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Deaf Education in New Zealand: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going

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Over the past 150 years in New Zealand, education of deaf and hearing-impaired children has undergone a series of transformations. These have included shifts in the underlying philosophies and pedagogies, as well as modifications to how schools and deaf and hearing-impaired students are funded and supported. This article provides an overview of historical changes, and identifies current legislative and policy modifications and initiatives that may ensure that inclusive education policies and practices for deaf and hearing-impaired children reflect international obligations, current New Zealand legislation, and evidence effective engagement for deaf and hearing-impaired students.

KEYWORDS deaf, hearing-impaired, hard-of-hearing, inclusion, New Zealand, inclusive education

Introduction

New Zealand (NZ), also known as Aotearoa, is located in the South Pacific and has a current population of 4.4 million people (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Most people live in the North Island, with more than 25% of the country's population living in the Auckland area alone. Greville (2005) estimated the number of deaf and hearing-impaired (DHI) New Zealanders to be 400,000 people. Specialist support for DHI children comes under the umbrella of the two Deaf education centres, Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC), covering the northern and central part of the North Island, and Van Asch Deaf Education Centre (VDEC)

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covering the lower part of the North Island and the whole South Island. New Zealand is geographically small, however, some areas are remote and sparsely populated, which can pose challenges to providing equal access to education and support services for DHI children, given that currently the majority attend their local school. In order to see a clear direction for where deaf education is headed, it is important to review the historical roots of deaf education in New Zealand and outline the changes in philosophies and pedagogies that have occurred over time.

History of deaf education in New Zealand

Prior to the first New Zealand school for the deaf opening in Sumner, near Christchurch, in 1880, deaf children were sent to Melbourne, Australia for their education. The Milan Congress, held in the same year as the Sumner Institution for the Deaf and Dumb opened, recommended that sign language in deaf education be abolished (McKee, 2001). Within many schools for the deaf prior to the Milan Congress, there were significant numbers of Deaf teachers who frequently conducted lessons in the indigenous sign language of their country (Ladd, 2002). In New Zealand, however, there were no Deaf teachers of the deaf, and the first known teacher of the deaf in New Zealand was a hearing Englishwoman, Miss Dorcas Mitchell, who arrived in 1868 to privately teach a family of eight deaf children at Charteris Bay. Records show that once it was decided that New Zealand should have a government-funded school for the deaf, twelve applications for the role of principal were received from people who taught using a combined system of spoken and signed communication, four from people who had no experience with ‘deaf-mutes’, and one from Gerrit van Asch, a professor of the German oral system (Fogarty, 2005). Miss Mitchell is said to have written the following in 1879 when applying for the position of principal of the soon to be opened school for the deaf.

> The principal of the Victoria Deaf and Dumb Institution evidently thinks as I do, and most eminent teachers of the deaf-mute with whom I have conversed express themselves similarly, that, when found practicable to teach it, articulation is good as an accomplishment, but not as good as a means of imparting knowledge to the deaf (Fogarty, 2005: 39).

She was not successful. Gerrit van Asch was appointed as founding director, which cemented the oral method of teaching into New Zealand deaf education for many years.

After the Milan Congress, New Zealand, like many other countries, largely followed an oral philosophy, referred to as ‘oralism’, which meant students were instructed solely by hearing teachers using aural/oral communication methods. St Dominic’s School for the Deaf was opened by the Dominican order of nuns in 1944 and the Auckland School for the Deaf opened in 1952. All three schools for the deaf were residential schools for children from the age of four. Some children did attend as day pupils, but mostly the students were boarders. Their ultimate

goal was to produce deaf students who could speak, therefore, children spent many hours focussed on speech lessons, often to the detriment of subject knowledge and literacy (McKee, 2001; Gardner, 2005). Throughout the 1960s, services for deaf children expanded to include an itinerant teacher of the deaf service (R.T.D.) and advisors on deaf children. This change coincided with the introduction of deaf units, based in mainstream schools and staffed by qualified teachers of the deaf.

