

**IDENTITY, IMAGINED COMMUNITIES, AND THE THIRD SPACE
IN THE LIFE OF A HARD OF HEARING STUDENT IN A
HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE PROGRAM**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study based on the life of a hard of hearing student in a mainstream high school is to examine ways in which the representation of hearing impairment mediates the participation within an imagined community. In an interview, “Lisa,” a nineteen year old, hard of hearing woman, reflects on the influence of the high school drama program two years after her graduation, recalling her attempt to cope with an increased loss of hearing, a cochlear implant, lip reading, the learning of sign language, and the ever-essential quest – making friends – in the chaotic and verbally dominated community of an after school theatre program. This paper is situated in research such as Norton (2006), in which second language proficiency is exposed as the gatekeeper to social worlds, examining the negotiated identities and their relationship to inequitable distribution of power. The role of the teacher is also explored in the socialisation of a hard of hearing adolescent in a hearing society. This study discusses the conflict of two cultural and linguistic communities – the deaf and hard of hearing community, using A.S.L. (American Sign Language) or S.E.E. (Signed Exact English), and the hearing community, using English. How does she negotiate an identity when denied membership in both communities? The influence of imagined communities is explored (Anderson, 1991; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) in collaboration with the creation of the third space through shared dreams (Gutierrez et al, 1999). Lisa moves from accepting to resisting her representation as an “outsider” and “incapable deaf girl,” developing strategies to communicate with her imagined community, and negotiating her identity as a valued member of the school. As Lisa finds leadership outside of the classroom, the role of extracurricular activities and their potential to redistribute power is discussed. The findings witness her shift of power from seeking symbolic resources to giving symbolic resources (Bourdieu, 1991), which opens the door to the unexpected community for a hard of hearing student: the school musical.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Research Questions.....	14
Participant	15
Researcher/Teacher.....	16
Interview	17
Analysis Procedures.....	17
Setting	19
Overview.....	19
Lisa's History.....	21
CHAPTER THREE	35
English Class.....	35
Drama Class	40
CHAPTER FOUR.....	48
The School Musical	48
Grade 12.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE	56
Lisa Today	56
CHAPTER SIX.....	64
Discussion and Conclusion.....	64
Works Cited	69
Appendices.....	73
Appendix A: UBC Research Ethics Board's Certificate of Approval.....	73
Appendix B: Lisa's Consent Form	74
Appendix C: Interview Schedule.....	77
Appendix D: Emergent Themes.....	78

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

With My Hands I Can...

With my hands I can
Fly a plane,
Pluck a guitar,
Shout,
Tell a story,
Cry...

With my hands I can
Frown,
Dance,
Smile,
Take a chance...
Tell me what you can do with
your Voice?

By Maria Grace Okwara (as quoted in Adams and Rohring, 2004, p.75)

Because language plays a critical role in the negotiation of identity (Norton, 2006), how might a hard of hearing student find membership in an imagined community if entrance is dependent on communication with a larger hearing society? An imagined community is threatened to live only in the imagination if the person seeking membership has a voice that is unheard, unrecognized or unvalued. In the following chapters, I examine the inequitable distributions of power in the life of my hard of hearing student, “Lisa,” offering an overview of her elementary and high school years, but paying specific attention to her grade 11 and 12 years, integrated into a mainstream school.

My involvement and deep commitment to this student increased monumentally the day her mother visited me at the school. A caring and compassionate woman, Lisa's mom came to see me due to her great concern over her daughter's severe loneliness and sense of isolation. She talked with me for some time, but one story stood out in particular. She described Lisa spending her lunch hour hiding in the bathroom, crying, waiting for the miserable sixty minutes to end. There is no greater way to feel lonely than to walk through the hallways of your peers who are laughing and enjoying each other's company, yet there is no place for you in amongst the many groups. As a result, Lisa hid, alone in the bathroom. I was determined to keep this from happening again, and I was embarrassed to admit that I had no idea she was experiencing school in this way. Lisa always smiled and participated during both classes in which she was my student, English and Drama. I was unaware of how she was spending her free time. In an attempt to avoid further painful lunch hours, Lisa's mom drove at least 30 minutes to school each day to pick up her daughter at lunch. They spent this time together. As considerate as this gesture was, I knew it would only exacerbate the problem. How could Lisa connect with her peers if she wasn't there to connect with them?

Throughout this chapter, I will examine specific events involving Lisa's experiences at the school, both in and out of the classroom, her acceptance of imposed representations, her resistance to these representations and the ultimate creation of a third space, which led to entrance into an unexpected imagined community: the school musical. First, I will situate my reflections and data in the context of previous theories and research.

Literature Review

Many researchers have explored the role of language in the negotiation of identities within a social world. Bourdieu (1991) places great credence on not only words spoken but on the person who speaks them. He brings to light the social dynamics at play during communication – the power of one’s words is accredited to the value given to the person speaking them. Therefore, if a person is unrecognised, her words are not heard, regardless of their value. This creates a great dilemma: the hard of hearing person must find membership within a hearing world before she may contribute to it. One must negotiate this power through the use of language (Norton, 2000). Before any power can be negotiated, it has to be imagined. Anderson (1991), from a political perspective, coined the term “imagined communities.” He defines nationalism as a product of our imaginations, largely due to the fact that a sense of community is created amongst a group of people who will never meet. Their connection is a creation of the mind. Pavlenko and Norton (2007) move the term “imagined communities” from the political arena to the world of second language learners. They discuss the inequitable access to cultural communities – the legitimate membership of second language learners into the target community is sometimes never achieved due to the invisible nature of minorities within the dominant group (the *unimagined* membership). Dagenais (2003) and Kanno (2003) have contributed much needed research, exploring the role of schools and parents in the creation of imagined communities. It is integral for a society to imagine the future

collectively in order for dreams to shift from the mind to reality. Dreams cannot be realized with the efforts of a single person. The hearing world must dream for the inclusion of a deaf and hard of hearing community. For the community to be created, it requires the dominant group to dream *with* the non-dominant group, creating a third space.

In an interview with Rutherford (1990, p.211), Homi Bhabha says:

...all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity...hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.

What does this mean for the integration of hard of hearing students in a mainstream school? The third space is a place of friction, conflict and diversity (Guteirrez, 1999), and it is through this tension that power is negotiated and new voices heard. A school is often a place with multiple cultures and languages. Through the co-existence of these groups, a new dialogue emerges and a place for the hard of hearing is found. Legitimate membership for the deaf and hard of hearing in a hearing community is initially imagined and then realised in a third space. To understand the struggles that exist within the deaf and hard of hearing culture within a hegemonic society, attention must be paid to research which examines the community members, their language and their sociocultural identities.

Within the deaf and hard of hearing community, a movement erupted, in which many positioned themselves as a cultural linguistic minority as opposed to a group of people deficient due to a sensory loss. In the 1980s, Carol Padden, a deaf activist, fought for the definition of “culture” to include the deaf community, but membership was not determined simply by one’s inability to hear; rather, it was determined by one’s *ability* to use A.S.L., American Sign Language (Adams and Rohring, 2004). This movement allowed for people with hearing loss to develop a sense of belonging within a social network and to generate pride in their language. The benefits are clear, but a great obstacle remains – how does one exist in the larger hearing world?

If hearing impaired individuals wish to obtain optimum success in the economic, educational and yes, social dimensions of life, it is necessary to learn the social skills associated with the culture in which one lives. (Schloss and Smith, 1990, p. viii)

Parents debate whether or not to enrol their deaf or hard of hearing children in residential schools, which can provide needed language development in A.S.L., or mainstream schools, which can provide needed communication development in the hearing world. The majority of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents (Power and Hyde, 2003; Adams and Rohring, 2004), which highlights the importance of seeking opportunities for language development and role models elsewhere. As many studies have shown, residential schools offer opportunities for their students which are not equally available at mainstream schools. For example, leadership roles are rarely afforded to the hearing impaired teenager. Socially, these young people often suffer from severe loneliness and isolation due to a lack of communication with their hearing peers.

One study noted, “Deaf students in the mainstream frequently reported not being invited to parties and other social events attended by their hearing peers” (Foster, 1988, 1982; Mertens, 1989 as quoted in Holcomb, 1996, p. 184). Upon reflection of his mainstream experience, one student in the study said, “I was feeling lonely because no one seems to ask me to participate” (Holcomb, 1996, p.191). Another said, “I had no one to be with” (Holcomb, 1996, p.192). Why does such loneliness exist and what can be done to prevent it?

The hearing community may not know how to communicate effectively with those who are hard of hearing. In addition, many adolescent social activities are inaccessible for the hearing impaired: talking on the phone, going to the movies, and attending school dances. However, many other activities are available: text messaging, emailing, renting movies with subtitles, or just hanging out in small groups. The barriers to successful communication need to be explored not only by peers but by teachers and administrators as well.

Access to information is the chief obstacle for any hard of hearing student, particularly in high school. From childhood to the teenage years, ability to use language develops. Vocabulary becomes more advanced, sentence structures are increasingly complex, and abstract ideas are of the utmost importance in classroom discussions (Mahshie et al, 2006). In order for a hard of hearing student to access this new dialogue, the potential obstacles need to be eliminated or at the very least downsized. Communication for those with a hearing loss is heavily reliant on visual cues; therefore,

teachers and administrators need to provide those cues with the help of a support team (interpreters, district resource teachers, buddy systems, etc.) (Schloss and Smith, 1990). As recognised by multiple researchers, teachers need to provide more than communication support by encouraging the development of a bicultural/bilingual community. Role models need to be actively included into the curriculum (Anderson and Miller, 2004/2005).

In addition to creating access to a diverse community for all students, teachers can help to support their students with hearing loss by fostering a sense of independence. Weisel, Most and Efron (2005) pointed to the over-involvement of some adults in the lives of hard of hearing young people in order to control social interactions, but the result is the youths' inability or lack of confidence to initiate. Students need to develop self-advocacy skills to contribute within a hearing world. They need to develop a sense of comfort when discussing their communication needs, because educating those around them will be a permanent part of their lives. Eriks-Brophy et al (2006, p. 68) presented a young boy in their research who said, "I wanted to fit in more, I wanted to be dependent on myself and not on my itinerant teacher." Students need to be empowered.

Extracurricular activities are an excellent way to develop a healthy identity in a social world.

Leisure is an important context for adolescent development in that it provides opportunities for youth to select and manage their own experiences by exerting personal control over their environments and becoming autonomous in their actions. (Silbereisen and Eyferth, 1986, as quoted in Darling, 2005, p. 493)

Activities that take place outside of the classroom provide another opportunity for students to negotiate their identities and engage with one another in an informal setting.

