

The Creation of an Underclass: A Critical Analysis of California Teacher Education Programs with an Emphasis on Deaf Teacher Education

By Ellen E. Touchstone & Madeleine Youmans

In the 1987 *English-Language Arts Framework*, Bill Honig, former Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California, proclaimed his goals for the new literature-centered curriculum, emphasizing the effort it would take to achieve them:

This new *English-Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, which provides philosophical direction and perspectives on curriculum and instruction, can be an important resource for curriculum planners, decision makers, teachers, and parents to use in developing strong instructional programs.

However, we must do more than adopt the *Framework*. Only through our best efforts and sustained commitment will we truly achieve the level of excellence outlined in this document: the development of “informed and responsible citizens, competent and successful members of the workforce, and thinking, fulfilled individuals within our society” (*English-Language Arts Curriculum Framework and Criteria Committee, 1987, p.vi*).

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We have defined the aforementioned *English-Language Arts Framework* (the *Framework*) as, at the time of this writing, the State of California's most recent document describing literacy policy for its schoolchildren. It states that the aim "...of English-Language Arts programs is developing a literate, thinking society" (ELAC, 1987, p.6). The *Framework* then proceeds to describe the skills this "literate, thinking" member of society will acquire if such a program is implemented.

The purpose of our analysis is twofold. First, the strengths and weaknesses of this policy will be presented and critiqued, particularly with respect to its effects on a minority language population: the deaf. It will be demonstrated that in many respects, the *Framework* is problematic. In addition, we will examine the policy as it has passed through the hierarchy of steps toward implementation: it is argued that the *Framework* has not reached the stage of implementation, which requires "...authoritative backbone to achieve the goals and the motivation for the use...of the policy" (Eastman, 1983, p.12).

We have chosen to examine the mismatch between stated policy and its implementation at the teacher-training level. Teacher-training institutions are particularly important because they constitute the first conduit through which such policy passes. In this intermediate step, there are four possible outcomes: policy can be ignored, consciously revised, unconsciously revised, or implemented as stated. Evidence from interviews with program coordinators, as well as an examination of program requirements, is presented to show that the policy is either ignored or unconsciously revised in California's teacher-training institutions; thus, the presumed trickle-down of this policy, as originally laid out, does not occur, particularly in teacher-training programs for the deaf. This paper, in part, is an investigation of the way in which stated policy, such as it is, can quickly become altered through various interpretations along the way to practice.

The Language Arts Framework: A Critique

The *Framework* is built on the premise that "...the first curriculum priority is language" (Boyer, 1983, p.85, cited in ELAC, 1987, p.1). Specifically, the State proposes the following goals, which underscore the fundamental nature of language to individual and societal growth:

To prepare all students to function as informed and effective citizens in our democratic society. Language permits people to gain access to the knowledge that makes us culturally literate, and one of the most important ingredients in becoming culturally literate is familiarity with significant works of literature in which the great themes, events and ideals of the culture have been recorded.

To prepare all students to function effectively in the world of work. In this age of technology, full participation in the work force requires effective language use. Effective language use is at the very core of lifelong learning strategies that will

permit people to become versatile and to adapt to jobs in the twenty-first century which will require sophisticated technical, scientific and managerial skills.

To prepare all students to realize personal fulfillment. Effective language use also permits people to develop a full sense of themselves as individuals. Through the readings of Anne Frank's diary, or the musings of a contemporary author, individuals find answers to their questions and experience a connection with the past and present. By being exposed to the greatest and most powerful literary works, people are given effective models for speaking and writing that enable them to express themselves as individuals within a culture. (ELAC, 1987, pp.1-2)

According to the *Framework*, these goals are to be achieved through a new, literature-based, integrated language arts curriculum. Although dictionary-like definitions of the terms "effective language use," "literate," and "culturally literate" are never provided, the *Framework* does outline in elaborate fashion the various skills which constitute "effective language use" by a "literate" person. In the *Framework*, the child's evolving literacy is discussed, culminating in the product, the high school graduate who should be able to

read and experience a variety of literary genre (sic). At the same time all students are developing the capacity to write cogent, clear, precise prose, using their own styles and voices and to revise and edit for the conventions of writing, such as correct usage, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. (ELAC, 1987, p.31)

The policymakers have high hopes for such a literate individual, stating that such "literacy enables them to respect themselves and others, succeed in the workplace, and contribute to improving the human condition" (ELAC, 1987, p.32). Such lofty goals cannot be achieved, however, if the policy is not implemented, which, as we will argue, it is not.

