

Accessibility of Deaf Education in the Mainstream Certificate Program of a Private Tertiary Educational Institution in Manila

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Abstract

De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's Center for Educational Access and Development in partnership with the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management offers Certificate and Food and Beverage Service. This program aims to provide an environment for deaf students to develop their service skills and confidence. In the present study, accessible support services and methods of teaching used by faculty members for deaf and hard of hearing were described and evaluated. A qualitative method was used to analyze the gathered data from the focus group discussion. Eight deaf students participated in the discussion. Consequently, five distinct themes emerged from the data namely *meeting deaf needs, inclusivity, achieving academic goals, program enhancement, and level of understandings a result.*

Keywords: Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Deaf Education, Accessibility, Support Services, Teaching Methodologies, Mainstream/Inclusive Setting

1. Introduction

Gone are the days when deaf people are viewed as disabled hearing impaired as described in the context of deaf culture. The emergence of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) in the Philippines is now being recognized as a medium of instruction and communication for deaf learners. But despite its recognition, making decisions on what to take after secondary education becomes crucial for deaf learners as they remain excluded in the society. As a result, they are constrained to look for employment as a popular option, largely due to socio-economic reasons affecting their future.

The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons or Republic Act 7277 states that deaf people should have adequate access to a quality education. Deaf education has been in existence in the Philippines for almost a century with the establishment of the Insular School for the Deaf and Blind (now called the Philippine School for the Deaf) in 1907. Now, many schools for the deaf and special education centers have been established and continuously growing (Bustos & Tanjusay, 2006).

To take the lead, the deaf program of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) started in 1991 as a short course and became a full-fledged degree program in 2000. The DLS-CSB School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies (SDEAS) is one of the many schools in the country that cater and provide deaf students an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills and earn a college degree through its Bachelor in Applied Deaf Studies (BAPDST) program with two tracks: Multimedia Arts and Business

Entrepreneurship. Although these programs are exclusive to deaf students, SDEAS is now being challenged towards the inclusion of deaf students in various programs.

At present, SDEAS fulfills complete access through scholarship for the underprivileged deaf students. In Clemena's (2005) article, out of over 8,000 students in the DLS-CSB in 2005, only 128 deaf students were enrolled in SDEAS and about 90 percent of them were fully subsidized by the College. The majority of them was female and came from a poorer sector of the society. As of first term SY2013-2014, there were 213 deaf students who enrolled under BASAP scholarship program.

With the initiative and mandate of the institution, the School of Hotel and Restaurant and Institution Management (SHRIM) is now part of taking the lead towards mainstreaming the deaf in its certificate program. Prior to offering of the program, SHRIM faculty members and staff were provided training opportunities such as deaf awareness program, acquisition of expressive and receptive skills of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) levels 1 to 3 and experiential learning through workshops and seminars abroad.

As part of the SHRIM-Center for Educational Access and Development (CEAD) partnership, the Certificate and Food and Beverage Service (CFBS) had been in operation from February 2012 to June 2012. The program was the first offering in the DLS-CSB to be mainstreamed to further develop service skills and confidence under current and global F&B practices. Further, SHRIM and CEAD accommodation and academic preparations which include interpreting services, facilities conducive for deaf and hearing learners such as computer laboratory, library, audio-visual services, instructional materials and service laboratories, on-the-job training, advising, and full scholarship program. This study, therefore, aims to determine the challenges experienced by deaf and hard of hearing students on support services and teaching methodologies used by the faculty members in the certificate program of DLS-CSB SHRIM.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Legal Aspect