Research has indicated that involvement in school activities contributes to various positive attributes, including higher self-esteem, increased positive peer interaction, and a stronger sense of belonging. (Marks and Cohen, 1978; Mergendoller, 1982; Tripp and Turner, 1986 as quoted in Holcomb, 1996, p. 182)

This involvement is even more essential in the life of a hard of hearing youth who may struggle to create meaningful relationships. Students with a hearing loss can use participation in extracurricular activities as an opportunity to display leadership and strengths, shifting focus from disabilities to abilities. Participation in a club or team can also offer legitimate membership in a community with a common goal. Experience in such a community is essential for all members to recognize the potential of each individual. Contributing to a shared dream points to the earlier discussion; first, a community needs to be imagined, and then it may be realised in the third space. Is it possible for the arts to play a role in the construction of this space?

The arts have long been used as a process through which to develop community. In Lowe's article, "Creating Community: Art for Community Development" (2000), a drama project is studied to understand its impact on participants. The community comes together to create a play, and through the process solidarity is found – a collective identity. The group of neighbours that were divided by culture, language, and age were brought together with a shared interest in the arts, which gave them the opportunity to

interact socially and develop relationships. Lowe posits that it is the arts that combat the isolation that is too often found in society. When art is valued, self is valued.

If art and identity can be clearly linked in community building projects, the role of drama communities in high schools ought to be studied to better understand their influence on young people in the education system. Extra-curricular activities in school settings are extremely influential on the lives of young people, contributing to their positive youth developments (Eccles, 2003; Johnston et al, 2004; Kahne, 2001; Larson 2000). Today's youth need to be empowered as valued members in society, and this is achieved when they are given decision-making opportunities, ultimately acting as change agents.

As caregivers and educators, our inclination is to do things “to” youth and “for” youth rather than “with” youth. The insight of positive youth development is that young people thrive when we listen to them, respect them as current contributors, and engage with them in meaningful investment in the community. (Johnston Nicholson et al, 2004, p.55)

Extra-curricular activities – when designed to value and empower young people – can offer the possibility of identity negotiation and voice discovery. What might happen if teenagers were given the opportunity to use the arts to discover their own voices?

Identity negotiation and construction takes place in after-school settings with the arts as a communication medium. Conrad (2005) values the potential of drama, in particular, to change the lives of youth. She suggests that the process of character development on the stage leads to the students' ability to “create new roles for

themselves, to create new knowledge, to become producers of culture” (Conrad, 2005, p.38). In this paper, I argue that students can create new roles for themselves both onstage and off. As a contributing member of the production team, a student working backstage can experience a great sense of satisfaction and value. In a society that does not give teenagers meaningful decision-making opportunities, drama has the potential to create culture producers rather than culture consumers. Identities, as shown by Norton (1995, 2006), are continuously shifting; therefore, society’s prescribed identities are often limiting to a young person’s complex and often contradictory perception of self. Through the creation of a drama production, young people learn that role negotiation on the stage can transfer to role negotiation in real life. Young people are empowered, learning that they have a role to play in the construction of their individual identities and communities.

Who is denied access to particular communities? Who is denied the opportunity to self-represent? As shown earlier, hard of hearing students experience life too often from the margins, on the periphery. Fortunately, studies have shown that the arts have the potential to position oppressed or marginalised students as legitimate members in their target peer groups; although, most of the studies consider “gender stereotyping, sexual harassment and cliquishness,” for example, as leading contributors to discomfort in schools (Astor, Meyer, and Behre, 1999 as cited in Nicholson et al, 2004), but more research is needed to explore the potential of drama to benefit those living with sensory losses. Researchers have examined drama in the identity development of girls, for example, arguing that the potential of drama, at its best, is to give life to the imagination and to “unfix” restrictive and prescribed identities, liberating girls, allowing them to

define and create their own roles – their own reality (Boehm & Boehm, 2003; Gallagher, 2000; Hatton, 2003; Lev-Aladgem & First, 2004). Theatre has also played a role in the emancipation of those who are silenced and victimised due to race. The Black Power movement, for example, evolved through the desire for black art to be offered to black audiences (Elam Jr., 1997). B.A.R.T.S. (Black Arts Repertory Theatre School) and B.R.T. (Black Revolutionary Theatre) were established in response to the constant struggles and oppression facing African Americans. Questions about inequalities erupted. Suddenly, the voices of African Americans were heard by black audiences and expressed by black actors. The horrors of World War II were also contrasted by the benefits of theatre. Through humour and creative banter, prisoners of concentration camps found relief through theatrical performances (Wolff, 1999). Plays surreptitiously barbed the Nazis, yet the mockery went unrecognized by the guards. The anti-Nazi performances gave strength to the prisoners during a time of unimaginable terror, serving “to hearten the prisoners for weeks” (Wolff, 1999, p. 146). Beyond a momentary reprieve from hell, the performances provided the prisoners with a determination to defy their oppressors and resist the dehumanisation of their beings. Many artists and researchers have been inspired by Augusto Boal, because he has fought for years to use theatre to bring about solidarity, protesting that theatre needs to represent “us” not “I” (1996). Privileged voices often prevail in society, yet theatre has a history of dismantling traditional systems of power distribution and exposing alternate ways of being to the public eye. Because a large body of literature exists on the role of drama to give power to those oppressed by gender stereotyping and race, for example, I aim to satisfy a need

for more research on the potential of drama to redistribute power in the lives of those who are hard of hearing.

Theatre is a legitimate participant in the ongoing struggle for social justice. If theatre can have such a profound impact on those who have been historically oppressed, it is important to ask how theatre can shape the lives of young people who are continually discovering and redefining themselves in high school. Freire (1970), in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, critiques the traditional “banking system” of education in which students are fed information by their teachers, and the role of the students is to simply echo the teacher’s words. Freire contends that this approach to education is harmful; students should play a central role in the process of their own learning. Liberty must be created *with* the oppressed, not *for* the oppressed, because this collaboration exhibits a genuine trust in the abilities of the oppressed to develop a solution. Young people have a great capacity to learn when they are given the opportunity to lead. In order for youth to be empowered, teachers need to relinquish some of their power and control. As previously shown, marginalised groups use theatre to imagine and create a new reality, but how does this translate to the high school environment? Qualitative research must be conducted to elucidate the impact that drama communities have on young people when they are placed in decision-making positions, when they have a stake in their own learning, when they have control over their own representation.

Booth (2003) contends that theatre is essential in the education of young people because it teaches them that they are valuable contributors to society. Theatre teaches

young people that they count; therefore, theatre, Booth argues, can no longer be categorised as a want, but rather, it must be categorised as a need.

I need for students of all ages to be shocked and surprised by ideas that can only be shared in the safety of the theatre frame; I need the sounds of powerful language filling their impoverished word world; I need for them to sense how they and those on stage breathe simultaneously as one; I need to witness the struggle of students of every age participating in drama work, listening to each other as they interact, so that they begin to see that everyone matters if the fiction is to become real. (p. 21-22)

Drawing on Booth's theory that participation in theatre and the tension that accompanies it teaches those involved that "everyone matters," my research explores the experiences of a student working backstage. A great deal of literature examines the influence of performance on the lives of the actors (Boal, 2003; Boehm et al, 2003; Conrad, 2005; Elam Jr., 1997; Gallagher, 2000; Gonzalez, 2006; Hatton, 2003; Heathcote, 1984; Lev-Aladgem et al, 2004; Lowe, 2000; Wolff, 1999), but more studies are needed on the people who work behind the scenes. My study will examine if Booth's theory, "everyone matters," is applicable in the life of a hard of hearing student searching for self-value while working backstage in a high school musical.

Beyond examining my student's experiences in high school, this paper will also consider my reflections as her teacher. Reflective practitioner research is essential because, as Philip Taylor (1996) argues, educational research in the arts includes limited authors. The discussion needs to expand the inclusion of new positions, new ideas, and new voices. Taylor suggests that "arts educators' ability to investigate fully why they make the decisions they do, or how they reflect in action, might unravel the intricate and

messy happenings which characterize a pedagogical moment” (1996, p. 30). The messiness is inevitable as teachers, in their attempt to accommodate students’ developmental needs, offer students opportunities to practise self-agency (Gonzalez, 2006; Heathcote, 1984). Reflection is needed on this redistribution of power.

This case study will aim to elucidate the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the participant, expressing her struggles and victories in a high school drama community. Her voice will be the forefront of the investigation. The goal of my research is to share the experiences of a hard of hearing student before, during, and after her participation in a high school drama program, honestly exposing her pitfalls and triumphs while investigating the role of language on her participation and non-participation within that community.

Research Questions

This study will explore the following questions:

1. How does language acquisition influence access to imagined communities for hearing impaired students?
2. How does a student with a severe to profound hearing loss find community in a mainstream high school?
3. How does involvement in a drama program influence the identity negotiation for a hard of hearing student?

Participant

This research includes a case study based on the experiences of “Lisa” in the drama program at “Carson Secondary.” To protect the identity of the participant, I have used the pseudonym, Lisa, and the fictional school name, Carson Secondary. The research was ethically approved by the University of British Columbia (see Appendix A). Lisa is a graduate from the high school; therefore, the study examines her reflections on the drama program and its influence over her identity negotiation. Included in this research are my own reflections as Lisa’s Drama and English teacher.

I have chosen to focus on Lisa, a drama student with a hearing loss, because I had the unique experience of teaching her in both Drama and English in grade 11, and she also became involved in an extracurricular activity, the school musical, which I supervised. During her grade 11 and 12 years, she participated backstage in the school musical as a dresser. Lisa had a sincere commitment to the musical as she continued to volunteer her time backstage at Carson in her two years as a college student. Because I spent such a significant amount of time with Lisa, I am able to reflect in detail on her socialisation at Carson, and Lisa, herself, is a very articulate young woman who can clearly express the role that the school musical has played in the renegotiation of her representation.

Lisa is a 19 year old college student who graduated from Carson in 2006. She attended Carson for grades 11 and 12 after having been home schooled for her grade 10 year. During her two years in post-secondary life, she has worked as an accounts receivable clerk at a car dealership while attending college. Lisa describes herself as having a severe to profound hearing loss, which contributed profoundly to her difficulties socialising at Carson.

Researcher/Teacher

I have been an English and Drama teacher for ten years, and during one of those years I also taught E.S.L. For the last three years I have taught one block of drama to students with special needs. In addition to working with mainstream students and special needs students, I have also been part of a small group of teachers who originated a leadership program at Carson. Through this program, I teach English to highly academic and gifted students who are selected through a critical review process. After school, I sponsor a club, "Thespians," in which senior high school students direct the junior students in one-act plays. I also stage manage the school musicals each year, overseeing the countless volunteers who support the productions from behind the scenes. In total, I have worked at three different schools. For the past six years, I have been teaching at Carson Secondary. I am a white, monolingual, hearing person.

