

Public Abstract

First Name:Carrie

Middle Name:Lynn

Last Name:McCray

Adviser's First Name:Cassandra

Adviser's Last Name:Harper

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SP 2013

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:PhD

Title:A Phenomenological Study of the Relationship Between Deaf Students in Higher Education and their Sign Language Interpreters.

This research focuses on the relationship between deaf students in higher education who use sign language and need an interpreter to access course content. A sign language interpreter is a trained professional who translates between American Sign Language or another sign system and English. This phenomenological study draws from interviews with 10 deaf students about the working relationship they had with college interpreters, focusing on issues of power imbalances between the student and interpreter. This study reveals a comprehensive structural description of the essence of the interpreting relationship as perceived by participants, which includes key desirable traits of interpreters (e.g., attitude, professionalism, language skills, knowledge, and ability to understand students' needs), and power-balancing strategies as used by deaf students in unbalanced interpreting relationships (e.g., withdrawal, networking, coalition building, ego stroking). Implications for deaf students, interpreters, faculty, interpreter coordinators, disability offices, and educators for the deaf are provided.