

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Social Research for Professionals:

Part 1: Students are required to critically consider the strengths and weaknesses of the research article, with a particular focus on the methodology and methods used, and the ethics of the study.

This assignment will analyse the research article, “21st Century Teenagers and Young Adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Outcomes and Possibilities” by Jean S. Moog and Amanda M. Rudge (Moog and Rudge, 2019), which looks at the impact that inclusive education has on the outcomes and possibilities for deaf and hard of hearing teenagers and young adults, out of young people who attended the Moog Center program for at least one year in their preschool and elementary school years. The study was looking to prove how the Moog Center influences the students’ ability to learn in their education. The program in the Center helps young people who are deaf and hard of hearing to develop in their communication skills and their ability to learn in a school/educational environment and many of their former students, who are now young adults, have gone on to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, from secondary or high school education. The Moog Center is based in St. Louis, Missouri (Moog and Rudge, 2019).

In this study, there were 108 participants that took part in the research. All participants were fifteen years old or older at the time that the study took place. 92% of the participants were diagnosed with their hearing impairment or deafness by the age of three and the remaining 8% were diagnosed with their hearing impairment or deafness

by the age of five. Of the participants, 91% had amplified hearing aids before the age of three; 84% had at least one cochlear implant, and the other 16% used bilateral hearing aids. Of the participants with cochlear implants, 41% of the teens and 27% of the young adults reported bilateral implantation. All but one participant (who did not get their cochlear implants until the age of 25) reported wearing their cochlear implants most of or all of the time, excluding showers, swimming, and sometimes noisy or loud places. The number of participants involved in the research could be a strength or a weakness because one hundred and eight participants in a research project is a fairly large number and it could distort the final result of the research, or it could actually present a bigger and more helpful picture of the Center's program and impact.

In relation to the ethics of this research project, there isn't much mentioned apart from gaining participant consent. However, the study was approved by IntegReview Institutional Review Board in Austin, Texas. There were one hundred and thirty two eligible alumni from the Moog Center. Ten emails were not obtained, and parents of four high schoolers declined to consent to participation. Therefore, there were one hundred and eighteen emailed invitations for the online survey. Young adult participants, eighteen years or older, gave consent via email invitations, and teen participants were invited to participate through contacting their parents for consent through a phone call and then email invitations. One hundred and eight out of one hundred and eighteen of the invited alumni consented and participated and as an incentive, each participant who completed the survey got fifty dollars compensation for their participants. One weakness of the study is that there are no references to any ethical guidelines – for example, the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines. Although the

BERA Ethical Guidelines cannot apply here as this is specifically British and this study is based in the United States, however, there does not seem to be any equivalent policies or guidelines mentioned either. The researchers could have explained how the ethical considerations they had to take influenced how they conducted their study with both their young adult and teenage participants.

Linking to a point from the last paragraph, another weakness of the study is that there is only one obvious link to any children or young people's policies or rights, which is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). However, there is no strong reference as to why the research was carried out like it was with the teenagers and young adults. An example of this could be the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, known as the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989), but this is not applicable to the United States as they are the only country as a member of the United Nations not to have ratified the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989), and therefore, the United States have no legal obligation to follow or use the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989) (UNICEF, 2025). There also does not seem to be any links to policies surrounding working with young people or facilitating activities for young people; some examples could be the Youth Work National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019) or the Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (Youth Work Wales Review Group, 2022). Although these examples of policies are Wales or United Kingdom based, there does not seem to be links to any United States or Missouri state equivalent.