Interview

Lisa was a voluntary participant in the study. Because I asked a student who is a graduate from high school to participate, she did not need to concern herself with any repercussions for sharing her views openly with me, as I am now her former teacher. Being 19 years old, Lisa signed a consent form agreeing to be interviewed for the purposes of this study (See Appendix B). Before interviewing Lisa, I asked if she would prefer to conduct the interview over email or in person, giving her the option to communicate with me in a manner that was most comfortable to her. She chose to meet me in person. My interview with Lisa was an hour and a half – audio-taped and later transcribed. The interview was open-ended. I prepared an interview schedule (See Appendix C), but I encouraged the participant not to feel restricted by the questions. I wanted her to express her thoughts, memories, and reflections openly. To encourage an informal environment, my interview with Lisa was conducted in a park near her home on a beautiful, sunny day. The interview was very informal and conversational.

Analysis Procedures

The interview transcription is the central source of data collection in this study. To familiarize myself further with Lisa's thoughts, I transcribed the interview, approximately one and a half hours of conversation, into 27 pages of dialogue. While spending time transcribing the information, I made a list of emerging themes (See Appendix D). Once I finished the transcriptions, I re-read the interview multiple times

and condensed my list to a few major themes and sub-themes that continually surfaced throughout the transcriptions. Under each category, I listed the relevant quotes, and I began to add my own analytical notes to the emergent themes. Some of the themes included “Identity,” “Community,” “Third Space,” “Resistance,” “Power,” and “Imagination.”

The study also includes my reflections as participant-observer. As a drama teacher, stage manager of the school musicals, and sponsor of the extracurricular drama club, I was actively involved in the drama program, and therefore, actively part of the participant’s high school life. This study includes my own memories and reflections in addition to those of the participant. My notes include many of the same memories as Lisa; although, some include conversations with parents, other students, and staff members – conversations in which Lisa did not participate, adding new insight to the data.

In order to capture Lisa’s voice genuinely, I conducted a lengthy interview, which I audio-taped. During the interview, she shared both the obstacles and triumphs that accompanied her involvement in the drama program and her overall socialisation at Carson. Lisa shared her memories of being a sixteen year old, hard of hearing girl whose imagined community was within the school musical.

Setting

Carson Secondary is located in an affluent neighbourhood in the lower mainland of British Columbia. Approximately 1200 students attend the school, and a large part of the population is categorised as E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) learners. The population has multiple ethnic, racial and linguistic communities, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Russian, Indian, Trinidadian, Jewish and European. The school includes grades 8 through 12, and it has a strong academic reputation. The majority of students are represented as university bound, but the school also has a special program catering to students with individual learning needs, focusing on the development of life skills. Study Skills is another program that exists at Carson to support students who require smaller teacher/student ratios to overcome learning challenges. Within the fine arts department, the drama program caters to a large number of students as many of them participate in both the classes and extracurricular drama activities.

Overview

I will examine Lisa's experiences within the boundaries of the school curriculum, both in English 11 and Acting 11, discussing levels of integration that were successful and otherwise. In addition, I will analyse her time working backstage as a dresser for the school musical in order to provide insights into her non-classroom socialisation with her hearing peers. Included in this study will be my reflections on conversations with her interpreter, a member of her support team, and her mother.

While reflecting on my year teaching Lisa and my four years working with Lisa backstage, I became aware of the important influence of power to negotiate identities and the inequitable distributions of power throughout the school. This study discusses Lisa's daily struggles to integrate within a hearing world and my struggles as a teacher to support her. Themes of identity development, imagined communities, and third spaces will arise through discussion of the school happenings.

Before analysing Lisa's time in the extra-curricular theatre program and its contributions to her socialisation at Carson, I will first assess her history before coming to Carson Secondary, as seen in the section "Lisa's History." I will also examine her time in my two classes, English 11 and Acting 11. The first few situations highlighted below, "English Class" and "Drama Class" will paint a picture of Lisa's experiences before her mother discussed with me how Lisa was spending her lunch hours in the bathroom. The two following segments, "The School Musical" and "Grade 12," will explore Lisa's experiences after my discussion with her mom. Finally, I will conclude Lisa's story by updating the reader on her life, following her experiences at Carson. The segment is called, "Lisa Today."

CHAPTER TWO

Lisa's History

Before discussing Lisa's involvement within the drama program at Carson, I will share the history of her hearing loss. Lisa strongly believes that she was born hearing.

Lisa: Um, as far as the doctors and my parents and even, innately, as I'm concerned, I was born hearing. And then I got to be one and a half, my parents started to notice [my hearing loss]...And then by the time I was two and a half, three, I got my first hearing aids. I had a little bit of speech, but it wasn't much at all. I had speech therapy. I had walking therapy. Everything.

Lisa's speech development was delayed, as is the case with many children coping with hearing impairment (Svirsky et al, 2000). Because she was unable to hear people speak, her own ability to learn verbal communication suffered. As a result, she worked with a speech therapist. Walking therapy was also necessary, a common form of treatment for children with hearing loss, because this sensory impairment is often accompanied by a loss of balance.

In my interview with Lisa, she explains how her level of hearing differs from that of a fully hearing person: "I have what you call a severe to profound hearing loss. So, technically, on paper, I can hear thirty decibels without my hearing aid. With my hearing aid on, it's about 80." She goes on to explain that most hearing people are capable of hearing 100 decibels in each ear, giving them a total of 200 decibels, but Lisa is limited to a total of 80 decibels with the assistance of her hearing aid.

Faced with the reality of a child who has a severe to profound hearing loss, Lisa's parents had to make a decision about her education – a mainstream school or a school for the deaf and hard of hearing. This decision would have a profound impact on Lisa's academic and social development. They came to the conclusion that mainstreaming Lisa would be the best choice; therefore, Lisa was set up with an FM system in order to hear her teachers speaking.

Lisa: So I had an FM system...it connects to your hearing aid - a little mic that connects to your hearing aid - and the teacher has a microphone and they speak into it and then you can sort of hear them.

Being able to “sort of hear” her teachers must have made learning the curricula extremely challenging. To cope within a hearing classroom, Lisa developed strategies to keep pace with the other students:

Lisa: For the most part I was always relying on lip reading skills. I would also rely on my ability to follow the leader, and go with what everybody else was doing. It was a lot of guessing.

It is important to note that for eleven years, Lisa's education involved the FM system, lip reading, following the lead of her peers, and guessing, but it did not involve an interpreter. Lisa struggled to hear her teachers, yet she was expected to progress academically with her peers. While the hearing students focussed on their learning and socialising, Lisa spent an enormous amount of energy simply trying to understand the many voices around her. On the other hand, having spent years in mainstream schools,

Lisa developed excellent lip reading skills. She learned to function in a hearing world, despite the overwhelming obstacles.

School was not Lisa's only exposure to a hearing society: she experienced a very aural upbringing in her family. Both of her parents are hearing and they do not know any sign language.

Lisa: My parents have never really learned it. My mom has, to her credit, made an effort to try, but I think my parents are slightly older. And for them, it's just not a natural language for them...For our main, primary mode of communication at home, it's just speech, talking, in whatever language.

Lisa's dad is Italian and her mom is Brazilian; therefore, three languages are used in Lisa's home life: Italian, Portuguese, and English. When Lisa was a child, doctors recommended to her parents that she be raised in a monolingual home in order to improve her language skills. As a result, her parents chose primarily to use English at home. With the loss of her parents' languages in the house, an important part of Lisa's culture and heritage was kept from her. As Norton (1997) explains, ownership of language is a major contributor to identity construction. With the recommendation of her doctors, Lisa was separated from her parents' languages and, therefore, lost ownership of what once belonged to her – her language, her identity. At one point in Lisa's youth, she spoke Portuguese more fluently than English. Fear led the decision-making surrounding her language acquisition:

Lisa: I stopped speaking Portuguese all together because I was scared I was going to lose my English. But I look back in hindsight now, and I kind of realise, that's

not true. I could've had both, fluently, along the way...Again, my parents were just doing what they thought was best for me.

Fortunately, her exposure to Italian and Portuguese did not entirely disappear. Lisa has spent a great deal of time with her extended family in Brazil (they do not speak English fluently), which has ensured that she maintains some Portuguese. In addition, she has had Italian relatives stay in her home, during which time Italian is spoken. When Lisa's parents do not understand something in English, Lisa translates for them. Because her doctors and parents were making choices with the information they had at the time, Lisa is not fluent in all three languages, but she, fortunately, has maintained the ability to converse with her family.

Lisa's hearing loss disconnected her from fully immersing herself in her culture as shown through her loss of fluency in both of her parents' first languages, but her connection to her English speaking society was also threatened when she experienced increased hearing impairment at school one day.

Lisa: I've always had a severe to profound hearing loss. It was always stable. It was never fluctuating. And then in grade nine, I was in gym class one day, and it all of a sudden felt like somebody threw me under water or something. It kind of....I felt an echo. The sound sort of hurt.

Theresa: The sound hurt?

Lisa: It hurt a little bit. So what happened was that my tolerance level for sound had actually dropped. So what it meant is that my hearing got a little bit worse because they had to turn my hearing aid settings so low, to the point where I could tolerate the sound, but then I couldn't hear it.

Lisa's hearing aid gave her access to the hearing world and allowed her to participate within it, but with a decrease in tolerance for sound, she was incapable of using her hearing aid at the level to which she had become accustomed. Because she did not know sign language, her parents did not know sign language, and no one at school was signing to her, it was utterly essential that she have the ability to communicate with spoken English. Lisa explained to me that her frustration levels increased astronomically. She was heavily reliant on a device that she could no longer use in any useful way. She was isolated and cut off from not only her teachers and peers, but also from her own parents.

Because verbal communication became extremely difficult for Lisa, sign language was finally introduced into her life from January to June of grade nine. She was given an interpreter, but the interpreter was only provided for two out of her eight classes. She was still expected to struggle in the remaining six. Nevertheless, Lisa's initial exposure to sign language was an awakening, a realisation that an entirely new mode of communication was available to her that did not require her to hear. Finally, she was introduced to a language that she could understand.

Lisa: It just opened up a whole new world for me, and I somehow...I understood the language...It was interesting because the minute that I met my interpreter and the minute she started signing, it was almost like a light went on in my head. It was like I understood. It's so weird because I can't explain how it just felt so natural...It was amazing.

A weight had been lifted from Lisa's shoulders. She was no longer expected to guess and follow the lead of others. Rather, she was given the opportunity to participate – to hear with her eyes and speak with her hands.

A.S.L. (American Sign Language) is a common form of sign language used in North America, yet Lisa learned to sign using S.E.E. (Signed Exact English). Because Lisa was accustomed to communicating in spoken English, her interpreter started her introduction into sign language by signing exactly what was said in English, word for word. This gave Lisa access to the language in a way that was familiar to her. In addition, her interpreter would verbally say everything that was being signed, allowing Lisa to lip read if necessary. Through this process, she was able to learn S.E.E. Eventually, Lisa was introduced to A.S.L., which is not a direct translation from English into sign. It is its own language with its own rules. Lisa described A.S.L. as a language of concepts and pictures that requires one to use his/her imagination.