By the mid-1970s, it was becoming increasingly apparent, both here and internationally, that an exclusively oral/aural approach was not educationally appropriate, or successful, for a significant portion of severely and profoundly deaf students (Power & Leigh, 1998). Concerns held about deaf students' poor academic achievement levels prompted policy change, which saw 'Total Communication' (Ahlgren, 1986) being introduced into the New Zealand education system in 1979. New Zealand initially adopted the *Dictionary of Australasian Signs* (1982a). Shortly afterwards, a joint New Zealand and Australian initiative developed and expanded this further to become the revised *Dictionary of Australasian Signs* (1982b). Teachers and parents thought that by simultaneously using signs and finger spelling to represent the morphology of spoken English, DHI students would develop better English proficiency, and improve their literacy levels (Ahlgren, 1986; Smith, 1994; McKee, 2001). It was thought that these improved literacy levels would ultimately increase the students' chances of accessing further education, and enhance future employment options.

Many resources were developed, but eventually the use of Australasian signed English (MacDougall, 1988) as part of the Total Communication model declined, primarily due to problems with limitations on the ability of teachers and parents to concurrently produce signed and spoken English. As was identified for Australian teachers (Hyde & Power, 1991), if New Zealand teachers presented spoken English at a normal rate, then sign production could generally reduce to 'key signs' as with SimCom and systems that to a greater or lesser extent allowed the replication of spoken English on the hands. Typically, only stem words would be signed, leaving out inflectional morphemes or English functional words such as 'is', 'to', 'and', or 'at'. In order to match the pace of voice and hands, teachers also tended to slow their rate of spoken English, or they used a simpler English lexicon to suit their limited sign vocabulary.

During the late 1980s, there was an increasing awareness and acceptance that Deaf people in New Zealand had their own language. New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) has its own unique grammar and vocabulary and was systematically analysed and described as a language in its own right by linguist Marianne Collins-Ahlgren (1989) in her PhD thesis. In 1992, a report to discuss the development of a New Zealand language policy, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, acknowledged that NZSL was a complete visual-spatial language and a community language in its own right (Waite, 1992; Fogarty, 2005). This raised the question as to whether there was a need for the continued use of a sign system to represent English as a teaching device (Smith, 1994). By the early 1990s,

bilingual–bicultural programmes for deaf students were being developed internationally (Mahshie, 1995; Schirmer, 2000) and in 1995–1996 Kelston Deaf Education Centre, Auckland, established its first bilingual–bicultural pilot class (Nuthall, 1997). Gradually this approach, implemented throughout the school, brought with it a change of philosophy and practice. Van Asch Deaf Education Centre in Christchurch, the only other remaining school for the deaf in New Zealand, had also initiated these changes by late 1997. While there is still some use of signed English in the education system today, it is no longer educational policy. As in other nations, signed English, however, did serve a key purpose, which was to break the stranglehold of oralism, and pave the way for NZSL in the education of DHI students.

The use of NZSL in deaf education, and the introduction of bilingual/bicultural education for deaf students, created a demand for new resources, skills, and personnel. One of the most obvious changes was the advent of Deaf teachers of the deaf, Deaf sign language assistants, and Deaf mentors working alongside hearing professionals in the compulsory education sector. Funding structures and service delivery options, however, have not always developed sufficiently to meet those demands (Manning, 2004). The standard path to qualifying as a teacher of the deaf in New Zealand was to complete a regular primary teacher training course, then teach in regular schools for two years to become a registered teacher. Teachers would then apply to do a one-year, fulltime Diploma in Teaching Deaf and Hearing Impaired students. Those who were accepted were recruited from their permanent teaching positions and paid their full teacher's salary while they trained. This system presented a barrier for Deaf people wishing to become teachers of the deaf, as it was difficult, if not impossible, for them to fulfil the prerequisite of successful mainstream teaching with hearing children. Since the 1990s, however, there have been numerous exceptions made which have enabled Deaf people to become Deaf teachers of the deaf. One of those was Cheryl Anton, who in 1995 was the first teacher of the bilingual pilot class at Kelston School for the Deaf.

This brief history of New Zealand deaf education outlines two quite different 'models' of instruction for DHI students. The first 100 years or so principally reflects a medical, or communication deficit, model that emphasized the use of speech and residual hearing in the development of spoken language and literacy skills. The high reliance on a medical deficit model for the teaching of DHI students meant that teachers spent a significant amount of time focussed on what the student could not do, and reinforced the continuation of a spoken language emphasis. Further, the medical model with its emphasis on the child's development of speech and listening capacities, meant that many students did not have the time required or the ability to develop conceptual and curricular knowledge. Instead, many hours were spent practising oral/aural skills with the ultimate goal being for the student to develop spoken language as a first language, and become as close to a 'hearing' person as possible (Ladd, 1994, 2002; McKee, 2001; Marschark et al., 2002). Thus, the academic deficits experienced by DHI students

were not necessarily a lack of intelligence, but rather represented 'information deprivation'.

