# INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
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## Journal of Phi Beta Delta
## Honor Society for International Scholars

*SCIENTIA MUTUA MUNDI*

# International Research and Review

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**Editor**

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## Journal of Phi Beta Delta
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# Creating Inclusive Higher Education Environments: Mentoring Culturally Diverse Faculty

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative duoethnographic case study was to examine the experiences and perceptions of mentoring culturally diverse faculty in institutions of higher education (IHE). The growing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in higher education calls for a more inclusive, representative teaching workforce. Having a diverse representation of educators benefits students because instructors can serve as role models, mentors, advocates, or language and/or cultural translators. Although an emphasis has been placed on increasing the recruitment of diverse faculty, there is a need to go beyond recruitment to identify and implement strategies and policies that will retain and support them. Using the frameworks of intersectionality and culturally responsive practice, this duo ethnographic case study identified eight major themes shared by three culturally and linguistically diverse female faculty members from three disciplines at an IHE. The findings of this study could benefit new and seasoned faculty and administrators in higher education by identifying mentoring tips and strategies to improve the experiences of diverse faculty and to address any barriers and challenges they may face in IHE.

*Keywords: mentoring, higher education mentoring, faculty mentoring, duoethnography*

Faculty of color continue to be significantly underrepresented across American higher education, particularly in tenure-track and senior academic positions (Kelly & McCann, 2014; Lin & Kennette, 2022; Thorne et al., 2021; Fox Tree & Vaid, 2022; Turner et al., 2008; Zambrana et al., 2015). National data continues to report this disproportional representation (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2020; American Council on Education [ACE], 2024; American Psychological Association [APA], 2023; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023; The Education Trust, 2022).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2023), in Fall 2022, 72% of faculty were White (35% female and 37% male), while 7% were Black (4% female and 3 % male). Also, the report showed that faculty of color predominantly held non-professorial ranks. The AAUP (2020) reported that underrepresented minority faculty members make up only 12.9% of full-time faculty members, of which 6.0% were Black or African American. The report further showed that women faculty held lower-ranked or no-rank positions, and, in particular, women faculty of color were the most overrepresented in lower ranks and underrepresented among full professors and tenured positions.

Similarly, the American Council on Education (2024) data showed that in 2021, 69.4% of full-time faculty and 56.2% of newly hired full-time faculty were White, while 6.1% of all full-time faculty and 9.3% of new faculty were Black or African American, with the faculty of color holding lower academic ranks. Finally, the American Psychological Association (2023) report from the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs documented ongoing barriers to tenure, promotion, and retention that psychology professors of color face. Hence, although institutions publicly commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion, persistent structural barriers, including implicit bias, isolation, limited access to professional networks, and inequitable workloads, continue to impede career advancement for many faculty of color.

The underrepresentation of faculty of color is a concern, given the increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations in higher education. It calls for a more inclusive and diverse teaching workforce that is representative of the student body. Representation among faculty enhances student engagement, belonging, and academic success (Pham & Tsai, 2024). Diverse educators contribute to inclusive pedagogy by integrating multiple perspectives and culturally responsive practices, which improve learning outcomes for all students (White-Lewis et al., 2021).

Addressing the underrepresentation of minority issues demands first understanding their experiences as faculty. Most underrepresented faculty do not feel supported in their careers, evaluated fairly for tenure and/or promotion, and made to feel appreciated and valued in their institutions (Davis et al., 2021; King & Upadhyay, 2022; Lin & Kennette, 2022). Additionally, diverse faculty often experience isolation, microaggressions, and disproportionate service burdens related to diversity work, which negatively affect job satisfaction and career progression (Davis et al., 2021). Moreover, international and multilingual faculty face additional challenges in navigating U.S. academic norms, cultural differences, and language differences (Adebayo & Sunderman, 2023; Msengi & Clabaugh, 2025).

Next, the interlocking effects of gender, race, and ethnicity for faculty women of color (FWC) further impede their success as faculty members (Lin & Kennette, 2022; Tree & Vaid, 2022; Turner, 2002). These faculty are underrepresented at senior ranks across disciplines, particularly at research-intensive universities (Tree & Vaid, 2022). Rarely are they considered for administrative positions (Lin & Kennette, 2022; Turner, 2002). Additionally, Lin and Kennette (2022) reported that women of color in IHE experience prejudice in aspects of their professional responsibilities, including teaching, mentoring students, research, and service, which impede them from advancing in their academic careers. Turner (2002) identified unique experiences reported by FWC, including feeling isolated and underrepresented; the salience of race over gender; being underemployed and overused by departments and/or institutions; being torn between family, community, and career; and being challenged by students.

Although the various experiences highlighted in the review of experiences of women of color in this paper are not exhaustive, it is important to note that these issues shared are rarely considered by IHE when designing faculty mentoring programs, which makes one wonder what then is the experience of mentoring by women faculty of color, which is the essence of this study. Consequently, for faculty of color, particularly female faculty of color, to be resilient and

overcome the challenges placed before them, they need uniquely designed support that addresses issues that impact their advancement, in addition to what typical peer faculty need to secure tenure, promotion, and appointments.

Studies suggest that mentoring can be an effective strategy for supporting diverse faculty members and can enhance retention, research productivity, and success for underrepresented groups (Garrigues & Olukotun, 2023; Giancola et al., 2016; Johnson, 2002; Msengi & Clabaugh, 2025; Yun et al., 2016; Zehra et al., 2023). These studies have targeted enhance faculty development (Giancola et al., 2016); attending to new faculty challenges to balance their responsibilities of research, teaching, and service (Johnson, 2002; Yun et al., 2016), provides psychosocial support, helps faculty navigate institutional culture, and mitigates feelings of isolation (Msengi & Clabaugh, 2025) and overcome challenges and thrive in their new academic environment (Garrigues & Olukotun, 2023; Zehra et al., 2023).

Previous research on mentoring faculty of color indicates a need for mentoring that considers race and ethnicity as a factor for effective mentoring (Davis et al., 2021; Kelly & McCann, 2014; King & Upadhyay, 2022; Msengi & Clabaugh, 2025; Thorne et al., 2021; Zambrana et al., 2015). Some of the issues that focus on mentoring faculty of color reported in these previous studies include the barriers in mentoring faculty of color (David et al., 2021); cross-racial relationship (Thorne et al., 2021); the need for exclusionary mentoring spaces for faculty of color (King & Upadhyay, 2022); mentoring of foreign-born faculty (Msengi & Clabaugh, 2025) and the need, strategies and knowledge for effective mentoring minority faculty (Zambrana et al., 2015).

Hence, a focused investigation into the perceptions, experiences, and practices of mentoring for FWC is necessary and timely. This study is justified by gaps in existing literature, inequities in faculty experiences, and the urgent need for evidence-based mentoring models that promote equity and retention. The study acknowledges that the term "mentoring" has been defined in several ways. For instance, Doyle et al. (2016) defined mentoring as "both a relationship and a process between at least two individuals that provide support and an exchange of knowledge and expertise" (p. 305). Peeler and Jane (2005) described mentoring as a formal or informal ongoing supportive relationship. Johnson (2016) defined mentoring as "a personal relationship in which a more experienced (usually older) faculty member or professional acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) graduate student or junior professional." Consequently, in the current study, the researchers considered the need to examine what mentoring meant to the participants, even as they explored their perceptions and experiences of mentoring.

## Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two theoretical frameworks: intersectionality and cultural responsiveness.

### Intersectionality Framework

The first theoretical framework that provides a lens for understanding the perceptions and experiences of linguistically and culturally diverse faculty in higher education is Crenshaw's

(1989) intersectionality framework. Crenshaw (1989), an African American feminist scholar, coined the term *Intersectionality* to understand how the intersections of variables such as gender, race, class, or ableism impact one's social identity. She used the framework to present the nature of oppression experienced by African American women based on their various identity components, such as social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, and race, which are sources of oppression (Chapple, 2019; Skyer, 2021). She argued that identity markers do not exist independently and that each informs the others (Crenshaw, 1989). Skyer (2021) stated that the intersection between social and political identities empowers certain people and disadvantages others. In research, the theory of Intersectionality has been used to examine the interactions between different aspects of social identity and an increasingly wider range of processes and systems.

The intersectionality framework was used in this study to examine how aspects of the participating faculty's identities, including race, language, culture, and country of origin, intersected with their mentoring experiences in IHE. In using the framework, the research examined how the three tenets of Intersectionality, including multiple systems of social stratification, interlocking systems of oppression and domination, and standpoint epistemology (Carastathis, 2016; Hankivsky, 2014; Olatunbosun & Musyoka, 2021), provided the lens to understand the shared mentoring experiences by the three faculty in IHE.

The element of multiple systems of social stratification shaped the lens through which the faculty understood race, language, culture, and country of origin, influencing their views and experiences of mentoring. The multiple systems of interlocking social stratification provided the researchers with a lens for understanding how different forms of discrimination, oppression, and power dynamics in IHEs interact and reinforce one another, impacting faculty perceptions and experiences with mentoring. Finally, standpoint epistemology, which focuses on what is considered knowledge shared by participants influenced by their social positions and lived experiences, enabled the researchers to analyze and interpret the shared voices of the three faculty members. Hence, adopting an intersectionality framework in the current research enabled the researcher to reflect on their experiences as participants, analyze them, and document experiences that do not result from individual and independent factors but from the intersections of various social determinants and power structures.

**A Culturally Responsive Framework for Mentoring**

According to Gay (2010), a culturally responsive framework values, honors, affirms, and utilizes culture as a strength to enhance academic, personal, professional, and social achievement. Culturally responsive individuals are aware of their beliefs and how their world impacts others, with multiple perspectives in mind; hence, their commitment to challenging the status quo and becoming advocates for social justice (Gay, 2010; Sprott & Msengi, 2019). Consequently, these individuals employ strategies to identify resources that help shape practices and policies for success in the educational setting, including those focused on mentoring.

In the context of mentoring, Lindsay-Dennis et al. (2011) noted that cultural responsiveness can be used as a tool that allows one to tap into and value cultural knowledge, prior experiences,

and performance styles of diverse individuals. Additionally, culturally responsive mentoring requires the cultural orientations and experiences of members to be integrated in order to improve each mentor-mentee interaction (Han & Onchwari, 2018; Hofstede, 2009; Hofstede & McCrae, 2004; Rosinski, 2003). In particular, to sustain and develop positive mentoring relationships, the cultural attributes expressed by mentor and mentee must be considered.

In IHE mentoring, a culturally responsive framework becomes essential because culturally and linguistically diverse faculty bring unique viewpoints from their personal and social histories to the academy (McCombs, 1989). Adopting this lens enables mentors and mentees to overcome challenges, such as negative stereotyping, resentment, and the lack of effective management networks, which may lead to an imbalance in professional environments (Han & Onchwari, 2018; Lynch, 2002). Failure to attend to the unique identities of culturally diverse faculty may result in stress because some faculty devote considerable time to meeting traditional expectations of the academy: excellence in teaching, the production of published research, and service to a community of scholars. An example of such stress is pressure to meet institutional requirements, such as pursuing tenure, which affects the retention of most culturally and linguistically diverse faculty (Diggs et al., 2009).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative design, specifically, a duoethnographic approach (Norris, 2017; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Duoethnography is a collaborative research design that allows two or more individuals to provide similar and different meanings to a common phenomenon as it was experienced throughout their lives by critically juxtaposing their stories (Norris, 2017; Norris & Sawyer, 2012; Norris et al., 2012). This methodology has been used in transformative research aimed at collecting voices addressing issues of diversity, including culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation, among others (Agosto et al., 2015; Wagaman, 2013).

The study utilized a duoethnographic research design to explore the perceptions and experiences of three higher education faculty members. Although all three participants identified as racially Black, they represented diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including African American and African immigrant perspectives. Additionally, each faculty member possessed multiple identities, which significantly shaped their perspectives and experiences with mentoring in academic settings. Hence, each researcher shared their unique perceptions and experiences, and the study combined these individual autoethnographies, creating a collaborative duoethnography that highlighted the common emerging themes of how their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds intersect with their multiple identities, representing perceptions and experiences of mentoring culturally diverse faculty in higher education institutions.

### Research Questions

This duoethnographic study was guided by two main research questions.