Further, there are still some criticisms of the *Framework* itself which should be lodged. A central criticism of the *Framework* is that it perpetuates the autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1984). The *Framework* states:

In addition to improving students' language skills and their sensitivity to language, integrating all the language arts can help students develop the type of thinking skills they need to become informed and effective citizens. (ELAC, 1987, pp.v-vi)

While the view that literacy is necessarily associated with higher-order thinking skills was once popular (Goody & Watt, 1968), this has been refuted by Scribner and Cole's (1981) work with the Vai and Street's meta-analysis (1984). It is reasonable to posit that promoting language as an abstract entity subject to manipulation and discussion may help children develop their thoughts further (Herriman, 1986). However, the *Framework* seems to have adopted an unacceptably strong view of the relationship between literacy skills and cognitive development.

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An additional criticism concerns the ethnocentric nature of the *Framework*. For example, the *Framework* states that what children learn should "...enable them to express themselves as individuals within **a culture**" (ELAC, 1987, pp.1-2: emphasis added). While the idealistic "melting pot" metaphor implying a single, unified American culture is widely espoused, a closer examination of the U.S. population reveals that the idea of cultural pluralism is perhaps a more realistic paradigm upon which to base the *Framework*. The "melting pot" theory is based on one "...totally new blend, culturally and biologically..." (Gordon, 1985, p. 249), which "...break[s] up...groups or settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race" (Gordon, 1985, p. 248). However, cultural pluralism "...was a fact in American society before it became a theory" (Gordon, 1985, p. 252). The truth is, U.S. society is made up of diverse cultures, and "the member of the ethnic group may if he wishes follow a path which never takes him across the boundaries of his ethnic structural network" (Gordon, 1985, p. 254).

While cultural pluralism is a fact throughout the U.S., it is even more evident in California. California's white population is shrinking, which is reflected most dramatically in schools. For example, only 20 per cent of Los Angeles public elementary school students are white (Reeves, 1990). The *Framework*'s goal of exposing California's students to the "significant works of literature...of **the culture**" (emphasis added) only succeeds in perpetuating the myth of a single homogeneous culture. It is elitist to assume that such "classic" literature, which has been argued to be "Eurocentric and patriarchal" (Winders, 1991, p. 9) will be valued by all members of our society. Further, the *Framework* is seemingly inconsistent when it discusses children writing in "their own styles and voices" (ELAC, 1987, p.31) when the "styles and voices" of diverse cultural groups may not be reflected in the students' curriculum. It is interesting to note that a list of non-English "great books" was reportedly included in the *Framework* until the last draft, when it was omitted for political reasons (Macias, personal communication).

The *Framework*'s privileging of one culture, while it claims to prepare **all** students for various life tasks, is ripe for a Freirean analysis of the hidden agenda of such a policy. Freire (1983, p.65) maintains that "education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (**often not perceived by educators**) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression." The *Framework* is ethnocentric, addressing alternative populations under deficit-model-inspired labels such as "less prepared," "limited English proficient," and "hearing impaired."

On the one hand, it could be proposed that the policy in its limited treatment of minority groups is **not** addressing the needs of all students. A Freirean analysis of the policy, however, would attribute this inattention to minority groups' needs as guaranteeing their failure, thus effectively creating an underclass. It could be argued that the *Framework* does have as its goal preparing all students for a future involving work and participation in society, but within a constrained social system.

With the crucial caveat of social prescriptivism included, the goal implies “to prepare all students to fit into slots we have prescribed at their designated level of the social status pyramid.”

As mentioned above, the labels used to describe such children are based on a “deficit model”—it is assumed that something is wrong with these children or their actions. Freire (1983) posits that the educational system treats children as objects in need of assistance, which assumes that they lack something crucial. This historic treatment of ethnic and “handicapped” minorities—in fact of all children who do not immediately succeed in school—has been cited as an excuse for the educational system to expect less from such children, which removes all accountability of the system when they fail (Mason, 1986). Further, it must be noted that the aforementioned labels treat ethnic minorities and “handicapped” children as if the only relevant difference between them and mainstream children is their relative language abilities and preparation for school.

