

**A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY: HOW REGULAR  
TEACHERS PROVIDE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR  
SEVERELY AND PROFOUNDLY DEAF STUDENTS IN  
REGULAR SCHOOLS IN RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES**

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution

Signed.....

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis reports a collective case study of the school educational experiences of five severely and profoundly deaf students who were enrolled in regular schools in rural areas of New South Wales. The students ranged in age from 6 to 18 years. Three issues were examined:

- (1) The impact of the philosophy of inclusive education and the question of why students with high degrees of deafness and high support needs were enrolled in regular schools in rural areas;
- (2) The specific linguistic and educational support needs of deaf students; and
- (3) The ability of the regular schools and teachers to cater for the educational needs of the deaf students in those settings.

The case studies revealed that to considerably varying extents in different situations, the students were afforded inclusive educational opportunities. The extent of inclusiveness of students' educational experiences was shown to vary according to a number of variables. The variables identified included: the type and quality of communication with the deaf student, teaching style, accessibility of content, particular lesson type, and the type and extent of curriculum adaptations employed.

As a result of the analysis of the data from the five cases, a number of generalisations were possible. These generalisations were that (a) students with the ability to access spoken communication auditorily were more easily included than students using manual communication; (b) reduction of linguistic and academic input occurred as a response to student inability to access class programs because of reduced linguistic capabilities, resulting in the deaf students receiving different and reduced information to the hearing students; (c) communication between a deaf student and his or her class teacher needed to be direct for the most successful inclusion to occur; (d) teaching style needed to be interactive or experiential for successful language learning and literacy development to occur; (e) curriculum adaptations needed to involve provision of visual support for lesson material to be highly effective; (f) lessons/subjects easily supported by visual means, such as mathematics or practical subjects, when taught hierarchically, going from the known to unknown in achievable steps, meant teaching style could be either transmission or interactive, for lesson activities to be considered inclusive; (g)

students with poor literacy skills were unable to successfully access an intact (i.e., unaltered and complete) high school curriculum; (h) the teaching style of the class teacher impacted on the support model possible for the itinerant teacher; (i) an interactive class teaching style allowed for cooperative teaching between class teacher and itinerant teacher who could then assist the class teacher with both the linguistic and academic needs of the deaf student; (j) a transmission style of teaching resulted in various levels of withdrawal for the deaf student unless the subject matter could be represented visually; (k) when curriculum content or expected outcomes were reduced, the deaf students did not have the same access to information as their hearing counterparts and consequently could not develop concepts or understandings in the same manner; and (l) language and literacy development were most facilitated when interactive teaching opportunities were established proactively for the deaf students rather than through the reduction of content as a response to their failure to successfully engage with the complete curriculum.

The conclusions suggest an alternative support proposal for deaf students in rural environments. The model of support proposed involves the targeting of specific preschools and primary schools with the provision of teachers identified to teach collaboratively and interactively. Under the proposed model several students with impaired hearing would be located within the one school with the itinerant teacher position becoming a full-time appointment in that school. Such a model would enable co-enrolment, co-teaching, co-programming, creative grouping, and the provision of demonstration opportunities and support for other teachers within the school and district that had deaf students enrolled.

Finally, interactive teaching, based on a clearly defined theoretical model of language acquisition, development, and learning, is recommended for students with impaired hearing in such environments. It is argued that the support of linguistic development and academic learning could be facilitated concurrently, thus ensuring that by the time students had reached high school they would possess sufficient literacy skills to access a regular high school program successfully.

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