**RQ 1:** How do culturally and linguistically diverse faculty construct their understandings of mentorship, and what factors shape these definitions?

**RQ 2:** What is the mentoring experience of culturally and linguistically diverse faculty in IHE?

## Participants and Setting

In qualitative research, the sample size is generally small to enable in-depth analysis, allowing a more nuanced understanding of the studied phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guest et al., 2006). In the case of autoethnography, the sample size can be as small as one because of the focus (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ellis et al., 2010). The current study involved three participants: two faculty members born and raised internationally, and the third, a researcher, is African American. Although the number of participants is small, it is not a limitation given the study's purpose: not to generalize or represent the target population, but to explore the specific phenomenon and develop a deeper understanding.

Additionally, with autoethnography, the researcher is both a researcher and a participant (Norris, 2017). Hence, this duoethnographic inquiry weaved back and forth, juxtaposing the narratives of three faculty members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and educational disciplines. In this dialogic process, the three researchers brought their own narratives to critique and deconstruct the nature of faculty mentoring in higher education institutions.

The current study adopted Norris's (2017) four principles of duoethnography, including:
1.  Duo ethnography has a dialogic nature, allowing the researchers to engage in open conversation about a phenomenon.
2.  Each voice is made explicit by juxtaposing individual conversations to present both thesis and antithesis and to facilitate the readers in forming their own synthesis.
3.  Individual perspectives are socially constructed. Hence, a change of perspective is central to the methodology. During a conversation, researchers may change their views and add to or omit parts of their original stories.
4.  Both similarities and differences between the researchers' points of view are included, with differences perceived as a strength.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. The first stage was narrative collection. This stage began with the researchers sharing their experiences with mentoring among themselves. Upon recognizing the uniqueness of their mentoring experiences, the three authors each wrote a personal narrative describing their mentoring journeys and shared these narratives with one another. Each participant reviewed their own artifacts, including records, emails, photographs, letters, and various memorabilia, to aid in recalling memories and help them craft their personal narrative. The stories included their experiences as mentors and mentees across various institutions of higher education where they had been involved as students and faculty. Following the exchange of narratives, the second stage of data collection involved the three researchers actively listening to one another, making comments, asking questions, and seeking clarification on one another's perceptions of mentoring. Based on this feedback, each researcher reflected further on their own experiences, integrating their interpretations with those offered by the other two authors. The final stage of data collection involved reviewing artifacts, such as

records, emails, photographs, letters, and other memorabilia, to support memory recall and guide the style of narrative presentation. This stage was conducted last to substantiate and strengthen the narratives, fill gaps not captured in earlier stages, enhance memory recall, and ensure that the original storytelling remained authentic and unbiased. It also reinforced the evidence for the themes identified later during data analysis.

The current study adopted Connelly and Clandinin's (2000, 2006) three-dimensional space narrative structure of analysis: temporality (time), sociality (interaction), and context (place). In their analysis, temporality focused on their mentoring experiences in the past and present, as well as their expectations or desires for the future. For sociality, the researchers examined their interactions as both mentors and mentees. Finally, the analysis examined their stories in various contexts, including their institutions as students and faculty.

Connelly and Clandinin's (2000, 2006) three-dimensional space narrative structure of analysis enabled the researchers to understand each other's narrative and facilitated the next step, thematic analysis. In conducting the thematic analysis, the researchers adopted the six-step approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). Individually, the researchers first used open coding to segment the stories into codes. After open coding, the researchers shared the codes and, together, used axial coding to develop categories by grouping similar codes. The final step of thematic analysis involved focused coding, in which the researchers determined the themes or patterns that emerged.

## Findings

The findings were presented as responses to the two main research questions that emerged during the study's early discussions.

### RQ 1: How do culturally and linguistically diverse faculty construct their understandings of mentorship, and what factors shape these definitions?

Participants held different definitions of a mentor, depending on the purpose, context, and format of the mentoring process. First, all the participants identified a mentor as a knowledgeable other who guides and supports them. For instance, one of the participants shared the following:

*I understood a mentor as a mature other who shared their knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience with another (me) to support improvement. On the other hand, the mentee received a mentor's knowledge, skills, and expertise that guided their progress toward improved skills, performance, promotion, and satisfaction.*

A second participant defined a mentor as

*"one that is familiar with the intricacies of the organization, such as expectations, rules, regulations, and other key variables, which can help the mentee navigate through and succeed in that environment."*

Finally, the third participant said

*"The mentor encompasses skills and knowledge to assist in the growth process of the*

*relationship. This active participation from both results in collective and cooperative orientations towards nurturing emotional support and the development of trust."*

Additionally, the participants defined a mentor based on what they expected that person's role to be, which varied by purpose and context. All three saw the role of the mentor as one to support them in their academic pursuits as new faculty or towards promotion. Also, the participants perceived the mentor as someone who could assist them in navigating their lives in a new work environment, whether in an IHE or outside academia. Furthermore, the faculty saw the mentor as someone who helped them navigate power dynamics across various contexts.

One participant described her mentor as "*someone who guided me in understanding the do's and don'ts of my new environment.*"

To be an effective guide, she emphasized the following characteristics of a mentor:

*"My mentors were kind, nonjudgmental, and helpful. Having a mentor was transformational, but it was important to approach it correctly. At times, it felt like having a supportive friend, thoughtful partner, gentle critic, helpful guide, or sounding board."*

A second participant articulated her expectations of effective mentorship, identifying several critical components, including:

*"Experience, respect, reciprocity, shared values, clear expectations, and being valued and validated are critical components of mentoring, irrespective of the mentoring adopted."* Reflecting on her most impactful mentoring experience, this second participant said:

*"My mentor's friendliness, patience in listening to me, and her validation of my concern from my perspective, coupled with her clear guidance, made her quickly become my unassigned mentor. I recall the mutual respect and shared value, and together, we set goals."*

A third participant pointed out that,

*"The mentor fostered an atmosphere of trust and value, which helped us achieve our goals through our regular interactions. During our meetings, we openly talked about personal, spiritual, and professional challenges."*

In addition to the characteristics they valued in a mentor, two participants described traits or behaviors they considered ineffective: The first participant highlighted several indicative factors that may undermine the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, saying,

*Some telltale signs include ineffective communication, no-shows, disinterest in the mentoring relationship, unhealthy emotional reactions to mentoring conversations, and failure to meet meaningful goals.*

Similarly, the second participant identified additional challenges, saying,

*I noticed poor communication, lack of commitment, conflicts of interest, personality differences, and the mentor's lack of understanding and experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion experience posed a challenge for the mentoring relationship.*

**RQ 2: What is the mentoring experience of culturally and linguistically diverse faculty in IHE?**

During data analysis to examine the mentoring experiences of culturally and diverse faculty, eight themes emerged, which are discussed below.

**Theme 1. Mutual Respect**

Mutual respect is key in every mentoring relationship (Cross et al., 2019; Msengi et al., 2013). Both the mentor and mentee should approach the relationship with respect for each other's experiences, knowledge, and backgrounds. They should acknowledge and honor the differences in age, experience, and expertise. Ultimately, the mentor and mentee should treat each other as equals, recognizing that both parties have something valuable to contribute to the relationship.

All three participants cited the importance of mutual respect and value in a mentoring relationship. In particular, the participants identified mutual respect regarding how ideas and perspectives were shared and adopted during the mentoring process. Irrespective of differences in background, identities, and experiences between the mentor and mentee, this mutual respect was identified as a determinant of the mentoring relationship's continuation. Mentors and mentees need to embrace the diversity of thought that comes from each other's different backgrounds and experiences. The mentors need to encourage mentees to share their thoughts, ideas, and goals openly, even if they differ from the mentors' opinions.

One mentor described her experience:

*I strongly felt that having mentors had a positive influence on my personal growth and ability to build career resilience. I held my mentors to high standards because they offered the insights I needed to succeed, and they did so in a way that was both caring and respectful. Their willingness to support me, despite my lack of cultural understanding or experience in certain tasks, never made me feel less than or inadequate. This relationship, rooted in mutual respect, promoted intellectual stimulation, enhanced self- confidence, increased personal happiness, self-awareness, advanced creativity skills, and fostered a deep sense of belonging.*

Conversely, the participants discussed mentors who were critical and unwilling to listen to the mentee's experience or ideas. Instead, the mentor judged the mentee's views as wrong or unacceptable and pushed their own views instead.

For example, one participant expressed the absence of mutual respect in the mentoring relationship and process:

*Additionally, whenever I raised issues that concerned me, the mentor tended to downplay them, reducing them to misunderstandings or to cultural differences as an immigrant student or faculty member. In this setup, my mentoring experience was in a listening, receiving mode, and I rarely asked questions.*

Another participant talked about the lack of mutual respect regarding meetings:

*One of my informal mentors turned out to be inconsistent and unreliable. After promising me a meeting, she backed out and offered numerous excuses. It would have been better if she had simply told me she didn't have time, rather than giving me false hope. I regret sharing my thoughts*

*with her, as it feels like she didn't have my best interests at heart.*

The participants remarked that when communicating ideas and perceptions, the mentor must present them as suggestions, provide details about each suggestion, and allow the mentee to adapt the ideas to meet their needs and interests. The three participants agreed that mutual respect and setting boundaries need to be discussed and set at the beginning of the mentoring.

**Theme 2. Matching Mentors and Mentees**

Matching mentors and mentees is a crucial step in establishing effective mentoring relationships (Deng et al., 2022; Yun et al., 2016). A successful match can significantly impact the outcomes of the mentoring partnership. It is important to match mentors and mentees whose goals and objectives align or complement each other (Matarazzo & Finkelsein, 2015). If the mentor has experience or expertise in a specific area that the mentee wants to learn about, it can create a meaningful and productive partnership. Hence, it is important to consider the mentor's professional background and experience. A mentor with relevant experience and expertise can provide valuable guidance and insights to the mentee.

Additionally, it is important to consider the cultural backgrounds, values, personality traits, communication styles, and the mentee's learning preferences and needs, among other identities of diversity that intersect in both the mentor's and mentee's lives. One participant stated,

*The mentoring relationship is not established if a mismatch exists between my goals and the mentor's abilities, availability, and willingness. Many reasons can lead to unsatisfactory mentoring relationships, such as mismatched goals, unrealistic expectations, lack of effective boundaries, cultural or personality differences, or lack of alignment in values and vision.*

Another participant shared,

*"Sometimes, there was a communication breakdown* due to *personality and cultural differences, and I did not share similar values with my assigned mentor.* Additionally, because the *assigned mentor held a higher status than me, conflicts of interest and trust issues affected the mentor/ mentee relationship. Whenever I raised concerns, the mentor often downplayed them, attributing them to misunderstandings or cultural differences as an immigrant."*

Discussing the impact of considering cultural matching, a third participant remarked,

*"My expectations of the mentoring process exceeded my previous experiences because the relationship became reciprocal in terms of cultural and social expectations."*

**Theme 3. Mentor-Mentee Shared Values**

Although the mentor-mentee relationship varies with context and purpose from case to case, the mentor and mentee must establish a shared vision early, guided by a common interest and purpose, to ensure the mentoring relationship continues or to decide to discontinue the mentoring partnership (Straus et al., 2013). The initial meeting allows mentors and mentees to share personal experiences and build common ground around their beliefs, expectations, and areas where they need support. Participants reported that common-interest findings strengthened the mentoring relationship.

One participant articulated,
*"I had mentors with whom I felt mutual respect and shared values, and together, we set goals."*

Another participant emphasized the importance of fostering authentic relationships through a shared vision, saying, "Creating authentic relationships nurtured as a successful component for *shared topics for discussion, including timelines for projects, should be shared*."