Because language plays a major role in the construction of identity (Miller, 2000; Norton, 1997, 2000, 2006; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), Lisa's exposure to sign language was not only an opportunity to communicate; it was an opportunity to negotiate her sense of self. It was an introduction to a community to which she had not previously belonged, a community that she knew existed but one in which she was not a member. With her exposure to sign language, the doors were starting to open to a community of A.S.L. users. Lisa was beginning to discover a new language, a new culture, a new identity, but she could only share this with her interpreter. A.S.L. simultaneously connected her to the hearing world and kept her from it; it connected her to the deaf and hard of hearing world, yet she had no one with whom to communicate, other than her interpreter. Hovering between two communities, both incomplete, Lisa, with the support of her

parents, elected to undergo surgery in order to be fitted with a cochlear implant – a final attempt to hear.

Lisa: Because I wasn't benefiting from my hearing aid anymore, I was so frustrated. My parents couldn't sign. I had very few people around me that could sign, just my interpreter at that point...so I was so frustrated. I wasn't hearing stuff. I was missing out. I needed to hear...I felt really isolated. The hearing world, in a sense, was the only world I ever really knew. I felt like, 'I'm lost without hearing.' So I made the decision to get a cochlear implant.

In an article on speech recognition using cochlear implants, Wilson et al (1991) describes how the system works:

A cochlear implant system consists of one or more implanted electrodes for direct electrical activation of the auditory nerve, an external speech processor that transforms a microphone input into stimuli for each electrode, and a transcutaneous (rf-link) or per-cutaneous (direct) connection between the processor and the electrodes. (p. 236)

The implant essentially converts natural sound to electronic sound. As a result, Lisa had to relearn every sound. The crinkling sound of a crumpled piece of paper as she previously knew it, now had an electronic cue to which her brain had to adapt. Imagine for a moment the shock Lisa must have experienced upon hearing her own parents' voices through her cochlear implant. They would be unrecognisable. In an attempt to become a legitimate member of the hearing world, Lisa would first have to experience a complete disconnect from everything and everyone she once knew. She would have to relearn how to interpret sound at the age of fifteen. Lisa describes the experience:

Because a cochlear implant isn't like regular hearing at all...the sounds are so different. I heard some with it. It's more that you have to train your brain how to hear with it. It would take me a while to decipher exactly what that sound was. So, like, for example, water running, I would have to be cognitive. I think the frustrating part for me was that I knew what water running sounded like. You know. It sounded so funny with a cochlear implant. It didn't sound like water running at all. It was noise. That's what it was. Everything was just noise.

Lisa and her parents recognised that the process would be incredibly trying, so in an attempt to alleviate some of the ongoing challenges, Lisa was home schooled for her grade 10 year. She successfully completed grade 10 at home, all the while hoping to turn “noise” into identifiable sound. If she could master this process, she imagined that this would give her the opportunity to participate fully in the hearing world as a legitimate member. Her imagined community was a clear target.

Because Lisa was being trained to hear, she did not have an interpreter; therefore, her access to sign language was gone. In many ways this mirrored her experience with Portuguese and Italian. Because she chose to use a cochlear implant, she had to face the consequences of her decision: a monolingual life yet again.

In addition to losing A.S.L., Lisa's hearing aid was taken away from her. In fact, it was hidden. For ten months, Lisa was not given access to her hearing aid, which had always been a great source of comfort. As Lisa stated, “For all intents and purposes, I was deaf for about ten months.” Lisa describes this time as a “horrible process” for both her and her parents. In our interview, she wanted to be clear that her parents were merely following the directions of the audiologist. If Lisa was to benefit from the cochlear implant, she would have to be separated from her hearing aid.

Lisa: I cried. I think it was scary for me, and I've got a lot of anger over it too, because I couldn't hear. I had this thing that could help me hear sound, and I wasn't allowed to use it...I was mad. I was frustrated. I couldn't hear anything. My parents' communication was horrible. I had to read their lips. My speech had gotten worse because I couldn't hear myself talk. So, you know, I was talking in more of a deaf way.

Lisa had such high hopes that the cochlear implant would give her the gift of sound, but she was unprepared for the ironic silence that accompanied it and the painful emotional journey she would have to experience. Her self-esteem suffered as a result of her verbal communication changing. One could anticipate the angst that Lisa would experience when she could no longer recognise the sounds of those around her, but one may not consider that the loss of her hearing aid would prevent her from hearing herself. She lost the sound of her own voice. She was not only losing a connection to the world around her; she was losing a connection to herself. The sound of her voice changed. She began talking in a "deaf way," separating herself further from her imagined community, the hearing world.

How much more might Lisa have to endure? Unfortunately, her struggles remained. A side effect of the cochlear implant that Lisa experienced was facial nerve twitching. "Pretty much, everything that I heard, I not only heard it, but I felt it." She gave the example of someone slamming a cup on a table. Her brain interpreted the sound as pain, causing her face to twitch. Lisa was unaware that this was not supposed to happen. She thought it was part of the cochlear implant package – a necessary by-product of hearing.

Lisa needed to find a form of escape, because without her hearing aid, she had lost sound. With her cochlear implant, she only heard unrecognisable noise. Ironically, her escape from the silence was music.

Lisa: I was lucky enough that I could hear music without my hearing aid if I had the thing that goes in your ears, the inner ear headphones, I'd use those. And I'd listen to the music when I had it cranked up. That was the only thing that I heard... Yeah, that's what got me through, because that was the only thing I heard. Like, for ten months I could barely hear my parents' voices. That was my way of getting through it.

Music gave her strength to persevere, foreshadowing what would help her to survive her two years at Carson– the school musical.

After experiencing incomprehensible levels of stress following her cochlear implant surgery and year of home schooling, Lisa began to prepare herself for re-entering high school. The adjustments would be vast as Lisa would have to attend school for the first time without the use of her hearing aid, a daunting prospect.

Lisa's investment in the hearing community was vehement. She exemplified the deep levels of her investment by undergoing surgery, living without a hearing aid for 10 months, re-learning sound, and leaving high school to be home schooled. Her sacrifices to enter her imagined community were profound. Despite these many sacrifices, Lisa knew that going back to a mainstream school and simply subsisting would not be enough. She wanted to be academically successful and she wanted to make friends. She had

given up the possibility of a social life that exists only in high school when she chose to continue her education at home, so she was ready to claim her membership as a legitimate member of the grade eleven student body. Lisa recognised that she would struggle to manage school work and to socialise with her peers because she was still learning to hear with her cochlear implant. With her imagined community in mind, Lisa knew that she would have to improve her communication in order to participate, but how was this going to happen? Lisa dared to demand an interpreter – a request her parents were reluctant to support.

Lisa: Before I even came to [Carson], they didn't want me to have an interpreter, because they wanted me to just hear with [my cochlear implant] and learn.

Theresa: Why?

Lisa: Their reasoning is that if I had an interpreter, I'd be so focussed on the interpreter that I wouldn't be listening to what the teacher was saying. But I refused. I told them, 'No, I'm going to have an interpreter there, because I'm not going into a new school, grade eleven, sixteen years old, and it's my last two years of high school, and I really want to get everything. And I've missed so much up until now. I don't think it's too much to ask that I get everything for once.' So, I stuck to my guns, and they had no choice. And that was the best thing I ever did.

How did Lisa find the strength to stand up to her parents and insist on an interpreter? If Lisa continued her final two years of high school having to guess her way through her education, she knew that she would not be reaching her full potential. Her brief exposure to sign language in grade nine highlighted for Lisa how much she had been missing prior to having an interpreter. Before returning to high school, she knew that she needed to restructure the communication process so that she would have equal opportunities to knowledge as her hearing peers. With her interpreter in place, Lisa successfully reframed

the power relationship between the hearing society and herself. Her desire to understand her teachers and her peers outranked her parents' desires to have her learn solely with her cochlear implant. Lisa, for the first time, gained control over her own education needs. She discovered her voice, and with this identity recognition, she discovered the power of her voice to create change.

In the article, "Social Identity, Investment and Learning," Norton (1995) studies immigrant women; in particular, their investment in learning English is examined in terms of their social identities. Norton writes:

...if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners will expect or hope to have a good return on that investment – a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (p.17)

In other words, immigrant women were motivated to learn English depending upon their investment to learn the language. For example, if being fluent in English meant that a woman's children would be better educated, then she would be more motivated to learn the language. The return on her investment would be educated children, which in turn would offer symbolic and material resources, such as social status and employment. Her desire to learn is in relationship with her investment to learn. I argue that Lisa, as a sign language learner, was extremely motivated to learn A.S.L., as it signified access to the hearing world. If she could gain access to the hearing world, then she could gain membership within it. She was beginning to envision herself as a full participant in high school as opposed to an outside observer or non-participant. Lisa did not only want to

exist within high school; she wanted to make meaningful contributions to its community. Her investment led to a shift in power, an identity negotiation, and potential access to an imagined community.

Fortunately for Lisa, “Joan,” the assigned interpreter at Carson Secondary, voluntarily went to Lisa’s house, free of charge, to teach her sign language during the summer months. These lessons in A.S.L. were integral if Lisa was to integrate into a mainstream high school by fall. Lisa’s gratitude, two years after high school with Joan, remains strong: “She’s such an amazing person. I’m so blessed to have her in my life. She changed it, really she did.”

Lisa’s demand of having an interpreter would not come without a cost. Because the school board had a limited number of available interpreters, she would have to change schools. Beyond being identified as the “deaf girl,” Lisa would also have to develop strategies to cope with being the “new girl.” As a new student at Carson, Lisa did not have any pre-existing relationships with her peers; whereas, the majority of the students at Carson had been attending the school since grade eight. Cliques were already pre-established upon her arrival. Lisa’s goal to belong within a hearing school would involve multiple struggles and emotional pitfalls. Her imagined community was not going to offer automatic membership upon arrival. In order for Lisa’s dream to be realised, she would first have to imagine it. That she had accomplished. While in high school, she would learn that membership in a community requires social dreaming, not merely the dream of one. Social dreaming occurs in the third space (Gutiérrez et al, 1999;

Rutherford, 1990), a space where diversity meets opportunity. Would the third space exist at Carson Secondary?

CHAPTER THREE

Having reviewed Lisa's history before reaching Carson, I will now examine Lisa's experiences in my English and Drama classes. I will do this by using my own reflections as Lisa's teacher, and I will, of course, highlight Lisa's memories of her own experiences and feelings during this time. How did Lisa manage to cope with her new cochlear implant in a mainstream high school? What was the influence of A.S.L. on her ability to communicate with teachers and peers? Did Lisa make friends and find a community in which to belong? How could I, as her teacher, help her to find acceptance within herself and among her peers? With stress that was unfathomable, Lisa started grade eleven at Carson Secondary.

