A NARRATIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND LIFE EXPERIENCES OF FOUR HONDURAN TEACHERS OF THE DEAF

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Abstract

In Honduras the need for teacher training and professional development opportunities to assist educators with the challenges associated with teaching is essential. This narrative research study examined the training and life experiences of four teachers of the Deaf located in central Honduras. The experiences of the Honduran teachers were explored and used to develop an understanding of their insights and perceptions of their personal training as educators and what they believe they need to grow as professional teachers of the Deaf. The theoretical framework utilized in this narrative study was Jean Lave’s and Etienne Wenger’s, Communities of Practice. Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a common concern or passion for something they do and as a group they want to learn how to improve. The central question to the Study was: “What are the lived experiences of Honduran teachers of the Deaf and how have these experiences impacted their present role as educators?” The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the lived experiences and educational backgrounds of four Honduran teachers of the Deaf and to further appreciate how these events have affected them as they prepared to become teachers of the Deaf. This understanding may help future teachers of the Deaf to develop their professional skills. The findings revealed that the teachers of the Deaf displayed varied pathways to teaching in Honduras and they were motivated to improve professionally. The teachers identified differentiated instruction and diagnosing learning disabilities in Deaf children as priorities. A university partnership and networking with other teachers of the Deaf is recommended to enhance the teachers’ ability to teach students who are Deaf.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Honduras, Teachers of the Deaf, Professional Development, Professional Learning Communities
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my brother Daryl Paul Druhan. Without his influence I would have never had the opportunity to know the joys associated with teaching in the field of special education. I also dedicate this thesis to every student with whom I have had the privilege to work with. I pray that I have inspired them to never give up.
Acknowledgements

There are a number of articles and poems referring to “Lessons Learned from Geese.” Throughout there are descriptions of how geese work together in formation when flying in order to create lift making it easier for the group, or when a goose becomes ill, one or two geese will stay with it on the ground never leaving it until it is well again and while flying, if the lead goose in the “v” formation becomes tired another goose takes its place, sharing the work. The common theme throughout these lessons relate to how much can be accomplished when everyone works together and how difficult it is to work alone.

I began the doctoral program as part of the first cohort. It has been a long journey. During this time there were numerous health issues, surgeries, two new jobs, multiple topic changes and now my oldest child in college; this is how much time has passed. Too often I was not certain I could finish this project and through it all, my husband David and my family endured the process as well. I am thankful for all David did for me and our family, making certain our children had everything they needed and he evolved into quite the cook as a result. Sarah and Jeffrey, my two children grew accustomed to mom “doing her work.” It was difficult to say, “Not right now”, or “Wait until I finish this sentence” so many times. I hope I have influenced them to work hard and accomplish what ever they put their hearts and minds to. I know they can do it!

My parents, Paul and Paula Druhan always put education first. I am eternally grateful they instilled in me an appreciation and love for learning. I thank them for their encouragement and lessons in perseverance.

I am most fortunate to have a wonderful team at Northeastern University. Dr. Carol
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Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Developing countries including Honduras have issues with extremely high rates of illiteracy and limited educational opportunities. Most individuals in high poverty, rural and urban areas have little to no access to education. When a teacher in a third world nation is able to earn a college degree or a certificate of teacher training it is frequently a degree or certificate with limitations. Educators enter the classroom with few or no additional opportunities for ongoing training, professional development and/or support to assist with new and/or recurring issues associated with teaching and lesson development. High caliber professional development is key to meeting the current educational demands teachers encounter daily. Research and experience help us recognize that through ongoing professional development dedicated to enriching teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills schools will have teachers current and up to date in best practices (Reed, 2005). The ultimate objective is to produce outstanding educational results for the students as a result of building teacher skills and competencies.

As stated in the Mission, Vision and Core Values statements of the College of Professional Studies of Northeastern University: “Accessibility to high quality education is vital to the growth and prosperity of the local, national and international communities.” Many individuals are fortunate to have access to high quality education, especially in America. The goal of this scholarly investigation was to give voice to four Honduran educators towards the end of developing and implementing professional learning communities to provide on-going professional development to the international teaching community with Honduras.

This study incorporated information obtained directly from two direct interviews of four Teachers of the Deaf located in south central Honduras. The interview questions and dialogue
focused specifically on their own lived experiences as they were prepared for their careers as educators. In addition, the teachers were asked to contemplate what they personally believed to be essential for them to further develop and advance as professionals. The inquiry required the teachers to reflect on previous professional development experiences and to determine if they regarded the trainings to be beneficial to their individual practice. Teachers were also asked to consider their personal strengths as well as areas they believed required further development as an educator. Self-reflection afforded the opportunity for participants to assess pedagogy and opportunities for the development of interventions for improvement.

Lastly, the interviewees were invited to share their respective thoughts pertaining to the types of ongoing professional development they consider beneficial for their own professional growth and development as an educator. The results of the narrative study identify and explore the specific experiences and challenges the Honduran educators encountered while training to become teachers of the Deaf.

**Research Problem Statement**

The Honduran education system lacks resources and demonstrates many opportunities for improvement (Altschuler, 2010). Honduras is the third poorest country in the Americas, only behind Haiti and Nicaragua (Rodriguez, 2012). The overall illiteracy rate in Honduras is presently 40 percent, with up to 80 percent illiteracy in rural areas. Illiteracy encompasses more than half a million people in Honduras, which is the equivalent of the entire population between 15 and 40 years old (Global Exchange, 2004). The Honduran Ministry of Education census for 2008 reported a 65 percent drop out rate by third grade and the number of dropouts increases each year (USAID, 2010). The cycle of poverty, illiteracy and dropout rates in Honduras continues despite efforts to improve.
There are significant distinctions between the United States and Honduran education systems. One of the most compelling is the requirement associated with schooling: five years of schooling from the ages seven through twelve is typical in Honduras. Only 58 percent of primary school age students reach the fifth grade (Rodriguez, 2012). Challenges to the education system include inadequate student preparation for primary education, and low household income (Sekiya, 2012). Another challenge is that Honduran teachers receive limited in-service training to prepare them for the classroom; this along with a lack of administrative and monitoring systems in local districts, in addition to low parental involvement, contribute to the obstacles teachers face (Sekiya, 2012).

The majority of Honduran teachers do not possess college degrees. Teaching licenses are awarded upon graduation of high school, with only three years of training. When teachers assume a teaching position there is limited, if any, ability to participate in ongoing professional development. Once in the classroom, conditions in most schools do not permit teachers to learn new and more effective instructional practices. Teachers have minimal opportunities to continuously improve their ability to respond to the needs of their students (Faubert, 2012).

**Justification for the Research Problem**

Teachers in poor and developing countries often have insufficient access to ongoing professional development opportunities. Professional development can enhance teacher knowledge, skills and experiences leading to overall improved student achievement (Faubert, 2012). Without ongoing professional learning, teachers rely on what they know and what they are comfortable with. Professional development experiences need to be high-quality, challenging, sustainable for as long as needed, systematic in approach, preferably developed by an expert, built from the understanding that teachers are independent professionals, and be
aligned with the school goals (Faubert, 2012).

This narrative study uncovered the lived experiences and challenges four Honduran educators faced while training to become teachers. The information helps to inform what professional development opportunities these educators find useful and provides insight into the challenges they experienced as individuals and as a group. These challenges included both incidents in the past and circumstances they continue to encounter on a daily basis. The goal was to develop a deeper understanding of the teacher’s experiences throughout their training and to detail their current implicit needs. With the knowledge of their perceived needs, the goal of this study was to develop meaningful and appropriate professional development opportunities.

Circumstances inside and outside of every education system affect the educational outcomes of the students. Students are influenced not only by their families and communities, but also their teachers, pedagogy and curriculum, educational materials, infrastructures and lastly school management. All of these components have an impact on student development (Di Gropello, 2005). Honduras is encountering multiple challenges in its present education system. There is the obligation to provide quality universal basic education to its population despite a reduction of and a clear lack of resources. There is also a shortage of physical structures, in addition to confronting growing violence especially affecting its youth. All of these challenges have significant consequences for the country’s education services (World Bank, 2013). Despite spending a much higher proportion of its Gross Domestic Product on education than its neighboring countries, Honduras’ public education system is considered one of the most challenged in all of Latin America (Caceres, 2012). Scores on standardized tests in Spanish and mathematics in third and sixth grade have not improved since 1997 (World Bank, 2010). The country’s learning assessment unit reported in 2007 that only 11 percent of students in 6th grade
achieved the minimum competencies in Spanish, and only 9 percent in Mathematics (World Bank, 2013).

Central America’s present educational challenge is to improve learning at all levels. Improved learning is vital for individual and national growth, competitiveness, and quality of life (Di Gropello, 2005). The country’s lack of competitiveness and almost complete absence in most of the world's key industries and markets is evident in its financial struggles. The present economy remains largely agriculturally based relying on exports of coffee, bananas and shrimp (Caceres, 2012). Honduras’ limited resources and exports create a sense of vulnerability for the nation as a whole. Without increased financial freedom within its own economy, Honduras will continue to rely on the generosity of other nations for support on all levels, even to provide the most basic needs of its citizens. There are countless reasons contributing to why Honduras is poor and continues to be economically disadvantaged. Some individuals will blame political corruption however many agree it is the lack of a viable public education system (Caceres, 2012). Some believe there is a direct correlation between earning potential and level of education achieved. If this belief is true, then the outcome is potentially grim for many Hondurans. Teacher training, or a lack of an opportunity for excellence in teacher training, greatly impacts the quality of instruction students receive. Professional learning must be well planned; formal, systematic, deliberate and as much as possible topics should have an explicit focus of teaching specific skills (Faubert, 2012). In addition to outdated teaching practices, teachers in Honduras are often dealing with poor administration, an absence of physical facilities and meager or outdated materials. The curriculum being taught is sub-par, as a result public students are not being well taught (Caceres, 2012). Most Honduran students complete their education without achieving the adequate skills to earn a good living. Poor learning outcomes
result in school abandonment, grade failure and repetition (Di Gropello, 2005). It is important to provide teachers with opportunities utilize one another as a resource. These moments to share ideas, best practices, successes and challenges allow educators the chance to increase their learning of strategies and successful methodology without costing the school any additional funds. Surprisingly, more than 90 percent of the money allocated for education in Honduras goes to pay teacher salaries, Consequently, there is very little left over for anything else (Caceres, 2012). Despite challenging circumstance, there are teachers in developing countries who are surprisingly effective even when faced with inadequate resources (Schiefelbein, 2013). Have these individuals been influenced through their training experiences? Have they had the benefit of a mentor? Which life experiences have assisted them in becoming a strong and highly effective teacher?

Currently, access to ongoing professional development or introduction to prevailing best practices is scarce or nonexistent. This goal of the scholarly investigation was to inform the development and implementation of professional learning communities and identification of potential materials for Teachers of the Deaf in Honduras. It was necessary to understand the type of information the teachers believe to be relevant and useful to them as educators. The knowledge gathered and shared directly from them has been essential to promoting, creating, expanding upon and incorporating additional professional development opportunities in the future. Potential focus areas are associated with but not limited to details specific to working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, lesson development or behavioral challenges associated with teaching. The areas of focus being considered continue to be refined based on the needs as the Teachers of the Deaf described them during the interview process. Without properly educating its children, Honduras is destined to keep struggling simply to attain mere mediocrity.
With its current system, the best the country can do is slow its rate of decline (Caceres, 2012).

**Deficiencies in the Evidence**

Teacher quality is mentioned in all cultures as important, but it is measured solely in terms of years of training; little or no data is evident describing actual teaching. Little research has been done to explain why teachers teach in the manner they do (Schiefelbein, 2013). Recent studies in the United States suggest that teacher effectiveness is unrelated to the type of pre-service education the teacher receives. Neither specific coursework nor type of college degree seems to influence the performance of teachers (Feng & Sass, 2013). Much of the research focusing on teacher training and educational practices in Honduras concentrates on the lack of resources and huge deficiencies in the educational system.

Hurricane Mitch in 1998 bore a tremendous impact on the Honduran educational system. Nearly two thirds of the country’s schools were eradicated in addition to all educational records and history of the educational system being wiped out when the Ministry of Education was flooded as a result of the hurricane. With the history of the Honduran education system essentially erased, finding documentation pertaining to the exact history of the Honduran education system is particularly problematic.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this narrative study was to develop greater insight and awareness of the complex challenges of the Honduran Teacher of the Deaf as identified through their personal understanding of their life experiences and experiences while being trained to be a teacher. The information gathered was instrumental in developing an understanding of what these teachers in
Honduras and other teachers of the Deaf in similar situations require to continue moving forward as educators.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the challenges and experiences four Honduran teachers of the Deaf encountered in order to inform the education and training necessary to become a special educator in Honduras. In addition, the purpose of the study was to use the information gained from these interviews to assist in the development of future educational and professional development opportunities for the teachers. This was accomplished by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf, both formal and informal as they were prepared to teach?
2. How do Honduran teachers of the Deaf make sense of these experiences as they relate to their professional practices as a teacher today?
3. What professional development opportunities and ongoing training do Honduran teachers of the Deaf believe to be beneficial for themselves and their colleagues moving forward?

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that was utilized as a lens for this narrative study is Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger and Communities of Practice (Smith, 2009). The theory behind Communities of Practice is that communities are everywhere and we are generally involved in a number of them (Smith, 2009). When Etienne Wenger began working with anthropologist Jean Lave they studied cases of apprenticeships in a variety of contexts. Through their studies they
realized that very little learning actually took place between the apprentice and the Master, but rather among the apprentices themselves. Once they identified this “living curriculum” they began noticing communities everywhere from the playground to the government. This concept has become a cornerstone for social theory of learning (Smith, 2009).

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and want to learn how to do better (Smith, 2009). The community of people share resources, ideas, discusses and solves problems. It is not simply a group of individuals in a club or a group with similar interests or ideas, but rather an opportunity to grow as professionals, to add and share knowledge and experiences. Over time, community members develop a common sense of identity they develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting and they also develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices and approaches (Brekelmans, et. al. 2011).

There are three dimensions to a Community of Practice. The first is “the domain”, or mutual engagement. The second is “the community” or shared repertoire. Last is “the practice” or joint enterprise. The mutual engagement binds members of the community together into a social entity. Mutual engagement creates relationships among members; it connects them in ways that can become deeper than more superficial similarities in terms of personal features or social categories (Brekelmans, et. al. 2011). If the community is strong and mature, it will foster interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust. The members will willingly share ideas, admit their own ignorance, ask difficult questions and listen carefully to the other members (Cheng, 2013). Being included in “what matters” in a group is a requirement for being engaged in a community’s practice (Brekelmans, et. al. 2011).

Next, community members develop a shared repertoire, a shared set of communal
resources such as routines, words, tools, and ways of doing things, stories, and concepts. The products of a shared repertoire of resources are not restricted to simply teaching materials, but also extend to the sharing of the practice cultivated by the individuals during their participation in the “Community of Practice” (Cheng, 2013). The concepts, language and tools embody the history of the community and its perspective on the world. The repertoire of a community is a resource for the negotiation of meaning (Brekelmans, et. al. 2011).

The joint enterprise of the community is the collectively developed understanding of what the community is about. A joint enterprise provides common ground for communication and a sense of common identity for the members. The joint enterprise is the result of a collective process of continuous negotiation and it creates among its participants’ relations of mutual accountability, which in turn become an integral part of the practice (Brekelmans, et. al. 2011).

The potential development of communities of practice with the Teachers of the Deaf in Honduras may afford this select group of educators a forum to harness their passion for teaching in a way that allows them to share and grow from one another.

**Significance of Research Problem**

It has become widely accepted that high quality teachers are the most important assets of schools and the amount of experience an educator has correlates with how effective a teacher is (Hanushek, 2011). This is true of all educators, including those in Honduras. Therefore it is important to understand the experiences of Honduran teachers as they prepared for their role as an educator including understanding how Honduran educators are introduced to current best practices; how Honduran educators engage in ongoing professional development; and how Honduran educators access current information related to their field. In addition, it is important
also to understand how Honduran educators might utilize remote access for continuing education opportunities to help inform the establishment of Professional Learning Communities in their schools to help one another grow professionally.

Teacher education is understood as a professional development continuum that begins in an institutional setting. As teachers move across this continuum it is expected they will improve on their understanding of content, the quality of their instructional strategies and their decision making capability in dealing with students of differing abilities, genders and cultural backgrounds (Avalos, 2000). The continuum of teacher education should assist teachers in collaborating among themselves, to assess their teaching practices and to reflect on the social and cultural demands and constraints of the context in which they work (Avalos, 2000). Creating opportunities for educators to mentor one another through difficult and challenging teaching situations leads to best practice. In order to develop and implement effective communities of practice for the teachers of the Deaf in Honduras, it is important to listen to and understand the lived experiences, stories, recurring problems and necessary resources educators share.

**Positionality Statement**

I have been in the field of special education essentially for my entire life. As the sister of a severely disabled, multi-handicapped brother, working with the disabled has always been a huge part of who I am. My education would be considered highly privileged by the standards of the Central American educational system. My brother and I (despite his disability) both have had access to free and appropriate public education. I know, understand and believe that my educational career, through graduate school has allowed me opportunities and experiences that I may not have been afforded without my education. I am passionate that other individuals be
presented with similar opportunities and experiences.

For my first three years as an educator I worked as a Teacher of the Deaf at a small private school for the Deaf near Boston, Massachusetts. When a former student of mine traveled to Honduras to do volunteer work at a school for the Deaf I was intrigued by the pictures he shared through social media. I became fascinated with the school, teachers and children. I researched as much as I could about the school and the American organization that supported it at that time. I reached out to the American director to find out the necessary steps I would need to take to be a volunteer at the school. She interviewed me and once she discovered I held an advanced degree in Educational Leadership, she asked that I conduct professional development workshops with the teachers. It was at this time that I became aware of how little training the teachers in Honduras have and how limited their access to ongoing professional development is.

I truly enjoyed my experience in Honduras; however, I was humbled and almost embarrassed by what I brought to the teachers. I developed my lesson plans based on the suggestions of the director. However, I never once asked what the teachers believed they needed to know, or what they considered helpful and important for their teaching. My American Sign Language (ASL) skills were fairly adequate and although I did not know LESHO (Honduran Sign Language) there were enough similar signs between the two dialects of sign language we were able to communicate reasonably well.

As an individual with post graduate education and a background in teacher observation and evaluation working in the United States, it was essential for me to listen, make sense of and disseminate the lived experiences of the Honduran teacher and how their experiences applied to their culture and their society. While I am well trained and educated in the best educational practices for the United States, I needed to be mindful that these practices might not be
appropriate or practical in another country. It was often difficult for me to understand the limitations that the teachers have experienced working in a developing country. In America, educators have an abundance of resources and opportunities in comparison to educators in developing countries. It is difficult to understand when people do not have access to the opportunities I frequently took for granted. I was respectful and understanding of the culture and potential economic limitations of the teachers with whom I was working.