A third participant provided an in-depth perspective on the concept of a shared vision, which she viewed as fundamental to her roles as both mentor and mentee. She stated,
*"The mentor and mentee have a shared vision that connects their mentoring relationship. Every time I have received a request to mentor someone, our first meeting has been about getting to know each other to ensure we are aligned on strengths, weaknesses, personalities, communication styles, needs, and expectations. Once these characteristics are communicated and there is a mutually agreed-upon alignment, we proceed with the mentoring relationship. If there are inadequate commonalities, I recognize it and suggest that although we cannot move forward with the mentoring relationship, we can maintain a collegial relationship and support each other in many ways."*

**Theme 4. Cohort Mentoring**

The participants shared their group-mentoring experiences and how to cultivate it. Cohort mentoring, also known as group mentoring or peer mentoring, is a mentoring approach that involves pairing a group of mentees with one or more mentors, creating a collective learning and support environment. Unlike traditional one-on-one mentoring, where a single mentor is paired with an individual mentee, cohort mentoring brings together multiple mentees who share common goals, interests, or characteristics. The challenge reported by participants occurred when group mentoring overlooked an individual's needs, leaving the mentee without a sense of belonging.

One of the participants expressed:
*Sometimes when I raised my concerns or made suggestions, I got labeled as complaining, impossible, far-fetched, out of the scope of the group plan, or simply different.*

Furthermore, the three participants noted that the matching of mentors and mentees can impact group mentoring outcomes, sometimes leading to mentees drop out or even the dissolution of the mentoring group. The challenges faced in group mentoring are not solely related to the mentor; they can also stem from differences among the mentees within a given group.

One participant illustrated this point by recounting experiences from group mentoring sessions, stating,
*"On two occasions, I noticed that faculty variables presented challenges, including the mentee's age, gender, race, and years of teaching experience. While some mentees attended the first two meetings, they subsequently ceased attendance and did not respond to further email communications. During our initial meetings, I detected competitive tensions, particularly due to the seniority of some of the faculty members involved."*

Another participant echoed similar sentiments, noting that,

*The mentee seemed to wonder why we were paired and felt that it would not be a worthy process from the first meeting. The mentee frequently canceled and rescheduled the appointments, which ultimately hindered our ability to meet. Consequently, we decided to discontinue the entire mentoring group."*

These reflections underscore the importance of carefully considering the compatibility of mentor-mentee pairs to facilitate effective group mentoring experiences.

### Theme 5. Communication and Reciprocal Dialogue

All the participants' responses revealed that communication was a determining factor in the success of their mentoring relationship (Straus et al., 2013). Communication assists in building a stable and secure mentoring relationship. Due to the diverse backgrounds of mentors and mentees, clear communication is vital to ensure understanding between the two. Also, two-way (reciprocal) communication supports mentoring relationships and ownership. Mentors need to ensure their communication is collegial, supportive, and non-judgmental so that it is not misinterpreted as disregarding the mentee's perspective or as forcing their own advice.

Sharing about her experience with regard to communication,

One participant shared: *Effective communication of mentor responsibilities is important for a successful mentoring relationship. Also, mentees need to share the specific types of support they seek from their mentors.*

A second participant shared her experience with communication during mentoring by highlighting how the communication occurred:

*Meetings were delivered virtually, face-to-face, and by phone. We conversed on the telephone and face-to-face before and after school daily. Open and honest communication was essential to accomplish goals.*

Finally, the third participant shared the importance of mentors and mentees communicating their feelings about the mentoring and their decision to continue or discontinue it:

*Mentors should respect mentees' time. If they are not available, they should let the mentee know. If what the mentee wants is outside their expertise or comfort zone, they should say so instead of giving out useless information.*

### Theme 6. Mentoring Format

Mentoring can take various forms, each tailored to different needs and contexts (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). Examples include formal and informal, assigned, individual choice or request, one-on-one, or group mentoring. The participants offered insights into various forms of mentoring experience. They also suggested that the type of mentoring should be a choice, as some individuals may prefer one-on-one mentoring, while others are okay with group mentoring. The first participant shared her experiences with mentorship by stating,

*Throughout my life, I have had mentors assigned to me and have volunteered to assist in achieving meaningful goals. The first mentor assigned to me was an educator teaching in a middle school. She provided support in various ways. We conversed on the telephone and face-to-face. Also, I engage in more than one mentor for multiple purposes. As a spiritual, professional, and*

*personal mentor, I understand the significance of engaging multiple mentors. Humans are multi-dimensional, with various aspects of one's life co-occurring. Mentees can advance valuable viewpoints by triangulating advice from various individuals. One mentor is unlikely to be an expert in all things.*

A second participant concurred with the notion of having multiple mentors, stating,
*"We need more than one mentor to not feel like burdening one mentor.*

The third participant echoed the sentiments of the first two, clarifying that,
*"Mentors can be categorized as formal or informal, professional or non-professional, and may engage in face-to-face or virtual mentoring. Mentors may also adopt various titles, including student, peer, faculty, spiritual, and cultural or identity mentors. The types of mentors have evolved in response to my life circumstances, career objectives, challenges encountered, and the specific mentoring I require to address my needs and bridge any gaps."*

## Theme 7. Building Trust

Trust is a foundational element of effective mentoring relationships (Hagemeir et al., 2013). A strong sense of trust between mentors and mentees is essential for open communication, mutual respect, and meaningful growth. Participants shared what trust means in mentoring relations, how trust impacts the mentoring process, and how to develop trust in mentoring. Being sensitive to mentees' needs indicates that mentors are responsible for supporting and scaffolding mentees to nurture satisfaction and trust in the mentoring process.

Mentors must be honest with mentees when providing feedback on their performance, areas for improvement, and building their strengths. All participants agreed that building trust was one of a mentor's good qualities. Mentoring relationships involve vulnerability and risk in sharing stories about self-experiences:

The first participant stated that a trusted mentor acts as a valuable resource.

The second participant elaborated on the critical importance of trust in mentoring relationships. *True mentoring begins with building trust in the relationship. I remember being assigned to a mentor who held a higher status than me, and conflicts of interest and trust issues affected the mentor/mentee relationship.*

Finally, the third participant emphasized that,
*For a mentee to become a great mentor, robust support and trust must guide the collaborative interaction. A mentor must create a climate of trust and worthiness. Active participation from the mentor and mentee leads to a collective and cooperative approach that nurtures emotional support and the development of trust.*

## Theme 8. Mentoring Exit

A graceful mentoring exit is a crucial phase in the mentoring relationship because it allows both mentors and mentees to reflect on the progress made, lessons learned, and the impact of the mentoring journey (Alred et al., 2000). Exiting mentoring varies with each relationship.

For some, there is a set time for beginning and ending the mentoring relationship. In other

cases, the mentoring continues until the mentee feels confident and prepared to navigate their situation independently. Additionally, some transition the mentoring experience into a partnership or friendship, or become each other's peer mentors. Finally, in other cases, the mentoring ends because they both realize they are not well-matched and compatible to continue with the mentoring. Two of the participants in the current study shared their experience of mentoring exit as follows:

The first participant said

*Once a relationship is no longer working, it is best to have an honest conversation to see what can be improved or end it professionally. Sometimes, mentoring relationships dissolve on their own.*

The second participant stated

*The nature of the exit from mentorship has always varied. In one case, after a year or two, the informal mentorship evolved into a partnership, with roles such as co-principal investigator in research and publications. Years later, I find that I am no longer merely a mentor to this individual, but rather a friend; we occasionally connect to discuss both professional and personal matters. In another scenario, the meetings felt formal and one-sided, and since all mentorships have a beginning and an end, this particular relationship concluded without further development. Conversely, in a different mentoring experience, more than 15 years later, my mentor continues to be a guiding figure for me, and I still reach out to her for advice from time to time.*

## Discussion

The findings indicated that culturally and linguistically diverse faculty defined mentoring based on their experiences. How one defines mentoring acts as a mental filter, or lens, that dictates how they perceive it, behave toward it, and experience it. Overall, what emerged as common in their definitions was mentoring as an ongoing, supportive relationship between seasoned professionals or faculty members and their less experienced counterparts, which can be both formal and informal. Additionally, the findings revealed their perception of what mentoring should involve, including professional guidance, expertise, and emotional support. Also, they shared their perception of what an effective and ineffective mentoring process would entail. The shared understanding among the three participants of an effective mentor's characteristics focused on positive interpersonal skills, effective communication (listening, questioning, and feedback), trust, commitment, and ethics.

When aligning the findings with the two main theoretical frameworks that guided the study (intersectionality and culturally responsive mentoring), we noted that the emerging themes were related. Importantly, mutual respect emerged as a central theme that integrated the others because it highlighted issues of identity, cultural diversity, and power, which are key to both theories and were mentioned across all the themes, indicating experiences in the mentoring relationships (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Interactions among the varied experiences that emerged in the study*
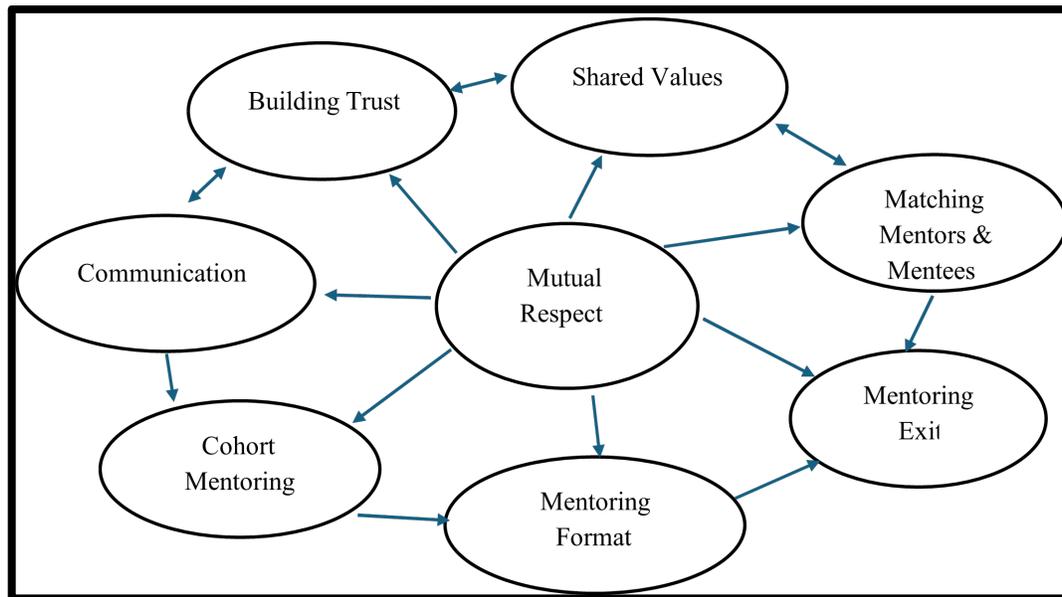


Within an intersectionality framework, mutual respect underscores recognition of mentors' and mentees' identities, how those identities intersect, and how they can affect shared values and the matching of mentors and mentees. When identities are respected, power imbalances are recognized, and negotiation can be conducted respectfully, fostering trust and shaping how they communicate and engage in shared decision-making. Through the lens of the intersectionality framework, mutual respect is significant because it rejects deficit views in which the mentor sees themselves as the custodians of the knowledge or skills at the center of the mentoring experience. Instead, mutual respect recognizes the mentee's cultural wealth and experience and takes a counter-hegemonic stance that disrupts hierarchical mentoring models. Hence, mutual respect enables the mentor and mentee to engage in effective communication and reciprocal dialogue, and it also supports smooth interaction in any form of mentoring, particularly in cohort mentoring, where every mentee needs to feel secure in sharing their perspectives and experiences.

Conversely, within a culturally responsive framework, mutual respect shapes how mentoring programs match mentors and mentees, ensuring that in any match the mentee's lived experiences are validated, their linguistic and cultural identities affirmed, and cultural humility is demonstrated. In doing so, the mentor adopts an asset-based approach to mentoring that recognizes and encourages reciprocal dialogue, focuses on shared values, and, in turn, builds trust in the mentoring relationship. Hence, aligning the mentor-mentee match within a culturally responsive framework shows that the mentoring program needs to consider both the mentor's and the mentee's linguistic and cultural backgrounds, communication styles, and shared or complementary lived experiences. This is particularly important when engaging in cohort mentoring because mutual respect creates a linguistically and culturally safe space for reciprocal dialogue about individual differences within the group, emphasizes active listening, and supports the negotiation of cohort goals while respecting individual mentees' linguistic and cultural identities and avoiding cultural microaggressions. Additionally, mutual respect in cohort mentoring protects marginalized voices

within the cohort, preventing dominant identities from overshadowing others.

