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# Understanding the Language Experiences and Motivations of Deaf Adolescent Latino Struggling Readers

## **Cover Page Footnote**

The author thanks Advisors C. Ramsey, T. Humphries, and C. Padden for their guidance with this study and participants who shared their experiences.

## Introduction

What can be learned about motivation to read among Deaf Latino adolescents who are struggling readers? How do these students' backgrounds and language experiences affect their attitudes towards self, community, and the English language? What are their self-concepts about their reading abilities? Finally, what are their values and motivators in regards to reading? Deaf Latino students typically possess a pride of heritage, a positive attitude toward multilingualism, and an adaptable spirit that allows them to shift their language use according to their needs and context. However, they may be frustrated by reading and even have a narrow conception of reading as a school activity. Teachers can learn a great deal by simply asking students about their enjoyment of reading or lack thereof.

There is a great need to be literate in today's society. Failure to acquire adequate literacy skills leads to devastating consequences for students, including unsatisfactory academic outcomes, problematic behavior, an increased likelihood of dropping out of school, limited employment options, and a greater likelihood of living in poverty (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Hitchcock, Prater, & Dowrick, 2004). Only 15% of all Deaf high school graduates read above the sixth-grade level, with fewer than 6% of those who are African American or Latino doing so (Cohen, Fischgrund, & Redding, 1990). Only 3% of Deaf 18-year-olds read as well as their hearing peers (Traxler, 2000). The outcomes have not changed over the history of deaf education. Is it possible that because psychological factors such as self-esteem, self-concept, and cultural experiences are not typically addressed in reading programs, reading achievement levels do not improve significantly?

Over 40% of America's Deaf and hard of hearing school population consists of students from culturally diverse minority groups (Paez & Fletcher-Carter, 2010). There is thus a need for a clearer understanding of the cultural elements in these students' lives and how they influence needs in the classroom and ultimate academic achievement. Compared to Deaf children of Anglo-American families, Deaf children of Latino and African American families face greater challenges in reading achievement. Latino Deaf students have typically scored lower in overall achievement and were also regularly classified as "multi-handicapped" (Delgado, 1982). Blackwell and Fischgrund (1984) cited ethnic and racial bias, misunderstanding of language acquisition, and a mismatch of culture in the learning process and curriculum as reasons for this inaccuracy.

Motivation plays an important role in literacy development and leads to differences in achievement regardless of socioeconomic status or parents' educational background (Baker, Afflerbach, & Reinking, 1996; Gambrell et al., 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). In Carnegie Corporation of New York and Alliance for Excellent Education's *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* Report, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) presented several key elements in programs designed to improve adolescent literacy achievement in middle school and high school, such as motivation and self-directed learning. Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal, and Cusenbary (2000) reviewed the literature on struggling adolescent readers and identified four necessary factors for hearing adolescents with learning disabilities to become proficient readers: being motivated to read, decoding print, comprehending language, and transacting with text (i.e., actively seeking information and making personal responses).

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined the motivation to read as "the cluster of personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to topics, processes, and outcomes of reading that an individual possesses" (p. 404). It is worth noting that this definition of motivation is not synonymous with having an interest in reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). For instance, one can have an interest in reading but choose not to do so because of other factors such as early life experiences, emotions, and incentive to read.

Kamil (2003) found that students do not benefit from reading instruction unless they are motivated to read. In other words, motivation is a prerequisite for adolescents' engagement in reading, and therefore warrants further investigation with struggling readers, including Deaf Latino students. Existing theories discussing motivational processes have not been clear or explanatory, particularly for ethnic minorities (Rueda & Dembo, 1995; Rueda & Moll, 1994). Exploring the determinants of motivation in Deaf students may be valuable, especially since they share characteristics with ethnic minorities.

The first step in understanding the potential role the classroom environment plays in reading motivation is to learn more about students and what motivates them to read. Highly motivated students read for a variety of reasons such as curiosity, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction (Gambrell, Martin, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzone, 1996). To engage and enable struggling readers, educators need to provide reading instruction tailored to the students' needs and specific interests (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In this study by Snow et al. (1998), students who lagged behind their peers in the development of standard American English, including those learning English as a second language, were identified as struggling readers. A lack of motivation likely has a

negative impact on engagement, which, in turn, can have negative consequences on students' ability to become skilled readers. This research investigated varying ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds of deaf students, as well as any potentially motivating circumstances that could alter their approaches to reading and thereby improve their literacy skills.

### **Factors Affecting Motivation and Reading**

Several interrelated areas have been identified in the literature as prerequisites of motivation and engagement in reading development: attitudes toward the self, beliefs, orientation towards goals, and life experiences (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Fullerton, 2001; Kamil, 2003; Meltzer & Hamann, 2004; Peterson, et al., 2000; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; Wigfield, Eccles, & Pintrich, 1996). Readers' motivation and academic success depend on their foundation in reading and their perspectives of self and others as readers (Meltzer & Hamann, 2004). For some, positive emotions and academic experiences may help build self-esteem and motivation to read (Fullerton, 2001), especially because the former is strongly associated with students' perceptions of their academic competence (Wigfield, Eccles, & Pintrich, 1996). For instance, students who experienced frustration with reading as young children may stop this activity to ward off negative emotions.

Motivation is not located solely within the individual; rather, it is a combination of activity between the student and his or her social context (Sivan, 1986). Social context influences students' interests, cognitive and affective engagement, and motivated behaviors (i.e., what they choose to do, how they act, and their persistence in the face of obstacles). Rueda and Moll (1994) observed that Latino students were motivated in certain tasks but not in others. For example, when writing about personal issues, they were engaged. When asked to write to learn certain skills that were not meaningful to them, they were not motivated. This finding demonstrates how motivation is not an individual construct; instead, it changes depending on the child's interactions with others in specific activities that promote social and cultural experiences (Rueda and Moll, 1994).