Legislations have been amended in many countries including the Philippines to protect the rights of people with disability. One of these rights is the access of deaf people to postsecondary education. While the inclusion to postsecondary education among marginalized groups in the country has been recognized, very few are only enjoying such a right (Sanchez & Kusanagi, 1998). In order to build a safer and more inclusive society for Filipino deaf community, the Senate and the Congress approved the Bill No. 2188, declaring Filipino Sign Language Act of 2014 as the national language of the Filipino deaf and the official language of government in all transactions involving deaf and mandating its use in schools, broadcast media, and workplace. Thus, Article V, Section 1.4.1. of the 1997 Policies and Guidelines in Special Education (SPED) states that FSL shall be used in the education of the deaf. The Department of Education Order 74 series of 2009 also mandates the use of the learner's first language as the primary medium of instruction and literacy. Hence, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons or Republic Act 7277 states that deaf people ensures adequate access to a quality education. In this regard, the Insular School for the Deaf and Blind (now called Philippine School for Deaf) was established in 1907 to cater to Filipinos with a hearing problem. However, there are only limited private and government institutions that are mainstreaming deaf

students in various programs in the country. Thus, the access of deaf people to higher education has been a big challenge.

2.2 Methods of Teaching

Teacher of the deaf (ToD) has a vital role in honing the skills and knowledge of deaf learners. As a requirement, teacher shall provide quality teaching to mainstream deaf learners equipped with qualification and expertise in teaching deaf learners. In addition, teaching approaches require student-focused pedagogy to facilitate learning. As highlighted in the study of Foster and Cue (2009), the best way to teach deaf students is to integrate collaboration and coaching approaches. Whereas, Lenihan (2010) pointed out that an effective teacher must be knowledgeable about the listening and instructional technologies that will optimize outcomes for a child with hearing loss. Not only on a certain type of approaches, teachers should also be capable of using latest instructional technologies. Aside from technological approaches, researchers have found that the development of learning begins with the cognitive processes of deaf students. That is why auditory and signing methods are used as foundation of meaningful learning experience for deaf students.

2.2.1 Oralist & Auditory Methods

In order to help deaf students to be mainstreamed, both oral and auditory methods of teaching are made to teach deaf individuals to speak and to read lip. This is also with the help of hearing aid in order to communicate with hearing peers as opposed to signing. The purpose of these methods is to promote the academic and social inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing students in the mainstream education (Hadjikakou, Petridon & Stylianou, 2007). As a result, these methods would be much easier as a support mechanism for accomplishing the skills of speech by not relying on signing at all. While deaf students are exposed in these methods, they will be more focused solely on speaking and proper use of English.

2.2.2 Signing

Another method for teaching deaf students is signing. Many educational institutions have chosen to incorporate signing as a tool for communication and teaching. However, research claimed that the reading difficulties experienced by deaf students were most likely related to delays in the acquisition of the spoken language (Hermans, Knoors, Ormel, & Verhoeven, 2007). In addition, many institutions have found that signing may actually contribute to the success of students' English skills. In order to find out the effectiveness of this method, Hermans et al. (2007) studied 135 students in Netherlands who participated in bilingual forms of education. In a classroom, signing was used as a tool for reading and understanding text. Researchers discovered that deaf students were able to gain concept of a word by associating the written text with the sign which represented the word. After the sign had been acknowledged, students began to learn the spoken form of the word. However, the spoken form had yet to have meaning to the deaf. The next step was to relate the concept back to both the written text as the spoken word. Once the concept had been acknowledged, students could relate the spoken word to the written word, vice versa (Hermans et al., 2007). Further, Hermans et al. (2007)

discovered that all deaf students tested in the experiment had an acceptable level of vocabulary understanding.

Stinson and Lang (1994) stated in their study, that deaf students preferred teacher who is capable to sign and understand deafness and deaf culture. It was mentioned also that teachers need to be engaging and use participative style correlated to the students' academic achievement. As a result, teachers who provide clear explanation, visual materials, and good rapport through friendly and caring attitude perceived to be using effective teaching methods and approaches. As Clemena (2006) mentioned, faculty members are expected to be highly skilled and proficient in sign language especially when used as a medium of instruction.

2.3 Access to Support Services

According to Antia and Stinson (1999), the problem faced by deaf students in the inclusive environment is the mutual access to basic communication services which include good amplification, tutoring, real-time captioning or interpreting and so on.

While the integration of technological innovation has become synonymous to accessibility, in the United States, research studies on support services show that technology integration is a contributing factor to academic success in the postsecondary education. The most common support services include tutoring, notetaking, interpreting, real-time captioning and academic advising. Deaf students are mostly dependent on these services that provide access to information. Because of the technological support, researchers found that there was little direct communication between teacher and deaf students (Lang, 2002).