Finally, within both the theoretical framework and the mentoring format, the mentoring exit is influenced by mutual respect, in which the mentee's autonomy is recognized and abrupt, extractive endings are prevented. Instead, the mentee's sense of ownership of the mentoring process, as defined and described by the mentee, would inform the decision to maintain, end, or transition the mentoring relationship into a more informal one.

## Conclusions and Implications

The shared definition of mentorship and the expectation of an effective mentor imply that it is important to understand and implement the ground rules during the first mentor-mentee meeting (Wong & Premkumar, 2007). In setting the ground rules, both the mentor and mentee need to define what mentoring means and their goals and expectations from the mentoring relationship. Communication and reciprocal dialogue are key when setting ground rules; therefore, mentoring programs should have a clear communication policy for both the mentor and the mentee. To support communication, there is a need for seminars and workshops for both the mentor and mentee to discuss the purpose of the mentoring and to engage in a ground rules session to ensure both understand their roles and responsibilities, gauge their commitment and ability to undertake the role, and establish ground rules.

Furthermore, the eight themes that emerged to explain the experiences of the three researchers in the study point to the heterogeneous mentoring experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse faculty, requiring one to uncover what Hall (1976) identified as a cultural iceberg. In defining the cultural iceberg, Hall said that 10% of culture is visible, while the remaining 90% lies beneath the surface. Thus, mentors and mentees who adopt a culturally responsive and an intersectionality framework must be aware of the invisible factors that may impact the mentoring relationship. With this understanding, and from the findings of the current study, important elements in mentoring, e.g., matching mentors and mentees, mentoring format, communication and reciprocal dialogue, mutual respect, building trust, and mentoring exit, may be interpreted through different lenses, depending on the mentor's or mentee's cultural and linguistic backgrounds that build their intersectional identity. Consequently, mentoring program managers need to align with the iceberg concept by running a pilot match to identify potential issues and fine-tune the process. Even after matching, there is a need for consistent mentoring supervision to identify any challenges, provide mentoring support to the mentor, and discuss the possibility of a mentor change, if needed.

The implication is that mentoring programs in IHEs that aim to foster effective, productive mentoring of diverse faculty need to create forums that allow both mentees and mentors to engage in reflective questioning, active listening, and insights into ethical issues to be considered before, during, and after the mentoring relationship. Additionally, mentoring programs need to develop assessments (Legler, 2023) that target understanding and addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse faculty to avoid assumptions that lead diverse faculty to opt out of or become inactive in the mentoring program. To do this, mentoring program managers need to explore and design an effective mentor-mentee matching process using various strategies, such as personality

assessments, algorithmic matching, self-matching opportunities, and mentee and mentor surveys.

## Limitations and Recommendations

Faculty diversity includes faculty members with diverse international backgrounds. A limitation of the current study is the nature of the participants, who are all female and include both international faculty members of African descent. While the small sample size does not undermine the study's findings, the insights gained from these three faculty experiences could inform the development of a larger, survey-based study. Such research would broaden the faculty sample's diversity and shift from personal narratives to a more generalizable study.

Many universities invest in faculty professional development and mentoring. However, based on this study's findings, the researchers recommend that higher education institutions incorporate an evaluation component into their mentoring programs to gather data on the impact of these initiatives. This data is essential for supporting the retention of diverse faculty members and aligning with the increasing diversity of the student population. Similarly, the authors recommend that universities reexamine their student mentoring initiatives to ensure that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds benefit from these programs and are encouraged to trust and engage with mentors, thereby enjoying the outcomes these programs provide for their personal and professional growth.

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# Deaf Parents Raising Hearing Children in Kenya & Nigeria: A Narrative Case Study

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## Abstract

Parents play the most critical role in a child's whole development. In particular, the quality of parental acceptance, parent-child interactions, and parental support impacts their cognitive, emotional, and social growth during these formative years. Furthermore, parents are the first teachers, providing their children with early language and literacy experiences and resources. This research study aimed to explore how Deaf parents support their hearing children's language and literacy development within the home environment. The study emphasizes understanding the strategies and techniques employed by Deaf parents to foster their children's language and literacy skills, as well as the unique challenges and opportunities that arise from Deaf parents teaching hearing children. Using narrative inquiry and content analysis, the research collected and analyzed data from Deaf parents. The findings have the potential to inform educational and social policies and practices related to language and literacy development for hearing children of Deaf parents while also identifying ways to support Deaf parents in nurturing their children's overall development.

*Keywords:* Deaf parents, CODA, language, literacy, Africa

Parents' support for language and literacy is a critical component of a child's growth. The interactions and communication between children and their parents in the early stages of life are significant for fostering emotional, cognitive, and social development (Cohen & Anders, 2020; Huang et al., 2022; Jeong et al., 2021; Weisleder & Fernald, 2013). A pivotal aspect that profoundly shapes exchanges during these formative years is the parents' unique language and communication style (Desmita et al., 2023). In these critical early years, nonverbal communication systems, such as gestures, facial expressions, and sustained eye contact, become pivotal in mother-child interactions, particularly when the child has not yet developed spoken language skills (Çetinçelik et al., 2021; Rantalainen et al., 2021).

As children begin their language acquisition journey, they often hear parents use a charming technique known as "parentese." This distinctive style of speaking features a deliberately slower tempo and exaggerated intonation, all designed to capture the young child's attention (Honig, 2019; Sheth & Ramírez, 2024; Weiss, 2021). Parentese, whether spoken or in sign language, includes exaggerated, clear, higher-pitched speech or more elaborate signs that

can help a child begin to recognize language patterns, even as the child develops an emotional attachment to the parents.

The early years of life, from birth to age three, are a pivotal period for language development (McLean et al., 2023). During this time, the brain displays remarkable plasticity, making it adaptable and open to growth (Cisneros-Franco et al., 2020; Friedmann & Rusou, 2015; Gervain, 2015; Olulade et al., 2020). During this time, a child's exposure to language plays a vital role in forming robust language networks (Cisneros-Franco et al., 2020; Weisleder & Fernald, 2013). Hearing parents with hearing children often immerse them in rich, language-filled interactions (Curenton et al., 2008; Seetal & Quiroz, 2021). These interactions provide a wealth of diverse vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures, which are essential for expanding a child's vocabulary and enhancing their understanding of grammar (Bojczyk et al, 2016; Heidlage et al., 2020; Seetal & Quiroz, 2021; Sheth & Ramírez, 2024).

Parents foster language and literacy development by engagingly narrating their daily activities, reading stories aloud to capture their child's imagination, singing, and asking open-ended questions that encourage children to think critically and express themselves (Baker, 2014; Bojczyk et al, 2016; Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003; Heidlage et al., 2020; Weiss, 2021). Such rich linguistic engagement promotes effective communication skills and builds a solid foundation for lifelong language and literacy proficiency.

**Deaf Parents with Hearing Children**

Existing research on language acquisition among Deaf children predominantly highlights the experiences of the 90% born to hearing parents. These parents often need an understanding of sign language, which creates significant challenges for their children (Caselli et al., 2021; Kobosko, 2011; Mitchell & Kartchmer, 2005). These studies indicate that, due to a lack of early language exposure, Deaf children frequently experience substantial delays in language development, leading to profound language deprivation or considerable delays in language acquisition (Cheng et al., 2019; Hall, 2017; Humphries, 2015). Language deprivation or significant language delays impact future literacy development (Hall, 2017; Murray et al., 2019).

In contrast, research from developed countries focusing on Deaf adults with hearing children reveals a significant finding: approximately 90% of these households raise their children using signed language (Pizer, 2013; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). Signed language in the Deaf families' homes plays a crucial role in nurturing effective communication and fostering a strong cultural identity within the Deaf community. According to Pizer (2013), families where Deaf parents raise hearing children often embody a bilingual and bimodal environment. In these households, members fluidly navigate between spoken and signed languages, creating a rich tapestry of interaction.

Within the Deaf families in developed countries, signed language is the cornerstone of communication, even between Deaf parents and their hearing children. Additionally, Singleton and Tittle (2000) emphasize the importance of early language acquisition, noting that Deaf parents typically introduce American Sign Language (ASL) as the primary language from birth.

By introducing early ASL, Deaf parents engage their children in decontextualized discourses, which deepen the parental and family attachment that integrates their deaf or hearing children into the Deaf culture and the Deaf community (Musyoka & Anderson, 2024; Pizer et al., 2013). Also, early exposure to signed language provides hearing children with a robust foundation for linguistic and cultural development while equipping the family to navigate the unique challenges they encounter together. Deaf parents in the United States employ various strategies to promote bimodal bilingualism, including using signed-language literature for storytelling, drama, humor, poetry, and sign-language play (Singleton & Tittle, 2000). They also introduce spoken language to their children through extended hearing family members, friends, and other resources such as videos, eBooks, and reading materials (Musyoka & Anderson, 2024).

While most research on hearing parents raising Deaf children is concentrated on the United States, there are a few international cross-cultural studies (Al Mohsin et al., 2022; Dikeç et al., 2023; Luchivya et al., 2020; Merugumala et al., 2017).  Al Mohsin et al.'s (2022) study sheds light on the distinctive experiences of Deaf mothers in intersectionality who are nurturing Deaf and hearing children. The study explored the interplay of cultural, social, religious, and linguistic factors influencing the parenting styles of Saudi Arabian Deaf mothers and their overall experiences with their hearing children and family units. The study by Merugumala et al. (2017) in southern India explored the experiences of hearing mothers of Deaf children in rural areas. Their experiences center on culture, economic status, and access to information, which created barriers to accessing appropriate hearing services for their children. Dikeç et al. (2023) studied the experiences of 19 mothers and one father in Turkey, highlighting initial shock, sadness, and confusion upon diagnosis. The study centered on faith, social support from family or peers, and occasional self-care as they navigated limited information and resources, and on daily routines of therapy appointments and device care, which often led to social isolation and family strain, particularly for mothers.

Of the three studies that focused on African countries (Kenya and South Africa), only one focused on Deaf parents (Ikara et al., 2024). The other two focused on hearing parents' concerns, which were primarily related to communication and language (Khoza-Shangase & Bent, 2024; Luchivya et al., 2020).  The study, which focused on Deaf parents in South Africa, explored how parenting programs can be made inclusive and accessible for deaf families (Ikwara et al., 2024). The study report indicated a need for conventional parenting interventions that account for the unique communication, cultural, and resource needs of deaf parents and their children. In contrast to the 2024 study, Khoza-Shangase and Bent examined South African parents' perceptions of communication modes for their Deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH) children, focusing on oral, signing, and bilingual approaches. The findings revealed a strong preference for oral communication, likely because hearing parents use it. Also, this preference was due to societal stigma, marginalization, and the lack of accessible Deaf schools. In Kenya, Luchivya et al. (2020) conducted a study focused on hearing parents' experiences of learning Kenya Sign Language (KSL) to communicate with their children. The findings reported focus on parents' beliefs, the cost of learning KSL, and the limited resources available to teach it.

Hence, recognizing that various factors, including geographical location and cultural background, can significantly shape perceptions of parenting and disabilities and considering the scarcity of studies that delve into multilingual and multicultural contexts within African societies, this research seeks to explore the unique experiences of Deaf parents raising hearing children in Kenya and Nigeria.

**CODA, Language Acquisition and Literacy Development**

Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs) are often raised in uniquely bilingual environments that foster spoken language, such as English, and sign language, such as American Sign Language (ASL). In these bilingual home environments, CODAs acquire spoken language skills, such as English, through interactions with extended-hearing family, peers, educational systems, and media while simultaneously using sign language as their primary mode of communication at home (Almhosin et al., 2023; Musyoka & Anderson, 2024; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). The bilingual raising equips CODAs to navigate between hearing and Deaf individuals, becoming cultural brokers and bridges connecting the Deaf community with hearing individuals.

CODAs' bilingual capabilities often come into play as they interpret and facilitate meaningful interactions across these distinct worlds as they become language brokers interpreting for their Deaf parents at an early age (Heffernan & Nixon, 2023; Moroe & de Andrade, 2018; Napier & Napier, 2021; Wood, 2016). Additionally, the blend of bilingualism and biculturalism contributes to the development of strong visual learning skills in many CODAs. Having consistent access to visual language from an early age, these individuals often excel in environments that engage their visual strengths. However, this advantage can become a challenge when they transition to auditory-based classrooms, where the traditional reliance on spoken communication may create barriers to their learning (Bull, 2005).