Multilingual students' motivation to learn how to read English also could be a product of their identity and attitudes about self, attitudes towards language use, and attitudes towards teachers, and their classroom environment. The students' attitudes towards language use and experiences or the target language (English) they are learning are related to ideological and power relations (Fairclough, 2010; Luke, 1995) and formed through socialization processes

wherein students become competent members of society and understand the appropriate uses of language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Meltzer and Hamann (2004) found that community, school, and classroom cultures can support or impede the development of individuals' positive identity as readers. Before engaging adolescents in academic reading tasks, it is important to be aware of more than just the cognitive factors affecting learning motivation (Reed, Schallert, Beth, & Woodruff, 2004). Understanding the relationship Deaf Latino students have with English can help explain their motivation to learn how to read. The use of heritage language (American Sign Language for many Latino Deaf students in the United States) instruction presumably heightens self-esteem and respect for their Deaf cultural heritage, decreasing the affective filter (Krashen, 1992). Affective filter is a 'screen' that is influenced by emotional variables that can prevent learning. This hypothetical filter does not impact acquisition directly but rather prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. According to Krashen, the affective filter can be prompted by many different variables including anxiety, self-confidence, motivation and stress. These students are more comfortable expressing themselves in their heritage language since they are not as self-conscious about the grammar or word choice they use. The language used in the classroom and teachers' attitudes toward the students' heritage language can enhance or reduce this affective filter.

As students develop language structures and apply them, they acquire social knowledge (Bernstein, 1972). However, for Deaf children, this knowledge may only be useful and valued among their peers and family members but not necessarily in school. This discrepancy may have an impact on academic achievement (Cook-Gumperz, 1981). Depending on the students' school environment and their attitudes towards English, they may either value or devalue the languages they use at home and with their peers. Those who think English is superior may view the other languages (such as Spanish and/or ASL) negatively or vice versa.

Evidence suggests that Mexican immigrants want to learn English and want the same for their children. In an ethnographic study of 10 families, Valdes (1996) reported that all were aware of the importance of English in future academic and professional success. The parents strongly encouraged their children to learn English. One parent even stated that in order for his children to get ahead in life, they had to learn both Spanish and English.

Giacchino-Baker (1992) solicited the opinions of 14 Mexican high school students who had recently immigrated to California regarding their use and acquisition of English as a second language. Students with less confidence in

their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills experienced marked decreases in motivation and effort. The students also reported that institutional factors influenced their attitudes and subsequent acquisition of English. Being placed in classes with unchallenging lessons negatively affected students' motivation and self-esteem. They believed that they would perform better in classes commensurate with their skill level. In addition, the lessons needed to be interesting and relevant to their personal and cultural experiences for them to feel motivated.

Gurp (2001) studied the self-concept among 60 Deaf adolescent students in different educational settings in the Greater Vancouver area using the Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh, 1986). Gurp suspected that Deaf students in integrated classes would compare themselves to their hearing counterparts and have lower academic self-concept scores than their peers in all-Deaf schools. However, her findings revealed that integrated students had significantly more positive self-concepts as readers than the ones in all-Deaf programs. In many cases, Deaf students are integrated in hearing classes because they have higher reading skills than those in all-deaf classes. Gurp argued that the degree of integration was not directly correlated to ability or achievement. She noticed that Deaf students tended to compare themselves to other Deaf students rather than to hearing students. Deaf students with lower self-concepts might have a higher affective filter, which could influence their attitudes towards reading. This may be because mainstreamed Deaf students become frustrated when they miss key information in a non-signing environment. These students may also face challenges with their Deaf identity and self-acceptance. In contrast, Deaf students with higher self-concepts may have better attitudes towards reading depending on their beliefs regarding cultural norms, their peers' feelings about reading, and teachers' confidence in their reading ability. Learning more about the experiences of struggling Deaf readers will help us determine if the aforementioned factors play a significant role in their reading development.

Deaf Anglo signers tend to include negative school experiences with languages in their life story as bilinguals (Tomkins, 2007). These narratives often include reports of struggling to learn English, facing challenges with reading, and encountering teachers who either did not know ASL or forced them to use artificial sign systems. These students usually bring up negative experiences with speech training and with measuring up to others' expectations of their speaking skills (Lane, 1992; Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996; Padden & Humphries, 1988).

In the 1990s, several Deaf schools implemented bilingual/bicultural programs (Strong, 1998). However, efforts to address multicultural aspects of the

student population, and promote instruction of foreign spoken languages in the curriculum continue to be minimal. As a result, the needs of Deaf children whose home language is not English are not satisfied with bilingual/bicultural educational programming (Delgado, 2000). The communication obstacles of Deaf children in non-English speaking families are compounded when they attend a school that does not use their home language(s). Delgado (2000) found that multilingual/multicultural Deaf students were the most likely to fall between the cracks. Attention to these students was diverted by interest in bilingual/bicultural (ASL-English) programs, often considered the solution to all Deaf children's communication obstacles.

There is little research about Latino families with Deaf children (Rodriguez & Santiviago, 1991), especially those in the western United States (Ramsey, 2000). There is a growing need to investigate the children in these families because they represent 24.5% of the entire deaf/hard of hearing student population in the United States, 41.4% in the West, and 53.9% in California. (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2003). A qualitative study of Mexican Deaf students between the fourth and sixth grades (Ramsey, 2000) explored language use in the classroom, educators' perspectives on teaching these children about their heritage, and parents' perspectives about raising and educating them. Ramsey found that the students' fluency in Spanish was typically not recognized as an achievement. She concluded that the linguistic, cultural, and professional gaps and mismatches between educators and parents of Mexican heritage are primarily responsible for the residual tensions in the Deaf education system.

It is critical to understand how Latino Deaf students' attitudes and experiences related to their language use influence their self-concept — i.e., their feelings of competency and self-worth (Pajares, 1996) — and relationship with English. Their self-concept may subsequently affect their motivation to read. Students' positive and negative experiences determine their present ability to perform well on a task, so struggling readers tend to develop negative self-concepts and are thus more averse to the activity. This distaste for reading makes it even harder for students to acquire the skills they need to become successful readers (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; Nicholson, 2000). Students form self-concepts over time based on their past experiences, which have a bearing on eventual academic achievement. Students can enhance their self-concept by repeatedly doing well on a task. Chapman and Tunmer (1997; 1999; 2002) defined reading self-concept as “the combination of three interrelated components: 1) perceptions of competence in performing reading tasks; 2) perceptions that reading activities are generally easy or difficult; and 3) attitudes felt towards reading” (p. 280).