The methodology of the study is mixed methods as the research method was a survey consisting of both multiple choice questions, that are quantitative, and open ended questions, that are qualitative. One weakness of the research could be that the research method could have involved more person to person interaction as some of the questions asked about lived experiences in several aspects of the participants' lives and getting those kinds of answers in detail through a survey may be difficult. The study leans towards more of a pragmatic worldview (Cresswell, 2009) due to its use of mixed methods within the survey. However, many of the results seem to be recorded in the study in more of a quantitative format; e.g. graphs, pie charts, tables of percentages, etc. This supports my previous suggestion that the study could have included more conversation and person to person communication. The topics that the survey is comprised of are education, employment, communication, use of technology, special recognitions received, and other aspects of the alumni's lives after moving on from the Moog Center. A strength of the study is how many various topics relevant to the participants' lives the researchers covered in their study and how their early education impacted them moving forward gives the researchers a bigger picture as to how they can improve their early education program for deaf and hard of hearing children in the future.

The survey was created using skip logic (Delib, 2025), also known as survey routing or branching, which is a method that allows the researcher to omit certain questions that are not relevant to the participant based on the answers given to the previous questions. This creates one of the strengths of the study as eliminating some questions for the participants that it would be irrelevant to makes the survey more

accessible for the young people to complete. One strength of this study is that through the survey, they ask a range of participants of various ages several questions, multiple choice and open ended, to identify their views and opinions about their previous education at the Center and how that has helped them going forward in life. Another strength of this study is that the results of the research will go towards improving their educational center, keeping the aspects that have helped previous alumni and looking at what else they can do to benefit their students while they are in the center and moving forward in their personal, educational, and professional life. Another strength of the study is that they invited alumni between fifteen and thirty two years old to participate, meaning that their results cover approximately a seventeen year span of the Moog Center and its personal, educational, and professional impact.

Another weakness of the study could be researcher positionality. This may be a concern and has been picked up because one of the researchers and writers is called J.S. Moog, and the research is about The Moog Center for Deaf Education. This possible conflict of interest has not been mentioned and therefore, could lead to biases because as readers of the journal article, we do not know if the name is possibly a coincidence or if they are one of the founders or from the same family. Any of these could potentially cause biases to appear in the results of the study, and they also may not be easily noticed. This could be reflected in some of the tables on pages five and six, as there are not very many negative comments or answers, or anything that could be said to improve on. This is a very unlikely outcome with the number of participants being as high as one hundred and eight, especially having been to the center over a span of seventeen years. However, an improvement on reporting or feeding back

information on the study could be showing more comments on the two tables on page six as these only show sixteen comments between one hundred and eight participants. This does not give the readers of the journal article much in terms of the big picture of the research, due to the number of participants.

One strength of this journal article is that the researchers and writers have made it clear and mostly easy to read, especially for people and practitioners who may be unfamiliar with the terminology they are using. One example of this is the Key Words and Acronyms glossary on page one. This gives more people the chance to understand what is being said or spoken about throughout the journal article. Another strength of the article is that the researchers plan to use the article and the results to encourage parents of deaf or hard of hearing children that their children can have a mostly normal childhood and life. They also want to encourage young people who are deaf or hard of hearing that they can achieve their goals if they try and work hard for them (Moog and Rudge, 2019, pg 8-9).

In conclusion, this study has some strengths and weaknesses throughout the journal article. Some of the weaknesses could be resolved by some more clarity on the context of the situation, for example, but the aims and purpose of the study are a strength as it does show young people that their differences, such as deafness or being hard of hearing, do not define what they can achieve throughout their life. There are also possibly some improvements that could be made in the methodology and especially the research methods, but some of this could be down to the subjectiveness

of opinions or circumstances, or both. For instance, when researching with young people, qualitative research may be a better or easier approach to get the depth of answers the researcher is looking for. However, even with the more quantitative style of the research involving the young people, the study did complete its aims and the purpose for the study from the beginning.

Reference List:

CLD Standards Council Scotland. (2019). *National Occupational Standards for Youth Work*. CLD Standards Council Scotland.

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Youth Work Wales Review Group. (2022). *Youth Work Wales: Principles and Purposes*. Education Workforce Council.

Part 2: Consider critically the steps necessary in undertaking a successful small scale research project with young people, on a subject that is relevant to them. Consider your role in the process including ethical considerations and how your results can be shared.