Furthermore, choosing support services may vary depending on what deaf students actually need. For instance, tutoring is one common support services that is intended to enhance knowledge and better understand the instruction and course materials. On some points, professional tutor was preferred and highly regarded compared to peer tutor (Schere & Binder, 198 cited in Lang et al., 2004). Tutors must be a good communicator, must show empathy, must have good teaching skill and mastery in the subject matter. On the other hand, interpreting is one of the most often provided support services and highly regarded as helpful communication tool in the mainstream classroom environment.

According to Schick, Williams, and Kupermintz (2005), another critical factor is the complex social environment where interaction with teacher and hearing peers can be challenging for deaf students in terms of accessing support services. In support, deaf students viewed classroom communication and engagement in a similar manner as their hearing peers. Deaf students were more concerned about the pace of instructions and did not feel as much a part of the "university family" as did their hearing peers. Despite some modifications, faculty saw support service faculty as responsible for the success and failure of these students (Foster, Long, & Snell, 1999).

Similarly, communication topped as a problem despite teacher's knowledge in the FSL. Aside from poor facilities and classroom, teachers are encouraged to upgrade their sign language skills for better understanding (Sanchez & Kusanagi, 1998). Despite this disparity, deaf students educated in a mainstream setting are continuously increasing and are observed to be at par with their hearing peers. This is because there are options or

communication alternatives that can be so effective in order to for them to succeed academically (Marschark & Hauser, 2008).

3. Methodology

3.1 Context and Participants

Primarily, the participants in this study were those that successfully passed the scholarship program and identified as deaf or hard of hearing that was endorsed by the CEAD to enroll in the Certificate Program.

There were eight deaf or hard of hearing students enrolled in the certificate program. And since there were few that are qualified, the researchers agreed that these students were identified as potential participants. This study is centered on qualitative approach and is interpretive in nature.

3.2 Instruments

Focus group discussion (FGD) was utilized to gather data and explore their meaning which cannot be explained by statistical records. This instrument enables the study to gather multiple opinions among deaf participants. As part of FGD, a moderator's guide will be used by the researchers to get relevant information from the participants. In addition, researchers used explorative discussion to be able to extract more information from the participants. In closing, researchers were able to shift to an in-depth investigation and made sure that all topics are covered.

Prior to FGD, researchers developed a moderator's guide that will be used in the discussion with eight deaf students. The questions that were raised during deaf and hard of hearing discussion consisted of background (personal and family) information, goals, classroom interaction, personal challenges, teacher's teaching style, and views on the program and the current support system that were accessible and available throughout the program.

3.3 Data Collection

The DLS-CSB provided researchers with two interpreters as a support for this study. Ahead of time, interpreters were asked to be seated besides researchers to fully engage the conversation and able to clarify some issues that need to be addressed.

As for FGD, the researchers followed a rigid procedure. Firstly, we assured that all study participants were informed about the research study and agreed to be interviewed at their more convenient time. As part of the timeline, the participants were interviewed within the three-month duration of the program. FGD was scheduled at the end of the lecture and laboratory series.

Again, during the interview session, researchers explained the purpose of the study. The researchers explained that during the process there are no right or wrong answers. Participants were advised to speak one at a time. Moreover, participants were informed that discussion would be recorded. As part of the documentation process, researchers used videotape and digitally recorded the entire discussion. Researchers also used the cassette tape to record the voice translated by the interpreter in consideration to the language differences between the deaf or hard of hearing and researchers. These methods were utilized as a way of checking or validating the accuracy of information during transcription process as well as the translated version from English and Filipino

Sign Language, vice versa. The researchers in this study were all hearing and have knowledge in FSL though they were not as fluent as interpreter. Researchers underwent FSL training and attended various seminars on deaf cultures locally and abroad.

The researchers utilized interpreter as a facilitator of communication during the FGD sessions. The researchers took notes about exchanges of communication in comparison with the transcription that were generated from the recorded voice and video. However, the researchers were committed to ethical research practices that provide the study participants with confidentiality and more comfortable setting.