New Zealand Deaf adults' retrospective accounts of their educational experiences, at schools and within the postsecondary education system, described social isolation and barriers to their academic progress. They identified limited access to communication, lack of adaptation of learning tasks and alternative assessments, and the non-existence of Deaf academic role models (McKee, 2001; Dugdale, 2002). In Dugdale's research over half of the 86 respondents reported that they did not attempt any formal national examinations while at secondary school. McKee (2001) interviewed over 40 Deaf New Zealanders ranging in age from 22 to 86 years, with most being younger than 40 years of age, in an attempt to capture their 'voices' about what it means to be Deaf in New Zealand. In McKee's analysis, there was a recurring theme of a ceiling on Deaf people's achievements, especially regarding education and subsequent career development.

The emergence of bilingual–bicultural teaching models in the 1990s reflects a socio-cultural approach that considers that Deaf people are a linguistic minority and have a culture and language that are different from those of hearing people. According to Schirmer (2000),

> … the impetus for implementing bilingual-bicultural programs for students who are deaf comes from two sources: (1) The Deaf community, who advocate for the right to pass on their language and culture to succeeding generations, (2) the overall disappointing achievement of youngsters who are deaf. (p. 98)

Although New Zealand parents, Deaf people and education decision makers relied on research from other countries for guiding reform to the systems available to deaf children, there was also a body of research conducted in New Zealand.

Recent New Zealand research

In the few studies that do exist, DHI students in New Zealand are described as, on average, having lower academic achievement than hearing students (Pritchett, 1998; AC Nielsen, 2000; Fitzgerald & Associates, 2000, 2010; McKee & Smith, 2004). In her study of DHI children's reading comprehension in southern New Zealand, Pritchett, an Advisor on Deaf Children, collected data indicating that two-thirds of prelingually, severely and profoundly deaf children aged under 16 years were unable to understand reading material that 77% of hearing children of a similar age, could understand. This reflects research from international contexts (Padden & Ramsey, 1998, 2000; Easterbrooks & Huston, 2001; Kelly et al., 2001; Bowe, 2002; Cuculick & Kelly, 2003) and suggests a persistent struggle to achieve age-appropriate reading ability by deaf students in New Zealand and internationally.

The Fitzgerald report (2000) examined the state of educational provisions and achievement for deaf students in compulsory education in New Zealand. They

researched a randomly selected sample of twenty-two DHI students using direct observation and expert opinion on the students' work. The report described the environment in which the students were being educated, the key issues and the needs that students faced. A third of the sample (excluding very young children) had limited understanding of teacher communication or instruction in mainstream settings. These children with mostly severe or profound hearing losses, were not provided with information visually, and struggled with background noise. Levels of interaction with staff and other students varied considerably for those students in mainstream environments, working 'well' or 'very well' for many (48%) and 'poorly' for others (31%). Teachers judged over 75% of the children, to be operating below the average ability level for their age. The more severe the hearing loss, the further behind the children were, and these educational gaps tended to increase with age. While there was no correlation observed between self-esteem or social integration and students' levels of hearing loss, educational setting, or academic performance, there was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and social integration with the age of the student. According to their parents and/or teachers, the high school students in the study had significant problems in this area of development. Fitzgerald concluded that:

> The academic performance of this group is generally below that of their hearing peers. Half of the students in the sample have significant social and personal developmental needs, including social isolation, anti-social behaviour, or low self esteem (p. 3).

Fitzgerald suggested that mainstream services do not work effectively for all students and that there is a need for far greater accommodation of the learning and communication environment, such as visual presentation of learning material or the effective use of adaptive technology such as FM systems, and speech-to-text captioning, to accommodate hearing loss and its consequences. The researchers made other recommendations including the need for programs to deal with students' social needs through counselling, self-esteem, and social skills training. In a more recent study, Fitzgerald and Associates (2010) reiterated their earlier findings of significant unmet needs in terms of communication development, and social support.