When students find intrinsic value in a task, they are engaged in it for personal reasons (Lepper, 1988). This contributes to intrinsic motivation (i.e., personal gain). These gains might be related to mere enjoyment, learning, or feelings of accomplishment the activity brings. In contrast, extrinsically motivated students perform tasks in the pursuit of tangible rewards (e.g., grades or their teachers' approval) or to avoid punishment (Lepper, 1988). Wigfield and Eccles (1992) emphasized that values needed to be considered in terms of costs such as energy consumption and appeal of alternative activities. Keeping this framework in mind, Deaf students who choose not to devote their energy to reading are not necessarily lazy. They may just prefer to put their efforts into other areas where they will not be perceived as illiterate and unintelligent.

### **Research Questions**

What can we learn about motivation to read from Deaf Latino adolescents who are struggling readers? Four specific research questions were proposed:

1. How do students' backgrounds and language experiences affect their attitude towards self, community, and the target language?
2. What are these students' self-concepts regarding their reading ability?
3. What are their values with respect to reading?
4. What contributes to or hinders their reading motivation in school?

### **Research Method**

#### **Participant Selection and Demographics**

Four Latino Deaf students participated in this study, all of whom attended the same high school. Deaf students at this high school were either enrolled in special day classes (SDC) with teachers who knew ASL, in mainstreamed Resource Specialist Provider (RSP) classes, or in general education classes with ASL interpreters. The RSP classes followed the curriculum and standards of the general education classes, but at a slower pace and with the extra support of aides.

Based on that school's Executive Summary School Accountability Report Card in 2005-2006, there were approximately 2,900 students at this high school, and 80% were Hispanic or Latino. Fifty-five percent were socio-economically disadvantaged, and 31% were English-language learners. Eleven percent were Deaf or had other disabilities. At the time of the study, there were 18 Deaf students.

There were five eligibility criteria for this study: 1) enrollment in grades 9-12, 2) classification as “Deaf” on their Individual Evaluation Plans (IEP), 3) knowing ASL, 4) attendance at an elementary school for two or more years in the United States, and 5) placement in RSP classes, scoring “basic” or “below basic” on the California Standard Test on English proficiency, but possessing normal intelligence as identified by standardized IQ tests.

The number of possible participants was narrowed down to those who were mainstreamed in several RSP classes because cognitively delayed students were not placed in these classes and were articulate about their feelings and thoughts. Those who were in RSP classes were reading at five to six grades below level, or at approximately fourth-to-sixth-grade reading levels.

Four Latino students were selected. One student, Anna, was a 9th grader and the sister of a male participant, John, a 12th grader. The other two students, Nicole and Vanessa, were 10th graders. Ages ranged from 14 years and 4 months to 17 years and 10 months.

**Background and Language Experience.** All of the participants were born deaf. Anna, John, and Nicole had a deaf uncle or distant cousin, implying that the reason for their deafness was most likely genetic. Vanessa had unspecified health problems when she was born that caused her deafness. The participants were required to attend many hours of listening and speech training, but were not necessarily classified as good speakers. Anna, John, and Nicole spoke occasionally in English and Spanish, but shared that they felt much more comfortable signing. They had difficulty understanding hearing people, and they all had interpreters in their mainstreamed classes.

**Primary Language and Modalities at Home.** None of the parents, with the exception of Vanessa’s, knew sign language. Anna and Nicole’s first language was spoken Spanish, while John’s first languages were English and Mexican Sign Language (LSM). He learned LSM while attending a Deaf program in Mexico. Besides Vanessa, all used Spanish with family and friends. Occasionally, Anna interpreted for her deaf brother when communicating with their mother or other family members.

**School Language Use.** All four participants began using ASL between preschool and fourth grade. Vanessa learned ASL in preschool. John and Nicole learned it in second grade, although their primary modes of communication were LSM and spoken Spanish, respectively. Anna used spoken English until the fourth grade, at which point she started using ASL. It is important to note that although the students said they learned ASL in elementary school, the level of fluency their

teachers held is unknown. It is also unknown whether or not the teachers were Deaf or whether they used ASL or if they signed in English word order. Regardless, the general consensus was that all students had access to sign language during elementary school.

**Educational Placement.** Participants had attended school in the United States for 8 to 11 years. Anna and Vanessa grew up in the U.S. educational system. Anna was mainstreamed until fourth grade, while Vanessa attended a self-contained Deaf/Hard of Hearing program in a public school starting in pre-school. Nicole and John attended a class for Deaf students in Tijuana prior to beginning second grade in the United States. In middle school, all students were in Deaf/Hard of Hearing self-contained programs and received direct instruction in ASL. In high school, three were mainstreamed in several RSP classes with interpreters, but without access to direct ASL instruction. Vanessa was mainstreamed for her elective classes and remained in a self-contained program for core courses such as English and mathematics.

## Procedures

The participants completed the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP) (Pitcher et al., 2007), designed to elicit their feelings and thoughts about reading, school and academic goals, and their self-perceptions as readers. The AMRP is a modified version of the original MRP developed by Brell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996); the AMRP's questions are more adolescent-friendly (Pitcher et al., 2007). Pitcher and his team (2007) added an item about race and ethnicity to raise awareness of the similarities and differences among various populations.

The AMRP is usually administered as a paper-and-pencil survey, but was adapted for this study where it became part of the student interviews. The assessment contained 20 items using a four-point forced answer scale, assessing self-concept as a reader and perceived value of reading. To prevent misunderstandings, each question and its four answer choices were translated into ASL. Next, semi-structured questions about the survey items were presented. These items encouraged students to elaborate upon their answers, shedding light on their self-concept as readers and attitudes about reading.

The last part of data collection featured the AMRP interview by Pitcher et al. (2007). The questions related to narrative, informational, and general reading, and were designed to elicit semi-structured free responses. These responses in turn provided insight into students' reading experiences, attitudes, and motivations. Several additional questions addressed the types of reading specific

to Deaf people such as information relayed through television captions and two-way pager communication.