Previous research indicates that some CODAs may encounter language delays that affect their future literacy (Almohsin et al., 2023; Bishop & Hicks, 2005; Musyoka & Anderson, 2024). Beyond the academic hurdles, CODAs also grapple with the intricacies of identity development. Studies reveal that these individuals often struggle to reconcile their bicultural identities, profoundly influencing their communication styles and personal growth (Bull, 2005; Hoffmeister, 2008; Preston, 1994; Shield, 2005; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). The interplay of their cultural backgrounds shapes their experiences and plays a critical role in how they perceive themselves and interact with the world around them.

## Language Planning in Multilingual Bimodal Deaf-Hearing Family

Family language planning plays a crucial role in children's language development in multilingual bimodal families, particularly in Deaf-parent households with hearing children. Family language planning refers to the deliberate efforts by families to manage the use and acquisition of multiple languages in their homes, balancing factors such as cultural preservation, communication efficiency, and their children's educational needs (King et al., 2008). In Deaf-parented families, CODAs navigate dual modalities—signed and spoken languages—across

different contexts. Research indicates that exposure to signed language within the family supports CODAs in acquiring fluency, cultural identity, and cognitive flexibility (Baker & Van den Bogaerde, 2016).

However, Deaf parents often face challenges in selecting language sequences because societal pressures favor spoken language for educational and economic advancement (Grosjean, 2010). The language complexities in the Deaf family can be addressed by a family language plan that recognizes the value of multiple and bimodal language acquisition. Family language planning involves allowing CODAs to participate in the Deaf community to acquire and develop signed language skills and cultural competence (Hoffmeister, 2000). Thus, understanding and supporting language planning in these families is essential to fostering balanced bilingualism and preserving the linguistic heritage of Deaf communities.

In most African families, multilingualism is standard, with children growing up speaking multiple languages. Kenya has almost 70 languages, while Nigeria is home to more than 520. In the case of Deaf parents' homes, the case is beyond multilingualism, but one that is also bimodal because of the use of sign language. Bimodal multilingualism among Deaf children involves the use of more than one language across different modalities (Emmorey et al., 2008; Musyoka, 2023; Petitto et al., 2001; Pizzo, 2016). The two modalities are the vocal-auditory mode, which involves spoken and written languages such as English and Kiswahili, and the visual-gestural mode, which encompasses sign languages such as Kenyan Sign Language and Nigerian Sign Language.

Bimodal multilingualism presents unique patterns of language mixing, expression, and linguistic and cognitive processing that differ from those of multimodal multilingualism involving spoken languages only (Emmorey et al., 2008; Petitto et al., 2001). In this study, Deaf children in both Kenya and Nigeria are bimodal multilingual. Both Kenya and Nigeria have many languages spoken. Consequently, code-switching (using sign and speech simultaneously) or code-switching (alternating between languages) occurs between Deaf children and their hearing parents. This switch of languages creates a unique cross-linguistic processing task because they have to think in more than one language, presented in different modalities. This aspect of bimodal multilingualism is unique and demands an examination of how Deaf parents navigate it as they raise their hearing children.

**Theoretical framework**

Using an intersectional lens, the current study explored the experiences of Deaf parents raising hearing children in Kenya and Nigeria. The intersectionality theory focuses on how the intersections of individual identities, including social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, and race, result in oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). In the current study, the Deaf parents present a case of intersecting identities comprising social class, gender, religion, disability, language, and geographical location in East Africa and Nigeria in West Africa. In particular, the identity coverage of Deaf parents in this study is centered within societies where spoken language and hearing norms are privileged (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003; Trudell, 2018). This dominant perception influenced how the parents navigate parenting, language use, and cultural identity.

Since language is a critical aspect in Deaf individuals' lives, the intersectionality framework highlights how Deaf parents manage multilingual and bimodal communication environments. Their decisions are influenced by linguistic hierarchies that privilege colonial and national languages (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003; Trudell, 2018) and by the sociocultural value placed on spoken versus signed language. By viewing these decisions through an intersectional lens, this study situates Deaf parents as active agents negotiating complex social and linguistic systems to sustain both Deaf and hearing identities within their families.

## Method

The research design adopted for this study is a retrospective narrative inquiry. A retrospective narrative inquiry combines the elements of retrospective research and narrative inquiry methodologies. In this approach, researchers collect narratives or stories from participants about their past experiences, then analyze them to understand the meaning and significance of those experiences (Chase, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Focusing on participants' narratives will allow researchers to capture the richness and complexity of Deaf parents' experiences in ways that quantitative methods cannot.

Since retrospective narrative inquiry relies on participants recounting past experiences, their memories and interpretations may change over time. The researchers recognized the potential effect of the temporal distance between participants' experiences of motherhood and the timing of the interviews, prompting them to acknowledge the study's limitations due to memory distortion and subjectivity. To address limitations in retrospective narrative inquiry, the researchers employed strategies to strengthen its trustworthiness, validity, and depth of participants' past experiences while minimizing issues such as recall bias, subjectivity, and selective memory.

The strategies employed included member checking, thick description, and use of reflexive journals (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Maxwell, 2005). With members checking, the researcher consulted with the participants, reviewed and verified the information and interpretation to ensure accuracy and alignment with participants' intended meanings. Also, the researchers used a thick description of the data, providing detailed context to ensure they captured the full story of the participants. Since both researchers are involved in the Deaf community, they maintained reflexive journals, which allowed them to pause, identify their biases and positionality regarding the Deaf communities, and examine how their prior knowledge of the community could shape their interpretation of the data. Reflexive journaling throughout the study ensures transparency (Burck, 2005; Riessman & Quinney, 2005).

Furthermore, during data collection and interpretation, the researchers engaged the participants in interviews aligned with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional inquiry, which provided the participants with the opportunity to reflect their experience in three dimensions including the nature of their interaction (Personal and Social), Continuity (Past, Present, and Future) and Situation (Place or Context). Using these three dimensions helped the researchers situate participants' stories in context and time, showing how personal and social

factors interact across lived experiences, and helped them to think through their stories and minimize their memory distortion. The data analysis, which followed Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-phase narrative analysis of broadening, burrowing, and storying/restorying, helped the researchers identify inconsistencies in the stories and the themes that emerged across participants' retellings based on the three dimensions — interaction, continuity, and situation.

**Participants and Sampling Procedure**

There is no rule for sample size in narrative inquiry studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Gueterman (2015), the number of participants for narrative research can be from 1 to 24. The current study used purposive sampling to involve 15 Deaf parents with hearing children. Purposeful sampling is a qualitative research technique for identifying and selecting information-rich cases to efficiently use limited resources (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002). Participants must meet criteria that fit the study's purpose, problem, and objective (Creswell & Poth, 2018).  The researchers employed a snowball sampling procedure to increase the number of participants, as participants are difficult to locate (Parker et al., 2019).

**Table 1**
*Participants Demographics*

| Criteria | Kenya n=10 | Nigeria, n = 5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female: 4 | Female: 5 |
| | Male: 6 | |
| **Age during interview** | 25-35 = 7 | 25-35 = 1 |
| | 36-45 =3 | 36-45 = 3 |
| | Above 45 =0 | Above 45 = 1 |
| **Range of onset of hearing loss** | 6-14 years | 4 - 20 years |
| **Highest Educational Level** | A.A =5 | B.A. = 4 |
| | B.A=5 | M.A. = 1 |
| **Home Language** | KSL=10 | NSL = 5 |
| | Ethnic =9 | English = 5 |
| | English=7 | Ethnic = 5 |

Participants from Kenya included four deaf mothers (Sally, Ella, Brenda, and Sarah) and six deaf fathers (John, Timothy, Joseph, Jim, Tony, and Steve). Since most parents did not provide their exact ages, the participants ranged from 24 to 50 years old. Most participants were identified as post-lingually deaf. The onset of their hearing loss occurred between the ages of six and fourteen, indicating that they had acquired spoken language before becoming deaf. All participants reported learning their mother tongue or ethnic language. Despite having acquired this spoken language, many did not use it regularly. Those who attempted to communicate

verbally often faced stigmatization due to their pronunciation, leading some to feel embarrassed and ultimately discontinue its use in favor of sign language. As post-lingual deaf individuals, the primary cause of their hearing loss was illness. Specifically, five participants became deaf due to meningitis, three due to mumps, and two because of high fever linked to malaria. Additionally, three participants noted that certain medications, particularly quinine, contributed to their hearing loss. The study focused on literacy development and the ways in which Deaf parents supported their hearing children. The data collected included the parents' educational levels. Among the 10 participants, five completed college and earned a diploma equivalent to an associate degree, while the others held a university bachelor's degree.

Participants from Nigeria consist of five mothers (Olive, Molly, Queen, Dana, and Jane), aged 30 to 45. The participants are postlingually deaf and have acquired speech in official English and native tongues to varying degrees before the onset of deafness. Four of the participants became deaf due to illnesses such as meningitis and mumps. One became deaf through a slap on the face. All the participants went through a cycle of grief and denial before accepting deafness and signed language. Currently, all participants are members of the Nigerian Deaf community who use Nigerian Signed Language as the primary language of communication, while also engaging with the broader hearing society through speech. All participants from Nigeria have at least a Bachelor's degree.

**Data Collection**

The participants' narratives were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews, detailed written accounts, and a comprehensive background questionnaire. After participants signed the informed consent form and completed the background questionnaire, the researcher conducted the online interview. The in-depth semi-structured interview provided an opportunity to delve deeper into participants' experiences and stories, enriching the data collection process. Follow-up on the online interview questions was conducted via email and WhatsApp to address any misunderstandings and seek clarification.

**Data Analysis**

The researchers adopted a content analysis approach to analyze the narratives. This approach involves identifying common themes, patterns, and meanings in the narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis explored the content of the narratives to explain the underlying emotions, beliefs, experiences, and values expressed by participants (Saldana, 2021). This process allowed the researchers to understand the experiences and challenges of Deaf parents raising hearing children in Kenya and Nigeria.

Before coding the data, the researchers developed narrative scripts based on the participants' shared experiences. The first step in the content analysis involved the researchers conducting independent open coding, meticulously dissecting text segments, and examining each narrative line by line to identify key concepts and ideas. After the initial coding and independent coding, the researchers compared their coded outputs. They established a percentage of

agreement based on a simple comparison of the coded output. Also, the Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's Kappa (κ). The resulting κ value of 0.90 indicated strong agreement between coders. Any noted discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus coding, and the two researchers collaboratively created a codebook that defines each code and identifies inclusion and exclusion criteria. This step ensured that the coders interpreted the codes consistently and applied them to the entire dataset. The researchers also identified excerpts for each code, which represented the participants' voices.

The next step used axial coding to explore relationships among participants' experiences by comparing codes to identify similarities, differences, and emerging patterns. During this stage of analysis, the codes were consolidated into categories. The final coding step involved merging categories into broader themes to facilitate interpretation of the results, ultimately providing a comprehensive and detailed portrayal of the parents' experiences.

## Findings

Through content analysis, four major themes were identified that reflect the experiences of Deaf parents in Kenya. These themes are discussed below.