The issue of social isolation of DHI students was also addressed by Kent (2003) in a survey, based on the World Health Organisation's Health Behaviour of School-aged Children questionnaire, with 52 mainstreamed DHI students aged 11, 13, and 15 in New Zealand high schools. The survey included two questions about loneliness. Kent found the reported loneliness of DHI students to be statistically significant, and concluded, 'Identifying one's self as HOH [hard of hearing] continues to be socially undesirable for mainstream adolescents' (p. 322).

Relevant legislation

The goal of educational inclusion, according to Stainback et al. (1994) is, 'not to erase differences, but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality' (p. 489). Children in compulsory education in New Zealand have their rights to inclusion protected by the NZ Education Act (1989), which gives children the right to be educated in their neighbourhood school, and is protected further under the NZ Human Rights Act (1993). The NZ Education Act deems that all children are:

> Entitled to free enrolment and free education at any state school during the period beginning on the person's fifth birthday and ending on the first day of January after the person's 19th birthday. (NZ Education Act, 1989, Section 8)

In 1996, the Ministry released *Special Education 2000* as a framework that would satisfy a 'continuum of need' of a diverse range of students. In order to meet these legal obligations, DHI students in compulsory education have access to the services of resource itinerant teachers, advisors of the deaf, teacher aide support, and specific funding. They also have the right to assistive auditory devices such as personal FM systems and hearing aids provided by the government, until the age of 21 years.

The 2001 *New Zealand Disability Strategy; Making a world of difference. Whakanui oranga* (NZ Ministry of Health, 2001) includes a commitment to ensure that no child's access to their local, regular school is denied because of disability, and that all children have equitable access to resources. The 2007 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD, ratified by New Zealand in 2008), requires New Zealand to promote access, inclusion, empowerment, equality, and the right to education for all people with disability.

At this point, it is useful to revisit the definitions of *inclusion*. Inclusion is a concept that is frequently used interchangeably with earlier concepts of mainstreaming and integration. Hyde (2010) provides an understanding of distinctions among these three concepts:

> Mainstreaming was essentially focused on the 'place' of the child with a disability .... While *integration* implies that persons with a disability could be integrated into all elements of mainstream society .... *Inclusion*, by contrast, assumes that a just state of affairs is one in which people with a disability or another form of human difference should be included in society from the outset, and in education in particular. (Hyde et al., 2010: 7)

As in any country, the interpretation of these concepts is subject to the various historical and cultural traditions, policy frameworks, and economic priorities within which an education system operates and influence how the concept of inclusion is interpreted. Finding the right balance between the 'provision of high levels of differentiation of services and support to meet the needs of individuals, and at the same

time maintaining a degree of uniformity across an educational community to ensure that the rights of all are preserved' (Hyde, 2010: 312), is an ongoing challenge that faces education systems in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The NZ Ministry of Education currently defines inclusion in education as:

> … valuing all students and staff. It involves supporting all children and young people to participate in the cultures, curricula, and communities of their local school. Barriers to learning and participation for all children, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, disability or any other factor, are actively reduced, so that children feel a sense of belonging and community in their educational context. (Ministry of Education, 2009)

Effective approaches to inclusive education now go beyond access and participation to consider the nature of the engagement that individuals experience within inclusive education (Hyde et al., 2013). Engagement is concerned with the degree to which the student is 'attached' emotionally, socially, cognitively and academically to the school. The focus is more evaluative about how schools and the teachers are able to accommodate to the students' needs and how effective the initiatives taken and supports provided are ultimately judged to be. This ongoing challenge in NZ education is reflected in the need to achieve greater engagement in postsecondary education by DHI students (Powell et al., 2013).

Current trends and legislation in deaf education

Data available on the situation of DHI students in New Zealand are limited. A report on placements of disabled students in 2006 identified 9700 students with a recorded hearing loss (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). In March 2007, a Deaf Education Aotearoa New Zealand (DEANZ) report identified 2407 children aged 0–18 years receiving specialist deaf education services (P. Wise, personal communication, 12 February 2009). According to the NZ Ministry of Education's (2007) database, 320 children sometimes use 'a form of sign language or visual communication' (NZSL, or signed English).