This research project will be based on researching young people's access to sign language in youth work for young people who are deaf, hearing impaired and non-verbal. Young people who use non-verbal communication should not be excluded from youth work opportunities and provisions and therefore, this idea for a small scale research project will focus on what the current accessibility to youth work provisions are and what youth work provisions would young people who are non-verbal communicators would like or what they need in the world that young people are living through day-to-day. This research is influenced by my Level 5 placement as it was in Canolfan Elfed, a special needs secondary school, aged 11-19, and one of the classes I worked in was the hearing impaired base, as well as working with several non-verbal young people. It will also explore the ethical considerations for the research project and what role I would have to take on as the researcher on a small scale research project.

Most of the methodology would be qualitative for this small scale research project. The research would lean towards more of a constructivist worldview (Cresswell, 2009, pg.26) as these kinds of qualitative methods are easier to use in the field of social sciences. Qualitative methods also tend to be better for getting detailed answers about a person's lived experiences (Cresswell, 2009, pg 180) and the researcher can build more of a bond of trust with the participants. Using qualitative methods through open ended questioning also has less chance of distorting a person's answers and it would hopefully make it easier for the researcher to create a comfortable and safe environment for young people to answer openly and honestly.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the inspiration for this idea for a small scale research project is my placement from Level 5. The Level 5 placement was in Canolfan Elfed, which is an inclusion centre that specifically specialises in additional learning needs, special needs, and special educational needs. In relation to the small scale research project, this makes a difference to the researcher positionality and disclosing this when planning a small scale research project reduces the chances of biases distorting the results or outcomes of the research project.

Using participatory research with young people (Bottrell, Dockett, and Groundwater-Smith, 2015) may help the researcher create an atmosphere that makes it easier for young people to share openly and honestly through creative, communicative, and collaborative methods. By including participatory methods of research, this also aligns with the values of the National Occupational Standards of Youth Work like Partnership with Young People and Others, and Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019, pg 5), as well as the Five Pillars of Youth Work which are “Educative”, “Expressive”, “Inclusive”, “Participative”, and “Empowering”, from the Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (Youth Work Wales Review Group, 2022).

There would be three main research methods I would use to carry out the research. First, there would be three interviews, and this would ideally be with three different professional practitioners to get various perspectives on the development and growth of young people who communicate through sign language, either partially or completely. For example, the three practitioners could be a teacher of the deaf, a British

Sign Language interpreter, and an audiologist. This would hopefully give the researcher an idea of the bigger picture when we are looking at working with young people who communicate through sign language.

There would also be two focus groups consisting of six to eight young people who use sign language to various degrees, including a range of deaf, hearing impaired, and non-verbal young people. Having a range of young people who use sign language to various degrees would give a more rounded perspective on the research and its outcomes. Focus groups tend to be between six and twelve people and for this research, I think having two groups of six to eight (at most) would be easier with the young people and with the topics. Twelve young people in one focus group in this research would give too much information and would be overwhelming for both the researcher and for the young people.

There will also be a questionnaire with a range of open-ended questions to give out to young people, their parents, carers, guardians, and practitioners, like teachers, healthcare workers, social workers, etc. This will hopefully gather information on how young people and their trusted adults feel about whether they are missing opportunities and/or provisions that their mainstream peers have, inside and outside of school.

All of these research methods may also help to discover how youth work, and informal education could help with the development and growth of young people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and/or non-verbal and who communicate through sign language. This research project would also look at how beneficial youth work could be to these young people, and to see whether these young people are being excluded from youth work and informal education and how we can begin to change that.

When proposing a small scale research project, considering ethical issues and putting in protective and preventative measures when doing research with other people and young people is essential to a successful research project. Within a small scale research project, there should be reference to the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research from BERA (The British Educational Research Association) and your institution's own ethical guidelines (if you have one), e.g. UWTSD Ethical Guidelines. Some topics to consider are consent, assent, right to withdraw, incentives, harm arising from participation, transparency, disclosure, and privacy and data storage.