Further, the FGD was held in a secure and comfortable classroom of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's School of HRIM. Seats were comfortably arranged in circle to maintain good eye contact to establish good rapport. The venue was convenient for all the participants since they were officially enrolled under certificate program. It was also easy for researchers to schedule the interview because of the availability of the study participants and flexibility of class schedule.

During the FGD, researcher/moderator was able to maintain the discussion and help reduce any anxiety experienced by the participants. Before the discussion ends, researchers were able to shift to a more in-depth discussion and clarification and made sure that all topics included in the guides were covered. Finally, it took two hours to finish the discussion.

3.4 Data Analysis

After transcribing the gathered data, they were analyzed using data coding scheme. The researchers started reviewing and reading the transcription and notes from the start to finish. The coding process includes the creation of storyline that was used as a draft to identify possible codes. The researchers wrote down all the messages and identified words or phrases that were used frequently as well as ideas coming from participants. These words were organized into codes or categories. Again, researchers have thoroughly evaluated and reviewed the transcriptions recorded making sure that the information relayed during the FGD was accurate thus; the assigned interpreters were present during the review of video recorded so that they could validate the information and signs for accuracy. Secondly, researchers started the coding process; this refers to 'initial coding'. After a thorough and careful evaluation of these messages, researchers marked the documents and analyzed them. As codes have been counted, the initial codes that emerged were more than 57 codes. The 57 codes were then included in a notes or list of codes. These codes were evaluated and compared to one another as well as defined on what they mean.

Thirdly, while there were too many codes, researchers started refining and categorizing these codes. This process was used to compact codes that would fit the data. In this phase, codes were clustered into nine units. These nine units were carefully analyzed and reviewed. Again, researchers began comparing the data to data for meaning that represent its code then created a theme. However, analyzing the data was a bit too extensive, because of its excessive interpretation, researchers needed to qualify the interpreted codes that validate the research questions. Further, upon the completion of coding and themes, researchers again reviewed those codes and themes to determine its consistencies and accuracy. Finally, five distinct themes emerged from the data.

4. Results and Discussion

FDG was conducted in this study with eight deaf and hard of hearing students who have attended the three-month modular class in Certificate in Food and Beverage Service (CFBS). The participants consisted of four females and four males whose age ranged from 25 to 36. All of them utilized FSL as their primary modality of communication.

The current study focused on the accessibility of support services as well as the teaching methodologies employed by the faculty members in the certificate program. The data were gathered through FGD. From the gathered data, 57 codes emerged. These codes were categorized into nine units and then clustered into five distinct themes which were *meeting deaf needs, inclusivity, program enhancement, level of understanding, and achieving academic goal*.

Meeting deaf needs was the first theme that emerged. The participants expressed two units which were reinforcement of support services (e.g., interpreter and captioning, notetaker, on-the-job-training feedbacking to fill the gap) and their access to books. Second, teacher quality emerged which refers to the teacher's ability to answer and good teaching skills. However, the participants commented that their teachers need to communicate with them using FSL for them to fully engage in the discussion.

While there were support services available for deaf or hard of hearing students, participants indicated that the need of more support services was consistent among all study participants. In the findings of Schick, William and Kupermintz (2005), interpreting services can be challenging for deaf students because some interpreters provide incoherent messages resulting in confusion. However, in this study, issue on misinformation provided by the interpreter was not seen in this study as a barrier to accessibility. The participants suggested an option to replace their interpreter although the participants were satisfied the way the interpreter processed the communication. While there is no captioning service and notetaker assigned in the class, the participants suggested that they need this kind of support service. However, participants commented that notetaker was assigned to hearing peers and while comparing notes, they noticed that notes were not complete.

