

The Academic Status of Sign Language Programs
in Institutions of Higher Education
in the United States

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in Institutions of Higher Education in the United States
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify important characteristics of sign language programs in institutions of higher education (IHE) in the United States. Data were collected regarding (a) the institutions offering the programs, (b) the individuals administrating the programs, (c) the instructors teaching in the programs, (d) the structure of the programs within their institutions, (e) the administrative aspects of course content, and (f) the recommendations of the administrators for the development of standards in the field of post-secondary sign language program administration.

A national study, using an investigator-developed questionnaire, was mailed to approximately one thousand IHEs known or expected to teach sign language. The mailing list was developed from lists of post-secondary programs in deaf education, interpreter training, speech pathology and audiology, other programs training professionals to work with deaf individuals, and institutions with specific programs for deaf students. Of the 371 responses, 301 responses indicated that sign language was taught during the 1994-1995 academic year. Non-respondents were polled to determine reasons for non-response and the results suggested that half of those who did not respond made that decision because their institution offered one or two sign language classes, not a program. Another 18% of the non-respondents indicated that sign language was not taught at their institution. The 301 responses included in the analysis represented two-year institutions (47.2%) and four-year/graduate institutions (52.8%).

Results of the data analyses indicated that the status of sign language programs at institutions of higher education has improved over the past few decades. This point is most clearly manifest in the increased availability of sign language at IHEs, its status as a credit-bearing class, and its acceptance in fulfillment of institutional requirements.

The data suggested that there were dichotomies among sign language program administrators regarding their primary duties as teachers or administrators, and regarding their investment in the teaching of sign language as measured by their level of personal involvement with deaf people and their signing skills. Administrators with less signing skill had a greater

likelihood of holding full-time positions than those with more signing skill. The biggest issues facing most sign language program administrators were lack of support, funding for program expansion, and lack of qualified instructors.

The status of sign language instructors has not improved as markedly as the status of their classes. These professionals continue to be mostly part-time and hold lesser degrees than one might expect of IHE faculty. Additionally, no graduate programs offer degrees in the teaching of sign language to provide desired credentials. Instructors receive minimal supervision and minimal institutional support for professional development.

ASL was the most commonly-taught form of sign language, although 20% of the responding IHEs indicated that multiple forms of sign language were taught. Sign language was identified as a requirement of degree programs at many institutions, and many respondents anticipated changes in this area. Program content, within multisection programs and across institutions, was not highly standardized. Across and within institutions, different topics were covered and student progress was measured in different ways. Special programming and resources were often arranged to accommodate individual students.

On certain issues, differences were found between the perspectives of those administrators who were primarily teachers and those who were primarily administrators. Differences were also found between the responses of those administrators who were skilled signers and those who were not signers and not involved in the deaf community. The issues affected by these dichotomies were the position of sign language within the institutional structure, the acceptance of ASL as a foreign language, qualifications for sign language instructors, signing skill required for program administrators, and how administrators' time should be spent.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that sign language is clearly an emerging academic discipline. As a requirement for an increasing number of academic programs and a viable way to fulfill general education and modern language requirements, sign language as a "service course" is becoming entrenched in many institutions of higher education.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Administrators making decisions about sign language programs in institutions of higher education face many dilemmas today. Where should such classes be administratively based? Should sign language courses be considered modern languages that fulfill graduation

requirements? Should American Sign Language or a signed form of English be taught? How should transfer credits be evaluated if the receiving institution of higher education (IHE) does not offer the same course? How should native signing skills, education, and experience compare as qualifications for sign language teaching positions? Should policy decisions include consideration of conducting classes with or without the use of voice? Should assessment of student progress in expressive and receptive skills be evaluated in a standardized manner? What resources on campus are needed to support an academic sign language program?

Descriptions of real-life situations reflecting some of these concerns have begun to appear more frequently in the media over the past decade. *Deaf Life*, a news magazine for the deaf community (“Readers’ Viewpoint,” 1989), and DEAF-L, a discussion list on the Internet, both report stories of deaf instructors of American Sign Language (ASL) being dismissed and replaced by hearing instructors who appear to be less qualified than their deaf predecessors. This is an example of one dilemma facing administrators of sign language programs today. What qualifications should administrators seek in sign language instructor applicants?

The literature provides little assistance in addressing these issues for the 1990s and beyond. A flurry of research in the 1980s (a) provided basic demographic information regarding the extent and status of sign language instruction in the United States (Battison & Carter, 1982), (b) offered explanations of the increasing popularity of sign language on IHE campuses (Shroyer & Holmes, 1980), (c) yielded lists of IHEs offering sign language programs (“College Level Sign Language Programs,” 1982, 1983, 1984; Cokely, 1986), and (d) provided limited statistics regarding numbers of students enrolled in sign language classes (Delgado, 1984; Shroyer & Holmes, 1980). Cogen and Moseley (1984) conducted a study to assess what types of course offerings, degrees and certificates, and program types were available. No research has been reported since 1986 that would enable IHE administrators to make informed administrative decisions about the design of sign language classes or to work toward improving the quality of sign language instruction through standardization of faculty qualifications, sign language curriculum, and program structure.

In addition to the lack of research in the area of administration of sign language programs, no comprehensive professional journal or organization exists today to serve the discipline of sign language instruction. *The Reflector*, a short-lived journal for sign language teachers and interpreters, ceased publication in the mid-1980s. The main emphasis of the journal *Sign Language Studies* is on linguistics and sociolinguistics, not second language instruction. The American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA, the national professional organization of sign language instructors) is growing, but it is still a small organization that does not reach all instructors of sign language due to its focus on ASL and implied exclusion of signed forms of English, and it does not publish a professional journal. No standards are required, through ASLTA or other conventions, regarding post-secondary curricula or instructor qualifications.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish baseline information about the important characteristics of post-secondary programs that teach sign language in the United States, including the structure, organization, and administration of such programs and to examine the policies, procedures, and resources used by these classes and programs. In addition, this project includes the collection and synthesis of suggestions for the development of standards in the administration of sign language programs at the post-secondary level.

The target population for this study consists of personnel responsible for the administration of sign language classes in two- and four-year IHEs in the United States. This study provides a description of the administrative aspects of sign language instruction in a post-secondary environment.

Significance of the Problem

To put the issue into perspective, it is helpful to understand some of the expectations and goals envisioned in the early 1980s when sign language classes were emerging in schools, colleges, churches, adult education centers, and living rooms all over the country. Battison and Carter (1982) suggested four principal areas of public policy that might be affected by

developments in the field of sign language teaching and by the academic status of sign language.

They were:

1. administering and teaching in sign language programs, including interpreter training programs and programs that train sign language teachers,
2. national planning, development, funding, and coordinating of sign language programs and related functions,
3. links to other professions that relate to human services (e.g., interpreting, education, and counseling services with deaf people),
4. implications for the civil rights of deaf people.

The information gathered from the present study supports each of these areas. The results of this study (a) provide baseline information about the current status of sign language programs on IHE campuses; (b) provide support for IHEs, national organizations, and federal agencies in their educational planning and funding processes; and (c) provide support for the implementation and enhancement of quality sign language programs in post-secondary institutions.

Battison and Carter (1982) asserted that the civil rights of deaf people were tied to the status of sign language (p. vi). Recognizing that there are various steps in the recognition leading to enhanced status within the academic structure, a study identifying academic recognition of American Sign Language (ASL) may encourage more Americans to develop positive attitudes toward American Sign Language, add to the growing support for equal status of deaf people (e.g., through recent legal and political action), and subsequently help to enhance deaf people's access to all services and aspects of American culture.

In addition, this study was designed to be helpful to those individuals attempting to encourage IHEs to offer or upgrade the status of sign language courses or enhance existing offerings. The results may provide guidance to administrators of post-secondary institutions in establishing, implementing, and administering sign language programs. This information will

provide descriptive data to administrators of existing sign language programs who desire to compare their programs to programs in other institutions to promote or encourage standardization within the field. These data can be used by administrators considering acceptance of sign language in fulfillment of foreign language requirements for undergraduate or graduate degree completion. The results provide administrators with suggestions for types and sizes of class offerings, resources to support these academic programs, locations for sign language programs, qualifications needed for program coordinators and instructors, areas of curriculum to be standardized, and some policies in sign language classes.

Battison and Carter (1982) suggested that, as post-secondary level sign language programs grow, there will exist a greater pool of potential interpreter trainees from which to draw. They predicted that, with more sign language programs available, there would be fewer programs trying to teach interpreting skills to people who do not yet know how to sign. This should benefit the interpreting profession as well as hearing and deaf consumers of interpreting services. Thus, the consolidation of available information about sign language programs will enhance the quality of sign language interpreting for its consumers.

Additionally, earlier research has emphasized the importance of fluent signing skills needed for teachers of deaf students (Commission on Education of the Deaf, 1988; Johnson, Liddell, & Erting, 1989), particularly for bilingual and bicultural programs. Post-secondary sign language classes may contribute to the quality of Deaf Education programs, the subsequent effectiveness of teachers working with deaf children, and ultimately the literacy and success of deaf individuals.

Definition of Terms

In the literature on ASL and its users, it is common practice to use the lowercase “deaf” to refer to the audiological condition of not hearing and the uppercase “Deaf” to refer to the particular group of deaf people who share a language (ASL) and a culture (Padden & Humphries, 1988; Wilcox, 1991; Woodward, 1972). This convention is used throughout this document.

Clarification is necessary regarding the use of the terms “American Sign Language” and “sign language” throughout this document. There are two languages that can be signed, American Sign Language and English.

American Sign Language (ASL) is defined as the natural language used by members of the North American Deaf community, a language that has developed naturally over time among a community of users and that exhibits all features of a language (Valli & Lucas, 1992). Caccamise and Newell (1984, cited in Newell, 1995a) define ASL as “a manual-visual language communicated primarily through the hands, face, and body in which sign-words develop and evolve through natural processes based on sign communicators’ needs, culture, and manual-visual communication modes (p. 11).”

Newell (1990) described how ASL has developed within a bilingual context and has been influenced by English, and he suggested that several varieties of signing are all part of one language system. Baker & Cokely (1980), however, acknowledged that whereas ASL exists in a bilingual community, English is also used within certain contexts and groups. During the past few decades, several sign systems have been invented by educators for encoding the English language into signs (Wilbur, 1979) for the express purpose of making English words and morphemes visible to deaf students, although aspects of spoken English prosody have yet to be incorporated into any sign system.

These invented systems, including Seeing Essential English (SEE 1), Signing Exact English (SEE 2), Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE), and Signed English, have been generically referred to as “Manually Coded English” and have been used to “enhance the English base of those who are hearing impaired” (Scheetz, 1993, p. 114). Baker and Cokely (1980) described how the systems used for encoding English into signs differed on answers to two basic issues: the level of English represented (sounds, morphemes, words, suprasegmentals) and the origin of the stock of signs used - outright invention or borrowing them from the already existing stock of ASL signs. Thus, while there are distinctly two ways of signing, the line between signed ASL and signed English is often not clear.

DeCamp (1971) explained that when users of one language or system attempt to communicate with users of another language or system, “contact vernaculars” may occur. He explained that a “pidgin” or “contact vernacular” is not the native language of any of its speakers but is used in any situation requiring communication between persons who do not use each other’s native language. It is characterized by the elimination of certain grammatical devices and a drastic reduction of redundant features. Baker & Cokely (1980) identified a linguistic phenomenon occurring when Deaf and hearing people attempted to communicate with each other using such a “pidgin,” a combination of certain elements of both ASL and English.

More recently, Valli and Lucas (1992, p. 350) examined the signing style resulting from the contact between English and ASL. They determined that this “contact signing” has features of both, but does not have the linguistic features of what linguists call “pidgins.” They observed that the social situations in which contact signing is used are not like those that lead to spoken language pidgins. In fact, they noticed that “contact signing” is used by deaf people with other deaf people. Thus, the term “contact signing” is used in general and in this study to describe the type of communication that includes features of English (word order, use of prepositions, English expressions and idioms, mouthing of words) and features of ASL (nonmanual signals, body and eye gaze shifting, and ASL use of space).

The term “sign language” is often used to refer to any form of signed communication. Wilcox (1989a) suggested that this term is meaningless; signing is not a language but a means of producing utterances of a language. Languages can be communicated in spoken, written, or signed modalities. The term “sign language” indicates neither a modality (people do not say “speech language”) nor a language. To refer to a modality, one can refer to spoken, signed, or written language. To refer to a language, one can use its name (e.g., English, French, Spanish, American Sign Language, etc.).

Although Wilcox presented a supported argument against the use of the term “sign language,” there is a need for the purpose of this study for a generic term to refer to all forms of

signing, including ASL, English, and contact signing. The term *sign language* will be used for this purpose throughout this document.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) refers to accredited colleges and universities where students may earn undergraduate and graduate academic degrees. *Program* is defined as an academic unit of an IHE offering credit-bearing courses related to sign language and/or the lives and culture of deaf people. Single courses do not create administrative concerns, such as those outlined at the beginning of this chapter, to post-secondary administrators and were not the target population of this study; however, the few responses received from those institutions teaching only one sign language class were included.

Policies refers to the guiding principles and courses of action adopted by academic programs designed to influence and determine decisions. *Administrative structure* refers to the organization of personnel and programs within an IHE. *Administrative unit* refers to an academic division regarded as a distinct entity within the IHE responsible for making the decisions that govern its own programs and budgets.

Curriculum refers to the content areas covered in academic courses. For the purpose of this study, curriculum may also include the requirements of students in these courses and the methods used to evaluate students.

Characteristics of teaching personnel refers to demographic information, such as age, gender, and hearing status. *Qualifications of instructors* refers to additional categorical variables, such as educational background, including college majors, academic degree earned, and previous work experience.

The issues and concerns described lead to the development of the following research questions.

Research Questions

What are the characteristics of the institutions of higher education offering sign language, and what is the academic status of sign language at these institutions?

1. What are the characteristics, qualifications, duties, priorities, and concerns of administrative personnel in sign language programs in institutions of higher education?
2. What are the characteristics and expectations of teaching staff in post-secondary sign language classes?
3. What is the administrative structure of sign language programs in institutions of higher education?
4. What is the scope of the sign language program in terms of breadth of coverage, standardization, and assessment of student progress?
5. What are the recommendations of current sign language program administrators regarding the location, status, size, staffing, and administrative needs of sign language classes in IHEs?

Description of the Project

This study surveys administrators of existing sign language programs in IHEs in the United States. A questionnaire was developed and distributed, and data were collected about the current status of such programs and recommendations by administrators for their enhancement. To identify existing sign language programs, these questionnaires were mailed to (a) Deaf Education programs listed in the April 1994 directory of the *American Annals of the Deaf*, (b) Interpreter Training programs listed in the directory of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers and the *American Annals of the Deaf*, (c) Speech Pathology and Audiology programs listed in the directory of the American Speech Language and Hearing Association, (d) post-secondary programs with specialized support services for deaf students listed in the most recent *College and Career Guide for Deaf Students* and the directory of the *American Annals of the Deaf*, (e) IHEs known to teach sign language through the Less Commonly Taught Languages Project at the University of Minnesota, and (f) other programs known to this investigator or that responded to inquiries through the Sign Language Linguistics List (SLLING-L) and DEAF-L on the Internet. This list was cross-referenced with the most recent known list of sign language programs in IHEs (Cokely, 1986). Results of the surveys were compiled to identify trends in the

administrative structure, policies, and curricula of sign language programs in IHEs in the United States.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, a review of the literature that served as a foundation for this study is presented. The literature review addresses (a) the theoretical basis of considering American Sign Language as a language, (b) issues in the administration of modern/foreign language programs that parallel the concerns of sign language program administrators, (c) the process of accepting emerging disciplines into the academic structure of IHEs, (d) the history of research on the teaching and administration of post-secondary sign language programs including information on the academic acceptance of sign language in IHEs, (e) research on the qualifications and characteristics of personnel teaching sign language, and (f) research on post-secondary level sign language curricula.

American Sign Language as a Modern Language

ASL as a Language

Before American Sign Language was identified as a language, it was not found within institutions of higher education. The literature supporting American Sign Language as a language began with the work of William Stokoe in 1955. Stokoe came to believe that the system of signs used by deaf people was a language and could be analyzed as such. The first stage of his research, looking at signing as a system and signs as part of that system, lasted from 1955 to 1965, the year when *A Dictionary of American Sign Language* was published (Stokoe, 1965). During the second stage of his research, Stokoe continued to learn more about the syntax of signing, claiming that systematic knowledge of American Sign Language by teachers could be helpful in teaching English to deaf students. He was in frequent contact with the Center for Applied Linguistics, the Georgetown University School of Language and Linguistics, and the

Washington Linguistics Club, asserting that several aspects of sign language grammar paralleled aspects of the languages they were studying (Stokoe, 1990).

Stokoe believed that the signs were complex and abstract symbols that could be analyzed into parts. This analysis allowed researchers and linguists to develop new theories about how signed languages work, where they came from, how they were evolving, and how to teach them (Valli & Lucas, 1992). Stokoe developed a writing system to notate signs; he collected data and began further analyses to provide important information about this language. He proposed that every sign had at least three independent parts (location, hand shape, and movement), and that there were a limited number of ways of making these sign parts. An additional parameter, palm orientation, was suggested by Battison (1973; Battison, Markowicz, & Woodward, 1975). Linguists at other universities also became more interested in signed languages as unusual examples of languages, and the international journal *Sign Language Studies* was established in 1972 (Stokoe, 1990) to meet the growing need for information-sharing.

When Klima and Bellugi (1979) began their linguistic studies of ASL at the Salk Institute in the 1960s, they questioned whether ASL was an independent language as linguists understand that concept. They had no evidence that this communication system was a separate full-blown language. They did not begin their analyses with the assumptions that ASL was analogous to a spoken language or even that it had a grammar or to establish whether ASL had the properties shared by most languages.

The findings of Klima and Bellugi (1979) supported the linguistic features of ASL, which they called “a complexly structured language with a highly articulated grammar, a language that exhibits many of the fundamental properties linguists have posited for all languages (p. 4).”

Baker and Cokely (1980) supplemented this definition, calling ASL a “visual-gestural language created by deaf people” (p. 47). Baker and Cokely (1980) defined language as a system of relatively arbitrary symbols and grammatical signals that change across time and that members of a community share and use for several purposes: to interact with each other, to communicate their ideas, emotions, and intentions, and to transmit their culture from generation to generation. (p. 31)

Referring to this definition, Baker and Cokely (1980) described how American Sign Language meets the criteria of a language. It has symbols (signs) and grammatical signals (such as word/sign order and location). The members of the deaf community share these symbols, mutually understanding the meanings and how to use signs in order for communication to take place. The language is composed of a limited number of units (hand shapes, hand locations, movements, and palm orientations) that are related to each other in specific ways to form signs. The symbols (signs) are relatively arbitrary, although iconicity exists in some signs (Baker & Cokely, 1980; Valli & Lucas, 1992). The language has been shown to change over periods of time to express new meanings, create new signs, or alter signs for easier production. Finally, the language is used by people to express themselves and passed from adults to children as they teach them about the world and the culture of their community (Baker & Cokely, 1980).

ASL as a Foreign Language

Much has also been written about the status of ASL as a foreign language. Wilcox and Wilcox (1991) suggested that the question of whether ASL is foreign depends on the specific meaning of “foreign.” They rejected the notion that foreign implies a language used in another country, citing Navajo as one example of a language indigenous to the United States and not affiliated with any other country, geographic area, or nationality. Spanish is the native language of many U.S. citizens who do not consider themselves foreigners, yet almost every school in the country that has a foreign language requirement accepts Spanish in fulfillment of that requirement.

Armstrong (1988) justified why ASL can be considered foreign. First, to most people, foreign means an unknown or unfamiliar tongue. Second, it employs a communication channel separate from that used by most spoken languages, and thus it has structural characteristics that distinguish it from spoken languages. For these reasons and others, many language scholars now speak of requirements for a second or modern language, rather than a foreign language (Wilcox & Wilcox, 1991).

The goals and priorities of modern language study discussed by Guntermann (1984) indicate that the major outcomes to be sought in the general academic language curriculum are communicative proficiency, cultural knowledge, an understanding of language and how it works, and the development of strategies for learning new languages. The literature on what should be included in sign language curriculum (Carter & Whitcher, 1984; Holt & Hoemann, 1982; McIntire, 1982) identifies the same priorities. Holt and Hoemann discuss a horizontal dimension of the curriculum (topics, concepts, and skills to be taught) and a vertical dimension (sequence and timing), both of which are rooted in the goals elaborated by Guntermann (1984).

Foreign Language Program Administration

IHE administrators often face issues and decisions that are not unique to their particular discipline. Administrators from parallel subject areas often face the same types of concerns. In the field of sign language instruction, professionals often rely on theories and practices of foreign or modern language instruction as a basis for instructional philosophies, strategies, and policies. Similarly, administrative concerns in foreign or modern language programs may parallel those faced by administrators of sign language programs.

Program Structure

The Modern Language Association (MLA) completed a baseline survey of a sample of post-secondary foreign language programs in the United States in 1989 that yielded an overview of how foreign language programs are organized, how they are staffed, and where they are located (Huber, 1989, 1992, 1993). Due to a significant telephone follow-up, 85% of the sample participated in the study.

Institutional language requirements. Survey responses (Huber, 1992) indicated that 64% of the institutions represented by the sample had language requirements for one or more of their bachelor's or associate degree programs in the arts and sciences, whereas 36% did not. Of those with requirements, 40% mandated them for all students, and 60% for some majors only (Huber, 1992). Huber elaborated on the types of courses (language, literature in target language, culture, and literature-in-translation) that were used by various institutions to satisfy these requirements.

The study suggested that language requirements vary by the type of language program, as well as by the type of institution. Institutions with specialized language programs had more stringent language requirements than did those with inclusive programs. The results (Huber, 1993) indicated that more than half of the institutions surveyed (58.5% public, 41.5% private) viewed language study as essential to a well-rounded education. Of these institutions, 81% were four-year institutions.

Program organization. The MLA studies (Huber, 1989, 1992, 1993) identified that foreign language programs differ from other subjects in the way programs are organized and administered. Huber (1989) classified foreign language programs into four distinct types of administrative organizational configurations. In divisions, instruction was provided in English, foreign languages, and nonlanguage courses (e.g. philosophy, fine arts). In joint programs, English and foreign language programs were offered by the same administrative unit. Multilingual programs offered several foreign languages and did not offer English courses. This arrangement was found in 45% of the institutions with foreign language programs. Finally, multiple language units had separate administrative units for each language or pair of foreign languages offered.

In 87% of the institutions offering foreign languages, the programs were under one administrative unit controlling all of the languages taught. Almost half (47%) of these programs were housed in an administrative unit that was also responsible for English or nonlanguage courses. Thus, in close to half of the institutions with foreign language programs, administrative decisions about how instruction should be organized may be made by program or divisional chairs whose field is not a foreign language (Huber, 1989). This organizational feature has important implications for the quality of affected programs.

Huber (1989) described other organizational and administrative features of foreign language programs that appeared to impede programs' effectiveness. The findings indicated that lesser degrees were offered in foreign languages than in other areas. Over half (56%) of the programs that granted a degree in English offered courses but no degree in a foreign language,

and close to two thirds of those granting an MA degree in English granted only a BA degree in foreign languages. Huber suggested that foreign language instruction may have a secondary status in joint programs. Huber also suggested that the joint programs' lack of autonomy and focus may inhibit development of the curricular depth required if students are to become competent in the languages offered.

The MLA studies found that almost one fifth of all programs were administered by a division that offered nonlanguage courses (i.e., humanities, fine arts, social sciences) in addition to foreign languages. Huber (1989) questioned whether divisions, with titles such as "Humanities," "Humanities and Social Sciences," "Humanities and Communication," or "Humanities and Fine Arts" could offer the kind of curriculum necessary for students to develop competence in foreign languages.

Huber (1989) proposed another concern based on the high percentage of programs that offered courses in foreign languages but did not grant degrees in this area. If the programs did not provide the type of course work necessary to support a major, did they provide enough course work for mastery of the language?

Huber (1989) suggested that none of the administrative arrangements were entirely effective for an institution's foreign language program; however, a hybrid of the multilingual and multiple language unit approaches may represent the ideal arrangement. A collective language program for languages in which course offerings were limited might be justified due to low student interest or constraints on staff or resources, and separate departments for language groups or individual languages in which instruction was extensive may be most effective.

In the field of foreign languages, institutions with a single multilingual program have a structural advantage over those with multiple language units in introducing new areas of study. Huber (1989) suggested that it would be easier to add several courses to an existing multilingual program than to set up an independent program in a new language. Similarly, it would be easier to develop a program from existing course offerings than to start a new program from scratch.

Scope of course offerings. In another study, Huber (1993) gathered data on types of courses offered in addition to language instruction. Only 38% of the programs responding offered courses in linguistics. Of those programs, most offered language-specific rather than general linguistics courses. More than three fourths of the programs responding indicated that they offered advanced courses in the language, courses in culture and civilization, and literature in the target language. More than half of the respondents indicated that they offered “literature in translation” courses. Special format courses for bilingual speakers were offered in less than one fifth of the programs.

Respondents to the 1987-89 survey were asked to estimate the percentage of class time spent on five major facets of introductory language classes: grammar, oral communication, culture and civilization, reading literary texts, and reading nonliterary texts. In their first-year classes, over 90% of the respondents indicated an emphasis on the first three areas, whereas 73% used nonliterary texts, and less than half (42%) used literary texts (Huber, 1993).

Huber (1993) gathered data on alternative approaches to language teaching and curricula. “Intensive” courses were offered by 44% of the programs in the response sample, immersion experiences were offered by 66%, and study-abroad programs were offered by 75%.

Curriculum standardization. Based on a study of almost 700 IHE foreign language departments, Schulz (1978) identified areas of concern in developing common goals and measures of achievement in elementary and intermediate multisection courses and in courses taught by several faculty members. The discrepancies of content, requirements, and expected achievement in a course, when taught by different faculty, can be astounding (Schulz, 1978). If the course is one in a required sequence, this discrepancy can have serious consequences for the student who does not achieve the expected minimal background required by the next course. Department heads need to insist on joint development and coordination of multisection courses and courses that rotate among faculty. Schulz also asserted that the lower-level courses establishing the basic foundations of a language must establish realistic objectives and content

load, which can be covered by all instructors and mastered by a majority of students enrolled in the course.

Huber (1993) reported that in the vast majority of programs sampled, at least some aspects of their multisection introductory courses were administered in a uniform manner, although different individuals and groups were reported to be responsible for determining the form and content of introductory courses. The vast majority of first- and second-year language classes met between three and five times per week.

Class size. On the average, the first-year classes offered by the sampled programs enrolled 23 students, with half reporting average class sizes of 20-26 students. Only 6% reported classes as small as 12, and 15% reported classes of 30 or larger. Second-year classes tended to be smaller than first-year classes. Guidelines developed by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) in 1978 indicate that the optimum class size for introductory classes is 12, and the maximum should not exceed 20 (Huber, 1993). Consequently, more than half of the programs surveyed exceed the maximum recommended by ADFL. Findings indicate that class size is dependent on the source of funding and the faculty size (Huber, 1993).

Placement of students. Huber (1993) investigated how incoming students with previous language training were placed in appropriate introductory classes. The results indicated that scores on standardized tests accounted for the placement of 57% of these students, 18% accepted credits from high school for placement. In 17% of the cases the department chair or language coordinator decided, and in 8% of the cases students chose their own level of classes.

In a study to identify successful foreign language programs and examine those factors thought to have contributed to their success, Schulz (1978) investigated the topic of student placement. The findings indicate that some institutions attempted to get around the placement dilemma, encouraging students with a high school background to continue foreign language study in college by permitting them to enroll in courses above the first term without placement testing. If the student passed the course at a specified grade (usually B or C), the student

automatically received credit for the preceding courses in the sequence, essentially awarding IHE credit for prior high school study.

Assessment of student language competency. Schulz's (1978) recommendations suggested the development of nationally recognized tests for at least two levels of proficiency. The results of such tests could be sent to prospective employers, IHE administrators, and so forth, as indicators of an applicant's level of proficiency in a language. Schulz (1978) asserted that IHE transcripts were "practically meaningless as indicators of proficiency" (p. 156).

Most programs in Huber's (1993) sample did not assess the competence of students completing the introductory language sequence. Those that did used mostly oral examinations or departmentally-developed tests.

Personnel

Huber (1993) found great variation in the reported number of full-time tenure-track and part-time faculty members, non-tenure-track faculty members, and teaching assistants, all of which has an impact on the curriculum offerings. The percentage of full-time, tenure-track faculty members among all faculty members and the percentage of full-time faculty members holding Ph.D.'s and/or who are native speakers also affected the nature of the curriculum (Huber, 1993), but specific effects on the curriculum are not discussed in Huber's article.