### Theme 1: Identification of the Child's Hearing Status

Early identification is essential for addressing hearing issues effectively and minimizing language and developmental delays. Since most Deaf children (90-95%) are born to hearing parents, early detection and intervention for hearing loss that should occur from birth occur late in most developing countries (Eskay et al., 2012; Ndegwa et al., 2024; Olusanya, 2012). Conversely, in the current study, Deaf parents shared how they identified their children's hearing status from birth, making them aware of their hearing children's bilingual needs. For example, participants from Kenya shared:

> **Timothy:** *I knew he was hearing a few months after birth, as soon as he could respond to sound. Also, I was informed by hearing family and friends who noted how the child responded to environmental sounds.*
>
> **Ella:** *I knew my children were hearing by being told by my parents and friends. I also noticed they could respond to sounds.*
>
> **Brenda:** *I realized my firstborn child was hearing since birth because she was able to respond to any sounds surrounding her, even a small clapping.*

Nigerian participants echoed the same sentiments as Kenyan participants, for example:

> **Olive:** *I knew my child was hearing from the day he was born. He responded to the sound of my voice by movement/startle. I know my child was hearing. I know, I just know (smile).*
>
> **Dana:** *I know that my child was hearing when he was about age 2 months with his response to sounds around him, because of my growing up experience, which made me regard deafness as a problem.*

**Theme 2: Acceptance of Hearing Child**

Parents' acceptance of their children, whether or not they have disabilities, is crucial to shaping their child's development. In the African community, several factors can influence how a newborn is accepted and welcomed, including the child's abilities, appearances, family, and societal perceptions and pressures (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2001; Mukuria & Korir, 2006; Ndurumo, 1993; Olatunbosun & Musyoka, 2022). In the current study, the Deaf parents shared how they felt when they realized their child was Deaf.  For example, some participants from Kenya shared:

**Sally:** *Well, parenthood, especially motherhood, is the sweetest thing I ever experienced. When I first realized my girl is hearing, it was not a big deal."*

**Timothy:** *I am okay with my child being hearing.*

*Sarah: I was happy to receive my bundle of joy like any other woman.*

**Tony:** *Having a Deaf or hearing child is both a blessing and a symbol of the continuation of society, so I felt happy.*

The Nigerian participants expressed feelings similar to those of the Kenyan participants:

*Olive: It is a real blessing to have a hearing child as a deaf parent because our children will be our ears and will help us. I am blessed to have a hearing child. It is a real blessing to have a hearing child as a deaf parent because our children will be our ears and will help us.*

*Queen: When I confirmed that she is hearing, I knew that I had a helper to assist me to hear in the house.*

*Dana: Knowing that my child is hearing makes me happy... I realized that if I had had a deaf child, it would have also been an advantage because of communication fluency and interaction, and the deaf child would not experience the possible stigma of being a hearing child of deaf adults that is rampant in our society. But thinking deeper, I love my child being hearing.*

Although other parents echoed the same sentiments, some participants from Kenya shared their concerns about the child's hearing.

**John:** *I accepted my challenge, but as a Deaf parent, I experience challenges. As a Deaf parent, I couldn't easily understand my child's emotions and feelings, especially when the child cried uncontrollably despite having eaten, peed, or pooped. At times when my child fumbled, I was unable to tell his needs.*

**Brenda:** *I was okay; my child was hearing and healthy. My biggest challenge was my hearing ability. I couldn't even hear a single note of her voice when she was crying. That was painful. On the other hand, communication between me and my little girl became problematic, especially when she was so small and she herself didn't know the sign language so well.*

**Theme 3: Support a Hearing Child's Spoken Language Acquisition**

Supporting a hearing child of deaf adults (CODA) in acquiring spoken language requires an intentional effort by Deaf parents who primarily communicate using sign language (Almohsin et al., 2023; Klimentová & Dočekal, 2020; Musyoka & Anderson, 2024; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). The participants shared their insights on using their previously acquired spoken language abilities to support their children's spoken language development.

> **Brenda:** *I supported my children's language development by slowly teaching them sign language. I also taught them some spoken language, even if my pronunciation was incorrect.*
>
> **Sarah***: Since I had lost my hearing ability, and not speech, I used to speak to the child. My only challenge was that I had no idea if the words I uttered were correct or wrong.*

Most parents from Kenya shared how their extended family members and individuals in their households supported them in helping their children develop language skills.

> **Brenda:** *I got so much support from my family members, especially my sister's children, who interacted with my children.*
>
> **Joseph:** *Fortunately, my child had their grandparents, who offered much support with spoken language.*
>
> **Sarah:** *My mother was always around to help with spoken language.*
>
> **Tony:** *I got support from my hearing family members, especially our nanny (house help), who would help my child develop language through imitation of sounds and babbling*
>
> **Timothy:** *My family and friends taught my child how to speak.*

Participants from Nigeria shared how the extended family supported the hearing child in developing spoken language. For instance, Molly and Olive shared how their hearing mothers supported their children in developing spoken language.

> **Molly:** *In order to support English language development, I spoke English to my son. That led to his limited knowledge of the Yoruba language (an indigenous language). So, I reintroduced him to Yoruba. So, I sent him to spend the holiday with my mother to strengthen his Yoruba language skills.*
>
> **Olive***: When my children stayed with my mother, it was very helpful to speak very fast. With us (my husband and I), the kids will refuse to speak. Other support comes from his interaction in school, where he meets and speaks with other children.*

Other participants from Kenya talked about how schools, day care centers, churches, and other institutions assisted them.

> **Sally:** *When I had my first child, my family was worried about so many things. I am so sensitive.  I learned how to take care of my babies on my own. I introduced her to school early, and she learned to pronounce words there. The first taught the second, and now the two eldest children taught the third how to speak.  They also learned spoken English, Swahili, and French at school.*

**Steve:** *My children learned speaking because we sent them early to baby daycare centers to gain adequate speech for communication. Also, the children were enrolled in school early to avoid delays in language development. We employed a hearing person to help develop spoken language.*

Similarly, participants from Nigeria shared how institutions such as schools and churches supported their hearing children's spoken language development.

**Jane:** *Like I mentioned earlier, my parents live far from home. So, I enrolled my children in school as early as ten months or one year old. I don't care about the money. My focus is for the child to be able to interact with other children and have more access to spoken conversation. I am deaf; my way of talking may not match the conventional way the child understands things. I also communicate with the school management that I am deaf and my children will need more support. ... So, to manage the situation, I hired a lesson teacher to teach them Yoruba. My first daughter can speak Yoruba, while her siblings are picking up. I leave the responsibility for the indigenous language to the lesson teacher, while I can support the English language.*

**Dana:** *A critical step my husband and I took was to attend a hearing church that provided a system for training children. And we told the church that we joined in order to obtain support for our children. The church is a Yoruba-speaking church. This exposure helped our children to develop both English and the Yoruba language proficiently.*

Meanwhile, other parents from Kenya expressed how they engaged their children in activities that could support language development.

**John:** *As a Deaf parent, I supported my child's development of language by ensuring the environment was enriched with play toys and activities. Also, I ensured my child spent time mostly with his hearing peers.*

**Joseph:** *I allowed her to play with kids to build her spoken language skills. ......Also, my child received speech therapy and used electronic speech translators.*

**Ella:** *A friend advised me to let him watch TV with the volume up to assist him develop speech and sound cues. My parents also stepped in to help him develop his spoken language skills. Although his language development milestones were slow, he has improved over time, even though he sometimes stammers. With my second child, I had more knowledge about what to do, and he speaks so fluently.*

One parent from Nigeria echoed Ella's sentiments regarding the use of television.

**Dana***: We procured solar with Television. So, once the kids arrive home, they watch television, giving them critical exposure to the world around them.*

**Theme 4: Early Bimodal Multilingualism Acquisition**

Bimodal Bilingualism refers to the simultaneous acquisition of two languages expressed in different modalities: spoken (oral-auditory) and signed (visual-gestural) (Davidson et al., 2013; Emmory et al., 2008). Bimodal bilingualism is a unique form of bilingualism that occurs among Deaf families in which hearing children are exposed to spoken and signed language from

an early age (Bishop & Hicks, 2008). In the current study, the findings show the various ways in which parents supported bimodal multilingualism simultaneously and sequentially.  Examples of simultaneous acquisition support from participants from Kenya:

> **Sally:** *I train my children how to speak in XXX (ethnic spoken language) and all of them speak the language fluently. I also train them to sign. They also learned English, Swahili, and French at school.*

> **Timothy:** *I encouraged the use of both sign and XXX (ethnic spoken languages) from an early age. I integrated both sign language and spoken language from an early age. I taught my child sign language and provided access to educational resources that support bilingualism. I also took the child to preschool at age 3 to prevent delays in speech and language development.*

> **Jim:** *My children were exposed to signing and XXX (ethnic spoken languages) from a young age. I was able to teach my children how to sign simple words. I also encourage my children to speak; my wife sometimes helps interpret when I fail to understand. I also try to understand the child through lip reading. My wife taught them how to speak.*

Examples of sequential acquisition support from participants from Kenya:

> **Sarah:** *Another challenge was in communication between me and the child as she grew up. She would talk about something she wanted, and I would misunderstand her. She would then cry a lot until someone interfered and explained to me. As the child grew up and joined school, I could not take it anymore. I started teaching her home signs, which made it easy for me to communicate with her. Later, I introduced her to fingerspelling and Kenyan sign language. She can now communicate with me without any problems.*

> **Tony:** *The baby would gaze at how we communicate, so it becomes natural. As the baby grows, love for her parents also grows. Immediately, she started copying (imitating) signs; one day, at 5 years old, she began singing signs for us once in church, since she felt her parents couldn't understand what was being said.*

Conversely, Nigerian participants emphasized spoken language and sign language later.

> **Queen:** *I made sure that my children are not exposed to sign communication only. Some parents may feel that because they want their children to sign, they should introduce sign language to the child from birth. I thought that is not good at all, as that may affect their ability to communicate in spoken language very well. If I should become a new deaf mother again, I will make sure my children are introduced to sign language early on.*

> **Dana:** *The challenge with my language development approach is that I trained my children to communicate with the world, and now they can't communicate with me. Sometimes I found that painful and wished I had introduced them to just sign language, so I wouldn't feel left out of their communication. If I could turn back the hand of time, I regret not introducing sign language early. I would correct this if I had another chance with simultaneous exposure to sign and spoken language.*

> **Molly:** *In order to support English language development, I spoke English to my son. That led to his limited knowledge of XXX (ethnic spoken languages). So, I reintroduced*

*him to XXX (ethnic spoken languages). So, I sent him to spend holidays with my mother to strengthen his XXX (ethnic spoken languages). I wish I had joined the deaf community earlier, and that would have integrated my son into sign language as his mother tongue, too.*

**Olive:** *He was four. My husband told him that we are deaf and that you must learn sign language. Although the boy protested, "No, you are not deaf," the dad persisted and emphasized that he must learn sign language to communicate with his deaf parents. If he continued speaking with us, we wouldn't understand him. After that time, he took his sign language learning seriously and progressed. If I turned back the hands of time, I wish I had introduced my child to sign language as early as six months.*

Only Nigerian parents shared how the Deaf community supported their hearing children's acquisition of sign language.

**Queen:** *They picked up some signs from deaf friends that the family interacted with. We also attend camps/conferences for deaf people, where they pick up some signs.*

**Dana:** *She also opened her home for my children to interact with her children, and she also teaches sign language and provides a signing ecosystem.*

**Molly:** They joined the deaf community and learned sign language.

## Theme 5: Supporting Hearing Children's Literacy

Emergent literacy begins at home, with parents creating a literacy and language-rich environment that encourages children to engage with language and literacy from a young age (Hamilton et al., 2016; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Weigel et al., 2005). Although some Kenyan Deaf participants shared that they supported their children's literacy skills, others focused only on writing.

**Ella:** *I made efforts to support my children in learning to read. Since I was not born deaf, I have intelligible speech, which helped me to read words to them. The challenge arose when they asked questions that I could not understand. I decided to teach them basic sign language to communicate and ask questions. Using sign language was very helpful.*

**Brenda:** *When they were young, I supported them by writing down words for them to understand when I could not speak some words correctly. Once they had mastered sign language, I took advantage of that to teach them so well. Reading with voice challenged me, but I depended on sign language as a blessing.*

**Joseph:** *I exposed her to coloring and free writing activities. However, on reading remain challenging.*

**Jim:** *I cannot help the child read due to my speech challenge. But I was able to help a child learn how to write. My hearing wife supported the child in learning how to read.*

**Timothy:** *Supporting my child with reading was a significant challenge for me, as I could not speak fluently nor assess my child's speech for accuracy and fluency. Unfortunately, there was limited support from my child's teacher. I relied on family and friends, especially to help teach my child how to speak and read.*

Only one parent from Nigeria shared how she supported her hearing child's literacy skills:

> **Molly***: For my son to develop literacy skills, start with me, the mother, who loves reading. I bought him several storybooks and introduced them to him early. I took it upon myself to train him in literacy. I encourage deaf parents to improve their literacy skills through reading to influence their children. A puzzle book can also be used to encourage reading.*

The parents, both from Kenya and Nigeria, shared how the school was instrumental in supporting their hearing children's literacy. Examples from Kenyan Deaf parents.

