PROJECTS COMPLETED BY STUDENTS OF THE
LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE AREA OF THE DEAF

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Directed by Dr. Ray Jones

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY STATE COLLEGE
Department of Administration/Supervision
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A SURVEY OF POSSIBLE JOBS IN THE PARA_MEDICAL FIELD
FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS

CELESTE S. BAER

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The problem of underemployment of the deaf has led me to investigate the career opportunities in the para medical field. I have limited myself to this area primarily because the prediction is that medicine and the allied medical fields will be employing more and more workers. It is estimated that more than one million workers will be needed in this field in the next decade in addition to doctors, dentists and registered nurses. Presently the medical field is the third largest employer; by 1970 it may well be in first place.

The range of jobs is staggering. It includes such traditional positions as medical secretary, and such far-out ones as nuclear medical technologist. There are opportunities to work directly with people, or in laboratories, or with complicated and sensitive machinery. On-the-job training enables young people to qualify for technical positions of all kinds.

With the increasing medical services offered to all people both privately and publicly, with the advanced medical findings and research, with the electronic and technological advances creating new employment opportunities for all people, the employment opportunity for more deaf people should be proportionate.

Presently the deaf adult who meets minimum academic standards for post high school training, with proper guidance and supported help provided by inter-
interpreters, note takers, or recorded copies of lectures, can be expected to fulfill academic requirements of some of these jobs. With the hope that our youth will be coming out of the high schools better prepared to go into post secondary education, the problem of underemployment will be lessened, and the upgrading of deaf people as an economic-social group will be accomplished.

However, the deaf need to be informed of the occupational opportunities available.

"the foundation of occupational information is to remove that part of the client's employment handicap which can be ascribed to his lack of knowledge of opportunities available to him in the world of work. Occupational information is a tool for functioning the employment of the handicapped by broadening their choice among occupations, locating the chosen occupation..." (Shartle)

In order to find a realistic approach to providing information I talked with physicians, dentists, nurses, technicians and educators. I asked for their suggestions about possible jobs, for their advice about those jobs that might seem impossible, but with modification could be feasible, and to indicate those jobs that under no condition a deaf or hard of hearing person, perform.

I also looked over many books and articles about allied medical jobs, and then selected specific job titles and descriptions from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
From this background of help and information I have prepared the following material that suggests feasible employment opportunities for deaf or hard of hearing people in the para-medical field.

Nursing

Nursing has always been a woman’s occupation. The training has usually been a part of a hospital program with a smattering of instruction and with much on the job training. Now the training has become a college type program with at least two years of formal instruction. Therefore, the emphasis in nursing has shifted from one of practical application to one of theory. Nurses must pass state exams and be licensed. The nurse works primarily with people.

The opportunities for the deaf woman are possible but limited. Because the nurse works so directly with patients the communication problem becomes a deterrent; intellectually, academically, and technically deaf women could be trained for the job. Hard of hearing women with good speech would not automatically be barred from entering the field. The one-to-one communication with the patient would
make this a possible career for them. However, specific areas that even the hard of hearing person could not enter would be those of operating room nurse, communicable disease nurse, or obstetrical nurse. These specialties use sterile procedures that require the use of face masks. It would be possible for a deaf or hard of hearing nurse to work as a nursery nurse, or as a physical therapist. In these specialties the gentle touch and the concern for people is more important than conversation. It must be emphasized that a deaf person should be employed only in a large hospital or clinic rather than a small one. The larger allows for specialization, but the smaller requires too many general talents including answering telephones.

The field of nursing also includes nurses' aides. Here again the deaf deaf person can learn the academics and the practical application of the job with little difficulty. But she would be eliminated where too much patient communication is a part of the job requirement, where sterile procedures are used, or where the job becomes too generalized.
The nurse aid works under supervision and has routine jobs to perform. She makes relatively few decisions, but she must follow orders accurately for the care she administers is important to the patient's welfare, recovery, and comfort.