Faculty characteristics. Huber's (1993) study also addressed who was teaching the introductory language classes. The results indicated that introductory level classes were taught most commonly by tenured faculty members; followed by junior faculty members; full-time, non-tenure-track faculty; part-time faculty; teaching assistants; and others. In two-year colleges, the percentage of introductory classes taught by tenured faculty decreased as the number of part-time faculty increased. In four-year programs, the percentage of introductory language sections taught by tenured faculty members was considerably higher in programs without teaching assistants than in programs with teaching assistants. The percentage of introductory language sections staffed by part-time faculty was highest in programs where relatively few faculty

members had full-time tenure-track positions and where the number of part-time positions was large.

Staff development and supervision. Schulz (1978) suggested the need for practical, regional workshops dealing with specific areas in need of development. Areas that should receive priority were listed as program development, teaching assistant (TA) training, coordination and supervision of lower-level language instruction, advising and career counseling, interdisciplinary programs, articulation between secondary and post-secondary programs, and special program needs on the two-year college level.

Studies of TA training, supervision, and evaluation were conducted in 1969 and 1979, and a comparison of the results indicated little change in the academic preparation of TA supervisors (Schulz, 1980). There was a positive change, however, in the number of respondents offering preteaching orientation and a methods course, from 11% in 1969 to 28% in 1979. The researcher (Schulz, 1978) indicated that 86% of the responding departments required only the Bachelor's degree as the minimum academic qualification for TA appointment. Not one respondent indicated required test scores on a target language proficiency test.

Schulz's study (1980) yielded several recommendations for supervision of TAs, including more preparation for and gradual immersion into their teaching duties, more training for supervisors, released time for supervisors, and recognition of excellence and commitment in the classroom. Schulz concluded that the lower division courses, often taught by TAs, are the lifeline of most departments, and it is crucial for students as well as for departments that program quality be monitored.

Foreign language program administrators. In a survey of over 1,000 chairpersons of foreign language programs in two- and four-year IHEs in the central states, Cardenas (1988) found that 71% of the department chairs found their role satisfying because they could have an effect on building a quality program. Another great satisfaction (73.5%) was being able to advise and direct students. Cardenas' results suggested that the satisfaction of chairing a department may be balanced, if not offset, by the responsibilities. More than half (58.9%) of the

respondents perceived their administrative role as giving them great responsibilities but little power. A significant percentage (57.6%) said that they were asked by upper-level administrators to assume additional responsibilities each year.

According to Cardenas (1988), the situation creating the most frustrations for foreign language department chairs was the lack of momentum in the chair's own teaching and research because of time spent on administrative responsibilities (73.7%). Other frustrations included motivating unproductive faculty members (60.2%), accurately evaluating faculty teaching (54.3%), developing a fair and reasonable departmental budget (51.7%), locating and hiring part-time faculty (48.3%), and handling faculty complaints and squabbles (47.1%). Cardenas' results also suggested that department chairs in smaller institutions feel less pressure and consequently enjoy their role more. They also seemed to feel slightly more satisfied with the economic status of their departments. Chairs at smaller institutions seemed more content and in control. Institutions experiencing growth appeared to be very stressful places to work.

Administrators' qualifications and background. Teschner (1987) examined the academic backgrounds of foreign language program directors in American universities. His results indicated that the typical lower-division foreign language director in American doctoral-granting institutions is more likely to have written a dissertation on a literary topic (59%) than one on theoretical linguistics (19.5%) or on applied or educational linguistics topics (6.5%); however, later publications tended to be on applied or educational linguistics topics.

Teschner (1987) also identified that 18% of all directors hold the rank of full professor, 31% associate professor, 35% assistant professor, and almost 16% rank below assistant professor (instructor or lecturer).

Referencing the unpublished minutes of the 18 October 1985 minutes of the "Committee on Institutional Cooperation" Language Coordinators' Meeting, Teschner (1987) pointed out that often junior faculty members were required to do coordination during their first few years on the job. The implication appeared to be that some colleagues believed that anyone can coordinate lower division courses without specialized training or experience.

Compensation and support for administrators. Huber (1990) found many variations in the support of foreign language program administrators such as the availability of perquisite benefits for administrators, reduced teaching load, and monetary compensation. In general, however, foreign language chairs did have a lighter teaching load than their colleagues in the department. They typically had increased clerical support and special office facilities at their disposal and some monetary compensation. Over one-half of the chairs received monetary stipends, another third received 10- or 11-month contracts including a salary supplement rather than the usual 9-month contract, and some received both a salary stipend and a longer contract.

Huber's (1990) study attributed these differences to the funding sources of the institution (public or private), the type of institution (level of degrees granted), the presence or absence of faculty unions at the institutions, the number of faculty in the department, and the organizational structure of the language program. Issues affecting the organizational structure of the department included both the scope of subjects taught and the selection process for the chair. Huber suggested that, because language departments often offer instruction in many languages, the administrative tasks facing these chairs was more complex than in other disciplines and merited greater support and compensation than chairs of other departments.

Another study of foreign language department chairs (Cardenas, 1988) found that almost half (43%) of the foreign language department administrators were dissatisfied with the impact of market-driven formulas on the salaries of their department members. Insofar as salaries were concerned, 39% of these respondents felt that their salaries were not competitive with salaries in other departments of the same institution, and 39.5% felt that their salaries were not competitive with salaries in comparable departments at other institutions. Additionally, this study found that more than half (51%) of the respondents did not feel that their level of department funding was adequate.

Emerging Disciplines in Academia

The study of sign language in IHEs began in the 1960s (Shroyer & Holmes, 1980), making it a relative newcomer to the academic menu. As such, sign language programs parallel other emerging disciplines. For example, the fields of Black Studies (also known as Afro-American, African-American, or African Studies) and Women's Studies also emerged on IHE campuses beginning in the late 1960s (Hine, 1990; Kornbluh, 1990).

Black Studies did not appear on the academic scene as the result of careful and deliberate planning and analysis (Hine, 1990). Programs were typically established in response to political exigencies rather than intellectual and academic imperatives. These and other factors have contributed to ongoing structural and organizational diversity, evidenced by factors such as faculty size and composition, relationships with administrators and more traditional departments, curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach (Hine, 1990).

Women's Studies, also occasionally called Feminist Studies or Gender Studies, also appeared in the last half of the 1960s. At that time, women faculty in higher education began to create new courses that would facilitate more reflection on the female experience and female aspiration. Their efforts at organization and course development were inspired by the "free university" movement and the civil rights movement, which provided the model of Black Studies courses and programs (Boxer, 1988).

Women's Studies programs have continued to grow steadily for 20 consecutive years (*NWSA Directory*, 1990). From one program in 1970 to 78 programs in 1973 to 621 programs in 1990, the acceleration is impressive (*NWSA Directory*, 1990). The increase is even more staggering when one considers that these numbers only include full-blown programs; many additional institutions offer courses, but no program in this area.

Program Structure

Program organization. Many of the Black Studies endeavors have differences in structure and mission. Departments exist that hire and grant tenure to faculty, certify students,

confer degrees, and administer a budget. There are also programs that offer majors and minors but rarely confer degrees. Other campuses boast centers or institutes that tend to be administrative units more concerned with the production and dissemination of scholarship and professional development than with undergraduate teaching (Hine, 1990).

In the parallel field of Women's Studies, there are academic departments teaching students about Women's Studies as well as Women's Centers, Women's Research Centers, and Institutes concerned with the production and dissemination of scholarship and professional development. In many instances, these units share the same space and often share the same faculty (*NWSA Directory*, 1990). A 1986-87 study looked at the Women's Studies academic programs at large IHEs in the U.S., investigating administrative and operational aspects of each responding program (Andreadis, 1988).

All of the Women's Studies programs surveyed (Andreadis, 1988) indicated that they are responsible for the coordination of courses and course approval. Most (97.7%) are also responsible for student advising and for the operation of an office; most (93%) engage in outreach to both students and faculty; and many offer programs to their campus communities. Almost all sponsor speakers (95.3%), hold seminars (88.4%), and coordinate conferences (74.4%). Most (81.4%) reported that they had been operational for more than five years.

Andreadis (1988) further identified that a majority of the programs (76%) report directly to the Dean or Assistant Dean of the IHE, usually Liberal Arts or Arts and Sciences. Almost one-fourth (23.1%) report to a university-wide academic officer such as Provost, President, Chancellor, and one program (2.3%) reports to the chair of a department. Several respondents remarked that they really do not report to anyone because the person assigned as their superior knows nothing about Women's Studies. The budgets of most of these programs are allocated by their institutions, either by direct allocation through a dean or executive, by internal granting agencies, or by hidden funds obtained through the reallocation of resources and personnel time.

The Women's Studies programs surveyed represented a variety of administrative alternatives. Almost all (93.0%) of the programs have a director or coordinator, and more than

one-third (39.5%) are also administered by a committee. Almost three-fourths (74.4%) of the programs are overseen by a large collective unit or other type of arrangement; only 3 (7.0%) have no administrative officer, and eleven (25.6%) are administered by a director/coordinator alone.

Scope of course offerings. Despite its contributions and successes over the past twenty years, Black Studies still contends with and needs to resolve rampant confusion, conflict, and creative tensions in such areas as nomenclature; curriculum; identity, mission, and structure; graduate programs; faculty recruitment, retention, and development; accreditation; and professionalism (Hine, 1990). A sound Black Studies curriculum should include some courses in Afro-American history, Afro-American literature, Afro-American art, sociology, political science, psychology, and economics. Clusters of courses in art, music, and languages and/or linguistics should also be available to students. Finally, a well-rounded program should offer courses on other geographical areas of the Black Diaspora.

Both Black Studies and Women's Studies departments utilized courses and faculty members outside of their own departments. These programs increasingly relied on cross-listing courses to augment curriculum. Hine (1990) believed that this was both reasonable and advantageous because it built bridges between the emerging programs and the more traditional departments, thus decreasing tendencies toward isolation and marginality.

Curriculum standardization. Curriculum, in particular, posed a special problem for faculty unable to agree on a standard or core for all sections of the same introductory course in African-American Studies. Hine (1990) suggested that a Black Studies curriculum should reflect an ordered arrangement of courses progressing from the introductory through intermediate and advanced levels. Hine also suggested that the rapid proliferation of knowledge in this field was a strong argument in favor of institutional flexibility. Hine also suggested that faculty members need to be free to develop new courses, to experiment with different methodologies, and to adopt nontraditional texts as new knowledge is produced. It appeared that institutions were able to

offer only those courses for which they had qualified faculty, and that not every course could be available every semester.

Andreadis (1988) reported that almost all of the Women's Studies programs have required foundation courses (95.3%), and a required curriculum (97.7%), which often included *components* in both humanities and social sciences. More than half (53.5%) offered more than 20 different courses, and 34.9% ($n=15$) offered between 11 and 20 different courses. Almost half (41.9%) of the programs were concentrated in one college, whereas the other half (46.5%) included courses across their campuses. Some of the programs ($n=5$) had off-campus courses.

In some institutions, Black Studies departments awarded B.A. degrees. In others, students could not have a major in this area, but could have a minor or concentration in this area with a major in a more traditional academic discipline. According to Hine (1990), there were "a half dozen or so" Black Studies units that offered Master's degrees (p. 20).

In the area of Women's Studies, 76.7% ($n=33$) of the programs responding offered a minor in this area, 37.2% ($n=16$) offered a concentration, and 51.2% ($n=22$) offered a major. In addition, 34.9% ($n=15$) offered a Master's degree, and 30% ($n=13$) offered a Ph.D. These programs, however, were usually offered as part of an interdisciplinary program or as a specialty in a hospitable department (Andreadis, 1988).

In 1990, the *NWSA Directory* reported that 425 of the 621 listed programs offered either a minor, a certificate, or an area of concentration in Women's Studies. The number of programs offering graduate level work in Women's Studies also increased from 23 in 1986 to 102 in 1990. The most common form for both undergraduate and graduate degrees in this field was through a concentration or minor in Women's Studies with the degree awarded through a more traditional department (*NWSA Directory*, 1990). As of 1990, six institutions offered full Master's degrees in Women's Studies alone.

Personnel

Faculty characteristics. Hine (1990) presented a historical view of Black Studies, explaining that many programs were established hastily to meet the demands of African-

American students, staffed by undertrained people with the mission of preserving campus peace, and lacked intellectual challenge and substance. By 1987, however, a pool of productive and well-trained African-American scholars was available to be recruited. Hine noted that often the only critical mass of African-American faculty working at many institutions was housed in the Black Studies division, supporting the sad but true statement that without Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Women's Studies, or Native American studies, few IHEs could boast an integrated or pluralistic faculty (Hine, 1990).

Hine (1990) asserted that one of the most daunting tasks facing a Black Studies department was acquiring resources to recruit and retain an appropriate faculty, one that included assistant, associate, and full professors. During the growth period of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black Studies units simply drew into their domain whoever happened to be available to them. After the economic difficulties and retrenchment of the 1970s, many Black Studies faculties declined in size, producing an even more fragmented curriculum and relying heavily on part-time, visiting, and temporary appointees.

McKay (1990) supported Hine's assertions about the difficulty of securing qualified faculty, particularly in the Midwest, because both established and younger African-American faculty sought appointments on the East or West Coasts, in or near large urban centers with diverse populations. The difficulty in attracting faculty could lead to certain courses not being taught regularly, which could result in a decrease of student interest and a loss of enthusiasm for the program among students who should support it the most (McKay, 1990). This could be a serious problem.

Attracting faculty to the Midwest was only part of a larger problem facing Black Studies across the country. The larger issue was the extremely small pool of scholars available. The reasons for this included failure to convince bright students to choose university teaching as a career, failure of some scholars to survive the stresses of academia, failure of some scholars to publish and as a result advance themselves professionally, and the success of others who moved out of the classroom into the nation's most prestigious institutions with higher salaries, minimal

teaching loads, and generous research budgets. This has left only a few scholars to engage in the day-to-day struggles of full-time teaching, research, counseling, and other duties (McKay, 1990).

Andreadis' (1988) survey did not gather data on the employment status of faculty. However, information was collected on other administrative issues. More than four-fifths (88.4%) of the responding programs have permanent office space, almost half (48.8%) had at least one full-time secretary, and almost all (97.7%) had one or more part-time secretaries. Many employed work/study helpers (39.5%), graduate assistants (27.8%), or student workers (76.7%).

Program administrators. The *NWSA Directory* (1990) reported that 99% of the Women's Studies programs are administered by women and that most faculty who teach Women's Studies courses were women, but increasing numbers of men were teaching courses that were part of Women's Studies programs.

No studies were found describing the employment characteristics or background qualifications of program administrators for either Black Studies or Women's Studies. It may be inferred that the same difficulties exist in recruiting and retaining Black Studies program administrators as exist with Black Studies faculty.

Effecting Change

Several feminist scholars developed theories to describe the process of curriculum change. These theories have provided an outline of conceptual transformations in thinking about women and organized an understanding of curriculum critique and revision as an ongoing process (Anderson, 1988). These theories have been helpful to scholars attempting to change thinking about deaf people through sign language curriculum.

McIntosh (p. 49, cited in Anderson, 1988) developed an analysis of curriculum change in Women's Studies relating patterns of thought in the curriculum to human psyches and their relation to the dominant culture. She called the first phase in curriculum change "womanless," meaning women were not studied and by virtue of this were perceived as losers, second-rate citizens, or nonexistent. In the second phase of McIntosh's theory, "women in history," only a select few, exceptional women were studied although women were still not perceived as central

or fundamental to social change. In the third phase, “women as a problem, anomaly, or absence,” barriers were identified that excluded women from studies, and as a result, women looked deprived and were angered to the point of wanting to redefine terms and methods through which the human experience was understood. The fourth phase, “women as society,” made the claim that women’s experiences and perspectives created history, society, and culture as much as did those of men. Phase five, “lateral consciousness,” was the transformation of minds toward working for the survival of all.

Teaching and Administration of Sign Language Programs

History of Sign Language Instruction

Like Black Studies and Women’s Studies, the study of sign language appeared for the first time in the second half of the 1960s. In 1965, Stokoe, Casterline, and Croneberg published their *Dictionary of American Sign Language on Linguistic Principles*, which recognized American Sign Language as a language for the first time. At the time, very few people paid attention to this (Wilcox, 1991). Shroper and Holmes (1980) reported that DePaul University in Chicago started offering sign language in 1965 and was reported to be the first higher education institution in the country to do so.

In 1967, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) responded to the slowly emerging public interest in learning sign language by establishing its Communication Skills Program, with the goal of influencing schools, universities, and programs and agencies serving deaf people to begin offering sign language classes (Newell, 1995a).

During the same decade, several systems were invented to represent English visually to teach deaf children. David Anthony, a deaf man, invented a system incorporating signs for parts of words; in essence, he developed signs for morphemes, a system which was called “Seeing Essential English” or “SEE I” (Scheetz, 1993). In 1972, Dennis Wampler invented a system called Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE), based on the philosophy that signs should be presented in the symbols Stokoe had developed. His philosophy also stated that a word should be signed the same way regardless of its meaning (Scheetz, 1993). Another deaf person, Gerilee

Gustason, with collaborators Donna Pfetzing and Esther Zawolkow, invented a third system of representing English manually which was called “Signing Exact English” (SEE II). This system introduced initialized signs into the sign system and added signs where none were previously available (Scheetz, 1993). The developers of these systems wanted to ease the process of acquiring English by deaf children.

Several of these systems for representing English became part of the curriculum in teacher education programs training teachers for deaf children (Akamatsu & Stewart, 1987), thus expanding the availability and varying the types of sign language classes on IHE campuses.

Just as the civil rights movement paved the way for Black Studies and Women’s Studies through the 1960s and 1970s, a series of developments in sign language research and federal legislation created major breakthroughs in the widespread use and teaching of sign language. The research and publications of Stokoe (1966-1990), Klima and Bellugi (1979), Wilbur (1979, 1987), and Cokely and Baker (1980) added continuous reinforcement to the public acceptance of ASL as a language.

Passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensured deaf people’s rights to have sign language interpreters in various public fora and in educational settings. Creating a previously nonexistent need for hearing individuals fluent in sign language, this law led to the creation of federally-supported interpreter training programs, a strong venue for the instruction of sign language (Newell, 1995a).

Other legislation, Public Law 94-142, expanded the need for sign language interpreters. In 1975, this law mandated that children with disabilities should be educated in the least restrictive environment. Many school districts interpreted this to mean the public school environment where deaf students shared classes with hearing students, utilizing support services such as interpreters, note takers, and tutors (Scheetz, 1993). As sign language use by deaf students and interpreters became more common in many public school classrooms, awareness and interest grew. Family members and classmates of deaf students also developed interest in learning to communicate in sign language.

In 1975, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) established the first professional association of sign language instructors, the Sign Instructors Guidance Network (SIGN). The stated purposes of this organization included (a) providing a closer relationship between teachers of manual communication (American Sign Language and Manually Coded English) and the NAD, (b) providing an effective avenue for the exchange of information regarding methods and materials in the instruction of manual communication, (c) developing certification standards and procedures for the teaching of manual communication, and (d) developing standards and procedures for the accreditation of training programs, facilities, and personnel in the education of teachers of manual communication (Newell, 1995a). In the summer of 1976, the first teachers of sign language were certified by SIGN. The teaching of sign language was becoming a profession (Newell, 1995a).

SIGN struggled through its first decade. Although sign language classes were appearing in many types of settings, the qualifications for instructors were loosely defined and varied from program to program. Program administrators in adult and community education programs, IHE programs, and other settings who did not know sign language themselves were unable to assess the skills of their teacher applicants.

It was easy for teachers to be hired without certification for two reasons. First, in its ardor to ensure that teachers of ASL were highly qualified, SIGN created a certification process that most practicing sign language teachers could not pass (Newell, 1995a). Second, and as a result of the first, academic administrators were unaware of the existence of SIGN certification and so did not require it. The numbers of agencies and schools offering sign language and people teaching it continued to increase. Because certification was not a requirement for work, there was no incentive to support the professional organization of sign language instructors (Newell, 1995a). In 1990, SIGN membership voted to change its name to the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) to reflect a broader view of ASL and a more appropriate organizational identity. Over the years, the certification process has been adapted to be more user-friendly.

Sign language classes were appearing more frequently in IHEs. Wilcox and Wilcox (1991) reviewed the history of the administration of these programs.

In the past, these programs were housed in special education or communication disorders departments. These departments supported many classes through the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s when the demand for sign language instruction began to increase steadily. However, the signed language classes were often taught from a clinical/pathological point of view, and the cultural heritage of the deaf community and the linguistic structure of ASL were often ignored. More recently, ASL programs have been welcomed into departments of linguistics, and modern and classical languages. University administrators are aware of the scholarly research potential of ASL, especially in the area of linguistics. (p. 78)

In recent years, many state legislatures and boards of education recognized ASL as a language that can be offered in fulfillment of foreign/modern language requirements (Wilcox, 1991). This, combined with the federal legislation in the late 1970s mandating the provision of sign language-related services for deaf people, led to a rapid proliferation of sign language classes offered at IHEs (Kanda & Fleischer, 1988). This created a critical need for qualified teachers of sign language, particularly ASL. However, there were few post-secondary programs designed to prepare teachers of ASL (Newell, 1995a).

History of Research on Post-Secondary Sign Language Programs

Early research. The first of the few existing studies of sign language classes in IHEs was conducted in 1979. This study included only the state of North Carolina (Shroyer & Holmes, 1980). A survey was sent to 77 IHEs in the state to determine how many institutions were offering sign language classes, when they were started, what levels of courses were available, the status of credit/ non-credit courses, the employment status of the instructors, and the number of students enrolled. Sign language was operationally defined as any form of manual communication. The first classes in North Carolina's institutions of higher education appeared in 1968. Shroyer and Holmes found that more IHEs added classes each year, and by 1980, 46%

of the 63 responding institutions were teaching manual communication, an additional 1% had taught it previously, and 5% anticipated its being taught in the future. A large number of beginning level classes were offered, with fewer at the intermediate and advanced levels. Shroyer and Holmes' results indicated that of the 29 institutions offering sign language classes, 11 schools offered academic credit for classes, 17 did not, and 2 institutions did not respond to the survey question.

Surveys and lists of programs. Throughout the 1980s, the number of sign language classes on IHE campuses in the United States increased tremendously ("College Level Sign Language Classes" 1982, 1983, 1984; Cokely, 1986). During this time, efforts were made by the National Association of the Deaf's Communication Skills Program; a short-lived journal called *The Reflector*; and later, an ongoing professional journal, *Sign Language Studies*, to maintain lists of these programs. The lists were published with disclaimers that the lists might not be complete, might not be up-to-date, might not be accurate, and included institutions offering courses in "manual communication," without providing a definition of manual communication. The number of classes, the titles and content of such classes, and the types of credit offered for these classes were not indicated.

The first listing was published in 1982 (*The Reflector*, 1982) and identified 101 IHEs reported to teach "manual communication." The 1983 listing (*The Reflector*, 1983) identified 182 IHEs teaching "manual communication." In 1984, there were 315 IHEs identified as teaching "manual communication" (*The Reflector*, 1984). In 1986, an updated version of this list was published in *Sign Language Studies* (Cokely, 1986) identifying 772 IHEs teaching courses in "manual communication" or sign language. No information on the number of courses, content, program administration, or definition of manual communication was provided.

Based on the growing length of these lists, sign language appeared to have come of age at many American IHEs. However, little research had been done to identify the administrative procedures or structure of these classes and programs.

In addition to this lack of information, conflicting statistics from various research perspectives that implied that many sign language classes and programs might be hidden on their own campuses. The Fall 1990 study of enrollment in modern language classes conducted by the Modern Language Association (B. Huber, personal communication, January 1995) yielded only 23 institutions identifying American Sign Language as a course on their campuses. This conflicts with Cokely's 1986 findings of at least 772 campuses offering sign language. Clearly, not all of the sign language classes offered are in Modern Language departments, but it is curious that many modern language departments do not seem to be aware of, or acknowledge, the existence of these classes on their campuses.

Program Structure

In the spring of 1980, a pilot survey of sign language programs and teachers was conducted under the auspices of the National Association of the Deaf (Battison & Carter, 1982). The purpose of this survey was to gather information on the extent, the status, and the quality of sign language instruction in the United States. The survey emphasized sign language programs in IHEs, although the sample was not limited to these programs. The results provided information about teachers, program extent (quantity), program status, and program quality. The authors identified the types of institutions offering sign language programs (41% of all sign language programs responding were within IHEs) and the age of these programs (66.5% had been established within the preceding five years). More than four-fifths (82%) of the post-secondary programs surveyed responded that sign language courses were a "regular part" of the college curriculum, with 62% of the institutions surveyed requiring sign language for some students, and 38% of the institutions offering sign language as an elective only. Battison and Carter found that over 60% of the classes surveyed offered letter grades or pass-fail grades, whereas a much smaller percentage of classes had no grade. Because this study was not limited to IHEs only, it was impossible to know how many of the post-secondary courses were offered for a grade. This study also showed that less than half of the classes responding used teaching assistants and/or labs. The study also addressed the question of videotape usage for teaching sign

language. The results indicated that approximately half of the programs made their own tapes, half of the programs did not use videotapes, and almost one-quarter indicated buying commercial tapes. It should be noted that videotape technology was not in widespread use at this time (1980-81), and commercially-made tapes were not widely available.

Shroyer and Holmes (1980) conducted a study in two major universities in the North Carolina system of higher education to determine why sign language courses appeared to be of increasing interest to students. The most common reason was “professional interest” (52%), i.e., students who expected to use sign language at some time in their careers in encounters with deaf people. Other common reasons were “interest in sign language” (22%), “social contact with deaf people” (16%), “interesting sounding course” or “needed credit” (6%), “deaf family members” (3%), and “personal hearing loss” (1%).

Battison and Carter (1982) described the changes in universities’ perspective on sign language, as follows:

Formerly, a hearing person who got a job in professional services relating to deaf people (education, counseling, etc.) would take the job, find out that s/he could not possibly function in a job without learning how to communicate with the deaf people there, and then would somehow learn some Sign communication. This process might take anywhere from months to years, depending on the person’s proclivity and opportunities to learn. One change that the universities have produced is that many students now have the opportunity to learn sign language and learn about how deaf people communicate before they become involved as service professionals who work with deaf people. In fact, because many college students are learning Sign Language as a language, some may know it better and have a more positive attitude towards it than many professionals who have been working for years with deaf people. (p. viii)

Shroyer and Holmes (1980) suggested that the growing interest in sign language classes can be traced to a growing awareness of deaf people, their language, and their culture, and the communication issues presented. Like Battison and Carter, they suggested that their study illustrated the need for sign language classes at the post-secondary level in order for students in the human service professions to serve deaf clients.

Also similar to Shroyer and Holmes (1980) who found that 46% of institutions surveyed offered sign language, Delgado (1984) found that 47% of 790 community colleges and junior colleges offered sign language classes. This national study (Delgado, 1984) presented information about the availability of sign language classes, enrollment, the status of credit/non-credit courses, acceptance of sign language in fulfillment of foreign language requirements, the availability of interpreter training programs, and the ratio of deaf and hearing sign language teachers. Delgado found that between 30,000 and 32,000 students were registered for sign language classes in community colleges and junior colleges consistently during each of the 1981-82 and 1982-83 school years. Other enrollment data showed that 34% of the programs had increased in size, 40% had stayed the same, 20% had decreased in size, and 6% were new programs. More than half (54%) of the classes granted academic credit (average two or three credits) and some others gave continuing education units. Sign language was accepted as a foreign language requirement at 20 institutions (5%). Some type of interpreter training was offered at 54 institutions (6%).

Delgado concluded that interest in sign language increased or remained stable in 75% of the responding institutions and noted that many students enrolled in sign language classes at four-year institutions, in adult and community education programs, and through other private and public organizations and agencies in addition to the community colleges surveyed. This study supported the belief that there was a continuing high level of interest among the hearing population to learn sign language. This study also indicated an interest among academic administrators to recognize sign language as a credit-worthy course (54%) and in fulfillment of foreign language requirements (5%).

With the blossoming of new research in sign language linguistics and sign language instruction, and a journal produced specifically for sign language instructors and interpreters in the early 1980s, opportunities also appeared for publishing program descriptions and polemic papers on the topic of teaching sign language. Rust (1981) published a description of the Sign Language Studies Department at Madonna College, providing information about the majors and

areas of concentration available within the Sign Language Studies Department. He presented the number of students in the major, information on the degree status and employment status of the faculty, additional duties of the faculty, and requirements for employment in the department. He described the resources available, such as the TV lab; opportunities for earning credit for experiential learning, and the department's philosophy. Teaching methodology was briefly described and catalog descriptions were provided for each course offered.

In 1982, Newell published a description of the Communication Training Department at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Information was included about the staffing, philosophy, curriculum, and methodology for sign language instruction.

Program organization. The only study to identify trends in sign language program administration in IHEs was conducted by Cogen and Moseley (1984). In this study, 175 sign language programs across the country were surveyed. Responses were received from 61 institutions, yielding a sample of 35%. Cogen and Moseley believed that this survey, although informally structured, offered reliable impressions of how sign language programs were administered and the problems they encountered, as well as some clues to future trends in sign language program development. They looked at course offerings, degree and certificate offerings, program instructors, enrollment trends, course costs, program history, program typology, and planned improvement.