The study did not outwardly have the potential to do any physical harm, however I remained sensitive to each individual's experience. Throughout this study it was essential for me to listen to and understand the experiences of the Honduran teacher, from their perspective. It was important for me to bracket and acknowledge my own experiences and expectations on how and why we do what we do in the American educational system as I made sense of their stories. This was an opportunity for these teachers to authentically share their lived stories and experiences. It was the time to have others understand their challenges and the changes necessary to bring about transformation in their piece of the Honduran educational system.

**Summary of Paper and Organization**

This narrative research study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the identified problem and the significance of the problem being studied; the purpose of the research and the research questions are reviewed. The theoretical framework shaping the problem of practice and composition of the study are identified as well. Throughout the second chapter the literature review outlines how the study is informed by the current literature and highlight the lack of literature related directly to the Honduran education system. The third chapter describes the research design and detailed description of data collection and analysis.
procedures. The participants of the study are identified in addition to the research site. The fourth chapter provides the detailed narratives of each participant, including a summary of their stories. The fifth and final chapter features the major themes identified as a result of inductive analysis of the interview transcripts and discussed those findings in relation to the literature presented in chapter two and the theoretical framework presented in chapter one. Lastly, implications for practice and areas for future research are discussed.

Definition of Key Terms

**ASL**- American Sign Language

**Community of Practice**- Groups of people who share a common concern, passion or interest for something they do and as a group, learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

**Certified**- Officially recognized as possessing certain qualifications or meeting certain standards.

**Degree**- An academic rank conferred by a college or university after examination or after completion of a course of study.

**Diploma**- A certificate awarded by an educational establishment to show that someone has successfully completed a course of study.

**Experience**- An event or occurrence that leaves an impression on someone.

**LESHO**- "Lengua de Señas Hondureñas" Honduran sign language.

**Narrative Analysis or Narrative Inquiry**- Research methodology “inquires” or asks questions about and looks for deeper understanding of particular aspects of life experiences.
Professional Learning Community- (PLC) a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. The term is also applied to schools or teaching faculties that use small-group collaboration as a form of professional development.

Reflection- An idea about something especially one that is written down or expressed.

Teacher Preparation- The formal and/or informal training received in preparation to assume the responsibilities associated with being a qualified teacher.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this narrative study was to investigate the lived experiences, motivations and reflections of four Honduran teachers of the Deaf. In order to make sense of these stories, this chapter explores the historic background of the country of Honduras, the Honduran education system, and teacher preparation in Latin American countries, including Honduras. The review also explores factors such as teacher motivation and governmental oversight that impact the Honduran Teacher preparation process. In order to fully understand the current status of teacher training in Honduras the exact role of the teacher is also considered in conjunction with financial, societal and political challenges faced within the country of Honduras in addition to the difficulties surrounding the Honduran Education system.

Honduras as a Nation

Spain ruled Honduras for hundreds of years, beginning in 1502 when Christopher Columbus landed near Trujillo on one of his final voyages. Once Honduras gained its independence from Spain in the 1800’s, it became an area of constant conflict. Frequent battles with neighboring countries and interference from foreign countries contributed to the ongoing struggles of the nation (Kras, 2007). Honduras has a long history of military dictatorship; In 1933 General Tiburcio Carias Andino was elected president. His first order of business was to cancel all elections, allowing no one other than himself to be voted into power. He continued to rule the country as a dictator until 1948 (Kras, 2007). Severe human rights violations, strong military and police presences continued to be the norm with several leaders being ousted until the first democratic election in 1981. Although progress is slow, Honduras is determined to move forward as a democratic nation (Salomon, 2012).
In 2005, Manuel Zelaya narrowly won the Honduran presidential election. One of Zelaya’s first major tasks was to follow through on his promise of education reform. Despite increasing educational opportunities for poor children and helping the 60,000 strong Federation of Teachers Organizations (FOMH) win major salary increases during his first year in office, his leadership followed no clear ideological path resulting in many inconsistencies. Many teachers were forced to strike multiple times during the school year, as they were not paid for extended periods of time. He also succeeded in upsetting human-rights groups with a harsh but unsuccessful crackdown on gang violence. Zelaya earned a reputation as an impulsive, confrontational leader, eventually developing a hostile relationship with most of the Honduran media (Ruhl, 2010). On June 28, 2009 a military coup against President Zelaya ended the progress of democracy forcing Honduras back to its military dictatorship past. The coup left the Honduran community deeply split. Both supporters and opponents of the deposed president took to the streets by the thousands (Ruhl, 2010). Ironically, the strong desire for stability actually empowered the military and police, suspending any immediate democratic reform (Salomon, 2012). In November 2013 Hondurans returned to the polls to elect new political officials, including a new president. There were concerns surrounding the election with some doubting whether a fair election was possible in the climate of violence and intimidation (Weisbrot, 2013). As the weekend for the 2013 elections drew closer concerns of violence became a reality when four members of the Libre (Liberty and Refoundacion) party activists were murdered. The Libre Party was established by Hondurans opposing the military coup of 2009, which resulted in the ousting of the democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. These killings would be the equivalent of 120 Democratic Party organizers being murdered in the United States (Weisbrot, 2013). The outcome of the 2013 elections were in favor of the National Party receiving 36.8
percent of the votes, the Libre Party receiving 28.8 percent and the newly formed Anti-Corruption Party receiving 13.5 percent of the tallied votes. Ongoing reports of fraud, vote buying and intimation from the National Party continue to haunt the legitimacy of the election process and results.

**Poverty**

Honduras remains one of the slowest growing and poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere. With six out of ten families living in extreme poverty (Roneros, 2011), Honduras has one of the highest poverty rates in Central America. In 2011, the minimum wage in Honduras was $1.83 per hour. More than half of the working Hondurans are self-employed. Most individuals work as crafters, shopkeepers or subsistence farmers, producing only enough food for their own families (Kras, 2007). Because of its status as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country, Honduras has worked with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in an effort to reduce its substantial debt. The country is making progress towards economic growth and has signed a free trade agreement with the United States. The agreement has significantly impacted the Honduran economy; however the high rates of crime in Honduras remain a deterrent to additional foreign investors (Purdy, 2006).

The high level of poverty among the Honduran population continues to influence how children access education. In rural areas children miss many months of school to help their parents, especially during coffee harvest season (Cotza, 2013). Most Honduran children are forced to leave school entirely in order to work and help support their families. Children are also unable to go to school because their families cannot afford transportation, uniforms and necessary school supplies required to attend school (Bless the Children, 2015). Often the value of school is not obvious at the time the student is actually attending. In a vicious cycle that is
difficult to break, poverty hinders access to education and a lack of education leads to growing poverty. The 2006 Honduras Poverty Assessment form the World Bank states that low levels of education are inextricably linked to low levels of economic growth (Cotza, 2013). In some families, daughters are married off at the age of fifteen because of the financial responsibility associated with raising them. These young girls leave school prematurely and begin their own families without completing their education (Leal, Murphy-Graham, 2015).

**Crime and violence.** Central America is not only the poorest region in Latin America; it has also been identified as the most violent and insecure regions in the non-conflict world (Ronderos, 2011). Honduras is known as “The Murder Capital of the World” (Lee, 2014). The country maintains the highest homicide rate on the planet with 90.4 homicides per 100,000 people in 2012, according to U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime. In comparison the United States has an estimated five killings per 100,000 people. Detroit is the most dangerous city in America with a population of over 200,000 and almost 300 murders in 2014 (Rizzo, 2015). Last year Honduras had more than 7,000 people murdered, an average of 19 murders per day (Vinik, 2014). These statistics make Honduras the world’s most violent, corrupt and crime ridden non-war country (Almendarez, et. al., 2014).

Honduras reportedly has more gang members than any other country in Central America. The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime reports there are 36,000 gang members in Honduras. Other sources estimate as many as 70,000 (Department of Justice, 2013). Presently, Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, is home to roughly one hundred youth gangs (Kras, 2007). More than 4,700 children and young people belong to gangs in Honduras. Honduras’ gangs, once insignificant and unprofessional, have grown into what is arguably the top security challenge facing the country. It is clear much of the rise in homicides in Honduras is related to
gang activity. The gangs fighting for territory, prestige and revenue are at the heart of these battles (Dudley, 2015). Social exclusion and lack of opportunities are just two of the many factors making gang life appealing (Gonzalez, 2012). Most gang members report “being adopted” into their gangs between the ages of 7 and 30. Often children feel compelled to join a gang for protection, companionship or out of fear. According to Carroll, 2010, gang initiations include group beatings if the new member is male and having sex with all of the gang members if the new recruit is female. Those who choose to leave their gangs are faced with few opportunities as a result of their limited education. Gangs will repeatedly target schools, bully students, steal their money and threaten and intimidate the students. Teachers were surveyed about the effects of gang activity and their schools and ninety one percent of the teachers reported their schools as being affected by the violence and harassment of gangs (Gonzalez, 2012). The ongoing atmosphere created by the gangs often results in students ultimately refusing to attend classes and often resolving to join the gang. The rate of crime and violence Honduras experiences is extreme. Gangs specializing in drug trafficking, kidnapping, killing and extortion continue to foster the atmosphere of insecurity in the nation (Gonzalez, 2012). Rival gang members have been beheaded and burned and busloads of civilians have been massacred to extort money from drivers and intimidate authorities. As a result, the endless high level of violence and reign of terror continue to threaten the economic and social development of the country as it erodes human and social capital and limits trust among people in poor urban areas (Almendarez, Juan, et. al., 2014). There is total impunity, of the thousands of youth murders in the past decade; fewer than 50 had been solved (Carroll, 2010).

**Educational Organization in Honduras**

The link between education and social development has been crucial throughout Latin
America (Herdoiza-Estevez, 2002). In many countries education is a symbol of progress and freedom. The nation of Honduras has 7.8 million people and a land area approximately the size of Ohio. More than half of Hondurans live in the rural areas of the country where illiteracy is common (Ruhl, 2010). Honduras was without a formal national education system until the late 1950s. Prior to then, education was an exclusive privilege for those who could afford to send their children to private schools. Many schools in rural areas are similar to the one-room schoolhouse of the pioneer days in the United States. These schools have between fifty and seventy students in all different grades with only one or two teachers responsible for all the students. When students actually attend school, more than half are enrolled in private, rather than public schools. The quality of education is somewhat higher in private schools, but the overall quality of education remains low (Purdy, 2006). In 1957 the establishment of a national public education system came under the government of Ramon Villeda Morales. The new constitution stated that a free primary education was obligatory for every child between the ages of seven and fourteen. In the year 2000, only 88 percent of the Honduran children between the ages of seven and fourteen were attending school. Approximately 79 percent of the children completed primary school, but many had to repeat grades resulting in more than 50 percent of the student population requiring an additional two to three years to meet primary school requirements (Purdy, 2006). With primary school taking many individuals additional time to complete, only 35 percent of the student population chooses to continue on to secondary school. Many factors impact a child’s ability to continue attending school. In certain circumstances poverty forces the child to work in the fields to help support the family. Some schools attempt to provide meager meals in an effort to attract poorer students to attend school where absenteeism is high. Teachers are in a unique position to counsel and help students think about their decisions to leave school.
carefully. They can help students think through the consequences of their decisions and promote a more opportunistic future (Leal, Murphy-Graham, 2015).

Secondary school is not free and is divided into two stages. The first stage focuses on general education topics for grades seven through nine. The second stage, grades ten and eleven, focus on career education such as teaching, computer technology and carpentry. Only students who have completed secondary school are eligible for university and only 8 percent reach university level. The reality of the Honduran educational system is much more problematic than the numbers of students reaching university level. In 1998, on average, a twenty-five year old Honduran had gone to school for a total of just five years. These numbers were among the lowest in Central America (Kras, 2007).

**Resources.** While Honduran families may have the desire to send their children to school, the challenges associated with accessing school often impact their ability to attend. A study carried out by the Ministry of Education in Honduras in 1997 revealed more than 14 percent of school age children were not enrolled in schools and 85 percent of the un-enrolled children lived in rural areas (Pavon, 2008). Despite an effort to increase spending on education, 27 percent of the total government budget, approximately $394.11 US dollars per pupil (Morazan, 2008), compared to the $ 6,700 US dollars per pupil in the United States, multiple factors continue to affect attempts to improve the educational system, including but not limited to: the lack of actual school facilities, under-staffing in schools established at this time, an inability to purchase materials required to equip schools and the overall poor quality of the public education system. Presently, Honduras does not have the resources necessary to provide updated public school facilities. Rural schools house multiple grades in one room, with as many as fifty students per class and one teacher. A lack of ongoing teacher training and development
in addition to an absence of transportation for students and teachers to and from school continue to be barriers in accessing quality education as well. At this time, the main funding for educational development is through charitable donations and teacher volunteers (World Bank, 2011). Another example of the present financial strain in Honduras was evident when it was necessary for the government to borrow $100 million to pay its employees (Lee, 2014).

Eighteen years ago Hurricane Mitch, the deadliest hurricane in Honduran history, annihilated Central America resulting in the deaths of an estimated 11,000 people. 1.5 million people were left homeless and damages were projected at over 5 billion dollars. Honduras was particularly hit hard, with drenching rains triggering mudslides and eliminating entire villages. The Education Ministry building flooded up through the third floor resulting in computers and school records being eradicated. The entire educational history of the country was lost. Classes were cancelled for more than three months and one quarter of all Honduran schools were destroyed. During this time teachers distributed medicine, worked as census takers and cleaned the streets (Lubbock-Avalanche Journal, 1998). Eighteen years later constructing new schools continues to remain a high priority for the Honduran education system. Teachers and students will have to adjust to the new challenges associated with starting over (Rodriguez-Florido, 2012).

**Recent Political Impacts on Education**

On the morning of the June 28th, 2009 a military coup deposed of President Manuel Zelaya and put him on a plane to Costa Rica (Ruhl, 2010). What followed was a battle not only between defacto President Roberto Micheletti and current President Porfirio Lobo Sasa and their supporters, but also a massive strike of 90 percent of the 68,000 public school teachers. The government moved to privatize the entire public school system. Teachers were told they needed
to be on a waiting list to retire, mainly because the teachers’ government managed retirement fund was bankrupt, looted by President Micheletti’s post coup government (Frank, 2011). By March 2011 the number of grievances filed by teachers became massive. In addition to pension funds being gone, teachers were owed six months back pay. Teachers and the teachers unions were considered part of the anti-coup resistance movement. During the coup teachers had their pensions stolen, their wages cut, if they received them at all and their labor rights suspended. As a result teachers occupied institutions, highways and roads. The defiance was met with brute force and since the coup, at least twelve teachers are known as missing or dead.

On March 31, 2011, the Honduran congress approved a law opening the door for privatization of the entire country’s public school system. This legislation passed the control of education to municipalities. Towns are free to organize for-profit enterprises or work with nonprofit initiatives. Teachers will no longer be hired through their professional associations, but will work on annual ten-month contracts with no job security, less pay and no pension (Frank, 2011).

**The Deaf and Disabled in Honduras**

Individuals with disabilities make up one of the most disadvantaged sectors of society in Honduras (Goetz, 2016). The main causes for disabilities in Honduras include sickness, malnutrition, complications at birth and accidents (Williams, 2010). In many developing countries there is a sense that the disabled are not able to contribute to society and they are viewed as a burden (Williams, 2010). Many individuals find their communities shun or ignore them; they are literally “thrown away” (Brookland, 2013). In addition to little support being offered locally, the country’s disabled struggle to exist with nearly no assistance from the
government as well. The average amount of money the government spends each year on a person with a disability in Honduras is about 40 cents (Telesur, 2016). The majority of support services provided for the handicapped are the result of charitable foundations and missionary teams.

There are more than seven hundred thousand disabled persons in Honduras and nearly seventy thousand Deaf people (Holden, 2004). Deafness is the fourth major disability in Honduras after blindness (Williams, 2010). Approximately ninety percent do not work and are unemployed (Telesur, 2016). The Deaf community feels a particularly acute exclusion as a result of their disability. Until the 1980’s Deaf Hondurans had no formal access to language. At that time the National Deaf Association and Deaf ministries were established and began what was known as “The Joshua Project” (The Joshua Project, 2009). In an effort to share the gospel the project utilized American Sign Language (ASL) as a foundation and developed Honduran Sign Language (LESHO). Honduran Sign Language has a shared vocabulary with both ASL and Mexican Sign Language. The two main sources of ASL influence in Honduras are American missionaries in Honduras and Deaf Hondurans who have studied in America (Williams, 2010). Prior to the development of LESHO most Deaf people communicated through gestures and homemade signs created within their own families.

Currently one of the greatest needs in the Honduran Deaf community is for sign language interpreters. With limited access to language and reliable information, the Deaf community is extremely vulnerable. Deaf individuals have inaccurate and limited knowledge regarding current events, the political unrest and ongoing challenges occurring in their country. The lack of interpreters also places increased limits on educational opportunities in addition to participation in mainstream society. Having reliable information pertaining to day-to-day events and educational opportunities is crucial for the Deaf community in Honduras.
opportunities through interpreter services affords increased independence for the Deaf and the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to become productive contributing members of society. An example of the Deaf and sign language being so unfamiliar in Honduras is when Deaf people communicating using sign language have actually been arrested and accused of flashing “gang signs” while signing in public.

The Honduran school year runs from February through November. Opportunities for specialized instruction for the Deaf and support necessary to be successful in their communities is lacking. Less than fifteen percent of disabled children are receiving special education services (Williams, 2010). Parents do not always send their disabled child to school as they may not be able afford the cost of tuition and transportation for them. If a family can afford to send a student to school they will select their non-disabled child, believing it is more practical to educate them over their handicapped child. In 2010 records indicate only about 30 Deaf people in all of Honduras had graduated from secondary school (Williams, 2010). Less than one percent of the Deaf population achieves a secondary education. For Deaf individuals who have achieved a secondary education and wish to continue on to university, their opportunities continue to be limited due to financial restrictions and a lack of interpreter services.

There are three major cities where Deaf people congregate: Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba (The Joshua Project). Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula are the two major Deaf centers with the most services for the Deaf community (Williams, 2010). There are six main Deaf educational centers in Tegucigalpa. With funding being limited most educational centers offer purely vocational training including cooking, sewing, hairstyling and upholstery. Another example of an educational center includes the Centro de Investigacion y Rehabilitacion Especial (CIRE) which was established about forty years ago. The center offers
classes in the morning for Deaf students only and afternoon classes for students with various disabilities in addition to the Deaf. Students are educated at CIRE until the age of 15, however if they demonstrate positive, motivated behavior they may be allowed to stay longer (Williams, 2010).

**Educating the Deaf**

In countries considered to have “emerging or developing” economies, the proportion of children having hearing loss is estimated to be about two times that of developed countries (Marschark & Spencer, 2010). Despite these statistics, Deafness continues to be considered a “low incidence” disability. The impacts of this impairment are underestimated, not simply regarding education, but as they relate to: access to information, resources, physical, mental and social development as well. Presently, there is little data regarding the developmental and educational histories of Deaf children living in countries where health issues of life or death have still not been effectively addressed (Marschark & Spencer, 2010).