> **Sally:** *I enrolled them in school early and hired a tutor to make sure they learned how to read and write. Since I couldn't hear if the pronunciation was correct, I always insisted on using their tutor to assist them with homework involving the sounds. For the writing part, I bought so many pictorial books, and I trained them on scrabbling, matching, tracing, coloring, etc.*

> **Tony:** *I thought my Deafness and difficulty pronouncing certain words might affect her reading skills. I purchased various reading materials, including short storybooks recommended by her teachers. The school did a great deal to support our child's literacy skill development.*

> **John:** *I encouraged my child to read and write by providing him with writing materials, where he started by scribbling; by the time he started school, he could write down numbers 1-5, vowels, etc. With hearing school-going children around, they would come and help in reading (voicing words) as I taught the child sign language for the words voiced.*

> **Sarah:** *Supporting my child in learning literacy skills wasn't easy; I used to avoid teaching her at home to avoid giving her the wrong pronunciation of words. She learned most of the skills at school and from relatives. Fortunately, I was blessed with a gifted child, so the school used to give her full support. I would only encourage, reward, and provide her with the necessary writing and reading materials.*

> **Steve:** *The school supported the child's reading and writing skills. I just reinforced what had been learned through the homework the teacher gave.*

Two Deaf participants from Nigeria shared how the school supported their child in developing literacy skills:

> **Queen:** *As a deaf mother, I made sure my children started school very early. I enrolled them in a baby class (kindergarten).*

> **Olive:** *Hiring a lesson teacher is a part of support. A hearing teacher will help them with reading and writing. As deaf parents, when a child comes home from school with homework, it might be difficult for deaf parents to get some pronunciation accurately.*

Additionally, some parents suggested various CODAs could be supported in literacy development:

**Timothy:** *To foster a literacy-rich home environment, I made sure to include diverse reading and writing materials. I used visual aids and technology to support my child's literacy learning and encouraged regular reading and storytelling in spoken languages. I also sought out resources and support groups specifically for Deaf parents to share strategies and experiences.*

**Steve:** *We need to establish community support groups for Deaf parents focused on literacy development. We should provide access to bilingual educational resources, including books and apps in both sign and spoken languages… schools and libraries offer programs and resources that promote bilingual literacy development. … workshops to train Deaf parents on effective literacy teaching strategies and how to use technology and visual aids to support literacy development effectively.*

One Deaf participant from Nigeria shared how she used technology to support literacy:

**Queen***: I bought some video discs and played them for my children.  So that will help the children to hear and speak English very well, such as audiovisual videos for A for Apple, where the child can hear the pronunciation and see the spelling. That will encourage the child to learn language.*

**Theme 6: Communication Challenges**

Communication between a deaf parent and their hearing child involves using two language modalities. The deaf parent relies on a visual modality, primarily expressed through sign language. In contrast, the hearing child navigates an auditory modality involving spoken language and sound cues acquired or learned from interactions with hearing family members and peers within their predominantly hearing environment. In the current study, deaf parents recounted their personal experiences, shedding light on the communication obstacles they encountered and the strategies they used to overcome them.

**Sally:** *As a Deaf parent, I couldn't easily understand my child's emotions and feelings, especially when the child cried uncontrollably despite having eaten, peed, or pooped. At times when my child fumbled, I was unable to tell what his needs were.*

**John:** *The main challenge was that my child was not aware that I am Deaf, as he kept voicing his needs, calling me daddy, etc. At the age of 2, he realized sign language could be the best mode of communication with me.*

**Timothy:** *Not knowing when the child was crying after being put to bed, we had to be placed where we could watch her with our eyes all the time. Not hearing what the child was saying was actually tormenting. So, family and friends. Checking whether the child had any short breaths or any symptoms indicating he was sick.*

**Brenda:** *I realized my firstborn child was hearing because she could respond to any sounds surrounding her, even a small clapping. My biggest challenge was my hearing ability. I couldn't even hear her voice when she was crying. That was painful. As a Deaf mother to hearing children, communication was a big challenge because my children*

*preferred to speak mostly. If they spoke so fast, I would be lost because I depended on sign language and writing on paper.*

**Sarah:** *Another challenge was in communication between me and the child as she grew up. She would talk about something she wanted, and I would misunderstand her. She would then cry a lot until someone interfered and explained to me.*

One participant from Nigeria shared the communication challenges they experience that affected how they could support their children.

**Dana:** *I trained my children to communicate with the world, and now they can't communicate with me. Sometimes I found that painful and wished I had introduced them to just sign language, so I wouldn't feel left out of their communication. The difficulty I had obtaining verbal feedback from my hearing child affected how much I could provide academic support for him. He could not articulate sign language effectively at that time, so he often responded by signing "I don't know".*

## Theme 7: Being a Deaf Parent

Parenthood is a journey filled with various experiences that shape thinking, impart valuable lessons, and highlight one's journey and hope for better future parenthood experiences (Carbines et al., 2017; Nyström & Ohrling, 2004). A child's attitude and behavior towards their parents being different echoes how they embraced their bicultural, bilingual, and bimodal identity, particularly their use of sign language and expectation to become a language broker or interpreter for their deaf parents (Almohsin et al., 2023; Hadjikakou et al., 2009; Moroe & de Andrade, 2018). In the current study, the Deaf parents from Kenya reflected on their experiences being Deaf and a parent.

**Sally:** *The most challenging thing is when I speak XXX (ethnic spoken language) to my kids, and the hearing people bash the way I speak and use the spoken language, confusing my kids. I also get comments that only mad/crazy people talk with their hands when I sign with them .... there was a time my daughter was bullied at school by a classmate who told her that her mother Is Deaf. My girl cried, and I had to talk with her and train her to assume some things. Parents are responsible for guiding their children and leading them to live a respectful life, respecting every human irrespective of who they are, how they look, and their different abilities."*

**John:** *Some hearing children are not proud of their Deaf parents, who are loving, caring, supportive, role models, and committed towards parenthood.*

**Sarah:** *As a Deaf parent of a hearing child, I was really proud of myself, but I had some challenges. The child used to avoid me in public; she didn't want me to communicate with her in sign language while others watched.*

The participants from Kenya suggested the following

**Sally:** *We need to raise awareness of people living with disabilities and train our children on morals towards individuals with disabilities and children whose parents have a disability.*

**John:** *Having workshops specifically tailored for Deaf parents on parenting strategies, child development, and educational support can empower them with the knowledge and skills needed to support their children's growth. Establishing peer support groups where Deaf parents can share experiences, advice, and encouragement can create a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation.*

**Timothy:** *Provide resources and support groups for Deaf parents to raise hearing children. Provide avenues to connect with a broader network of Deaf and hearing families for support and shared experiences.*

**Ella:** *We need to establish community support groups for Deaf parents focused on literacy development. Additionally, we should provide access to bilingual educational resources, including books and apps in both sign and spoken languages. To support Deaf parents, we must ensure that schools and libraries offer programs and resources that promote bilingual literacy development. Finally, we should offer workshops and training for Deaf parents on effective literacy teaching strategies.*

### Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

The implications and recommendations for future research emerge from the distinctiveness of the current study, its limitations, and the findings derived from the data. While several studies have examined deaf parents raising hearing children and the experiences of hearing children with deaf parents, research on Deaf parents with hearing children is scarce. And within the African context, the research we found focused on hearing parents' concerns about learning sign language rather than on raising a Deaf parent raising a hearing child, which is the focus of this study.

Additionally, although the retrospective inquiry method facilitated authentic storytelling and personal meaning-making, it also relied on memory reconstruction, which can be influenced by temporal distance and emotional filters. Future studies could engage in longitudinal or cross-sectional research to examine, follow, and document real-time experiences as they occur throughout the hearing child's parenting period from birth. Additionally, fathers not included in the current study may have different experiences and challenges that future studies can explore. Hence, expanding participant demographics would offer a more comprehensive real-time report.

The current study focused on only two African communities, Kenya and Nigeria. It involved a small sample size of only 15 parents, indicating a need for future research with larger sample sizes. Additionally, the findings present a geographical limitation. Although it was conducted in two African countries, it was limited in scope to a specific location. In the two countries where many ethnic and linguistic practices and beliefs vary across the geopolitical divide, the findings of this study may not reflect what is obtainable across the two countries used in the study. Future research can consider an exploratory quantitative study with a larger sample size from other African countries to yield more generalizable data.

Since parents affect both early language and literacy acquisition and development, this study is unique in that it impacts both Deaf and general education. The findings indicated that the

participants in the current study were also post-lingual Deaf who had access to spoken language before becoming deaf. Despite being post-lingual, they still depend on hearing individuals in the family, school, and community to support their children's development of specific language and literacy skills. Furthermore, since the current participants were postlingual, future studies are needed to examine the experiences of prelingual deaf parents raising hearing children in a multilingual African community. Hence, in education, the unique findings impact teachers of hearing children or CODAs, helping them understand the experience of these children and how to support them in school. Additionally, teachers need to be aware of the challenges the Deaf parents experience in helping their children to read.

The findings of the study also highlighted the importance of supporting Deaf parents in their efforts to pass on cultural and linguistic heritage to their children, recognizing and validating Deaf parenting strategies and strengths, and providing resources and community connections that help Deaf-hearing families navigate bimodal, multilingual and bicultural dynamics that exist in their families and society that may impact their hearing children and the parenthood experience. These challenges may be alleviated through community awareness of Deaf culture and the Deaf community. Hence, there is a need for community mobilization within the larger hearing and Deaf communities to establish programs that support and empower Deaf parents to support their hearing children's language and literacy.

Moreover, the findings from the current study revealed the need for resources specifically tailored to the needs of Deaf parents raising hearing children in multilingual and bimodal settings. One of the challenges this study identified is the late realization of the need for early sign language introduction for deaf children of deaf parents. Hence, there is a need to examine family language plans for Deaf parented families to support Deaf parents in allocating multiple languages within the household while preserving their Deaf linguistic and cultural identity. Also, there is a need for focused studies and innovations that provide Deaf parents with tools and strategies for effective language management within their families.

The authors noted limited discussion on how technology can provide an avenue to support Deaf parents raising hearing children. Hence, there is a need to examine how deaf-parented families can be supported by multilingual and multimodal technological resources designed to enhance their hearing children's language and literacy development. These resources could include apps, digital platforms, and educational materials that support bimodal bilingual families, such as Deaf-parented families in Africa.

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**Ethics Statement**

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# Global Education in Elementary Schools Through Children's Literature – Opportunities and Challenges

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Interest in global education at the elementary school level has been growing in the last few years.  One frequently used definition is the following:  global education means helping children see the interconnectedness of people with each other and the biosphere.  It also means being able to "see through the eyes, minds, and hearts" of others and recognizing that, though we have many surface-level differences, we share deeper, more important commonalities rooted in our needs and wants (Ramler, 1991, p. 45).

If learning to see through the eyes, minds, and hearts of others is a major goal of global education, literature, with its power to create new experiences, illuminate the familiar, bring alive characters whom the readers know more intimately than next-door neighbors,  or create a bridge to other times and other places, is the ideal lens.  Children do not come to literature to learn.  They come because they want to live the lives they are reading about, be in the places they discover.  However, inevitably, they also learn.  A National Council of Teachers of English survey of children's current heroes, among whom were actors, writers, politicians, and athletes, revealed the varied influences early reading had on their lives.  They spoke of books as motivating forces, shaping their understanding and compassion for others.  Many said they had learned what it is to be human  from  well-loved books (Cullinan, 1980, p. 9).

This is what Louis L'Amour said of his three favorites, *Treasure Island, Kim,* and *The Count of Monte Cristo:* "All three are great stories, exciting stories, but they do more: each one introduces you to chapters of history that might be no more than lines in a history book... Places you have never seen are known to you and are real, and you can walk in times far from you, and when you wish, you can speak to the great minds of all ages (L'Amour, 1980, pp. 95-96).

Donna Norton, a scholar and educator in the field of children's literature, says that through carefully selected and shared children's literature,  children "learn to identify with the people who created the stories, whether from the past or the present.  From the past, they discover folktales, myths, and legends that clarify the people's values and beliefs. They discover the great stories that have founded whole cultures.  From the present, they discover the threads that weave the past with the present and the themes and values that continue to be important to the people" (Norton, 1990, p. 28).  The stories shed light on both similarities and differences among people and on the specific settings that have given rise to them.

