
Art	156 Patter	E
Physical Ed 1	156 Patter	E
STEM-STEAM Explor / 1	156 Patter	P
Health	156 Patter	E
Music, General/1	156 Patter	E
Language Arts 1	156	72
Reading 1	156	73
Mathematics 1	156	85
Science 1	156	84

The dashboard also includes a navigation bar at the bottom with icons for Dashboard, Classes, Calendar, Schedule, and More.

* 4g

Lorraine Elementary School
 3343 E. Fairview Rd. SW
 Stockbridge, GA 30281
 (770)483-0657

2019 - 2020 Report Card - Quarter Grades
 Grade: 03 Student ID: [REDACTED]
 State ID: 1509946233
 Generated on 01/21/2020 08:49:31 AM

A-B grade scores
 A-C

Attendance Summary By Term:

1		2		3		4		Total	
Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy	Absent	Tardy
1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0

Grade Report:

Course	Task	1	2	3	4
2) 23.0014010-5 Reading 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Quarter Grade	76			
1) 23.0040050-5 Language Arts 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Quarter Grade	74			
2) 23.8014018-15 Reading 3 [Webb, Brandy]	Quarter Grade		80		
1) 23.8040018-18 Language Arts 3 [Webb, Brandy]	Quarter Grade		80		
3) 27.0140010-5 Math 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Quarter Grade	73			
3) 27.8140018-15 Math 3 [Webb, Brandy]	Quarter Grade		85		
HR*) 3000-5 Grade 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Asks questions and seeks help when needed	M	M		
	Completes work in allotted time	M	M		
	Demonstrates organizational skills	M	M		
	Displays self-control	M	M		
	Listens to and follows directions	M	M		
	Participates appropriately in class activities	M	M		
	Respects authority	M	M		
	Respects property and rights of others	M	M		
	Returns completed homework assignments	M	M		
	Stays on task	M	M		
	Works independently	M	E		
8) 38.0040010-5 Phys Ed 3 [Spain/Smith]	Conduct	M	M		
	Performance	M	M		
5) 41.0140010-5 Science 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Quarter Grade	100	85		
4) 45.0040010-5 Social Studies 3 [Spain, Jennifer]	Quarter Grade	80	85		
6) 50.0040000-5 Art 3 [Spain/Tompkins]	Conduct	M	M		
	Performance	M	M		
6) 53.0040000-5 Music 3 [Spain/Miller]	Conduct	M	M		
	Performance	M	M		

Scoring Legend
E: Exceeds Expectations
M: Meets Expectations
N: Needs Improvement

APPENDIX FIVE

Performative Videos in the viewing order within the memoir (password protected: peyton05)

1. Musicality—Meaning in Motions
2. Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants AVT and Technology
3. Little Boy Blue
4. Does the Thunder Really Roar?
5. Welcome to Holland
6. Amazing Grace
7. We Shall Behold Him
8. History of Deaf Education
9. Two Roads (Frost)
10. Dream & I Know Why I Believe
11. Carmanah -*Roots* Lyrical Dance
12. Humanness (Discrimination and Humanness)
13. Epilogue Performative Song & Lyrical Dance (Kaminsky)