In examining degree and certificate offerings and program typology, Cogen and Moseley found that virtually all existing programs were intrinsically linked to other programs. The most common types of programs were interpreting, deaf education, rehabilitation, counseling, speech pathology/audiology, and paraprofessions such as health care aides and teacher's aides working with deaf adults or children. Cogen and Moseley suggested that, because most of these sign language programs were established in response to the need of the professional programs to serve the signing deaf population, their mission, and thus their content and structure, have been dictated by their parent program's goals and politics.

Cogen and Moseley identified several distinct paths of sign language study. They categorized the programs into eight types of programs. Type A consisted of individual courses offering basic sign language instruction without connection to any particular program of study. Type B was identified as a Basic Interpreter Training Program, with approximately 10 courses, including sign language, interpreting, and a deaf culture or psychology course. Type C was an expanded, more detailed interpreter training program, with approximately 15 to 20 courses, including sign language, interpreting, finger spelling, courses on interpreting in special settings, ethics, deaf culture, interpreting labs, and field practica. Type D consisted of a Type B or C program with additional courses in speech and hearing science, ASL linguistics, communication theory, and English competence. Type E included paraprofessional programs designed to train people in human and social service professions. Type F included course work associated with professional programs in communication disorders (speech/language pathology and audiology), imparting rudimentary skills to prepare students to work with deaf clients. Type G consisted of course work associated with deaf education programs designed to prepare teachers to communicate with deaf children in an educational setting, and Type H was course work associated with rehabilitation counseling programs. Cogen and Moseley determined that Types F, G, and H seemed to be the most long-standing and well-established programs, and also those that offered the more advanced degrees. Types B, C, D, and E were most often certificate or associate degree programs.

Cogen and Moseley (1984) found that programs offered a variety of degrees and certificates. Of the 54 programs responding, 33 indicated offering at least one degree or certificate. Certificates were awarded by 11 of the programs, of which 7 certificates were in interpreting. Associate degrees were offered by 15 programs, of which 9 were in interpreting and 2 were in sign language studies. Bachelor's degrees were available through 14 of the programs (4 in interpreting, 6 in deaf education, 3 in speech and hearing, and 1 in sign language studies). Master's degrees were offered in 23 programs, the majority of which (12) were in Deaf Education.

Cogen and Moseley also found a new type of program beginning to emerge, which had as its sole, or at least primary, mission the teaching of American Sign Language as a language. This type of program examined ASL from a social-cultural perspective, without the presumed intent of using the knowledge acquired to help deaf people.

Scope of courses. Cogen and Moseley (1984) found a variety of courses that appeared to fall into three categories, which they labeled roughly as “sign language,” “what it means to be deaf,” and “theory and practice of sign language interpreting.” Within each category, they found a variety of course titles to describe classes. Language courses included titles such as “ASL I” (and II and III), Elementary and Intermediate ASL, ASL Lab, Communication Theory, Signed English I and II, Beginning Sign Language for Health Care Professionals, and others. “Deaf” courses included titles such as “Orientation to Deafness,” “Psychosocial Aspects of Deafness,” “Deaf History,” “Deaf Culture,” and “Current Issues in Deafness.” Interpreting courses included titles such as “Introduction to Interpreting,” “Expressive Interpreting,” “Reverse Interpreting,” “Interpreter Training Lab,” and a series of courses in interpreting in specific settings such as education, theater, mental health, rehabilitation, law enforcement, and so on. On the basis of several telephone interviews, Cogen and Moseley noticed great discrepancy in the use of the term ASL, and they came to view “ASL” in course titles with some skepticism.

Post-secondary sign language curricula. Shroyer and Holmes (1980) found, as one might expect, that a very large number of beginning courses were offered among the post-secondary institutions surveyed, with fewer classes at the intermediate level, and even fewer at the advanced levels. More than half of the courses surveyed by Shroyer and Holmes were not offered for credit, although some offered continuing education credits. In their questionnaire, Shroyer and Holmes asked about the instruction of “manual communication.” They provided no definition of this term; thus, the results did not indicate whether the communication being taught reflected the grammar of English or ASL. Their study did not gather any data on curricula or textbooks used.

Delgado (1984) gathered data about sign language instruction in junior and community colleges; however, he did not collect specific data on curricula used. Like Shroyer and Holmes, Delgado did not offer a definition of sign language to his survey sample, nor did he ask about specific course titles, textbooks, or curricula used. The responses indicated that sign language classes provided a forum for developing public awareness about deaf people and their language and culture.

Akamatsu and Stewart (1987) surveyed teacher training programs for teachers of deaf children to ascertain the extent to which ASL and Manually Coded English (MCE) were taught in such programs. Their results indicated that 93% of the responding programs required some level of signing skill; 82% offered one to three courses, and a few offered as many as nine courses. They found that 55% of the programs offered or required both ASL and MCE, 10% offered ASL exclusively, and 25% offered one or more MCE systems exclusively. The remaining 10% did not specify which language or sign system was taught. In this study, responding faculty ranked ASL as “the most important language/sign system for preservice teachers to learn, followed very closely by Signed English and SEE II. This [was] consistent with the reported practice of 65% of the programs teaching ASL, either exclusively or in addition to MCE” (p.9).

Akamatsu and Stewart (1987) also noted a conflict between philosophy and methodology of sign language instruction. Of particular interest was the fact that ASL was rated “the most important language/sign system for preservice teachers to learn,” yet non-ASL textbooks were being used to teach ASL. Akamatsu and Stewart recommended that university faculty obtain training in the instruction of sign language, both in ASL and MCE, even suggesting the need for prerequisite credentialing for university faculty.

Class size. None of the surveys reviewed involved collection of data on sign language class size. A position paper published by the Conference of Interpreter Trainers in the mid-1980s and re-issued in the 1994 CIT Conference Proceedings strongly recommended a class size of 8 to 12 students per section. This was based on several facts. First, ASL is a visual language,

and all students must be able to see the instructor and other class members as the language is modeled and introduced to the class. This precludes the traditional classroom arrangement where students sit in rows behind one another and enables students to see each other better by being seated in a semicircle arrangement. The visual nature of this language also necessitates more time for turn-taking in the classroom, as all must turn to make eye contact with the next speaker in order to “hear” (see) what is being said. Second, because ASL is not a written language, drills and compositions are difficult, so in-class recitations are necessary, and consume great periods of time. Third, the use of videotaped feedback, which allows students to see their performance and facilitate self-correction of production errors, is strongly recommended. This is extremely time-consuming, considering that each ten-minute tape should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to critique, plus the time needed for instructors to sit with each student individually to watch the tape and point out correct and incorrect items.

Personnel

Studies by Shroyer and Holmes (1980), Battison and Carter (1982), Delgado (1984), and Cogen and Moseley (1984) addressed some of the variable characteristics and qualifications of sign language instruction personnel. Other sources (Carter & Whitcher, 1984; Kanda & Fleischer, 1988; Leviton, 1982; McIntire, 1981) have provided recommendations and suggestions for characteristics and skills desirable in sign language instructors.

Characteristics of sign language instructors. Shroyer and Holmes (1980) found that more than half of the sign language instructors were part-time faculty, with one quarter described as full-time (possibly teaching other subjects in addition to manual communication or sign language), and one quarter described as visiting instructors or instructors hired to teach a specific course. No information was available about the hearing status, educational level, specialized training, or previous work experience of the instructors.

Battison and Carter (1982) found that the mean age of the sign language instructors was 34.2 years of age, with 70% of the sample identifying themselves as 35 years old or younger. The instructors were 71% female and 29% male, and 84% had four or more years of college

education. Major fields of study were not identified. Although 75% of the instructors had taken at least one sign language class, 25% of the instructors had never taken a sign language class themselves. Two-thirds (64%) of the respondents stated that they participated in programs to upgrade their skills, and 81% said that they would want to participate in such programs.

Battison and Carter (1982) found that 76% of the instructors were hearing, and 24% were either deaf or hard of hearing. Supporting the findings of Battison and Carter, Delgado (1984) found higher percentages of hearing instructional staff (78%) in community colleges, with only 22% identified as hearing impaired. Cogen and Moseley (1984) also found that 70% of the sign language instructors were hearing, and 30% were hard of hearing or deaf.

Cogen and Moseley (1984) gathered additional information on demographics of sign language instructors. They found that 47% (25 responding institutions out of 53) had only one or two instructors; 32% reported seven or more instructors, indicating that many of these faculty members were part-time. Overall, 35% of the instructors were identified as full-time, and 65% were identified as part-time. Approximately one-third (33%) held faculty appointments and only 12% were tenured. Cogen and Moseley suggest that most of the faculty appointments and tenured positions were in the more traditional fields of deaf education, audiology, and rehabilitation counseling rather than in teaching ASL per se.

More recently, Newell (1995a) conducted a study of sign language instructors through the American Sign Language Teachers Association and learned that the profile of sign language instructors has changed significantly since 1980. Like Battison and Carter, Newell found that 74% of the responding instructors were female, and 26% were male. The majority of the respondents (87.7%) were in the 25 to 54 age range, with 75.9% ($n=269$) 35 years or older. This was a significant change from Battison and Carter's 1980 findings. The mean age of instructors of ASL appears to have increased. Newell's interpretation of this change was that many of the respondents to the 1980 survey have remained in the profession and aged, or matured, with the profession.

Newell collected data on the hearing status of respondents. A majority of the respondents (51%) indicated that they were “deaf,” 45.1% indicated that they were “hearing,” and 3.9 % responded “other,” listing responses such as “hearing impaired,” “hard of hearing,” and “CODA” (Child of Deaf Adult). This was also a significant change from Battison and Carter’s 1980 findings, where a large majority (76%) were hearing people.

Newell (1995a) also identified that a majority of the respondents to his survey ($n=128$, 63.9%) taught full-time or part-time at the post-secondary level. More than one-third (37.1%) taught exclusively in the post-secondary setting, and 20.9% reported that they taught both in post-secondary and adult/community education settings. Additional respondents taught in elementary or secondary settings.

Qualifications of sign language instructors. In the early studies (Delgado, 1982; Shroyer & Holmes, 1980), no information was gathered regarding the employment status, educational level, specialized training or previous work experience of the instructors. Cogen and Moseley (1984) attempted to determine what standards were used in selecting and hiring instructors. The results indicated that criteria included holding earned degrees, having prior teaching experience, being known to the deaf community, holding certification from the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), and having prior work experience in sign language or interpreting, but no formal or standardized qualifications existed. Cogen and Moseley suggested that many sign language programs had not yet clearly defined the qualifications they were seeking in new instructors and were using a more “intuitive” approach to hiring. The authors recognized, however, that it would be difficult to demand strict prerequisites of instructors in programs as new and as lacking in advanced degree options as sign language.

Newell (1995a) collected data on the educational background and training of sign language instructors. His results indicated that teachers of ASL were well-educated and experienced. The large majority of respondents (79.2%) had earned a Bachelor’s degree or higher, including 22.5% with a Bachelors degree, 50.9% holding a Masters degree, and 5.8% having an earned Doctorate. The remaining teachers held Associate degrees, had some college

education, or were high school graduates. No majors or areas of specialization were mentioned. Baker-Shenk (1987, cited in Kanda & Fleischer, 1988) reported that approximately 3200 people taught sign language at 800 institutions; however, none of these teachers held a graduate degree in ASL teaching. The only graduate program for teachers of ASL was located at Western Maryland College from the late 1980s to the early 1990s.

Battison and Carter (1982) found that teachers of sign language in 1980 had an average of 4.5 years experience, with 90% having less than nine years experience and 60% having less than three years experience. Newell's (1995a) study in 1993 found that teachers had an average of six to nine years experience, with 41.3% having more than ten years experience, and only 1.7% reported less than three years experience.

Battison and Carter's study (1982) identified that "42.5% of sign language teachers are certified as sign language teachers or interpreters, but most of these hold interpreting certificates" (p. xi). They did not break down the percentages. In Newell's study, only 8.9% of the respondents reported that their primary profession was sign language interpreting, and nearly 38% reported that ASL teaching was their primary profession. Newell's (1995a) study included members and non-members of ASLTA, the professional organization of sign language instructors; only 13.4% reported that they held certification by ASLTA and an additional 14.9% reported that they were certified by SIGN (ASLTA before its name change).

Newell's (1995a) study also identified that 72% of the respondents regularly attended professional development workshops. Newell suggested that (a) the availability of professional development opportunities had expanded since Battison and Carter found that 80.7% of the respondents wanted additional programs to help them improve their skills, and (b) the teachers of ASL who had expressed a desire to upgrade their skills in 1980 may have availed themselves of these opportunities.

Suggested qualifications for sign language instructors. Newell (1995a) suggested that foreign/modern language teachers must possess knowledge and skill in the language and culture they are teaching, and they must possess this in a unique way. Unlike teachers of other subjects,

who teach using a language common to all students, the foreign/modern language teacher generally uses the target language as the language of instruction. Therefore, instructors must not only know their subject matter, and how to teach it, but they must have the unique ability to combine communicative competence in the target language with cognitive/academic knowledge of the target language and knowledge of students as learners to manipulate the language for classroom use (Newell, 1995a). These teachers must be able to use the target language to teach it. This unique situation also applied to the teaching of sign language.

In Newell's doctoral dissertation (1995a), responding sign language teachers rated knowledge and ability to explain the linguistic structures of ASL, proficiency in ASL, and knowledge of deaf culture as the most important overall areas. Methods and strategies of teaching ASL and issues of technical/professional knowledge regarding the field of ASL teaching were rated as second and third most important. Newell presented recommendations to the American Sign Language Teachers' Association for improving the quality and effectiveness of their evaluation system, suggesting that they (a) revise the current evaluation system, (b) develop state-of-the-art teacher assessment practices including portfolio documentation, and (c) explore how the portfolio documentation assessment process can be used as a primary approach to awarding certification.

The few studies on characteristics of sign language teachers have focused on identifying hearing status, employment status, and demographic information such as gender and age. Little or no attention has been given to the particular skills, academic background, work experience, and attitudes required. This is particularly unfortunate in light of existing polemic and other non-research articles elaborating on this topic.

Kanda and Fleischer (1988) made several suggestions regarding the specific qualifications and attitudes of sign language teachers. They asserted that sign language teachers must respect the language and its history. They believed that sign language instructors should feel comfortable interacting within the deaf community, demonstrating their fluency in ASL as well as their knowledge of and comfort with the culture. Sign language teachers must be good

teachers; they should have completed formal study of the language and of educational and pedagogical principles. Sign language teachers should be familiar with second language teaching theory and methodology, and they should be engaged in personal and professional growth and development.

Hoemann (1983) questioned whether instructors of ASL must be native speakers of the language. He acknowledged that, although teachers of ASL and other foreign languages should have native fluency, not all of them do, and it is unlikely that all of them ever will. Hoemann suggested the need for a measure of a minimal level of proficiency and made several suggestions for how teachers who are “not as fluent as they would like to be (or perhaps should be) but are in a situation that requires that they teach ASL” (p. 10). He suggested that such teachers should spend as much time as possible interacting with deaf people, provide ample opportunities for students to observe proficient signers on videotapes, invite deaf sign models into classrooms, and be honest with their students about their own limitations. Hoemann suggested that the teacher who is not a model of native fluency could still serve as a model of sustained enthusiasm for learning ASL.

The issue of sign language teachers’ subconscious oppression of their students was discussed by Bienvenu (1983). Bienvenu cited Kannapell (1980) who stated, “Maybe we [deaf people] are afraid to share our language with hearing people. Maybe our group identity will disappear once hearing people know ASL” (p. 7). Bienvenu warned teachers against trying to save ASL by not teaching it to hearing students, explaining that ASL must be understood if it is to be recognized and respected by hearing people. Bienvenu suggested that teachers analyze their feelings, skills, and attitudes, and suggested ways to improve skills and change attitudes in order to show respect for the language and culture of deaf people and upgrade the quality of sign language instruction.

Deaf Life, a deaf consumer publication, conducted an unscientific poll of its readers published in September 1989 soliciting opinions on “Who should teach ASL to hearing students - Deaf or hearing?” One hundred percent of the unidentified respondents said deaf teachers. No

respondents indicated that they were unsure. Respondents listed reasons that included deaf teachers being able to demonstrate facial expression and grammar that hearing people lack, having better body language and natural expression, and using ASL, their native language, all the time “so they know what they are talking about” (p. 31).

Continuing education and supervision. One problem encountered by administrators of sign language programs has been the lack of overlap between teachers skilled in ASL and teachers skilled in foreign language teaching methodology (Leviton, 1982). To address this problem, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. government funded a five-year grant to the National Consortium of Programs to Train Sign Language Instructors in 1978. The first actual training took place in 1980, with a curriculum including courses such as Introduction to Language; Introduction to American Deaf Culture; Sign Variation in American Sign Language; two courses in the structure of ASL focusing on phonology, morphology, and syntax; Second Language Teaching/Learning; Sign Language Evaluation; Student Teaching; and others. With the publication of this curriculum, the NAD’s Communication Skills Program hoped to assist educators employed at institutions of higher learning in their endeavors to establish graduate level American Sign Language teacher training programs (Carter & Whitcher, 1984).

Leviton (1982) reported on a seminar in teaching sign language offered to teachers in the greater Philadelphia area. The Community College of Philadelphia offered a series of workshops to provide teachers a chance to explore some of the proficiency areas needed for SIGN certification and to establish personal and professional communication with one another. Topics covered in this series included methods and materials; curriculum: designing topics, courses, and lessons in sign; topics in language for ASL teachers; evaluation; adults learning sign language; and deaf culture. Evaluations of this seminar indicated that the material presented was applicable to a wide range of teaching settings (from ASL to Signed English, from colleges and schools for deaf children to adult education programs and centers on deafness), and demonstrated the need for additional teacher training.

Newell (1995a) suggested the need for professional-level training for sign language instructors. This investigator is aware of only one graduate-level teacher training program specifically in the area of ASL teaching. This program was established in the late 1980s at Western Maryland College in Westminster, MD and offered a Master's degree in Teaching ASL. Due to funding and other problems, the program has closed. At the time of this writing, plans for the re-establishment of this program at another location have not been confirmed.

Although the need for continuing education and ongoing supervision of instructors is clear, no research on supervision of sign language instructors could be located for this review. The current study gathered data on the amount and types of supervision occurring in post-secondary sign language programs at present.

Viewing the supervision-evaluation cycle from a broader perspective, Kemp (1988) discussed self-assessment of sign language programs. He suggested that sign language programs should develop their own goals and objectives, and subsequently conduct their own evaluations to determine whether their goals and objectives should be changed, improved, or terminated. To avoid fear of reprisals from supervisors and subordinates, Kemp suggested using outsiders to conduct these evaluations. He outlined five areas to be assessed: personnel selection, curriculum, placement evaluation, media utilization, and supervision. Checklists were offered for administrators to use to begin this process.

This review of the literature on sign language teaching supported the need for program administrators to assess both the inherent quality of their programs and to see how they compared with other similar programs. Assessments such as Kemp suggested would help program administrators identify a program's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in comparison to other programs. In addition, ongoing teacher supervision and opportunities for continuing education will strengthen programs.

Academic Acceptance of Sign Language in Institutions of Higher Education

The number of institutions accepting sign language in fulfillment of various types of foreign language requirements has increased over the past sixteen years. In 1980, Shroyer and

Holmes identified five institutions (only two in their target population of North Carolina) accepting American Sign Language in fulfillment of requirements for proficiency in a foreign language. In 1983, *The Reflector* listed eight institutions that did not teach sign language but accepted it in fulfillment of foreign language requirements. The following year, the list had increased to 12 (*The Reflector*, 1984). Delgado (1984) identified 20 institutions that accepted sign language in fulfillment of their foreign language requirement. Another study (Corwin & Wilcox, 1985) attempted to ascertain from over one hundred post-secondary institutions their policies on the matter of accepting ASL as a foreign language. Although they found several institutions receptive to the idea that ASL could be used to meet the foreign language requirement on their campuses, they also discovered strong resistance to this suggestion by the respondents who were not identified in the article. Although several universities reported that they did recognize ASL as a language, most did not accept it as suitable for foreign language credit. By 1989, the list of universities that were accepting ASL for foreign language credit on an individual basis was growing, and several had explicit policies for accepting ASL (Wilcox, 1989b). By 1995, Wilcox listed over 40 post-secondary institutions known to accept ASL in fulfillment of language requirements.

The following post-secondary institutions were reported to accept ASL as a foreign language as of November 1996. This list was compiled from the research of Sherman Wilcox (1996), newspaper articles, responses to requests by this investigator on DEAF-L and SLLING-L on the Internet, and other sources.

Institutions of Higher Education
Accepting American Sign Language
In Fulfillment of Foreign Language Requirements
(November 1996)

Abilene Christian University
American University
Arizona State University
Baylor University
Bowling Green State University
Brigham Young University
Brown University
Brandeis University
California State University, Hayward
California State University, Northridge
California State University, San Marcos
Carleton College
Catholic University
Centralia College
College of Staten Island
Dallas Baptist University
E. Central Oklahoma State University
East Texas State University
George Washington University
Georgetown University
Hardin-Simmons University
Harvard University
Houston Baptist University
Howard Payne University
Indiana University
Lamar University
Lubbock Christian University
Madonna University
Mary Hardin Baylor University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
Northeastern University
Purdue University
Southwest Texas State University
State University of New York
Stephen F. Austin University
Sul Ross State University
Texas Tech University
Texas Wesleyan University
Texas Woman's University
Trinity University

University of Alaska (Fairbanks)
 University of Arkansas (Little Rock)
 University of California at Los Angeles
 University of California at Berkeley
 University of California at Davis
 University of California at San Diego
 University of Central Florida
 University of Chicago
 University of Colorado at Boulder
 University of Hawaii
 University of Iowa
 University of Kansas
 University of Massachusetts
 University of Minnesota
 University of Nebraska (Lincoln)
 University of Nevada (Reno)
 University of New Hampshire (Durham)
 University of New Hampshire (Manchester)
 University of New Mexico (Albuquerque)
 University of Pittsburgh
 University of Rochester
 University of Southern California
 University of South Florida
 University of Texas at Austin
 University of Utah
 University of Washington
 University of Wisconsin
 William Rainey Harper College
 Yale University
 Youngstown State University (Ohio)

Since the late 1980s, much has been written about the controversy of the academic acceptance of American Sign Language. Reluctance to give foreign language credit for ASL has often been based on misconceptions about the language (Wilcox, 1989b). Proponents of acceptance have had to justify that American Sign Language meets three criteria. First, it must be a true language. Second, it must be associated with a culture, and third, it must possess a body of literature.

Researchers have identified that the deaf community has both a language (Baker & Cokely, 1980; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Valli & Lucas, 1992) and a culture of its own

(Rutherford, 1988; Padden & Humphries, 1988). Linguistic research has demonstrated that ASL is a natural and complete language, comparable in complexity and expressiveness to spoken languages, with its own distinct grammatical structure (Wilcox & Wilbers, 1987).

Not only does the deaf community have a language, it also has a culture (Wilcox, 1989b; Wilcox & Wilbers, 1987). This culture encompasses the values specific to deaf people, their patterns of daily living, their politics, their world view, their folklore, deaf history, deaf arts, the social make-up of the deaf community, and deaf people's sense of identity, which sets them apart from the hearing majority. These are topics that are, or should be, taught in ASL classes.

The claims regarding language and culture have gathered enough momentum, based on evidence presented by linguists, anthropologists, and others, that many in these professions do not question them, although these positions have not been widely accepted throughout academia (Corwin & Wilcox, 1985). The third criteria for some academicians for not accepting ASL for foreign language credit was a perceived lack of literature on the language. Although it is true that writing systems exist for ASL, none have been widely used to record ASL literature (Wilcox, 1989b). There is, however, a rich oral folklore including ABC stories, deaf humor, conversation stories, and an extensive library of motion picture and videotaped literature recorded in permanent media (Corwin & Wilcox, 1985; Wilcox, 1989b) and suitable for classroom use.

The College Board Review (cited in Wilbers, 1987) identified that the greatest barrier to the academic acceptance of ASL has been the question of whether or not the study of ASL affords hearing students the experience of a culture unique and distinct from their own, which is normally one of the goals of foreign or second language study. Generally, academicians have shown themselves more willing to accept the argument that ASL represents a natural and complete language than to accept the existence of a definable deaf culture (Wilbers, 1987).

Although the University of New Mexico began accepting ASL in fulfillment of the undergraduate foreign language requirement in 1986 (Lamb & Wilcox, 1988), the University of Minnesota served as the first institution to address publicly three basic questions in its quest to

develop a policy on the academic acceptance of ASL for language credit or exemption (Wilbers, 1987). First, is ASL a language separate and distinct from English, with a grammar, syntax, and morphology of its own? Second, would the study of ASL provide students with the learning experience of entering a culture linguistically different from their own? Third, would this field of study involve opportunities for research and exploration comparable to those offered by the study of other oral and written languages?

The committee answered “yes” to all three questions and in 1986 established a policy recommending that the institution allow students to fulfill the second language requirement with proficiency in ASL. They believed that their decision would benefit their hearing students, who, through the study of ASL, might enter a culture linguistically different from their own, thus meeting the institution’s goal of expanding the students’ grasp of the varieties of human experience and address the issues of a culturally pluralistic society (Wilbers, 1987).

Wilcox (1989b) offered several considerations for institutions choosing to accept ASL as a foreign language. First, curriculum should develop expressive and receptive fluency and provide students with opportunities to interact with the deaf community. Administrators should note whether sign language classes are teaching ASL or a manual version of English; the latter would not meet the requirements for a foreign language course. Second, ASL teachers should have a formal background in second language pedagogy, experience in teaching ASL, and verifiable proficiency in ASL. Third, universities may need to make special provisions to provide foreign language credit in situations where existing ASL courses are not taught in foreign language departments. New ASL programs should be located in language departments. Finally, evaluation should be based on proficiency rather than amount of time spent in class.

Wilcox and Wilbers (1987) also suggested that higher education not continue to remain indifferent to the significant minority of Americans who are deaf, stating that it is time for institutions of higher education to accept ASL as a language worthy of scholarly study. He believed that this would help to overcome the ignorance of the language and culture of deaf people that exists in this country as well as enrich the education of college students.

In 1984, Cogen and Moseley pointed out that, based on the dearth of undergraduate and advanced degrees in ASL studies and the virtual absence of full-time tenured faculty whose primary concern is ASL instruction, it is clear that ASL had not yet been generally recognized as a subject meriting serious study and was not yet accepted fully by the academic community. No studies have been done since that time to see if the perception of sign language as an academic entity on campuses has changed.

Acceptance of sign language on campuses has continued to grow, as evidenced by Wilcox's growing list, yet there exists little research to describe and document an emerging field of study. No information exists on what criteria are being used for selection of sign language instructors around the country. No published research studies presently describe sign language curricula, how students are placed into classes, how instructors effectively use media, or how faculty are supervised. A great deal needs to be known about the practices in place before administrators can assess how their programs compare to others. This information is needed from sign language program administrators and from the instructors themselves.

Implications of the Literature on the Study of Sign Language Programs

Many of the findings in the review of the literature of foreign language program administration and the emerging disciplines of Black Studies and Women's Studies parallel those of the studies of sign language programs conducted in the 1980s. For example, Huber's (1989) findings of the varied structures of foreign language programs paralleled those of Cogen and Moseley (1984) who found that sign language programs fit into a variety of distinct organizational configurations.

Additionally, the issue of administrators not knowing the language (Huber, 1989) affects ASL/sign language programs, which may be housed within departments (such as education or communication disorders) where the administrator may not be knowledgeable on the subject of sign language. Huber (1989) also suggested that the lack of autonomy of a program within a program created a secondary type of status. This concern pertains directly to sign language

programs under an administrative unit focusing on another discipline and because few programs around the country grant degrees in ASL or any form of sign language. The same secondary status may exist, and the same lack of autonomy and focus may inhibit development of the curricular depth required for students to become competent in sign language. When sign language programs only offer a few levels of coursework, there is no opportunity for students to master the language.

Sign language programs face many of the same organizational dilemmas as foreign language programs. The type of organizational structure needed to teach sign language effectively depends on several factors including the levels of interest and enrollment of the students, number of courses offered, and other supporting programs (e.g., deaf education, interpreter training). Like the foreign language administrative dilemma, the solution is not simple.

To date, no studies have been conducted to collect this type of data for sign language programs. The studies of foreign language programs, however, can lay the groundwork for parallel studies in sign language instruction.

Deaf people, like women and African Americans, represent a minority. Academic representation of minority individuals and the programs studying them is a relatively recent development in this country. The process of acceptance and integration of these ideas is a lengthy one. However, the reality of Black Studies and Women's Studies on many campuses represents the desire to present a broader perspective of the American experience into the post-secondary liberal arts curriculum. The study of Deaf people and their language is now coming of age too.