With their parents' permission, further data was collected through participants' background data from their IEPs. Field notes were taken throughout data collection to record detailed observations as well as procedural modifications and changes in participants' thoughts over time

### **Data Analytic Plan**

The data analysis honed in on the factors influencing reading motivation among struggling Deaf Latino high school students. Individual data analyses and summaries were conducted, followed by a cross-case analysis. Categorization and analysis of the data consisted of bottom-up and top-down approaches. The former resulted in the categorization of each individual's data into two distinct themes: 1) feelings about reading, including places reading occurred; and 2) definitions of reading. The latter approaches led to the categorization of data based on language experiences, self-concepts, and values. Data from both approaches were combined to draw general conclusions about the students' reading motivation. Similarities and differences between students were then explored.

### **Results**

There initially appeared to be few commonalities among the students. However, analyses of the interviews ultimately revealed common experiences they all shared, ones that influenced their attitudes, motivation, self-concept, and values about reading. These results provide valuable insight that can help educators better support students in the future.

### **Language Experiences**

Analysis of the participants' attitudes revealed two findings. First, multiple factors influenced the attitudes about languages of the Deaf Latino students in this study: their parents, teachers, and residence in the United States. The Deaf Latino mainstreamed students who were trilingual in English, ASL, and Spanish reported specific purposes for using each of these languages. More specifically, they switched between languages at specific times and in certain environments. They viewed the languages as equally important although they admitted they did not feel as fluent with English and Spanish as they did with ASL. The students reported no negative experiences with any of their languages. Rather, they valued each quite highly and constantly juggled all three in a predominantly hearing environment. Part of the reason is that the students in this study were mainstreamed Deaf students in a school where the majority of the

population was not using ASL or English. Furthermore, their school had a comprehensive bilingual program for hearing Latino students learning English, offering English support classes and English Language Development classes in addition to regular English. Most of the other students were bilinguals (Spanish/English) and were learning to speak, read, and write in English. Because they were not alone in learning English, this may have affected the Deaf students at this school in such a way that they developed an appreciation of the various languages they used. The data also suggested that these experiences did not adversely affect participants' motivation or attitude towards self, community, or the target language (i.e., English). Three of the four lived as trilinguals, and like all multilingual people, they switched between languages depending on the context.

**English.** Students' self-assessments of their English skills were consistent across the board. Their perceptions were based on their experiences communicating in English at school. None of them thought they were proficient or fluent in English. The students' ambivalence about their English language skills was based on their self-assessment of using correct English grammar and vocabulary words. In fact, in their comments, English was equated with grammar, correctness, and vocabulary.

The students credited their teachers for instilling in them a positive attitude towards the English language. One acknowledged that English Language Development (ELD) classes also helped her understand and grow to like English. They admitted that they did not value English at first, but started to value it after understanding its importance, especially in school. John was confused initially, thinking Spanish and English were one and the same.

All four participants valued English. Two explicitly said that they lived in the United States, so they had to learn English. Also, since their parents chose to immigrate here to access better education, students reported striving to do their best and to learn English given its perception as the language of power in this country. Anna and John believed that English was important at school, and Nicole said that she used English all the time.

Each of the participants had a clear sense of English's importance in their world, were able to self-evaluate their English skills, and noted that English, rather than ASL, provided access to hearing people. Vanessa preferred English because she liked spending time with hearing people. She added that it was more important than ASL and that she enjoyed learning the rules of English grammar because it was similar to learning a foreign language.

**ASL.** For similar reasons, all of the students claimed that ASL was a vital part of their lives: first, ASL was important because they were Deaf. Second, they relied on ASL to communicate with others, either directly or through interpreters. Third, ASL facilitated their learning in school. One student said that ASL helped her learn new words, and another acknowledged that although her family does not know ASL, she still needs it at school and at doctor appointments. Two of the four participants considered themselves fluent signers.

They all stated that teachers and friends in elementary school helped them develop a positive attitude towards ASL. Three admitted that they were embarrassed to use ASL at first, but that their self-consciousness waned in upper grade level at elementary school. Using ASL made them “stand out” at school, and they did not want to be different. Three participants noted that it was easier to learn school-related concepts via ASL, especially when teachers read stories in ASL before asking students to read to themselves in English.

None of the students commented specifically on grammar or correctness when they discussed ASL. Instead, they associated ASL with communication and learning. In contrast, many of their comments about English were phrased in terms of correctness or rules.

**Spanish.** Three participants said that their families contributed to their positive attitudes towards Spanish. John, Nicole, and Anna spoke Spanish with their parents and relatives. They also went to Mexico on the weekends, during breaks, and in the summer. None considered themselves fluent in Spanish, but they appreciated the importance of the language due to its association with their families. Anna and John admitted that needed to improve their Spanish skills because they wanted to better understand their family members.

### **Self-Concept as Readers**

Participants’ self-evaluations of their vocabulary knowledge and reading skills contributed to their self-concept and values as readers. For instance, three participants gauged their reading skills based on their understanding of vocabulary words. Anna, John, and Nicole said that the level of reading difficulty depended on how many words they understood. Nicole explained that she considered herself to be a good reader if she knew all of the words in the text. Vanessa said that reading usually came easily to her, but if a book contained vocabulary words she did not understand, she would select another book.

The interviews suggested that some students' self-perceptions were critical in how they judged their own reading skills. In fact, even when these students reported that their friends saw them as good readers, they did not necessarily hold the same views. Other students, however, compared their reading skills to those of their counterparts according to what they believed their peers thought of them. For example, John believed he read just as well as his friends because they were in awe of how he could read closed captions on television. They thought he was a very good reader. Because captions disappear quickly following dialogue, reading them is a skill most struggling readers do not have. Anna's deaf friends asked her for help when they did not understand something, which implied to her that she had superior reading skills. On the other hand, Anna did not think she read as well as her hearing friends. Most of the participants correctly identified whether they were better or worse readers than their friends.

All of the participants enjoyed the information they learned in class more when the teachers read aloud through an interpreter. Although John was confident about his performance in school, he knew he needed to work on improving his reading skills. He preferred when his teacher read aloud, since this helped him envision the story along with the interpreter signing in ASL. His comments indicated some self-consciousness about reading and awareness of what he needed to improve. His ideas about what helped motivate him to read (e.g., reading aloud and seeing the words in ASL) enabled him to perform better in school. Anna also preferred read-aloud opportunities, especially when an interpreter was present.

The participants offered interpretations of what resembled a "good" reader and a "bad" reader. They agreed that a good reader reads a lot, has good English, and is smart. In contrast, bad readers are not interested in reading, have poor English skills, and prefer other activities such as chatting or walking the dog.

