

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui*



**Report on a survey of**  
**Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf**  
**of 'High' & 'Very High Needs' Deaf Students**  
**in Mainstream Schools**

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## **1.0 Background**

The larger research project of which this survey forms a part investigated the communication access and learning situations of mainstreamed Deaf students in verified by SES as ‘high’ and ‘very high’ needs. These students receive the highest level of support resources via Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding. In addition to six case studies of primary aged deaf students, key groups involved with mainstreamed deaf students were surveyed by questionnaires posted to national populations of parents, mainstream teachers, teacher aides, itinerant teachers of the deaf, and by interviews with Deaf mentors.

This paper reports specifically on data obtained from Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf (ITODs). ITODs were surveyed for two purposes: firstly, as an attempt to form a profile of examination pass data on deaf senior high-school students in mainstream schools over the last five years. Our enquiries revealed that no centralised record of mainstreamed deaf and hearing impaired school-leavers’ academic achievement exists at national or regional level; this survey therefore aimed to collect this information via the case records of ITODs.

The second aim of this survey was to canvas ITODs’ views on the effectiveness of mainstream learning contexts for deaf students of all ages. Interviews with ITODs and mainstream teachers in the case studies revealed some consistent issues and perspectives about the situation of mainstreamed deaf students and of ITODs who work with them. Through open-ended survey questions (see Appendix A), we aimed to find out whether these views were more widely indicative of ITODs’ opinions on current provisions and outcomes for deaf learners in mainstream schools.

## **2.0 Distribution and Return of Surveys.**

Questionnaires were sent to 83 ITODs employed by the two Deaf Education Centres, who assisted with distribution. 33 of these ITODs were located in the Northern region of New Zealand and 50 in the Southern region. Since only ORS funded students are likely to receive ITOD support at secondary school, it was assumed that surveying ITODs would target mainly students verified as high or very high needs. It was anticipated that this method of coverage would not provide a

complete picture, by excluding mainstreamed secondary students (either ORS or non-ORS funded) who are not supported by an ITOD due to the schools' decision, and also those who are only partially mainstreamed and receive teaching support from a Deaf Resource Class teacher.

Of the total 83 sent, 31 surveys were returned, giving a response rate of 37%. This relatively low return rate probably reflects a flaw in the distribution method: that is, the two parts of the survey (seeking high school examination data, and ITODs overall views on mainstreaming respectively) were sent together. Those ITODs without high school students on their caseloads may have discarded both parts of the survey, although some did return Part Two of the survey only, noting that they had no senior highschool students.

Due to the small sample size, the results (particularly on examination passes) can only be seen as suggestive rather than representative of the range of achievement of deaf students leaving mainstream high schools. A more comprehensive survey and complete data source is needed.

### **3.0 Secondary school examination achievement**

#### *3.1 The Data Set*

Part One of the survey aimed to gain a profile of the educational achievement of mainstreamed deaf students at or above fifth form level over the period 1996-2000, by gathering the following data for each such student on ITOD's caseloads:

- Passes gained in public examinations in 5<sup>th</sup> –7<sup>th</sup> form
- Age of school leaving
- Destination after leaving school
- Information on level of hearing loss; mode of communication; settings attended was also gathered.

Information about 32 secondary students was received. Taking the AC Nievesen (2000) figure of 518 secondary students verified as high or very high needs, and 83% of all deaf students being in mainstream schools (SES 1997), this gives a potential total of 429 students enrolled at high schools – of which 32 students represents 7%.

As this survey was limited to those at 5<sup>th</sup> form (Year 11) or above, the percentage of coverage should be slightly higher, but still relatively low.

Based on the fact that only 8 students out of 32 are reported as gaining no exam passes, we suspect that some students who have not taken national exams at all might not have been included in the data supplied by ITODs. The largest number of students reported by any teacher was five, with the majority returning data for one or two students over a five year period.

### 3.2 Results

#### 3.2.1 Total number of examination passes

Students in sample who have gained passes in national exams: 24

Students in sample who have not gained passes in national exams: 8

‘Other’ exam passes for the group: 8

These included Alternate subjects (Computing, Maths, English), Correspondence School English, NZQA Unit Standards Catering, Practical English IT, University level 1 Maths

#### 3.2.2 Bursary passes

Total number of Bursary passes reported for the group was 33, obtained by 11 students. The average pass rate is thus 3 subjects per eligible student.

<b>Bursary Passes</b>	<b>No. of students</b>
0 subject	2
1 subject	0
2 subject	2
3 subject	2
4 subject	3
5 subject	2
6 subject	0

2 students gained no Bursary subjects

7 students gained between two to four Bursary subjects

2 students gained 5 subjects.

Clusters of passes were in English (4) and Chemistry (4), followed by Art (3).  
Maths/History, Classics/Geography/Calculus (2)

Other subjects passed: Biology, Economics, Graphics, Music, Physical Education,  
Physics, Science.