The current study draws on the literature by addressing previously unstudied areas, including (a) characteristics of institutions offering sign language, (b) characteristics of personnel administering sign language classes, (c) characteristics of sign language teaching staff, (d) structure of sign language classes within particular institutions, (e) scope of the sign language curriculum and methods of assessing student progress, (f) recommendations of sign language

administrators. This research, therefore, is intended to fill in the gaps of missing information and build on the work of earlier researchers. Utilizing models of research in other emerging disciplines to create a template, this study has gathered new information in a time-tested manner.

This study looks at the history of sign language programs on campuses, acknowledging how they have grown and been incorporated into various departments in campuses around the country, and describes the structure, curriculum, and policies that are currently in practice. The results should help administrators make campus-wide policy decisions based on current practices in sign language teaching and program administration.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study follows up on the work of Battison and Carter (1982) and Cogen and Moseley (1984) by examining administrative patterns in sign language programs in institutions of higher education (IHE). This study also investigates some of the issues raised in the review of the literature related to parallel issues in foreign language programs and emerging disciplines with sign language programs. The research methodology for the study is described in this chapter. Information is presented about the research design, the sample, the survey instrument, issues of reliability and validity, and the research procedures, which include the data collection techniques and data analysis.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the current status of sign language programs in IHEs around the country from an administrative perspective. The design of this descriptive study was a national survey to analyze the status of sign language at IHEs. According to Borg and Gall (1989), survey research has a long historical tradition as a method of systematic data collection. Borg and Gall explain that descriptive studies are primarily concerned with finding out “what is.” Descriptive studies can gather data about form, structure, activity, change over time, and relation to other phenomena. Descriptive research in the field of

education can produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators.

The data collected from this survey describes the current status of sign language programs in IHEs. The information may be of significant interest to post-secondary educators and educational policy makers.

Restatement of Research Questions

This study involved the collection of descriptive data, guided by the following six major research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the institutions of higher education offering sign language, and what is the academic status of sign language at these institutions?
2. What are the characteristics, qualifications, duties, priorities, and concerns of administrative personnel in sign language programs in IHEs?
3. What are the characteristics and expectations of teaching staff in post-secondary sign language classes?
4. What is the administrative structure of sign language programs in institutions of higher education?
5. What is the scope of the sign language program in terms of breadth of coverage, standardization, and assessment of student progress?
6. What are the recommendations of current sign language program administrators regarding the location, status, size, staffing, and administrative needs of sign language classes at IHEs?

Sampling Frame

The participants for this study included post-secondary personnel who coordinate the teaching of sign language in two and four-year IHEs in the United States. The sampling frame was a listing of those institutions that were known to teach sign language or might have reason to teach sign language and was compiled from previous studies and publications regarding existing programs.

To develop the list of potential sign language programs, several directories were cross-referenced. The list was compiled in March, 1995, using the most recent data, directories, and lists available. The most recent known list of sign language programs in IHEs ($n=772$, Cokely, 1986) was entered into a data base. The April 1994 directory issue of the *American Annals of the Deaf* provided lists of undergraduate and graduate programs in deaf education ($n=60$) and deaf-blind education ($n=3$), Interpreter Preparation programs ($n=63$), and post-secondary programs known to offer extensive support services for deaf students ($n=9$). The 1994 directory of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers was used to identify other interpreter training programs ($n=96$) and the November 1994 listing of U.S. programs in communication sciences and disorders published by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association was used to identify programs training speech pathologists and audiologists ($n=137$; institutions identified with other deaf-related programs were not included). Additionally, a list of IHEs known to teach sign language through the Less Commonly Taught Languages Project at the University of Minnesota ($n=45$) was included. Additional institutions were found via inquiries initiated by this investigator through the Sign Language Linguistics List (SLLING-L) and DEAF-L on the Internet ($n=48$) during April and May 1995. Obvious duplications (e.g., Interpreter Preparation Programs listed in both the *Annals* and the *CIT Directory*) with the same names and addresses were eliminated, bringing the total number of institutions contacted from 1230 to 1174.

When the same institution appeared on multiple lists (e.g., deaf education program and interpreter training program at the same institution), all contact persons and addresses were entered into the data base to be contacted. Thus, multiple copies of the questionnaire were intentionally sent to some campuses. The rationale behind this was the hope that at least one copy of the questionnaire would actually reach the person responsible for coordinating sign language classes on that campus.

These diverse lists were compiled, totaling 1174 addresses and representing approximately 991 institutions potentially offering sign language in IHEs in the United States. Using this variety of sources, the resulting sample was expected to include programs with

various structures and teaching various sign language systems and thus present an accurate profile of the status of sign language in IHEs around the country, rather than a narrow profile of only one type of program or one perspective. Although this method of identifying potential institutions is not as comprehensive as requesting information from all IHEs, it is likely that this diverse sampling frame represents the population of sign language programs in IHEs.

The target population was administrators of sign language programs; however, those responses received from institutions offering only one course were included in the study.

Measures

The survey instrument used for this study was a questionnaire developed by this investigator (Appendix A). Items for the questionnaire were derived from the literature on administration of sign language programs, administration of foreign language programs, and administration of emerging fields, such as Black Studies and Women's Studies.

The development of the questionnaire involved a process of ongoing communication between this investigator and several research experts. The questionnaire was pilot-tested by administrators at four institutions including one interpreter preparation program, one deaf education program, one institution serving a large deaf undergraduate population, and one institution where American Sign Language is a major itself. All suggestions made by the research experts and pilot-testing administrators were considered, and changes were made before the mailing was sent to the full complement of programs.

The Questionnaire

The cover letter and questionnaire instructions included explanations that the questionnaire was to be completed by persons who identify themselves as responsible for sign language programs and classes. The items on the questionnaire solicited data on (a) the characteristics of institutions offering sign language classes, (b) characteristics of personnel identified as sign language program coordinators, including the biggest issue facing them regarding administering a sign language program, (c) characteristics of teaching staff, (d)

sign language program structure, (e) sign language program content, and (f) recommendations from administrators.

Reliability and Validity

Face validity refers to the evaluator's appraisal of what the questionnaire measures (Borg & Gall, 1989). This study attempted to gather data regarding the structure and administration of sign language programs in institutions of higher education, and the questions on the questionnaire deal with relevant content in this area. Thus, the questionnaire can subjectively be said to have face validity.

Content validity is determined by systematically conducting a set of operations to define the content to be sampled (Borg & Gall, 1989). Content validity for this questionnaire was established in the following ways:

1. Items for the questionnaire were derived from the literature on sign language program administration, foreign language program administration, and emerging discipline program administration.
2. Copies of questionnaires from the Modern Language Association and other surveys were obtained, and, whenever appropriate, items were worded exactly as presented in the questionnaires from which they were borrowed.
3. The questionnaire was reviewed by the administrators of the pilot site sign language programs to determine if the issues addressed by the questionnaire reflect those issues currently being addressed by professionals in the field and if the questions were worded clearly to elicit accurate responses.

Reliability, in the case of a descriptive study, is demonstrated through internal consistency. In this study, the open-ended questions asked of the sign language program coordinators were compared with the priorities and concerns identified in the multiple choice sections of the questionnaire to determine reliability. This procedure was done first with the piloted questionnaires, and necessary revisions were made before the questionnaires were sent to the selected institutions.

Procedures

Overview and Philosophy

The “Total Design Method” (TDM) developed by Dillman (1978) for conducting mail or telephone surveys was used for this study. This method involved the identification of all aspects of the survey process that might affect response quality or quantity and the shaping of them in a way that encouraged good response. This method is based on research about why people do and do not respond to surveys and is known to be particularly useful with lengthy and complex questionnaires in social science research.

In the first part of a TDM study, each aspect of the survey process that may affect either the quality or quantity of responses is identified. This step is guided by a theoretical view about why people respond to surveys. The second step is to design the survey efforts so that the design intentions are carried out in complete detail. This step is guided by an administrative plan, the purpose of which is to ensure implementation of the survey in accordance with design intentions. Dillman (1978) suggests that there are three things that must be done to maximize survey response: minimize the costs for responding, maximize the rewards for doing so, and establish trust that those rewards will be delivered.

Providing Rewards

Dillman suggests that “expressing positive regard for another person” (p. 13) can have reward value for many individuals. This can be implemented in many ways. Explaining to people that they are part of a carefully selected sample and that their response is needed if the study is to be successful represents a way of expressing positive regard. Many people perceive being “consulted” as a reward. Telling people that their opinions are important suggests a consulting type of approach. Personalized signatures and abundant appreciation expressed in the cover letter can also communicate positive regard. Finally, Dillman suggests that some people enjoy filling out questionnaires, and the process itself may provide the motivation to complete and return the questionnaire. Thus, every attempt was made to make the questionnaire as attractive, rewarding, and interesting as possible.

Reducing Costs

Dillman suggests that time may be the major cost experienced by respondents. Therefore, a clear and concise questionnaire that does not look formidable may do a great deal to decrease respondents' expectations that a questionnaire will be too time consuming for them to consider completing. The questionnaire disseminated to potential respondents was designed in an aesthetically-pleasing manner and included primarily forced-choice responses. Also, although the cost of providing a return envelope and postage is small, it may be resented by the respondents. To avoid this problem, prepaid return envelopes were enclosed with the questionnaire.

Establishing Trust

Unknown researchers presenting themselves only by name to potential respondents seem less likely to generate trust than those who can be identified with a known, established organization, especially if that organization symbolizes legitimacy (Dillman, 1978). As the only liberal arts university for deaf people in the world and as one of the premier institutions conducting research on deaf-related issues and sign language, affiliation with Gallaudet University may lend credibility to an unknown researcher. Therefore, establishing that this research is being conducted with the support of the faculty at Gallaudet University may lend credibility and trust to the relationship established in this questionnaire interaction. Thus, this researcher's Gallaudet affiliation was identified on the cover letter.

To inspire additional trust, this researcher chose to identify herself as a sign language program coordinator in the cover letter and used return envelopes addressed to her institution. This was another attempt to establish trust and credibility within the professional community of potential respondents.

Second, Dillman suggests that respondents may return questionnaires because they have received past benefits from a particular institution. Many of the targeted subjects of this study may have connections to programs at Gallaudet University and may be inspired to respond on the basis of past benefits to themselves, their friends, or their family members.

Data Collection

Data collection involved the following steps:

1. In April, 1995, questionnaires were mailed to all institutions on the mailing list.
2. Eight weeks later (June 1995), a follow-up postcard was sent to each institution from which there was no response to the questionnaire.
3. Three months later (September 1995), a second postcard was sent to each institution from which there was no response to the questionnaire.
4. Requests were made through sign language-related discussion lists on the Internet (Deaf-L, SLLING) for sign language program coordinators to contact the researcher via telephone or e-mail to request copies of the questionnaire to complete. Upon request, over 30 more copies of the questionnaire were mailed out during the summer and fall of 1995.
5. In October 1996, postcards were mailed to all respondents acknowledging their responses and requesting information if any major changes had occurred in their program subsequent to the time that the survey was completed in order to ensure that data were up-to-date.
6. Also in October 1996, postcards were sent to a representative sample of non-respondents to determine the reason for non-response. Postcards were sent to a total of 160 institutions, including 60 institutions where a contact person had been identified, and 100 institutions where no name was known.

The initial data base included 1174 addresses, including multiple entries for institutions offering two or more deaf-related programs. As each response was logged into the data base, other entries for that institution were deleted, so that each institution was only represented once. Deleting multiple entries for the same institution brought the number of institutions contacted to 991.

Returned questionnaires and postcards were received from the post office for 29 institutions. An additional seven questionnaires were rejected by the post office, and second addresses were tried with no response; these institutions never received the questionnaire.

Eliminating duplicate mailings and questionnaires never received by institutions brought the number of institutions contacted to 955.

A total of 371 responses were received; however, some responses were not usable. One institution contacted was a rehabilitation facility, not an IHE. Duplicate responses were received from eight institutions. In four cases, the same person completed the questionnaire several months apart. In these cases, only the first response was included. In four other cases, two different people at the same institution completed the questionnaire, indicating that they each considered themselves the coordinator of sign language classes. In each case, one questionnaire was completed more thoroughly than the other. Therefore, the questionnaire that was most complete, with the fewest numbers of blank responses, was used.

Of the 955 institutions contacted, responses from 362 different institutions were counted, yielding a response rate of 37.9%. To address the issue of potential of bias in the responses received, a postage-paid postcard was sent to a sampling of non-respondents comprised of 60 institutions where the name of the contact person was known and included on the address label, and 100 institutions where no contact person was known and both the original survey and the follow-up postcard had been addressed to "Person Responsible for Teaching Sign Language."

Recipients of this postcard were asked to select their reason for not responding. A list of reasons was provided, including (a) sign language was not taught on the campus, (b) the survey said "sign language program" and the institution only offers a class or two, (c) the survey arrived at a busy time and no one had time to complete it, (d) it was forwarded to another person to complete, or (e) other.

Two postcards (2.7%) were returned by the post office because their forwarding orders had expired, suggesting that those institutions may not have received the original questionnaires. Almost half (45.2%, $n=33$) of the 73 responses to this postcard indicated that the reason for non-response was choice (b), "the survey said 'sign language program' and we only offer a class or two." Another 17.8% ($n=13$) stated that sign language classes are not offered on their campus, and 12.3% ($n=9$) responded that the survey arrived at a busy time, and they were not able to

complete it. A few respondents (12.3%, $n=9$) responded that they never received the original survey, three respondents (4.1%) reported that the survey had been completed, and 3 respondents (4.1%) said it had been forwarded to another office to be completed. One respondent (1.4%) could not remember.

This information provides support for the theory that many institutions did not respond because they do not offer sign language classes, or they offer only one or two classes and not a “program” per se. If it can be estimated that two-thirds of the institutions contacted did not respond because they do not offer sign language (17.8%) or have a sign language program (45.2%), then the 362 responses received represent a higher response rate than 37.9% indicates.

Data Analysis

The data from each completed questionnaire was entered into a data base. To analyze the data, quantitative methods involving descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Frequencies, means, and percentages were the primary descriptive statistics used to profile the continuous variables. Chi-square and t-test statistics were used to provide support for inferential statements, and all statistical analyses were held to a .01 level of significance. Categorical variables were analyzed in terms of grouped frequency distributions. For open-ended questions, both qualitative and quantitative responses were analyzed and coded into categories established by the investigator.

In looking at data describing sign language courses, statistical means rather than frequencies were utilized to control for the differences in prevalence between ASL and other types of sign language classes and to provide a profile of the status of sign language on typical campuses.

This study presents a profile of information of the IHEs offering sign language programs with respect to the degrees offered, how and where sign language instruction is coordinated within the institution, and the scope and structure of the sign language curriculum. In addition, detailed information about the personnel coordinating the programs and teaching sign language, as well as their recommendations regarding the administration of such programs, have been

presented. A qualitative summary of the most pressing issues facing sign language program administrators is included, leading to recommendations for maximizing use of resources and maximizing opportunities for student learning.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study based on an analysis of the responses received. The chapter contains six sections presenting the results of each of the six sections of the questionnaire corresponding to the six major research questions.

1. What are the characteristics of the institutions of higher education offering sign language, and what is the academic status of sign language at these institutions?
2. What are the characteristics, qualifications, duties, priorities, and concerns of administrative personnel in sign language programs in IHEs?
3. What are the characteristics and expectations of teaching staff in post- secondary sign language classes?
4. What is the administrative structure of sign language programs in institutions of higher education?
5. What is the scope of the sign language program in terms of breadth of coverage, standardization, and assessment of student progress?
6. What are the recommendations of current sign language program administrators regarding the location, status, size, staffing, and administrative needs of sign language classes at IHEs?

Research Question #1: Institutional Characteristics

A description of institutions that did not have current sign language classes is presented first. These programs, part of the total number of respondents ($N=362$), are then excluded from

the remainder of the chapter, which includes those responding institutions with sign language classes ($N=301$).

For those institutions teaching sign language, the following information is presented (a) degrees offered, (b) student enrollment, (c) status of sign language as a credit-bearing course, (d) sign language as a general education requirement, (e) foreign language requirements, (f) type of sign language taught, (g) levels taught, (h) multiple sections, (I) quantity of classes and number of levels, and (j) class size.

All Responding Institutions

A total of 362 institutions of higher education returned questionnaires. Of these, 42.8% ($n=155$) offered Associate's degrees only, 4.4% offered Bachelor's degrees only, 3.6% offered graduate degrees only, and 49.2% offered two or more levels of degrees.

Institutions without Sign Language Classes

Of these 362 responses, 61 indicated that sign language was not taught on their campus during the 1994-95 school year. More than half of these (68%, $n=41$) indicated that they had never offered such classes. Other ($n=17$) institutions indicated that they had previously offered sign language classes, but were not teaching them in 1994-95, one institution was planning to implement sign language instruction in the Fall 1995 semester, and two institutions indicated that they had temporarily suspended their sign language classes. Reasons for discontinuation of sign language instruction included lack of funding for adjunct positions ($n=4$), lack of qualified instructors ($n=4$), low enrollment ($n=2$), and elimination of offerings ($n=3$). Not all institutions provided reasons for the discontinuation of their programs.

Some of the institutions where sign language was not taught accepted sign language transfer credits as elective courses or in fulfillment of institutional requirements. Of the 61 institutions not teaching sign language, 32 indicated that they have a foreign language requirement for all or some majors. Five of these 32 institutions have policies allowing them to accept sign language in fulfillment of foreign language requirement for a Bachelor's level degree, and seven respondents indicated that their institutions are working toward this goal. Of

the remaining 29 institutions that do not teach sign language, 17 had no foreign language requirement, and 12 did not respond to the question.

Institutions Included in the Sample

For purposes of this study, only responses from the 301 institutions teaching sign language during the 1994-95 school year are included in the analysis in the remainder of this chapter. Two of these institutions indicated that their programs would not be continued in the 1995-96 school year, but were included in the study because sign language was taught in 1994-95.

Degrees Offered

The 301 institutions with sign language classes offered the distribution of degrees shown in Table 1, which is very similar to the distribution of those sampled in studies of institutions teaching foreign languages and in the population of all IHEs (see Table 2), although the distribution is slightly more evenly distributed in the present study.

Table 1
Highest Degree Offered by Responding Institutions with Sign Language Classes

<i>Highest degree offered</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Associate's degree	139	47.1%
Bachelor's degree	24	8.1%
Master's degree	59	20.0%
Doctorate	73	24.7%
(Missing data)	6	-----
Total institutions	301	100%

Table 2
Comparison of Institution Type by Research Sample

<i>Population</i>	<u>Institution Type/Degrees Offered</u>	
	<i>Associate degree only (Two-year institution)</i>	<i>All others (Four +)</i>
All IHEs	40.4%	59.6%
Institutions teaching Foreign Language	38.0%	62.0%
Institutions teaching Sign Language	47.1%	52.9%

Note. The data on all IHEs are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995. The data on institutions teaching foreign language are from Huber, 1993.

Student Enrollment

These institutions also varied in size. One quarter (27.9%) had a total student enrollment of under 5,000. Almost half (43.1%, $n=125$) had a total student enrollment of 5,000 to 15,000. Another fifth (21%) had an enrollment of 15,000 to 30,000, and the remaining 7.9% had an enrollment of over 30,000 students.

Status of Sign Language as a Credit-bearing Course

The status of sign language as a credit-bearing or a non-credit-bearing course varied from institution to institution. Most institutions, regardless of degrees offered, give credit for sign language classes. (See Table 3.)

Table 3

Credit Offered for Sign Language Courses by Institution Type

<i>Credit Offered</i>	<i>Assoc. Only</i>	<i>Bach. Only</i>	<i>Grad. Only</i>	<i>Two/more degrees</i>	<i>Total</i>
UG Credit	81	11	7	74	173
Grad Credit	--	--	--	6	6
UG. and Grad. Credit	--	--	2	27	29
UG Credit & Non-Credit	29	--	--	9	38
UG, G, and Non-Credit	--	--	--	6	6
Non-Credit only	29	1	1	18	49
Total	139	12	10	140	301

On more than three quarters of the campuses (83.7%, $n=252$), sign language was offered as a credit-bearing course. On 38 of these campuses, sign language was taught as both a credit-bearing undergraduate course and a non-credit course. One-sixth of the institutions (16.3%, $n=49$) offered sign language as a non-credit course only. Significantly more institutions granting bachelor's and/or graduate degrees offer credit (89.7%) than institutions granting only an associate's degree (79.1%), $X^2(1, n=295) = 5.603, p = .018$.

Sign Language as a General Education Requirement

Sign language was also used at many institutions to fulfill various requirements for graduation. Over half (59%, $n=167$) of the 283 respondents to this item reported that sign language satisfied some "general education" or non-major requirements for graduation during the 1994-95 school year, with an additional 42 institutions considering changes in this area. When institutions not offering credit-bearing sign language courses were excluded, the percentage of institutions accepting sign language for general education requirements increased to 85.2%. Changes in the credit-bearing status of sign language classes were being considered by a total of 18.1% of the respondents.

Although not all institutions explained the details of their planned changes, four respondents indicated that changes were under consideration at the department level, two respondents reported that changes were under consideration at the institutional level, three respondents indicated that changes were being considered at the state level. Twelve respondents indicated that changes had already been approved (nine specified that sign language would fulfill the Humanities requirement) and would become effective within the year, and five indicated that they would be expanding course offerings or changing from sign language to ASL in a longer-term effort to have sign language fulfill institutional requirements.

Foreign Language Requirements

More than half (57.1%, $n=172$) of the institutions reported having a foreign language requirement for some or all majors. Of those institutions reporting a language requirement, more than half (54%, $n=93$) accepted American Sign Language in fulfillment of the foreign language requirement for either some or all majors or degrees, 49 institutions (28.5%) indicated that they would not accept sign language in fulfillment of foreign language requirement. Additionally, 29 institutions (16.3%) indicated that although sign language would not fulfill the language requirement at this time, work was already in progress toward this goal, and 3 institutions (1.7%) did not respond to this question. Institutions do not uniformly accept ASL in fulfillment of the language requirement for all degrees or for all majors. Table 4 shows the acceptance of sign language in fulfillment of the foreign or modern language requirement for various degrees offered. Institutions are represented more than once in the first part of Table 4 if ASL is accepted as a foreign language for “some majors” at different degree levels.

Table 4
Institutions Accepting ASL as a Foreign or Modern Language

<i>Degree</i>	<i>All Majors</i>	<i>Some Majors</i>
Associate's degree	19	9
Bachelor's degree	28	28
Master's degree	3	14
Doctoral degree	2	11
All degrees offered	16	n/a

Institutions with Language Requirement:

Institutions accepting ASL as a Foreign/Modern Language	93
Working toward acceptance	29
Not accepted, no planned changes	49
Institutions without Foreign/Modern Language Requirement	121
No response	10
Total	301

Table 5

List of Institutions of Higher Education Accepting American Sign Language in Fulfillment of Foreign Language Requirements, February 1997 (Source: Cooper, 1997)

Abilene Christian University*
 American River College
 Bakersfield Junior College
 Baylor University*
 Bethel College
 Broward Community College
 Brigham Young University*
 California State University, Fresno
 California State University, Hayward*
 California State University, Northridge*
 California State University, San Bernardino
 Central Washington University
 Cleveland State University
 College of LS&A, University of Michigan
 College of Saint Catherine, Minneapolis
 College of the Sequoias
 Community College of Southern Nevada
 Cuyahoga Community College
 Deaf International Bible College
 Eastern Illinois University
 Eastern Washington University
 Fresno City College
 Gallaudet University
 Gardner Webb University
 Hillsborough Community College
 Iowa State University
 John A. Logan College
 Lee College
 Lehman College
 Loyola College, Maryland
 Maryville College
 Middlesex Community - Technical College
 New York University
 North Central Bible College
 Northeastern University*
 Northern Illinois University
 Northwestern Connecticut Community Technical College
 Oxnard College
 Ozark Christian College
 Riverside Community College

Salt Lake Community College
San Antonio College
San Diego State University
Santa Rosa Junior College
Sinclair Community College
Skyline College
South Puget Sound Community
Southwest Texas State University*
Spokane Falls Community College
St. Cloud State University
St. John's University
St. Petersburg Junior College
State University of New York*
Stephen T. Austin State University*
Tarrant County Junior College
Teachers College, Columbia University
The University of Tennessee
Tyler Junior College
University of Kansas Medical Center
University of Massachusetts Boston Harbor Campus
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
University of Alaska - Anchorage
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas at Little Rock*
University of California - Berkeley*
University of California - Davis*
University of California - Santa Barbara
University of Chicago*
University of Florida
University of Iowa*
University of Minnesota*
University of Minnesota - Duluth
University of Montana
University of Nebraska - Lincoln*
University of New Hampshire - Manchester*
University of New Mexico*
University of Pittsburgh*
University of Rochester*
University of South Florida*
University of Southern Maine
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Texas at Austin
University of Wisconsin - Madison*
University of Wisconsin - Stout
Utah Valley State College
Vincennes University

Vista Community College
 West Valley College
 West Virginia University
 William Rainey Harper College*
 Xavier University
 Youngstown State University*

(One other respondent indicated that ASL satisfied the foreign language requirements at its institution; however, the name of the institution was not provided.)

Note. * indicates previously identified in Chapter 2.

Many institutions were considering expanding acceptance of ASL as a foreign language. A total of 72 institutions (23.9%) indicated that changes were either planned or being considered regarding acceptance of ASL as a foreign language. Among them were the 29 institutions mentioned above that were working toward acceptance of ASL to satisfy their foreign language requirement; 15 indicated that they were still in the “inquiry” stages, 14 indicated that work was in progress at the institutional or state level. At nine institutions, laws to become effective within the year had already been passed, and sign language had already been accepted at the state level. Some ($n=8$) institutions were increasing their offerings to meet the foreign language requirements. Additionally, 21 institutions that accept ASL to satisfy limited requirements were considering expanding the degrees or majors for which ASL was acceptable. Some ($n=6$) were working on accepting transfer credits or high school credits to apply toward the institutional foreign language requirement. Others were still in the exploratory stages, had no foreign language requirement but were considering some change in this area, or did not identify what changes were planned.

Types of Sign Language Taught

Data were collected on types of sign language classes (ASL, signed English, or contact signing) taught at the responding institutions, as well as the availability of “special format” classes designed for special professions (e.g., “Sign Language for Audiologists”) or for a specific type of student (classes for deaf students or hearing children of deaf parents). Information on the

type of sign language taught was provided by 268 institutions; no data were received from 33 institutions.

Responses indicated that 87.3% ($n=234$) of the institutions offered 1,914 sections of ASL classes, 15.3% ($n=41$) offered 159 sections of “contact signing” or “pidgin” sign system, 17.2% ($n=46$) offered 88 sections of signed English, and 6.3% ($n=17$) offered a total of 103 “special format” classes. On average, there were more sections of ASL offered than contact signing or signed English, $F(2, 900) = 105.57, p < .0005$. Across all institutions, the means were as follows: 6.36 sections for ASL ($SD=9.49$), .59 for contact signing ($SD=2.84$), and .33 for signed English ($SD=1.12$).

Although the majority (79.5%, 213 institutions) taught only one form of sign language, 20.5% ($n=55$) institutions reported teaching more than one form or format. Specifically, classes in two different forms of sign language were taught at 41 institutions, 3 types of classes were taught at 13 institutions, and 1 institution offered all 4 types of classes.

The relationship between forms of sign language and highest degree granted was examined and is presented in Table 6. Institutions where more than one type of sign language was taught are represented multiple times in the data; thus, the row totals exceed 100%.

Table 6
Type of Sign Language Reported to be Taught by Institution Type

Type of sign language reported to be taught

<u>Degree Level</u>	<u>ASL</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Signed English</u>	<u>Total</u>
Associate’s degree	92.7%(114)	8.9%(11)	13.0%(16)	123
Four-year/Graduate degree	82.7%(115)	21.6%(30)	20.9%(29)	139
Total	89.3%(229)	15.6%(41)	17.5%(45)	262

Data were also analyzed to determine which types of sign language were taught within which academic programs. These data are found in the results of Research Question #4.

Quantity of Classes

To determine how many sign language classes were offered and how many students took them, two measures were collected: number of sections offered, by level, and average number of students per section. Respondents reported the number of sections of each course and the number of levels offered. The total number of sections for the entire sample is shown in Figure 1.