Participants also had specific ideas of how to be better readers. Nicole believed she needed to read more comic books. Anna thought she should read more often, Vanessa wanted to read the dictionary and write summaries of each chapter she read, and John planned to learn more words.

The students shared what motivated them to read in class. One felt particularly motivated when teachers read aloud at the beginning of the lesson before asking students to read independently. Another teaching strategy students found as helpful was when teachers introduced and discussed vocabulary words before the readings.

## **Values**

The students' motivation to read was not static; rather, it depended on who they were with, what they were reading, and why they were reading. Regardless of how they felt about reading, all participants stated that reading was important. They reported a range of purposes for reading from doing schoolwork to accomplishing future goals, but they did not discuss books with their friends because they saw the activity as academic in nature. None of the participants considered reading for enjoyment.

Anna placed little value on reading. If she had a choice, she would not read during her free time. Further, she predicted that she would spend very little time reading as an adult. However, she did read magazines about pop culture and shared what she learned with her younger cousin. These contradictions reveal that she viewed reading as an academic and not recreational task.

All participants except for one said they would read if they had to, but not by choice. Evidently, reading was a low priority for them. Nicole read at school and did not mind magazines, but she found other reading materials uninteresting. Anna only read in an academic environment when required, although she reported reading for pleasure if material was interesting. John emphatically said that he did not like to read at all and that he had no patience, motivation, or interest in reading. Vanessa, however, thought reading was "cool." She liked to read books sometimes, as long as she understood the content and found it interesting. Anna liked stories, but because she was not a strong reader, she preferred when others told her about books they had read.

There was an inherent contradiction between how participants defined themselves as readers and how they described their actual reading experiences, indicating that their thoughts about the activity were limited. Their narrow conceptions of reading may have thus affected their self-concept as readers. They believed that reading is mostly for academic purposes and that one must know a lot of words in order to be a good reader.

During the open-ended interviews, further evidence implied that the students were more interested in reading if it was presented in a multimedia or other non-conventional format. Despite John's disinterest in reading, especially at school, he did read for pleasure and social purposes. Anna read pop culture magazines, newspapers, and captioned television shows, sharing what she learned with her cousins. She read the Bible for church and studied scripts for theater. Like John, she read for entertainment and as a means of expanding her social circle purposes. Nicole enjoyed reading teen-related magazines, watching captioned television shows, and using social media websites. She also reported



sharing information she read with her friends and cousins. Vanessa read flyers and magazines. She discussed them whenever she stayed at friends' homes. She was the ASL Club secretary. Given her extracurricular activities, Vanessa had a broader range of purposes for reading than her peers. These comments suggest that the students read much more than they realized.

### **Discussion**

Three main findings emerged from the data analyses: first, the Latino Deaf students' conceptions of language came mostly from their parents and teachers, living in the United States, and their experiences being mainstreamed. None of the students expressed strong negative feelings about Spanish, English, or ASL. Importantly, though, the participants were either immigrants or children of immigrants, which had an impact on their attitudes toward the importance of English in the United States. In particular, their attitudes toward English were more similar to those of immigrants than those of Deaf Anglo students.

These results indicate that Deaf Latino students might feel comfortable in a school with a large immigrant population than in a residential Deaf school with few immigrants. However, they may benefit if residential Deaf schools (or mainstreamed Deaf/HH programs) are better at teaching students about multiculturalism. A diverse school environment may show these types of students that using multiple languages is normal and even valued. And, in turn, encouraging these viewpoints might subsequently provide students with more secure identities. Most likely, the combination of pride in their Mexican heritage and the emphasis their parents placed on learning English contributed to these students' assimilation into the school environment and to their impartiality of one language over the other.

The participants went to school with many students whose first language was not English. They, like the participants, were bilingual. This bilingual presence is not representative of most comprehensive public schools or residential Deaf schools. Generally, bilinguals have an easier time finding a place of belonging and thus developing a positive self-image, particularly when they are surrounded by other bilingual individuals who share an appreciation of multilingualism (Crawford, 1999). In this study, Deaf Latino mainstreamed students who were trilingual in English, ASL, and Spanish reported distinct purposes for each of these languages and did not plan to stop using them. Most viewed Spanish as a language used outside of school with their family members, although some studied it in school. Overall, the students did not attend to the grammatical aspects of Spanish as carefully as they did with English. Further, they often overlooked grammatical errors in ASL. Even though this school

offered ASL classes for hearing students, none was available for Deaf students who wished to improve their signing. This context-dependent use of language holds many implications. For instance, the students considered themselves fluent signers because their perceptions of their ASL skills were based on their ability to communicate with their peers. However, according to my observations and based on my experiences as a Deaf person and a native ASL signer, their self-evaluations were incorrect. They may have been fluent in basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), but not in communicative/academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2006). The more students understand the languages they know, the easier it is for them to apply this knowledge during further foreign language instruction. This supports the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Language Interdependence Theories (Cummins, 1994; 2006), which posit that experience with either of two languages can foster proficiency applicable to both. Hence, in order to ensure age-appropriate cognitive development, it is imperative that students develop solid first-language competence (Cummins, 1994; 2006).

Research has shown that Deaf people who have better ASL skills demonstrate superior reading and writing skills in English (Freel et al., 2011; Hrastinski & Wilbur, 2016). These findings suggest that students may benefit from comprehensive exposure to academic ASL, as this may improve their reading skills. It would be especially beneficial for these students to receive direct instruction from teachers who are fluent ASL users and can employ strategies to help them connect ASL to English (Nover & Andrews, 2000; Padden & Ramsey, 1998; Strong & Prinz, 1997).