English Class

In my English 11 class, I had two hard of hearing students, Lisa and "Alice." The school provided them with an interpreter, "Joan," who signed in A.S.L., translating what I said and the discussions that included the other hearing students. At the beginning of the year, the district resource teacher provided me with information on students with hearing loss, and she organized a meeting with herself, the interpreters, and teachers of hard of hearing students. As a result of that meeting and conversations between the interpreter and me, I decided to place both Lisa and Alice at the front of the classroom. This gave them clear access to any visual cues that I could provide and a clear sight line

to the interpreter positioned near me. During class discussions, I tried to write all key words on the board in order to highlight necessary terminology for academic success. This helped not only my hard of hearing students but all students in the class. Lisa would periodically get involved orally in class discussions, but I noticed that it was occasionally difficult for her to follow the conversations.

Because both hard of hearing students were placed at the front of the room, they in turn had their backs to all the other students. Lisa's signing abilities were quite good, but she also used lip reading a great deal in order to communicate. This meant that she would turn away from the interpreter at times in order to see the students(s) speaking, as well as turning to include herself in the dialogue. She then would turn back to Joan if she got lost. Imagine the great difficulty Lisa would have in participating in a conversation, when she never faced the individuals who were speaking. Due to the lack of eye contact, the student with hearing loss is instantly situated as the "outsider." Another obstacle that surfaced during classroom discussions, of which there were many, was the limited ability of one interpreter to represent the true nature of any verbal discussion fully. An interpreter can only sign for one person at a time, yet conversations often include students speaking over one another, not to mention the quiet asides that occur throughout the lesson. Joan might be interpreting one person's contribution to a conversation, when suddenly the whole class laughs due to a quick interjection by another. Both Lisa and Alice are excluded from the spontaneity of the moment. They are not let in on the joke until it has already passed.

At Carson Secondary, each lesson is 80 minutes in length, which increases the need for shifts in activities. I would often include small group work as another way of learning, and this permitted students to have the opportunity to discuss using more informal language. In addition, it encouraged social connections, creating a congenial and safe environment for the students to share ideas. A problem arose, which I did not predict. Alice and Lisa were not close friends and preferred to work with different groups, yet there was only one interpreter in the room. Joan could not be in two places at once. Alice and Lisa certainly did not dislike each other by any means; they just did not have a close connection. Alice, having been at the school longer, had a small but committed group in which she belonged. Lisa, on the other hand, did not have a group of friends in which to situate. Despite their lack of closeness, simply sharing the space with another hard of hearing student made a positive impact on Lisa. She recalls, "The cool thing about the English [class] is that I had the other student that was needing the interpreter there too, so it was nice to know that I wasn't alone." Lisa was no longer the only hard of hearing student in school. She shared the hard of hearing experience with another person, which slightly lifted the loneliness of her existence in high school. Nevertheless, Lisa needed to build meaningful connections. It was integral for Lisa to interact with her peers in order to find a place in her imagined community.

I dealt with this problem through trial and error. I attempted giving them the opportunity to work with whomever they chose, encouraging the development of identities with different social circles. The downfall of this approach was that the interpreter was left to divide her time between two groups. As a result, information, both

academic and casual, was lost for Alice and Lisa. The group work also meant that 30 students in the room were encouraged to discuss and speak to one another, creating a loud environment, which was not conducive for Alice or Lisa's learning. Upon reflection, I could have given both Alice and Lisa's groups a quiet space to talk, outside of the classroom. Another possible solution would be to remove two of the other groups to another space, keeping both Alice and Lisa's groups in the classroom, but creating a slightly quieter environment.

On other occasions I encouraged Lisa and Alice to work in the same group to ensure the necessary information was being passed on through the interpreter. Again, this had its downfall. The students were given greater access to necessary information, yet the continual presence of an adult (Joan) in the group likely changed the conversations, the content and the way in which the students spoke. Groups speak differently, depending on their audience. Lisa, who had not yet situated herself in a group of friends, was particularly in need of opportunities to create social connections, yet she would never be given access to meaningful relationships if an adult were always present.

From my perspective as the teacher, I believed that having an interpreter was essential for Lisa's education but potentially hazardous to her socialisation. What I did not understand until my interview with Lisa was that she was far more socially isolated without an interpreter than she was with one. Lisa explained, "It helped me knowing that I had somebody. That I wasn't responsible for trying to figure everything out.

Somebody was being my ears for me for once.” I had not considered the incredible responsibility Lisa carried, having to self-educate in many ways. Joan was able to lift this weight off her shoulders, take away the guessing, and insert concrete answers. Joan’s job as an interpreter was to sign everything that was being said in the room, giving Lisa the opportunity to understand group discussions and social interactions for the first time. Lisa was painfully aware that she was not connecting to her peers in a meaningful way, but she was connecting more than she had ever connected before.

To magnify Lisa’s struggles in her first year at Carson further, Lisa started to gain a limited amount of hearing back in her left ear, potentially resulting from the medicine she received post-surgery or from her intense ear training she received. Why would increased hearing ever be perceived as a problem? Normally, this would be deemed an unexpected gift, but for a person with a cochlear implant, it results in multiple and contradictory stimuli being sent to the brain. It meant that Lisa would sit in class, gather information from the sign language, hear limited sound in one ear, and a fraction of a second later she would hear the electronic sound in the other. It was as though an echo was occurring in her head at all times. Despite these communication barriers, Lisa attempted to succeed academically and make friends in a new school. The stress was unfathomable. This dilemma was even more profound in the drama classroom.

Drama Class

I conduct my drama classes in a very different manner from my English classes. The very nature of the physical space – no desks – requires a different approach to the teaching. The students are given much more physical freedom (e.g., no assigned seating) and the emphasis on verbal interaction is heightened. The following is a typical outline of the Acting 11 class: 1) P.A. announcements, 2) class discussion, 3) group rehearsal and 4) group performance. Each activity contained a multitude of barriers for a hard of hearing person.

To intensify the obstacles further, the interpreter provided by the school board during Drama was temporary. The district had so few trained interpreters, yet the need was great. Another student at a different school was considered to have a need more paramount than Lisa's, due to his severe hearing loss. As a result, the interpreter was reassigned to another school. For the majority of the year, Lisa was left to fend for herself in an environment that produced even greater obstacles than an academic class. I would argue that the school officials likely viewed an elective as less important than an academic class; hence, an interpreter was not provided. At this point, a parent has more power to create change than the student or the teacher. Lisa has a right for equal access to information, yet her needs were overlooked. I have witnessed in the past that parents are necessary advocates for their children's rights, and demands are usually met when demands are made by a parent seeking necessary support services. Had I brought this to

the attention of Lisa's parents, would they have fought for that support? Why did I choose to stay silent?

Because I was able to view Lisa with an interpreter in English and without one in Drama, I witnessed her potential for access into imagined communities without an adult ever-present. I noticed that Lisa was not as comfortable with her Drama interpreter, "Fanny," as she was with her English interpreter, Joan. Lisa explains why she felt distant with Fanny: "[Joan] was the person who introduced me to [A.S.L.]. She was the person whose signing I had gotten so connected with. And to have someone else come in was hard." Simply providing a student with an interpreter does not solve all of the communication problems. The connection between the interpreter and the student is essential if successful communication is going to exist. When Fanny left, Lisa appeared to become more socially involved, although great improvement was still needed. I hoped the lack of adult involvement would encourage her hearing peers to include her more fully.

It is important to note that Lisa's difficulty with her cochlear implant was resolved at this point. She no longer used it, choosing to employ only a hearing aid to amplify natural sound. This choice came after a visit to a new audiologist who informed her that the cochlear implant would not ever reach her hopeful expectations. After a year away from high school, serious surgery, uncontrollable facial twitching, and intense ear training, Lisa's dreams for a successful cochlear implant were discarded.

Lisa: I just knew for me, it was never going to happen. I knew I had to let go, because I wanted to enjoy my years at [Carson]. I told my doctor, 'I'm sixteen years old. I just want to be a kid...' When most kids were worrying about their dresses for prom, I was worrying about whether or not I was going to hear again. I didn't want that anymore. I didn't want that responsibility... You know, it was hard for my family and I, because my parents felt guilty about keeping my hearing aid from me. They didn't know how to help me. It's a learning process... I never blamed my parents for it because I knew they were only doing what they were told.

When Lisa stated, "I just want to be a kid," it exemplified how a part of her childhood was stolen from her due to her sensory loss. She refused to let it take a piece of her final high school years as well. She wanted to experience life as a sixteen year old, a life in which she would not have to preoccupy herself with re-learning every sound. She wanted her hearing aid back. Once again, Lisa found the strength to demand a change. Her hearing aid was returned to her.

In Drama, Lisa had to learn how to participate in a class without an interpreter and work in groups with the limited assistance of her hearing aid. When facing an individual, Lisa was usually able to decipher what he/she was saying, and her spoken English was quite clear. When listening to Lisa one would be able to hear that she is hard of hearing due to the way in which she speaks; although, this "accent" did not impede anyone's understanding of her words. I would argue, though, that her "accent" did act as a barrier to her legitimate ownership of the language. She would never be granted full membership into the hearing world because she could never communicate as hearing people do.

The first struggle that Lisa faced each day in Drama was listening to the P.A. announcements. They were inaudible to her. As noted earlier, equal access to information is of prime importance to a hard of hearing person in a mainstream school. Lisa could not listen to the announcements that included multiple opportunities for socialisation, for example, club meetings, theme days, sports tryouts, or volunteer positions. In order to provide all students with needed information, the school delivers announcements over the P.A. system in addition to a written bulletin, given to each teacher every day, which is supposed to be read each morning. In reality, the P.A. announcements are often different from the information provided on the bulletin, and the bulletin never includes the fun banter that students transmit orally over the P.A. system. In addition, many teachers choose not to read the bulletin, as they feel it is redundant after hearing the announcements. Therefore, equal access is not provided. In an attempt to combat this inequality, I would listen to the announcements and repeat or summarize what I heard. Lisa would read my lips, thereby receiving news of social and academic events. This was not a perfect system, because it assumed that I was always available to repeat the announcements at that given time. On multiple occasions, another student would need my attention, and the announcements would go unheard by Lisa. I would ask other students to share this information, but it was always a highly edited version. This is where I needed to release some of my responsibilities and control of the situation, and offer it to other students. A buddy system would have been much more effective, allowing a student to interact with Lisa one on one, rather than simply having her rely on me.

As theatre is a collaborative art, group work was a daily routine in the class. After discussing the theme or topic of the day, students would work in small groups to create scenes. Their scene work was inspired by group dialogue, and then the scene would take shape when movement and gestures were added. Music was occasionally used to add another sensory layer onto the performance. One day I asked Lisa to stay after class to discuss her progress. I was very concerned with her ability to participate in a verbally dominated curriculum, and I needed her input to learn how to support her. After talking with her, I realised that the other students in the class would benefit from a similar discussion with Lisa. I asked if she would be willing to share her valuable information with the class. She was nervous, but she agreed.