Total Number of Sections of Sign Language Classes Offered 1994-1995 (268 Institutions)

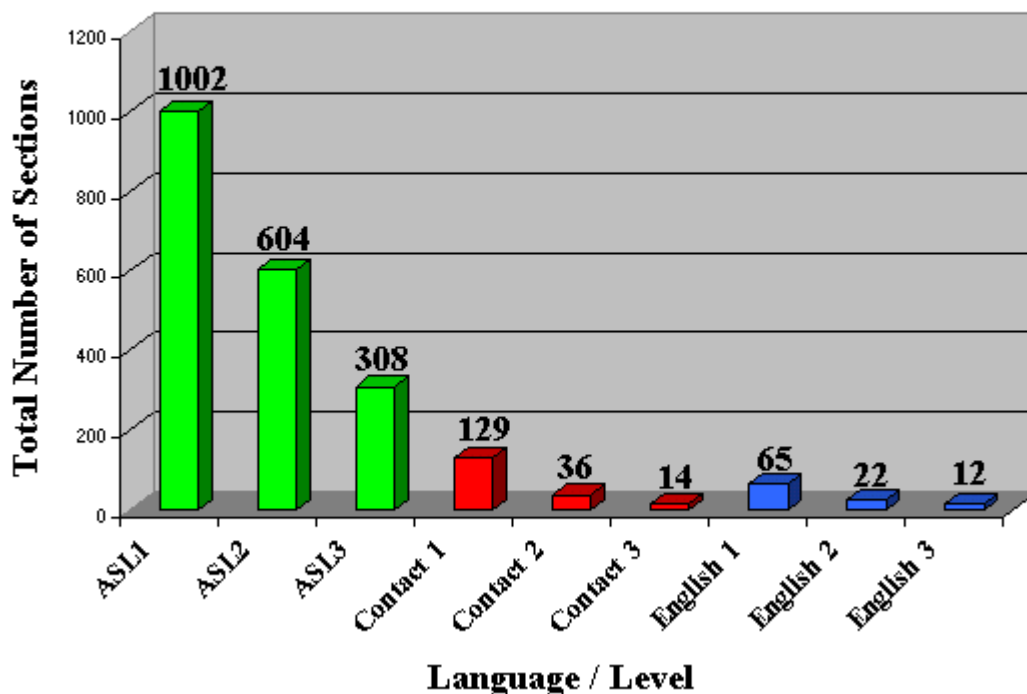


Figure 1. Total number of sections of sign language classes offered 1994-95. Types of sign language reported by institution, 268 institutions responding.

Levels Taught

Many institutions indicated that multiple levels of a type of signing were taught. A total of 118 institutions indicated teaching ASL 3; all but four of these institutions offered a full range of ASL 1, 2, and 3 classes. A total of five institutions indicated that a third level of contact signing was taught; however, three of these did not offer either a level one or two class in this mode of communication. Only two institutions offered a full range of signed English courses, and one of these also offered full ranges of both of the other types of sign languages.

Single Sections

Whereas the majority of the responding institutions offered multiple sections of multiple levels of sign language classes, 17 of the responses indicated that only a single section of a sign language class was taught. Of these, 14 were credit-bearing classes and 3 were non-credit. Additionally, 3 of these classes were offered by two-year institutions and 14 were offered by four-year institutions.

Multiple Sections

ASL classes. Most institutions indicated that multiple sections of first level classes were offered. Of the institutions offering classes reported to be ASL, only 21.8% offered one single section of their first level class and 66.8% offered between 2 and 9 sections of their first level class during the 1994-95 school year. Some (11.4%) of the institutions offered 10 or more, with a maximum of 24 sections. The mean number of all ASL 1 classes was 4.75 ($SD=4.95$), the median was 3, and the mode was 2.

Contact signing classes. Most institutions reporting that classes in “contact signing” were taught also indicated that multiple sections of first level classes were offered. Only one third (37.5%, $n=12$) of the 32 institutions offering these classes offered only one section of their first level class during the academic year. More than half (56.3%) of the institutions offered between 2 and 9 sections of their first level class, and 6.2% offered 10 or more sections during the 1994-

95 school year. The mean number of all first-level contact signing classes was 4.03 ($SD=5.75$), the median was 2.5, and the mode was 1.

Signed English classes. Of the 36 institutions reporting that signed English classes were taught (Signing Exact English, Seeing Essential English, Manually Coded English, or Signed English), 58.3% ($n=21$) offered only one section of their first level class. The remaining 41.7% offered between 2 and 5 sections of their first level class. The mean number of all first-level signed English classes was 1.79 ($SD=1.15$), the median was 1, and the mode was 1.

A total of 17 institutions indicated that “special format” classes were offered. Two did not offer any first level classes, and six (40%) offered only one section of their first level class. More than half (60%, $n=9$) of the institutions offered between 2 and 6 sections of this type of class during the 1994-95 school year.

The mean number of classes with multiple sections offered on each campus was calculated (see Table 7).

Table 7
Sign Language Classes Offered 1994-95 Multiple Sections and Means
(by institution; number of sections in all levels combined)

<i>Type of Class</i>	<i>% of Institutions Having Multiple Reported Level 1 Sections</i>		<i>Maximum # of Level 1 Sections</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>			
ASL	n= 215	78.2%	24	4.7	5.0
Contact Signing	n= 35	62.5%	32	4.0	5.8
Signed English	n= 42	41.7%	5	1.8	1.1
Special Format	n= 17	60%	6*	4.0	4.9

* Note: This number does not include two institutions who provided “special format classes” at the rate of 15 or 16 per year, but defined them as workshops or seminars available to their students taking credit classes in ASL, contact signing, or signed English.

Class Size and Meeting Frequency

Across all types of signing, there does not appear to be a significant difference in class size, as shown in Table 8. Special format classes were not considered here. There was not a significant difference in the number of students per section across formats, $F(2,298) = 1.221, p = .296$. The median number of students per class decreased as the level increased, except in the case of second- and third-level contact signing.

Table 8
Median Number of Students Per Class

<i>Class Type Reported</i>	<i>Valid Cases</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
ASL 1	228	24.5	250
ASL 2	204	20.0	100
ASL 3	127	15.0	70
Contact Signing 1	36	25.0	75
Contact Signing 2	20	13.0	40
Contact Signing 3	6	20.0	30
Signed English 1	37	20.0	100
Signed English 2	16	17.5	50
Signed English 3	6	15.0	20

First-level median class sizes were compared between two-year institutions and four-year/graduate institutions (Table 9). The median class size for four-year/graduate institutions teaching contact signing was larger than the median class size for contact signing at two-year institutions, $U(10, 26) = 58.5, p = .0057$ (one-tailed).

Table 9
Median Number of Students Per Class by Institution Type

	<i>ASL</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Signed English</i>
Associate's	22.0	14.5	17.0
4-year/grad	25.0	28.0	20.0

Overall	24.5	25.0	20.0
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There was a range of class meeting times from one to five times per week. Both the median and mode responses across all levels were twice per week for each level, with a mean of 2.16 for first-level classes ($SD=1.131$), 2.17 for second-level classes ($SD=1.12$), and 2.31 for third-level classes ($SD=1.12$). One meeting per week was the second most frequent response across all three levels of classes.

Several respondents indicated that their institutions were changing the format of sign language classes to meet more frequently in order to meet their institution's requirements for foreign language study. Therefore, the frequency of class meetings was analyzed with respect to the issue of foreign language requirement to determine if those classes with more frequent class meetings were more likely to accept ASL as a foreign language. For all first-level classes, a modest relationship was suggested between the frequency of class meetings and acceptance of ASL as a foreign language, $U(84, 65)=2197.5, p=.034$. For second-level classes, however, there was a significant relationship, $U(73, 52)=1352, p=.0041$. For third level classes, there was no relationship, $U(58, 22)=481.0, p=.0700$. When non-credit classes were excluded, the findings still showed no difference $U(82, 55)=1847.5, p=.0638$.

Research Question #2: Sign Language Administrator Characteristics

Respondents were asked to identify their employment status and describe their duties and qualifications in several ways. Results were analyzed for the total group, and, when appropriate, separated by differentiating between characteristics of administrators of credit and non-credit offerings. Overall, the results pointed out diversity in backgrounds, priorities, and signing skills among sign language administrators across the country.

Job Titles and Employment Status

An interesting variation among institutions offering sign language was the job titles and positions of the people who considered themselves responsible for administering the sign language classes. The job titles of these persons differed greatly across the 301 institutions (see Table 10). One respondent did not identify a job title. Responses indicated that most persons considering themselves responsible for sign language classes or program administration (60.6%) were in teaching positions close to or in the classroom, including academic program coordinators, faculty members, or instructors. Another 20% of the sign language program coordinators held staff positions, and 19.4% held administrative positions.

Respondents were asked to fill in their job titles rather than select from existing categories in order to avoid overlooking any unpredictable responses. The reliability of the categories was checked by comparing the position title with data obtained in other questions (faculty/non-faculty status, how professional time was spent).

Many respondents listed their job titles as “program coordinator.” A qualitative analysis of the data indicated that there were four different types of program coordinators. Academic program coordinators (26% of the respondents) included persons responsible for academic programs within academic departments who may or may not teach classes. Program coordinators of support services, student activities, and continuing education offerings were grouped together as professional staff (13.7%). These individuals did not hold faculty status. The category of “faculty” (20.3%) included faculty members of various disciplines, clinic directors and supervisors, and audiologists who considered themselves responsible for sign language offerings at their institution. The category of sign language instructor (14.3%) included respondents who identified themselves specifically as sign language instructors or lecturers, many of whom specified that their positions were adjunct or part-time. Paraprofessional staff (4.3%) included job titles such as tutors, administrative assistants, and secretaries.

Table 10

Job Classifications of Sign Language Administrators
(ranked by relative position in institution)

<i>Job classification</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Administration		(19.4%)
Dean, Provost, etc.	20	6.7%
Dept./Division Chair	38	12.7%
Teaching		(60.6%)
Academic Program Coordinator	78	26.0%
Faculty	61	20.3%
Sign Language Instructor	43	14.3%
Staff		(20.0%)
Professional Staff	41	13.7%
Paraprofessional Staff	13	4.3%
Other	6	2.0%

Most (83.2%) of the respondents were employed full-time by their institution in some capacity, although many indicated, through responses to other questions, that their responsibilities included more than coordinating sign language classes. The majority (85.5%) were permanent employees, with the remainder identifying themselves as temporary.

Data were analyzed to consider the 16.8% of those sign language administrators employed by their institutions on a part-time basis, and the 14.5% who were employed on a temporary basis in terms of credit-bearing classes in Table 11.

Table 11

Credit Status of Classes by Employment Status of Administrators

<i>Credit Status of Classes</i>			
<i>Employment Status</i>	<i>Credit-bearing classes</i>	<i>Non-credit classes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Part-time	89.1% (n=41)	10.9% (n=5)	46
Temporary	94.9% (n=37)	5.1% (n=2)	39

Respondents held a combination of faculty (79%) and non-faculty (21%) positions. Those with faculty status included individuals at the instructor level (40.4%), assistant professor level (16.4%), associate professor level (23%), and full professor level (20.2%). Almost half of the faculty members were tenured (43.2%), and almost half were not on a tenure track (48.1%), with a few on the track toward tenure (8.7%). Non-faculty positions included directors and supervisors (44.9%), deans and division chairs (22.5%), professional staff (14.3%), interpreters and interpreter coordinators (10.2%), and adjunct faculty (8.1%).

Over half of all the administrators (52.7%) had held their current position for more than six years, with 27.1% having between 3 and 6 years in the position, and 20.1% in their current position for less than 3 years.

Qualifications

Educational Background

Degrees. The administrators indicated a wide variety of educational levels and backgrounds. Half (50.6%) of the respondents held a Master's degree as their highest level of education, and one third (33.2%) held earned doctorates. The remaining administrators held either a Bachelor's degree (12.2%) or an Associate's degree (4.1%).

Majors. Administrators' undergraduate majors were distributed among health or science (18.7%), education (15.2%), counseling and psychology (11.7%), deafness-specific majors such as deaf education or interpreting (10.9%), liberal arts (9.3%), and other majors (34.2%). At the graduate level, the percentage of deafness-specific majors more than doubled (28.2%), compared to the distribution of other majors (education, 20.4%; health or science, 18.5%; counseling or psychology, 12.5%; liberal arts, 2.3%; and other, 18.1%). For those administrators holding doctoral degrees ($n=100$), the most strongly represented area was education (25%), followed by health or science (16%), deafness-specific majors (14%), counseling or psychology (12%), and liberal arts (4%). The remaining 29% held doctoral degrees in other areas.

Involvement with Deaf People

Professional. When asked about the length of time they had been professionally involved with deaf people, 250 respondents reported a range of responses from none (2.7%, $n=8$) to 42 years ($n=2$) and “all my life” ($n=2$). The mean response was 18.52 years, the median was 17 years, and the mode was 20 years, with a standard deviation of 15.8.

Personal. Data regarding administrators’ personal involvement with deaf people showed a different pattern than their professional involvement. There were 32 respondents who did not respond to this item. Of those who did respond, one third (33.3%) of the administrators indicated that they had no personal involvement with deaf people, and 5.1% of the administrators had less than 10 years of personal involvement with the deaf community. Almost half (44.8%) had 10 to 30 years of involvement, and 16.8% had over 30 years of contact with deaf people, including 25 individuals who wrote in the response “all my life.” The mean response of the 269 respondents was 20.75, the median response was 12, with a standard deviation of 29.56.

Signing Skills

There was great variability in the sign language skills of respondents. Their reported sign language skills tended toward one extreme or the other. Reporting the length of time they had been signing, almost three quarters (71.3%) indicated that they had been signing for more than 10 years or were native signers, and almost one quarter (21.8%) identified themselves as non-signers. The rest (7%) said that they had been using sign language for between two and eight years. Whereas more than half (61.1%) considered themselves advanced or fluent signers, the remaining quarter (21.9%) were “non-signers.” The remaining administrators identified themselves as beginners (2.6%), advanced beginners (4.1%), or intermediate level signers (10.4%).

Table 12 compares full-time and part-time program administrators with regard to sign language skill level, and shows that of the 227 administrators who are full-time, 43.1% ($n=98$) of those administrators were not advanced. Conversely, a greater percentage of the

part-time administrators reported that they were advanced or fluent in their sign language skills. This finding suggests that administrators with less sign language skill have a greater likelihood of holding full-time positions than people with more signing skill.

Table 12
Sign Language Skill Level of Administrators by Employment Status

<i>Employment Status</i>	<i>Reported Sign Language Skill</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Intermediate/below</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	
Full-time	43.1% (n=98)	56.8% (n=129)	100% (227)
Part-time	16.2% (n=7)	83.8% (n=36)	100% (43)
Total	38.89% (n=105)	61.1% (n=165)	100% (270)

$$X^2(1, n=270) = 9.899, p = .002$$

Further interpretation of the data suggests that those administrators knowledgeable about deafness, as demonstrated by their fluency in sign language and personal involvement with deaf people, hold positions of less status, as measured by their full-time equivalency and academic position status.

Job Duties and Administrative Support Available

Use of Sign Language

Respondents reported varying levels of use of sign language in their work. One quarter (n=67) stated that they rarely or never used signing in their jobs, 16% stated that they used sign language between once and several times a week, 42.3% indicated that they used signing on a daily basis, and 16.7% indicated that signing was their primary method of communication.

Job Duties

The job functions of sign language program administrators were about equally divided between academic and non-academic duties. Respondents ranked how they spent their professional time from a list of five choices. "Teaching" was selected as either the first or

second choice by 181 of the 262 respondents to this question. Data were not collected regarding the subject matter taught. “Administration” was the second most common response, ranked either first or second by 151 respondents. Half of the respondents (51.2%) identified “Advising Students” as the second or third biggest use of their time, and 49.5% indicated that “Providing Service to the Institution and the Community” ranked either third or fourth. “Research and Scholarship” was identified as the area where respondents spent the least amount of time, ranked last by 54.8% of the respondents. In addition, out of the 90 administrators that rank ordered less than the five items given, 84 (93.3%) chose not to assign a rating to this item.

The issue of how faculty of varying tenure status spend their time was investigated. More than half (59.1%) of the respondents in tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure track positions ranked “teaching” as the primary use of their time, and an additional 17.7% reported that teaching was the second-largest use of their time. Research and scholarship ranked last or next-to-last for 75% of the respondents. Of those who were tenure-track faculty members ($n=127$), none ranked research and scholarship first, one ranked it as second, and one ranked it as third.

Administrative Support

Respondents were asked what types of administrative support were provided to themselves and their sign language programs. Reduced teaching loads were available to 15.9% of the respondents, 7.6% were offered additional months on their contracts, and 14.3% were provided a salary stipend. Other forms of support were provided to some programs, with 24.3% of the programs having increased staff support or student assistants, and 35.9% having special facilities.

Administrative Concerns

Management Problems

The questionnaire presented several possible problems that may be faced by administrators, and respondents were asked to identify to what extent they experienced these issues as problems. More than half (57.5%) of the respondents stated that managing resources

and a budget was a moderate to large problem. More than half (62.4%) reported that obtaining and hiring staff was a moderate to large problem. Most respondents did not feel that evaluating instructors was a problem - 42.3% stated that it was not a problem at all, and 24.3% said it was only a slight problem. Handling complaints of staff members was perceived as a slight problem by an additional 31.6%, and not a problem by 54% of the respondents. Responses were varied regarding the issue of lack of opportunity to do research. Although 52.8% of the respondents reported it was either a moderate or large problem, 29.7% of the respondents reported this was not a problem at all. "Resolving students' concerns" was perceived by 81.4% of the respondents to be either not a problem, or a slight problem.

Budgetary Needs

Administrators were asked what they would be likely to do with an extra \$5,000 provided to their sign language program. Table 7 "Inclusive Wish List" shows the priorities of all respondents who indicated all applicable choices. Respondents were also asked to identify their one area of greatest need from the same list of choices, indicated in Table 13 as "Single Greatest Need." It should be noted that almost half ($n=124$, 41.2%) of the respondents did not indicate a "greatest need."

Table 13

Financial Needs and Desires of Sign Language Program Coordinators

	<i>Inclusive Wish List</i>	<i>Single Greatest Need</i>
Purchase books or videotapes for the library	61.1%	16.4%
Purchase new or additional technology	52.5%	15.8%
Provide in-service training for instructors	48.0%	14.7%
Add new courses	38.5%	18.6%
Pay guest speakers	36.9%	3.4%
Add more sections of existing courses	35.2%	14.7%
Hire or increase the hours of student workers	18.6%	2.3%
Other	17.6%	14.1%

“Other” choices written in by respondents included hiring additional instructors ($n=9$), hiring support staff (lab assistants, secretaries, tutors, $n=6$), raising salaries or providing bonuses ($n=4$), advertising ($n=4$), field trips and outreach ($n=3$), developing curriculum ($n=2$), providing distance learning ($n=2$), and providing faculty released time ($n=1$).

The data suggested a cluster of needs without any one emerging as a “greatest need” across all institutions. Although the most common item on the wish list was purchasing books and videotapes for the library, adding new courses was seen as the single greatest need by the most respondents. Whereas 38.5% would like more courses, 18.6% indicated more courses as their greatest need. Similarly, 61.1% indicated that they would like additional materials in the library, but only 16.4% saw that as their greatest need. The data suggested that administrators wanted more materials for their library, new technology, new courses, and in-service training.

Priority Issues

Respondents were asked to answer an open-ended question identifying the biggest issue facing them regarding the administration of a sign language program. The 234 responses received were grouped into eleven categories with the responses shown in Table 14.

Table 14
Biggest Issue Facing Sign Language Program Administrators

24.1%	Lack of administrative support and/or money for expanding programs and adding full-time positions
21.0%	Finding qualified instructors
11.6%	Insufficient demand for courses, filling (higher level) classes with minimums required by institution
8.5%	Institutional bureaucracy (who is permitted to take courses, course limited to majors, credit or non-credit issues)
7.1%	Lack of understanding of “deaf” issues and administrator’s lack of knowledge of the field or sign language
6.3%	Inadequate resources (space, equipment, support staff, time)
6.3%	Sign language as a foreign language
4.9%	Departmental and curricular issues (lack of standardization, need to keep up with research, isolation, need meeting times for people with busy schedules, whether to teach ASL or signed English)
4.5%	Need for instructor in-service training and credentialing

- 3.6% Need for a “program” for students (higher levels needed, certification or degree needed)
- 2.2% Lack of community involvement (need deaf people involved, need opportunities to practice, need tutors)

Research Question #3: Characteristics of Teaching Staff

This section of the questionnaire reports data concerning the employment status of sign language instructors, gender and hearing status, qualifications, expectations in terms of participation in department issues, and expectations in terms of ongoing professional development. A total of 221 full-time and 777 part-time instructors were identified. The mean number of part-time sign language instructors (2.95, $SD=3.34$) was greater than the mean number of full-time instructors (.84, $SD=1.23$); $t(262) = -10.138, p < .0005$; their demographics are considered separately. Information regarding teaching assistants, another form of instructional staff, is also presented.

Description of Teaching Staff

Characteristics of Full-time Teaching Staff

Approximately half ($n=137, 52\%$) of the 263 administrators responding to this question did not have any full-time positions dedicated to sign language instruction at their institution. The other half ($n=126, 48\%$) had full-time positions dedicated to teaching sign language, with slightly more than half of these ($n=70, 55.5\%$) employing only one full-time sign language instructor. The remaining institutions employed a range of up to nine full-time instructors, although 97% of the institutions had four or fewer full-time sign language instructors.

The responses indicated the employment of 221 full-time sign language instructors across 263 institutions. The mean number of full-time instructors was .84 per institution ($SD=1.23$) and the median and mode were both 0. Some respondents wrote notes on the questionnaire identifying that full-time faculty members were assigned to teach sign language as a percentage

of their full work load. Therefore, it is likely that the data collected underrepresents the number of individuals who have other responsibilities in addition to teaching sign language.

Gender. Not all institutions reported the genders of their full-time faculty. For the 126 institutions providing this information, one third of all full-time instructors were male ($n=79$, 33.3%), and two thirds were female ($n=155$, 66.6%). The mean per institution of full-time male instructors was .64; the mean of full-time female instructors was 1.23, indicating significantly more female than male full-time instructors, $t(123) = -5.017, p < .0005$.

Tenure status. For the 200 individual sign language instructors for whom tenure status was reported, 36.5% ($n=73$) were tenured, 25% ($n=50$) were on a tenure track, and 38.5% ($n=77$) were in non-tenure track positions.

Hearing status. Additionally, 126 institutions reported on the hearing status of their full-time sign language instructors. Of the 230 instructors represented, 38% (88 instructors) were deaf, 61% (140 instructors) were hearing, and 1% (2 instructors) were hard-of-hearing. The number of full-time hearing instructors was greater than the number of full-time deaf instructors; $t(123) = -2.886, p < .005$. Within an institution, the maximum number of full-time deaf instructors was nine, the maximum number of full-time hearing instructors was seven, and the maximum number of full-time hard-of-hearing instructors was one.

Characteristics of Part-time Teaching Staff

The responses indicated the employment of 777 part-time sign language instructors across 263 institutions. The mean number of part-time instructors was 2.95 per institution ($SD=3.34$), the median was 2, and the mode was 1.

Gender. Not all institutions reported the genders of their part-time faculty. Of the 220 institutions reporting on the gender of their 739 part-time sign language instructors, 535 (72.4%) were female, and 204 (27.6%) were male. The number of part-time female instructors was greater than the number of part-time male instructors; $t(219) = -9.079, p < .001$. The maximum number of part-time male instructors per institution was 6, and the maximum number of part-

time female instructors was 20. Institutions had a mean of .94 part-time male instructors ($SD=1.18$) and a mean of 2.43 part-time female instructors ($SD=2.67$).

Hearing status. Of the 725 individuals for whom hearing status was available, 344 (47.5%) were deaf, 352 (48.5%) were hearing, and 29 (4%) were hard-of-hearing. The number of deaf and hearing part-time sign language instructors was about equal $X^2(1, n=725)=.608$, $p=.435$. Respondents reported a mean of 1.59 ($SD=2.08$) and a maximum number of 13 deaf part-time instructors per institution, a mean of 1.61 ($SD=2.07$) and a maximum number of 16 hearing part-time instructors per institution, and a mean of .13 ($SD=.43$) and a maximum number of 3 hard-of-hearing part-time instructors per institution.

Distribution of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Sign Language Instructors

The data were analyzed to determine the distribution of deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors across institutions. Approximately one third of the institutions (36.0%) had no deaf or hard-of-hearing instructors, and another third (34.0%) had a majority of deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors. Of the remaining institutions, 22.8% had between 26% and 50% deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors, and 7.2% had between 1% and 25% deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors. Of the 34% ($n=85$) of the institutions with more than half deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors, 18% indicated that all of their instructors were deaf or hard-of-hearing. When only the institutions with more than one instructor were considered, 38.6% were found to have a majority of deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors.

Qualifications of Teaching Staff

Academic qualifications. The academic qualifications of 921 sign language instructors were compared. Approximately one fifth (20.6%, $n=190$) held a high school or associate's degree as their highest degree. Of these, 73% were teaching in two-year institutions and 27% were teaching in four-year or graduate institutions. A bachelor's degree was the highest degree for 305 (33.1%) of the instructors. Of these, 64% were teaching in two-year institutions and 36% in four-year or graduate institutions. Two fifths (40.3%) of the instructors (371 instructors) held a master's degree as their highest degree and these were evenly distributed between the

two- and four-year institutions. 6% (55 instructors) held a doctorate as their highest degree. When institutions offering only non-credit courses were excluded, the percentages did not vary significantly; 19.5% held less than a bachelor's degree, 32.7% held bachelor's degrees, 42.7% held master's degrees, and 6.1% held master's degrees.

Experience. The number of years of sign language teaching experience was used as another measure of instructors' qualifications. Information on 917 instructors was provided, indicating that 17.6% of the instructors had less than three years of sign language teaching experience, 23.4% had between three and six years experience, and 59% had more than six years experience teaching sign language. When institutions offering non-credit courses only were excluded, the percentages varied by less than three-tenths of one percent in each category.

Signing proficiency. Respondents were asked to identify if sign language proficiency was measured for their instructor applicants or instructors. Almost half of the respondents (42.6%) indicated that signing skills were not formally evaluated, and 42.2% responded that signing skills were observed in the hiring interview. The qualifications of the interviewers were not reported. Some (7.2%) indicated that locally-developed tests were used, and others (7.6%) reported that a nationally standardized test was used. Some institutions did not report which standardized tests were used, and others reported that more than one choice was available. The standardized tests identified included RID certification ($n=11$), ASLTA or SIGN certification ($n=6$), the SCPI (Sign Communication Proficiency Interview) ($n=4$), state-level quality assurance tests (no further information provided) ($n=3$), NAD certification ($n=2$) and "other" ($n=4$).

Expectations

Work Duties

Responsibilities for instructors varied among the institutions. An average full-time teaching load was defined as two courses per quarter/semester by 12.9% of the respondents, three courses per quarter/semester by 25% of the respondents, four courses per quarter/semester by 26.3% of the respondents, five courses by 22.4%, and 13.4% responded "other." Of those responding "other," 14 institutions indicated that one course per quarter or semester was

considered full-time, 5 indicated that the number of credits (between 6 and 21) was used to measure full-time employment, 2 institutions indicated that there were no full-time instructors, 3 responded that the definition of full-time varied among departments, 1 reported that 3 courses plus released time constituted full-time employment, and 1 reported that 7 courses must be taught over the course of a year.

Attendance at Faculty Meetings

There was diversity among the institutions regarding which categories of faculty were expected to attend departmental or divisional faculty meetings. The responding 232 institutions were compared to determine the lowest level of faculty expected to attend meetings. A small percent (8.2%) identified only tenured faculty as eligible to attend such meetings, another 23.3% allowed only tenure track faculty, and another 35.8% expected non-tenure track faculty to attend meetings. The remaining 32.8% of the institutions allowed part-time faculty to attend meetings.

Supervision

Respondents were asked if their institutions followed a formal supervision process involving a scheduled cycle of observations and feedback meetings. One third (33.1%, $n=87$) of the 263 respondents indicated that such a procedure was followed at their institutions. Qualifications of observers were not reported. Of these respondents, 32.2% indicated that sign language instructors were observed once or twice per year, 20.7% were observed less than once per year, 8% were observed more than twice per year, 10.3% reported that observations took place but did not specify the frequency, and 28.7% did not report any information. Post-observation feedback meetings were provided to individual sign language instructors at 19.5% of these institutions. On some campuses ($n=10$) feedback and supervision was provided in the context of a group meeting. Several campuses identified student evaluations as their form of supervision.

Professional Development

Few (14.3%) of the responding institutions required their sign language instructors to participate in continuing education programs. In-service training opportunities for sign language

instructors were provided on 18.9% ($n=57$) of the responding campuses. Funding for travel or professional development appeared to be more available to individuals with higher status within the institution; of all faculty who received such support ($n=519$, includes all faculty of all departments represented), 46% were tenured faculty members, 20.6% held tenure track positions, 19.9% held non-tenure track positions, and 13.5% held part-time positions.

Use of Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants constituted another form of teaching staff at 24.2% ($n=73$) of the institutions. The teaching assistants on 35.6% of these campuses were undergraduate students, on 28.8% of the campuses they were deaf people from the community, on 12.3% of the campuses they were graduate students, and on 23.3% of the campuses they held an unspecified status (two were interpreters). Training was provided to teaching assistants in 37.5% ($n=27$) of the institutions.