### 3.2.3 Sixth Form Certificate attainment

Total number of Sixth Form Certificate subjects attained was 54, obtained by 17  
students. The average attainment rate is thus 3 subjects per eligible student.

(Note that SFC subjects are attained by ranking from 1-12 rather than passed/failed.)

<b>SFC Passes</b>	<b>No. of students</b>
0 subject	5
1 subject	1
2 subject	0
3 subject	3
4 subject	1
5 subject	4
6 subject	3

5 students attained no SFC subjects

5 students attained SFC in one to four subjects

7 students attained either 5 or 6 subjects.

Clusters of passes were in Maths (9) followed by English (8), Geography (5),  
Chemistry (4), Biology/Graphics/History (3).

Other subjects: Accounting Art, Computer Economics, Information Technology,  
Journalism, Latin, Music Photography, Science, Tourism, Woodwork, Engineering.

### 3.2.4 School Certificate Passes

Total number of School Certificate passes reported for the group was 73, obtained by 27 students. The average pass rate is thus 2.75 subjects per eligible student.

<b>SC Passes</b>	<b>No. of students</b>
0 subject	5
1 subject	4
2 subject	4
3 subject	4
4 subject	4
5 subject	3
6 subject	3

5 students gained no SC passes.

16 students passed between one to four subjects in equal proportions.

6 students passed five or six subjects

Clusters of passes were in English (13), followed by Maths (11), Science (11), Art (6), Graphics (4).

Other subjects passed: Accounting, Biology, Clothing, Economics, Food technology, History, Home Economics, Horticulture, Information Technology, Latin, Metalwork, Music.

### 3.2.5 Range of subjects passed

Students gained passes in 29 different subjects at SC and SFC level, and in 34 different subjects at Bursary level.

### 3.2.6 School leaving age and destination

Of the 18 students reported as having left school, immediate destinations were reported as follows:

Employment	2	(one had 0 exam passes, one had 4 SC passes)
Unemployment	1	(0 exam passes)
Transition	2	(one had 0 exam passes, other had 1 SC pass))

Polytech	6	(one had 2 Bursary passes, three had 1 or more SFC pass, others had 3 SC passes)
University	7	(all had 3 or more Bursary passes)

The average age of leaving school was 16.5 yrs, with a range of 15 – 20 years. The 15 year old had no exam passes and went to Transition; the 20 year old had 4 Bursary passes and went to university.

#### **4.0 Benefits of mainstreaming**

Part Two of the survey sought ITODs overall views on the benefits and disadvantages of mainstream placement for students they work with. Responses to Question 1 - “What are the main benefits/advantages to deaf students of being in a mainstream class?” - fell into thematic groupings as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Benefits of mainstreaming

<i>Perceived Benefit</i>	<i>No. of mentions</i>
Normalisation/ Socialisation in hearing world	39
Access to curriculum/higher expectations.	16
Local school community (being part of)	12
Oral language development	7
Others’ awareness/acceptance of deaf people	4

##### *4.1 Normalisation through socialisation in hearing world*

The primary advantage of mainstream school placement was expressed by ITODs as the opportunity for deaf children to have extensive interaction with hearing people, and through this socialisation experience to regard themselves as part of normal society. This group of responses variously emphasised elements of communication skills, social behaviour (as modelled by hearing peers), having a normal range of school experiences, and gaining knowledge of hearing social norms. We have abbreviated this theme as ‘normalisation’, which summarises the intent and often the wording of responses such as the following:



- *Being in a "normal" environment, they gain a realistic idea of what others their age do, and what is expected of them.*
- *Feel a part of the world they live in.*
- *Working with normal hearing students.*
- *They are exposed to the normal range of learning experiences.*
- *Exposed to the demands of, and learn to function in, the hearing society.*
- *Normalising of social behaviour.*
- *They have a multitude of role models.*
- *Hopefully help prepare them for when they move into the workforce.*
- *Get used to finding ways to communicate with a variety of people.*

#### *4.2 Access to curriculum and extra-curricular activities*

The next largest group of responses refer to the academic advantages of mainstream education, citing elements of higher academic expectations (comparable to hearing peers), exposure to and measurement against the full range of national curriculum standards, and wider choice of extra curricular activities (with emphasis on sport). The following sample of comments reflects these aspects:

- *Increased expectations for academic achievement.*
- *Incentive - can compare skills and abilities with those of hearing peers.*
- *Access to National Curriculum through class programme.*
- *They have an equal opportunity of being exposed to the curriculum as any other child in the country.*
- *Curriculum levelled at their age and stage and expectation of high level of educational achievement (in some cases).*
- *Involvement in and the opportunity to choose from a wide range of extra curricula activities - sporting and cultural,*

#### *4.3 Participation in local school and community*

Convenient travel to a local school, and the opportunity to make social connections with neighbourhood peers was seen by 12 ITODs as a benefit of mainstream placement.