Philosophies related to how the Deaf should be educated are numerous in the United States. Specific approaches can be narrowed down to three main systems: Oral-Manual, or Total communication, meaning that students learn to utilize sign language and spoken language collaboratively. An Aural-Oral approach, implying students are trained to use any residual hearing they may possess, paired with learning how to lip-read and speak and the last approach is manual communication only, suggesting students are taught using only sign language with no voice support or lip reading at all. Individuals in the field of Deaf education in America have long debated over which approach is correct and appropriate when educating the Deaf. For the purpose of this research, this philosophical debate will not be focused on, but the use sign language will be emphasized as a strong asset in educating Deaf students. While parents often
avoid teaching their children sign language for fear that they will not learn how to speak, “several studies have found that the acquisition of signed language actually can support the learning of spoken language” (Hauser, P.C., 2012). The use of sign language in the classroom has also been linked to better educational outcomes for young Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children, but evidence from college students suggests that it may have limited long-term impact when other factors are controlled (Marschark et al. 2016).

Over the past twenty-five years there have been dramatic changes in the education of the DHH children around the world. These changes reflect the evolution and development in pedagogy, developmental psychology, psycholinguistics (including language acquisition), and other related fields (Marschark, et. al., 2002). There has been an increasing emphasis on educating DHH in mainstream classrooms with hearing children (Marschark, et. al. 2011). Despite the good intentions of mainstreaming Deaf students with their hearing peers, the issues associated with educating the Deaf are very complicated, and the Deaf population itself is far from homogeneous (Easterbrooks, 1999). Recent studies have indicated that even a slight hearing loss can negatively impact overall academic achievement as a result. Three areas where Deaf students consistently fall behind their hearing peers are the areas of language development (language acquisition) reading and reading comprehension. Language and reading are highly connected and both are fundamental aspects of education, employment and an element of life. Deaf children on average consistently lag behind in the development of language routinely read below grade level. Deaf students require a specific specially designed methodology of teaching, with a unique focus on language development and language comprehension regardless of the philosophical approach. As a result of the very distinct needs related to the Deaf students, teachers of the Deaf must be skilled in addressing these areas of deficiency, in addition to
presenting comprehensive curriculums covering all academic areas. As rewarding as Deaf education can be, without the right tools and with students who have so many challenges, teachers of the Deaf burn out at a much higher rate than teachers of hearing children (Marschark, et. al, 2012).

Teacher Training and Development

In 1996 Latin American and Caribbean Ministers of education came together to discuss issues related to teachers and professional development. The emphasis was on expanding of horizons, fostering a positive social image for the teaching profession, designing long term training programs and developing more efficient hiring practices (Avalos, 2000). In 2008, the total percentage of Honduran teachers trained in primary education was reported to be 36.44 percent. This is a significant decline compared to the number of trained teachers in 2004. These statistics indicate that more than two thirds of the teachers presently teaching do not have formal teacher training, qualifications or teaching certificates (Eduvelopment, 2015). It is suspected that this lack of background and access to training can impact the quality of education being delivered to the students.

For a short period of time, in 2005, New Life Deaf Ministry, worked in collaboration with Baylor University in Waco, Texas to establish the first Deaf education certification program in Honduras. Baylor University made this possible by sending professors, faculty and students to teach courses and substitute teachers to a school for the Deaf in south central Honduras (Williams, 2010). Throughout the partnership the teachers from New Life Deaf Ministry in Honduras taught the Baylor University staff and students courses in LESHO (Honduran Sign Language), Deaf Culture and Spanish. In return the Baylor University graduate students and staff taught the NLDM teachers courses in Introduction to Deaf Education, Behavior
Management and Language Development. The experience proved to be mutually beneficial for the NLDM Teachers and the Baylor faculty, staff and students.

**Positive Trends in Honduras**

One of the most tenacious issues plaguing Honduras is corruption. Corruption is at the core of weak governance, undermining efforts to build a more secure future, particularly in the area of education. Scarce resources are diverted from the intended purpose of funding already underfunded education (Boehm, 2016). While gang violence, political fighting and corruption scandals continue to dominate the headlines in Honduras, there is a new positive moment in one area, civil society groups. Honduras has one of the lowest corruption perception indices in the region (Boehm, 2016). In an effort to monitor corruption in the department of education the Ministry of Education began an initiative in an attempt to create transparency and increase accountability at the school, regional and national levels. The ministry began to post information on “transparency bulletin boards” allowing local stakeholders the opportunity to understand and monitor various aspects of the state of the education system including but not limited to: teacher absences and other irregularities at the school level (Boehm, 2016). While this initiative is fairly new, there have been reports of changes in attitudes and behavior on several different levels. The expectations of parents and civil society organizations have been raised and as a result general accountability has increased effectively resulting in the denouncement of past corrupt practices. The goal is with increased public dissatisfaction regarding the quality of Honduran public schools, in addition to current legal reforms in the education system and the anti-corruption agenda of the present government collectively will create the right conditions for planting the seeds of long-term systematic change (Boehm, 2016).
Conclusion

Teachers are often asked to teach outside of their primary area of expertise. As a result most educators will resort to lecture based teaching practices, or methods that they are familiar with, affording more control over the material (Albertini, 2002). Most teachers are required to teach multiple content areas, adding to the strain of planning for additional subject areas. When Teachers of the Deaf participate in professional development meetings they often choose those focused on teaching Deaf students rather than content area curriculum. If an educator has limited opportunities for professional growth and development, how does one choose which areas to prioritize, if any should be ranked more important than another? Some evidence suggests there is little correlation between professional development and student achievement (Hanushek, 2011). However, if educators were not secure in their practice, one would believe that it would certainly have an effect on student outcome and achievement. When a teacher is secure in a skill set and has confidence in their practice, they are able to project enthusiasm and engagement with their students, affording a stimulating and exciting learning environment. This frame of mind is what is desired for the teachers of the deaf in Honduras.
Chapter Three: Research Design

Introduction

Stories can be fascinating. Stories are a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful (Clandinin, 2007). When an individual shares a story about his or her experience, we become attentive, drawn in and curious. Stories contain within them, knowledge that is different and often better understood than that gained from a report, survey or statistics. For researchers, narratives assist in probing issues such as personal identity, life-course development and the cultural and historical worlds of the narrator. A narrative study also helps explore specific phenomena such as leadership and organizational changes and how the storyteller has experienced them (Dodge, 2005).

This study served to gain the stories of teachers of an impoverished and developing country, Honduras. Presently they have limited access to continuing education and professional development opportunities. With dwindling school resources to meet the daily needs of staff and students, there are no supplementary funds for ongoing trainings. Poverty-stricken countries, including Honduras, historically continue to have high rates of illiteracy and limited educational opportunities. Families have difficulty accessing education as a result of financial constraints and/or the inability to find schools and travel to them. Parents at times need to choose between each of their children and decide which child should be educated if they can only afford to send a singleton to school. Once a child is able to attend school they may be met by a teacher with limited training and experience. When an educator is able to earn a teaching degree or certificate, they enter the classroom with few opportunities for ongoing training or support to assist with new and/or recurring issues associated with teaching and lesson development.
This qualitative narrative study incorporated information from four select Honduran Teachers of the Deaf. Successful Teachers of the Deaf tend to have both the training in the curriculum subject areas they are responsible for teaching, in addition they are knowledgeable about the learning styles and patterns of students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing. However, in Honduras, limited numbers of teachers have this combination of abilities (Marschark, 2010). These educators were interviewed about their lived personal experiences and how these experiences shaped who they are as teachers today. The purpose of the analysis was to see how the respondents in the four interviews organize their lived experiences in an effort to make sense of events and actions in their lives. This methodological approach examined the participant’s stories and analyzed how it was put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it drew upon, and how it persuaded a listener of authenticity. Analysis in narrative studies opens up the forms of telling about experience not simply the content to which language refers. The goal was to understand why the individual’s story was told in the manner it is presented (Reissman, 1993). This information allowed the researcher to identify patterns and key concepts by establishing common threads between each of the teachers, their stories and experiences. Once the common concepts were identified, the objective was to work with the educators and establish solutions to identified areas of concern or difficulty in addition to recognizing domains of success and strength within their practices.

The interview process required the teachers to reflect on past teacher training and preparation as well as professional development experiences they have taken part in and to report if they considered these trainings to be beneficial. Interviewees were asked to consider their formal and informal educational experiences and how they understood these experiences and made sense of how they have affected them as educators. Participants were invited to
contemplate their personal areas of strength as well as areas of need and what models of support they considered to be beneficial for their continued development as an educator and what they believe they needed to grow as a professional. The process assisted in identifying common points in each teacher’s narrative.

The teachers in the study were four teachers from a school for the Deaf in Honduras. The results of the study provided valuable information to share with groups of teachers working in the rural and hard to reach areas of Honduras, as well as to teachers in other developing nations that may not have easy access to ongoing professional development opportunities.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf, both formal and informal as they were prepared to teach?
2. How do Honduran teachers of the Deaf make sense of these experiences as they relate to their professional practices as a teacher today?
3. What professional development opportunities and ongoing training do Honduran teachers of the Deaf believe to be beneficial for themselves and their colleagues moving forward?

Research Design and Paradigm

The overarching research design for this project was a qualitative, narrative study. Through qualitative, narrative research, as the observer into the world of the Honduran teacher, an understanding of the lived experiences each teacher has had was developed. Each person’s story had three dimensions: the personal and social (interaction) past, present and future (continuity) and place (situation) (Clandinin, 2006). The narrative approach captured the emotion
of the moment as it was described by the individual, depicting the story as an active rather than passive event, embedded with the underlying meaning being communicated by the person. These lived and told stories and discussion about these stories are ways we create meaning in our lives as well as ways we enlist each other’s help in building our lives and communities (Clandinin, 2006). Through the interview process, identifying and connecting the shared and common experiences the teachers had, a deeper understanding of the needs the teachers shared was developed.

The Social Constructivist Worldview was utilized throughout this research as this set of beliefs guide the action of understanding what the teachers understood about their life experiences. Social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings were varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research was to give voice to the stories of the teachers being interviewed and to understand their view of the situation being studied. The interview questions were broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons (Creswell, 2009). In alignment with this paradigm, as a researcher it was necessary to recognize and understand that the environment and the world the Honduran teachers live have a direct impact on their interpretation of their personal experiences. Similarly, it was important that the researcher did not allow her own background and experiences to impact their interpretation of the Honduran teacher’s experiences.
Research Tradition

The purpose of qualitative research is to better understand phenomena in a specific group being studied, and to make inferences about broader groups beyond those being studied (Holton, 2005 p. 30). Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin, N.K. 1994 p.4). Qualitative study is the process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 1994, pp. 1-2).

Narrative analysis/study is a form of qualitative research approach committed to the examination of the stories of individuals that order events across time and also structure the account of these events in ways that give meaning to the experiences of the story teller (Breheny and Stephens, 2013). It is through identifying, understanding and making sense of experiences that the teachers have shared, or have encountered differently that we can then move forward determining areas of strength and areas continuing to require further development. The tradition of a narrative analysis afforded the teachers the opportunity to feel that their stories were important. Their stories needed to be heard and understood as they shared the challenges and triumphs through their journeys to become educators.

Research Site

Honduras presently has nine schools for the Deaf. Six of the schools are government schools and three are private (Allen, 2008). The research site was a private school for the Deaf located in southern central Honduras. The school presently has one administrator, also serving as director in addition to seven teachers. There are currently fifty-two students enrolled in the program, which serves children in preschool through eighth grade. This site was selected as the
result of a mission trip to the school completed in February 2014. The school serves to educate a specific population of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH). As a result, these teachers have unique and specific needs related to their teaching and professional development.

**Sampling Strategy**

The four Teachers of the Deaf in Honduras selected for this narrative study have demonstrated a passion and dedication for their work. While the teachers receive low salaries, they are committed to traveling great distances to do their jobs and independently take a class when possible. Most of the teachers do not have access to classes or cannot afford to participate in classes and there is also equal danger associated with traveling to and from classes in the evening, as Honduras is a country continually plagued by violence.

A convenience sampling strategy was utilized within the study based on the pre-established relationship with the school for the Deaf located in Honduras. It was not practical or safe to travel throughout the country of Honduras to collect data from a random sampling of teachers. The four teachers interviewed met the specific criteria of being Teachers of the Deaf, specifically in Honduras. Two of the teachers held bachelor's degrees and two did not have bachelor's degrees, but have graduated high school. These teachers were purposefully selected with the assistance of the school director in an effort to gain authentic information related directly to their experiences as Teachers of the Deaf in Honduras. All of the teachers in the school for the Deaf were offered the opportunity to be interviewed through a call for participants. The four teachers were selected from the pool of teachers who volunteered to be interviewed.

The teachers were asked to consider such experiences as: When and if they have professional development, are they able to incorporate the instruction into their lessons and classrooms immediately? With whom would they prefer to have professional development
opportunities? What experiences and opportunities do they value most as educators? Are there additional opportunities they recognize as more appropriate and practical for teachers in Honduras that would not necessarily be relevant in other countries? A full list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix G.

**Recruitment and Access**

The participants of this study were all teachers at a school for the Deaf in south central Honduras. These four teachers were selected as part of the study as a result of their participation in a professional development experience at the school the previous school year. All of the teachers were given the opportunity to volunteer for the study. Once the volunteer pool was established, four teachers were selected from the group of volunteers. Presently, the school employs one lead teacher and seven teachers. There were six female and one male teacher who could have possibly volunteered be interviewed as part of the study. These teachers have a variety of educational levels and background experiences. They are very proud of their accomplishments and enjoy discussing their role as educators of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The teachers appreciated individuals attempting to have a better understanding of their experiences as they prepared to become teachers. This information was essential in helping future teachers become better prepared based on the information collected from their surveys. It was also imperative to understand the current needs of teachers in Honduras in an effort to prepare and provide appropriate professional development experiences in the future.

The teachers were contacted with the assistance of an American individual who previously served as the director of the school where the teachers presently work. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. During the interview process the teachers chose to remain on location at their school in Honduras. Each teacher participated in two interviews. Each
interview took place in person and each interview was recorded using audio and video recording platforms. A third interview and opportunity to provide supplemental information was offered for an additional review of the responses once the interviews were completed. The interview responses were reviewed in an ongoing manner with the assistance of a Spanish to English interpreter. Teachers were asked to clarify their answers and insure that their responses were accurate and as they intended. A small gift card incentive was offered to the teachers to a common store in Honduras.

**Data Collection, Storage and Management**

There are a variety of approaches, which can be utilized during a narrative study. In-depth interviews will be the main source of data for this study. All of the interviews took place at the participant's school for the Deaf, in south central, Honduras. The interviewer traveled to south central Honduras to conduct the interviews in person. An interpreter was utilized to translate the questions from English to Spanish and to translate the responses from Spanish to English. It was necessary to utilize a LESHO (Honduran Sign Language) interpreter as well as a Deaf Honduran teacher was interviewed. All aspects of the interview were recorded, including the translations. The documentation from the interviews including the records and transcribed reports are saved and stored on a private hard drive. Only the student researcher has access to the password-protected information. Once the data is no longer needed the recordings will be deleted and destroyed. These standards guarantee the protection and the privacy of the participants of the study.

**Data Analysis**

Several steps were necessary in the analyzing of the data. While a Spanish to English
interpreter was part of the interview process it was necessary to make certain the transcription of the interviews were genuine in capturing the responses of the participants.

Data is defined as the information collected as part of the research study. For this study the data was in the form of words collected from the interviews. Key concepts were derived from the information collected through the process of coding, sifting, sorting and identifying themes. The evidence was manipulated through the assignment of codes to portions of the data, which in this case are the stories and/or narratives collected (Lichtman, 2012). Once the data was coded it was be broken down into separate categories and eventually specific concepts. There are six steps that follow the three C’s (codes, categories and concepts) of Data Analysis. Step one was the initial coding, which involves going from responses to summary ideas of the responses. The second step was the revisiting of the initial coding. The third step involved developing an initial list of categories derived from the coding. The fourth step required the modification of the initial list based on additional rereading. During step five, the categories and subcategories were revisited. Finally, with step six, the categories were moved to individual concepts (Lichtman, 2012).

Validity and Credibility

Validation is the process through which one makes claims for the trustworthiness of our interpretations (Reissman, 1993). Validity and trustworthiness was maintained by following a structured, systematic procedure, where all subjects were asked identical questions throughout the interview process in addition to being given identical surveys. Some validity may be compromised through the translation process, however this was monitored and minimized with the use of an interpreter to insure that all questions and answers were translated to the highest
degree. A final review of the interview responses was conducted with the teachers to insure that the intent of their responses have been interpreted correctly. It is important to understand what participants think of our work, and their responses can often be a source of theoretical insight (Reissman, 1993).

Protection of Human Subjects and Informed Consent

The teachers from the selected school for the Deaf were required to sign a consent form in order to participate in the interview process. The information collected is kept private and participant’s names have not been utilized at any point during the study to insure confidentiality. The teachers have been assigned the pseudonyms of: Linda, Sandy, Juliana and Carolina in order to insure confidentiality but also in an effort to maintain organization and clarity. The interview process of the narrative analysis offers the opportunity to establish a sense of trust with the participants. Ethically it was necessary to be respectful and open to the voices of the individuals willing to share their stories. It has been crucially important to honor the trusting bond established with the teachers during the process and to give their experiences everlasting voice and meaning. The ethics surrounding this narrative study has been and continues to be about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices (Clandinin, 2006).

Obtaining IRB approval

The mission of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University is to protect the rights and welfare of the individuals participating in the interview and research process. The researcher followed the fundamental ethical principles of respect for people's, beneficence and justice as outlined in the Belmont Report. This researcher completed the necessary requirements and applications affording the Board the opportunity to assess and evaluate the potential risks and benefits of the proposed research, and ensured that any potential
risks were kept to a complete minimum. If any risks were identified it was critical they were justified and outweighed by the potential gains of the study. Through the application process this researcher established a collaborative practice with the IRB, complied with federal and state regulations and privacy laws and lastly promoted a high standard of research associated with the institution.
Chapter 4: Summary of Findings

Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the specific lived experiences and challenges of Honduran educators as they began their careers as Teachers of the Deaf. This information was essential to understanding the difficulties not only specific to each individual, but collectively as the group works to grow professionally as a faculty. Utilizing the details of these experiences was essential in identifying potential recommendations for ongoing professional development for the teachers. This chapter introduces the narratives collected through one-to-one interviews with four teachers of the Deaf from south central Honduras. These individuals will be referred to as: Linda, Sandy, Juliana and Carolina for the remainder of the paper. These pseudonyms have been assigned to insure each teacher’s privacy.

Each interview highlights the teacher’s personal educational and school experiences as a child, their personal feelings regarding their decision to become a teacher and how they came to work at a school for the Deaf. The interviews also focused on the personal experiences they encountered while being trained to be a teacher and a teacher of the Deaf. The teachers were further asked to identify where they find support and how supported from others they have felt with the decisions they have made pertaining to teaching. Lastly each individual shares what they believe they need moving forward to grow professionally.