The hard of hearing nurse aid could easily function as assistant in central supply, in the nursery, and as general assistant. Specific jobs from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles:

1. nurse nursery duty
2. nurse aid-general
3. nurse aid - central supply
4. nurse aid, nursery
5. nurse-physical therapy
6. nurse aid - physical therapy
7. nurse aid - orthopedic
8. nurse practical
9. nurse, vocational

Although the limitations are relatively great in nursing the field must not be regarded as impossible for a hearing impaired person. There is at present a young woman with a hearing impairment enrolled in a Los Angeles Junior College program for nurses. She was judged by a panel of physicians as being capable of performing the job required of nurses.

Medical Technology

The area of medical or laboratory technology offers a variety of opportunities for the deaf person. This has become one of the fastest growing occupational areas in the para-medical group. The levels of jobs range from
those requiring doctor's degrees to those requiring only a high school education, as physician, technologist, technician. The technologists and technician are differentiated by the educational requirements. The technologist is a college graduate with one or two years of special training. He technician may be just a high school graduate or college graduate. There would be no difficulty in a deaf person becoming a technician. He usually works under supervision following written directions. The technologist carries a greater responsibility. He supervises the technicians and the general running of the lab. Technician and technologist are used synonymously in describing the jobs.

Much of the work done by the technician is done in the laboratory away from people. Communication is limited to the work group and reading the written orders. The technician reports his findings in writing. He has minimal contact with sick people. On those occasions that do require contact with the sick, as for example, an electrocardiograph technician, the communication need be only minimal. The technician attaches the electrodes and since he has a machine he can easily discourage any unnecessary conversations.

The area of blood banking does not require a great deal of knowledge of chemistry and biology; therefore, conscientious persons who do not meet the high standards for medical technologists in other specialties have been trained
as blood bank technologists. Dedication, willingness
to follow instructions, absolute integrity, and watchfulness
are a few of the attributes for a blood-banking technologists.

Technologists and technicians find employment
in hospitals, clinics, medical school laboratories, and
research laboratories. The medical school laboratory
team must be highly trained. The research laboratory
provides opportunities for both highly trained scientists
and for those who like laboratory work but do not have
high academic backgrounds. Large commercial pharmaceutical
laboratories employ many technicians who have received no
formal training so have little understanding of what they
are doing. However, this is often an entry job for the
trained person or for the one who wishes to continue his edu-
cation.

The area of medical technology is an open field
for employment. Jobs are found in rural and urban areas.
The need for trained people in this area has been growing
rapidly and will continue to grow because of the advances
in science and medicine. Each new test increases the need
for new resources. New developments in equipment and the
ever-growing number of patients all make this a wide open
field.

Specific jobs from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles:

1. Assistant lab technician-high school grad

2. Scientific helper
3. Bacteriologist
4. Bacteriologist-technician
5. Biochemist
6. Biochemist technician
7. Blood bank technologist
8. Blood bank technician
9. Hematologist Technician
10. Laboratory HELPER
11. Medical technologist
12. Medical technician
13. Serology technician
14. Tissue technician
15. Microbiology technician
16. Pharmaceutical technologist
17. Pharmaceutical technician
18. Histologist—Doctor degree
19. Pathologist—Doctor degree
20. Nuclear medical technologist

**Dietetics**

Dietetics and nutrition present another possible area of employment for the deaf. This was especially recommended by the nurse educator. So much of the work is done in writing and the contact with the patient can be none at all to a minimum, with the nurse doing most of the patient contacting. The best position for the hearing impaired would be therapeutic dietitian. In this list I have included the numerous kitchen help.
Specific jobs:

1. dietician therapeutic
2. baker
3. baker helper
4. bus boy
5. chef
6. cook
7. cook helper
8. dishwasher
9. formula room workder
10. kitchen helper
11. meat cutter
12. meat cutter helper
13. pantry man
14. vegetable man
15. waitress
16. tray girls
17. pastry maker
18. special diet man

All these kitchen people would be necessary for the operation of a hospital.