The label LEP only addresses the language differences between minority and mainstream children; however, other differences in beliefs, values, and priorities exist between the groups. The overt focus on language obscures and thereby minimizes the intrinsic and complicated connections between language, culture, and social identity (Gee 1990). By focussing only on language differences, the *Framework* fails to acknowledge that many judgments attributed to relative language abilities are in fact based on other social and cultural criteria which are attributes of “Discourses” (with a capital D) as per Gee (1990). Discourses are culturally-specific ways of doing, valuing, and believing which include language use but are by no means exclusively defined by it. Thus, a focus on language rather than its place within social networks artificially separates language from its all-defining social context.

This is not to say, however, that language is not important in a multicultural school environment. It is argued that language—in particular, a focus on Standard English—is used to privilege majority students while marginalizing minorities. For example, Fairclough (1989) states that “...the general level of attention and sensitivity to language has been woefully inadequate, and in particular the teaching of language in schools has...contrived to ignore its most decisive social functions” (Fairclough, 1989, p.4). This “decisive social function” appears in “...the new agenda based on Standard English...(which) could once again segregate elite, white students from the minorities” (Shor, 1986, p.143). This is another example of the rather constant “...tests of the fluency of the dominant Discourses in which their power is symbolized; these tests become both tests of ‘natives’ or, at least, ‘fluent users’ of the Discourse, and **gates** to exclude ‘non-natives’...” (Gee, 1990). If interpreted as written, the *Framework* could be unwittingly used to perpetuate dominant society hegemony.

Literacy Policy at the Teacher-Training Level

It should be noted that “policy does not occur in a vacuum” (Kaplan, personal communication): its formulation, as well as implementation, is influenced by political, budgetary, and other factors. Even so, it is interesting to analyze policy as it exists independently of such factors. At times, policy seems to be formulated without regard to such concerns, a phenomenon that will be addressed presently.

The following discussion analyzes the reality of teacher-training programs for educators of both the mainstream population and the deaf. Because the *Framework* highlights the role of teachers, we chose to analyze this teacher-training link in the trickle-down of the state’s literacy policy. According to the *Framework*:

teachers must 1) be able to excite students about learning to listen, speak, read, and write; 2) incorporate knowledge about language acquisition and learning in their instruction, and 3) be flexible in the use of methods and in attitudes. (ELAC, 1987, p.13)

Teacher-education institutions have the difficult task of training these all-important teachers. Just how these institutions prepare future teachers for this task will be examined in this analysis. While it is possible that the institutions might ignore the edict set forth in the *Framework*, this is unlikely for two reasons: first, the teacher trainers interviewed expressed excitement over the document and its proposed new curriculum—some stated, in fact, that it may serve as a model for language arts curricula across the U.S. Second, the institutions are undoubtedly aware that the new teachers that they produce for California will be expected to espouse this philosophy.

While the production of teachers inadequately prepared to deal with the *Framework*’s policies may adversely affect mainstream language arts students, it can lead to even more unfortunate consequences for the deaf. This is one subgroup of students which, it has been argued, has been labeled “deficient” by the system and thus neglected, its members left to fill traditional posts far below their potential. A recent commission report on deaf education in the U.S. blames the educational system for the widespread failure of deaf children in school. It states:

We contend...that these results represent a failure of the system that is responsible for educating deaf children. We will argue in support of changes in the system which recognize deaf children’s need for...access to curricular material. (Johnson *et al*, 1989, p.1)

University A Elementary Education Program Vis-a-Vis the Framework’s Recommendations

University A suggests an undergraduate major in General Studies (which we have deemed “Jack of all trades, master of none”) to prepare students for the

Multiple Subject Instructorship Credential, necessary to teach in an elementary classroom in California. A similar major, Liberal Studies, is suggested for study at the other two institutions. If a student enters the program with a B.A. in another subject, she or he is required to pass the National Teachers' Examination, which reportedly tests knowledge in a variety of subjects. However, we contend that the superficial nature of this curriculum prevents teacher candidates from acquiring in-depth knowledge of any one subject, including subjects crucial to their future effectiveness.

For example, language skills—in particular, reading—are essential for gaining content knowledge in all subjects. However, University A requires that teacher candidates take one four-unit course in the teaching of reading and writing, which is the only course exclusively devoted to language arts instruction. While there are three other courses devoted to general methodology, we feel that this lack of specific emphasis on language arts is absurd. In addition, there is no course designed to introduce teachers to children's literature, or literature of any kind. Because University A recommends a General Studies B.A., it can be assumed that entrants will have taken the one, unspecified literature course required by that major. Since the *Framework* foregrounds the importance of reading and writing in its definition of literacy, and argues that a literature-based curriculum leads to this type of literacy, it would seem that University A might not produce teachers who are prepared to teach per this curriculum.