Lisa: It was scary and good at the same time because I think at that point I wasn't sure how to communicate with myself. I was very aware that I could not expect people to be sure how to communicate with me. I mean, I have an interpreter, and then I don't, I talk, but then I sign a little bit...Even now, it's always been that whole, who are you thing. Where's the identity there?

As Lisa reflects on speaking before the class about her communication needs, she discovers the relationship between language and identity. Her sense of self is intrinsically linked with how she communicates. Speaking before the class was an opportunity to self-represent. This was a daunting task for Lisa as her identity was complex and constantly in flux. She was given a position of power and had to consider carefully how she might use it.

The next day, Lisa stood in front of the class to tell them how to communicate with her most effectively. She provided the following information:

1. She needs to see you to “hear” you.
2. She lip reads.
3. If everyone speaks at once, it’s difficult for her to follow along.
4. If her back is turned and you need her attention, just tap her on the shoulder.
5. She is capable of hearing some of what is said. She is not deaf.

By standing in front of the class to explain what could facilitate her participation, Lisa positioned herself as a leader. She turned the tables so that she was the person in power, self-representing, as opposed to accepting the imposed representation of “disabled deaf girl.” By including the other students in the conversation and being open about her unique communication needs, she informed her hearing peers that it was okay to ask questions. Discussing hearing loss was no longer “taboo.” I told Lisa that some hearing students might not approach her because they may not know how. In particular when there is an interpreter in the room, the hearing students may assume that Lisa can only successfully communicate with sign language. My first experience working with an interpreter initially made me quite nervous. It was strange having another adult in the room, translating everything that I said. I felt pressure to say something important! I soon became totally comfortable with the process, especially after getting to know the interpreter, but if I was experiencing some tension, what might the young people in the room be feeling? The comfort level with sign language never developed in the drama class because the interpreter left so early in the school year. Although the initial presence

of the interpreter did create an identity for Lisa as “unapproachable” due to her use of a different language, her self-representation was a powerful way to renegotiate her identity within the class.

Lisa’s approachability improved, but mainly on a superficial level. Students would talk to her when they shared an assignment together, but what about time outside of the classroom? Whom did she spend time with at lunch, after school, or on the weekends? What meaningful relationships had developed?

Theresa: How was it making friends?

Lisa: It was hard. It was really hard...I was just so awkward. I was angry, I think, a lot. I was very hurt and confused. It was such a hard year for me alone in grade 10, and I didn’t really trust people. And I was still getting used to the fact that I could hear again. It was overwhelming for me to start a new school, that late too...Like, I knew people. I think people knew who I was. I was never bullied or anything like that. I was just kind of there. I was just there.

Lisa’s imagined identity was a person who contributed to life at Carson, not simply a person who sat on the outskirts, yet the other students did not recognise her as a person who had anything to offer. Lisa was viewed as a person who required assistance, but she was unable to construct an identity as a person who could offer assistance. She had no power.

Because I was observing only classroom time, I was unaware of Lisa’s true loneliness until her mother talked to me. It was at this point that I recognised that I needed to have a greater role in her socialisation at the school. This would be a difficult

task, because part of adolescent development involves a claim for independence, a move away from adults. How could I contribute to Lisa's social identity without intruding on her independence? Through discussions with both Lisa and her mom, I learned whom Lisa admired. I was fully aware of her imagined community. When the teacher and student have differing goals, the student may respond through resistance or non-participation (Norton, 2000). But what could happen if the teacher and student shared an imagined community?

CHAPTER FOUR

The School Musical

I am a strong advocate of extracurricular activities. My involvement with the theatre department allows me to see the contributions that extracurricular activities bring to the lives of young people. Some of the students whom Lisa identified as her imagined community belonged to the theatre department. As I was the stage manager of the school musical, it seemed a logical choice to involve Lisa in some way. I asked her if she would like to work backstage as a dresser, helping to organise costumes and assisting actors with quick dress changes. I warned her that the commitment would involve rehearsals after school, including one Saturday, and six evening performances. She looked absolutely ecstatic. Her face lit up and she smiled from ear to ear. She happily agreed to participate.

Lisa worked with the costume crew, and it just so happened that the parent in charge of costumes was also hearing impaired. She had a very minor hearing loss in comparison to Lisa's, but simply seeing another person wearing a hearing aid allowed Lisa to recognise that she was not alone. One of the directors of the musical also wore a hearing aid. Two adult role models were present, and without realising it, they showed Lisa that hard of hearing people could make valuable contributions to the world, even through a musical. In addition, both role models held positions of high authority. All of the actors showed great respect to the parent who worked backstage and to the director

who was held in high esteem. Lisa was able to witness them function in a hearing society, and follow their lead.

How did Lisa's role in this extracurricular activity differ from school group work? First, student volunteers involved were there because they wanted to be there. This is how they exerted autonomy over their own time, working on a theatre project. Second, each student shared a common goal. This, I argue, is the creation of the third space.

Lisa: [Working as a dresser] was a good way to break through in the school...At the time I was so isolated from everything. And I just needed something that I could be involved with that was something that I could not focus on my problems and my feelings, and could just focus on something else for a change, and just get my mind off of everything. And, you know, it was just so nice to be able to help somebody else for a change.

Lisa became essential. The actors, many of whom she identified as her imagined community, depended on her contributions. Lisa gained power by defining herself as helpful in the eyes of her peers. Her identity shifted from someone who needed assistance to someone who offered assistance.

The musical was a product of an ensemble. Absolutely every single person involved in this musical was essential to its success. If one person stepped away from the challenge, all would feel the effect. Actors needed to remember lines and dance choreography, stage crew needed to change set pieces, technical crew needed to control sound and light, musicians needed to work collaboratively with the singers, and dressers

needed to ensure that each actor stepped on stage with exactly the right costume at exactly the right time. Lisa was assigned to dress the lead, a role that signalled her reliability.

As actors were usually anxious and nervous on performance nights, they became very dependent on their dressers to help them during high stress scenes. On opening night, the lead actress suffered from a serious case of stage fright, hyperventilating backstage. The play could not start without her. The audience waited in anticipation, but the curtains did not open. The lead was in the dressing room with her dress unzipped, sitting in a chair with her head between her knees, desperately trying to regain her composure.

Lisa: I got assigned to the lead, of dressing the lead...And I was there for her. She almost fainted, right? Remember that?

Theresa: Yeah.

Lisa: Well, I was her dresser, and I was trying to calm her down, not to freak out. It was nice to be there.

Lisa witnessed a student in an extremely stressful situation, and she saw her emotionally break down. This experience showed Lisa that breaking under pressure can happen to anyone. Fear is a part of everyone's life. Fortunately, with the help of Lisa's consoling manner, the lead gathered her inner strength and performed magnificently. Over and over again, Lisa witnessed mishaps: one girl broke her tap shoes, another went on stage with her dress tucked into her underwear, someone missed a cue, and microphones went

missing. Lisa was part of the chaos. She witnessed, she consoled, she problem-solved, she laughed, she took part.

Some actors had only seconds to change from one costume to another. Lisa had to know when the change was coming up, and she had to be waiting in the wings with the appropriate costume. One of the actors was particularly appreciative of Lisa's efforts. When the production was over, I had the pleasure of seeing the actor approach Lisa at lunch in the drama room. She presented her with a gift to thank her for her kindness.

In my interview with Lisa, she shared with me an experience that I did not witness, an experience that lifted her confidence.

Lisa: And then I remember it was the nicest thing. I'll never forget this. One of the guys comes up to me and goes, 'You know, we're all going for bubble tea. You should come.' And, you know, this is a grade 12 guy asking me to come to something. I was flabbergasted. I wanted to scream inside. I was so happy. My mom was picking me up and I didn't want her to go all the way back, so I said, 'No, unfortunately, my mom is on her way. I can't make it.' And he goes, "Ah, that sucks. Another time.' And it was so funny, because I just felt connected with something there. And everybody treated me so nicely. The next night I asked [him], 'Oh how was bubble tea?' And he goes, 'Oh, it was great, but you should've been there.' It made me feel so good. I wish I did get the chance to thank him for that because it meant so much.

The simple gesture of a grade 12 boy helped Lisa feel connected. The continuous acknowledgement of her existence and the gratitude she received for her contributions by actors and crew members shaped Lisa's identity. Lisa became a participant. In a moving statement, she says, "I felt like I was there." Her self-imposed identity was actualised

through the acknowledgement of her peers. She was a significant member of the backstage crew. She was part of a team, part of a community.

No longer did Lisa need to hide in the bathroom. She finally became visible. Her many strengths were seen, valued, acknowledged and respected. The doors to the imagined community were opening, and a third space was created. The shared vision of all students was achieved collectively, and this is what made all the difference. Lisa no longer imagined how she might contribute. Together, each student dreamed, and each student achieved.

As I watched from a distance, I saw Lisa make connections with her peer group. I had to be careful not to assume that a few days of working on the school musical would grant Lisa legitimate membership within her imagined community. I was viewing the beginning of potential friendships, but not yet in full bloom.

Grade 12

I did not have the pleasure of teaching Lisa in grade 12, but we kept in touch regardless. She would occasionally stop by my classroom for a quick hello. This alone showed great improvement. At one point, Lisa had become quite dependent on me to talk to. During her grade 11 year, I believe our conversations during recess and lunch hour acted as an avoidance of her peer rejection. By grade 12, she was occupied with other activities at lunch and only occasionally came by for a visit.

Lisa became a peer counsellor. Lisa proudly told me, “I think I was the first hard of hearing person at [Carson] to ever be a peer counsellor. So that was a huge milestone.” She applied for the prestigious position after confiding in “Annabelle,” one of the actors, who was also a peer counsellor, that this was her dream. Annabelle encouraged her to apply, and Lisa was pleased to learn that she was accepted into the program. Through this position, Lisa was given the opportunity to expand on the leadership skills she gained from the school musical. As a peer counsellor, she was considered a mentor to grade 8s who were new to the school. Again, Lisa imagined her future, negotiated for a position of power, and achieved her goal. The group of grade 12 students involved in the program became very close. Their community membership was even publicly displayed through t-shirts. Only peer counsellors wore them.

Again, Lisa became involved in the school musical, but this year she was a part of the theatre company as a production assistant. The two directors of the school musical asked her if she would be willing to take the theatre company class, earn credit for her work, and act as a leader to the backstage crew members. She was delighted to take part in the team formally. As part of her duties, she supervised the costume crew. She held meetings at lunch hour with the volunteers, created a schedule of their shifts, and answered any necessary questions. She also worked collaboratively with a graduate from the previous year to supervise dressers on performance nights. Lisa faced challenges that other students did not face, yet she was so successful working backstage that she became a supervisor.