Research Questions

Through the interview process, this qualitative narrative study aimed to identify and understand the challenges and experiences faced by the Honduran Teacher of the Deaf as they began teaching in Honduras. The information collected from these interviews assisted in the
The development of future educational and training opportunities for the teachers. The focus of the interviews were outlined through the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf, both formal and informal as they were prepared to teach?

2. How do they make sense of these experiences as Honduran teachers of the Deaf relate to their professional practices as a teacher today?

3. What professional development opportunities and ongoing training do Honduran teachers of the Deaf believe to be beneficial for themselves and their colleagues moving forward?

**Methodology Revisited**

Interviews were arranged through a private school for the Deaf in south central Honduras. After distributing a “Call for Participants” letter describing the study, four teachers were randomly selected from the individuals who volunteered to be interviewed. Each teacher was interviewed individually two times. Responses were reviewed and checked for clarity to insure answers were interpreted as intended. Interview questions and responses were presented with the assistance of an interpreter utilizing either LESHO (Honduran Sign Language) or Spanish, and the interviewer. The purpose of the interpreter was to insure complete comprehension on behalf of the interviewer and each participant. Every interview began with a description and purpose of the study. All questions posed by the participants were answered, written consents and confidentiality forms were reviewed and signed before the interview process began.

All participants had two face-to-face interviews in person at the school for the Deaf. The teachers selected this location, as it was convenient for them to be interviewed and then return to
their teaching. The first interview focused on personal past educational and teacher training experiences. The second interview focused on current personal experiences as a classroom Teacher of the Deaf and what they as educators believe the needs are for professional growth and development moving forward.

Every participant was offered the opportunity to request a third interview after reviewing the questions and their answers from each interview in an effort to ensure validity and reliability. Responses were discussed for verification and clarification, allowing the teachers to elaborate or change any part of their responses as needed. All of the interviews were conducted in person and were video and audio recorded using two devices with permission from the participants. The recordings have been downloaded onto a computer and password protected. The devices utilized to record are stored securely under lock and key.

**Research Site Description**

The interview site was a private school for the Deaf located in a highly congested urban setting in south central Honduras. The school presently educates approximately fifty-two students from preschool through eighth grade. All of the students are Deaf and communicate using LESHO, Honduran Sign Language. There are currently seven full time teachers, a school director, a consultant and an armed security guard. The security guard is responsible for allowing people in and out of the property. The school itself is constructed mainly of concrete with a congregated metal roof. Most of the windows consist of a metal mesh type material covering the openings mainly for ventilation purposes and security. The classroom doors are also constructed of heavy congregated steel. The doors are very solid and make a lot of noise when they slam shut, similar to the sound a jail cell door might make when it is closed. The
school has two levels with four classrooms on each level and a courtyard in the middle. There are two classrooms on the bottom left and bottom right and two classrooms on the top left and the top right. One of the classroom spaces is presently being used as a small library. The classrooms face into the courtyard, opening directly to the outside walkway bordering the courtyard. The restrooms are at the end of the walkway and each consists of a toilet and a barrel with a common sink on the outside.

The central courtyard serves as a recess space for the students. There are basketball hoops at each end of the space in addition to soccer goals. There are no nets in the basketball hoops, or in the soccer goals either. The children played soccer for a long time with a partially inflated soccer ball which appeared to be falling apart. The students did not seem bothered by the condition of their space and ball as evidenced by their enthusiastic soccer playing.

A huge metal gate secures the front of the school campus with a door located in the middle. The gate slides to the left allowing cars to drive in when necessary. The top of the gate and perimeter of the school are both surrounded in a layer of coiled barbed wire. Across the street from the school there is an indoor soccer stadium on one side and a car wash on the other. There is no evidence of signage stating that the location is home to a school. As traffic passed and people hurried by during the morning commute, no one appeared to look at the building or children and parents entering and exiting the gate. Commuters gave the impression they were intent on their destination as they feverishly honked their car horns and recklessly pulled into the congested streets. The lines of people waiting for the bus were inconceivable, running the full length of a city block and up to five people deep. It is not unordinary to stand and wait up to an hour to take the bus and then ride on the bus an additional hour to reach one’s destination.
Development of Themes in the Findings

Through the interview process, the four teachers shared information pertaining to their life experiences. The information was organized and analyzed through the coding procedure. A variety of sub codes emerged during the initial stages of sorting and coding. These sub-codes included, but were not limited to: experiences attending school, earning a degree, church life, teaching without training, difficulty with parents (of students), finances associated with attending school, access to technology, traveling to work and school, feeling safe commuting to work and school, difficulties associated with teaching and improving language skills.

The sub-codes were further organized into the final themes. The final themes are discussed in detail in the findings section of this chapter. Examples of establishing themes through the organization of the sub-codes included organizing all sub codes with experiences related to attending school, family and growing up, being grouped together to create the theme: background and school experiences. Earning a degree and teaching without training were two sub-codes which became part of the theme: teaching and teacher training experiences.

The final themes identified at the conclusion of the coding process were: background and school experiences, feelings about teaching, working at the school for the Deaf, teaching and teacher training experiences, finding and feeling support and moving forward professionally.

Findings

Linda

Background and school experiences. Linda is presently thirty-three years old, born and raised in Honduras. As long as she can remember she always wanted to go to school. She loved attending school and had wonderful experiences until third grade. Linda’s family had moved out of the city and returned when she was nine years old. She recalls the children in the city being
different; she described them as “fighters.” She explained the poor children were actually respectful of one another and needed to look out for each other.

Linda found sixth grade as one of the most difficult years of her schooling. Her teacher was very strict and she was a timid child. Despite her teachers being tough, she learned to love one of them very much. Seventh grade Linda explained as being a transformational year for her. She had a lot of strong friendships and enjoyed school and studying. She became interested in art, dancing and sports. Linda embraced the challenges of studying and at that time found school very satisfying. “I would live it again. It was very satisfying because of friendships, because of learning, because of the challenges after graduating,” she explained.

**Feelings about teaching.** Linda knew she wanted to be a teacher when she was just five years old. Her father’s family and all of her cousins were teachers. Linda decided then she wanted to be a teacher and a journalist. She recollected her father calling her “teacher”. My daddy used to tell me, “Come here teacher,” or “Do you want this, teacher?” Unfortunately for Linda she could not be trained as a teacher while she was in high school. Her father abandoned her and her family and went to the United States. Her mother could not afford to pay for transportation for Linda to go to teacher training school, nor could she afford the materials and supplies. Linda’s mother needed to support her five brothers and sisters cleaning houses. Linda decided to pursue marketing in school, but promised herself when she turned eighteen she would go to university and study to become a teacher and a journalist.

**Working at the school for the Deaf.** When Linda was twenty she was looking for a job. Her friend from church told her there was an ad in the paper looking for an assistant teacher. Linda did not think she was qualified for the position because she had not attended and graduated from teacher training school. She called about the job and initially the school director said she
no longer needed help, however a week later the school director called Linda and asked her to come in for a meeting. The school director asked her if she knew sign language. Linda explained she did not know sign language and she had actually never met a Deaf person before. The school director asked her if she would be willing to study sign language, however Linda did not have the money to pay for the classes. The school director spoke with the school consultant and they agreed to give Linda the money to pay for the sign language course at the university. Linda was touched by their generosity and trust. They gave her cash to pay for the course. “They did not know if I was an honest woman. They just trusted in me and gave me 300 Lempiras. I didn’t steal it. I didn’t use it to buy other things.” She went directly to the university and registered for the sign language class. She attended classes for four months, every Friday and Saturday to learn sign language.

Linda openly shared that she did not feel at all prepared to teach. She was scared. She did not know if the children were going to understand her, even with her new sign language skills. Linda was not certain as to how to combine the fundamental aspects of teaching with the sign language to educate her students.

**Teaching and teacher training experiences.** After completing the sign language classes Linda began teaching at the school for the Deaf. The sign language classes were her only “formal” training at that time to be a teacher and a teacher of the Deaf. Prior to assuming teaching responsibilities she had not attended a university to train to be a teacher. Linda described the majority, if not all of her training to teach the Deaf occurred at the school for the Deaf. For a short time there was a partnership with Baylor University with the school. Student teachers would come from the United States and supervise the classes while the Honduran teachers attended classes and workshops presented by Baylor University. Linda participated in
these courses offered by the American university, however she shared the majority of her training took place with the school director and fellow teachers, one in particular who also served as a mentor. Presently, Linda has been working at the school now for twelve years, she has taught for ten years without a Bachelor’s degree.

In 2014, Linda decided to attend college and earn her Bachelor’s Degree in education. She will earn a degree in Pre-School Education and graduate in 2019. Linda believes the classes focusing on “special applications” for children with disabilities have been the most practical and useful in her university classes. She has also enjoyed classes focusing on Evolutionary Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Human Development. Linda believes understanding the phases of child development through adulthood has been very useful. Part of Linda’s Bachelor’s program is a Professional Practice course; this course is the equivalent to a student teaching practicum in the United States. The Professional Practice is the last three months of the program and is supervised by a guide called and Academic Tutor. Despite the courses and the training Linda is participating in currently, she refers back to the school director and specifically a fellow teacher who has since passed away as being one of the, if not the most supportive, helpful and influential colleagues.

**Finding and feeling support.** When Linda decided to pursue her Bachelor’s degree in Pre-school Education she felt supported by her mother. Her mother believed that she always had the characteristics of a teacher. Linda’s colleagues and parents of her students encouraged her to go to school and study. She also felt motivated by her own students. She wanted to be a professional teacher because of them. Returning to school required a lot of commitment. She needed to continue teaching full time in addition to attending school. If she did not work, Linda would not have been able to afford school in addition to ongoing living expenses: home
expenses, bills and food. Linda needed to work in order to study. Despite the challenges and
difficulties she believes it is satisfying and worthwhile.

**Moving forward professionally.** Linda is eager to complete her Bachelor’s degree and
apply her new knowledge to the classroom. She believes that increased sign language skills
continue to be necessary in addition to an “Orientation of how to teach classes to Deaf children.”
She would love to know more about Sign Language. She would like to and understand more
“Where the Deaf person is.” “This will help me understand more what do I need to know and
what do I need to give?” Linda wants to know more so she can have more to give her students.
Linda provided an example of not knowing the sign for a word of a body part during a biology
lesson. She felt that not having the sign and the language to explain the word and the concepts
associated with it prevented a deeper understanding for her students.

Linda feels further education on the prescribed materials for working with Deaf children
in addition to teaching conceptual skills is necessary. She believes having a mentor is essential
for ongoing support and growth. Having the assistance and encouragement of her colleagues has
been vital to her growth. She specifically thanks the school for the Deaf for helping her develop
her skills. They facilitated her introduction to working with the Deaf with the Sign Language
courses and other classes to help her with her classroom including art and physical education
classes. Most recently there have not been any formal professional development opportunities
that Linda is aware of, as she is not at the school while she completes her practicum.

Professional learning communities at the school for the Deaf have happened in the past,
but not in a formal, organized manner. Linda described an attempt at book groups or a reading
circle. The group met two or three times but it never became established. The teachers have too
many commitments and everyone leaves school as soon as their work is finished. Many teachers
go to university, others have a long commute home, and some have second jobs. Linda describes
the group of teachers as a group who wants to help one another, teach and learn from one another
but to have a formalized group is not happening at this time.

**Summary.** Linda is a thirty-three year old teacher of the Deaf finishing her bachelor’s
degree in Pre-School Education. She is also working on a degree in journalism at the same time.
These degrees are two promises Linda made to herself when she was unable to attend school to
become a teacher earlier in her education. When her father left her family to live in the United
States, Linda’s mother needed to provide for her five brothers and sisters. Linda became
educated in marketing because it was financially a better choice at that time, however she knew
she still wanted to be a teacher. Linda was given the opportunity to work with children at the
school for the Deaf twelve years ago. She was honored and touched by the faith they had in her
when they handed her cash money to enroll in a sign language class at the local university. The
school director and consultant did not know her, they had just met her, but the trusted her and
gave her the money. Linda has never forgotten this act of kindness and has grown to admire the
Deaf community through her experiences at the school for the Deaf. Linda feels she has given
all that she has as teacher, but she wants to give more which is why she wants to continue to
grow and learn.

**Sandy**

**Background and school experiences.** Sandy is a married thirty-three year old woman
with a nine-year-old son. She was born Deaf in south central Honduras. Sandy’s Deafness is a
result of a genetic disorder. She began the interview very eager to discuss her educational
experiences as a child. Her parents enrolled her in an “integrated” school with hearing students.
Sandy was one of three Deaf students, the rest of the students, approximately fifty-one others
were all hearing. Sandy described her time in the classroom as the teachers “Talking, talking, talking” and she and the others students would “Write and write.” Nobody would explain any of the lessons to her and the other Deaf students and they would fail their courses. She found school very frustrating. Eventually her parents and the parents of the other two Deaf students hired tutors to help teach them in the afternoon separately. Sandy described this experience as very exhausting. The tutors changed frequently adding to the confusion. Sandy accepted that she did not understand anything. She felt her mind becoming “closed and blocked” when it came to her education.

When Sandy was almost twelve years old, a Deaf man, Harry (pseudonym) came to Honduras from Arkansas. Harry was part of a large church mission group. Years earlier Harry and his wife adopted a child from Honduras and they felt a strong bond to the country. He began working with Sandy and the other two Deaf students every day. Harry began by teaching them American Sign Language. Once they had an understanding of sign language he expanded the lessons to include math skills. He taught Sandy how to count using her hands. Harry also explained to Sandy who the members of her family were. She began to understand the connection she had to all of the people she interacted with in her life. Sandy described these moments as the “The block that I had in my mind being hammered off, opening my mind.” Sandy characterizes these moments as life changing for her. She began to love learning. She loved going to the Harry’s classroom. When she returned to the mainstream, hearing classroom she found herself very bored. At this time Sandy’s sister also began learning American Sign Language by going to classes every Saturday. This was another milestone for Sandy; she now had a family member able to communicate with her.

**Feelings about teaching.** Sandy graduated from high school with a certificate in
technology. She began looking for office work at the school for the Deaf, she felt she could learn office skills and be happy working there. The school director asked Sandy if she was interested in teaching. Sandy told her “No, I don’t want to be a teacher. I don’t like teaching children.” Sandy was approached by the school consultant and one of the other teachers at the school, who happened to be Deaf as well, they both asked to her to reconsider teaching at the school for the Deaf. Sandy prayed for guidance to help her decide what to do. After asking for guidance she decided to try teaching. Sandy’s first teaching assignment was with the pre-school children. These children touched her heart and she wanted to help them. After struggling to decide if she should teach, Sandy has now worked at the school for the Deaf for a total of ten years.

**Working at the school for the Deaf.** Sandy was not initially drawn to teaching or working with the Deaf, however after being pursued by the school director, school consultant and fellow teacher, she is ultimately happy she decided to work there. When Sandy began working at the school she was an assistant in the preschool classroom. She knew she was missing many of the skills necessary to be a teacher and had a lot to learn. As other teachers left the school she was switched to different grades and classrooms. Throughout these transitions it was necessary for Sandy to ask for help from her co-workers to understand how to teach all the different subjects. Sandy always felt as if she were missing something, she explained it took several years before she finally felt comfortable teaching on her own in the classroom. Sandy shared an experience regarding a former student. When she saw the student, he ran and embraced her. He started crying and told her it was an honor to have had her as a teacher. He told her he has not forgotten her and he keeps her in his heart. Moments like these are important to Sandy as they reinforce her decision to be a role model for the Deaf by being a teacher and completing college. She
believes it is important to set a good example.

**Teaching and teacher training experiences.** Sandy taught at the school for the Deaf for six years before formally attending the university and earning her Bachelor’s degree. When she started at the school for the Deaf all of her training and experience happened directly at the school. She began by participating in the courses offered in a partnership program through Baylor University. Sandy continued to find her colleagues to be the most helpful in preparing her to teach.

When Sandy was twenty-nine years old she saw a notice in the newspaper announcing that the local university was offering a basic education degree. She and two other Deaf teachers applied to the program at the university. Sandy wanted to earn her Bachelor’s degree, but she also wanted to be an example for other Deaf individuals and prove that the Deaf can be teachers too. The first time Sandy and the two others applied to the university teaching program they were not accepted. The university explained they could not attend the teacher-training program because they were Deaf. Sandy and her two colleagues fought the university and on their third attempt to be enrolled they were accepted into the education program on a trial basis. Sandy embraced the challenge of attending college, and did well. Despite their motivation and hard work, attending university was not without it’s challenges. The university did not provide the three Deaf students with a sign language interpreter. They had to pay someone on their own. At times the university would hire volunteers to interpret, but they were not professionals. When individuals volunteered the three students would buy them food. Eventually they found a helpful interpreter who actually knew sign language. After four years, the university finally provided a skilled interpreter. As a result of the commitment of Sandy and her friends the university now accepts Deaf individuals into their programs. The university also has three interpreters working
for them. Sandy believes this is the price they paid to “be the model, to be the example, to be the pioneers.” Sandy and her two classmates were the first Deaf people in Honduras to earn their Bachelor’s degrees; they graduated in December 2015.

Sandy found a few of the teaching classes helpful. There were concepts that were familiar to her that she had learned from her colleagues at the school for the Deaf. This familiarity helped her confirm some of her methodology as being correct. Ultimately, all of the classes focused on teaching hearing students. There was never any discussion about Deafness. Some of the subject matter was not useful at all. Sandy found it difficult to research and write about things she did not understand. “I didn’t think it was something I could use at the school. I just did it because I had to do it.”

While attending university, Sandy discovered classes focusing on background information, such as the social sciences class very interesting. One example she shared was, a discussion highlighting the history of former Central American president Francisco Morazan. It was during these classes that Sandy became aware of how much background knowledge and information she had missed during her own education. “All those things in history that I didn’t know, that somehow I was teaching wrong, things about Honduran history. I have to learn these things myself so I can teach the children, before this I taught superficially.”

Sandy appreciated that the process of attending the university was a learning experience for her as well as the university. She is pleased the university was able to see that Deaf people can learn and become teachers. Sandy also accepted that she had made mistakes as a teacher and she needs to make changes as an educator. She found the experience at the university satisfying both as a teacher and as a student. She is also proud that she has opened the door for other Deaf adults to attend university and study to become teachers.
**Finding and feeling support.** When Sandy decided to go to college her father was very encouraging. He told her “You can do it!” He supported her “One hundred percent” and her family was proud of her, but it was her father who backed her the most. While Sandy’s mother was encouraging, Sandy did not feel her mother was as convinced she would be able to complete college. She never felt her mother understood what she was capable of as a Deaf person.

Sandy’s in-laws were also very supportive of her going to the university. On the contrary Sandy was surprised at how little support she received from her Deaf friends outside of school.