***University A Communication Handicapped Program
Vis-a-Vis the Framework's Recommendations***

The Communication Handicapped do not have their own policy document; rather, they are addressed to some degree in the *Framework*. It is therefore implied that beyond some practical considerations demanded by the handicap, these students are to be taught following the same guidelines as the mainstream population. It is important to note that the University A Communication Handicapped program is entitled "Communication Handicapped," as are the other two programs analyzed here. This clearly indicates the program's focus and emphasis on language for communication. Like other programs, University A's classes concentrate heavily on the mechanical aspects of oral communication. However, it is widely believed that the most natural and efficient form of communication for the deaf is visual. Indeed, American Sign Language (ASL) is often touted by linguists as the ideal language in that it shares many attributes with natural spoken language. ASL is efficient and morphologically complex; moreover, deaf children of fluent ASL signers acquire ASL in much the same way as hearing children acquire spoken language (Quigley & Kretschmer, 1982).

However, the educational community's "...commitment to speech-centered educational methodology" is typical of training programs in deaf education, and illustrates the ways in which "...deaf education in the United States has come to

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expect that deaf children cannot perform as well as hearing children and has structured itself in ways that guarantee that result” (Johnson *et al*, 1989, p.12). We find this reality particularly unfortunate.

While mainstream-track teacher candidates take one course in reading and writing, deaf teacher trainees are not trained at all in the teaching of reading or writing, nor is there any indication that University A has responded to the State’s dubious call for language activities that presumably encourage critical thinking—integrated language arts. Once again, we attribute these omissions to lowered expectations for the deaf. Program Director A, when asked to define literacy, acknowledged this prejudice, mentioning that different definitions of literacy are given for deaf vs. hearing persons.

As in the other programs, entrants must be credentialed, which entails a General Studies major or waiver, again suggesting that if students have studied any literature, it is probably the one course required by that major. There is no literature requirement in the University A Communication Handicapped program, which is not consistent with the *Framework*’s recommendations. This, too, could be caused by lowered expectations: this might explain why University A continues to teach methodologies that produce deaf high school graduates who read at the fourth grade level (Allen, 1986, pp.164-5). Such students, who are assumed to be somehow deficient (Johnson *et al*, 1989), could never be expected to read much beyond the basal level, never mind literature.

The *Framework* states that teachers **must** be well versed in language acquisition and learning theory. Yet, Program Director A states that her program’s choice of methodologies is atheoretical. She cannot think of a theory that justifies their practices, explaining that most deaf education today is weak in theoretical foundations. She attributes this to excessive argument over basic communication systems (i.e. oral/aural vs. several sign systems) among educators of the deaf: until they have agreed on a cease-fire, serious research will not be pursued. The State teacher credentialing commission has criticized University A’s Communication Handicapped Program for its inattention to research. However, it should be noted that the Commission continues to grant University A unconditional approval, although the weakness in research runs counter to the *Framework*’s policy. This demonstrates lowered expectations on the State level.

University B Elementary Education Program Vis-a-Vis the Framework’s Recommendations

As usual, the University-sanctioned undergraduate major is the Liberal Studies major, of which we maintain the aforementioned criticisms.

University B offers two specifically language-related courses: one course on the teaching of reading and one on ESL instruction, both worth three units. It should be noted that a required course concerning physical education for children also merits three units. We suggest that the *Framework*’s policymakers would feel that

since reading is prior to other learning, it should be given more emphasis than physical education. Further, there is no course designed to teach writing methodology, a necessary component of a curriculum based on integrated language arts. Once again, students are assumed to have completed at most the one literature course required by the Liberal Studies B.A. No provision is made for additional literature study in this program, which runs counter to the *Framework's* tenets.

***University B Communication Handicapped Program
Vis-A-Vis the Framework's Recommendations***

Students enter the 36-unit program possessing a single- or multiple-subject credential, as required by California law.