These education data show an estimated 95% of DHI students now attend regular classes. Their communication mode primarily is oral–aural with amplified residual hearing and speech reading. The remaining 5% of children are based in one of the two separate deaf education centres (DEANZ, 2005). Children at both KDEC and VDEC also have greater access to NZSL as their main language of communication (WEBResearch, 2003; McKee & Smith, 2004). Children are placed in either mainstream settings or a deaf education centre, based on parental choice. Educational professionals do not make the placement decision and typically, parents make choices for a range of reasons, such as their child's language or social/cultural needs, or additional disability (Powell, 2011).

The data above reflect the trend in many countries of moving away from special school and unit placements for deaf students, resulting from parental and

community attitudes, and legislative changes over the past decade (Power & Hyde, 2002; Luckner & Stewart, 2003).

There have also been changes in technology feeding into these increased mainstream placements. Since 2006, the New Zealand Government has funded Universal Newborn Hearing Screening that has the goal of identifying hearing loss at an early age. However, it has only been since July 2010 that all district health boards have been screening newborns for hearing loss (National Foundation for the Deaf, 2012). Early detection of a child's hearing loss increases access to timely and appropriate early intervention. Combined with technological advances in hearing aid design and the increasing use of cochlear implants in New Zealand (Powell, 2011) mean that more profoundly deaf children may be functioning in a manner similar to a child with a moderate-to-severe loss, and therefore, be more able to 'fit in' to mainstream hearing classes (Mayer et al., 2009).

Although many people and groups applaud the right of children with disabilities to attend their local school, Deaf groups internationally have mixed feelings about the success of such moves for deaf children (Padden & Humphries, 1988, 2006; Ladd, 1994, 2002; McKee, 2001). These groups believe that DHI students can be socially and linguistically isolated in environments where they are the only DHI person, as even with the best technology available, deaf children can never be hearing children.

With the high rate of mainstreaming in New Zealand, very few DHI children at school have contact with, or advice from, Deaf adults (Buzzard & Nicholson, 2006; Fogarty, 2006; Laing, 2006; McKee, 2006). Recently, the Deaf Mentor or Deaf Resource Person services that were provided by Van Asch Deaf Education Centre throughout the southern part of New Zealand and consisted of Deaf adults visiting and liaising with DHI students, their teachers and families, was discontinued due to lack of funds (Lewis, 2010). Deaf professionals and commentators have highlighted the value of connecting hearing parents and their DHI children with Deaf role models over a long period, a view supported by educational and sociolinguistic research (Johnson et al., 1989; Holcomb, 1997; Grosjean, 1998; Martin & Lytle, 2000; McKee & Biederman, 2003; McKee, 2005). The loss of Deaf role models in the educational environment has the potential to further impact on personal development and the knowledge and choices made by students about future academic and career options (Powell, 2011). Consequently, the personal and social requirements of DHI students, as well as their academic skills need to be identified and addressed specifically.

In 2010, the New Zealand Government approved a wide-ranging review of special education and produced a public discussion document (Ministry of Education, 2010b). At the completion of this yearlong review the Ministry launched a new campaign, *Success for all—every school, every child* (Ministry of Education, 2011), which is a four-year plan of action to achieve a fully inclusive education system. To this end, the Government has allocated an additional $69 million for special education initiatives. From the beginning of 2012, children in the Ongoing

and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS) who are deaf, blind or with low vision had the opportunity to receive more flexible specialist services and support. Teaching resources were allocated to Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ and the two Deaf Education Centres; meaning students could potentially have more access to specialist teachers, interpreters or note takers (Ministry of Education, 2010c).

The flexibility to provide note takers and interpreters within the compulsory school setting is timely given a recent New Zealand study identifying the experiences of deaf students in postsecondary settings (Powell et al., 2013). The study reported that 60% of respondents with a hearing loss did not receive any resource/itinerant teacher of the deaf support during their secondary schooling even though the majority of students in the study had either a severe or profound loss. While the students did not identify a need for this type of support at the time, they may well have benefited had they had prior experience or knowledge of the benefits of other forms of support while attending high school. For example, once they attended university, note taking was the most frequently accessed accommodation and 73% found it either 'very' or 'extremely' useful.

