

Proceedings

# Workshop on Continuing Education for Deaf Adults

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## GRASS ROOTS PANEL

Moderator: Allen E. Sussman

Panelists: Donald Brummit, Howard Busby, Tommy Eades, Caesar Rentie, Grace Wolfe.

(Note: In assembling this panel an attempt was made to get a representative cross section of the deaf population. Academically, the panelists ranged from very low verbal to college graduate. Occupationally, they ranged from unskilled worker to teacher of the deaf.

While the views expressed by the panelists are their own and may not necessarily be shared by their deaf peers, they do present an insight on the thinking of the "consumer". What follows should be read with this consideration in mind.)

**Question:** What do you consider important in an adult education program?

- A. Provisions should be made for a program leading to a high school diploma, especially since they may presently or in the future be related to job requirements.
- B. Provisions for programs at some time other than evenings for those who work nights.

**Question:** What do you consider important in an adult education program? (Asked of those who participated in the past.)

- A. Taking a course that is inappropriate, e.g., taking a course in typing when the skill is lacking.
- B. Courses offered for an insufficient length of time.
- C. Course work that goes ungraded so that a student is unable to gauge his progress.
- D. Interest in a course may be high but a competent interpreter is a critical need.
- E. Classes should be centrally located.
  1. Teachers are from the school in Olathe and they did not want to travel.
  2. Olathe was the logical location for the program because of personnel, equipment, and facilities.
  3. The public schools in Kansas City did not have the necessary facilities.

- F. Desirable courses offered at the same time so that one is compelled to choose between them.
- G. Provisions are needed for day classes for night workers.
- H. Personal finances (travel costs) can be a limiting factor.

**Question:** What do you consider important in an adult education program? (Asked of one with a college degree but very limited experience in adult education.)

- A. Have been able to take courses at the college level with an interpreter.
  1. Prefers a verbatim interpreter. Does not care for an interpreter who "summarizes" which results in a limitation on ability to derive the fullest benefit from class lectures.
- B. Note takers are helpful.
- C. Must rely more on outside reading.
- D. Would participate in adult education programs if offerings were appropriate to his needs.
- E. Would be willing to serve in an adult education program.

**Question:** How would you plan classes for deaf people?

- A. There should be variety and students should be allowed to choose.
- B. Many want English and mathematics. There is a special need for these courses for people with limited backgrounds.

**Questions on course content brought out the following:**

- A. Consumer Education
  1. Deaf people tend to be unsophisticated in areas related to consumer education. Courses should include:
    - a. Food planning and buying.
    - b. Insurance protection.
    - c. Budgeting.
  2. Monetary matters
    - a. Paycheck deductions.
    - b. Banking, savings and checking accounts.
    - c. Payment of bills.
- B. All aspects of driver education
  1. Preparation for the driver's examination
    - a. Preparation for road test.
    - b. Preparation for written examination.
  2. Insurance
    3. Driving in general; defensive driving.
  4. How to respond when involved in an accident.
    - a. How to write an accident report.
    - b. How to notify the insurance company.
  5. Filling out driver license forms.
- C. Sex Education
  1. Often young people coming out of school are unsophisticated and do not know the basic facts. The schools do not provide sex education so adult education programs should fill this gap.

2. Young people may go wrong because of ignorance.
  3. To avoid embarrassment, classes should be segregated by sex.
- D. Marriage and Family Adjustment.  
E. Leadership Training.  
F. Current Affairs.

**Question:** If you could go to an adult education class with hearing persons, would you do so?

- A. Yes, if the hearing students took an interest in us.
- B. We tend to be isolated in hearing classes. An interpreter would help bridge the gap and help hearing students understand and work with us.
- C. Speech reading is all right for those who can do it. When one's speech is poor it results in an inhibiting factor.
- D. Such classes provide socialization opportunities with hearing people.
- E. Would utilize a program for hearing adults if a good interpreter were available.

**Question:** What do you have to say about interpreters?

- A. Too few interpreters are available who can do an adequate job.
- B. Generally speaking, church interpreters are not satisfactory.
- C. More and better interpreters would tend to attract more deaf people into adult education classes and, in turn, could result in an improved program overall.
- D. Interpreters need to get out of their "cloistered" environment and be more involved with deaf people on an informal basis.

**Question:** Do the deaf people in this area know about the adult education program in Kansas City?

- A. No, generally not. Information sent by mail is not good enough. Often the person to whom the letter is sent cannot read it.
- B. Schools could help by educating the older children to the idea of continuing education after leaving school.

**Question:** What do you think about providing counseling services as part of an adult education program?

- A. We think it a necessary component.
- B. Counseling would help deaf people express their needs better and enable them to discuss their personal problems.
- C. It has value for my children, therefore it seems it would be helpful to us.
- D. Deaf people who want high school level courses could be helped and guided by counselors.
- E. Adult education is a many faceted thing that should include education and a good counseling program.
- F. I have problems that need to be resolved and need a person who can help me in their resolution.

### QUESTIONS ASKED FROM THE FLOOR

Q.: How should adult education publicity be handled?

A.: Go to the clubs in the area and discuss it with the members face to face.

By means of letters and postcards.

By newspaper advertisements.

Through the school papers.

Q.: What kind of teachers do you want to teach English in adult education?

A.: Hearing teachers and interpreters because that would mean more advanced teaching. Teachers of the deaf are accustomed to talking down to deaf people (teaching children).

Prefer a deaf teacher because I am more comfortable with such a teacher and would learn better through the use of signs.

Q.: Would a college graduate be interested in a hobby-type or a world current events type of program?

A.: Hobby-type -- yes, perhaps, and other courses suited to my level and needs.

Q.: What type of interpreter would you prefer?

A.: Different types because a low verbal deaf person cannot necessarily understand a literal interpreter.

Q.: Would a deaf teacher talk about your problems in the deaf community?

A.: Deaf teachers gossip about their deaf students in the poorest sense of the word.

Q.: What about the dropout problem? Why do they occur?

A.: Money

Distance.

Bad weather.

That particular teacher.

Poor teachers result in dropouts. Students will continue if they are satisfied with their teacher.

Lack of understanding.

Loss of interest because of being the only deaf person in the class resulting in lack of opportunity for involvement with the class.

Lack of tuition requirements is often a negative factor.

Lack of credit attached to course.

Absence of any immediate or short term goals.

Q.: If an adult education course is offered and a person is encouraged to start immediately, would this help?

A.: Maybe yes, maybe no.

Q.: What about changing your work shift so that you can enroll in an adult education program?

A.: I do not have enough seniority so I do not have a choice. If I had a choice I would change. I have been trying to change.