Sandy’s father assisted her with some of the finances associated with attending college, however, after she obtained her Associate’s degree her father retired from his job. At this point Sandy’s husband continued to support her as she completed her Bachelor’s degree. Sandy needed to continue working during her program to help with the expenses of day-to-day living. Fortunately, classes were on the weekend allowing Sandy to work during the week and keep her job. She would attend classes from seven in the morning until six in the evening on Saturday and from seven in the morning until eleven in the morning on Sundays.

**Moving forward professionally.** Sandy believes she is a better teacher since completing her Bachelor’s degree, however it also brought to light for her how much she doesn’t know. “As a Deaf person, there are many things I don’t know. For example, science and its themes I would like to do courses and workshops in these areas.” The Spanish language is another area where Sandy feels behind compared to her peers. “I would feel more satisfied and better if I had training in the Spanish area.”

Sandy considered having a colleague or mentor to turn to for advice and support important. She also regarded professional development a necessity to increase the knowledge base of the teachers and to help them develop into “something professional.” Sandy has
participated in a number of workshops focusing on teaching children with disabilities. Unfortunately, Deafness is a disability that is often not recognized at the classes and the techniques presented do not “Fit in with teaching the Deaf or they talk about blindness and other disabilities. In my experience there is not much development with the Deaf.” Sandy reported the workshops are often expensive and far away, requiring two or three days away from school. The school does not always have the means to arrange for a substitute to cover for the students either.

In addition to developing better Spanish skills, Sandy admits that she needs training in planning and lesson preparation. She also would like the school to have more professional development specifically focused on educating the Deaf. “What they need to know or how they learn.” Sandy further explained, for an example, how she and the other teachers have watched their students continue to struggle with reading and vocabulary. Despite ongoing interventions the students remain at the very basic reading level. Developing the skills and techniques to identify and address the individual needs of each child Sandy feels is important. Sandy wants to have this perspective, she feels frustrated when she does not know what to do.

**Summary.** Sandy is a married thirty-three year old mother of a nine-year-old boy born and raised in Honduras. She has been teaching at the school for the Deaf for ten years. Sandy’s educational encounters have been unique in that she was born Deaf and was one of three Deaf students in a public school serving hearing children. Her early school experiences could be considered particularly negative as she described being unable to comprehend anything the teachers presented in class.

Sandy experienced a positive turning point in her education when she met a Deaf missionary worker from the United States. He introduced Sandy and the other Deaf students to
American Sign Language. This was a powerful change for Sandy as she described her mind blossoming for the first time when she made connections with the world around her. After graduating high school, Sandy pursued an office job at a school for the Deaf in south central Honduras. Despite having no initial interest in working with children at all, Sandy conceded to multiple requests from the school to teach for them.

Sandy began to realize that being a Deaf adult working with Deaf children she was able to be a positive role model for the children with whom she worked. She also understood the impact she had on their education and their lives. Once Sandy made the decision to earn her Bachelor’s degree, she and two other Deaf colleagues found it necessary to advocate on behalf of themselves with the university in order to be accepted into the teacher-training program. After applying to the program three times, they were admitted on a trial basis. They also struggled to secure a competent sign language interpreter for their classes. Sandy knows and believes that the challenges she overcame were not in vain. She knows she and her colleagues have been pioneers and through their struggles they have laid the foundation for other Deaf individuals to attend college.

The work Sandy completed while earning her Bachelor’s degree also provided insight into how many gaps she experienced during her own primary school education. This realization motivated Sandy even more to make certain that her students have all they need and deserve throughout their education.

Learning American Sign Language opened a whole new world to Sandy and afforded her the opportunity to access education, however Sandy also knows that she must develop a deeper knowledge base of the Spanish language in order for her to fully comprehend the vast majority of curriculum she wants to share with her student. She has many goals and wants to improve her
teaching, she is even considering returning to school for her Master’s degree.

Juliana

**Background and school experiences.** Juliana is currently thirty-one years old and married with a two-year-old daughter. She was born and raised in south central Honduras. She grew up with her grandparents in a small colony after her parents divorced. Juliana credits her grandparents for her education. She remembers attending public preschool, elementary and high schools. All of her experiences were “Very, very good.” Juliana shared that she always did her homework and was never in any type of trouble. She described herself as having a very “Beautiful scholarly.” After ninth grade Juliana began her training to become a “mentor school teacher.” This training occurred at “Diversity School.” In Honduras Diversity School is the school one attends for tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade to learn a trade. During Juliana’s three years at Diversity School she took regular academic subjects in addition to “special training” towards her teaching certificate. After finishing high school Juliana enrolled at Pedigosho University to study for a Bachelor’s degree in Special Education.

**Feelings about teaching.** While in elementary school, Juliana became inspired to become a teacher. She was in second or third grade, she had a teacher who decorated her classroom in a nice way and she taught beautifully. Juliana decided she wanted to be like her and made the decision to be a teacher at that time.

**Working at the school for the Deaf.** Juliana has been working at the school for the Deaf for eleven years. She applied for a job at the school after listening to a radio advertisement regarding working with Deaf children. Juliana was not certain this was something she was qualified to do. She did not know sign language, but she wanted to “give it a try.” When she initially went to the school, the director informed Juliana that they did not have any openings at
that time. The director did inform her they were offering a training course in “Deaf Application” as part of a partnership with Baylor University. Although it was not a job, Juliana was interested in being trained and her friend offered to pay for the course registration! Shortly after signing up for the course the secretary from the school for the Deaf resigned to attend school full time. Juliana was offered the position as secretary at the school. She accepted the job while still completing her Bachelor’s degree in Special Education and participating in the training with Baylor University. Juliana worked as the secretary for the school for the Deaf for four years. During Juliana’s time as a secretary “The school was growing and growing with more students. They needed a teacher and they got me to work with the preschool.” She began to learn sign language and was moved to teach second grade and eventually third grade. Juliana has been teaching the sixth grade for three years and for the past two years a combined class of fifth and sixth grade.

**Teaching and teacher training experiences.** When Juliana completed Diversity School after twelfth grade she earned a certificate in “Teacher of Elementary Education.” She then began attending university to earn her Bachelor’s degree in Special Education.

Even with her elementary certificate Juliana did not teach before joining the school for the Deaf. When Juliana first began attending university she worked at a coffee company and then changed jobs to work as the school’s secretary. Juliana’s Bachelor’s degree took about five years to complete because she was working full time the entire time she attended school.

Throughout Juliana’s Special Education program there were classes with overarching themes aimed at various disabilities, but “nothing profound, pretty basic.” The classes she felt were the most beneficial were evaluating students with disabilities and how to make adaptations for these students.
Juliana shared that the most helpful training she has received has been through the school for the Deaf. When she began working as the school secretary she would attend the trainings and workshops being offered. She also assisted with a tutoring program for the students. She began developing relationships with the students and “working with them helped me learn more and more and more.” “Working at this school is different than for the hearing and they talk and talk and talk and you stand there and it didn’t help. That practice is not good for us. We use summaries, visual and instruments, more concrete materials.”

Throughout both of Juliana’s formal teacher training programs, she participated in a total of three student teaching assignments. She first completed two month long assignments, one in an urban setting and the second in a rural setting. She also fulfilled a three-month assignment in Costa Rica. Juliana described being supervised once a week by a mentor/supervisor from the university. Her lessons and materials were reviewed and the supervisor provided feedback and support. Juliana found her to be very supportive, she considered her suggestions constructive and believed they helped her to improve and “do better with the work.”

**Finding and feeling support.** Juliana’s grandparents continued to support her throughout her Bachelor’s degree. At the university, students are responsible for all of their own materials and supplies, even during student teaching. Her grandparents assisted her with her food, materials and a place to sleep as well. Her neighbors and friends allowed her to borrow their computers to do her homework.

Juliana shared one of the many positive aspects of the school for the Deaf is the amount of teamwork between the faculty and staff. “We support each other. When someone does not know a sign, we ask the Deaf teachers. We complement each other. We have a very good working environment.”
**Moving forward professionally.** Juliana would like more training specifically focused on educating the Deaf. She is interested in learning about other disabilities as well, but at a much deeper level. She considers all of her training as having been very superficial. She desires an understanding of more “philosophical techniques” that she can use with the children.

Juliana recognizes that ongoing professional development is important, “If we are better prepared, we can provide a better service, a better education. There is more environment in the classroom. There is more trust, confidence as we impact a class.” Juliana has participated in some online training classes, most recently one on teaching Deaf and blind students and students with multiple disabilities. She found this course helpful as she learned new teaching techniques. Juliana is also interested in learning more about evaluating students for other disabilities, such as a disability in reading for example. Juliana has identified that despite having a primary disability with their hearing loss, a number of her students also struggle with reading and other content curriculum areas more than their classmates. She would like to know how to evaluate her students for these disabilities and provide the specialized instruction necessary for them to succeed. She also believes learning techniques to differentiate lessons and instruction is a fundamental necessity as well. Juliana identifies time and distance as the most challenging aspects of attending professional development classes for herself and her colleagues.

Juliana recently pursued training in Sign Language Interpreting and earned her certificate. At the time of her graduation there were only five other interpreters in all of Honduras. Since completing her training, the program she attended has closed. Unfortunately any attempts to have the program reinstated have been a struggle. Juliana is hopeful it will reopen next year allowing for more interpreters for the Deaf to be trained in Honduras.

**Summary.** Juliana is a married thirty-one year old mother of a two-year-old little girl.
She shared with great enthusiasm a very positive educational experience. She has tirelessly attended school since she was in preschool with the encouragement of her family and friends. She spoke often about the ongoing support she has received from them and made it evident without their ongoing assistance and encouragement she may not have achieved all she has. Juliana is very motivated to learn more on behalf of her students. She has identified student evaluation as an area she would like to learn more about in addition to differentiated instruction.

Juliana credits the school for the Deaf with her training for working with Deaf students. Although she successfully earned her Bachelor’s degree in Special Education, Juliana believes her preparation through the university was superficial and did not have a great deal of depth to it. “I like what I do. I like to teach. I like to learn. With these children, most people believe they are just difficult. People are amazed with the work we do. We know it because the parents tell us that they know it is not easy. The work is hard but it is good.”

**Carolina**

**Background and school experiences.** Carolina is a married thirty-two year old mother of a five-year-old daughter. She was raised in south central Honduras as part of a big family. She grew up with her mother and five siblings. Her grandmother, aunts and uncles also lived with them. Her parents divorced when she was young and her father did not live with them.

When Carolina was young she was very interested in attending school. She remembered telling her mother she wanted to go to school when she was five years old. At that time Carolina was living with her father in another city when they moved, it was in the middle of the school year so her parents did not register her. Carolina attended public school beginning in the first grade. She remained in the same school through seventh grade. Her next school was seventh through ninth grade these years were called “Basic Language School.” After completing the
“common cycle” Carolina decided she wanted to study to become a teacher. Carolina’s mother was working in a kindergarten as an assistant and Carolina would often go to help her. “I helped her with the little guys. I was interested in classes and I felt that desire to become a teacher.”

The school that Carolina would need to attend for teacher training was far from her house. In addition to paying for transportation, she would also need to buy all of her supplies and materials. Carolina’s mother was a single parent and it would have been very difficult for her to pay the expenses associated with attending the school. Unfortunately, Carolina’s training would need to wait.

Carolina completed her training in high school and graduated as a secretary. She worked for one year performing clerical work and hated it. “It wasn’t what I wanted to do. I kept in my mind the idea of becoming a teacher.”

**Feelings about teaching.** Carolina knew while helping her mother in her kindergarten class that she wanted to be a teacher. She worked in another kindergarten separate from her mother as an assistant teacher for two years. She was eventually promoted to a head teacher position. Carolina knew she wanted to pursue a degree in education however, in Honduras Carolina’s high school diploma with her secretarial certificate would not be accepted into a university for teacher training. Before Carolina could attend college for a degree in education, she would need to repeat to high school and receive a new high school diploma in “science and letters.”

Carolina describes her first experiences with teaching as difficult. She had moments of frustration when she felt that she was being confronted by herself. “Am I really good for this? Am I doing this right? Do I need to improve myself?” She believes going through these moments were actually something that assisted her in acknowledging that she did not have all of
the preparation that she needed and it was not beneficial for her to stay at the level she was at. Carolina feels the lack of preparation she experienced ultimately forced her to find the alternatives she desired to move forward and grow.

**Working at the school for the Deaf.** Carolina began working at the school for the Deaf in 2006. Prior to her work at the school, Carolina had never had any contact with Deaf people. She remembered watching someone speaking in sign language but never had any interaction with the Deaf person. When Carolina interviewed with the school director she was asked to complete a number of tests to assess how well she could write in addition to evaluations determining how quickly she could learn sign language. Carolina completed the interview feeling encouraged and excited about the possibility of teaching, “this is what I really wanted.” When Carolina was finally offered the job, she met her first Deaf adult, who became a dear friend.

Carolina finds the most satisfying aspect of her work is seeing the children learn. She observes how capable and intelligent they are. “My greatest satisfaction is to see the fruit of my labor reflected in them.” Carolina is committed to learning more regarding methodology. With the limited resources such as technology and materials it is important to work to perfect methodology to “teach a better class for better education.”

**Teaching and teacher training experiences.** Carolina returned to high school and repeated tenth and eleventh grade allowing her to become eligible to apply to college and earn a Bachelor’s degree in education. When Carolina began the Basic Education program she attended classes on Saturdays and Sundays. She had to stop taking classes for a number of years because her daughter was a baby at the time and she did not have anyone to take care of her. In 2015 she returned to university and hopes to graduate in 2019.
During Carolina’s first year at the school for the Deaf the main focus was for her to learn Sign Language. “Here you could have a Bachelor’s Degree in teaching and it is good for nothing, because you need to know Sign Language.” Carolina began working as an assistant teacher for a Deaf teacher. This helped with her acquisition of sign language. “I’m still learning it, but it helped me a lot to be with her.” Carolina also participated in some of the courses offered through the Baylor University partnership program. Carolina believed they learned many things through the program including teaching methodology and language acquisition.

However, when Baylor University came it was a difficult week for everyone with a lot to do and learn. When Baylor came, the student teachers from the university took over their classes. This meant everything including lessons and materials had to be prepared in advance for the week allowing for the teachers from the school for the Deaf to attend the workshops.

Carolina considers her time with the Deaf children the most educational. “I believe that I learned the most from the Deaf children themselves because I feel they are the ones that do know, because of the their own experiences they can understand what they are going through.” Carolina initially worked as an assistant teacher for two teachers. She spent the majority of her time with a Deaf teacher to help her learn sign language. Carolina also learned a lot from the school director, “She was always giving advice, reprimanding me at the same time. She is one of the people I have learned the most from.”

When Carolina first began her formal teacher-training program she did have a short student teaching experience, but it was solely with hearing children. Carolina described the practicum as more like a project. She needed to prepare a lesson about reading stories to the children and present it to the students. The objective was to teach the students good reading habits. Part of the reason they only went to the school two times was a result of the location.
The school was set in a highly dangerous area experiencing ongoing neighborhood conflict; as a result the university stopped sending their student teachers to that school. Once Carolina completes seventy percent of her present course work she will have a formalized student teaching experience lasting up to three months.

**Finding and feeling support.** Carolina’s family is not able to offer her financial support while she attends university. She does feel “morally” supported however by them. “They encourage me with a word.” Attending school and working full time has required a lot of motivation so she appreciates having the encouragement. It is very difficult for Carolina at the moment because in addition to paying for her own classes she pays tuition for her daughter to attend kindergarten at a private school. Although Carolina is married she is the sole provider for her family as her husband is currently unemployed. Carolina describes arriving home from work and studying until after eight o’clock in the evening.

Most of Carolina’s classmates do not know or understand the population of students she works with. When she shares some of her experiences with her students, her classmates say, “Wow, I couldn’t do that.” Carolina finds these responses her personal motivation. “Maybe some other people out there are into their careers much more than me, but they wouldn’t dare do the work that I do.”

At the school for the Deaf, Carolina continues to feel supported. She believes it is important to learn from each other. “It is important to have a mentor, but I think that we all have different abilities, different ideas and we share them one with the other. We learn one from the other.”

**Moving forward professionally.** Carolina considers her “vocation” or calling is to work with the Deaf. As a result she wants to educated herself so that she may offer her students
“more” and “do a better job.” Carolina believes it is important to receive specialized training for working with Deaf children, because working with Deaf and hearing children is not the same. “Their learning is not the same. The methodology is different. I think it is important that we receive some orientation, previous preparations before assuming, taking on a grade.”

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching her students Carolina feels is language acquisition. “In this case it is Spanish. It is a beautiful language. It’s beautiful. It is full of rules, grammar. Grammar is really ample so for them (the Deaf students) it is difficult.” Carolina has determined that she wants to specialize in the area of language acquisition and find alternatives to teaching Deaf students Spanish.

In addition to learning more about language acquisition, Carolina considers mathematics a personal weakness. She would like to learn additional techniques on specifically teaching mathematics. She works with a tutor on mathematics at the university and continually asks him how to teach specific math concepts. He explained the concepts to her and then she finds a way to teach it to her students.

Carolina is concerned about education in Honduras. She knows as a nation Honduras is being left behind. “In some other countries, more developed countries they are implementing new methodology now, whereas, they (methods) will be here in ten, fifteen years. So for teachers, it is a challenge for us. They use technology. It is a challenge. The truth is we live in a world where the children are growing with technology and for us as teachers; we need to use new techniques. I think that is basic.”

Carolina reported as a faculty they have not formally worked together in organized Professional learning Communities. One teacher did try to organize a book group with a focused educational topic. Everyone enjoyed it and the overall experience was positive, but “time always
overwhelms us.” They are rethinking starting the practice again.

**Summary.** Carolina is a married thirty-two year old mother of a five-year-old daughter. She grew up in south central Honduras with a single mother raising her and her five siblings. Carolina knew from an early age she wanted to become a teacher. She enjoyed assisting her mother in her kindergarten classroom.

With Carolina’s mother being the sole provider for her and her siblings it was not financially possible for Carolina to attend the specialized high school program for her to earn her teaching certificate. Carolina graduated high school with a certificate in secretarial skills. Despite her training office work, Carolina continued to want to be a teacher. She worked in an office setting for one year and despised it.

Carolina was fortunate enough to work in a kindergarten class as a teaching assistant for two years before being promoted to head teacher. After her three-year tenure at the kindergarten, Carolina became a teaching assistant at the school Deaf. She knew this is where she wanted to be; she would be doing what she wanted to do. Carolina became intent on earning her Bachelor’s degree in education, however it meant that she would need to repeat high school and establish the appropriate credentials in order for her to apply for college. Through hard work and determination Carolina completed her high school classes and applied to university. She has been taking classes while working full time. She had with a break in between for a couple of years to care for her daughter, but has since returned to school. Carolina is passionate about her work with her Deaf students. She is committed to being the best teacher she can be, however it is her passion for her students that drives her. “I think that to work with Deaf children, knowledge is important. To have a degree is important, but if you don’t feel that love, passion, that giving yourself for the work for them, then you are useless. It is useless to have so much
knowledge if you don’t have all those other elements, if there is no respect.”