Having this option available within the compulsory school system may mean students are able to receive education that is better tailored to their particular needs, given that New Zealand's educational support policy is to provide appropriate resources across the compulsory educational sector. Additionally, the use of NZSL in school education, together with early access for parents to sign language training and the use of educational interpreters were identified as the three highest priorities in a recent Human Rights Commission survey (2010). Census data from 2006 show that approximately 24,000 New Zealanders could hold a conversation about everyday things in NZSL, with 2220 people reporting NZSL as their only language (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Demand for interpreters has been growing steadily, and far outstrips current demand. However, in New Zealand, there is only one training programme for sign language interpreters, at Auckland University of Technology and while this may have benefits in providing a centre for training, the inflexible on-campus mode of delivery has limited the number of people willing to commit to the course requirements. Further, undertaking this course is the only way to become an accredited NZSL interpreter, as unlike other countries there is no alternative assessment or accreditation process. In order to meet the objective of providing access to the curriculum through the use of NZSL and interpreters, as is mandated by Article 24 of the UNCRPD, will require specialist training of educational interpreters as well as appropriate remuneration for their services. Currently, within the compulsory education sector, interpreters are employed as teacher aides in the main, and therefore their pay rates and work benefits are exceedingly poor.

The Ministry of Education also recently developed a new specialist training qualification in an attempt to honour the Ministry's objectives and intention of

educational success for all (Ministry of Education, 2010b). The *Post Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching* commenced in 2011, and is a two-year part time distance course jointly offered by Massey University and Canterbury University. Teachers, who are already experienced and qualified classroom teachers, undertaking this qualification can chose to specialize in Deaf and Hearing Impairment as well as completing a core course in inclusive education. Research has shown that many classroom teachers work hard to achieve the best results they can for the students they teach; however, they do not always have the knowledge or the support required to adapt the curriculum to meet their students' diverse needs (Gilmore, 2001; Kearney & Poskitt, 2001; Kearney & Kane, 2006). Ensuring that teachers are well prepared to teach diverse student populations and meet the needs of all learners requires an understanding of the principles and practices that underpin inclusive education environments.

The intention of this new specialist teaching qualification is to increase the pool of people with expert knowledge available to support students, teachers and schools when needed. In addition, The New Zealand Teachers Council has recently signalled that it will require teacher education providers to include a focus on inclusive education in future initial teacher education programmes. Work also continues on the development of a strategy for deaf education in response to a range of issues with provision of specialist education services (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

The Ministry of Education (2010c) indicates that in the near future, supplementary specialist services will be made available to children between 5 and 8 years of age to enable successful transitions from early childhood education to primary school. By 2014, the Ministry's aim is for a further 1100 children with high or very high needs (which includes DHI children) to receive ORRS support. Additionally, National Standards, that set clear expectations that New Zealand students need to meet in reading, writing, and mathematics in the first eight years at school will include ways to assess, track and report on the learning and development of children and young people with special educational needs. These National Standards will also set performance targets for schools measured by the Education Review Office that include the demonstration of inclusive practice within their schools by 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2010c).

Accessing education via the most appropriate means, including the provision of teachers fluent in sign language and access to educational sign language interpreters, is recognized under the UNCRPD. Since the New Zealand Government has only formally recognized NZSL as an official language in 2006 (New Zealand Parliament, 2006), there has been a shared desire among all groups representing DHI people to see this provision implemented across all NZ education sectors. In a recent NZSL priorities survey (Human Rights Commission, 2010) one of the top five priorities for NZSL was deaf children's access to education through NZSL. The Ministry of Education (n.d.) has recently produced a new resource to support the teaching and learning of NZSL as an additional language in English-medium schools for

students in years 7–8 working at NZ Curriculum Levels 1 and 2. This is a positive move forward, as it is bringing NZSL into the general New Zealand School Curriculum (2007) as a valid subject for language learning. There are issues, however, with the lack of qualified NZSL tutors available to teach this subject and therefore resources were designed to enable general classroom teachers to incorporate some aspects of NZSL into their classrooms.

> The design of this resource acknowledges that this may be your first contact, as a teacher, with NZSL. It enables you to adopt the role of facilitator in the classroom, learning along with your students and, potentially, learning from them. You are encouraged to view yourself as an NZSL learner, too (Ministry of Education, 2010d)

Throughout this legislative and policy development, no mention has been made about DHI postsecondary (university, college and polytechnic) students. New Zealand does not have any specific anti-discrimination laws; therefore, postsecondary institutions' legislative obligations to address the needs of DHI students fall under the *Human Rights Act 1993* and the *Education Amendment Act 1990*. Since 1998, New Zealand postsecondary institutions have received a Special Supplementary Grant (SSG) for Tertiary Students with Disabilities. The SSG made it possible for postsecondary institutions to provide essential resources and technological assistance for students with disabilities. This funding package was designed to cater for a small portion of postsecondary students who have high cost service needs. The grants were intended to (a) improve the access of students with disabilities to educational opportunities at postsecondary institutions; (b) increase the level of enrolment of students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions; (c) improve the levels of educational achievement by students with disabilities; and (d) increase the accountability of postsecondary institutions for their support of students with disabilities, consistent with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1993 and the Education Act 1989 (New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission, 2005).