OJT feedbacking was raised as a need to fill in the gap as deaf students need to be fully equipped before an actual hotel immersion and employment takes place. Another requirement that a deaf student highlighted was teacher fluency in FSL. They suggested that teachers should further enhance their skills in FSL because that is the only way they can directly communicate. Further, while the certificate program has conflicting issues on borrowing books policy. The participants requested that they should be allowed to borrow books even in a shorter period. This would enable them to study and review their notes and assignment ahead of time. The participants indicated that support must be extended in order for them to develop creativity as they are compelled to research and present their ideas in various activities. This, however, had an effect on the creativity side and proving to their hearing peers that they can do it.

There should be an interpreter so we could focus, or there should be real-time video while interpreting or if there is none, close caption will do....We want to change our interpreter, we have no problem with interpreter, we just want a new face.....We have some hearing classmates to takedown notes so we could borrow it from them, but their notes are not complete....In terms of teachers, probably they could learn some signs, more interaction with students and teachers....We

would like feedback so we could work on certain areas in our OJT.....If possible make an arrangement to borrow books from LRC, we can't borrow books, LRC requested the ID of Mr. Chris.

Teacher quality is the most important factor in student learning. The participants described clearly the qualities of a teacher. Participants mentioned that they were satisfied with the lecture sessions. Also, their questions were appropriately answered and teachers provided them with essential tips. Overall, the participants commented that they were satisfied about teachers' teaching methods despite the short duration of the program.

When I asked the teacher, they always answered it appropriately and give us tips on how to do things.... I was actually satisfied with the teacher's lecture..... We're very satisfied, they gave us examples and methods were all very good.

Inclusivity is the second distinct theme that emerged during FGD. The participants expressed their opinion that resulted in three units which were access to information and communication, deaf awareness and their unbelongingness in the program.

The participants commented that they preferred to be mainstreamed with hearing peers in order for them to experience interacting with hearing peers and let them understand the world they live in. The participants commented that they were optimistic about meeting hearing peers that there will be cooperation, patience, and believing that there is always a 'give and take' relationship. In contrast, another critical factor as Schick, William and Kupermintz (2005) cited in their study, is the complex social environment in the classroom in which interaction with teacher and hearing peers can be challenging for them. Hence, the participants expressed their opinion that they would want to teach hearing peers in using sign language to 'fill in the gap'. As deaf participants observed, know-how on FSL was perceived an effective way in connecting with deaf students. In addition, the participants strongly suggested that deaf students should be well represented in any student organization. They also agreed that mainstreaming is for the mutual benefit of both deaf and hearing students. This is so because they are part of the community, and they share ideas to one another.

Information was also discussed as another relevant issue. They commented that the role of social networking was very helpful in accessing up to date information about the program. Because of this, the participants commented that it was easy for them to communicate with their program coordinator. Finally, while this program was beneficial for deaf students, the participants strongly believed that they are as equal with hearing peers.

We want to be mainstreamed to be able to learn, we feel lack of experience in interacting hearing so hearing must understand that world we live in....There should be a two-way, if I will not be mainstreamed, I will not understand on how to work with the hearing so that's two way....There should be no negativism or being pessimistic, there has to be a cooperation with the Deaf and hearing community.....For me, hearing should be patient if they want to learn sign language though, sign language requires a lot of practicing, but you will learn if you have patience, signing is good..... We have to be patient also with hearing if we are teaching them the sign, it is a give and take so that there will be a good communication for both.....It is very important to me, like one of our teachers, she knows how to sign, so I want her to be my friend for me, she is very good, if I see her signing then it will be easy for me to talk to her, and easy to be friends.....Are there like organization that we could probably participate in, will there be student organization.....I think hearing should also benefit from us,the same with Deaf, we both

benefiting each other like hearing should impart their knowledge to us and we could help them as well to teach how to sign, likewise it is an advocacy of sharing knowledge.....If others can do, then Deaf can do it.....What we need is the access to information, you don't know if there is an opening or opportunity for us, I saw it in my FB so I actually enroll the program.....Our program coordinator was very helpful, he always talk to us through social networking, announcements were really good.

On the other hand, *Deaf Awareness* was given importance during FGD. The participants discussed that deaf awareness on the campus plays important role in accessing education by the deaf. Six codes were revealed; these are *nice set-up, wow reaction, FSL in campus, respect for Deaf, feeling welcome, and happy community*.