Requirements for Teaching Assistants

According to the responses received, requirements for teaching assistants were limited. Some (19.2%, $n=14$) reported that they had no requirements; others reported requirements such as completion of certain courses (31.5%), passing certain tests (6.8%), possession of a certain degree (2.7%), experience (45.2%), or some other requirement (31.5%). The “other” requirements included such criteria as fluency in ASL, preference for deaf individuals, instructor recommendation or preference, ASL/English competency, full-time enrollment in a graduate program, and good “people skills.”

Benefits for Teaching Assistants

There were limited benefits for teaching assistants. A few received academic credit (21.9%), tuition reimbursement (13.7%), or payment (13.6%). A few (28.8%) reported that teaching experience leading to a teaching job was a benefit of a teaching assistantship, and finally, a few (15.1%) stated that there were “other” benefits which included stipend support ($n=2$), serving as an ASL tutor ($n=1$), volunteering experience ($n=2$), opportunity to keep up

signing skills ($n=3$), their personal enjoyment and [the instructor's] deep gratitude ($n=1$), references ($n=1$), and independent study opportunity ($n=1$).

Research Question #4: Sign Language Program Administrative Structure

Data were collected on several aspects of sign language program growth and structure. Respondents reported on the year their institution began teaching sign language, recent changes in program size, where sign language fit into their institutional structure, major programs requiring sign language classes, existence and composition of advisory boards, titles and qualifications of those who make and approve hiring and curriculum decisions, placement of experienced students, and planned changes in the structure of sign language offerings. When useful, comparisons were made between two-year institutions and four-year/graduate institutions.

Program Establishment

Of the 232 campuses responding to the question concerning the year sign language classes were first offered, the first reported sign language class began in 1948, earlier than previous research indicated. From 1965 until the end of 1970, 18 more institutions added sign language to their offerings. Between 1971 and 1975, 50 institutions followed suit, and by 1980, 56 more were added. From 1981 to 1985, 41 institutions added sign language to their curriculum, and between 1986 and 1990, 35 more. From 1991 until the end of data collection for this study in December 1995, 31 more institutions began teaching sign language. The highest percentage (21%) appeared between 1971 and 1980. The single most popular year for the addition of sign language classes was 1980, with 28 institutions first offering sign language classes in that year. Figure 2 illustrates the growth of sign language programs from 1948 to 1995 by cumulative percent.

Increasing Numbers of Programs on Campuses

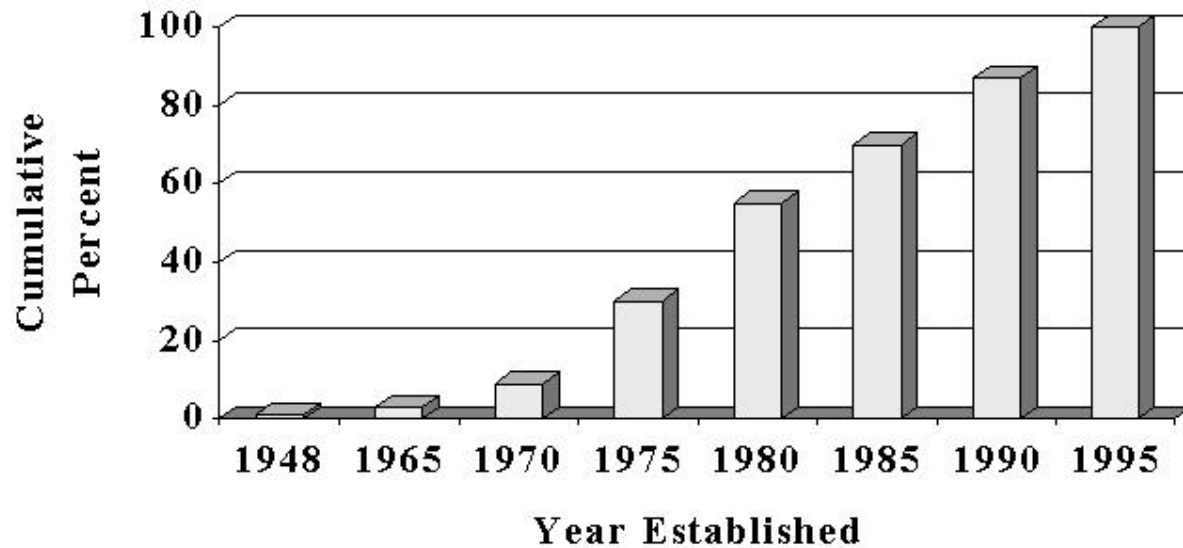


Figure 2. Cumulative percent of sign language program establishment by year

Program Growth

During the three years prior to the survey, enrollment in 64.8% of the programs had increased, and in 29.9% of the programs it had remained stable. In 5.3% of the institutions, enrollment had declined.

Administrative Structure

Chain of Command

In 51.5% of the 262 institutions responding to this question, sign language administrators indicated that they reported to department chairs. In 32.5% of the institutions, sign language administrators reported to deans or division chairs. A small percentage (1.1%) reported to the provost, and the remainder (14.9%) said "other." Of those who responded "other," ten indicated a vice president, ten indicated a coordinator-level position, three indicated associate deans, one indicated a counselor, one indicated a faculty member, one indicated an administrative assistant, and the remainder did not identify the positions of their immediate superiors.

Position of Sign Language with the Institutional Structure

Respondents identified the position of sign language classes within their institutional structure by providing the names of the appropriate programs, departments, divisions, schools, or colleges with which they were affiliated. The structures of the participating institutions varied greatly; not all sign language offerings were affiliated with programs, and not all institutions were structured according to the same levels. For the purpose of this analysis, the above five possible levels of institutional structure were condensed into three levels (program, department/division, and school/college), and data were reported for each of the responding institutions according to the three possible levels.

Program Level

At the program level, 136 respondents indicated a specific affiliation. The most common programs with which sign language was affiliated were interpreter preparation programs, which included 29.4% ($n=40$) of all institutions indicating that their sign language offerings were located within a specific program and American Sign Language programs or Deaf Studies programs, which included 28.7% ($n=39$) of all respondents. Another 20.6% ($n=28$) indicated that they were affiliated with Deaf Education or Special Education programs, 17.7% ($n=24$) were part of Speech Pathology or Audiology programs, and 3.6% ($n=5$) were part of a language or linguistics program.

Department or Division Level

At the department or division level, the most common location for sign language classes was within a department of Speech, Speech Pathology and Audiology, or Communication (25.5%, $n=68$). The second most common location for sign language classes was within a department of Foreign Languages, Modern Languages, or Linguistics (15%, $n=40$). Continuing Education departments or divisions were responsible for another 13.1% of the sign language offerings, Education and Special Education departments sponsored 12.4%, and Liberal Arts and Humanities housed another 10.5%. Departments with titles such as Health, Human Services, or Social Sciences were responsible for 8.6% of the sign language classes. A small number of

institutions (3.7%) identified departments with a specific focus on deafness (Deaf Education, Deaf Studies, Interpreter Preparation, ASL Studies), and 11.2% fell into other categories.

School or College Level

A total of 140 respondents indicated which school or college housed their program. This number most probably reflects the fact that the institutions offering only Associate's degrees ($n=139$) do not have this level of organization, and those institutions offering only a Bachelor's degree ($n=12$) or only a Graduate degree ($n=10$) may not have multiple schools or colleges. Colleges for Arts and Humanities, including colleges for languages, communication, and social sciences, housed 50% of the responding programs. Another 21.4% fit into colleges for education. Continuing Education was responsible for 12.1% of the institutions offering sign language, colleges for health or human services administered another 7.9%, and 8.6% fit into other categories.

Types of Sign Language Taught within Academic Departments

The location of sign language classes was further analyzed with respect to the types of sign language reportedly taught. To observe which forms of sign language were taught within which academic constructs, each institution providing information on program or department affiliation was categorized into one of the following categories: education, speech pathology and audiology, continuing education, languages and cultures, and "other." Because several institutions offered speech pathology within an education construct, a separate category was created for this type of program. Multiple types of sign language were reported to be taught within most of the academic constructs; however, ASL was reported to be taught in 100% of all language and culture-based programs, in 78.2% of all speech pathology programs, and in 93.3% of all programs where speech pathology was offered within a department or division of education (see Table 15). Institutions where more than one type of sign language was taught are represented multiple times in the data; thus, the row totals exceed 100%.

Table 15

Types of Sign Language Reported to be Taught in Departments or Divisions

<i>Department/Division Affiliation</i>	<i>ASL</i>	<i>Contact Signing</i>	<i>Signed English</i>
Education (n=42)	78.6% (n=33)	28.6% (n=12)	26.0% (n=11)
Speech Path/Audiology combined w/Educ (n=15)	93.3% (n=14)	26.6% (n=4)	40.0% (n=6)
Speech Pathology (n=46)	78.2% (n=35)	21.7% (n=10)	21.7% (n=10)
Language and Culture (n=40)	100.0% (n=40)	2.0% (n=1)	7.5% (n=3)
Other (n=80)	93.7% (n=75)	10.0% (n=8)	11.2% (n=9)
Continuing Education (n=27)	96.2% (n=26)	3.7% (n=1)	3.7% (n=1)
Insufficient information provided (n=51)	--	--	--

The data were analyzed further to identify what types of sign language were taught in Interpreter Preparation programs. Of the 40 programs responding, 37 provided this data (see Table 16).

Table 16

Types of Sign Language Reported to be Taught in Interpreter Preparation Programs

<i>Types of signing reported to be taught</i>	<i>Number of programs</i>	<i>% of Programs</i>
ASL only	22	59%
ASL and signed English	9	24%
ASL, signed English and contact signing	5	14%
ASL and contact signing	1	3%

Sign Language as a Requirement of Major Programs

Respondents identified degree programs within their institutions requiring sign language as part of their major program of study. Sign language classes were required by 55 Interpreter Preparation programs, 32 Deaf Education programs, 16 Speech Pathology programs, 15 Deaf Studies programs, and in 10 cases ASL Studies was a degree program. Additionally, 11 Audiology programs required a sign language class, and 6 respondents wrote that sign language was required for their Special Education or Early Childhood Education programs; four respondents wrote that it was required for their rehabilitation counseling or human service majors. Finally, four institutions indicated that sign language fulfilled certain requirements for their certificate programs. Half of the responding institutions ($n=149$) indicated that sign language was not a requirement of any program. At 110 institutions, one sign language program served multiple degree programs. Therefore, the total number of programs reported in each category may be greater than the number of respondents to the questionnaire.

The data were analyzed to determine the distribution of sign language programs serving more than one major. Data indicated that at 68 institutions, sign language fulfilled a major requirement for one program. Sign language fulfilled requirements for 2 major programs at 32 institutions, 3 major programs at 8 institutions, and 4 major programs at 2 institutions. Of those 110 institutions where sign language fulfilled requirements for one or more majors, 48 institutions (43.6%) were two-year institutions and 62 (56.4%) were four-year or graduate institutions. Of the institutions where sign language fulfilled requirements for two or more majors, 12 institutions were two-year institutions and 30 were four-year or graduate institutions. There were no differences in the types of institutions requiring sign language for various major programs, $X^2(1, N=295) = .8536, p = .3555$.

Advisory Boards

One fifth of all respondents (20.6%, $n=62$) reported that their sign language programs had advisory boards. The composition of these boards is reported in Table 17.

Table 17

Composition of Advisory Boards (N=62)

<i>Group represented</i>	<i>Number of inst's</i>	<i>Mean/inst</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Deaf professionals	55	3.36	2.12	1	10	
Hearing professionals	53	4.91	3.02	1	15	
Deaf consumers	53	2.19	1.49	1	6	
Institution representatives	37	2.44	1.43	1	6	
Deaf sign language instructors	37	2.09	1.88	1	9	
Hearing sign lang. Instructors	32	2.33	1.65	1	7	

Hiring Decisions

Hiring Recommendations

Respondents were asked to identify the lowest level of administration to recommend decisions for hiring sign language faculty at their institutions. Half of the respondents (56.3%, $n=138$) reported that the program coordinator or a head instructor made these types of recommendations. The department chairperson made this type of recommendation at 20% of the institutions, a group of all instructors made recommendations at 14.7% of the institutions, 8.2% used some type of a committee, and .8% depended on their advisory board.

Qualifications of Recommendation Makers

Respondents identified what qualified persons and groups to make their recommendations. The three choices were not mutually exclusive, and respondents were not limited to selecting only one qualification. For the first-line hiring recommendation, 73.4% reported that the experiential backgrounds of the individuals qualified them to make the recommendations, 70.9% indicated that the persons or groups were qualified by virtue of their

job function, and 61% of the 244 respondents reported that the educational background of the individuals qualified them to make the recommendations.

Approval of Decisions

Respondents also identified the person or group approving hiring decisions. In 41.1% of the institutions, the department chair approved the decision; in 27.5% of the cases, the program coordinator or head instructor had this authority; in 17.8% of the cases, the provost or another university administrator had the authority, and in a few cases the Human Resources office (6.4%), a group of all instructors (3%), a committee (3%), or the advisory board (1.3%) had the final say.

Qualifications of Those Who Approve Hiring

For those individuals or groups approving the hiring decisions, 78.8% indicated that the persons or groups were qualified by virtue of their job function, 45.9% reported that experience was a qualifying factor, and 45% of the respondents reported that educational background was a qualifying factor. No data were collected regarding differences in hiring full-time versus adjunct faculty.

Curriculum Decisions

Decision Making

Respondents identified the lowest level of administration to make recommendations regarding sign language curricula at their institutions. Half of the 250 respondents to this item (50%, $n=125$) reported that the program coordinator or a head instructor made this type of recommendation. A group of all instructors made these recommendations at 36.4% of the institutions, the department chairperson made this recommendation at 6.4% of the institutions, 4.8% used some type of a committee, and 2.4% depended on their advisory board.

Qualifications of Decision Makers

Examining the qualifications for those making curricular recommendations, 81.1% of the 244 respondents reported that the experiential backgrounds of the individuals qualified them to make the recommendations, 68% reported that the educational background of the individuals qualified them to make the recommendations, and 59% indicated that the persons or groups were qualified by virtue of their job function.

Approval of Decisions

Respondents identified the person or group responsible for approving curricular decisions. In 36.4% of the institutions, the program coordinator or head instructor had this authority, the department chair approved the decision in 28.2% of the cases, a committee approved the decision in 22% of the cases, a group of all instructors made the decision in 11.4% of the cases, and the advisory board had the final say in 2% of the institutions.

Qualifications of Those Who Approve Curriculum

For those individuals or groups approving curricular decisions, 75% indicated that the persons or groups were qualified by virtue of their job function, 57.4% reported that experience was a qualifying factor, and 51.6% of the respondents reported that educational background was a qualifying factor.

In the decision-making procedures for both hiring and curriculum, the program coordinator most frequently had the first-line responsibility, and this appeared in both cases to be based on the individual's experience. In the approval stage, the prevailing qualification appeared to be job function, with educational background appearing to be a less important qualification.

Placement of Students

Respondents reported how students with previous sign language experience were placed into classes. Selecting all appropriate responses from a list of choices, respondents ($n=217$) indicated that the prevailing method of placement, used by 81.6% of the responding institutions, was instructor screening and approval. Other methods utilized by the responding institutions included school-made tests (15.2%), administrative decisions (12.4%), unspecified "other"

methods (10.1%), high school or college transfer credits (8.8%), student's choice (7.8%), and national standardized tests (3.2%).

Changes Planned

More than one third (37.9%) of the respondents indicated that changes were planned regarding the structure of their programs. The most common changes anticipated were the expansion of course offerings (22 institutions), the addition of certificate, degree, or minor programs (17 institutions), modification of curriculum or course requirements (11 institutions), an increase in the number of credit hours for sign language classes (8 institutions), the establishment or modification of admission requirements into programs requiring sign language (5 institutions), the addition of more sections of existing classes (4 institutions), institutional changes from quarter system to semester system (4 institutions), an increase in the number of weekly meeting times (2 institutions) and the establishment of exit competencies (2 institutions). Three institutions mentioned their plans to accept sign language in fulfillment of foreign language or general education requirements. Other changes anticipated by individual institutions included enabling deaf students to earn credit for sign language classes, discontinuing courses, changing to credit-bearing courses, changing from teaching contact signing to teaching ASL, adding a summer institute, finding a "home" for sign language courses, and adding an advisory board. Additionally, several institutions indicated that they were in the exploratory stages of considering curriculum changes (11 institutions), expanding to a degree program (3 institutions), and making foreign language credit available (2 institutions).

Research Question #5: Sign Language Program Content

Information was gathered regarding standardization of course administration and course content, measurement of student progress and competence, resources and special programming, the use of teaching assistants, and the existence of policies regarding use of voice in class.

Standardization across Multisection/Multiinstructor Classes

Reliability of Data

Information from Part A of the questionnaire regarding the number of sign language classes on campuses indicated that 188 out of 245 institutions (76.7%) had multiple sections of at least one class. In Part E, respondents were specifically asked if their institution offered multiple sections of their introductory class taught by multiple instructors. The responses indicated that 53% (138 out of 260) fit into this category. Of the 188 responding that they offered multiple sections in Part A, 121 (64.4%) responded “yes” to the question in Part E, indicating that 16 of the institutions identifying multiple sections in Part E did not respond to the question in Part A. There was a significant correlation of .466 ($p < .0005$) with the data obtained in these two sections. The difference can be explained in the following ways:

1. Not all respondents completed all items of the questionnaire, particularly since the information requested in Part A was very detailed.
2. Some institutions offered multiple sections taught by the same person.
3. Some of the multiple sections identified in Part A may have been at the second or third level, and the question in Part E requested information regarding the introductory level.

Description of Institutions with Multiple Sections

Institutions indicating that multiple sections were taught by the same instructor were excluded from the following analysis. A total of 138 institutions met the criteria for multiple sections taught by multiple instructors. These respondents identified which features were administered uniformly across classes.

Decision making. Decisions regarding uniform administration of multisection introductory courses were handled differently at various institutions. The sign language program coordinator was responsible for decisions at 27.5% of the institutions, and a group of instructors who regularly teach the class was responsible for decisions at another 27.5% of the institutions. The entire faculty was responsible for this type of decision making on 20.6% of these campuses. The department chair was responsible for administering the uniform features of classes on 10.7%

of the campuses, a group of current instructors made the decisions at 5.3% of the institutions, a faculty committee made the decisions in 4.6% of the cases, and 3.8% reported that no features were administered uniformly.

Uniform administration of classes. Respondents reported which features of their multisection classes were administered uniformly on their campus. Learning objectives were administered uniformly within 78.3% of the campuses, and course requirements were uniform within 60.1%. Vocabulary and grammar topics taught were standardized within 75.4% of the institutions, and the information about deafness covered was standardized within 60.1% of the institutions. Course syllabi were standardized to some degree on 68.4% of the campuses, and achievement expectation levels were uniform within 60.1% of the campuses. Examinations were only standardized on 37% of the campuses with multiple sections of introductory level courses.

Course content in multisection classes with multiple instructors

Textbooks. Textbooks were standardized on 84.7% ($n=117$) of the 138 campuses with multiple sections of introductory level courses taught by multiple instructors. The most commonly used book/curriculum was *Signing Naturally (Vista)*, used on 59.8% of these campuses ($n=70$), followed by *Learning ASL* which was used at 12.8% of the institutions. *A Basic Course in American Sign Language* was used on 7.7% of these campuses, and the remainder used a variety of other books.

Topics. Respondents were asked to select from a list which topics were incorporated into their introductory level sign language classes. These data are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Frequency of Topics Covered in Multisection Introductory Sign Language Classes

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Frequency Taught</i>		<i>total institutions teaching topic</i>
	<i>some sections</i>	<i>all sections</i>	
Deaf Community/Deaf Culture	18.3%	77.8%	96.1%
History of Sign Language	29.6%	60.0%	89.6%
Sign Language Continuum	23.1%	63.6%	86.7%
Deaf Education	36.0%	38.6%	74.6%
Careers Using Sign Language	37.2%	27.4%	64.6%
Laws Affecting Deaf People	35.1%	21.6%	56.7%
Audiological Information	24.1%	17.6%	41.7%

Resources Available

Respondents identified resources available to their students by selecting from a list. Most resources supporting sign language classes were found in libraries. The most common resource was books on deaf-related topics, and the second most common resource was deaf-related videotapes. Table 19 provides the complete responses.

Table 19

Resources Available to Sign Language Students

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Percentage of institutions where available</i>
Books on deaf-related topics	74.4%
Deaf-related videotapes	68.4%
Deaf-related journals	57.1%
Deaf students on campus	53.2%
Centralized deaf-related information	43.9%
Video laboratory	41.9%
Sign Language or Interpreting Club	32.9%
Deaf events	31.6%
Deaf student organizations	20.3%
Other resources	11.0%

The “other resources” listed by respondents included local community resources such as other post-secondary institutions, deaf clubs, and schools for the deaf (nine institutions); opportunities for interaction with deaf individuals such as instructors, tutors, lab aides, and visitors (eight institutions); deaf community events off-campus (eight institutions); guest lectures and workshops (six institutions); use of a computer lab (three institutions), student support groups or organizations (three institutions), and clinical placement in a signing environment (one institution).

Measuring Student Progress and Competence

Techniques used for measuring student progress at responding institutions were identified using a checklist (see Table 20). Almost all of the respondents reported using both live and written evaluations of students’ progress. When non-credit classes were excluded, the percentages of total institutions using each technique increased slightly.

Table 20

Measurement of Sign Language Student Progress

<i>Assessment Technique</i>	<i>Used in some</i>	<i>Used in all sections</i>	<i>Total institutions using technique</i>	<i>Credit-bearing classes only</i>
In-class assignments	13.8%	84.9%	98.7%	99.0%
Live expressive presentations	16.1%	81.4%	97.5%	98.1%
Written exam, translating signs	16.1%	79.6%	95.7%	98.1%
Out-of-class assignments, papers	22.2%	69.3%	91.5%	94.5%
Videotaped presentations	28.9%	55.3%	84.2%	86.9%
Written exam/t-f, multiple choice	24.9%	55.8%	80.7%	84.8%

Less than half (40.2%, $n=103$) of the respondents reported they assess student sign language competence in a standardized manner. Of those who did, 80 used departmentally-developed tests, 12 used locally-developed tests, 8 reported using a nationally standardized test

(5 specified the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview), and 3 did not identify the measure used.

Specialized Programming

Some campuses offered enrichment opportunities for highly motivated students. Off-campus immersion experiences, such as staying in the home of a deaf person, were available through 65 institutions. Designated areas in dormitories, cafeterias, or other locations for “signing only” were available on 26 campuses. Intensive courses were offered on 21 campuses, and “study abroad” programs (such as an exchange program with Gallaudet University) were offered by 5 institutions.

Many respondents wrote in additional ways in which they accommodate highly motivated students. These accommodations included:

1. Practica, internships, field experiences, volunteer or part-time jobs, independent studies ($n=10$)
2. ASL Club, Interpreting Club, or Deaf Club ($n=8$)
3. Participation in deaf social settings or deaf community events ($n=8$)
4. Attendance at workshops or seminars ($n=5$)
5. Referrals to other institutions of higher education ($n=3$)
6. Signing-only lunches or suppers ($n=3$)
7. Living with deaf family or roommates ($n=2$)
8. Working as interpreters ($n=2$)
9. Referrals to community resources ($n=2$)
10. Tutoring or study groups ($n=2$)
11. Deaf retreats, Silent Weekend ($n=2$)
12. Signing-only time between classes ($n=1$)
13. Independently-paced work ($n=1$)
14. Field trips to Gallaudet University ($n=1$).

Use of Voice in Classroom

Respondents identified if their sign language classes had policies regarding the use of voice in the classroom. Responses were not separated by type of sign language reported to be taught. More than one third of the respondents ($N=98$ out of 259) reported a voice-or-no-voice policy in effect. Of these, 92 institutions indicated a “limited or no voice” policy, including 46 with policies for “no voice” and 46 with policies for limited use of voice. An additional 88 institutions reported that they had no policy, but the use of voice in the classroom was discouraged. Respondents at 18% of the institutions indicated that their instructors used their voices in their classes on a regular basis. Of the remainder, 57.6% used their voices on a limited or very limited basis, and 24.4% did not use their voices at all.

Similarly, students were discouraged from using their voices in the classroom. At 22.4% of the institutions, students’ use of voice was strictly not permitted, and at 58.7% it was only allowed on a very limited basis. Only 18.9% of the institutions indicated that students were permitted to use their voices.

Research Question #6: Recommendations of Sign Language Administrators

Respondents were asked to provide their recommendations on several topics relating to the structure and administration of sign language programs. Not all respondents answered each question.

Program Location

Respondents were asked to identify where they thought the sign language program should be housed. The largest group of administrators thought that sign language classes should be housed within the department of foreign or modern languages. The next largest group thought that sign language should have its own department. The results are detailed in Table 21.

Table 21
Sign Language Program Administrators' Opinions: Where Should Sign Language be Housed?

<i>Department recommended</i>	<i>Percentage recommending this department</i>
Modern/Foreign Language	36.8%
Sign Language (separate dept.)	12.6%
Speech Pathology/Audiology	10.5%
Deaf Education	8.1%
Deaf Studies	7.7%
Interpreting	5.7%
Linguistics	5.7%
Special Education	5.3%
Other	7.7%

Of the 7.7% who said “other,” four thought sign language belonged with arts and humanities, three thought it belonged in continuing education or community service, one said counselor education, one said health careers, one said that it should be variable to accommodate different universities, and the others had no suggestions.

These data were investigated further in consideration of the wide range of administrators filling out the questionnaire. The administrators were categorized based on their investment in the field of sign language. The group with “most signing skills” was defined as those reporting greater than ten years signing experience, self-assessment of signing skills as advanced or fluent, and reporting some personal involvement with deaf people. The group with the “least signing skills” was defined as those reporting less than ten years of signing experience, less than intermediate level of signing, and no personal contact with deaf people. The group with the most signing skills was compared to the group with the least signing skills, and differences were found in their perceptions of where sign language belongs, $X^2(8, N=198) = 25.41, p < .0005$. Whereas 18.6% of the “least signing” group suggested that sign language be housed in a speech pathology or audiology department, only 2.9% of the “most signing” group suggested this placement. Similarly, only 1.7% of the

“least signing” group suggested that sign language belonged in a Deaf Studies department, and 10.8% of the “most signing” group made that recommendation. This information suggests a difference in the ways that those with more or less investment in sign language perceive its function.

Foreign Language Requirement

Almost all (96.1%, $n=248$) of the respondents ($n=258$) to this question agreed that ASL should be considered an acceptable language in terms of satisfying institutional foreign language requirements. Of the 3.9% ($n=10$) who disagreed, half represented programs offering non-credit sign language classes only. Of these 10 individuals, 3 were deans, 3 were academic program coordinators (Deaf Education, Speech Clinic, Foreign Language), 3 were professional staff in continuing education programs, and 1 was a faculty member. There were 43 respondents who did not answer this question.

This issue was also viewed in terms of the respondents' levels of involvement with sign language. Comparing the recommendations of the “least signing” and “most signing” administrators defined previously, more of the “most signing” administrators favored acceptance of ASL as a foreign language, $X^2(1, N=208) = 13.01, p < .001$.

Class Size

Administrators provided their opinions regarding the optimal size for beginning sign language classes. Slightly over half (54%) of the 261 respondents believed that sign language classes should have between 8 and 15 students. The minimum response was 8 students per class, the maximum was 35 (mean=17.19, $SD=5.07$). The highest class sizes proposed were 35 ($n=2$), 30 ($n=9$), and 27 ($n=1$). A crosstabs analysis of these higher responses by job title of administrator indicated that of these 12 individuals, 5 were faculty members or sign language instructors, 2 were deans, 2 were academic program coordinators, and the remainder included 1 paraprofessional, 1 professional staff member, and 1 department chair.

Transfer Credits

Respondents were asked to provide their opinions on how sign language transfer credits should be handled when the receiving institution did not offer sign language. Slightly over half of the respondents (54.2%) favored applying sign language credits toward a modern or foreign language elective, and 19.2% suggested that it be accepted as a general elective. Some (6.7%) said it should be considered an elective in Communication Sciences/Speech Pathology and Audiology, and others (4.6%) suggested it belonged in Special Education. A small number of respondents (5%) suggested that it could be accepted as either a foreign/modern language elective, a speech pathology/audiology elective, or a general elective. Others (5%) stated that sign language should not be accepted. The remainder wrote in responses indicating that acceptance would depend on the contents of the course and/or the credibility of the instructor, and would have to be evaluated on an individual basis.

