

September 2019

Book Review

William A. Welsh

Research Analyst- Rochester Institute of Technology National Technical Institute for the Deaf

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jadara>

Recommended Citation

Welsh, W. A. (2019). Book Review. *JADARA*, 25(2). Retrieved from <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jadara/vol25/iss2/10>

BOOK REVIEW**Deaf Students and the School-to-Work Transition** by Thomas E. Allen, Brenda W. Rawlings, & Arthur N. Schildroth; (Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks, 1989)

One of the things that those involved in educating deaf people know better than any other is that deaf people have more trouble getting jobs, and in particular more trouble getting jobs commensurate with their training and ability, than do their hearing peers. Less is known about the precise reasons for this phenomenon, and there is certainly no consensus about how education can be used to provide a remedy.

Allen and his co-authors (as well as the six other people who contributed four chapters) have given us a most interesting and useful examination of the transition deaf students face as they prepare for the world of work. In particular, the authors discuss enrollment and attrition patterns, the role of vocational training in the schools, student experience while in school, the function of assessment in placing students properly, and the respective role of (1) education, (2) rehabilitation, (3) the environment (e.g., laws; the state of the economy), and the (4) family in transition.

The chapter by Mendelsohn and Brown, who are parents, describe how their children moved through the education system with ultimate success, albeit with many difficulties. Their stories are very moving, and certainly illustrate a great many problems deaf youth will face in the long trek towards employment. The contributions of the parents seemed extraordinary, and I found myself wondering whether the parents of most deaf children would have gone to such lengths to fight their way through the system as did Mendelsohn and Brown. Following this, Gloria Wright, past President of ADARA, contributes a brief chapter on the role of rehabilitation, and especially the partnership between parents and rehabilitation.

The authors then present the findings of an ambitious and rather impressive multiple-instrument survey. Through these surveys, the

authors were able to demonstrate the relationships between such demographic variables as age, sex, ethnic background, degree and etiology of hearing loss, additional handicapping conditions, and type of school to enrollment and attrition patterns, vocational training and coursework, and employment history (of students while in school). Traxler contributes a very useful chapter on various instruments that can be used in placing deaf students. Finally, the authors discuss some of the policy implications of their findings.

We have no space to discuss findings, but suffice it to say that many are interesting, as are policy implications. Two issues caught my attention particularly. The first was the need for cooperation between rehabilitation agencies and schools in terms of the initiation of services. There is agreement that earlier intervention is better, but on occasion each camp sees the other as having primary responsibility. The second was whether the primary effort of the schools should be to provide vocational training – valuable skills are thus transferred – or it should be literacy training, because the reading level of deaf people lags far behind that of hearing people, and that literacy will help deaf people adapt to a rapidly changing job market.

This is a difficult book to summarize because it addresses so many issues. For now, I will leave it by saying that the authors make a very important contribution toward our understanding of the relationship between school and what follows. This book should stimulate research that takes the issue of transition further still, and examines the effect of schooling and rehabilitation services on the careers of deaf people. This book deserves a wide readership; I guarantee it will made you think.

William A. Welsh, Ed.D.
Research Analyst
Rochester Institute of Technology
National Technical Institute
for the Deaf