The participants discussed their feelings as they were impressed on the way the community accepted them. They saw that there was no problem in the interaction with the hearing, teachers, and staff. Upon entering the campus, they quoted that they were 'wowed' by the staff and teachers who can finger spell. The participants felt that they were accommodated as the security staff greeted them with respect. The participants observed that people in SHRIM community were generally in high spirits because everyone was smiling and were able to do sign language.

Why SHRIM people are so happy, they knew sign language, the first time I entered here, people here were so happy and smiling.....When we came here, Sir Chris greeted us, I was surprised because he finger-spelled, we felt welcomed.....When I entered here, people greeted me, they said 'good morning' good afternoon, you could feel that they respected us.....I was shocked, I felt wonderful, they were nice, they talked to us through sign language.....They all aware with sign language, so I wowed, there were people who knew sign language, it was so surprisingly....

In contrast, *unbelongingness* also emerged during FGD. Deaf people are sensitive people. A certain facial or body expression might give them a wrong signal leading to misinterpretation. In this discussion, the participants commented that when they first entered the campus, they felt afraid because they could not talk. Participants revealed that while they were in the library, they felt insulted when some hearing students looked at them. While this is only an isolated case, overall experience of deaf students seemed satisfactorily during the course of the program.

At the LRC library, hearing students were looking at us, they were talking to each other, I don't know what they were talking, I was not happy for what they did.....On the first week, initially I was afraid, according to xxx I had the same feeling too when I came here.....I felt insulted.

The third distinct theme that emerged was *Program Enhancement*. The study revealed that program enhancement was connected to program service and delivery towards fulfilling their academic goals. However, the participants revealed that the program should be enhanced further in order to hone their knowledge and skills in taking the certificate program. One unit that emerged was focused purely on *methods of teaching*.

Since it was the first time that SHRIM offered Food and Beverage (F&B) certificate program for deaf students, it is interesting to note that the teaching styles being utilized in this program have substantial effect on deaf attitude. Aside from that, the presence of the interpreter during hands-on and lecture session have proven to be helpful in the classroom. However, there was an issue that F&B terms use was found to be

difficult to explain because there was no available signs that represent each F&B term. The participants suggested that continuous improvement of the program is vital in the inclusive setting for the next generation. They shared their thoughts about the program, and how their teachers handle the class within the three-month program. The participants commented that teachers should give more time to explain the topics and if possible, to use FSL. The participants commented that they only learned a few items; they suggested that they could have learned more in the F&B sessions if program will be extended. More so, the participants commented that they needed more time to focus on one topic because they were not used to multitasking compared to hearing peers.

Similar to the study of Lang (2002) that peer tutoring was preferred by deaf students as part of their coping mechanism, deaf students need to improve in communication specifically their level of understanding when it comes to English language. Hence, coaching and tutoring were seen as an aspect in the inclusive environment that facilitates learning so that deaf will not lag behind hearing peers. In support, most of the participants suggested that instead of lecturing, more hands-on activities should be given importance in the program. Thus, a 'one-on-one' teaching approach and coaching might help. In addition, lecturing styles were raised during FGD. The participants suggested that hand-outs should be provided prior to lecture and laboratory session so that they can have more time to read and understand the lesson. Other issues like limiting to a 'small group' were stressed because they thought that in a group activity, three members per group would facilitate. Lastly, the participants revealed that the program was too short for them, they expressed that they were a bit dissatisfied because they only learned a few international cocktails.

I think teacher was not explaining well, it wasn't clear either, It was hard for me to understand, I don't know the meaning, If you don't pay attention, you will not understand. So I think teacher should explain it more, teacher should understand each one of us.....In F&B, 5 days was not enough because finals were really fast approaching....We can't focus on the lessons because there were classess per week so we tend to forget whatever discussed.....We need more practice and more hands-on activities because time was limited..... Teacher should provide us a summary of lecture notes, probably teachers need to explain and we needed an interval before moving on to the next topic, teacher should consider also that we were taking down notes and we waited for the interpreter to translate the discussion.....I want to learn more, to understand it, we need a 'one on one' tutoring so that we can learn and improve, I hope I wont forget it.