Working backstage in a school musical is particularly difficult for a person with a hearing impairment. First, there is barely any light backstage, making it extremely difficult for Lisa to lip read. Second, her cues were sound cues (e.g.: a spoken line or the end of a song). Because Lisa could not hear her cues, she was forced to ask for help. This meant that Lisa had to take initiative in her interactions with other people. She no longer waited for someone else to begin dialogue. Her commitment to the musical was emphatic because actors and other dressers were relying on her. She understood that performing well as a head dresser would situate her as capable in the eyes of her peers. Therefore, she asked questions and found answers. She reviewed the script. She memorised songs. She watched the backstage monitor. She read the scene orders posted backstage. She did everything she could to ensure her success.

Despite her efforts, she would occasionally get lost or confused. This is when two actors in particular reached out, “John” and “Alan.” Lisa explained how they communicated with her:

[John and Alan], two boys, knew some sign...They knew some sign, so sometimes when I didn't understand something, they would finger spell, or they would sign what they knew to me...They knew some and it was amazing. It was amazing.

Imagine attempting to speak broken French to a fluent French speaker. For many, this is intimidating. For those two boys, using sign language and finger spelling with Lisa may have been intimidating, but, again, their investment levels forced them to try. They

understood the necessity of Lisa having the correct information. Without it, she may not perform her job properly, which would in turn affect the two boys. As a result, they were willing to take the risk of signing poorly if it meant that Lisa would receive the information. The power dynamics shifted. The hearing students had to learn how to communicate with a hard of hearing person, as opposed to the other way around, Lisa constantly having to adapt to the communication needs of the hearing. Lisa was thrilled to learn that she could share her language with two of the actors. Their acknowledgement of sign language was an acknowledgement of her identity.

Backstage, many of the crew members would get up and dance to their favourite songs in the musical. Lisa always joined in and often led the dancing to music that she could only partially hear. There was a hidden value to the musical production that I had never previously considered – repetition. Lisa could watch each night, follow the pattern, and then begin to predict the events. For example, she was able to watch the backstage monitor to know exactly which scene followed which scene. The performance was the same every night, so she began to learn during which scenes everyone would get up and dance. After a couple of nights, she was the first one to participate.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lisa Today

As a nineteen year old, Lisa's hearing impairment has led to her involvement volunteering and working with deaf and hard of hearing youth. She volunteers for a buddy program, which is similar to Big Sisters and Big Brothers, except she works with deaf and hard of hearing children in particular. She visits a child for two to four hours once a week. Together they simply spend quality time with one another while signing. Lisa acknowledges the benefit that the parents receive from her relationship with the deaf or hard of hearing child: the parents are given exposure to a young adult who has already encountered and survived much of what the child will likely be experiencing. Because deaf and hard of hearing children are often born from hearing parents, the mother and father may not have any prior exposure to the deaf community. Lisa provides that insight and removes the mystery. The children can benefit from befriending a person with a hearing loss, which hopefully removes the intense sense of isolation that too often accompanies hearing impairment, and the parents learn that their child has a community in which he/she is a legitimate member.

Lisa also worked as a camp counsellor for deaf and hard of hearing children during the summer. Because Lisa had very little exposure to other children with hearing losses when she was young, she is determined to be part of the solution for youth today. Her experience working at the camp reinforced her career choice – social work. After

working at the summer camp, her future plans were validated. Lisa praised the opportunity to work with the deaf and hard of hearing children, “It was the best experience of my life so far. I really enjoyed it.” The other staff members were all deaf, so for the first time, Lisa was able to immerse herself in a community of people who communicated with A.S.L. They all worked collectively to communicate with one another, yet speaking English was not part of their dialogue. Through sign language alone, Lisa and the other staff members cared for 43 children, planning outdoor activities and organising games. Lisa was able to learn what she could accomplish with the support of her new imagined community, the deaf and hard of hearing.

Lisa has had social work as a career goal for many years, but her latest experiences have altered her plans somewhat. She had previously wanted to work with street youth and other youth at risk, but now she would like to work and contribute as a social worker within the deaf and hard of hearing community. Lisa’s entire life has been living on the outskirts of the hearing world, but with her new goals in sight, she applied and was accepted into a university which caters to deaf and hard of hearing students, where she will study social work.

Where did Lisa find the strength to stand with pride as a hard of hearing person? Lisa accredits the after school drama program for the shift in her sense of self. Lisa recalls her volunteer work in the school musical:

...having drama there, it made me feel like, okay, I’m not alone. There are other people out there. Maybe we won’t ever be the best of friends, but it’s just nice to

know that there's someone else there....I think that's what started me on so much more. That's what made me get involved. That was my stepping stone. If I didn't have that, I'm not sure everything else would have followed...It changes your life.

When Lisa learned that she had meaningful contributions to make within the hearing world, it gave her the confidence to seek the deaf and hard of hearing world; because it was no longer a community she was forced to take part in, it became a community that she chose. Lisa voiced her gratitude to the drama program which taught her that she can successfully exist among fully hearing people and participate in a meaningful way. She does not romanticise her experience by suggesting that she made lifelong friendships, but she recognises that being a part of the school musical changed her life by acting as a stepping stone. Because Lisa's identity was as a valuable, capable, visible person, she was able to carry this identity to her application into the peer counselling program at Carson. She learned that her dreams were attainable.

Lisa: I think [the drama program] taught me for the first time in a really long time that I could do things. I could belong and I was important. I felt that when I dressed all those people, and I did a good job at it, and people were telling me that, I felt like I was part of it. I felt like I'm not invisible. I do exist here. It gave me that much more confidence to be a peer counsellor. It gave me that much more confidence to be in the school, to want to go to school. I fully admit, grade 11, I skipped. I hated it. I did not want to be in school. There wasn't anything that anybody could have done at that point, until the drama came along...to make me stay. I just did not want to be there, but then knowing that I had responsibilities, knowing that people were counting on me. Me! Knowing that it was me that was important, and not everyone could do what I was doing. It made me feel special.

For the last two years, Lisa has continued to take part in the school musicals, returning as Carson alumni. Because the program was so beneficial to her development, Lisa has

committed to helping other young people find a place to belong through theatre at Carson. Lisa's memories of skipping school in grade 11 are memories of resistance. She resisted high school because she was not invested in it. As soon as she had a stake in the school musical, she found a reason to attend, participate, and interact with her peers. People relied on her attendance. She had resources to share, resources that were in need. By continuing to volunteer, she reinforces her self-value, and she is able to help other students who may be experiencing school in the same way to feel part of a community. Lisa wants to pass on to others what she gained.

Lisa: I think that's why I wanted to come back and help [Carson's drama program] so much. It helped me so much. Good memories. It really taught me that, I don't know, we're not all alone in high school. It looks like we are, but there's a lot of people there who just feel the same way.

Because theatre is a collaborative art and the storytelling behind the art form requires the participation of many, a community is formed. Making theatre has the potential to shift identities, create relationships, and build communities. Through theatre, Lisa was no longer alone.

Theresa: Is there anything else that I should ask you or that you want to say that I haven't thought of asking?

Lisa: I think the only thing that I want to say is that this program, drama...I think more kids deserve something like that...Everybody just wants to feel like they belong somewhere...because high school can be, it can be the hardest place in the world...It's hard to feel confident in who you are when everyone's telling you who you should be.

As a student who benefited from drama, she is now active in keeping it alive.

High schools need drama programs because they give students power, responsibility, a place to redefine themselves and a place to connect with others. Because so many students volunteer their time to partake in Carson's school musical, it also gives the students autonomy over their own time. For the majority of the school day, students' schedules are determined by the government, counsellors, administrators, teachers, and parents. Students deserve the opportunity to self-direct.

As I witnessed Lisa gain control over her life and change inwardly, I asked her, "What is your identity? How would you describe yourself now?" Her answer reveals reflection, maturity, and aspiration:

Lisa: I think honestly, I'm still figuring it out, even two years later...In grade 12, with [Carson's theatre company] and Peer Counselling, those two classes really gave me a better sense of self, in the fact that I was being a production assistant, I was being responsible, I was contributing to the school by listening. And it really made me more aware that I felt so isolated for so long from everyone, partially, I think, because of my hearing loss. I had always been the only kid with a hearing loss. But my family... part of me does wish, even today, that they knew some sign. Just so that it would make me feel that they did accept it. I don't think that they realise that it's that important to me...I mean, it's not like I blame my parents for anything. My identity now, I think I'm sort of figuring it out...I know who I want to be, and I want to be somebody who takes everything that I've learned from [Carson's theatre company], from Peer Counselling, from the teachers, from my parents, from my friends, and pay it forward. Right? That's what I really want to do. And I'm looking forward to doing it.

A great deal of Lisa's identity comes from having a clear sense of direction. She knows who she would like to be; therefore, I argue, she knows who she is. Her dreams are a part of her self-concept. She will interact with society based on who she would like to

become and based on how she envisions herself contributing. If Lisa could not imagine herself as a production assistant and peer counsellor, then how could she possibly imagine herself as a future social worker? Imagined identities need to be realised by those who live in target communities. For example, Lisa imagined herself contributing to the drama department at Carson. The drama students and teachers, too, needed to imagine her membership within the community, because it is the social dreaming - the third space - that creates change.

In Lisa's description of her identity negotiation, she naturally gravitated to a discussion about sign language. This signifies the relationship between identity and language. Throughout Lisa's time at Carson and her years since, she has envisioned multiple communities for herself: the school musical, the theatre company, peer counselling, college, a deaf and hard of hearing university, social work, etc. Her most recent imagined community is one in which her family communicates through sign language. Although, there is a problem as Lisa reveals, "I don't think that they realise that it's that important to me." Immediately following this statement, she defends them to me by ensuring that I understand that she does not blame them for their choices. She clearly loves her parents, but she believes that if her parents were able to communicate with her in A.S.L., this would symbolise their acceptance of her identity as a hard of hearing person. I reiterate that social dreaming is required to bring about change. Lisa's parents need to imagine this community that includes A.S.L. in their home in order for the community to be built. Hopefully, when Lisa is ready, she will disclose to her parents the importance of language sharing in the construction of family. Just as Lisa's parents

shared Portuguese and Italian with her in order to give her a piece of their identities, she too would like to share her language, A.S.L., in order to share a piece of her identity.

Lisa's exploration of self will continue. Before travelling abroad to attend university, she considers her place in the deaf and hard of hearing community. Within the hearing world, Lisa cannot hear enough, and within the deaf world, she is not deaf enough.

Lisa: In a way I haven't really established that part of my identity. Up until grade 9, I always thought of myself as more of a hearing person...I could talk on the phone, I listen to music; I do everything to fit into that world. And then, I think, grade 9 forced me to be more introspective, and I realised, there's limitations to what I can do, and I have to be okay with the limitations because they're always going to be there. It's interesting because I'm always in the in between. I never hear enough to be fully in all the time, but then I hear too much sometimes.