#### *4.4 Oral Language development*

Exposure to spoken language communication is implicit in many of the responses coded under category (a) as ‘Normalisation’. However, seven respondents stated specifically that mainstream placement is beneficial to the development of oral language skills, for example:

- *Continual exposure to spoken English is beneficial to students with useful hearing.*
- *Language immersion.*

#### *4.5 Others’ awareness/ acceptance of deaf people*

A final benefit of mainstreaming is perceived to be increased awareness and acceptance in the wider community with regard to deaf people, as this comment expresses:

- *The community as a whole slowly becomes more aware of the deaf (relates to the student, as they must live and work in the community eventually)*

### **5.0 Disadvantages of mainstreaming**

Question 2 of the survey asked, “What are the main disadvantages or difficulties you have observed for deaf students in mainstream classes?”. Problems reported centred on social relationships, communication, and students’ ability to participate and succeed in the regular academic programme. They also commented on insufficient resources and environmental adaptations to support deaf learners, and concerns about students’ self-esteem and identity.

Table 2 Disadvantages of mainstreaming

*Perceived Disadvantage*

*No. of mentions*

Social difficulties/isolation	17
Communication difficulties	17
Academic gap/ learning pace	16
Attitudes of others	15
Not enough resources	15
Physical environment	8
Lack of Deaf peers/self esteem	6
Student dependence	3

### 5.1 Social isolation

ITODs observe that deaf students are often socially isolated and have difficulty conforming to expected social norms of the peer group and of the classroom. This is mainly attributable to communication problems – e.g.:

- *Not succeeding in being a part of it - lack of oral language*
- *They can miss out on the subtle social humour, information etc. so they feel they are excluded from the group - isolation.*

Numerous comments (as shown below) also suggest that responses to deaf students within the mainstream context may fail to recognise or address their psycho-social needs, with negative outcomes for developing social competence and integration with peers.

- *Time needed to explain and teach strategies for social interaction.*
- *Teachers (classroom) don't deal with inappropriate behaviours and so they manifest.*

### 5.2 Communication difficulties – “missing out”

While communication and social integration cannot be separated (as reflected in the group of responses above), some comments emphasised communication barriers as the source of social difficulties (e.g. “Communication difficulties may restrict social interaction”) and restricted academic participation – for example:

- *Communication barriers ... could lead to resentment of hearing world.*
- *Communication with teachers; access to information; isolation in the playground.*
- *Discussions are difficult to follow for Deaf students and [they] miss information.*

Communication barriers are described as both inherent to deafness and created by the ways in which mainstream contexts fail to provide a communication environment that is really accessible to deaf learners. This is described chiefly in terms of the inability of teachers and teacher aides to communicate adequately through NZSL or to make other adaptations that would make communication more comprehensible to deaf students:

- *Not getting all the information - teacher aide NZSL not good enough - technology not fully utilised - teachers not making adaptations.*
- *NZSL skills of paraprofessionals may not be sufficiently advanced.*
- *They don't have teachers who can communicate with them.*

### *5.3 Academic gap/ instructional style*

ITODs observe that deaf students are academically disadvantaged by the pace and style of instruction in mainstream classes which does not accommodate their linguistic experience and communication mode in class, their level of contextual knowledge, and style of learning. A common problem is insufficient learning time within the class programme for a deaf student to master new material, even with additional input from support staff. The content and structure of learning tasks often presents the deaf student with language, concepts and skills which are unfamiliar to him, but not necessarily to hearing classmates - creating inherently unequal learning opportunities for the deaf student, as these comments express:

- *Pace of the curriculum too fast for most deaf students, with not enough time for pre and post teaching of concepts, new vocabulary etc.*
- *Need time for reflection, extra explanation.*
- *In class there is not usually enough time for the deaf child to respond to questions.*

- *They sometimes need the opportunity to work on a longer time frame but the class has moved on.*
- *Lack of understanding of new topics, etc.*

Other comments refer to inadequate adaptation of learning activities for deaf learners:

- *Not all teachers are equally skilled in appropriate techniques.*
- *Difficulty in tests - particularly oral spelling and tables tests.*

This lack of ‘fit’ between mainstream instruction and deaf learners is seen by ITODs to result in “achievement levels lower than that of peers [sic].”

#### *5.4 Attitudes and expectations*

According to ITODs, deaf students are disadvantaged by peers exhibiting a lack of acceptance, teacher expectations that are unrealistic or under-informed, and their lack of strategies/knowledge required for teaching and relating to a deaf student.

- *Having teachers with high initial expectations that they will just read like everyone else - lack of knowledge about being Deaf.*
- *Teenagers become less accepting than younger children - some ostracism for deaf/hearing -impaired.*
- *Lack of understanding/appreciation of classroom teachers of the difficulties of deaf - unwillingness to make adaptations.*
- *Not wanting to take responsibility of the deaf student in the same way as a hearing student - wanting to pass on all the responsibility to ITOD who is only in the class setting with the student for a limited time each day.*

#### *5.5 Not enough resources*

Some ITODs believe that insufficient resources are available, in general, to support students:

- *They may not get level of help to adequately access curriculum.*
- *Sometimes a need for a notetaker as well as a communicator.*

- *Often miss vital information when there is no support.*
- *Not all subject areas are covered with a support person.*

ITODs perceive that deaf students need increased coverage for communication support and more specialist support teaching than is currently available.