Qualifications of Instructors

A list of possible qualifications was provided to the respondents, and they were asked to rate each item in terms of its importance as a qualification for post-secondary sign language instructors. The results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Importance of Qualifications for Post-Secondary Sign Language Instructors

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>
Prior work experience w/SL	51.2%	39.8%	8.7%	.4%
Native/near-native signer	42.2%	36.3%	15.1%	6.4%
Prior teaching experience	38.6%	46.7%	14.3%	.4%
Known to the deaf community	34.9%	34.5%	23.5%	7.1%
Earned degree	40.2%	23.3%	32.5%	4.0%
Earned degree in a related field	31.3%	31.3%	32.5%	4.8%
Second language learning theory	13.8%	36.0%	38.1%	12.1%
ASLTA certification	12.1%	28.5%	40.2%	19.2%
RID certification	8.4%	17.3%	38.0%	36.3%

The most essential qualification appeared to be previous work experience using sign language, with 90.9% of the respondents indicating that this was essential or very important. Prior teaching experience was essential or very important to 85.3% of the respondents. Native or near-native use of sign language was seen as essential or very important to 78.5% of the respondents, and being known to the deaf community was considered essential or very important to 69.4% of the respondents. An earned degree was very important or essential to 63.5% of the respondents, and having this degree in a related field was very important or essential to 62.7%. There were 10 responses indicating that having an earned degree was not important. Training in second language learning theory was seen as essential or very important by 49.8% of the respondents.

A less important qualification appeared to be certification from national organizations. Certification from the American Sign Language Teachers Association was seen as essential or very important by 40.6% of the administrators, and certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was considered essential or very important by 25.7%.

Differences were found between the “most signing” and “least signing” respondents regarding certain qualifications for sign language instructors. The “most signing” respondents saw “knowledge of second language learning theory” as more important than their “least signing” peers, $t(195) = 4.15, p < .0005$. Also, the “most signing” respondents saw “native use of sign communication” as more important than their “least signing” peers, $t(202) = 6.26, p < .0005$.

These data were investigated further in consideration of the priorities of administrators filling out the questionnaire. The administrators were grouped according to their primary responsibility as “teaching” or “administration.” This was defined by their response to the question asking them to rank how they spent their time. The group ranking “teaching” as a top priority was compared to the group ranking “administration” as a top priority, and differences were found in their perceptions of certain qualifications for sign language instructors. The “teaching” group found the qualification of “being known to the deaf community” more

important than their “administration” peers, $t(243) = 5.88, p < .0005$. The “most signing” group found the same qualification (“being known to the deaf community”) more important than their “least signing” peers, $t(204) = -3.85, p < .0005$.

Skills for Instructors

A list of six skills was provided, and administrators were asked to select what, in their opinion, were the three most important skills for sign language instructors to have. Proficiency in signing was the most necessary skill, selected as the first choice by 69% of the respondents, and as either the first or second choice by 91.7%. Knowledge of methods and strategies for teaching sign language was reported to be a first or second priority for 66.8% of the respondents. Knowledge of the linguistic structure of ASL was ranked as first or second by 60.6%, and knowledge of deaf culture was ranked as first or second by 46.3% of the respondents. Respondents perceived creativity in lesson planning and issues of technical and professional knowledge as less important, only identifying them as a first or second priority 34.5% and 27.1% of the time, respectively. Table 23 illustrates the top three combinations selected by the most respondents. The choice combinations shown in Table 23 account for over three quarters of the respondents.

Table 23

Top Three Ranked Skills for Sign Language Instructors

<i>Top Three Skills</i>	<i>Percentage Recommending this Combination (any order)</i>
Linguistic Structure of ASL Deaf Culture Proficiency in ASL	25.4%
Linguistic Structure of ASL Methods of Teaching ASL Proficiency in ASL	23.7%
Deaf Culture Methods of Teaching ASL Proficiency in ASL	27.6%
Methods of Teaching ASL Proficiency in ASL Creativity in Lesson Planning	6.6%
Other combinations	16.7%

Use of Class Time

In ranking the relative importance of ways that introductory sign language class time can be spent, 94.6% of the respondents identified receptive skills as first or second priority. Development of expressive skills was a first or second priority for 84.5%, and providing information about deaf people and their culture was a first or second priority for 24.9%. The recommended ranked priorities are reported in Table 24.

Table 24

How Class Time Should be Spent by Rated Order of Importance

1. Receptive 2. Expressive 3. Info on Deaf People	36.9%
1. Expressive 2. Receptive 3. Info on Deaf People	26.2%
1. Expressive 2. Info on Deaf People 3. Receptive	14.3%
1. Receptive 2. Info on Deaf People 3. Expressive	7.3%
1. Info on Deaf People 2. Receptive 3. Expressive	6.0%
Other combinations, including those with only two ranked items	9.3%

Weighting of Grades

Respondents considered the relative importance of information taught in introductory sign language classes, and how this should be reflected in students' grades. Most (57%) of the respondents believed that receptive skills should be weighted most heavily, expressive skills were the second priority (38.8% indicated this was the top priority), and information about deaf people should carry the least weight (only 11.3% weighted this as a first priority). Over three quarters of the respondents ranked the combination of receptive and expressive skills as where the most weight should be placed (see Table 25).

Table 25

How Evaluation of Progress Should Be Weighted

<i>Skills/Knowledge Evaluated</i>	<i>Percentage of Administrators Recommending these Priorities</i>
1. Receptive 2. Expressive 3. Info on Deaf People	43.0%
1. Expressive 2. Receptive 3. Info on Deaf People	33.5%
1. Receptive 2. Info on Deaf People 3. Expressive	10.7%
1. Info on Deaf People 2. Receptive 3. Expressive	6.6%
Other combinations	6.2%

The relationship between individuals' responses to the questions regarding use of class time and weighting of grades was explored. Most respondents (85.8%) reported the same rank-ordered priorities for use of class time and weighting of evaluation of progress, $X^2(5, n=240) = 672.1, p < .0005$.

Evaluation of Student Progress

When asked to identify how best to evaluate students' progress in learning sign language, 96.2% of the respondents ranked ($n=237$) "live signing" either first or second. Videotaped signing ranked second, followed by "written exams," then "papers," and "other" as shown in Table 26.

Table 26

Mean Ranking of Methods for Evaluating Students' Signing Skills

<i>Evaluation Method</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Live Signing	1.27	.71
Videotaped Signing	2.29	.99
Written Exams	3.12	.99
Papers	3.84	.73
Other	4.78	.74

Some of the “other” ways of evaluating students’ progress suggested by respondents included demonstrating comprehension through action, being able to demonstrate facial grammar, interacting with deaf people, and projects and presentations.

Qualifications for Sign Language Program Coordinators

Academic Qualifications

Degree. Most respondents (75.3%) indicated that a Master’s degree should be the minimum requirement for the coordinator of a post-secondary sign language program. Some (14.4%) reported that a Bachelor’s degree was sufficient, and others (8.6%) indicated that a Doctorate was required. Few (1.6%) indicated that an Associate’s degree was sufficient.

Major. Respondents provided suggestions for appropriate specializations or majors for sign language program coordinators; some respondents provided more than one choice. The degrees recommended by the respondents are detailed in Table 27.

Table 27

Sign Language Program Administrators’ Opinions: Appropriate Major/Specialization for Sign Language Program Administrator

<i>Specialization recommended</i>	<i>Number of respondents recommending</i>
ASL, Sign Language, Interpreting, Linguistics	99
Any deaf-related degree	66
Deaf Education, Rehabilitation, Human Services	52
Education, Special Education, Bilingual Education, Second Language Learning	25
Speech Pathology, Audiology, Health Science	13
Communication	6
Administration and Supervision	3
Sociology, Liberal Arts	2
Contact with Deaf Community	2
Disabilities, Cognition	2
Continuing Education	1
Industrial Theory	1
Area of specialization not relevant	66

Signing Skill

Most respondents reported that the sign language program coordinator should have some level of signing proficiency, although 11% reported that signing should not be required, and 9% indicated that beginning through intermediate level skills were acceptable. Almost half of the respondents (45.9%) indicated that native or near-native signing skills should be required, and 34.1% believed that advanced level skills were necessary.

This issue was analyzed in terms of the respondents' own levels of involvement with sign language. Comparing the recommendations of the "least signing" ($n=59$) and "most signing" ($n=143$) administrators defined previously, more of the "least signing" administrators reported that signing skills should not be required of sign language program administrators, $X^2(5, N=202) = 90.5, p < .0005$. This same issue was also analyzed in terms of respondents' primary responsibilities. Comparing the recommendations of the "teaching" ($n=146$) and "administration" ($n=90$) respondents defined previously, more of the "teaching" administrators reported that sign language program administrators' signing skills should be fluent, $X^2(5, N=236) = 35.94, p < .0005$.

The relationship between the two dichotomies (teacher/administrator and least signing/most signing) was examined. The level of signing skill showed differences according to the individual's primary job duty. More of the "teachers" were involved with signing and the deaf community than their "administrator" counterparts, $X^2(3, N=262) = 45.8, p < .0005$.

Use of Program Coordinator's Time

Given a choice of five duties, respondents ($n=226$) were asked to prioritize how a sign language program coordinator's time should be spent. Out of 228 ratings of "most important" (two respondents each identified two "most important" ratings), teaching was ranked as the top priority by 49.6% of the respondents, administration was ranked first by 40.1%, advising students and service to the institution were each ranked first by 4.4% of the respondents, and 2.6% indicated that research and scholarship should be a top priority.

Comparing the recommendations of the “teaching-oriented” and “administration-oriented” respondents defined previously, the “teaching” administrators reported that teaching should be the top priority for sign language program administrators, and the “administration” respondents indicated that administration should be the top priority. There was a difference in how “teachers” and “administrators” viewed the priorities of sign language program coordinators, $X^2(4, N=217) = 36.18, p < .0005$.

Summary

This chapter presented the statistical treatment of the data to answer the research questions about the administration of sign language programs at institutions of higher education. Specifically, the major findings were:

1. Sign language was offered as a credit-bearing class at more than four fifths of the responding institutions. More institutions granting bachelor’s and/or graduate degrees offered credit than institutions granting only an associate’s degree. Four fifths of the institutions teaching credit-bearing sign language courses accepted sign language for general education requirements, with almost 20% more considering changes. Of those institutions reporting a language requirement, more than half accepted American Sign Language in fulfillment of the foreign language requirement for either some or all majors or degrees.

There were more sections of ASL offered than contact signing or Signed English. Although the majority of institutions taught only one form of sign language, 20% of the institutions reported teaching more than one form of sign language. Multiple sections were usually taught.

Institutions granting bachelor’s and graduate degrees were more likely to teach contact signing than institutions granting an associate’s degree. Across all types of signing, there was no difference in class size.

2. Sign Language program administrators held a variety of administrative, faculty, and staff positions. Administrators with less sign language skill have a greater likelihood of holding full-time positions than people with more signing skill. The biggest issues facing most sign language

program administrators were lack of support, funding for expansion, and lack of qualified instructors.

3. Half of the responding institutions did not have any full-time positions dedicated to teaching sign language. The mean number of part-time sign language instructors was greater than the mean number of full-time instructors. The numbers of female full-time and part-time instructors were greater than the numbers of male full-time and part-time instructors. There was little supervision, little expectations of participation in continuing education, and little training for teaching assistants when used.

4. Respondents identified many degree programs requiring sign language as part of major programs of study at their institutions. Sign language programs served multiple degree programs at many institutions. There was no difference in the status of sign language as a requirement between two- and four-year institutions. Many institutions were planning changes regarding their program structure, mostly expecting expansion of course offerings and the addition of certificate, degree or minor programs.

5. Program content, within multisection programs and across institutions, was not highly standardized. Even on the same campus, multiple sections of the same introductory course had much variation. Across and within institutions, different topics were covered and student progress was measured in different ways. Special programming and resources were frequently arranged to accommodate individual students.

6. On certain issues, differences were found between the responses of those administrators who were primarily teachers and those who were primarily administrators. Additionally, responses to some items differed between those administrators who were skilled signers and involved with deaf people personally and those who were not skilled signers and not involved in the deaf community. The issues affected by these dichotomies included:

- where sign language should be housed within the institutional
- structure, the acceptance of ASL as a foreign language,
- the administrator's perspective on qualifications for sign language

- instructors, the signing skill required for sign language program
- administrators, and how sign language coordinators' time should be spent.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding chapters presented the problem and the purpose of the study, a review of the literature, the methodology of the study, and the results of the study. This chapter provides a summary of the study and summaries and discussions of the results interpreted with respect to the original research questions and review of the literature. Limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for future research are also presented.

Summary of the Study

The purposes of this study were to compile information about the important characteristics of post-secondary programs that teach sign language in the United States (including the structure, organization, and administration of such programs) and to examine the policies, procedures, and resources available to existing classes and programs. The project included the collection and synthesis of suggestions for the development of standards in the administration of sign language programs at the post-secondary level.

The review of the literature that served as a foundation for this study addressed American Sign Language as a language and utilized research in the parallel discipline of modern/foreign languages and the emerging disciplines of Women's Studies and Black Studies for comparisons, support, and guidance. Because no studies of sign language at institutions of higher education have been published since 1986, this study updates the existing body of knowledge.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of personnel responsible for the administration of sign language programs in institutions of higher education in the United States. Several directories of post-secondary programs training professionals to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in various disciplines were cross-referenced, yielding a total mailing list of

1174 representing 991 institutions. The accessible population was expected to include programs with various structures and teaching various sign language systems and thus present an accurate profile of the status of sign language in IHEs around the country. A total of 371 responses were received. Elimination of duplicates from the same institution and other non-usable responses were excluded, bringing the total to 362. Of these, 301 institutions offered sign language classes during the 1994-95 academic year, and their responses were analyzed in the results. The study includes data from 49 institutions where sign language is taught only as a non-credit class and 17 institutions only offering a single section of a sign language class.

Methodology

The survey instrument used for this study was a questionnaire developed by this investigator (Appendix A). Items for the questionnaire were derived from the literature on administration of sign language programs, administration of foreign language programs, and administration of the emerging fields of Black Studies and Women's Studies. The instructions included explanations that the questionnaire was to be completed by the person responsible for the sign language program or classes. Follow-up postcards were mailed to encourage additional responses, and postcards were later sent to non-respondents to identify reasons for non-response. The responses were analyzed using the software package, *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows, Version 6.1* and *Version 7.0*.

Research Question #1: Characteristics of Sampled Institutions and the Academic Status of Sign Language

Summary of the Results

Increased Status

The status of sign language within institutions of higher education has improved significantly since the studies conducted in the 1980s. This point is most clearly manifest in its

increased availability at IHEs, its status as a credit-bearing class, and its acceptance in fulfillment of institutional requirements.

Increased availability. The results of this study indicate that sign language has become available at an increasing number of institutions of higher education over the past few decades. Of the responding 301 institutions, 107 have begun offering sign language since 1981. Two thirds of the responding institutions indicated that enrollment in their sign language classes has increased within the past three years.

A 1995 study of students enrolled in foreign language classes (Huber, in press) indicated that 3,394 students were enrolled in ASL classes at two-year institutions, 852 students were enrolled in ASL classes in four-year undergraduate institutions, and 58 students were enrolled in ASL classes at graduate institutions. This indicates a high number of students enrolled in ASL classes through modern/foreign language departments. Of the 124 “less commonly taught languages” identified by Huber (in press), ASL had the highest student enrollment, making it the thirteenth most commonly taught language in the MLA study of foreign languages taught at post-secondary institutions.

Sign language as a credit-bearing course. The status of sign language has continued to improve since Shroyer and Holmes (1980) determined that 38% of the institutions offering sign language classes offered academic credit for these classes, and Delgado (1984) found that credit was offered on 54% of the campuses. The present study indicates that in 1995, 252 out of 301 campuses (83.7%) offered credit for their sign language classes. Additionally, sign language courses in 1994-95 fulfilled other general educational requirements at 85% of the institutions, and 72 institutions were considering changes in this direction. Although sign language was found in almost equal proportions in two-year and four-year/graduate institutions, significantly more institutions granting bachelor’s and/or graduate degrees offered credit for sign language classes than institutions granting only an associate’s degree.

Acceptance of ASL as a foreign language. The present findings indicate that 57.1% of the institutions sampled had foreign language requirements for “all or some majors.” Huber’s

(1992) study of foreign language programs found that 64% of the sampled institutions had language requirements for one or more of their bachelor's or associate degree programs, 40% of which were mandated for all students, and 60% for some majors only. This also shows a parallel between the sample in the foreign language study and the present sample.

Of the institutions reporting a language requirement, Delgado (1984) found that ASL fulfilled this requirement in 5% of the institutions; the present study found that more than half (53.5%) accepted American Sign Language in fulfillment of the foreign language requirement for either some or all majors or degrees during the 1994-95 school year, indicating that the acceptance of ASL as a foreign language has increased ten-fold in one decade.

Since the time that data collection for this study ended in December 1995, planned changes at many of the institutions responding in 1994-95 may have become effective. Additionally, information received by this researcher from institutions participating in this study, discussion lists on the Internet, and articles in newspapers has indicated that the number of institutions working toward, and achieving the goal of acceptance of ASL in fulfillment of foreign language requirements, has continued to grow almost weekly. Another indication of the improved status of ASL on campuses is the information provided by respondents in the present study that there are at least eleven institutions where sign language is not taught that accept, or plan to accept, ASL as a foreign language in the form of transfer credits.

Types and Levels of Sign Language Taught

American Sign Language, forms of signed English, contact signing, and "special format" courses were being taught at responding institutions. The majority of respondents reported teaching only one form of sign language or one format; however, one fifth of the institutions (20.5%, $n=55$) reported teaching more than one form. Classes in two different forms of sign language were reported to be taught at 41 institutions, 3 types of classes were reportedly taught at 13 institutions, and 1 institution reported that all 4 types of classes were offered. Significantly more institutions reported offering classes in ASL (87.3%) than those reporting classes in contact signing (15.3%) or signed English (17.2%). Those institutions reporting that ASL was

taught offered significantly more sections of these classes. Contact signing appeared more likely to be taught at institutions granting bachelor's degrees and graduate degrees than institutions granting associate's degrees.

According to the responses received, most institutions offered multiple sections of classes and multiple levels. There were fewer sections of the higher levels of signed English classes reported..

Numbers, Sizes, and Meeting Frequency of Classes

During the 1994-95 school year, the 301 responding institutions reported a total of 1,914 sections of ASL classes, 159 sections of contact signing classes, 88 sections of signed English classes, and 103 sections of special format classes. Most schools offered multiple sections of their introductory level sign language classes across all forms of signing.

Across the different forms of signing, no difference appeared in class size and the number of students per section, regardless of level. The numbers of students per section, however, were much higher than those recommended by the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT, N.D.), higher than those recommended by foreign language experts, and higher than those recommended by the responding administrators in Part F of the research questionnaire.

Class meeting frequencies varied from one to five times per week; classes most commonly met twice per week at each level. One meeting per week was the second most frequent response across all three levels of sign language classes. Huber (1993) found that most introductory level foreign language classes met three to five times per week, providing students with regular and consistent exposure to the target language.

Multiple Sections

Among the 78.2% of the programs with multiple sections of the same introductory course, some aspects were uniformly administered. There appears to be less uniformity among sign language classes than among foreign language classes as shown in Table 28.

Table 28
Comparison of Uniformly Administered Features of Introductory Language Classes

<i>Introductory Course Features</i>	<i>Percentage Administered Uniformly</i>	
	<u>Foreign Language</u>	<u>Sign Language</u>
Textbooks	97.5%	84.7%
Learning Objectives	96.7%	78.3%
Syllabus	82.0%	68.4%
Examinations	60.0%	37.0%

Note. The data on foreign language requirements are from Huber, 1993.

Discussion

The presence of sign language at institutions of higher education has increased significantly over the past three decades, demonstrated by the growth in numbers of programs teaching sign language and the increasing offerings of these programs. The status of sign language as an academic subject has also improved, as demonstrated by its status as a credit-bearing class and its acceptance in fulfillment of general education and foreign language requirements in many institutions.

Resistance still exists to the acceptance of ASL in fulfillment of foreign language requirements at some institutions. Brown (1996) conducted a study concurrently with the present study to determine the reasons for and against the academic acceptance of ASL as a foreign language, surveying the institutions identified by the present study that accepted ASL as a foreign language or were working toward that goal. Responses from 101 institutions were analyzed; multiple reasons for the acceptance or non-acceptance of ASL as a foreign language were received from some. Brown found that the most commonly cited reasons in favor of accepting ASL were (a) the recognition of ASL as a language by the institution ($n=46$), (b) recognition by state legislatures, state education codes, or state law ($n=18$), (c) trends in other institutions ($n=14$), (d) research supporting that ASL has a literature ($n=13$) and a culture ($n=11$),

(e) recognition that ASL can be a valuable asset to students ($n=10$), and (f) the number of students enrolled in sign classes and the demand for it as a requirement ($n=10$).

Brown (1996) found the primary arguments against acceptance of ASL were (a) differing beliefs about the nature of the language ($n=22$), (b) lack of ASL literature ($n=12$) and/or associated culture ($n=11$), (c) foreign language departments not accepting it into their ranks ($n=15$), and (d) the belief that ASL is not a true language ($n=11$). Brown noted that the primary theme in response to why ASL was not acceptable was, in fact, the exact reason used in support of its acceptance at 46 institutions. The academic position of ASL has made great progress, and, despite opposition, appears to be gaining acceptance.

It is likely that the data gathered in the present study underrepresents the group of institutions accepting, or working to accept, ASL as a foreign language, since the present study contacted institutions where sign language might be expected. Because ASL has also been accepted for transfer credit at institutions where it is not taught, it appears that the academic acceptance of sign language is not dependent on having sign language taught at the institution.

The issue of large class size is not unique to the teaching of sign language, since Huber (1993) identified the same problem with foreign language classes typically exceeding the recommended size. Both CIT and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) recommended class sizes of 12; typical foreign language classes have an average of 20-26 or more students per class (Huber, 1993), and typical sign language classes were found in this study to have the same sizes. In foreign language classes, second-year classes tended to be smaller in size; this was not true for sign language classes. It is not known whether this difference reflects higher interest in sign language classes or administrative decisions to keep classes larger and offer fewer sections.

Research Question #2: Characteristics of Administrators

Summary of the Results

Types of Program Administrators

The data suggested dichotomies among the group of responding administrators on several characteristics. There were administrators who were primarily involved with the teaching of sign language and those whose primary duties were administrative. The data also suggested dichotomies between administrators regarding level of signing skill and level of involvement in the deaf community.

Job Titles and Employment Status. The job titles and employment status of persons coordinating sign language classes and programs were categorized as primarily teachers (60%), administration (20%), or staff (20%). This phenomenon parallels the administration of foreign language programs. Huber (1989) found that in close to half of the institutions with foreign language programs, administrative decisions about how instruction was organized were made by program or divisional chairs whose field was not a foreign language. Huber believed that this organizational feature had important implications for the quality of affected programs. The present study found that the same issue affects sign language programs, found in departments or divisions where administrators are not always knowledgeable about sign language.

The findings showed that almost one fifth of the sign language administrators were employed by their institutions on a part-time basis (89% of whom were responsible for credit-bearing classes), and 14.5% were employed on a temporary basis (95% of whom were responsible for credit-bearing classes). Over three quarters of all the administrators had held their current positions for more than three years, and less than one quarter had been in their current position for less than three years. The findings that program administrators had varying years of experience and were distributed among all ranks of faculty positions support the findings of Teschner (1987), who identified a similar pattern in foreign language administrators. Teschner suggested that often “junior faculty” are required to do coordination based on the higher administration’s belief that “anyone can do it” without specialized training or experience.

Qualifications. The undergraduate majors of the administrators were widely varied, with only 11% in “deafness-specific” areas such as deaf education or sign language interpreting. However, at the graduate level, the number of “deafness-specific” majors more than doubled. For those administrators holding doctoral degrees, the most strongly represented area was education (25%), and most held doctoral degrees in a variety of other areas.

The data suggested that those administrators knowledgeable about deafness, as demonstrated by their fluency in sign language and personal time involved with deaf people, held positions of less status, as measured by their full-time equivalency and academic position status. Statistical analysis supported the conclusion that full-time positions had a greater likelihood of being held by people with less sign language skill. Workload

Duties. The job functions of sign language program administrators reflected a dichotomy. “Teaching” was ranked first by 139 individuals, reflecting the duties of a group of sign language program administrators who were primarily teachers. “Administration” was ranked first by 91 individuals, reflecting a group whose positions were primarily administrative. Both groups of respondents reported spending moderate amounts of time “Advising Students” and “Providing Service to the Institution and the Community.” “Research and Scholarship” was identified as the area where respondents spent the least amount of time.

Support. Little administrative support appeared to be provided to sign language administrators. Only 15.9% carried a reduced teaching load, 7.6% were offered additional months on their contracts, and 14.3% were provided a salary stipend. In contrast, Huber (1990) found that foreign language programs typically provided lighter teaching loads to their administrators, and more than 50% received a salary stipend.

Administrators’ Concerns

Management problems. More than half of the respondents stated that managing resources and a budget and obtaining and hiring staff were moderate to large problems. Evaluating instructors, handling complaints of staff members, and resolving students concerns were not significant problems. Responses were varied regarding the issue of lack of opportunity

to do research. Although one quarter of the respondents indicated this was not a problem, half reported it was either a moderate or large problem. These responses differed greatly from the responses of foreign language program administrators whose chief frustration was the lack of momentum for the Chair's own teaching and research (Cardenas, 1988).

Budgetary needs. Administrators reported what they would be likely to do with an extra \$5,000 provided to their sign language program. Although the most common items on the "wish list" were books and videotapes for the library, addition of new courses was identified as the single greatest need for most respondents. The data indicate that, although many administrators wanted more materials for their library, the need to add new courses was a higher priority. Other strong budgetary desires included providing in-service training for instructors and adding more sections of existing courses.

Priority issues. Lack of administrative support was the single issue facing the largest number of sign language program administrators. Respondents identified the need for money for expanding programs and the addition of full-time positions as their top priorities. The need to locate qualified instructors was the second most frequently mentioned issue. Insufficient demand for courses and filling higher level classes with minimums required by the institution was another major concern, as were institutional bureaucracy, lack of understanding of "deaf" issues, and administrator's lack of knowledge of the field or sign language. Inadequate resources, the approval of ASL as a foreign language, and departmental and curricular issues were also mentioned frequently. The need for in-service training and credentialing for instructors were seen as important priorities for several respondents, as was a need for a "program" for students, and greater levels of community involvement.

Discussion

The role of the administrator appears to be different depending on the relative status of the position. Those sign language program administrators who are full-time administrators appear to have different qualifications and different concerns than those whose primary responsibility is teaching. The part-time status, temporary status, and low-level academic degree

requirements of some sign language program administrators may reflect the status of sign language within those institutions. In these cases, one might question the institution's investment in sign language instruction and its perception of sign language as a second-class discipline.

The diverse signing skill level of administrators and level of involvement in the deaf community is manifest in the issues of qualifications, job duties, and in their perceptions of administrative concerns. Those administrators with greater involvement in the content area of their programs may bring different perspectives to the position than those who view sign language instruction purely from an administrative point-of-view.

The status of "research" as a low priority may have implications for sign language program administrators who are also faculty members. Research and scholarship were clearly identified as low-ranking priorities for sign language program administrators. Given the importance of research and scholarship at some institutions, the lack of emphasis on research and scholarship may present problems for some faculty members.

Whereas several of the problems and priority issues reported by the respondents were universal issues confronted by all post-secondary administrators, some may be unique to certain types of programs. Specifically, the issue of "finding qualified teachers" may be unique to emerging disciplines where training is not readily available and scholars are few and far between. Sign language program administrators' concerns are comparable to those in the discipline of Black Studies, where qualified teachers often cannot be obtained, leading to the cancellation of classes and subsequent decrease in student interest and enthusiasm (McKay, 1990). The administrative problem of lack of qualified instructors could have serious ramifications for the future of the sign language programs.

The lack of administrative support reported may be explained to some degree by the fact that approximately 40% of the respondents held staff or administrative positions and may (a) not teach at all, (b) already have 12-month contracts, and (c) have sign language program coordination as a part of their regular job duties, so that the provision of "extra" time and support

was not necessary. On the other hand, lack of administrative support for those administrators who were primarily teachers may be attributable to the institution's view of sign language as a second-class discipline.

The "wish list" of budgetary needs generated by this study reflects the types of concerns faced by many program administrators. Cardenas (1988) found that 51% of modern language program administrators believed that the funding level for their programs was inadequate. Like their modern language administrator counterparts, many of the sign language administrators believe that their perceived problems could be resolved with an injection of funding into the program.

Research Question #3: Characteristics of Teaching Staff

Summary of the Results

Characteristics and Qualifications of Sign Language Instructors

The status of sign language instructors in institutions of higher education has not improved as markedly as the status of sign language classes. The findings indicate that these professionals continue to be mostly part-time (see Table 29) and continue to hold lesser degrees than one might expect of faculty at an institution of higher education (see Table 30). In what other field are people with less than a Bachelor's degree qualified to teach credit-bearing post-secondary courses? Additionally, these instructors receive minimal supervision and feedback and minimal institutional support for in-service training or other professional development opportunities.