Consent, assent, and the right to withdraw (BERA, 2024) for all of the participants. This will include several steps during the research project. Initially, the researcher should get consent from every participant taking part in the research and they should get consent from the parents or carers of every participant under the age of 18. The researcher should then follow up with the participants at intervals during the research taking place, checking in on their physical, emotional, and mental health, and making sure that the participants want to continue to take part in the research project. In the case that a participant is doing well in any aspect, there should be appropriate courses of action of what to do in this situation. These courses of action should also be agreed by the institution where you are facilitating this part of the research; for example, agreeing on the protocols with staff members and teachers at a school where you may want to hold interviews or focus groups. This also links to the participant's right to withdraw from participating in the research if they feel unable or are unwilling to continue for any reason. Every participant should also clearly understand that they have the right to withdraw from participating in the research as they wish.

Looking at incentives (BERA, 2024) for the participants, they should not cause any feelings of forced participation or coercion. For example, a bag of sweets at the end of a focus group. It is important that incentives are not too big or too much due to safeguarding regulations, and participants should not ever feel like the incentive is a means of forcing them to participate. Any means of forcing the participants to take part or coercion would jeopardise the authenticity of the results of the research project.

Within any research project, there may be harm arising from participation (BERA, 2024), even if the research project does not necessarily include traumatic experiences or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). There may be experiences that they have had or topics to arise in a focus group, for instance, that the researcher is unable to predict. Because of these possibilities and unpredictabilities of focus groups or interviews as they are person centred, there must be measures put in place so that any participants who may need it have suitable and appropriate support before, during, and after the research has taken place. This will hopefully create a more comfortable and secure environment for the participants.

Linking to the last point, there should be complete transparency (BERA, 2024) between the researcher and the participants as to the privacy of their information and how the results from the research are going to be used within the project. This is connected to disclosure (BERA, 2024) as well as the researcher should be completely transparent with the participants about what they will do if a disclosure from the research project causes safety and/or safeguarding concerns. If a disclosure is made within the safety of a focus group or an interview, the researcher should inform a safeguarding officer or equivalent staff member as soon as possible.

In terms of ethical considerations, there is also privacy and data storage (BERA, 2024). Every participant should have total clarity on how the researcher will use their information, their answers, and their views and opinions. This should also include how long the researcher will keep their data for and how securely it will be stored by the researcher. It is essential that the participants are aware that their privacy, data, and information will be stored safely and protected.

As an educational researcher, there will be an ethics approval form and process so that as a researcher, the individual is protected under the educational institution, such as the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Therefore, as a researcher, I also have an obligation and a duty of care to the university (institution or organisation) and the research participants to follow the UWTSD Ethical Research Guidelines (UWTSD, 2022), and to follow the ethics approval form, so that the researcher or the university are not likely to be liable for any harm caused through participation in the research project.

While carrying out the research study, the recording and reporting will be done by note-taking and possibly either voice recording or camera recording, and by having a second note-taker as this may help to cover any comments that you may have missed on your own notes. Therefore, by having an observer as a second note-taker, the results of the study should hopefully be more detailed and have a more complete coverage of the results as it would be a compilation of both the researcher and the observer's notes on the sessions of research, especially in focus group and interview settings. In terms of feedback, after the research is completed, the results should be relayed back to the organisation or institution that the researcher is completing the

research project from, and the results should also be relayed back to the participants in some way if possible and any changes, new initiatives or outcomes that have been developed or will be developed as a consequence of the study that they took part in.

In conclusion, this small scale research project would hopefully be successful as there have been considerations upon research methods, including participatory research in line with the Youth Work National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019) and the Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (Youth Work Wales Review Group, 2022), as well as looking at the ethical considerations and measures that will have to be looked at to carry out a research project with young people, including considering research positionality to limit biases distorting the final results of the study. This assignment also looked at what an educational researcher must consider in terms of their ethics approval form and process, and their obligation and duty to their participants and their institution or organisation, and how the researcher will report, record and feedback their results. When all these things are considered, it should hopefully result in a successful small scale research project.

Reference List:

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