#### *5.6 Physical environment – not adapted*

Physical adaptation of classroom environments is seen to be inadequately addressed. Points raised include: poor classroom acoustics for use of hearing aids, inappropriate seating arrangements for students' visual access (especially in large classes), and “not enough visual support, e.g., OHP pictures and diagrams, use of colour to facilitate learning.”

#### *5.7 Lack of Deaf peers, self esteem and identity*

A small number of respondents identified lack of contact with other Deaf people and competent NZSL users as a disadvantage for mainstreamed students. They describe this isolation as having a negative impact on the development of sign language skills (and subsequent academic learning), identity and self esteem - for example:

- *Limited social contact with other deaf students/Deaf adults until recently*
- *Limited access to good signing role models - TODs or Teacher Aides often at beginner level and changing from year to year, so they don't have strong language base if they are NZSL users, therefore hard to develop concepts.*
- *Poor self esteem.*

#### *5.8 Student dependence*

Finally, some ITODs observe that “some support people [are] doing the student's work instead of the student” and that some Teacher Aides provide support in ways that “inhibit development of independence”.

## **6.0 Benefits and disadvantages compared**

Many of the disadvantages and problems described in section 5.0 are in direct contradiction to the social and academic benefits listed in section 4.0. This pattern is apparent within the data set overall, but also within individual survey responses. For example, one respondent identifies as a benefit, “large social group, opportunities to make friendships in their own area”, alongside the disadvantage that “communication difficulties may restrict social interaction”. And later in the same survey, “continual exposure to spoken English beneficial to students with useful hearing”, is followed by concern about “difficulty following class discussions; poor classroom acoustics”.

This apparently conflicting set of perceptions can be interpreted in either of two ways: firstly, that the existence or balance of benefits and disadvantages differs between individual situations, and thus all observations are true for some students but not others. Or secondly, that teachers (and others) may be more inclined to state advantages and benefits in the abstract (from an ‘ideal scenario’ or belief basis), while concerns tend to be described on the basis of observed disadvantages, which depart from the stated ideal.

An appended chart (Appendix B) sets out comments within individual survey responses which juxtapose apparently contradictory benefits and disadvantages of mainstreaming. It is noteworthy that almost identical sets of themes were found in the survey data collected from parents and Teacher Aides.

## **7.0 Perception of educational outcomes overall**

Question 3 of the questionnaire asked “In your opinion, how satisfactory are the current academic outcomes of mainstream education in NZ for deaf students in general?”, with tick box ratings ranging from ‘very satisfactory’ to ‘very unsatisfactory’, and space for comments.

Six participants felt unable to choose an overall rating in response to this question, stating that it is impossible to generalise about outcomes since individual children with their diverse characteristics differ in their response to the varying circumstances of mainstream situations. One respondent said that they did not have an ‘overview’ and thus could not comment.

Several ITODs comment that profoundly deaf children and those who use NZSL have the least satisfactory educational situations and outcomes, whereas

another points out that children who do not use sign language often receive a lower level of support and may thus end up disadvantaged. Numerous comments identify family input as the key factor in successful academic outcomes.

The majority of respondents(22) believe that, in general, educational outcomes are less than satisfactory: 11 consider them to be 'partly satisfactory', 6 'not satisfactory', and 5 state that they are 'very unsatisfactory'. Five believe that outcomes are 'satisfactory', while only one ITOD chose 'very satisfactory'. Nearly all participants qualified their answer with some explanation, particularly those who chose 'partly satisfactory'. A sample of comments are shown below, to give a sense of the issues which ITODs perceive to be pertinent to this question.

### **Satisfactory**

- *Same range of abilities as hearing students. Similar range of family support although in some cultures, the Deaf student is regarded as less worthy, or even deficient.*
- *For some students a mainstream education sees them achieving at the same academic level as their hearing peers which might mean they attain very satisfactory results or like their peers unsatisfactory results. For some deaf students a mainstream placement can be totally inappropriate, resulting in unsatisfactory academic outcomes.*
- *Often find deaf students have developed good work habits and get on with their work when it is set. With support, [they] have an adult to process work with and extra explanations and more in depth teaching done.*

### **Partly Satisfactory**

- *Satisfactory for a few*
- *For Deaf students who need NZSL I don't think it works especially well, for social reasons - children are often isolated within peer group.*
- *I see a lot of good things happening but feel restricted by the limited time I can spend with some students.*
- *ITOD's do what they can in the time available, but with ORS students - too many personnel involved which can lead to further difficulties and organisation problems.*