University B offers one course on the teaching of reading, and two other specifically language-related courses, which is more than the other programs require. This program is unique in that it is not totally speech-centered. Nevertheless, the program does not offer literature study, and focusses more on language for language's sake than language as a path to knowledge. Program Director B cites specific theory to justify practice; thus, it is hoped that teachers are exposed to theoretically-based methodology, as recommended by the *Framework*. Program Director B asserts, for example, that "what should be" is the use of language in meaningful contexts. This is consistent both with language acquisition theory (Krashen, 1981) and the *Framework's* recommendations.

As a non-speech-centered, ASL-based program, University B produces teachers who can provide language in meaningful contexts. In contrast, research has shown that the speech-centered programs which use such systems as Total Communication and Signed English do not succeed in communicating meaning to children. This results from the fact that the use of signs to support spoken English does not constitute a true sign language (Stokoe, 1960). Such systems, which cause a type of cognitive overload, lead to faulty production in one or both signals, usually the sign (Marmor & Petitto, 1979, in Johnson *et al*, 1989). Johnson and Erting (1989, cited in Johnson *et al*, 1989, p.6) cite the following example in which the spoken message "Ah, I think I want a green one with yellow flowers on it" becomes "I think I freeze green together with yellow flower LOC on it." In a second example, "You were a good Easter bunny" deteriorates into the signed message "Good Easter devil."

Program Director B asserts that ASL is the natural first language for deaf children and that a good foundation in this language is necessary before they can be expected to acquire English. This is not unlike Cummins' theory (1979) that second language acquisition can only occur based on the foundation of an already-acquired, first natural language. In addition, Program Director B recognizes the sociopolitical importance of ASL, as well as its value as a vehicle to transmit content knowledge. Program Director B feels that since ASL is a powerful vehicle of identity for the deaf community, it must receive official recognition to be kept alive.

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The teaching of ASL to future teachers, its effectiveness guaranteed by University B's competency exam, is progressive and rare: a recent study by Woodward and Allen (1987) shows that out of 1,888 teachers of the deaf surveyed, only 140 reported using ASL in the classroom. Further examination demonstrated that only six of the 140 teachers were actually using ASL.

As stated, ASL is a necessary foundation upon which to base English, a language which, as deaf children mature, will play an increasingly greater role in their lives as they move into interaction with mainstream communities. Program Director B argues that deaf children's acquisition of English must come from reading, as it is the only access they have to a "complete model" of English. She asserts, therefore, that reading plays an even more significant role in the lives of deaf children than in those of hearing children. She is the only deaf educator we encountered who argued for this increased importance of reading. Despite the Program Director's progressive views, however, it must be noted that the University B program offers only one course in the teaching of reading to the deaf. We propose that just as reading will provide deaf children with the best access to English, writing will be their most successful mode of communicating in English. It should be noted that University B offers no course in the teaching of writing, thereby ignoring the importance of writing as a component of the *Framework's* proposed integrated language arts curriculum.

Program C Elementary Education Program Vis-a-Vis the Framework's Recommendations

Program C requires one course on the teaching of reading, and a course that covers methods for both mathematics and language arts teaching. Program Director C admits that this split-methodology course is not sufficient given the importance of language arts, a view that is consistent with the *Framework's* guidelines. The Program Director is enthusiastic about the idea of a literature-based curriculum, but her enthusiasm does not appear to have been translated into course offerings. Once again, students' exposure to literature is assumed to be that which they receive in their Liberal Studies B.A.

Program Director C recognizes the importance of imparting theory to teacher trainees as is outlined in the *Framework*. She states that a child's language acquisition at school should proceed as it does at home, mentioning the Natural Approach as a methodology based on this theory. However, she interprets the theory very broadly, stating that its function is to "get children talking" when in fact, production on demand is downplayed if not discouraged in a strict interpretation of the methodology (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Thus, though the Program Director is concerned with theory, we question whether the methods courses accurately reflect the theories they are supposed to embody.

***University C Communication Handicapped Program
Vis-a-Vis the Framework's Recommendations***

Once again, the program requires a credential, which implies that entrants possess or have waived a Liberal Studies B.A.

The program offers no courses in the teaching of reading, writing, or language arts. Perhaps, then, graduating teachers will not be prepared to follow the *Framework's* integrated language arts policy. Once again, no literature course is offered: this too is inconsistent with the *Framework's* emphasis on a literature-based curriculum.