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges and perspectives of the Honduran Teacher of the Deaf. Additionally, the purpose is to develop possible solutions for the challenges the teachers face to receive the training and professional development opportunities necessary for them to grow as professionals. Four teachers were interviewed two times in a one-to-one setting at a school for the Deaf in south central Honduras, where the teachers presently work. All of the narrative stories highlight themes, which included a tremendous amount of dedication to children with whom each individual works. All of the teachers also described the exceptional support they felt and continue to feel from each other. Additionally, all of the teachers reiterate how much the school for the Deaf itself has done to train them to the best of their ability. None of the teachers believed they are secure in their capabilities, every one of them wants to continue on with their education and professional developments. Furthermore, all of the teachers desired additional training with a focus on language acquisition and development. They are equally concerned with developing the skills necessary for differentiating instruction. Lastly there is a need for assessment strategies identifying academic learning disabilities, specifically in the area of reading.

The next chapter includes a consideration of these findings in addition to the areas of need identified by the teachers themselves. These conclusions will be examined in conjunction with the theoretical framework and the literature supporting the identified areas of concern.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings and Implications for Practice

Introduction

Honduras as a nation continues to be plagued by a multitude of ongoing challenges. As the third poorest country in Central America, with one of the worst educational systems and highest illiteracy rates, Honduras appears to be incapacitated by these prevalent burdens. The Ministry of Education in Honduras continues to encounter ongoing difficulties meeting the basic needs of its students and the chronic frustrations faced by its teachers. In a nation with limited resources, there never appears to be enough to meet the basic appeals and obligations of its people.

The purpose of the qualitative narrative study was to speak directly with individuals personally affected by these hardships and struggles. Teachers from a private school for the Deaf located in Honduras were interviewed to develop a deeper understanding, awareness and appreciation of their specific lived experiences. The details obtained through face-to-face interviews were significant in establishing an appreciation of the challenges the educators endured while training to become Teachers of the Deaf. The information gleaned from the study is essential in identifying the supports that are necessary for the teachers to grow as professionals. The following questions were utilized to frame the context of the research:

1. What are the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf, both formal and informal as they were prepared to teach?

2. How do Honduran teachers of the Deaf make sense of these experiences as they relate to their professional practices as a teacher today?
3. What professional development opportunities and ongoing training do Honduran teachers of the Deaf believe to be beneficial for themselves and their colleagues moving forward?

Limitations of the Study

Throughout the investigation, the student researcher tried to understand the intensity and magnitude of challenges experienced on a daily basis by the teachers being interviewed. As an individual from a developed nation it can be difficult to understand how the circumstances surrounding the teachers and their fellow citizens can each impact every aspect of their lives. Obstacles surround what people in developed nations consider simple tasks such as obtaining the basic needs of living: water, food, shelter and clothing. Securing a job to pay for necessary living expenses can be an arduous task, paired with the challenge of finding transportation to a job once one is secured. In Honduras poverty, violence and corruption are routine aspects of daily living. Listening to their experiences and making an effort to understand how an individual can accept constant obstacles, led to additional questions when analyzing the interview transcripts.

The participants expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to share their stories. They were touched and honored that someone had taken an interest and valued their work and their lives. Initially a few of the teachers were brief with their responses, which in effect may create some limitation in the study. During the second interview the teachers appeared more comfortable and eager to share their lived experiences, affording a deeper appreciation for what they have been through.

The limitations of only having four participants pose questions to whether or not their experiences are an accurate representation of the larger community of teachers in Honduras, including Teachers of the Deaf, which itself is a very specific population. Having a longer
study, perhaps over a year, or more participants in the study might allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of the teachers of Honduras.

**Overview and Discussion of Findings**

**Background and School Experiences were Similar**

The teacher participants in the study presented with similar familial and early educational backgrounds and experiences. All four of the teachers were born and raised in south central Honduras. Two of the teachers were raised as part of larger families with five siblings and three of the teachers came from families where their parents were divorced. Two of the teachers were raised by their mothers and one was raised by her grandparents. Three of the teachers are currently married and they each have one child. One of the teachers is not married and does not have any children. All of the teachers had completed high school, through the public education system. Educational experiences were varied in that two teachers had essentially positive school experiences, one teacher had a varied educational history and the fourth teacher, who was Deaf, had the most difficult educational experiences out of all the participants.

Juliana and Carolina both had positive school experiences. They separately shared they were motivated to attend school and enjoyed the learning process. The also knew from a very early age that they wanted to become teachers. Linda’s school experience was mixed in that she had some difficult years, especially during sixth grade. Her feelings towards school changed in the seventh grade with the development of a cohort of friends and a new focus on activities and what she was learning. Sandy shared a very different story pertaining to her education. Being one of only three Deaf individuals in a hearing public school presented with significant frustrations. Sandy recounted a very difficult experience of isolation and confusion. All of her
classes were in the mainstream with teachers and students who were hearing. Throughout the duration of her education there was no direct instruction using sign language and no special education or specially designed lessons to guide her.

It is not uncommon for Deaf students to be mainstreamed with hearing peers and be expected to communicate through lip-reading and speech. Parents often hesitate to teach their Deaf children sign language fearing that it will somehow impact their ability to learn how to speak when current research indicates have a foundational language such as sign language can actually help a Deaf child to learn how to speak. Research also indicates, “children exposed to rich natural sign language models from birth acquire language as readily and completely as hearing children in similarly supportive spoken language environments” (Marschark, 2010).

Despite ongoing debates pertaining to the diverse philosophies and practices for teaching language to Deaf and hard of hearing children; there is no present analysis indicating that any one technique of teaching is superior to the other by providing a “level the playing field” for Deaf students by allowing them to be in alignment with their hearing peers.

**Feelings about Teaching Varied**

Linda and Carolina knew from a very young age they wanted to be teachers. Linda had family members in the field of education and she wanted to follow in their paths by becoming a teacher and a journalist. Both had experiences at an early age working with children, either by helping in someone’s classroom or through work as religious education teachers through their churches. Juliana was not inspired to pursue teaching until later in elementary school. Sandy confessed she had absolutely no interest in teaching at all. When the director of the school for the Deaf approached her to consider teaching she told her “I don’t like teaching children.” After Sandy conceded and began working with preschool children at the school for the Deaf, she felt
the children “touched her heart.” Sandy has now been a teacher for ten years.

Working at the School for the Deaf

With the exception of Sandy, who is Deaf, none of the teachers had any experiences with the Deaf or teaching the Deaf. Juliana and Linda both responded to advertisements soliciting applicants for positions at the school. Carolina was interviewed for a position at the school and was evaluated to determine her skill-set for learning sign language. Juliana, Linda and Carolina had never met a Deaf person prior to working at the school. Each teacher was willing to try working with a new student population and were all committed to participating in the training fundamental to securing a job at the school.

Teaching and Teacher Training Experiences

All four of the teachers interviewed never participated in any formal training to serve as a teacher of the Deaf until they began working at the school for the Deaf. Only one of the teachers, Juliana, had explicit training as a general education teacher through her high school certificate. Once she started working as a secretary at the school for the Deaf she began her bachelor’s program in education. The three other teachers had no direct teacher training in any way at all even in the field of special education. Two of the teachers, Linda and Carolina had a considerable interest in education, however they were unable to pursue high school certificates in education due to financial limitations. Sandy began teaching with a certificate in technology and never had any intentions of becoming an educator until she began teaching.

Each of the teachers recognized that the school for the Deaf played a significant role in the development of their fundamental skills as teachers of the Deaf. They all credit the school for inspiring their desire to pursue their degrees and certifications as educators. This inspiration and realization is important as recent research indicates the Deaf students taught by experienced
and trained teachers of the Deaf can learn as much as their hearing peers (Marschark, 2011). All of the teachers shared stories of commitment and sacrifice pertaining to how they have achieved their degree, or are presently completing their bachelor’s degree. Stories included repetition of high school courses, working full time while attending school and receiving support and encouragement from family and friends. As a Deaf adult, Sandy realizes now that she is a role model to many Deaf adults, but more importantly to her Deaf students. She has demonstrated to them what could be accomplished through perseverance, hard work and dedication.

**Finding and Feeling Support**

While discussing how supported the teachers have felt through their experiences, without exception every teacher had a significant support system in place. Each teacher relied a considerable amount on, not just their family for support, but friends and colleagues as well. One anomaly was with Sandy regarding encouragement from her Deaf friends. Sandy explained that she didn’t necessarily feel validation from her friends in the Deaf community at all; in fact she was very surprised at how little support she felt.

All of the teachers received assistance in some form from their immediate family members. Some of the teachers received a small amount of financial aid from their families, however despite financial help it was essential for all of the teachers to continue working full time to pay for school and living expenses. For three of the teachers additional support meant help with watching their small children. One of the teachers needed to put her bachelor’s degree on hold for a couple of years because she was unable to find someone to watch over her daughter when she was an infant.

All four teachers reported collegial support at the school for the Deaf. New staff members are paired with experienced teachers, hearing teachers are paired with Deaf adults and
new Deaf employees are paired with hearing teachers. The philosophy is one of mutual assistance and benefit with a belief that each individual can learn from one another. Juliana shared, “We support each other. When someone does not know a sign, we ask Deaf teachers. We complement each other. We have a very good working environment.” This mutual engagement and support is in alignment with development of communities of practice as it creates relationships among the teachers, “connecting them in ways that can become deeper than relationships based merely on superficial similarities” (Brekelman, 2011).

Moving Forward Professionally

Professional growth and development is a goal shared by all of the teachers. Linda is working tirelessly to complete her bachelor’s degree and is committed to continuing her work as a teacher of the Deaf. Sandy is inspired to possibly pursue her master’s degree. Juliana recently completed a program to become a certified sign language interpreter. She was grateful to have the opportunity to work on a skill out of her “comfort zone” and now feels more confident with her sign language skills. She wants to continue working on her skills in “voicing signs” for the Deaf. Juliana has also expressed a strong interest in assessments for Deaf students. She acknowledged that she sees differences in the students with whom she works and their ability levels. The gaps she has observed surpass the typical range in a classroom, but are suggestive of student’s having specific learning disabilities in conjunction with their hearing loss. The other teachers echoed this concern of multiple factors affecting the academic process of students as well. Carolina expressed a concern shared by Linda and Juliana as well, which is to continue to improve on her sign language skills. She believes that having a solid foundation of the language will allow her to communicate concepts more clearly, allowing for her students to learn better. Carolina believed it is important for her to continually improve her skills to be a better teacher.
She did assert that despite all of the training “in the world” without a passion for teaching the children all of the work is inconsequential, worthless.

**Discussion of the Findings in Relation to the Literature**

Recent positive trends in Honduras stand out remarkably for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as well as for the teachers of the Deaf. Statistics shared from the Honduran government indicated that 76 percent of individuals with total hearing loss are illiterate. As a result there is a significant limitation and access to information in the Honduran community for the Deaf and hard of hearing (Williams, 2010). In May 2014 legislation was created and implemented in Honduras recognizing LESHO, Honduran Sign Language, as a structured linguistic system. This recognition is essential for the Deaf community to have enhanced access to information, permitting better inclusion in society. These developments allow for access to “rights and fundamental liberties” with improved communication and accessible information (Williams, 2010).

Recent studies indicated that on-the-job training gained through experience does have positive effects on the ability of teachers to promote student achievement. The largest gains in student achievement appeared in those students working with teachers with the most experience (Feng and Sass, 2013). While the Honduran teachers of the Deaf in this study rely solely on training specifically related to Deaf education through their school, research does support the benefits of “on-the-job” training. The indication that experience gained though work may serve as a substitute for pre-service training in special education (Feng and Sass, 2013) further supports the ongoing work and collaboration the Honduran teachers of the Deaf are doing at their school on behalf of their students and development of their personal teaching skills.
Discussion of the Findings in Relation to the Theoretical Framework

It is often assumed that learning has a beginning and an end; that it is best separated by all other activities; and that is the result of teaching. “Learning takes place through our participation in multiple social practices, practices which are formed through pursuing any kind of enterprise over time” (Wenger, 2016, p. 140). Communities of practices are best described as a group of individuals who have come together with a prevailing objective, interest, challenge or other similar enterprise. This group of individuals, or community, collectively engage in a collective dedication of an identified topic or vocation in which they are entirely committed to sharing, growing and learning from one another how to improve in their identified passion. Communities of practice can be informal and loosely based on a group of individuals who possess a shared interest or hobby, or they can be an established, formal and highly organized community based on a specific vocation or profession.

Communities of practice by definition have three characteristics: the domain, as the identified prevailing area or topic of interest; the community, is made up of the individuals or members participating in the dialogue and related activities while simultaneously building relationships allowing one another to grow and learn; lastly, the practice, is the common, mutually developed practices, information, techniques and methods for approaching obstacles or challenges associated with the identified domain.

Communities of practice are essentially being implemented at school for the Deaf in south central Honduras as evidenced by the implementation of the three characteristics of a community of practice. The teachers interviewed all share an established domain with a mutual passion for educating and working with Deaf children. The teachers themselves classify as
community of practitioners working together on behalf of their students. Lastly, the teachers have conscientiously worked in conjunction with one another to develop and implement best practices for the students with whom they work, at times with insufficient resources.

The interactions involved, and the ability to undertake larger or more complex activities and projects through cooperation, bind people together and help facilitate relationships and trust (Smith, 2009, p.7). Throughout the research and interview process the four teachers of the Deaf continually referred to their fellow teachers as a resource and support system. Every teacher discussed on multiple occasions having confidence in their colleagues as a means for information, advice and problem solving.

Communities of practice can occur naturally or can be set up purposefully. Over the years the school for the Deaf in south central Honduras has become an expert in the field of Deaf education, mainly out of necessity. As a result, a community of practice has formed, initially as an internal group, a team of teachers working collaboratively to teach a cohort of Deaf students. Over the past fifteen years the community has grown, expanding beyond the walls of the school as other teachers of the Deaf in Honduras turn to this group of teachers for guidance and support as they work with their Deaf students in other parts of the nation. The school and its teachers have become a resource for other teachers and parents by providing the knowledge, assistance and understanding as these individuals seek to know how to best help the Deaf individuals in their lives.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Teacher Preparation and Development is Critical

The research participants openly discussed their experiences working at the school for the Deaf in Honduras and their backgrounds pertaining to when they trained to become a Teacher of
the Deaf. Not all of the teachers had received formal training to become general education or special education teachers. In addition to inadequate training opportunities, there are presently no formal training programs or certifications offered in Honduras to become a Teacher of the Deaf. Although there was an association with Baylor University in the United States, the length of the partnership was limited and did not, in the opinion of the participants, satisfy the level of training they believe they require as a faculty.

Training and developing skilled teachers of the Deaf is a challenge also in the United States. Individuals wishing to pursue a career as a teacher of the Deaf utilizing American Sign Language, for example, make a commitment to master a foreign language. It can take up to seven years as an adult learner to become proficient in a foreign language (Goodman, 2006). Once these skills are mastered, the individual must then acquire the knowledge to implement their language skills in conjunction with the plethora of techniques needed in the classroom setting. Goodman, 2006 found the following:

Little is known about how pre-service teachers of the Deaf are being prepared to meet the manual linguistic needs of their future employment. More information about current practice is needed before the field of Deaf education can move forward to enhance the performance of the teachers. (p.6)

As educators it is our responsibility to work to develop and improve educational opportunities and services on their behalf. Through the cultivation of improved educational experiences students will develop a stronger set of skills increasing their opportunities for independence, resulting in an enhanced quality of life, which in turn raises their ability to contribute to their communities. This objective is not exclusively related to Honduras, but rather may be a global objective. As Marschark & Spencer, 2010 point out “Even though Deaf and
hard of hearing children make up only a small proportion of the world’s children, their actual number is both impressive and compelling given the challenges they face”. We must provide effective training programs to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children.

**Partnership Programs are a Way to Help Grow**

A number of teacher training programs in the United States develop partnerships with colleges and universities resulting in a mutually beneficial affiliation. The school for the Deaf actually began a similar collaboration in the past with a university in the United States but, unfortunately, for unknown reasons the partnership did not continue. Despite the additional work associated with preparing for the visiting student teachers when they assumed their classroom responsibilities, the Honduran teachers believed the classes and workshops were relevant. While implementing such a partnership may take time and effort to establish once again, it is worth revisiting such a relationship. Presently, no universities in Honduras offer degrees, certification or classes related to Deaf education, as a result an initial measure would be identifying a university in another country offering a certification or degree program in Deaf education.

Initially it may be ambitious to have a university establish an entire satellite program in Honduras, however an initiative could begin through supporting the training and education of the current school director or one of the teachers at the school for the Deaf in Honduras. The intention moving forward would be for this individual to return to their school and share their new knowledge with their colleagues. With a collaboration such as this, newly trained individuals would be directly contributing to the training and professional development of their fellow teachers.
**Professional Learning Communities Through Lesson Study**

The teachers participating in this study identified very specific areas they wish to have additional training and knowledge in. These areas include, but are not limited to: differentiated instruction, language acquisition and development, assessments/tools to identify learning disabilities, specifically in reading, sign language classes and content curriculum areas such as social studies and science. Some of these topics such as sign language can be addressed through professional development opportunities and workshops led by their own colleagues. An example of this would be having the Deaf faculty lead workshops in sign language with the hearing teachers. Through the interview process the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at the school for the Deaf was discussed. It appeared that informal PLCs might have been attempted at one time through book groups. “Because schools have been unable to articulate the results they seek, they have become susceptible to the constant cycle of initiating and then abandoning innovative fads” (DuFour, 2008. p. 65). New initiatives historically take a significant amount of time and effort; it could be beneficial for the teachers to select a specific area they want to learn about as a group. Once the topic is selected the group can dedicate a portion of the school year or even the entire school year learning about the chosen topic through discussion and collaboration. The existing schedule at the school for the Deaf includes a half day every Friday for the students. This time is generally utilized for teacher planning and preparation. It would not be prudent to eliminate every Friday afternoon to implement mandatory professional development, however perhaps once a month ninety minutes could be dedicated to reviewing, sharing and discussing the selected topic.

Doig & Groves, 2011 indicate, “Professional development is driven by the need to both extend and renew teacher practice, skills and beliefs. However, the underlying endeavor is to
improve outcomes for students, whether they are focused on understandings, skills, attitudes or engagement” (p. 78). Communities of Inquiry through Lesson Study are becoming increasingly popular in the west as a form of professional development. A lesson study approach to professional development may have relevance for the teachers of the school for the Deaf. Lesson Study began as an initiative in Japan with teachers researching their own practices in school-based communities of inquiry. Teachers with a common focus meet and develop lesson together. These lessons are known as “research lessons.” The “research lessons” are presented and taught to the student body by one teacher and are observed by all of the teachers who helped to plan and design the lesson. In Japan, teachers from all over the country will travel to observe research lessons. After the lesson is taught the group of teachers gather to discuss and modify the lesson as necessary. Feedback is implemented from all of the observers including a veteran teacher usually invited to be part of the group. “Research lessons are not about perfecting one lesson, but rather focus on developing teachers’ ideas and experiences of different approaches to teaching. Research lessons require participants and observers to think quite profoundly about specific and general aspects of teaching” (Doig & Groves, 2011, p. 86). This practice could also be implemented utilizing videotaping if teachers are unable to observe a lesson at a predetermined time.