The resources available to DHI postsecondary students in New Zealand to support their inclusion are limited in comparison to those available in compulsory years of schooling. Consequently, many DHI postsecondary students have not been able to participate to the extent that their hearing peers are entitled (Powell et al., 2013). It is not clear why the New Zealand Government accepts the responsibility of policy development and implementation, as well as providing specific funding and resources to promote the inclusion of DHI students at the compulsory education level, as has been described earlier, and yet chooses not to maintain these resources to the same degree in postsecondary education. There is still no resource teacher or advisory service, and there is no automatic right to assistive auditory devices. Instead, the responsibility for providing resources and funding for the DHI students passes to the postsecondary institution, or to the student themselves.

This is in direct contrast to the gains made in the compulsory education sector and is an area that requires further improvement.

Summary and directions

In parallel with developments in other countries, New Zealand's services for deaf students and their parents have undergone several transformations since the first school for the deaf opened in 1880. In line with current thinking, most children now attend their local school with various forms of support. The right to be included at every level of society, academically, socially, and emotionally, is a goal worth pursuing, as it is central to what our society believes. The New Zealand Government has affirmed their intentions to provide an inclusive society by the international treaties and conventions they have signed, most recently the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008.

While there have been developments in education in NZ for DHI students that parallel those in compulsory schooling in other developed nations, the critical transition to postsecondary education, has not witnessed the same rate or level of development. The New Zealand government and Ministry of Education has shown only limited commitment in policy and in funding to provide the resources needed to support equitable outcomes for DHI students in the postsecondary sector.

For the New Zealand education system to be considered truly inclusive for DHI students, educational institutions must take the position that *all* students have the right to a quality education, including receiving instruction in the most accessible format, as well as the right to be, and to learn, together. To do this, there must be not only a national policy framework identifying that teachers and schools should have the appropriate skills and knowledge, but also the appropriate resources, assistance, and professional development they require. The ultimate goals being to ensure our DHI students are able to participate fully in all aspects of their education at all levels, and achieve outcomes that are comparable to their hearing peers. In particular, such requirements must be supported with on-going and appropriate funding. The current changes and initial allocation of an additional $69 million for special education initiatives indicated by the *Success for all—every school, every child*, will go some way towards that outcome.

In conclusion, New Zealand is a country with strong inclusive values such as fairness, social justice, equity, and respect for diversity and by continuing to work towards an inclusive education system that evidences these values, our society and our deaf children, will profit. The ongoing objective is the implementation of both government and educational institutions' policies into practices to benefit DHI students, and ensure they are receiving equitable education outcomes, alongside their hearing peers. Without the achievement of effective inclusion, these students will continue to fall short of realising their full potential and our schools and other

sectors in our education system including colleges and universities, and ultimately New Zealand society, will be the poorer for it. The ongoing challenge for New Zealand education systems and authorities is to be able to demonstrate that, beyond policies and procedures supporting inclusion, there is effective learning and engagement of DHI people and educational and vocational outcomes that evidence the success of national initiatives.

New Zealand glossary of terms

Deaf vs. deaf: An upper case 'D' is used to refer to Deaf people who have a culture and sign language that are distinctive, and identify with the Deaf community. The use of lower case 'd' indicates a broader definition, referring for convenience to all degrees of hearing loss, which may include Deaf people who are members of the Deaf community and those who are hearing-impaired.

Hearing-impaired: This is the term used to refer to people who have a degree of hearing loss but who do not identify with the Deaf community. We acknowledge that the term *hard of hearing* is a culturally preferred term in many countries (Hyde, 2009), but in New Zealand, this term is not routinely used within the education system or the Deaf community itself. For this reason, we have adhered to the national status-quo and used the term *hearing-impaired*.

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