The *Framework's* guideline that teachers should be aware of current language acquisition and learning theory is partially addressed through a class concerned with the theory of communication skills for the deaf, but this appears to be the extent of the program's theoretical offerings. When asked about theory, Program Director C (who, it should be noted, teaches the theory course) states that she "...can't point to any theory" that supports Program C's practice. While she wishes that research from other fields could be used more in deaf classrooms, she admits that "we [deaf educators] don't know what's going on in other fields." According to Program Director C, courses in deaf education aren't up to date and teachers of the deaf have little access to information. She asserts that while teachers **could** read current research in other fields, they hardly read the journals of their own specialty. Because teachers of the deaf are overworked and underpaid, they tend to lose interest in keeping abreast of current research the longer they remain in the field.

Program Director C soon reveals, however, that theory is not her main concern. She expresses concern for "moral right," meaning that she advocates methods that expose deaf children to English, which she believes will have the best moral outcome—that is, integration of the deaf into English-speaking society. She would rather do this, almost "just in case" it works, than investigate the effectiveness of the various methodologies to assess whether or not her plan is feasible. This bias is shown in that all but one course in the program are concerned with communication, and even that course is concerned with linguistic processes. This demonstrates that like the other programs, and perhaps to the largest degree, Program C's program is true to its name—Communication Handicapped—in its speech-centered nature.

It should be noted that because the program is small, Program Director C is the only professor; thus, students are not introduced to alternative viewpoints. She is aware that her prejudices might play a disproportionately important role in shaping students' views. She acts, then, as the students' only resource, a fact that even she finds disturbing.

Existing State Policies which Sabotage Efforts Toward New Policy Formation

We argue that the State of California has not followed up on its literacy policy to ensure implementation at the teacher-training level. Not only does it exhibit passive neglect, but in addition, the State conveys the message that perhaps its policy is not necessary after all. By accrediting programs that do not manifest adherence to policy guidelines, including some that the State recognizes violate them to a great degree, the State is effectively putting a stamp of approval on these programs. In effect, the State fails to provide the "...authoritative backbone" necessary to motivate changes in the programs (Eastman, 1983, p.12).

The dearth of teachers, which is especially pronounced in deaf education, has led the State to allow the issuance of emergency credentials in order to have a "warm body" in the front of the classroom. This results in teachers having little notion of the State's literacy policy and how this is to be carried out through the curriculum. While this may adversely affect mainstream students, the implications of this emergency policy measure for deaf students are even more far-reaching. The lack of teachers for deaf education has also led teacher-training institutions to develop a type of "get 'em in, get 'em out" mentality (Program Director A, 1989). Operating under the conviction that a poorly trained teacher of the deaf is better than one with just an emergency credential, program administrators feel that they must speed up the training process, even if this means a certain amount of sacrifice in quality.

It was brought to our attention that although the *Framework* mentions "...tests that reflect the purpose of the curriculum" (ELAC, 1987, p.33), the State has not, in fact, adopted a revised testing system. The reason for this is that the State has reportedly run out of money designated for this program (Program Director C, 1989). Because the State of California's educational system is highly test-driven (Program Director C, 1989), the lack of revised tests virtually guarantees built-in obsolescence of the *Framework's* curriculum. The State holds public school teachers accountable for students' test performance, and it is argued that teachers would not hold to a curriculum which they fear will not prepare their students for the mandatory standardized tests that inevitably follow. We could not ask program administrators if this played a role in the apparent absence of *Framework* policies in their programs. However, it is questioned whether the tacit knowledge that their students would continue to use traditional curricula might contribute to their non-adherence to the *Framework*.

Lack of funds on a higher level may also lead to undesirable consequences. Teachers no longer have the "luxury" of guidance and supervision that might provide the motivation for continuing education (Program Director C, 1989). Program Director C states that unlike today, in earlier days of deaf teacher training,

teachers were required not only to complete a full year of student teaching, but also a year as a “novice teacher” in which they were supervised by a “master teacher.” It has been demonstrated that there is insufficient follow-up on the teacher-training level, and Program Director C’s example acts as evidence that there is inadequate follow-up on the classroom level as well.

Conclusion

The immediately previous discussion was included to illustrate the many factors which may adversely affect policy implementation. It would be naive to implicate the teacher-training programs as the only weak link in the complex chain of policymaking. Further, criticism of the Program Directors was not intended as personal, as all were clearly sincere, professional, knowledgeable, and dedicated to their field.