Despite the hardships that will surely accompany her new life in a deaf and hard of hearing university, she is content knowing that she is able to mediate between two very different cultures and ways of communicating. She will likely find a community of "in-betweeners" who fluctuate as she does between the hearing and the deaf. Once again, Lisa will learn that she is not alone.

As Lisa embarks on the next stage of her life, she looks forward to learning about herself as a member of the deaf and hard of hearing community. She has displayed a true desire to explore this side of herself to expand who she is and who she can be.

Lisa: And who knows? I'll come back and be like, 'I'm hard-of-hearing-deaf-hearing!'

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion and Conclusion

As the data show, Lisa negotiated new identities over a two year period in high school and continues to negotiate as a university student. Initially, she accepted her position as an “outsider,” not knowing how to reposition herself within the hearing community. She withdrew from public places during social times, such as lunch hours, in order to avoid facing her isolation publicly. Socialisation is an essential part of adolescent life as it fosters a sense of belonging. However, Lisa was excluded from all groups for a multitude of reasons. One, hearing students did not know how to communicate with her, which points to the importance of initiating. She needed to educate those around her, and she will likely have to do this for the rest of her life. It is a reality of her hearing loss; therefore, it is essential for teachers to help equip students with the necessary skills to do this. Opportunities for education and leadership must be opened to deaf and hard of hearing students. Teachers have the power to create opportunities, but it is ultimately up to the student to use them. Without question, the job of the teacher is to help the student to recognise that he/she is worthwhile and capable of contributing. It is only then that the student will accept opportunities that come his/her way.

Bourdieu (1991) and Miller (2002) argued that a person must be recognised as a legitimate member by the target community before being granted full license to operate

within that community. Lisa became invisible to her hearing peers because they were unable to recognise her communication practices. It would require a great risk on the part of the hearing student, who is situated comfortably as a member of a dominant culture, to enter into a dialogue in which he/she is unaware of the rules. Hard of hearing students need to be educated on the insecurities that exist around them, not only within them.

Because Lisa displayed communication practices that situated her as “other,” she was not viewed as a legitimate owner of English. Norton (1997) quotes Leung, Harris and Rampton as saying, “there is an abstracted notion of an idealised speaker of English from which ethnic and linguistic minorities are automatically excluded” (p. 123). If Lisa could not claim ownership of English, and her fluency in A.S.L. was somewhat limited, in what culture or linguistic community could she be accepted? Linguistic minorities are often denied entrance into imagined communities, and hard of hearing individuals who cannot claim to be legitimate owners of English nor A.S.L., suffer severe and extreme loneliness. The isolation experienced by deaf individuals is often contrasted by involvement in the deaf community. There is limited access to this community for a hard of hearing person who has a limited grasp of A.S.L. It is of no surprise that a person with hearing loss who positions herself within the hearing community negotiates her identity as broken¹ (Mahshie et al, 2006; Evand & Falk, 1986).

Nevertheless, an argument exists for the education of hard of hearing students in a predominantly hearing school: the larger society is hearing, and those with a hearing

¹ I am aware that “broken” is a contentious term in disability literature. However, I have deliberately chosen to use it in this context to highlight the damage that can take place on a hard of hearing person’s image of self when educated among a hearing majority.

loss need to learn how to function within it. I learned that teachers can support their students by creating a space for open dialogue. The teacher needs to initiate dialogue with the hard of hearing student, the hearing peers, parents, and the school support team. Through this dialogue, it is integral for the teacher to learn the student's imagined community if he/she is to play a role in helping the student to gain membership. Assuming Bourdieu's argument to be true, one's words are only valued if the speaker is valued, the teacher then has to investigate ways in which to provide value to the hard of hearing student in the eyes of the target community. The student needs to be given a position of public leadership. It is necessary that the position is recognised, because recognition raises the awareness of cultural difference. In addition, it promotes the value of the individual's voice on a large scale. Presenting a hard of hearing student with a position of power and leadership is not enough. When considering the potential discomfort involved for a hearing individual to approach one with hearing loss, the meeting of the two is unlikely to take place unless the exchange is necessary. It becomes necessary when the person in power has needed symbolic or material resources.

To review, the teacher needs to create an environment in which 1) the hard of hearing student is given a recognised position of leadership, 2) the hearing community must communicate with the hard of hearing individual out of necessity, 3) the hard of hearing student is given symbolic or material resources to distribute, and 4) all the individuals must share a common dream.

Lisa's job as a dresser provided clear positions of leadership, the actors communicated with her out of necessity in order to enter the stage prepared, her symbolic resources included the comfort and reassuring words she offered to highly anxious and nervous actors during performance, and finally she participated with a larger group to achieve the collective dream of a successful theatrical production.

Lisa moved from seeking symbolic power to giving symbolic power (friendship) simply because she imagined the possibility. She saw herself as being capable and helpful to others, yet she needed her hearing peers to recognise this in her before she was able to contribute to this community.

Making theatre is not only a construction of a story; it is the construction of a new reality. When Lisa became a necessary figure in the production of multiple musicals, she became part of a culture which values the contributions of a hard of hearing person. Her contributions were not fictional. Lisa was no longer invisible. She was an integral part of the play-making process, and she found a legitimate way to participate in her school.

As her teacher, I learned that Lisa's potential surpasses the imagination of most. For my future hard of hearing students, I would like to dream bigger than I did with Lisa. I would like to see them perform on the stage, making visible to the audience, the actors, the crew members, the teachers, the families, and to all members of the hearing community that we must take some responsibility in the construction of "broken"

identities. We must allow our imaginations to meet the scale of those who are hard of hearing so that our communities can reflect the diversity of those who dream to enter them.

The tension and ultimate co-existence of the hearing world and hard of hearing world is the discovery of the third space. When Lisa could not hear the music, she danced. When she could not hear the words, she signed. Theatre, at its best, is social dreaming, on the stage, behind the scenes, in the audience, and outside the theatre walls. Reality is only limited by our imaginations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: UBC Research Ethics Board's Certificate of Approval



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL- MINIMAL RISK RENEWAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: George Belliveau	DEPARTMENT: UBC/Education/Language and Literacy Education	UBC BREB NUMBER: H07-01098
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
<small>Institution</small>	<small>Site</small>	
N/A Other locations where the research will be conducted: Vancouver School Board Jules Quesnel School Maple Grove School		
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Shelley Hymel		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)		
PROJECT TITLE: Addressing the role of the bystander through drama in bullying situations		
EXPIRY DATE OF THIS APPROVAL: June 12, 2009		
APPROVAL DATE: June 12, 2008		
The Annual Renewal for Study have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.		
Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:		
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair Dr. Ken Craig, Chair Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair Dr. Daniel Salhani, Associate Chair Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair		

Appendix B: Lisa's Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Department of Language and
Literacy Education**
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: (604) 822-5788
Fax: (604) 822-3154

July 11, 2008

Identity Negotiation and Community Development in an Extra-curricular Drama Program

Dear participant:

As a graduate student at UBC, I am investigating the impact of extra-curricular drama activities on students over both a short term and long term basis. I aim to learn, in particular, how youth directors negotiate their identities when given positions of leadership in a theatre context. This study would be conducted under the supervision of professor Dr. George Belliveau. I am providing written information along with a formal consent form regarding the SSHRC-funded study that I wish to conduct in July 2008. Examining the impact of extra-curricular drama activities has the potential to inform educators about the benefits that the arts may afford young people as well as the obstacles that they must face. After-school programs are integral sites of research as young people spend a significant amount of their time participating in these activities. The investigation proposes to better understand the community of young theatre participants that exists at Magee.

This is an invitation for you to participate in the study for two months beginning in July 2008. During the two months, you would be involved in one interview and potentially a second follow-up interview or questionnaire. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences as a student and volunteer within the drama program at Magee.

Any information pertaining to you will be kept strictly confidential, and records will be kept carefully in locked locations at the University of British Columbia under the supervision of the project's investigators. All information that I collect for this study will be used for research and educational purposes only.

I am seeking your consent to take part in this study. Your consent is entirely voluntary, and there will be no consequences if you prefer not to give your consent. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

The Vancouver School Board and the school's principal have given permission for this project to

be carried out at Magee. If you agree, then sign the extra copy of the consent form on page 3, return it to me, and keep this original letter and form for your own records.

If you would like to have further information about any part of this project, or have any questions about it, please call George Belliveau at 604-822-8654 or email him at george.belliveau@ubc.ca. I, too, will do my best to answer your questions. You are welcome to contact me at 604-713-8200 or email me at [REDACTED]. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia at 604-822-8598.

Thank you for your interest and kind cooperation.

Theresa Webber

M.A. candidate, Language & Literacy Education

The research team:

Principal Investigator: Dr. George Belliveau; Graduate Student Research Assistant: Theresa Webber

CONSENT FORM

My name is _____ and I am willing/not willing to participate in the study, ***Identity Negotiation and Community Development in an Extra-curricular Drama Program.***

I understand the nature and involvement of this study and I agree to participate in this study. _____

I realize that my work may be included in presentations or publications arising from this study. I understand that no information that reveals my identity will be given.

I have kept a copy of this letter for my own records.

Participant's signature: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

1. Could you share the history of your hearing loss?
2. How did having an interpreter change your experience in high school – academically and socially?
3. Describe your experience making friends at Carson.
4. Describe your experience working backstage for the school musical.
5. Why did you return to help backstage after you graduated from high school?
6. How important is it to belong to a community of people in high school?
7. What did you learn about yourself from your experience in the drama program?
8. What is your identity? How would you describe yourself?
9. How do you relate to the hearing community and the hard of hearing community?
10. Is there anything that you would like to add that I haven't thought of asking?

Appendix D: Emergent Themes

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community
Hearing Community
Post-secondary Life
Contributions
Hearing History
Technology
Follow the leader
Guessing
Communication with Parents
Frustration
Sign Language
Friendship
Speech
Home Schooling
Sounds
Physical Trauma
Interpreter
New World
Found Communication
Life Changing Moments
Anger
Isolation
Lack of Control
Frustration
Loneliness
Escape
Kid Responsibilities
Lisa's Responsibilities
Voice
Courage
Discovery
Categories
Identity
High School Community
Peer Counselling
Power
Coping Strategies
Peers Adapting
Peers in Stress
Participation
Involvement
Imagined Community

Invisible Girl
Imagination
Social Dreaming
Third Space
In/visibility
Resistance
Who is Lisa?
Pay It Forward
Envy
Belonging
In-Between
Do I Have To Choose an Identity?
Future
Exploration
Community
“Being There”
Connections
Existence
Floating
Fears
Walls/Barriers
Outsider
Meaningful Relationship