- *I think those students who are successful have very committed mums and dads who have communicated with them early, given them a rich first language base and emphasised to them the importance of education and that they can be successful.*
- *Some children do succeed well but they certainly need to be motivated and have family and professional support. For less able children or children with less support and/or poorer communication skills, the mainstream can be a very difficult place.*
- *Deaf students are not counselled, encouraged or expected by many who work with them to succeed.*
- *Need to raise standards of literacy by having a range of options available so education can be tailored to meet the needs of the child.*

### **Not Satisfactory**

- *Generally I feel academic outcomes are mixed. Children who use NZSL (and find English grammar etc. difficult) struggle in high school settings. Mostly because little progress has been made in the exam and assessment area. Literacy is often the benchmark for a lot of subjects but the complex nature of English will (by "normal" standards) fail our kids. Instead of English strands that involve knowledge of English, can they be given credit for their use of NZSL? Often our kids are set up to fail ... Much of the expression and understanding of NZSL is depicted in facial grammar. It is not that they don't understand. They just express it differently. Assessment needs to be standardised throughout the country. Lack of knowledge by ITODs is an issue as well.*

### **Very Unsatisfactory**

- *Despite best efforts of teachers, teacher aides, teachers of the deaf, most students with severe to profound hearing loss don't reach functional language or literacy levels.*
- *I see children being denied access to the curriculum by the funding methods. Children who do not sign will not be classified as very high needs and there is not enough funding to support their needs at school and schools refuse to spend their own funding.*

## 8.0 Suggested improvements to the mainstream situation

The final survey question asked ITODs to suggest how the mainstream experience for deaf students could be improved. Their responses identified a consistent set of factors which they believe would contribute to a more effective educational situation for deaf students, as summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Suggested improvements to mainstream situation

<i>Improvement</i>	<i>No. of mentions</i>
Training of mainstream class teachers	13
Equipment and physical adaptation	11
Training of teacher aides	9
Effective early intervention	9
NZSL tuition for teachers, aides, students	8
Increased resources (in general)	8
Qualified interpreters and notetakers	6
Access to deaf studies and deaf adults	6
Contact with deaf peers by clustering	6
Improved awareness of school/community	6
Rationalisation of support	5
Training/professional development for ITODs	4
Improved funding and accountability re. resources	4
More assistance for moderate needs students	4
Coordination/collaboration between staff	2

ITODs' suggested improvements emphasise particularly the need for qualitative changes in the skills of personnel and in the communication opportunities in deaf students' learning contexts. Two perceived needs which stood out were:

(i) More deaf-focused pre-service and in-service training for mainstream staff (teachers, teacher aides) and specialist staff (ITODs, interpreters, notetakers) – leading

to better overall competence of all staff in communicating with and teaching deaf students, as these comments highlight:

- *Often class room teachers are totally unaware of deaf issues - e. g. high social needs because it takes them all year just to accept the deaf child in the class room, adjust the curriculum, use the FM etc. and the playground issues are unsupported. ITODs don't have enough time to spend in each school each week to monitor this.*
- *[Need] teacher aide training in working with deaf students - the understanding of making them independent.*
- *Emphasis should be placed on up-skilling TODs and teacher aides in NZSL*
- *Greater emphasis on speech and auditory training in ongoing professional development for staff*
- *My wish list would be TOD training - preferably long distance learning - so the child's needs are better supported by a fully competent teacher*

(ii) More opportunity for students to develop social and communication skills and self-esteem through contact with deaf peers and adult role models.

- *A Deaf peer group*
- *Having more Deaf children within a central mainstream school in a region*
- *I have observed a marked improvement in behaviour, attitude and self confidence in signing children ...due largely to regular interaction/support from Deaf Mentors*
- *More NZSL Deaf teachers of the deaf trained to go back to small town areas rather than main centres of New Zealand*
- *Access to Deaf Studies in mainstream situations*
- *To have a part of each week e.g. afternoon for the Deaf students to meet with other deaf students to improve their own language [by] working with deaf adults*

ITODs believe that “attitude makes an enormous difference” to deaf students’ school experience and “quality of life”, and that much more could be done to improve school and community inclusion of deaf students through better information about deafness – what to expect and how to respond to deaf people.

Also high on the wish list was effective early intervention with families, with ITODs' comments suggesting a need for both qualitative and quantitative improvements to existing services and practices:

- *Full support immediately after diagnosis of hearing loss.*
- *Students must begin school with age appropriate language. This means early detection of loss (setting up screening programmes), intensive language development in the optimum language learning years(0-3 years), with TOD support during these critical years and not just upon school entry*
- *Parents given information so that they can make an informed choice – i.e., placement .*
- *Regular NZSL support to all teachers, teacher aides, students and parents throughout the country (regional areas in particular)*

Comment on the amount, range and co-ordination of support resources was slightly less prominent than qualitative aspects of existing provisions.

Physical resource needs identified as lacking included improved acoustic conditions in classrooms (i.e., sound-field amplification), technology such as laptop computers for notetaking, digital hearing aids, and fax machines for students.