Networking with Global Partners

A number of the teachers at the school for the Deaf have generated relationships with teachers from other schools in their area. It may be beneficial to establish a network with the local private or public schools with positive reputations. Through this relationship have the teachers of the Deaf participate in professional development workshops pertaining to content area or curriculum topics such as math, science, Spanish and social sciences. Attending these
workshops will assist in developing a greater depth and knowledge base for content curriculum areas. In return the teachers and school for the Deaf can hold workshops on sign language and some of the strategies they have learned through working with Deaf students that may be beneficial to all student populations.

Establishing an alliance with international and global networks and societies working on behalf of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals may avail the school to additional resources and services for their students, teachers and families. Gallaudet University, located in Washington, D.C. in the United States is one of the few universities in the world specifically for Deaf and hard of hearing students. Developing a relationship with university could assist in the promotion of networking with additional agencies. The International Hearing Society, located in the United States assists in the fitting and provision of hearing aids for Deaf individuals, The House Research Institute located in Los Angeles, California is devoted to advancement in the field of “hearing science” through research in the areas of education, global hearing health and improving the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing. The World Recreation Association of the Deaf, Inc. (WRAD) is located in Quartz Hill, California is an organization functioning under the guidelines of the United Nations. The World Recreation Association of the Deaf strives to create opportunities for the Deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) to be included in their communities in addition to supporting research and use of new technology for the Deaf and HOH. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), was first established in Rome, Italy. The organization is a non-governmental agency working alongside the United Nations and their guidelines, promoting human rights for the Deaf and HOH across the world. One priority of the WFD is to assist Deaf and HOH in developing countries where authorities are seldom aware of their needs. Deaf Child Worldwide is based out of the United Kingdom. The organization strives to strengthen local
organizations and improve the services the government provides for their country’s Deaf and HOH individuals.

**Implications for Future Study**

This study resulted in an increased understanding, and an appreciation of the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf. The interview process allowed the teachers to share their stories including their challenges, successes, hopes and dreams. Having the opportunity to sit and have dialogue with these individuals was a privilege for this researcher.

Additional studies related to the role of the Deaf individual, both child and adult in the family and community are warranted. One aspect to consider is the function of communication with the Deaf within the family structure. LESH, Honduran sign language has only newly been recognized as a language in Honduras. As a result, many individuals outside of the Deaf community never knew, or ventured to learn sign language. One of the teachers shared that only one member of her family, her sister, attempted to learn sign language to communicate with her. Having an extensive perception of how families included or excluded their Deaf family members could result in improved relationships and opportunities for the Deaf individuals within their family structure and community.

Another area of study related to the role of Deaf individuals within their family system could include, developing an increased understanding of the process of diagnosing Deafness in a child. The diagnosis process itself can be an overwhelming and traumatizing experience for parents and the family. Many questions emerge and parents are often unaware of the basic next steps they should be taking on behalf of their child. As a developing nation, Honduras continues to be burdened by limited resources for the average citizen. It would be beneficial to determine how parents are guided through the diagnostic process and where they are directed to understand
how to best help their child. Are there opportunities for early-intervention? When a child is diagnosed as being Deaf, what types of strategies for working with their child are recommended? Are community supports available? If so, what are they and how are they funded?

Unfortunately, resources and supports may not be available or implemented, however a study would be required to make this determination and make further recommendations for these Deaf children.

Another area of concern brought to the forefront during the interview process included assessing Deaf students for specific learning disabilities. Assessment for specific learning disabilities in the areas of reading, reading comprehension, written language and mathematics in Deaf children can be a challenging, yet necessary task. This study could be conducted in the United States in addition to Honduras, as very little information on this topic is currently available. When a hearing student is evaluated for a specific learning disability in the area of basic reading skills one of the first assessments focuses on phonemic awareness and how the student perceives the sounds letters make. If a Deaf student is unable to hear or perceive the sound a letter makes, how does one assess their understanding of phonemic awareness? The Honduran teachers of the Deaf have skillfully determined that reading and reading comprehension are areas in which their students continue to have difficulty with. Historically, Deaf students lag grade levels behind their hearing peers in the areas of basic reading skills and reading comprehension. Perhaps these academic areas and skills could be studied in an effort to establish a thorough understanding of how the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) learn to read and write. Assessments then could be developed to identify specific areas of weakness and achievement. With this information, improved identification of specific gaps in a student’s skill
set and areas of vulnerability could lead to direct specially designed instruction for Deaf students.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand and make sense of the lived experiences of the Honduran teachers of the Deaf throughout their early education and after they began teaching, in addition to understanding their experiences after they engaged in formal teacher training programs. Additionally, the function of this study was to identify, based on the teacher's personal reflections, areas they believed they require additional instruction and professional development in. The analysis of the teacher interviews indicated the teachers realized that educator training and preparation is an important and necessary element to their professional repertoire of skills as teachers. The personal, educational and life experiences growing up have impacted the participants as they prepared to become teachers, either related to financial circumstances, support systems or their educational histories. The teachers also reflected on how they can and will influence the lives of the students they teach. Having the realization of the impact they have on their student’s futures appears to further motivate their desire to continually improve on their practice as teachers.

The findings of the study indicated a prevailing theme of desire for professional development and opportunities to grow as teachers. The teachers identified the need to improve their sign language skills, and consequently the Deaf teacher identified a need to improve her Spanish skills. All of the teachers conveyed the lack of understanding for differentiating their instruction to meet the individual requirements of the students, especially in the areas of language development and reading. Lastly, the teachers indicated a desire to develop a knowledge base pertaining to specific learning disabilities in the areas of reading and reading
comprehension as it is known that the average student who is deaf graduates from high school reading at a fourth or fifth grade reading level. The teachers relayed a strong interest in developing an understanding of assessment practices and how to identify and diagnose learning disabilities in Deaf children. It is evident that this is a necessary skill.

If we truly want Deaf students to succeed, we must confront environmental and methodological barriers to education and foster appropriate educational assessment. Teaching is a challenge in general, and far more so with students who are deaf. The teachers at the school for the Deaf in south central Honduras have not experienced the same level of training or preparation as teachers in developed nations such as the United States. It was compelling to witness, that despite not having a degree specific to their vocation, they have collectively identified related areas of concern throughout their individual interviews.

The students at the school for the Deaf are fortunate to have a dedicated faculty of educators striving to perform their best on their behalf. Working with the Deaf requires a unique way of teaching, one in which the barriers are broken down. The teachers of Honduras diligently work challenging the barriers their students encounter on a daily basis. They have demonstrated and proven repeatedly that they are more than willing to put in the effort required to make the appropriate and prescribed fundamental changes. They simply need to have the opportunities and the resources to do so. In Honduras, the Ministry of Education continues to be overwhelmed addressing the daily endeavors of an educational organization. Despite the ongoing struggles it is imperative that the needs of the Deaf and HOH are not forgotten in the midst of other pressing matters being addressed by the ministry. During this time of growth and change therein lies the opportunity to promote the potential for progression in areas of academic, social and economical
development, consequently resulting in an improvement of overall quality of life for the Deaf and HOH population of Honduras.
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Appendix A

Permission to Conduct Research

April 2016

Dear Ms. ___________________

My name is Jill Druhan-Albanese and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing to ask for access to your school in order to conduct a research study. The following information is provided so you may decide if you agree to grant me access for my study.

I am interested in interviewing four Teachers of the Deaf from your school. I have a strong research interest in the life experiences and teacher training experiences of Honduran Teachers of the Deaf. I am presently working on my dissertation and I am very interested in interviewing four teachers from your school. The interviews will be related to their life experiences in education in addition to their experiences as they trained to become Teachers of the Deaf. Throughout the interview I will collect basic background information, I will ask questions that focus on their personal educational experiences and the experiences they had while training to become a Teacher of the Deaf. I will also ask them about how prepared they felt as a teacher and what they believe they need to continue to grow as educators. Each teacher will participate in two face-to-face interviews and each interview should last between 30 and 45 minutes. A third interview will consist of the teachers reviewing their transcribed interviews and verification of their responses. All responses will be kept confidentially and all identifying information, including the name of the school will never be published. All interviews will be conducted under stringent university protocols, which give the interviewees the right to remain confidential and if they wish to do so, they may withdraw from the interview process and study at any time.

In order to obtain participant, a “Call for Participants” will be distributed to all of the teachers in written form. I will request that individuals who are interested in participating return the “Call for Participants” for to you in a sealed envelop. I will ask that you hold these envelopes for me to pick up. If there are more than four interested participants I will need to randomly select four from the group of volunteers.

The is little foreseeable risk or discomfort for the individuals choosing to participate, nor is there foreseeable benefit to those choosing to participate other than the results of research and associated recommendations will be shared with you and your teachers in hope that the information will be beneficial in establishing strategies for teachers to participate in professional development and training opportunities. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym to protect
their identity throughout the interview and reporting process in the final written document. Your school will not be named at all throughout the study or in the final written document. The recorded interviews will be stored on my personal computer and password protected. I will maintain full confidentiality. The data collected from the interviews will be destroyed in accordance with university policy after three years.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time. The teachers agreeing to participate will be asked to sign a consent waiver. They will be given a 565.90 Honduran Lempira ($25 USD) gift card to a local store as soon as the final interview is complete.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at Albanese.j@husky.neu.edu or the principal researcher, Dr. Carol Young who is my doctoral study advisor. She can be reached at 508-587-2834 or at e.young@neu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights in this research you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Telephone number: 617-373-4588, email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call Ms. Regina anonymously if you wish.

If you agree to grant me access to your school, please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

_______________________________________  _______________________________________
Signature of Administrator/School Director  Signature of Student Researcher

____________________________________________________  __________________________________________
Printed Name                                                                                   Printed Name

____________________________________________________  __________________________________________
Date                                                                                              Date
APPENDIX B
Translated Site Access Letter
Autorización Para El Desarrollo De La Investigación

Estimada Directora ________________,
Mi nombre es Jill Druhan-Albanese y soy estudiante del doctorado en la Universidad Noroeste (Northeastern University) en Boston, Massachusetts, Estados Unidos. Le estoy escribiendo para solicitar acceso a su escuela a fin de llevar a cabo un estudio de investigación. La siguiente información es provista para que decida si está de acuerdo concederme el acceso para mi estudio.

Estoy interesada en entrevistar a cuatro maestros(as) de niños sordos de su escuela. Para la investigación, tengo un fuerte interés en las experiencias de vida y en sus vivencias de cómo ellas fueron capacitadas para convertirse en maestras de sordos. A través de la entrevista, recogeré información básica de sus antecedentes, las preguntas se enfocarán en sus experiencias educativas personales, y en las experiencias que han tenido en la capacitación para ser Maestra de Sordos. También les preguntaré sobre cómo se prepararon y se han sentido como docentes y lo que ellas creen que necesitan para continuar creciendo como educadoras. Cada maestra participará en dos entrevistas cara a cara y cada sesión para entrevistar podría durar de 30 a 45 minutos. Una tercera sesión consistirá en la revisión de los datos escritos recogidos en la entrevista y la verificación de sus respuestas. Todas las respuestas se mantendrán confidencialmente al igual que toda la información de identificación, incluyendo el nombre de la escuela, el cual nunca será publicado. Todas las entrevistas serán manejadas bajo rigurosos protocolos universitarios, lo que da a los participantes el derecho de permanecer bajo confidencialidad y si así lo deseen, ellos podrían retirarse del proceso de estudio y entrevistas en cualquier momento.

Con el propósito de conseguir entrevistados un “Llamado de Participación” escrito, será distribuido a todos los maestros. Luego solicitaré a aquellos que estén interesados en participar, que respondan dicho llamado, y se lo entreguen en un sobre sellado a usted. Le solicitaré que pueda guardar esos sobres para mí, hasta que se los pida. Si hubiere más de cuatro interesados en participar, entonces necesitaré seleccionarlos en forma aleatoria de entre el grupo de voluntarios. El margen de riesgo, inconformidad o de beneficio personal para los escogidos es escaso, ya que los resultados van en función de la investigación y las recomendaciones correspondientes que se compartirán con usted y los maestros, con la expectativa que esta información pueda ser de beneficio en el establecimiento de estrategias para que los maestros participen en oportunidades de capacitación y desarrollo profesional. A los participantes se les asignará un pseudónimo para proteger su identidad, tanto en las entrevistas, como en el proceso de reportes y en el documento final. La grabación de las entrevistas será guardada en mi computadora personal con una contraseña protegida. Reitero, el nombre de la escuela no será mencionado en lo absoluto. Mantendré todo en estricta confidencialidad. En seguimiento a las políticas de la universidad, la información recolectada en las entrevistas será destruida luego de tres años.
La participación en esta investigación es completamente de carácter voluntario y los maestros podrán abandonarla en cualquier tiempo que lo consideren. Los profesores que estén de acuerdo en participar, firmarán un documento de compromiso. (Sé que dice renuncia, pero no usamos esto en español, es como un contrasentido para nosotros…) Ellos recibirán una tarjeta de regalo con el equivalente en lempiras a $25 USD, para usarlo en un supermercado local, tan pronto como hayan finalizado completamente las entrevistas.

Si tiene algunas preguntas sobre este estudio, por favor síéntase libre de contactarme a Albanese.j@husky.neu.edu o a la investigadora principal, Doctora Carol Young quien es mi asesora de Estudio en el Doctorado. Puede contactar a ella al 508-587-2834 o a c.young@neu.edu. Si tiene algunas preguntas sobre sus derechos en este estudio, puede contactar a Nan C. Regina, Directora de Protección Humana de Sujetos de Estudios, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Número telefónico: 617-373-4588, correo electrónico: n.regina@neu.edu. Puede llamar a Ms. Regina anónimamente si así lo desea.

Si está de acuerdo en permitirme el acceso a su escuela, por favor firme esta Autorización, dándose por enterada de toda la naturaleza y propósito de estos procedimientos. Una copia de esta forma de consentimiento/ autorización le será dado para sus archivos.

Firma de la Administradora/Directora de la Escuela Firma de la Estudiante Investigadora

Nombre Escrito Nombre Escrito

Fecha Fecha
April 2016

Dear Teachers,

My name is Jill Druhan-Albanese and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing to ask for your assistance in order to conduct a research study. The following information is provided so you may decide if you would like to participate in my research study.

I am interested in interviewing four Teachers of the Deaf from your school. I have a strong research interest in the life experiences and teacher training experiences of Honduran Teachers of the Deaf. I am presently working on my dissertation and I am very interested in interviewing four teachers from your school. The interviews will be related to your life experiences in education in addition to your experiences as you trained to become a Teacher of the Deaf. Throughout the interview I will collect basic background information, I will ask you questions that focus on your personal educational experiences and the experiences you had while training to become a Teacher of the Deaf. I will also ask you about how prepared you felt as a teacher and what you believe you need to continue to grow as an educator. Each teacher will participate in two face-to-face interviews and each interview should last between 30 and 45 minutes. A third interview will consist of you reviewing your transcribed interviews and verifying your responses. All responses will be kept confidentially and all identifying information, including the name of your school will never be published. All interviews will be conducted under stringent university protocols, which give you the right to remain confidential and if you wish to do so, you may withdraw from the interview process and study at any time.

I invite all member of your school to participate. I am interested in interviewing both hearing and Deaf teachers, as well as teachers with a college degree and without a college degree.

The is little foreseeable risk or discomfort for individuals choosing to participate, nor is there foreseeable benefit if you choose to participate other than the results of research and associated recommendations will be shared with you and your colleagues in hope that the information will be beneficial in establishing strategies for you to participate in professional development and training opportunities in the future. As a participant you will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity throughout the interview and reporting process in the final written document. Your name and the name of your school will not be mentioned at all throughout the study or in the final written document. The recorded interviews will be stored on my personal computer and
password protected. I will maintain full confidentiality. The data collected from the interviews will be destroyed in accordance with university policy after three years.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign a consent waiver. You will be given a 565.90 Honduran Lempira ($25 USD) gift card to a local store as soon as the final interview is complete.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at Alabanese.j@husky.neu.edu or the principal researcher, Dr. Carol Young who is my doctoral study advisor. She can be reached at 508-587-2834 or at c.young@neu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights in this research you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Telephone number: 617-373-4588, email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call Ms. Regina anonymously if you wish.

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jill Druhan-Albanese

Please complete the form on the next page and return it to ______________________
Llamado para Participantes- Carta de Alistamiento

Abril de 2016

Estimadas Maestras:

Mi nombre es Jill Druhan-Albanese y soy estudiante del doctorado en la Universidad Noreste (Northeastern University) en Boston, Massachusetts, Estados Unidos. Les estoy escribiendo para solicitar su participación para poder llevar a cabo un estudio de investigación. La siguiente información es provista para que usted pueda decidir si le gustaría participar en mi estudio de investigación.

Estoy interesada en entrevistar a cuatro maestros(as) de niños sordos de la escuela. Para la investigación, tengo un fuerte interés en sus experiencias de vida y en sus vivencias de capacitación como maestras hondureñas de sordos. Actualmente estoy trabajando en mi disertación y por ello estoy muy interesada en consultar a cuatro profesoras. A través de la entrevista, recogeré información básica de sus antecedentes, las preguntas se enfocarán en sus experiencias educativas personales, y en las experiencias que han tenido en la capacitación para ser Maestra de Sordos. También les preguntaré sobre cómo se prepararon y se han sentido como docentes y lo que creen que necesitan para continuar creciendo como educadoras. Cada maestra participará en dos entrevistas cara a cara y cada sesión para entrevistar podría durar de 30 a 45 minutos. Una tercera sesión consistirá en la revisión de los datos escritos recogidos en la entrevista y la verificación de sus respuestas. Todas las respuestas se mantendrán confidencialmente al igual que toda la información de identificación, incluyendo el nombre de la escuela, el cual nunca será publicado. Todas las entrevistas serán manejadas bajo rigurosos protocolos universitarios, lo que le da a usted la seguridad de permanecer bajo confidencialidad y si así lo deseara, usted podría retirarse del proceso de estudio y entrevistas en cualquier momento.

Se invitará a todos los miembros del personal de su escuela a participar y estoy interesada en entrevistar tanto a maestras oyentes como a maestras sordas, bien sean maestras con grado universitario completado o sin grado universitario aún.