Deaf mainstreamed students tend to have poor self-concepts as readers. Self-concepts as readers are influenced by their narrow views of reading. Although their friends think they are good readers, they do not view themselves as such. In turn, their knowledge of vocabulary and their reading behavior influence their self-concept. However, students' motivation to read is highly social. Opportunities to share texts with their families and friends play a major role in whether or not they learn to enjoy reading. The students in this study reported out-of-school reading activities that they did not count as reading, but nonetheless involved reading skills. Students' motivation to read often stemmed from social purposes, such as reading materials other than books and partaking in social networking (Guthrie et al., 2006; Wigfield et al., 2004). Interestingly though, students generally defined reading as a school-based activity. On the one hand, they stated that reading was "boring," but on the other hand, they discussed how enjoyable it could be with respect to perusing gossip and movie magazines and talking with friends online. Although the students said they read various materials including websites, closed captions, text messages, magazines, and books

(Koskinen, et al., 1986; Parault & Williams, 2009), they still did not view themselves as readers. This underscores the importance of introducing a wide range of reading materials to students to broaden their narrow definition of reading. In sum, students should be taught that being a “good reader” is not limited to reading in school, and that reading has significant value beyond the classroom.

Teachers can examine students’ daily reading behavior and materials and encourage them to be more aware of what they read and of how they do so for multiple purposes. This insight will lead to students developing their self-perception as readers. As Partin and Hendricks (2002) stated, teachers should expand their scope of what they consider acceptable reading material. Including popular culture, music, the Internet, and magazines in the curriculum may help promote the social aspects of reading and thus enable students to read with the goal of sharing what they learn with friends (Hughes et al., 2011). Another idea is to read books that have been adapted into motion pictures to incentivize students (Koskinen et al., 1986). Teachers play an instrumental role in enhancing students’ self-concept as readers and broadening their definition of reading. They can modify lesson plans to better engage students in the classroom by framing academic reading in a more “everyday” context. As Pitcher et al. (2007) said, “Adolescents are the major stakeholders in their education, and we, the adults, need to listen to what they have to say” (p. 384).

Students felt supported in their reading efforts when teachers read aloud and the information was translated into ASL either directly or via an interpreter. Shared reading (i.e., the interaction between adult and student regarding a particular book) is an effective way to promote language and literacy, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and metalinguistic awareness (Snow, 1983). One student described shared reading as when teachers read aloud at the beginning of the lesson before letting students do so on their own. Another strategy these students found helpful was when the teacher introduced and discussed new vocabulary. These remarks epitomize the importance of training teachers how to foster interactive and stimulating reading environments for their Deaf students. Pairing ASL with reading instruction will provide more opportunities for students to learn the material. Teachers can employ a wide range of instructional methods when helping students learn to read: modeling metalinguistic skills such as what to think about while reading, connecting the text to prior experiences or to other texts, and preview, view, and review the texts. The participants in this study had a narrow range of strategies for constructing meaning in text. Teachers could boost the motivation of these students as well as their confidence in their reading skills by using the aforementioned strategies.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Due to the small sample size, the analyses in this study should be replicated with other groups of Deaf students in similar school settings. The participants in this study were unique because their high school was situated within 10 miles from the Mexico-United States border and because they were Latino and mainstreamed. One needs to be cautious before applying these findings to Deaf Latino students in residential schools because all students there are deaf or of those with deaf parents. Their experiences or self-concept may be different. In addition, our knowledge of non-Anglo Deaf students is limited; therefore, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with other racially diverse groups (e.g., Black Deaf students) in both mainstreamed and residential Deaf schools.

## **Recommendation for Future Research**

This research focused primarily on factors contributing to reading motivation among Deaf Latino students. There are more topics to examine in understanding how students with these demographics who are mainstreamed differ from their peers who attend residential Deaf schools. For example, how do these two groups vary with respect to their reading habits in various environments such in the home, in the classroom, or in other social settings?

Another potential topic to explore is the detailed ethnography of home life among Deaf Latinos and how the parents' communication styles and attitudes towards academics and reading activities influence their children's reading interests. Other important aspects of home life include how Deaf students' experiences living on the border and visiting Mexico may affect their desire to actively engage in academics and reading. Finally, birth order may be significant in shaping these individuals' reading motivation because the eldest children in Latino families tend to be the providers and interpreters for the family. It remains unknown whether these responsibilities facilitate or hinder reading motivation.

Future research could incorporate correlations of students' SAT scores and grade point averages with their various characteristics of motivation. Moreover, the overall demographics of the student body may have an impact on Deaf students' language and reading experiences.

The challenges that Deaf multilingual readers face are highly complex and not yet well understood. Reading often becomes associated with academics and separated from leisure reading. Fortunately, bilingual strategies can help young people reclaim reading for enjoyment and eventually increase their likelihood of mastering academic reading. Study participants were successful in acquiring BICS (or conversational skills) in English, Spanish, and ASL. Future research should investigate how academic coursework in ASL may help Deaf students gain a stronger understanding of various aspects of language.

### **Final Reflection**

Educators teach students, regardless of their ethnic background or hearing level, to prepare them for life outside the classroom. Deaf Mexican students in this study bring with them a pride of heritage, a positive attitude toward multilingualism, and an adaptable spirit that allows them to shift their language use according to needs and context. These are all valuable characteristics they will carry with them into adult life. Current methods for educating this unique population need to change in order to maximize their learning. As with all students, this begins with identifying and capitalizing on student strengths to help them gain new and productive skills. The students in this study were able to acquire advanced reading skills because their teachers were aware of each one's strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore our responsibility as educators to listen to what our students tell us and to learn from them.

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## **Appendix A: Student Profiles**

### **Anna, Freshman, 14**

Anna was born deaf, and acquired spoken Spanish as her first language. She has an older brother who is also deaf, and a younger brother who is hearing. She was born in Los Angeles and moved to Mexico for a few years before returning to California by the time she began preschool. In the fourth grade, they moved to San Diego.

Anna was the only Deaf student in her public school until she moved to San Diego. There, she enrolled in a public school with a self-contained program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. This was her first time being in a class with other Deaf students, and she learned how to sign. In middle and high school, she was mainstreamed with an interpreter for all of her classes. During her freshman year, she took two English classes, one for support and the other for general education.

Currently, she speaks Spanish at home and uses ASL with her Deaf friends. She occasionally speaks English or Spanish with her hearing peers, but has interpreters for her classes. At home, she helps facilitate communication between her deaf brother (sign language) and their mother (spoken Spanish) as needed. She visits Mexico almost every weekend. Her father passed away when she was very young, so her mother's brothers also visit them often from Mexico.

### **John, Senior, 17**

John was born deaf in Los Angeles. After his younger sister, Anna, was born when he was three, his family moved back to Mexico. He first attended a pre-school for Deaf students in Mexico where Mexican Sign Language was used. The family then returned to Los Angeles when John was in the second grade.