ITODs spell out a need for better provision of human resources which are currently available to mainstreamed students only at a minimal level - including NZSL tutors, Deaf teachers/mentors, trained interpreters (described as a 'human right'), notetakers, advisors, appropriately trained guidance counsellors, and speech therapists.

They highlight the need for more (qualified) Teacher of the Deaf contact time, as these responses express:

- *A recognition that teachers of the deaf need to cover students in all their subjects- at least half the time, with a qualified teacher aide with them during the other half.*
- *Greater access to specific subject teachers (eg. Maths and Science) to act as tutors. These teachers need to have an understanding of the implications of deafness and an affinity for working with deaf students.*
- *Lack of skilled, trained teachers of the deaf. Often our profoundly deaf children are left with part-time teacher hours; these teachers are chosen by the school and there is no accountability or training to support them working with the children.*

*They have no idea what their role is (no job description specifically for a deaf child) and no appraisal specific to their work.*

Better rationalisation and monitoring of the allocation of support services is the theme in comments such as these:

- *Ensure that all students have access to all resources and personnel. Some may have neither AODC or ITOD.*
- *Better resources for rural students*
- *A close look at the amount of support given to the students- in some cases this may be too much to allow the child to become an independent learner. Others may need more seamless services available for all deaf students - access to NZSL, Auditory Verbal - whatever is needed coming from centralised agency i.e. School for Deaf*
- *Having deaf students attend only a restricted number of schools in each area so that a better service/time can be given*

Some ITODs strongly believe that insufficient funding, and weak or non-existent monitoring mechanisms for the use of resources are issues that need addressing:

- *To be able to fund changes to physical environments.*
- *Provide more ITOD support to children on the moderate needs contract.*
- *Support according to individual needs not determined by financial limits or local resources available*
- *More control over teacher aides, i.e., those who work immediately with a Deaf student. More control over selection (and retirement) and direction. The teacher aide supposedly works under class teacher's direction. What a load of cobblers! Does the class teacher know what or how to direct the teacher aides involvement with the student? No way.*
- *There is no accountability for how Principals choose to spend the funding. This does not seem to be audited at all. Only the parents, if they have the courage, can contact the Ministry with concerns and then still nothing happens. Schools need constant educating ...deaf children's needs do not diminish as they get older; they are actually hugely increased.*

## 9.0 Summary

The first part of this survey gathered a limited set of data on examination passes for deaf senior secondary school students on ITOD caseloads. This indicated that three-quarters of those reported had achieved passes in national examination subjects from School Certificate to Bursary levels. 8 out of 32 students had not passed any examinations. The largest number (27) had achieved an average of 2.75 School Certificate subject passes, while 17 had achieved an average of 3 Sixth Form Certificate subjects, and 11 had achieved an average of 3 Bursary subjects. The subject range of Form 5 -7 exam passes indicates that mainstreamed deaf students are studying and succeeding in a wide range of subjects from the national curriculum. It is not known from this data how many other students may have taken no exams, or not shown up at all in ITOD caseload data.

Methodological flaws notwithstanding (as discussed in sections 2.0 and 3.1), the main point that this survey brings to light is the difficulty of accessing comprehensive and accurate data on final academic outcomes for deaf students in mainstream schools. In the course of planning the survey, we consulted with itinerant teachers, deaf education administrators, Specialist Education Services, and the Ministry of Education and were unable to find a more reliable or comprehensive method of obtaining national data on highschool achievement. Ministry of Education records on national examination passes do not identify students as deaf or hearing impaired, and individual school records do not necessarily either. In other words, there is no agreed mechanism for centrally recording and accessing achievement data that would allow evaluation of outcomes for the large proportion of deaf students who receive their secondary education in mainstream schools. A survey with more comprehensive coverage and access to a more complete data source than was available for this study is needed to draw valid empirical conclusions about academic outcomes at a national level.

In Part Two of this survey, ITODs identified essentially similar benefits and disadvantages of mainstreaming as did surveys of mainstream class teachers and teacher aides. They express a similar set of apparently contradictory statements of belief and observation - for example, that 'normal' social experience is an important benefit of mainstreaming, while social isolation is observed to be a common problem. As did parents, ITODs cited the advantage of students being exposed to 'normal' role

models, yet also noted that interaction with hearing peers is typically hindered by a communication gap. Similarly, mainstreaming was said to offer students better opportunity for academic achievement, yet the class programme was described as moving at too fast a pace, or presented in inaccessible ways for many deaf students to fully participate in learning activities with hearing peers.

ITODs believe that the learning situation for mainstream children would be improved by a greater depth and amount of training for mainstream teachers and teacher aides, by more specialist (TOD) teaching support, and by improved access to instruction through NZSL in some cases.

ITODs identify a range of other issues that need also addressing, including and more effective early intervention with families and infants, and better physical adaptations of classrooms (acoustics, lighting, seating arrangements).