The literacy policy for the State of California’s schoolchildren—the *Framework*—calls for a new, literature-based, integrated language arts curriculum, the purpose of which is to produce effective, literate citizens. The preceding discussion has illustrated that teacher-training institutions, which in turn are to produce the teachers of these citizens, have, for myriad reasons, not responded to this call; that is, they may not be producing teachers prepared to implement this curriculum.

Instead, the teacher-training institutions produce teachers who are lacking in knowledge of literature, language arts background, and theoretical foundations of language acquisition and learning. Programs for teachers of the deaf have been shown to deviate even further from the *Framework*’s goals: only one of the three programs examined offers any course having to do with reading or writing. This inattention to reading and writing, along with the speech-centered curricula, virtually guarantees that deaf students will never be able to “...write cogent, clear, precise prose, using their own styles and voices, and to revise and edit for the conventions of writing, such as correct usage, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and spelling” (ELAC, 1987, p.31).

An analysis of deaf education programs suggests that the deaf children will never be led to achieve the literacy outlined in the *Framework*, which Gee has described as “...mastery of or fluent control over a secondary Discourse” (Gee, 1990, p.27). This secondary Discourse, he proposes, is school-based English for minorities (e.g., deaf) as well as mainstream children. Nor are the deaf provided with a “liberating literacy,” one that contains “...both the Discourse it is going to critique and a set of meta-elements (language, words, attitudes, values) in terms of which an analysis and criticism can be carried out” (Gee, 1990, p.31).

It is questioned whether the deaf could ever fully integrate into the school-based, English-speaking Discourse, as one of its features is hearing (Gee, personal communication); however, the methodologies employed in deaf education rarely allow them the chance to reach a level where they could use “...partial acquisition

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coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to make do” (Gee, 1990, p.37). The deaf are thus deprived of both components of a liberating literacy: first, they typically get insufficient access to school-based Discourse (English), and second, they are not given the skills to critique this Discourse.

Deaf children’s consciousness is not raised to the fact that like other minorities in a multicultural community, they are likely to be marginalized for life—in fact, we propose that they are led to the false hope that speech-based programs will lead to their integration in hearing society. Once again, the deficit model emerges: students are told that if they work hard enough, they will catch up with their hearing peers, a pervasive fallacy in the field of deaf education. By perpetuating this myth, the school system remains unaccountable for “...100 years of failed educational philosophy and practice” (Johnson *et al*, 1989, p.12).

It must be noted that in reality, educators do not expect integration: this is illustrated by the presence of a course concerning early childhood career preparation for the handicapped at University C. If the deaf are being channelled into career tracks in elementary school, this indicates that preparation for life-long ghettoization begins at a very early age. In fact, this early tracking could help explain the finding that only 10 percent of the hearing-impaired are employed in fields requiring professional or technical expertise, and that the deaf are typically employed in jobs considered below their education level (Schein & Delk, 1974, cited in Quigley & Kretschmer, 1982, p.99).

In addition to career tracking, another cause of the underemployment of the deaf is the pervasive speech-centered approach, which serves as a gatekeeping device to metaknowledge. It has been shown that the speech-centered approach to deaf education makes language, content (Program Director C, 1989), and meta-level knowledge inaccessible to the deaf. This lends new meaning to the term multiple handicap: the students are deaf, have no control over even a single language, and thus have little access to content knowledge. Indeed, they experience a type of “multiple marginality” as defined by Vigil (1990) with respect to barrio gang members. Finally, they are all but discouraged from acquiring meta-knowledge about their own position in society, a position which continues to be perpetuated. If, as the *Framework* posits, its recommendations are necessary to produce “...informed and effective citizens” (ELAC, 1987, p.vi), then the deaf may never be able to participate in society as such and may never know the real reason why.

The *Framework* states that teachers must “direct their students as they seek to unlock the doors of language” (ELAC, 1987, p.3). We note that the recent report on deaf education by Johnson *et al*, 1989, entitled “Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education,” also makes use of the theme of gatekeeping in language and education. The *Framework* is supposed to eradicate gatekeeping; however, it is not being implemented. Even if it were in full effect, it sets up its own gates in terms of ethnocentricity, labeling, and pigeonholing of students, as well as linguistic prejudice. Thus, instead of providing the key to

effective participation in society, we must posit that for both mainstream and deaf populations, the latter to a greater degree, flaws throughout the educational system, from policymaking to teacher training to implementation, keep them locked out of full participation in society.

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