The *Level of Understanding* was the fourth distinct theme that emerged. Understanding the content of hand-outs, instructions and methods posed a big challenge among deaf students during the implementation of the certificate program. The participants expressed five codes which include *easily confused*, *uses of deep words*, *difficulty in menu terms*, *hand-outs vs. facilities*, and *hand-outs vs. actual demonstration*. In the literature, researchers noted that utilizing effective communication tools were considered as defining factor in order to grasp concepts and ideas. However in this study, support system that is utilized in the implementation of the program was not enough to address deaf students' problem in communication.

As a result, FGD explored other inclusive issues about deaf students' level of comprehension and this could lead an obstacle towards achieving their academic goals. The participants revealed that understanding teaching materials such as hand-outs or lessons was a big challenge. As participants indicated their views with hearing peers, they

mentioned that hearing peers can memorize words and study the lessons very well, while they got easily puzzled. In this view, they suggested the possibility of pairing deaf and hearing to improve collaboration, to develop confidence, and to improve themselves through shared concept and ideas. Another critical issue raised was the use of 'deep words'. The participants mentioned that understanding words and terms was a bit difficult for them; thus, they commented that they are not well versed to some words that are too deep to understand. As a result, lecturing style was a bit off for them because they need to spend more time comprehending some words taught in the F&B certificate program. Because some deaf students could not comprehend F&B terminologies and concepts, they ended up losing their focus in understanding the ideas. Further, the participants expressed their feelings about understanding the content of the hand-outs; an issue was raised concerning its accuracy as study participants call it 'SHRIM way'. Deaf students' understanding of SHRIM way was based on the context of book versus the actual demonstration. In this case, the participants perceived that teachers were not following the hand-outs. As per participants' perception, teacher should not deviate within the context of their understanding; that is, the illustration, photographs and procedures should be a replica of their hand-outs when teachers are giving lectures or demonstration.

I don't know if the teacher knows how to set up the table, actually it was demonstrated by the teacher but it was different in the manual, maybe SHRIM has its own way, the illustration was different as to compare with teacher's demonstrating it.....Yes, teachers met the common expectation but some concepts may be a bit deep for us to comprehend, memorizing menus and terms are too difficult for us.....Words were too deep to understand, we need more time to spend, Deaf has a different culture.....Hearing are good in memorizing while we Deaf are easily get confused because we use sign language....Photos in the hand-outs were different in the actual set-up..

Finally, *Achieving Academic Goals* was the last theme that emerged and had three units of *personal development*, *positive interaction*, and *school learning experience towards employment opportunity*.

The participants discussed their insights towards achieving their academic goals. They expressed their feelings that self-development is a way of allowing them to grow as a person. As part of their professional growth, one participant said that confidence was developed because of what they learned throughout the course. Capabilities and roles were among strengths that have been developed because they were able to showcase their skills in various activities and hotel immersion. They commented that they understood the methods because of the exposure and assistance of hearing staff. There was no feeling of awkwardness and concluded that they were happy.

Teachers taught us to be confident, we know that it is step by step process.....We know the methods in F&B and be exposed to be able to use in our OJT.....I developed awareness and I learned a lot in F&B, what my roles, my attitude, I think it will help me use this in opportunities in F&B.....We are happy about the result.....I don't feel any awkwardness because of confidence.....I learned more on professionalism, teachers taught us so well, we now know what to improve in a step by step process.

The participants revealed their opinions toward the positive interaction they experienced in school. In order for deaf students to overcome challenges, the participants pinpointed that they need to overcome their fears and learn how to interact with hearing peers. They noted that being sensitive to deaf culture widens their views that hearing and deaf are 'connected by heart'. Because of this, hearing peers became their friends and developed certain level of understanding in the context of inclusivity.

Hearing peers were enjoying in the class, when we were in the class they were talking to us, at least we tried to understand each other.....Hearing peers became our friends, they were helpful to us so in return, we also helped them.....At first, we were segregated, finally, hearing started interacting with us so I think, they were aware of our culture.....When we were together in the class, hearing peers were so excited because they want to learn sign language especially the alphabet, we were happy because we share each other like about ethics and other lessons.