When he was four years old, his father passed away. Like his sister, Anna, he frequents Mexico often, and his uncles come to visit from Mexico often. He lives with his mom, his deaf sister, and a younger brother who is hearing.

He was in a Deaf and Hard of Hearing self-contained program from preschool up to seventh grade with the exception of elective classes such as art, PE, and home economics. In eighth grade, he was fully mainstreamed with interpreters. Since his freshman year, he has taken English Concepts classes in the Resource Specialist Program. In these classes, they use the same textbooks as the general education English classes, but at a slower pace tailored to their needs.

During his junior year, John took Spanish level 1 and 2 classes. When he was a sophomore, he attended a National Language and Literacy Camp at South Dakota, and then attended the Youth Leadership Camp in Oregon when he was a junior. He played football and was a part of the track and field team.

His first languages were Mexican Sign Language and spoken Spanish.

When he moved back to Los Angeles, he started to learn ASL and written English. At home, he usually speaks Spanish and uses gestures and LSM with his family. At times when he and his mom do not understand each other, his sister Anna interprets.

### **Nicole, Sophomore, 15**

Nicole moved to San Diego from Mexico when she was in the second grade. From 2nd grade to 9th grade, she was in self-contained classes. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, she was mainstreamed for math. In high school, she was mainstreamed fully with interpreters.

She also took English Language Development (ELD) classes, a two-hour class designed for students not proficient in English or those who had English as their second language. She took ELD level 3 and 4 during her freshman year and then took level 5 and 6 at the time of this study. She had interpreters in her classes. Her family owns a house on the American side of the border and another in Mexico. She visits Mexico each weekend, but her parents believe Deaf education in America is better. Her sisters and brothers attend school in the United States, too. She has a Deaf uncle who lives in Mexico.

Nicole's first language was spoken Spanish. When she moved to the United States, she had a trilingual interpreter and learned ASL in elementary school. When she reached middle school, she used ASL as her main mode of communication at school. In self-contained classes, she used ASL to communicate with her peers and her teacher. In her mainstreamed classes, she utilizes ASL interpreters. At home, she speaks Spanish with her family and friends. With her Deaf friends, she uses ASL.

### **Vanessa, Sophomore, 15**

Vanessa's parents emigrated from Mexico and she was born in the United States. Her parents originally planned to move back to Mexico after she was born, but because she was Deaf, they decided to stay so she could get quality education. She attended school in the same town from kindergarten to high school. Her mother took ASL classes the minute she found out Vanessa was deaf, so Vanessa had exposure to sign language before she started school. She is taking English, Science, and Math courses in self-contained classes, and is mainstreamed for general education classes such as Folklorio Mexican Dance class and world history and culture classes.

She participates on the swimming and water polo teams. She also is a member of ASL Club and MeCHa (Chicano) club. She uses ASL in all of her classes and with her friends. She works with interpreters whenever she is mainstreamed or at sporting practices and events. At home, she communicates with her family through ASL and home signs.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

### Students' Background and Language Experiences

Questions below will be asked during the interview to gain background information about participants. (Some answers could be found in their Individual Education Plan documents.) This will aid the researcher in understanding the background experiences and the attitude they have about their language.

#### BACKGROUND

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 Where did you grow up? City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

How do you describe your ethnic status/identity?

Hispanic or Latino \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian \_\_\_\_\_ Black or African American \_\_\_\_\_  
 More than one: \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown: \_\_\_\_\_

When did you become deaf? \_\_\_\_\_ What was the cause? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of deafness: Mild \_\_\_\_\_ Moderate \_\_\_\_\_ Severe \_\_\_\_\_ Profound \_\_\_\_\_

Were you exposed to sign from birth? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what form of sign were you exposed to?

ASL \_\_\_\_\_ SEE \_\_\_\_\_ PSE \_\_\_\_\_ Other? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, how old were you when you began to learn ASL? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your mother deaf? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ Does she know ASL? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Is your father deaf? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ Does he know ASL? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an older deaf brother or sister? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what age is your older brother/sister? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other deaf relatives? \_\_\_\_\_

#### LANGUAGE/SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

From whom did you learn ASL:

Your parents? \_\_\_\_\_ Your brothers and sisters? \_\_\_\_\_

Your friends? \_\_\_\_\_ Your teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you use ASL in your everyday life? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of language did your schools use? (for example: ASL, home sign, signed English, SEE, or oral)?

Preschool                      in class \_\_\_\_\_ outside class \_\_\_\_\_  
Elementary school(s)        in class \_\_\_\_\_ outside class \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle school(s)            in class \_\_\_\_\_ outside class \_\_\_\_\_  
High school(s)              in class \_\_\_\_\_ outside class \_\_\_\_\_

What type of program was this instructional situation?

Preschool:

\_\_\_\_\_ residential (Were you \_\_\_ commuter or \_\_\_\_ resident?)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Regular education/mainstream program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Self- contained classroom in regular education setting  
\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary:

\_\_\_\_\_ residential (Were you \_\_\_ commuter or \_\_\_\_ resident?)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Regular education/mainstream program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Self- contained classroom in regular education setting  
\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

Middle School:

\_\_\_\_\_ residential (Were you \_\_\_ commuter or \_\_\_\_ resident?)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Regular education/mainstream program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Self- contained classroom in regular education setting  
\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

High School:

\_\_\_\_\_ residential (Were you \_\_\_ commuter or \_\_\_\_ resident?)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Regular education/mainstream program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Self- contained classroom in regular education setting  
\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

What language do you use with your parents  
now? \_\_\_\_\_

With your sister(s) and  
brother(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which language do you prefer to use with your family?  
Your friends?  
At school?

Explain your decision:

LANGUAGE PERCEPTION

Please rate your fluency in ASL:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
(Not fluent) (Very fluent)

Explain:

Please rate your fluency in English:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
(Not fluent) (Very fluent)

Explain:

Please rate your fluency in Spanish:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
(Not fluent) (Very fluent)

Explain:

On a scale of 1-5 (5 is high), how highly do you value/cherish your use of English?

1 2 3 4 5

Explain:

On a scale of 1-5 (5 is high), how highly do you value/cherish your use of ASL?