Table 29

Employment Status of Sign Language Instructors

<i>Researchers/Year</i>	<i>Percentage Full-time</i>	<i>Percentage Part-time</i>
Shroyer & Holmes, 1980	25%	75% (50% PT, 25% visiting)
Cogen & Moseley, 1984	35%	65%
Newell, 1995a	25%	75%
Cooper, 1997	22%	78%

Table 30

Educational Level of Sign Language Instructors

<i>Researchers/Year</i>	<i>Highest Degree Held</i>			
	<i>less than BA</i>	<i>Bachelor's</i>	<i>Master's</i>	<i>Doctorate</i>
Battison & Carter, 1982	16.0% or more	(84%: four or more years of college)		
Newell, 1995a	20.8%	22.5%	50.9%	5.8%
Cooper, 1997	20.6%	33.3%	40.3%	6.0%

The results of the present study indicated that there were more part-time than full-time sign language instructors. Over half of the institutions had no full-time faculty dedicated to teaching sign language, and of the remainder, half had only one full-time sign language instructor.

Table 31 provides a comparison of the gender distribution of sign language instructors over the past 15 years. The present study showed that of the part-time instructors, there were still significantly more women than men.

Table 31
Gender of Sign Language Instructors

<i>Researchers/Year</i>	<i>Percentage Male</i>	<i>Percentage Female</i>
Battison & Carter, 1982	29%	71%
Newell, 1995a	26%	74%
Cooper, 1997	36%	64%

Additionally, two trends noted by Newell (1995a) were also identified in this study: the percentage of deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors (see Table 32), and the experience level of instructors (see Table 33) have both increased since the early 1980s. The present study found differences in the hearing status of full-time and part-time sign language instructors. There were more hearing instructors than deaf and hard-of-hearing instructors holding full-time positions. Among the part-time instructors, there was no significant difference between numbers of deaf and hearing instructors.

Table 32
Hearing Status of Sign Language Instructors

<i>Researchers/Year</i>	<i>Percentage Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing</i>	<i>Percentage Hearing</i>
Battison & Carter, 1982	24%	76%
Delgado, 1984	22%	78%
Cogen & Moseley, 1984	30%	70%
Newell, 1995a	55%	45%
Cooper, 1997	47%	53%

Table 33
Years of Experience of Sign Language Instructors

<i>Researchers/Year</i>	<i>Number of Instructors</i>	<i>Percentage of instructors with > 3 years experience</i>
Battison & Carter, 1982	439	40.0%
Newell, 1995a	312	82.8%
Cooper, 1997	917	82.4%

Administrators' Expectations of Sign Language Instructors

The present findings indicated that post-secondary sign language instructors received little support in the form of supervision or in-service training opportunities, and there was little expectation that they would participate in professional development opportunities such as continuing education or institutional governance opportunities such as faculty meetings. Institutional funding was not available to most sign language faculty for travel or professional development. The data were consistent with research from the 1980s and with Newell's (1995a) findings.

Supervision of Sign Language Instructors

Only one third of the respondents indicated that supervision took place at their institutions, and only half of these were observed a minimum of once per year. Post-observation feedback meetings were provided to individual sign language instructors on only 19.5% of these campuses. Some campuses defined feedback and supervision as taking place through group meetings or student evaluations. When supervision is defined as a regular cycle of observations and feedback sessions, it is clear that not much supervision of sign language instruction is occurring.

Use of Teaching Assistants

Only one quarter of the institutions used sign language teaching assistants. One third of the teaching assistants were undergraduate students, one quarter were deaf individuals from the

community, one eighth were graduate students, and the remainder had varying status. In general, they had very limited prerequisites and did not receive special training. The lack of specialized training or proficiency testing for teaching assistants was also reported in the studies of foreign language programs (Schultz, 1980). However, most foreign language TAs held a minimum of a Bachelor's degree. Schulz's study (1980) yielded recommendations for the supervision of TAs, including more preparation for and gradual immersion into their teaching duties, training and released time for supervisors, and recognition of excellence and commitment in the classroom. Schulz concluded that the lower division courses, often taught by TAs, were "the lifeline of most departments (p. 8)," and it was crucial for students as well as for departments that program quality be monitored.

Discussion

Interpretation of the comparisons between the present study and Newell's study (1995a, 1995b) must consider the different populations sampled. Whereas Newell's study sampled the population of all ASL teachers, the present study only reported on sign language instructors teaching in institutions of higher education. Newell's study included the possibility of sign language instructors in non-credit classes, public schools, and adult and community education settings. Thus, the percentages of deaf instructors and full-time instructors may be higher than reported here when all venues are considered. Additionally, not all of the instructors identified in the present study teach only sign language; some are full-time faculty members who teach additional subject areas.

The issue of having a majority of faculty in part-time status is not unique to sign language. Other emerging disciplines demonstrate similar proportions. Due to a lack of qualified professionals, Black Studies programs also rely heavily on part-time faculty, causing the limited availability of courses each semester and ultimately resulting in a fragmented curriculum (Hine, 1990).

The professional status of sign language instructors has shown much improvement since the early 1980s. However, there are still many necessary improvements. There has always been

a need for continued teacher training and supervision. Newell (1995a) suggested the need for professional-level training for sign language instructors which, at the time of this writing, does not exist. The lack of training and proficiency requirements for sign language teaching assistants may also be of concern to administrators whose introductory-level courses serve as a recruiting mechanism for channeling more students into their major programs.

Research Question #4: Administrative Structure of Sign Language Programs

Summary of the Results

The institutions participating in this survey varied in their administrative structure. Some were colleges with limited programs under one roof; others were comprehensive universities with a full range of degrees and multiple campuses. Sign language was a complete program at some institutions, and a subprogram, single class, or series of classes within a department at others. Any attempt to fit the structures of many complex institutions into one mold would be difficult, if not impossible.

Position of Sign Language within the Institutional Structure

Program affiliation. Sign language classes were found in a range of programs and departments, including business, math, science and technology. Of those institutions indicating that sign language was affiliated with a particular academic program, sign language classes were most commonly affiliated with Interpreter Preparation Programs, followed by, in order of decreasing number, ASL/Deaf Studies Programs, Deaf Education Programs, and Speech Pathology/Audiology Programs. Across all programs, ASL was the most commonly taught form of sign language.

Department affiliation. At the department level, sign language was found in such a diversity of departments that the most commonly reported department was “other,” which included liberal arts, humanities, health and human services, and others. Of the departments specifically identified by the sampling design of this study, sign language classes were most

commonly found in speech pathology/audiology, education, language and culture, and continuing education. Across all departments, ASL was the most commonly taught form of sign language.

Sign Language as a Requirement of Other Programs

Sign language was found to be a requirement of at least one program at more than one third of the institutions surveyed and was a requirement for up to four programs at two institutions. There was no difference in the status of sign language as a required course between two-year and four-year/graduate institutions.

Program Governance

Advisory boards. Only one fifth of the responding programs had advisory boards. Those that did have boards appear to have a balance of deaf and hearing individuals and a balance of academic and non-academic representatives.

Hiring decisions. Hiring recommendations were made by front-line personnel who were qualified by virtue of their experience in the field to make such recommendations. These decisions were approved, for the most part, by the department chair who was qualified by his or her job function to make such approval.

Curriculum decisions. Curricular recommendations were made by front-line personnel who were qualified by virtue of their experience in the field to make such recommendations. These decisions were approved by persons with a variety of different job titles who were qualified by their job function to make such approval.

Placement of Students

At most institutions, students with previous signing experience were placed into classes according to instructor screening and approval. School-made tests, administrative decisions, and high school or college transfer credits were also used.

Planned Changes

More than one third of the respondents indicated that changes were planned regarding the structure of their programs. The most common changes anticipated were the expansion of course

offerings; addition of certificate, degree, or minor programs; modification of curriculum or course requirements; and increases in the number of credit hours for sign language classes.

Discussion

The status of sign language programs as a part of other programs or departments creates certain limitations. It was found that sign language classes were not always known to faculty and administrators within their own institution. This point was made clear when a list of “Less Commonly Taught Languages” obtained from the University of Minnesota for the mailing list for this study did not include sign language classes on dozens of campuses where it was known to be taught.

Cogen and Moseley (1984) found that virtually all sign language programs were linked to other programs, and their content and structure was dictated by the parent programs. They suggested that there was a new entity, the ASL-only program, beginning to emerge.

Cogen and Moseley’s prediction appears to be coming true. This study identified a handful of ASL-only programs, but they were not identified as departments. Whereas there are benefits to being part of a larger department such as the ability to augment curriculum and develop interdisciplinary offerings, there are also drawbacks. Loss of autonomy and administrators’ lack of knowledge of the subject matter were some of the problems identified in the comparison studies and in this study.

The review of the literature indicated that the comparison groups (Modern Languages, Women’s Studies, Black Studies) experienced these drawbacks as their programs and departments were established (Andreadis, 1988; Hine, 1990; Huber, 1989; *NWSA Directory*, 1990). Huber (1989) found that being a part of a joint program forced a lack of autonomy and inhibited the development of curriculum growth. Modern Languages, Black Studies, and Women’s Studies each faced issues of lack of autonomy and lesser degrees offered, resulting from their “secondary status.” Additionally, approval of decisions as found in this study, was made by persons primarily qualified by their job function, who may not have the educational or experiential background in the content area. This corresponds with the comments of those

respondents who indicated that the biggest issue facing them in administering a sign language program was their own superiors' lack of knowledge of deafness and sign language.

It appears that sign language is still mostly under the auspices of other departments, although its contributions to many disciplines are being noticed. As a requirement for an increasing number of academic programs, as well as a viable way to fulfill general education and foreign/modern language requirements, sign language is becoming entrenched within many institutions. Sign language classes provide valuable service to many institutions. Although it is still an emerging academic discipline, sign language has made great strides in the world of academia recently.

In the area of placement of experienced students, more than half of the foreign/modern language programs use standardized testing. Such testing does not exist for sign language students. In fact, the varying program structures, forms of sign language taught, and content areas covered may make such standardized testing impossible until a higher degree of standardization can be achieved.

Research Question #5: Sign Language Program Content

Summary of the Results

Standardization of Multisection Introductory Courses

Administrative aspects. Decision-making was handled very differently across all institutions. Approximately one quarter of the institutions indicated that decisions regarding uniform administration of sign language courses were made by sign language program coordinators, another one quarter indicated that decisions were made by a group of instructors, another fifth indicated that decisions were made by the entire faculty, and the remaining institutions cited the department chair or another type of group as being responsible.

Course content. Textbooks were standardized at more than three quarters of the institutions with multiple sections. The most commonly used books/curricula were *Signing*

Naturally, used on over half of these campuses, followed by *Learning ASL* and *A Basic Course in American Sign Language*.

Respondents identified which topics were incorporated into their introductory level sign language classes. Topics including the Deaf Community/Deaf Culture, History of Sign Language, and the Sign Language Continuum were covered at most institutions.

Assessing Student Progress

Almost all of the respondents reported using both live and written evaluations of students' progress. Measurement of progress at almost all institutions was done through the use of in-class assignments, expressive presentations, written exams, out-of-class assignments, and expressive videotaped presentations. Most institutions used several of the techniques listed.

Resources

Special programming. Some campuses offered enrichment opportunities for highly motivated students such as off-campus immersion experiences; designated areas in dormitories, cafeterias, or other "signing only" locations; intensive courses; and "study abroad" programs (such as an exchange program with Gallaudet University). Many respondents listed additional ways in which they accommodate highly motivated students, including practica and field experiences, student clubs, participation in deaf social settings or deaf community events, attendance at workshops or seminars, referrals to other institutions of higher education, signing-only lunches or suppers, living with deaf family or roommates, and other creative individualized techniques.

Deaf-related resources. Respondents reported that institutions made certain resources available to sign language students including books on deaf-related topics, deaf-related videotapes and journals, deaf students on campus, centralized deaf-related information, video laboratories, student clubs, and more. Books and videotapes were the most commonly available resources.

Use of Voice

Respondents identified whether their sign language classes had policies regarding the use of voice in the classroom, regardless of type of sign language taught. More than one third of the institutions reported a policy in effect, 94% of which indicated a “limited or no voice” policy. Several other institutions reported that the use of voice in the classroom was discouraged.

Students were discouraged from using their voices in the classroom. At 22.4% of the institutions, students’ use of voice was strictly not permitted, and at 58.7% it was only allowed on a very limited basis. Only 18.9% of the institutions reported that students were permitted to use their voices in class.

Discussion

Some standardization was found in the administrative aspects and course content of multisection introductory-level courses. More uniformity appeared to be present regarding the resources available and the assessment techniques used for sign language students across institutions.

The variations in administration and course content of multisection introductory-level sign language classes were more pronounced than in comparable studies of foreign/modern language programs reviewed. This variation of course content has the potential to be a problem as students from these classes proceed to second-level classes where students from different instructors, with varying backgrounds from first-level classes, converge on a second-level instructor. A similar problem may also occur with transfer students, although the effect of a small number of students is less pronounced. An instructor can work independently to help individual students catch up to the rest of the class. Planning lessons for groups who do not have similar foundations requires much more work for an instructor and has implications for all students in the class.

Schulz (1978), after studying foreign language programs, suggested that department heads should insist on joint development and coordination because the lower level classes

establish the foundation in the subject area. Therefore, the teachers must have realistic objectives that can be covered by all and mastered by a majority. Lack of standardization among sign language classes affects students moving from first-level to second-level classes and transfer students and can also impact on teachers. Increased standardization would also increase instructors' opportunities to bring their experiences to more IHEs.

Although program structure and course content varied greatly among the institutions surveyed, there were commonalities found. Many of the programs provided similar types of resources to their students and offered similar types of enrichment opportunities.

Research Question #6: Recommendations of Administrators

Summary of the Results

The data obtained suggested specific differences in the perspectives of the respondents. Administrators' investment in the field of sign language was measured by incorporating their years of signing experience, sign language skill, and time personally involved with deaf people. Administrators' primary responsibility was identified as either "teaching" or "administration." These groupings were determined by responses to the question identifying how administrators spent most of their time. The responses of individuals within each dichotomy were compared, and differences were noticeable on several issues. Additionally, the "teaching" group was compared to the "administration" group, and differences were found in their perceptions of certain qualifications for sign language instructors.

Perspectives on Administrative Decisions

Program location. The largest group of administrators thought that sign language classes should be housed within the department of foreign or modern languages. The next largest group thought that sign language should have its own department, and the third-largest group suggested placement within the department of Speech Pathology/Audiology.

Administrators' levels of involvement with deaf people and signing were considered. Significantly more of the "least signing" group suggested that sign language be housed in a

speech pathology or audiology department than the “most signing” group. Fewer of the “least signing” group suggested that sign language belonged in a Deaf Studies department than those in the “most signing” group.

Foreign language requirement. Almost all of the respondents agreed that ASL should be considered an acceptable language in terms of satisfying institutional foreign language requirements. This issue was considered in terms of the respondents’ levels of involvement with sign language. More of the “most signing” administrators favored acceptance of ASL as a foreign language than the “least signing.”

Class size. Slightly over half of the respondents believed that sign language classes should have between 8 and 15 students. The minimum response was 8 students per class, the maximum was 35. No differences were noticed based on level of signing skill or teacher/administrator orientation. These recommendations may stem from the need for student/teacher interactions and the availability of teaching materials and lab facilities.

Transfer credits. Slightly over half of the respondents favored applying sign language credits toward a modern or foreign language elective, and one fifth suggested that it be accepted as a general elective. A few said it should be considered an elective in communication sciences/speech pathology and audiology or special education. Some wrote responses indicating that acceptance would depend on the contents of the course and/or the credibility of the instructor, and should be evaluated on an individual basis.

Perspectives on Staffing Issues

Qualifications of Instructors. Prior work experience with sign language and fluent signing skills were reported as the most important qualifications for sign language teachers. Certification by RID and ASLTA were ranked the least important qualifications. Differences were found between the “most signing” and “least signing” respondents. The “most signing” respondents saw “knowledge of second language learning theory” and “native use of sign communication” as more important than their “least signing” peers.

Skills for instructors. Proficiency in signing was reported to be the most necessary skill for sign language instructors. Knowledge of methods and strategies for teaching sign language, knowledge of the linguistic structure of ASL, and knowledge of deaf culture were also important.

Use of class time and weighting of grades. Most of the respondents believed that receptive skills should be weighted most heavily, expressive skills second, and information about deaf people should carry the least weight.

Evaluation of student progress. Live signing was suggested as the best way to evaluate student progress, followed by videotaped signing, written exams, papers, and other methods such as interaction with deaf people, projects, and presentations.

Qualifications for sign language program coordinators. Most respondents indicated that a Master's degree should be the minimum requirement for the coordinator of a post-secondary sign language program.. The most commonly recommended degrees were degrees in ASL/Sign Language, Interpreting, Linguistics; any deaf-related degree; and degrees in Education or Rehabilitation.

Most respondents reported that the sign language program coordinator should have some level of signing proficiency, although 20% reported that signing should not be required or that beginning through intermediate level skills were acceptable. One third believed that advanced level skills were necessary. Almost half of the respondents indicated that native or near-native signing skills should be required. More of the "least signing" administrators reported that signing skills should not be required of sign language program administrators, and more of the "teaching" administrators reported that sign language program administrators' signing skills should be fluent.

Use of sign language coordinator's time. Teaching was ranked as the top priority by half of the respondents, and administration was ranked first by almost half. A few respondents indicated that advising students, service to the institution, and research and scholarship should be a top priority. The "teaching" administrators reported that teaching should be the top priority for

sign language program administrators, and the “administration” respondents indicated that administration should be the top priority.

The relationship between teacher/administrator and least signing/most signing was examined. The level of signing skill showed differences according to the individual’s primary job duty. More of the “teachers” were involved with signing and the deaf community than their “administrator” counterparts.

Discussion

Respondents reported their opinions on how sign language transfer credits should be evaluated. Their opinions, however, must be interpreted in terms of what programs exist at individual institutions. For example, sign language could not be accepted for speech pathology credits at an institution where speech pathology is not taught. Additionally, it is important to realize that these administrators have no control over policy decisions made in departments other than their own. A speech pathology department chair could not approve sign language for foreign language credit.

The qualifications and skills identified as most important for sign language instructors approximated the findings of Newell (1995a, 1995b) and Kanda and Fleischer (1988). Whereas knowledge of and ability to explain the linguistics of ASL was ranked first by Newell’s respondents, it was ranked third by respondents to this study. Proficiency in signing, ranked first in this study, was ranked second by Newell’s respondents. This difference, while potentially insignificant, may also be explained by the different populations sampled. Whereas Newell surveyed the teachers themselves, the present study sought recommendations from the administrators who indicated differing levels of involvement with direct sign language instruction.

The results of this study suggest differences in the ways that those with varying investment in sign language perceive its function. Those who were primarily “teachers” were more involved with the deaf community and signing, and appeared to have signing integrated

into their lives as a method of communication and a way of life. Those who were primarily “administrators” and were not as invested may view signing from a more academic perspective.

Limitations of the Study

Particular conditions may have influenced the scope and results of this study. These conditions lie in the selection of the sample, timing of the study, wording of the questionnaire, and analysis of data.

Selection of the Sample

The generalizability of this study may be limited by the sample. This study included the responses of 301 institutions and was not a comprehensive study of all sign language classes and programs in the country. The sampling frame was limited to those institutions contacted by the researcher (directly or via the Internet). Additionally, the sampling frame to whom the questionnaires were sent were institutions expected to teach sign language due to certain majors offered. The results of this study may not be generalizable to institutions outside the network of institutions known or expected to teach sign language. The sample of 301 institutions includes data from 49 institutions where sign language is taught only as a non-credit class and 17 institutions only offering a single section of a sign language class (not mutually exclusive categories). Finally, the sample was limited to those who took the time to complete the lengthy 12-page questionnaire.

The use of the term “sign language program” in the initial mailing lead some potential respondents whose institutions offered one or two classes to opt not to complete the questionnaire. This was found to be true of the respondents to the follow-up postcards; 47.8% ($n=33$) indicated that the reason they did not complete the questionnaire was due to the use of the term “program.” The postcard results show that many institutions offering few sign language classes did not respond. The survey sample included those responding institutions with only one or two sign language classes, however, the proportions of institutions with few sign language classes are not represented proportionately. Despite these limitations, this researcher is

confident that the responding sample presents an accurate representation of sign language instruction in IHEs. The sample size was large and there was diversity in all responses.

Timing of the Study

There may have been effects from the questionnaire being mailed out so close to the end of the 1994-95 academic year. Follow-up could not be done during the summer while potential respondents may not have been available, so in order to receive the maximum number of responses, data collection continued until December 1995 despite the original deadline of May 1995. As a result, some of the respondents who waited until Fall 1995 to submit their responses included information on the 1995-96 academic year, whereas this study was intended to describe the status of sign language during the 1994-95 academic year. Questionnaires were screened and every effort made to present only information based on 1994-95, requiring that some information received be excluded from the results. A final effect of the timing of this study was that changes occurred at many institutions during the lengthy data collection period. Several institutions responding during the spring of 1995 provided updates regarding changes later in 1995 and decisions were made about which changes to include.

The Questionnaire

Wording of the Questionnaire

Some items on the questionnaire may not have been worded sufficiently clearly to elicit the desired response. Some questions sought a single response, yet multiple responses were provided. Some questions requested the respondent to rank a certain number of items; in some cases respondents ranked two items at the same level or provided check marks instead of rank ordering. In each of these cases, the response was either recoded in a way that maintained the intention of the respondent, or that particular response was deleted from the data.

Some questions may not have been sufficiently specific. Sign language administrators were asked to identify the total number of instructors in their sign language programs. The next question asked them to identify “how many of your 1994-95 full-time instructors are male, female, tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track, deaf, hearing, hard-of-hearing.” It appears that

some administrators who were responsible for more than sign language programs provided information on all instructors under their supervision. For example, one institution was reported to have one section of one sign language class and was also reported to have thirteen full-time instructors. Such responses may have indicated that the respondents misunderstood questions. Every effort was made to exclude information provided about instructors teaching only other disciplines when it could be identified. Data from this section were compared to data regarding the numbers of sections offered to determine the validity of the response. Follow-up phone calls were made when necessary.

The present study did not contain any questions to differentiate between those whose focus was only teaching or administering sign language and those who had other types of teaching and administrative responsibilities. However, from the job titles and job duty priorities provided, it is clear that the data analyzed includes data on those individuals who may teach and administer sign language classes along with other classes in other disciplines.

Misinterpretation

Some data regarding number of sections taught appeared suspicious in that respondents may have misread the question and only reported the number of sections taught during one semester. Thus, it is possible that the actual numbers of classes and corresponding means are higher than the present results indicate.

Self-reporting of Results

Although the use of questionnaires is the only practical way to obtain large amounts of data from a large sample size, there are inherent problems. Data in this study were collected from self-reported responses from the participants; interpretations of the data were drawn from their perceptions. The researcher has no control over the interpretation that respondents assigned to particular questions.

The information on which forms of sign language were taught was reported as it was provided. There was no way to identify respondents' definitions of ASL, contact signing, and signed English. These results, therefore, may be viewed with some skepticism, as also noted by

Cogen and Moseley (1984), who noticed great discrepancy in the use of the term “ASL” and came to view it in course titles skeptically. Although the term ASL is in widespread use, it may not be defined consistently across campuses.

Additionally, respondents rated their own sign language skills, and provided their own recommendations in Part F of the questionnaire. It was impossible to verify these self-reports with objective data.

Analysis of the Data

The total number of institutions represented in this survey was relatively large, as was the amount of data collected. Additionally, not every respondent completed every item on the questionnaire. For these two reasons, it was impossible to compare every variable to every other variable. Every effort was made to keep the data clean, and report on only valid cases for each item analyzed.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations are based on the results of the current study. The numbers represent the research questions from which the recommendations were derived.

1. Administrators of sign language programs should use the data presented in this study to support their efforts to have ASL accepted as a foreign/modern language at their institutions.
2. The “wish list” of budgetary needs generated by this study reflects the needs of over 200 sign language program administrators. This information may be helpful to administrators of all sign language programs in developing needs assessments to apply to their own programs. Institutions may wish to create time for faculty to do research on the teaching of sign language. The publication of such research would provide much-needed information for this growing field, and visibility for the institutions sponsoring such research.
3. The administrative problem of lack of qualified instructors could have serious ramifications for the future of the sign language programs. Master’s and Doctoral-level programs

in teaching sign language are needed to provide appropriate credentials and standardized entry-level requirements for post-secondary sign language instructors. The establishment of such programs will provide opportunities to train instructors of sign language to teach in institutions of higher education. These programs should address the existence of three forms of sign language currently reported to be taught in IHEs.

More full-time sign language teaching positions within institutions of higher education would provide added status to the position and ensure that curricular and programmatic decisions will take into consideration the expertise of those familiar with the specialized needs of sign language instruction. As a temporary measure, including part-time sign language faculty in faculty meetings, decision-making processes, ongoing supervision, and professional development funding distribution may help improve the quality of sign language programs on campuses.

Institutions should enforce higher qualifications for sign language instructors. When possible, graduate level degrees should be required. When not possible, supervision, in-service training, and professional development should be supported and encouraged by the institution.

4, 5. Institutions teaching multiple sections of classes, particularly introductory level classes, should make every effort to have as many features of these classes as possible standardized. Standardized tests of signing proficiency should be developed in order to place transfer students into appropriate classes. Development of such tests may be a project that ASLTA should consider.

6. ASLTA should publish position papers on recommended class sizes and recommended number of class meetings per week in order to ensure optimal learning experiences.

Implications for Future Research

There are several issues raised by this study suggesting the need for further research. Additional studies tracking the growth and status of sign language programs would be beneficial. Future research will be particularly helpful in following the historical path of the status of ASL in fulfilling foreign/modern language requirements in IHEs.

There were comparatively few institutions reporting that their sign language programs were decreasing in size or being discontinued. However, it may be of interest to administrators to identify the reasons that institutions discontinue teaching sign language.

This study did not address the questions of “additional responsibilities” of sign language program administrators and sign language instructors. It was not determined how many administrators have responsibilities other than administering sign language programs, and how many instructors teach other courses in addition to sign language as part of their full-time responsibility. The analysis of how administrators’ and teachers’ time is spent would be important to understand more clearly the status of sign language at each institution.

The issue of minority sign language faculty was not investigated in the present study. This would be an interesting topic for further research. Recruitment and hiring of minority faculty would provide excellent role models for minority students interested in pursuing careers working with deaf people, and other studies have already demonstrated the need for minority role models across all disciplines.

The findings regarding the differences between signing/non-signing administrators could be examined further to identify the implications of each type of administrator of a sign language program. Differences between “teaching” and “administering” administrators could also be examined.

Research should be conducted to determine if there is a difference in the learning outcomes between those students who attend sign language classes once or twice per week and those who attend three to five times per week. This research should be compared with the literature on foreign language instruction.

The need for sign language classes reflecting different “tracks” should be investigated. IHEs might want to consider establishing a track for preprofessionals and professionals working with deaf people and students interested in deaf studies and culture, and a track for students with general education needs.

Additional research should investigate the definitions and accuracy of the use of the term ASL in course titles and course descriptions.

The administrative aspects of sign language programs have never been thoroughly investigated before. There should be a 5-year cycle in which this type of study is repeated. The following recommendations are made, based on the present study.

- Questionnaires should be mailed out closer to the beginning of the year, in order to obtain a better response rate.
- The questionnaire should be shorter and focus on only one aspect of program administration per study.
- All responses to all questionnaire items should be mutually exclusive.
- Responses to questionnaire items should clearly indicate whether an institution offers one class, several classes, or a program. Data should only be gathered on similar types of sign language offerings.
- Credit and non-credit classes should be surveyed separately.
- The wording of the questionnaire should clearly indicate which items apply to sign language instructors so that administrators will not include data on personnel who do not teach sign language.
- If data is gathered regarding credit hours or contact hours, the question should specify whether the desired response refers to per week or per semester.
- Issues regarding recruitment and employment of minority faculty should be investigated.
- Data should be gathered regarding the availability of sign language majors, minors, undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees and other credentials at each institution.

- Future investigators should ask specifically which structure best describes how sign language fits into each IHE: a formal program, its own department or course work within a list of specific departments.

SUMMARY

The results of this study showed the growth and emergence of sign language as an academic discipline over the past few decades. Sign language is accepted for both graduate and undergraduate credit at many institutions and is also accepted by many IHEs in fulfillment of institutional foreign language and general education requirements. ASL is the most commonly taught form of sign language. The qualifications of instructors, however, have not kept pace with the improved status of the academic discipline. There is a need for graduate training for teachers of sign language. There is also a need for greater standardization of multisection courses within institutions.

Handwritten notes to the researcher on many of the completed questionnaires expressed sentiments of excitement and hope regarding the growth and improved status of sign language at individuals' own institutions and across the country. As more of the planned and desired changes take place, the coming decade appears to be an exciting one for the professionals in the field of post-secondary sign language instruction.

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