Participants commented favourably on the recent introduction of Deaf mentors and see the development of a Deaf Studies curriculum as a relevant addition for mainstreamed students. ITODs consider better NZSL competence for personnel working with deaf students (including themselves) to be important, and note an unmet need for trained interpreters to be providing communication access to students in mainstream schools.

Rationalisation and monitoring for the effective use of financial and human resources is seen to be weak within the current system, with few mechanisms in place to follow up decisions, practices and outcomes around the resources allocated to deaf students. Some ITODs suggest that the clustering of deaf students in fewer schools would be socially and academically advantageous for many students who are socially isolated and/or marginally supported in their mainstream placements.

ITODs are understandably reluctant to generalise about educational outcomes for mainstreamed deaf students. However they observe that, in general, students using NZSL and those with profound hearing loss are at a greater disadvantage in mainstream schools, while those with cochlear implants appear to achieve better than others. The majority of ITODs surveyed regard educational outcomes for high and very high needs mainstreamed students to be less than satisfactory overall, while also emphasising the wide range of factors and outcomes that characterise individual students.

## **References**

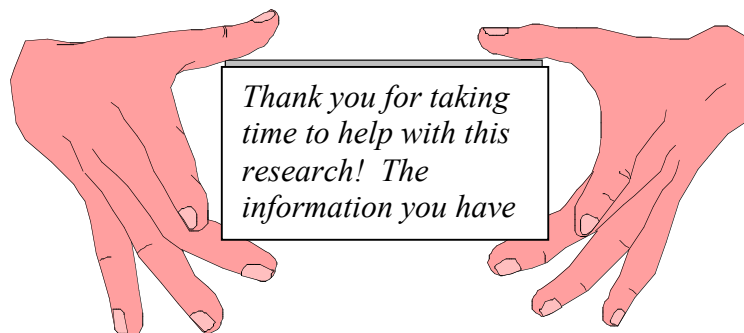
AC Nielsen (2000) *Establishing Deaf Children's Educational Needs*. Unpublished Report for Specialist Education Services (N.Z.)

**SES** (Specialist Education Services) (1997) *I need to find the ref for this*



## SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

- Please make photocopies of the Student Data Form and complete **one copy for:**
  - **each student** on your caseload still attending high school above 5<sup>th</sup> form
  - **each student** on your caseload who has left high school in the past 5 years
- Complete forms for students who gained qualifications *and* for those who did not.
- *The survey is anonymous. Do not give names of students.*
- We would be grateful if you would also take the time to complete the section which seeks your views: Itinerant Teacher Views on Mainstreaming
- Please return the forms in the envelope provided by **May 14th**.



*If you have any questions about this survey or the research project, please contact:*

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**STUDENT DATA FORM** (Please copy as needed)

1. What is the student's level of hearing loss?

- Profound     Severe     Moderate     Has Cochlear Implant

2. Does this student communicate mainly through

- Speaking and listening?     Signing and speaking together?     Signing?

3. What is the educational background of this student?

- always mainstreamed  
 has attended Deaf unit and mainstream  
 has attended Deaf school and mainstream  
 has attended Deaf School, Deaf Unit and mainstream

4. Has this student gained any passes in public examinations?    Yes  No

*If yes, please complete chart below, listing subjects passed.*

	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Bursary					
6 <sup>th</sup> Form Cert.					
School Cert.					
Other:					

5. If this student has left school, what was their destination immediately after leaving?

- University/ College of Education  
 Polytech  
 Employment  
 Unemployment  
 Other - please state

6. Student's age on leaving school? \_\_\_\_\_

**ITINERANT TEACHER VIEWS ON MAINSTREAMING**

*Please answer these questions based on your overall experience of working with deaf students at all levels in mainstream schools.*

1. What are the main benefits/advantages to deaf students of being in a mainstream class?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the main disadvantages or difficulties you have observed for deaf students in mainstream classes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In your opinion, how satisfactory are the current academic outcomes of mainstream education in NZ for deaf students in general?

- Very satisfactory                       Satisfactory                       Partly satisfactory  
 Generally not satisfactory                       Very unsatisfactory

*Comment if you wish:*

4. If you could improve the mainstream experience for deaf students, what would your 'wish list' be? Leaving aside family variables, what would contribute to making this situation most effective for students, in your opinion?