Finally, the participants described their learning experience and expressed their opinion on future employment opportunities. The participants commented that it was a life-changing experience being in the first batch of the certificate program. As part of their learning experience, the participants noted that the program provided them with more interesting topics and discussion. As they have raised issue on 'filling the gap', they all agreed that they learned so much in the course, the participants mentioned that because of this program, they have developed skills in F&B. The participants pointed out that while they enjoyed in the learning environment, they revealed that their learning is at par with hearing peers. In addition, the participants quoted that their achievements in the certificate program will give them the chance of possible employment.

My brother and sister encouraged me to take this opportunity and they were happy after I decided to take it, when I came here and attended classes, I liked it so much, hopefully it will find me employment in hotel.....when I heard this program I was very enthusiastic, plus I asked my cousin who is working now in hotel, so I asked what are the requirements, so I need certifications so that I can work abroad.....Here you will have an opportunity, if you gained some skills and knowledge, and if you wanted to work in the hotel.....I learned so much from F&B so I challenged myself that I am equal and at par with hearing peers, so now I developed my self esteem more, hopefully I will be able to complete the program..... my primary goal why I am here, is to work in the hotel.....my goal is yeah., we saw a lot of friends going abroad, most of them told me that they will be working abroad..

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to describe and evaluate the current support services and the teaching methods used. In conclusion, researchers have gathered valuable information in evaluating the accessibility of deaf students in attaining their academic goals. As a result, the study gave emphases on the access of the deaf to different areas that will enhance support services and teaching styles. In addition, there were challenges faced by deaf students in relation to their personal and academic requirement in the inclusive setting. These were program enhancement, meeting deaf needs, inclusivity, level of understanding, and achieving academic goals.

While there were positive results in deaf integration, deaf participants commented that there were only few enhancements in the support system such as the inclusion of captioning, notetaking, reviewing library policy, FSL fluency amongst teachers, and strengthening deaf campaign. The present study revealed that 'difficulty in

understanding' was a big challenge in the inclusive environment. Although researchers mainly focused on educational accessibility in terms of support and methods used, the analysis of data has explored into the complexity and diversity of deaf learners.

As Marschark and Hauser (2008) mentioned, deaf students are not destined to lag behind with their hearing peers because there are effective ways and communication alternatives that are fully accessible and support students to succeed academically. However, researchers found a learning 'gap' in this study which was the difficulty in communication particularly in English Language as a medium of instruction. Undeniably, accomplishment of deaf students' goals is at stake because in the first place, communication posed an underlying issue that need to be addressed. Researchers concluded that the use of English language should be enhanced through the creation of teaching materials with appropriate English or Filipino signs. If there is no available printed material in the F&B service subjects with appropriate signs, deaf learners might be lagging behind their hearing peers. Despite the availability of support system for deaf students, researchers suggested that an intervention program at an early stage of the course should be given priority to improve communication. An intensive reinforcement of support system such as language development in FSL, English and deaf appropriate-instructional materials should be provided in the implementation of the program.

The qualitative approach of this study aimed to describe and evaluate the accessibility of deaf students in the support services and methods used in mainstreaming environment. Findings of this study have numbers of important implications for future study. These however, give emphases in understanding deaf challenges, perception, and experiences in pursuing academic program. This study will provide the higher education an in-depth understanding of deaf students' experiences in accessing education. Hence, deaf student's point of view unfolds underlying issues that need to be addressed. The support of academic environment such as educators, and administrators is critical to the educational process. Also the study will provide an opportunity for potential deaf applicants to really understand the implications of the program before enrolling the program.

As the 'difficulty in communication' was found to be a gap, researchers recommend that an investigation be conducted on the challenges that are prevalent among deaf or hard of hearing in areas of early access to communication. Future research should investigate factors that might involve deaf comprehension in relation to their learning outcomes by focusing on cognitive side of learning such as perception skills, conceptual processing, information processing, and language learning.

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