1 2 3 4 5

Explain:

If you know or are learning other language such as Spanish, how highly do you value/cherish that language? (What language? \_\_\_\_\_)

1 2 3 4 5

Explain:

THOUGHTS ABOUT LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES

Have your attitudes changed through the years about the use of languages? If so, in what way?

Explain which situation is one language was/is more dominant than the other?

Looking back, who were the people who influenced you the most with your languages?

What are the experiences of positive influence?

For ASL?

For English?

For other language?

What are experiences of negative influence?

For ASL?

For English?

For other language?



## Appendix C: Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile

### Reading Survey

The students' answers to these questions will help us understand what their self-efficacy and their purpose are for reading. This Adolescents' Motivation to Read Profile assessment (AMRP) was modified and created by Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinesingh, Mogge, Headley, Gentry Ridgeway, Peck, Hunt, and Dunston (2007).

To avoid any misunderstandings, read the questions/statements and answers aloud and circle the students' replies and write their comments.

AMRP Profile Reading Survey:

1. My friends think I am \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A very good reader
  - b. A good reader
  - c. An OK reader
  - d. A poor reader
  
2. Reading a book is something I like to do.
  - a. Never
  - b. Not very often
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  
3. I read \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Not as well as my friends
  - b. About the same as my friends
  - c. A little better than my friends
  - d. A lot better than my friends
  
4. My best friends think reading is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Really fun
  - b. Fun
  - c. Ok to do
  - d. No fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Almost always figure it out
  - b. Sometimes figure it out
  - c. Almost never figure it out
  - d. Never figure it out
  
6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
  - a. I never do this
  - b. I almost never do this
  - c. I do this some of the time
  - d. I do this a lot
  
7. When I am reading by myself, I understand \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Almost everything I read
  - b. Some of what I read
  - c. Almost none of what I read
  - d. None of what I read
  
8. People who read a lot are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Very interesting
  - b. Interesting
  - c. Not very interesting
  - d. Boring
  
9. I am \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A poor reader
  - b. An OK reader
  - c. A good reader
  - d. A very good reader
  
10. I think libraries are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A great place to spend time
  - b. An interesting place to spend time
  - c. An OK place to spend time
  - d. A boring place to spend time
  
11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Every day
  - b. Almost every day
  - c. Once in a while
  - d. Never

12. Knowing how to read well is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Not very important
  - Sort of important
  - Important
  - Very important
13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I \_\_\_\_\_.
- Can never think of an answer
  - Have trouble thinking of an answer
  - Sometimes think of an answer
  - Always think of an answer
14. I think reading is \_\_\_\_\_
- A boring way to spend time
  - An OK way to spend time
  - An interesting way to spend time
  - A great way to spend time
15. Reading is \_\_\_\_\_
- Very easy for me
  - Kind of easy for me
  - Kind of hard for me
  - Very hard for me
16. As an adult, I will spend \_\_\_\_\_.
- None of my time reading
  - Very little time reading
  - Some of my time reading
  - A lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about what we are reading, I \_\_\_\_\_.
- Almost never talk about my ideas
  - Sometimes talk about my ideas
  - Almost always talk about my ideas
  - Always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teachers to read aloud in my classes \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Every day
  - b. Almost every day
  - c. Once in a while
  - d. Never
19. When I read out loud I am a \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Poor reader
  - b. OK reader
  - c. Good reader
  - d. Very good reader
20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Very happy
  - b. Sort of happy
  - c. Sort of unhappy
  - d. Unhappy

## **Appendix D: Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile**

### **Conversational Interview**

This Adolescents' Motivation to Read Profile assessment (AMRP) was modified and created by Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinesingh, Mogge, Headley, Gentry Ridgeway, Peck, Hunt, and Dunston (2007). (The sentences or questions with asterisk (\*) have been modified for Deaf students. The modified statement or question includes information about captions on TV or two-way pager communications that are popular among Deaf people.)

To avoid any misunderstandings, read the questions/statements and answers aloud and write down their responses.

#### **A. Emphasis: Narrative Text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book. I was talking with ... about it last night. I enjoy talking about what I am reading with my friends and family. Today, I would like to hear about what you have been reading and if you share it.

1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read recently. Take a few minutes to think about it (wait time). Now, tell me about the book.

Probe: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. How did you know or find out about this book?  
(Possible responses: assigned, chosen, in school, out of school)

3. Why was this story interesting to you?

#### **B. Emphasis: Informational text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out or learn about something that interests us. For example, a student I recently worked with enjoyed reading about his favorite sports teams on the Internet or \*read captions on History channel about World War II. I'm going to ask you some questions about what you like to read to learn about.

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher or signing with others, but from

something you have read. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probe: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. \*How did you know or find out about reading or watching captions on this?

(Possible responses: assigned, chosen, in school, out of school)

3. Why was this important to you?

### C. Emphasis: General reading

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? What?

2. Do you have anything at school (in your desk, locker, or book bag) today that you are reading?  
Tell me about them.

3. Tell me about your favorite author.

4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?  
Tell me about them.

6. How did you find out about these books?

7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading?  
Tell me about...

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading?  
Tell me more about what they do.

9. Do you have a computer in your home?  
*If they answer yes, ask the following questions:*  
How much time do you spend on the computer a day?  
What do you usually do?  
What do you like to read when you are on the Internet?

*If they answer no, ask the following questions:*

If you did have a computer in your home, what would you like to do with it?

Is there anything on the Internet that you would like to be able to read?

10. \*Do you have a two-way pager? (blackberry, sidekick, etc..)

*If they answer yes, ask the following questions:*

How much time do you usually spend on the pager a day?

What do you usually do?

D. Emphasis: School reading in comparison to home reading

1. In what class do you most like to read?

Why?

2. In what class do you feel the reading is the most difficult?

Why?

3. Have any of your teachers done something with reading that you really enjoyed?

Could you explain some of what was done?

4. Do you share and discuss books, magazines, or other reading materials with your friends outside of school?

What?

How often?

Where?

5. Do you write letters or email to friends or family?

How often?

6. Do you share any of the following reading materials with members of your family: newspapers, magazines, religious materials, games?

With whom?

How often?

7. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations for which you read and write?

Could you explain what kind of reading it is?