El margen de riesgo, inconformidad o de beneficio personal para los participantes escogidos es escaso, ya que los resultados van en función de la investigación y las recomendaciones correspondientes que se compartirán con usted y sus compañeros, con la expectativa que esta
información pueda ser de beneficio en el establecimiento de estrategias y oportunidades de capacitar y desarrollo profesional, en el futuro. Como participante se les asignará un pseudónimo para proteger su identidad, tanto en las entrevistas, como en el proceso de reportes y en el documento final. La grabación de las entrevistas será guardada en mi computadora personal con una contraseña protegida. Reitero, su nombre o el nombre de la escuela no será mencionado en lo absoluto. Mantendré todo en estricta confidencialidad. En seguimiento a las políticas de la universidad, la información recolectada en las entrevistas será destruida luego de tres años. La participación en esta investigación es completamente de carácter voluntario y usted podrá abandonarla en cualquier tiempo que lo considere. Si ustedes están de acuerdo en participar, firmarán un documento de autorización. Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo con el equivalente en lempiras a $25 USD, (L560.00 aproximadamente) para usarlo en un supermercado local, tan pronto como haya finalizado completamente las entrevistas. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio, por favor síntase libre de contactarme a albanese.j@husky.neu.edu o a la investigadora principal, Doctora Carol Young quien es mi asesora de Estudio en el Doctorado. Puede contactar a ella al 508-587-2834 o a c.young@neu.edu. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos en este estudio, puede contactar a Nan C. Regina, Directora de Protección Humana de Sujetos de Estudios, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Número telefónico: 617-373-4588, correo electrónico: n.regina@neu.edu. Puede llamar a Ms. Regina anónimamente si así lo desea. Agradeciendo su tiempo y su atención a lo planteado.

Atentamente.

Jill Druhan-Albanese

Por favor llene la información de la página siguiente y entréguesela a ________________
Estoy interesada en aprender más acerca de este estudio de investigación

Nombre:______________________________________________________

Dirección:____________________________________________________

Contacto (Teléfono o correo):___________________________________

¿El español es su lengua materna? ________________________________

¿Es LESHO (Lengua de Señas Hondureña) su primera lengua? _______________

Por favor de esta hoja a Oneyda Aguilar en un sobre sellado, dirigido a: Jill Druhan-Albanese, a más tardar el día 15 de abril de 2016.

Me pondré en contacto con usted, en caso de ser seleccionada para la investigación.

¡Gracias!

_______________________________________
Nombre

_______________________________________
Firma

_______________________________________
Fecha
Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies  
Jill Druhan-Albanese  

Title: A Narrative Research Study of Teacher Training and Life Experiences of the Honduran Teacher  

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.  

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?  
We are asking you to be in this study because you are a Teacher of the Deaf in Honduras.  

Why is this research study being done?  
The purpose of this study is to develop a greater understanding of the challenges of the Honduran Teacher of the Deaf as identified through their personal life experiences and experiences while being trained to be a teacher. The information gathered will be used to develop an understanding of what these teachers in Honduras and other teachers in similar situations require to move forward as teachers.  

What will I be asked to do?  
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in three interviews. Two interviews will take place in person. You will be asked to answer between twenty-five and thirty questions in total. The questions will focus on your personal educational experiences and the experiences you had while training to become a teacher. The third interview will be a review of the transcribed interviews. You will be asked to review the transcriptions for accuracy.  

You will be provided an interpreter during the interview process to ensure you understand the questions being asked and that the interviewer understands your answers.
You do not need to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering and you are free to stop participating at any time without penalty.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?

Each interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes. All interviews will take place at the school in which you work. You will be interviewed in a private, quiet location. The only other person participating will be the interpreter assisting. The interpreter will sign a confidentiality agreement.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

There are no foreseeable risks or harm in participating. If you do become uncomfortable participating at any time you are free to stop the interview and withdraw without penalty. You are also free to decline answering any specific questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

There are no legal, financial, social or physical risks associated with the study. As you will be discussing personal details related to your life there is a slight chance you may become uncomfortable, but the risk is minimal.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

There is no direct benefit from participating in the research. Your participation may however assist in the development and implementation of professional development opportunities for Teachers of the Deaf and other teachers in similar situations. You will assist and the greater understanding of challenging teachers in poor and developing countries face as they prepare to become teachers.

Who will see the information about me?

You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity throughout the study. Your true identity as a participant in this study will not be known. Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being of this project.

The information gathered including notes, video recordings and transcriptions will be securely locked and password protected. All of the information will be destroyed after three years.
In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board to see this information.

**Can I stop my participation in this study?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to withdraw, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have [as a student, employee, etc].

**Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?**

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Jill Druhan-Albanese at Albanese.j@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Carol Young at c.young@neu.edu, the Principal Investigator.

**Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?**

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

**Will I be paid for my participation?**

You will be given a 565.90 Honduran Lempira ($25 USD) gift certificate to a local store in Honduras as soon as you complete the interviews.

**Will it cost me anything to participate?**

There is no cost to you for participating.
Is there anything else I need to know?

You must be at least 21 years old to participate and a Teacher of the Deaf in Honduras.

I agree to take part in this research.

____________________________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part

Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of person above

Date

____________________________________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of person above
APPENDIX F

Translated Consent to Participate

Acuerdo de Participación

Universidad del Noreste (Northeastern University), Centro de Estudios Profesionales

Investigadora Principal: Dr. Carol Young

Estudiantes Investigadora: Jill Druhan-Albanese

Título: Un Estudio Narrativo de Investigación sobre el Entrenamiento Docente y Experiencias de Vida de Maestras Hondureñas

Información de Acuerdo para Participar en el Estudio de Investigación

Le estamos invitando para ser parte de un estudio de investigación. Esta hoja informativa, les dirá sobre el estudio, pero la investigadora deberá explicarle primero al respecto. Usted puede consultárle a ella cualquier pregunta que tenga o considere. Cuando ya esté lista para tomar su decisión comuníquele a la investigadora si participará o no lo hará. Usted no tiene que participar si usted no lo desea. Si usted decide participar, la investigadora le preguntará si está dispuesta a firmar este acuerdo o consentimiento y le dará una copia para respaldo.

¿Por qué me han consultado para ser parte de esta investigación?

Le hemos consultado para formar parte de este estudio, debido a que usted es Maestra de Sordos en Honduras.

¿Por qué están haciendo esta investigación?

El propósito de este estudio es desarrollar una mayor comprensión de los retos de los Maestros Hondureños de personas Sordas, como se identifican a través de sus vivencias personales y experiencias durante el tiempo de su formación para ser maestro. La información obtenida nos ayudará para desarrollar y comprender lo que estos maestros en Honduras, y otros maestros en situación similar, necesitan para avanzar más como profesores.
¿Qué se me pedirá que haga?

Si usted decide ser parte de este estudio, le pediremos que participe en tres entrevistas. Dos de las entrevistas le serán hechas en persona. Usted responderá alrededor de veinticinco a treinta preguntas en total. Las preguntas se enfocarán en su experiencia educativa personal y en las vivencias que tuvo durante se capacitaba para ser maestra. La tercera entrevista será una revisión de la transcripción de datos. Se le solicitará que revise la transcripción para comprobar la precisión de la misma.

Se contará con un intérprete durante las entrevistas, para asegurar que usted comprende las preguntas y que la entrevistadora entiende sus respuestas.

Usted no necesita responder a ninguna pregunta con la cual se sienta incómoda, y tiene la libertad de dejar de participar en la entrevista en cualquier tiempo, sin recibir castigo o penalización alguna.

¿Dónde será la entrevista y cuanto tiempo conlleva?

Cada entrevista toma aproximadamente de 30-45 minutos. Todas las entrevistas podrán desarrollarse en un lugar que usted elija. Usted será entrevistado en un lugar privado, tranquilo. La única otra persona que estará acompañando será el intérprete. El intérprete firmará un acuerdo de confidencialidad.

¿Podría haber algún riesgo o incomodidad para mí?

No hay ningún riesgo previsible o daño por participar. Si usted se siente incómoda participando, en cualquier momento sienta la libertad de detener la entrevista y retirarse sin ninguna penalización. Usted es libre de negarse a responder cualquier pregunta específica con la cual se sienta incomoda de contestar.

No existe ningún riesgo legal, financiero, social o físico asociado con este estudio. Debido a que compartirá detalles personales relacionados con su vida, hay una ligera posibilidad de que pueda sentirse incomodo, pero es un riesgo mínimo.

¿Seré beneficiado al participar en esta investigación?

No hay un beneficio directo por participar en la investigación. Sin embargo su participación puede ser de ayuda en el desarrollo e implementación de oportunidades de mejoramiento profesional para Maestros de Sordos y otros docentes en situaciones parecidas. Nos ayudará para tener una mayor comprensión de los retos de los profesores en países pobres y subdesarrollados y en cómo se preparan para ser maestros.
¿Quién podrá ver la información relacionada a mí?

Durante toda la investigación, a usted se le asignará un pseudónimo para proteger su identidad. Como participante de este estudio, su verdadera identidad, no se dará a conocer. Su participación será confidencial. Solamente los investigadores, veremos la información de su persona. Ningún reporte o publicación usará datos con los que puedan identificarle de alguna manera, ni a usted o a cualquier otro participante de este proyecto.

La información obtenida incluyendo notas, transcripciones y grabaciones de video serán cifradas con seguridad y protegidos con contraseña. Toda la información será destruida luego de tres años.

En raras ocasiones, personas autorizadas podrán ver su información y la de otras personas en este estudio de investigación. Esto se hace sólo para asegurarse de que la investigación se realiza correctamente. Únicamente a las personas autorizadas por organismos como la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad Noreste se les permite ver esta información.

¿Puedo dejar o abandonar mi participación en este estudio?

Su participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. No tiene que participar si no quiere y puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que le haga sentir incómoda. Inclusive si ya comenzó el estudio, usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento. Si no participa o si decide retirarse, usted no perderá ningún derecho, beneficio o servicio de los que usted podría tener (como estudiante, empleado, etc.).

¿A quién podría contactar si tengo preguntas o problemas?

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de esta investigación, siéntase libre de contactar a Jill Druhan-Albanese al correo Albanese.j@husky.neu.edu, quien es la encargada directa de esta investigación. También puede contactar a la Dra. Carol Young al correo c.young@neu.edu, quien es la Investigadora Principal.

¿A quién podría contactar acerca de mis derechos como participante?

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de sus derechos en esta investigación, puede comunicarse con Nan C. Regina, Directora de Protección Humana a Sujetos de Estudios, en el 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. Puede llamarla de manera anónima si lo desea.
¿Me pagarán por participar?

Usted recibirá un certificado de regalo equivalente a ($25 Dólares americanos) aproximadamente L560.00 para usar en una tienda local hondureña, tan pronto como finalice las entrevistas.

¿Me cobrarán algo por participar?

No, su participación no le conlleva ningún cobro o gasto.

¿Hay algo más que necesite o deba saber?

Usted debe tener por lo menos 21 años cumplidos para participar y ser un Maestro de Sordos en Honduras.

Estoy de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación

__________________________________________________________________________________________  ______________
Firma de la persona de acuerdo en participar  Fecha

__________________________________________________________________________________________  ______________
Nombre de la persona (en letra de molde)  Fecha

__________________________________________________________________________________________  ______________
Firma de la persona que explicó sobre el estudio al Participante del cual se ha obtenido el acuerdo  Fecha

Nombre de la Persona que explicó.
APPENDIX G
Interview Questions

Background Information:

Please tell me a little about yourself, including your family, where you grew up and where you are from.

Prompting questions if needed:

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Do you have children? If so how many?

Interview One Current Experiences:

1. What was your educational experience growing up?
2. Did your personal educational experience influence your decision to become a teacher?
3. When did you know you wanted to become a teacher, and why?
4. How long have you been in your current position and how did you obtain it?
5. How far do you travel to work and how long does it take you to get to work?
6. Do you have safety concerns traveling to and from work?
7. What are the most positive as well as challenging aspects of your position?

Teacher Training Experiences:

1. When did you begin training to become a teacher and how long was your training program?
2. Were you teaching before you participated in a teacher training program? If so for how long?
3. Where were you trained?
4. Did you earn a college degree or a certificate?
5. Did you have additional classes, courses, workshops or a separate training program to become a Teacher of the Deaf specifically?
6. Which classes did you feel were the most important and beneficial during your program?
7. Did you have a student teaching experience, practice instruction or work as an assistant as part of your training? If so, how long was the student teaching practicum and where was it?
8. Was there a mentor assigned to you as part of your training? If so, tell me about this person.
9. What were some of the techniques and practices during your training that you found most beneficial and practical as well as non-practical as part of your teacher preparation?
10. Did you feel prepared to teach and ready for the realities of the classroom after your training and once you began teaching?
11. If you could change one aspect of your training and preparation, what would it be?
12. Were your families and friends supportive as you prepared to become a teacher? Why or why not?
13. What type of financial commitment was required for you to pursue your training? Was this challenging for you? How did you prepare for this?

Interview Two Present Needs:

1. Now that you are teaching, what types of training activities and professional development do you believe are important for teachers to experience before they enter the classroom?
2. Do you believe having a mentor is important for not just new teachers but even after teaching for a number of years?
3. Do you believe professional development is important? Why or Why not?
4. Do you have access to ongoing professional development opportunities? If you do, what types of activities are they and do you participate? Are they helpful to you? Do you have to pay for the professional development? Does your school reimburse you? If you do not participate, what prevents you from participating?
5. What specific areas do you believe you personally need further growth and development with?
6. If you could decide on one or two specific topics or trainings for professional development, what would you suggest and why?
7. What do you know about Professional Learning Communities? Have you ever participated in one? If so, did you find it helpful?
8. If you were not teaching, what would you be doing instead?
9. Explain some positive developments in education and your country that you have witnessed over the years and recently.
10. Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
APPENDIX H
Translated Interview Questions

Guía de Preguntas para la Entrevista

Información de Antecedentes:

Por favor, hábleme un poco sobre usted mismo, de dónde es, dónde creció, de su familia.

Sugiera las siguientes preguntas, si fuese necesario:

¿Cuál es su nombre?
¿Cuántos años tiene?
¿Tiene hijos? *Si tiene, ¿Cuántos?

Primera Entrevista: Experiencia Actual

1.- ¿Cómo fue su experiencia educativa en general? Cuénteme sobre ello
2.- ¿Sus experiencias escolares, influyeron en su decisión de ser maestra?
3.- ¿Cuándo supo, o se dio cuenta que quería ser maestra y cuál fue la razón de ello?
4.- ¿Desde cuándo trabaja en esta institución como maestra y cómo obtuvo este empleo?
5.- ¿Cuánto tiempo le toma llegar de su casa al trabajo?
6.- ¿Se siente segura o tiene preocupaciones sobre su seguridad mientras se traslada de su casa al trabajo y viceversa?
7.- ¿Cuál es lo más positivo, así como los retos que enfrenta en su trabajo?

Experiencias de Capacitación Docente:

1.- ¿Cuándo inició su formación para ser docente y cuanto tiempo duró está formación?
2.- ¿Dio clases, enseñó, antes de participar en un programa de capacitación docente? Si fue así, ¿Cuánto tiempo enseñó?
3.- ¿Dónde fue capacitado o entrenado para ejercer la docencia?
4.- ¿Tiene algún título o grado académico en el área docente?
5.- ¿Participó en clases adicionales, cursos, talleres, o en algún programa especial para ser Maestra de Niños Sordos?
6.- ¿Qué clases o temáticas sintió fueron las más importantes y de beneficio durante su preparación para ser maestra de sordos?
7.- ¿Desarrolló Prácticas Docentes, como parte de su formación? Si realizó Práctica(s), ¿Por cuánto tiempo fue (fueron) ésta(s)?
8.-Tuvo un Maestro Asesor durante su tiempo de formación. Si fue así, hábleme sobre esta persona.
9.- ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las técnicas o estrategias que durante su formación usted sintió de mayor beneficio y sentido práctico, e igualmente cuáles no fueron útiles como parte de su preparación docente?
10.- ¿Se sintió preparado para enseñar y listo para enfrentar la realidad de su aula, después de concluida la formación, y una vez que comenzó a enseñar?
11.- Si tuviera la posibilidad de cambiar un aspecto de su entrenamiento y formación docente, ¿Cuál sería ese aspecto a cambiar?
12.- Durante el tiempo que estaba formándose como maestra ¿Sus amigos y familiares fueron de apoyo para usted? Si o No. Explique.
13.- ¿Qué tipo de compromiso financiero le fue requerido para llevar a cabo su formación? ¿Fue esto un reto? ¿Cómo se preparó en lo económico?
14.- ¿Su formación docente tuvo algún tipo de costo económico o fue gratuita? En caso de que haya tenido costo, ¿Le fue un reto lo económico? ¿Cómo se preparó para ello?

Segunda Entrevista: Necesidades Actuales

1.- Ahora que usted está enseñando, ¿Qué tipo de actividades de formación y de desarrollo profesional cree que son importantes para la experiencia de los maestros, antes de asumir un grupo de alumnos?
2.- ¿Cree que contar con un asesor es importante, no sólo para los maestros nuevos sino también para los maestros que tienen más años de experiencia?
3.- ¿Cree que el desarrollo profesional es importante? Si o No, ¿Por qué?
4.- ¿Está involucrado en procesos de desarrollo profesional continuo/ permanente? Si lo está, ¿Cuáles son las actividades que hacen y en las que usted participa? ¿Es de ayuda para usted? ¿Se paga para participar en estos procesos de desarrollo profesional? ¿La escuela le patrocina o reembolsa los pagos que usted hace en esos procesos? ¿Si usted no participa, que obstaculiza su participación?
5.- Personalmente, ¿En qué áreas específicas cree usted que necesita crecer más y fortalecerse?
6.- Si pudiera decidir sobre uno o dos temas específicos para capacitación en función del desarrollo profesional, ¿Qué temas podría sugerir y por qué?
7.- ¿Qué sabe acerca de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje Profesional? ¿Ha participado en alguna? Si lo hizo, ¿Fue de apoyo para usted?
8.- Si usted no fuese maestra ¿Qué estaría haciendo en vez de eso?
9.- ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartirme?
APPENDIX I

Confidentiality Statement
Interpreter/Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

Northeastern University College of Professional Studies

Jill Druhan-Albanese
Title: A Narrative Research Study of Teacher Training and Life Experiences of the Honduran Teacher
Transcriber /Interpreter Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

I am asking you _________________ to take part in a research study. The research collected will be one-on-one interviews. Each interview will be video recorded with audio as well using a digital video camera. Two devices will be utilized for backup in case of error and to insure the accuracy in recording all responses. The uses of recording devices are justified in this study as the details of language; expression and signs used by the participants are essential to the data analysis.

For Interpreters: You are responsible to interpret the dialogue between the interviewer and the participant. You are responsible to interpret the questions and the answers to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided. You will not discuss any item or part of the interview with anyone other than the researcher and only to ask for clarification if necessary. No name’s will be asked or revealed during individual interviews.

For Transcriber: You are responsible to transcribe the audio to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided. You will not discuss any item on the tape or during the interview with anyone other than the researcher and only to ask for clarification if necessary. No name’s will be asked or revealed during individual interviews. The audio will be stored in locked files before, during and after being transcribed.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
Jill Druhan-Albanese (Student Researcher)
Email: Albanese.j@husky.neu.edu  cell: 781-316-4174

Dr. Carol Young (Principal Investigator)
Address: Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115
Email: c.young@neu.edu

____________________________________________________
Signature of Interpreter or Transcriber          Date

____________________________________________________
Printed Name