Dentistry

Dental service also suggests possible positions for deaf people. The fact that there are at least two successful dentists in the country make dentistry feasible for the deaf person whose interests and motivation lead him that way. One dentist is an orthodontist in Pasadena, the other has been the dentist at the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York.
for many years.

There are relatively few opportunities for deaf or hard of hearing men or women in a small dental office. (Except as the dentist.) The smaller the setup the more general the job becomes. But the larger clinics allow for specialization and the deaf person can be absorbed into the work group. In these situations the deaf person could function as the technician who makes crowns and bridges, or as the technician who sterilizes the equipment and makes the filing mixture, or as the dental X-ray technician, the dental hygienist is the highest technological position. She is in direct contact with the patient and is a teacher to the patient. For a deaf person to do this job adequately would require much adaptation of the job. Although the adaptation might be possible, this is not likely to become the position that will seek out deaf to fill the jobs.

Specific jobs as listed in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles that might be feasible for the deaf to enter:

1. dental amalgam processor - special machine operator
2. dental assistant
3. dental ceramist
4. dental ceramist assistant
5. dental chari assembler (hydraulic furniture)
6. dental cream cooker (drug - mixing machine operator)
7. dental equipment installer and servicer
8. dental floss packer
9. dental technician
10. dental technician metal
11. orthodontic technician
13 dental surgeon
14. dental x-ray technologists
dental x-ray film assembler
16. denture waxer

**Physicians and Social Workers**

These are two high level jobs requiring skill in communication at a degree that might not be possible for the deaf person to achieve. Although I do not believe in depriving anyone the opportunity of trying I do not believe I could recommend these as feasible positions for the deaf to prepare for.

**Optics, Orthopedics, Clerical, and Veterinary**

These remaining areas have several non technical possible jobs that might be considered by deaf people. In the areas of optics and orthopedics there are jobs that require mechanical type skills, making glasses or making artificial limbs.

The clerical jobs are those necessary to run a hospital. The veterinarian is not a part of the hospital group but does have a background and education that makes him medically oriented.

The specific jobs are:

1. abrasive grader (optical goods)
2. abrasive grader helper
3. ambulance driver
4. animal caretaker (cares for animals and cages)
5. animal tender
6. arch support technician
7. artificial appliance maker (arms and legs)
8. orthopedic appliance and limb technician
9. artificial eye maker
   a. plastic eye technician
   b. glass eye maker (higher level job)
10. artificial leg and brace maker
11. artificial limb joint maker
12. artist scientist (medical illustrator)
13. assembler for glass frames
14. asylum attendant (psychiatric aide)
15. attendant occupational therapy
16. hand grinder (optical)
17. lens grinder (optical)
18. morgue man
19. molder - contact lens
20. medical voucher clerk - insurance clerk
21. medical instrument fixer - cable fabrication
22. medical librarian
23. medical record clerk
24. orthopedic boot and shoe designer and maker
25. orthopedic cast specialist
26. orthoptic technician (eye exercise)
27. pharmacy clerk
28. pharmacy helper
29. sterile product processor (drugs)
30. sterilizer (autoclave)
31. veterinarian research
32. veterinarian assistant
In the area of employment the problem of deafness is one of communication. This is the problem recognized by the deaf people and the educators of the deaf alike. Yet, I cannot help feeling that there are times when the communication problem is overemphasized to the point of doing a disservice to the deaf people. Without being completely unrealistic if one looked at a job and thought "the communication here will make this impossible as the job is now set up, but if we did this or that, the deaf person could do this job." Then I think we would be thinking creatively, positively, and to the advantage of the deaf person. Unless we do a little more dreaming, be more visionary, and spark the deaf person to act for himself in his own interest there will be little change or progress in the education or status of the deaf person for another hundred years or more. I had not prepared my paper with the thought of making 'way out' suggestions, but I feel that opportunities to be 'way out' will be available and we must grasp them.
Bibliography