Appendix B: Comparison of benefits and disadvantages within questionnaires

Benefits	Disadvantages
<p><i>Survey 1</i> It gives them the chance to mix with people their own age  ...hopefully help prepare them for when they move into the workforce.</p>	<p>The [lack of] acceptance of other children  Some support people doing the student's work instead of the student. Not enough support</p>
<p><i>Survey 2</i> Usually in their own community, large social group, opportunities to make friendships in their own area Number of peer role models After school activities, sporting and cultural  Continual exposure to spoken English beneficial to students with useful hearing  Incentive- can compare skills and abilities with those of hearing peers  Access to itinerant teacher and other specialist services</p>	<p>Communication difficulties may restrict social interaction  Time needed to explain and teach strategies for social interaction.  Difficulty following class discussions Poor classroom acoustics  Pace of instruction may be too fast (for some students). Need time for reflection, extra explanation  Sometimes a need for a note taker as well as a communicator  Large number of students in classes can be a problem deciding where is best seating for mainstreamed child, teacher and teacher aide</p>
<p><i>Survey 4</i> Being in a "normal" environment they gain a realistic idea of what others their age do, and what is expected of them</p>	<p>They can miss out on the subtle social humour, information etc. so they feel they are exclude from the group, isolation Deaf students need an incredibly positive attitude to teaming to succeed. Some hide behind their deafness as an excuse for not making the effort</p>
<p><i>Survey 5</i> Socialising with same age group Sporting, cultural contact i.e. Deaf/Hearing Access to National Curriculum through class programme</p>	<p>Discussions are difficult to follow for Deaf students and miss information Often miss vital information when there is no support Sometimes do not receive enough visual support - OHP, pictures, diagrams, use of colour to facilitate learning</p>
<p><i>Survey 6</i>  Get used to finding ways to communicate with a variety of people.</p>	<p>Not getting all the information - teacher aide NZSL not good enough - technology not fully utilised - teachers not making adaptations</p>

<p>Know the rules of games and sports</p> <p>Feel a part of the world they live in</p> <p>They can make friends with peers.</p>	<p>Having teachers with high initial expectations that they will just read like everyone else - lack of knowledge about being Deaf.</p> <p>Not succeeding in being a part of it - lack of language - oral.</p> <p>Teenagers become less accepting than younger children - some ostracism for deaf/hearing -impaired.</p>
<p><i>Survey 8</i> (if it is at a good educational setting) that the students are included and accepted</p> <p>That they are working alongside others</p>	<p>It is very rare to find a mainstream school that benefits the needs of the deaf student.</p> <p>They don't have teachers who can communicate with them. NZSL skills of paraprofessionals may not be sufficiently advanced.</p> <p>Not all subject areas are covered with a support person.</p> <p>Maybe teachers don't ensure that the appropriate schemata are in place before new knowledge concepts given.</p> <p>Teachers (classroom) don't deal with inappropriate behaviours and so they manifest.</p>
<p><i>Survey 9</i> Working with normal hearing students.</p> <p>Understanding of hearing world</p>	<p>Communication barriers. Because of these barriers, could lead to resentment of hearing world.</p> <p>Lack of teacher understanding the needs of the deaf child</p>
<p><i>Survey 14</i> Depends on the child. Some deaf children get on very well both socially and academically. Both these factors drop off if student is a signer or profoundly deaf.</p> <p>For some children the chance to participate in sport is a definite advantage</p>	<p>Communication with teachers, access to information, social isolation in the playground.</p> <p>In class there is not usually, enough time the deaf child to respond to questions.</p> <p>Difficulty in tests particularly oral spelling and tables tests.</p> <p>Unsuitable or inadequate listening environments</p> <p>Lack of understanding of new topics etc.</p> <p>Not enough time to practise</p>
<p><i>Survey 17</i> They have an equal opportunity of being exposed to the curriculum as any other child in the country.</p> <p>They are exposed to the normal range of learning experiences.</p>	<p>They may not get level of help to adequately access curriculum.</p> <p>Not all teachers are equally skilled in appropriate techniques.</p>

<p>Language immersion</p> <p>They have a multitude of role models.</p>	<p>They sometimes need the opportunity to work on a longer time frame but the class has moved on.</p>
<p><i>Survey 21</i></p> <p>Able to attend their local school.</p> <p>Exposed to the demands of and learn to function in the hearing society.</p>	<p>Achievement levels lower than that of peers.</p> <p>Poor self esteem.</p> <p>Classroom/subject teachers lack necessary skills.</p> <p>Teacher aide support inhibits development of independence.</p>
<p><i>Survey 24</i></p> <p>Increased expectations for academic achievement.</p> <p>Involvement in and the opportunity to choose from a wide range of extra curricula activities</p> <p>Normalising of social behaviour.</p>	<p>Pace of the curriculum too fast for most deaf students, with not enough time for pre and post teaching of concepts, new vocabulary etc.</p> <p>Lack of understanding/appreciation of class room teachers of the difficulties of deaf - unwillingness to make adaptations.</p> <p>Not wanting to take responsibility of the deaf student in the same way as a hearing student - wanting to pass on all the responsibility to ITOD who is only in the class setting with the student for a limited time each day.</p>
<p><i>Survey 30</i></p> <p><u>Some</u> social benefits - learning to interact with hearing children/adults.</p> <p>Modelling of other students.</p> <p>Academic advantages - higher expectation in mainstream.</p>	<p>Limited social contact with other deaf students/Deaf adults until recently (past 12 months)</p> <p>Limited access to good signing role models - TODs or Teacher Aides often at beginner level and changing from year to year, so they don't have strong language base if they are NZSL users, therefore hard to develop concepts.</p>