The reasons for introducing literature by and about men from different cultures are compelling, yet several challenges must be overcome. Four challenges to global education through children's literature are: (1) perspective, or who is to tell the story; (2) publishing decisions as to which countries' and culture's stories are told, including what books get translated; (3) what happens to a story in translation; (4) interpreting and understanding values that differ from one's own.

## Perspective

From whose point of view do children receive their first impressions of other countries and peoples? Indeed, whose interpretations and accounts do children read even about their own cultures? (Kuipers 1991; Nieto 1982; Sims 1982). Who are the writers, illustrators, and producers of the books and videos available to American children?

The issue of point of view was well-defined by Rudine Sims (1982), who addressed the African-American experience as reflected in children's books. Though speaking for a minority culture within the United States, Sims could be speaking for any culture whose stories are told in America primarily by outsiders from the culture. She writes of the attempts of well-meaning non-African-American writers of realistic fiction set in an inner-city ghetto:

"All of those books depict with some degree of accuracy some of the harsh realities of ghetto life. However, their reality is what can be seen by anyone who walks through a ghetto, or even by a regular visitor; it lacks the nuances apparent to those who call the ghetto home. The books miss the essence; they lose the substance. Grasping at the shadow. What is minimized is the recognition that within those grim realities, Afro-American people live their lives-they learn and grow and develop strength.... Thus, even the grimmest of the city books by Afro-American authors *(A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* and *A Teacup Full of Roses)* shine a bright spotlight on human relationships." (Sims 1982, p. 65). Sims also points out the problems non-African-Americans have in creating authentic details, whether through the misuse of Black vernacular or through mistakes in portraying church services, attitudes toward careers, use of names, and particularly, unlikely situations and behavior. While not denying the power of sympathetic imagination and meticulous scholarship, as exemplified in Katherine Paterson's historical fiction set in China and Japan, what does matter is who tells the story. The fact is that the vast majority of children's books about other cultures are written and published by American writers, as even a cursory check of *Children's Books in Prints* shows. Even with the best of intentions, these writers can provide only a limited picture.

## Publishing Decisions

How global are the publishing ventures of the major U.S. publishers? Are children's books being translated in equal proportions from all regions of the world? Are American children's books and videos representing each part of the world in equal measure? There is substantial evidence that they are not, thus creating a serious barrier to global education through children's books.

The idea that books representing European cultures dominate children's literature is neither new nor surprising.  To get a clearer picture, however, a study was conducted of *Children's Books in Print: Subject Guide* and  "Notable 1990 Children's Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies," published by the National Council for the Social Studies and the Children's Book Council.  The study indicates that books from and about Latin America are disproportionately underrepresented among books available to children from other cultures.  Further, when one considers the great size, population, cultural diversity, and cultural richness of Asia, that continent too is poorly and unevenly represented. Most of the literature listed from the Middle East, for instance, is either multiple editions of the *Arabian Nights,* modern fiction from Israel, or informational books about Ancient Egypt.  And, while there seems to be much on China, in fact, 76 of the 111 folktales listed are parts of a series of individual tales published by a single company.

The figures from *Children's Books in Print* are not accurate due to Books in Print's indexing policies, but are nevertheless indicative.  The distribution of informational books listed under the various subject headings for the five continents (other than North America), including most of the countries on each continent, is seen in Table 1, below:

**Table 1**
*Informational Books from Around the World in Children's Books in Print-Subject Guide 1991/92*

| Africa | Asia | Europe | Latin America | Oceania/Australia |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 154 | 232 | 278 | 127 | 12 |

The inequality in proportions is further accentuated for books under the headings Myths, Legends, and Folklore, which are each subdivided by country, as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**
*Myths, Legends and Folklore\* From Around the World in Children's Books in Print-Subject Guide 1991/92*

| Africa | Asia | Europe | Latin America | Oceania/Australia |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 51 | 219 | 199 | 27 | 10 |

*A separate listing under the heading FAIRY TALES contained a mixture of approximately 900 folktales, literary fairy tales, and fantasy literature, only 57, or 6% of which were not European.

At first glance, it seems as if more Asian than European legends and myths are being published, but the list is misleading.  The heading LEGENDS does not include all the legendary heroes listed under their individual entries. For instance, there is a separate entry under King Arthur with twenty-four (24) items listed, only one of which also appears under the heading LEGENDS.  The same holds true for many other figures, such as Odysseus, Beowulf, and Robin Hood.  Similarly, the headings for biographies under countries do not include everyone for whom there is an entry under their individual name.  There is an  entry, for instance, under (Mahatma)

Gandhi's name, but not under INDIA-BIOGRAPHIES. It is almost certain, however, that there are far more European legendary heroes and famous individuals who are thus missed when counting, but are actually in *Children's Books in Print,* than their counterparts from other countries.

A more reliable source of information on what is available to teachers about other countries is the list of 157 books included in "Notable 1990 Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies." Most of the list deals with U.S. materials, including 17 items that are not ethnically identifiable, 30 European-American, 13 Native American, 15 African-American, 4 Asian-American, and 2 Hispanic-related books. The list also includes materials of a general global nature, such as works about the environment.  For those books that relate to other countries, the list confirms the author's findings in *Children's Books in Print.* It supports the assumption that the *Children's Books in Print* figures under-represent discrepancies between books about Europe and other cultures, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**
*Children's Books from Around the World from "Notable 1990 Trade Books in The Field of Social Studies"*

| Africa | Asia | Europe | Latin America | Oceania/Australia |
|--------|------|--------|---------------|-------------------|
| 12 | 13 | 24 | 5 | 1 |

A study that demonstrated the uneven representation of translated children's books was Joan S. Nist's dissertation (1977), which she followed up with a second look ten years later. NIST's two studies of the Mildred L. Batchelder Award winners, an award given annually by the American Library Association to the American publisher of the most outstanding translated children's book, show that European children's books, especially those originally written in Germanic languages, predominate among the winners (1977; 1988).

One of the most surprising findings of Nist's first study was that the Batchelder Award had never been given to a book originally written in a Romance language. However, outstanding children's literature in those languages certainly exists. This is shown by the fact that several winners of the international Hans Christian Andersen Award were from France, Italy, and Spain (Nist, 1977, p. 118). In 1986, the French-language book Rose Blanche by Christophe Gallaz finally won the Batchelder Award, but the pattern of emphasizing German-language books has continued since. Other studies and bibliographies by Lynch-Brown (1991), Norton (1990), and Provsic (1985) found similar patterns.

One may speculate about the reasons behind the uneven interest of publishers in books from various parts of the world.  While the absence of a particular ethnic group in the United States may account for some of these findings, these explanations cannot account for the meager representation of children's books from and about Latin America.  Hispanic Americans represent the fastest-growing minority in the U. S. today (Information Please, Almanac 1991, p. 796-806), and, politically, Latin America is of major interest to the United States.  Part of the answer is probably cultural bias. However, another part of the answer lies in the lack of a

publishing tradition for children in many parts of the developing world, including the Latin American countries (de Gomez, 1990). Further, Hispanic-American writers choose to write for adults because of economic considerations, including the difficulty of placing manuscripts with large publishing houses (Soto, 1991).

**Translation**

Successful translations help to further understanding between cultures by interpreting the language, thought patterns, and worldview of one culture to another (Nist, 1987, p. 16). As anyone reading a poorly translated book can attest, a smooth, idiomatic knowledge of the language into which the book is to be translated is of first importance. Award-winning translator, Elizabeth Crawford, described the process at an international children's literature conference as going through many stages, from the first literal draft, through several drafts which must be "left to cool," to the final struggle for just the right words which will convey the author's entire meaning and tone. As a rule, Crawford said, it is the native speaker, bringing to the translation the store of experiences and idiomatic use of the language, accumulated from birth, who can best convey the author's message. However, the author must also understand the cultural context of the original (Crawford, 1990, pp. 115-116).

It is the cultural context that Jewell Reinhart Coburn, translator of Southeast Asian folktales, emphasizes. "The translator/author must be not only a fine writer but part diplomat, part sociologist, part historian, part psychologist-researcher. Thus, only by employing a many-faceted, comprehensive, holistic approach can a writer hope to capture and communicate an authentic gestalt of the material at hand," (Coburn & Van Quyen, 1989, p. 179).

Two of the cultural factors that transcend the linguistic are differences between the original and the new audiences' historical/cultural referents, and differences between the two audiences' expectations of story structure and resolution. A recent bilingual edition of Japanese writer Tadashi Kikuchi's *Ten Tales of Tama,* replete with legendary, historical, and geographical allusions, illustrates the difficulties translators encounter in conveying a seamless story. At the same time, it provides background information for foreign readers. Coburn, who faces the same problem when translating from Vietnamese, explains how she deals with the challenge of bridging the culture gap between the tellers of the original story and the listeners/readers of her translated version: she "retains as much of the original story as possible...[but] allows for the introduction of the omniscient author who speaks directly to the reader and furnishes explanations." She also "footnotes difficult concepts with lucid descriptive material."

Even when the story does not require major effort to provide background explanations for a new audience, translators must still have a thorough knowledge of the culture from which they translate. Details, such as getting the forms of address wrong and misusing gender specific words such as the interjection "ara," and "oh" in Japanese, which can be used by a woman only or by a man only, are two of the typical translating mistakes Yasuko Makino cites in her introduction to *Japan Through Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography* (1985, p. ix). She also notes mistakes regarding customs, such as children kissing their parents in salutation, as

in *Japanese Folk Tales* retold by James O'Donnell, and in describing foods, as in the story of *The Funny Little Woman.* The present author found similar problems in English translations of Hungarian folktales.

Readers' expectations regarding story structure and resolution also seem to differ across cultures. The typical **Western** plot structure, with its introduction of characters and situations, rising action, and a neat resolution, is not the rule in many Asian folktales, which, according to Coburn, are frequently characterized by episodic plots designed to entertain rather than to reveal character or lead to a resolution. Coburn feels that, as a translator, she must achieve a "delicate balance" between retaining authenticity and sparking the reader's delight (Coburn, 1989, p. 185).

Unresolved and sad endings, so disturbing to Western readers, are accepted by Japanese readers (Hotta, 1991). The many picture books about the suffering and death as a result of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, such as Toshi Maruki's *Hiroshima No Pika* and Junko Morimoto's *My Hiroshima, are examples of books that* are shared with very young children in Japan. However, they are not considered appropriate before the fourth or fifth grade in this country (Miyake, 1989, p. 42).

**Cultural values**

One of the challenges for teachers posed by introducing children's literature from or about other parts of the world is interpreting values that differ from the predominant Western values children are taught at home and in school. "Customs common to one people may be difficult to understand, distasteful, even repugnant to another, and yet may be an integral part of the body of its folk literature" (Coburn, 1989, p. 180).

Coburn uses the poignant Vietnamese folktale "Crystal Love" as her example. The universal theme of recognizing true worth beneath an ugly exterior is conveyed through a story about a mandarin's daughter and the young fisherman who first wins the girl's love from afar through his flute playing, then dies of shame and sorrow when she rejects him after discovering that he is deformed. When his body is exhumed for further burial rites, after the customary three years, his heart is found to have turned into a beautiful crystal, which, when served to the girl in the form of a crystal tea set, begins to play his beautiful music again. She realizes, too late, that she had missed his true beauty. Coburn says most translators omit the part about the body being exhumed, ending the story with the dead fisherman's boat being found with only a crystal heart remaining in it. As Coburn points out, by altering the story to fit Western sensibilities about burial, the translators rob it of its more profound, more universal meaning.

Other stories that include customs and values contrary to those taught to the majority of American children include Enkoomiak's written and illustrated sketches of his youth in Arctic Memories (1990) and the sound/filmstrip "Forgetful Porcupine" *(African Folktales,* 1980). In both Enkoomiak's realistic account and the African folktale, the conception of justice differs from what children are accustomed to in the dominant U.S. culture. Enkoomiak recounts the story of three boys who had been falsely accused of crimes that someone else, using their names, had committed. Even though the boys were found to be innocent, their families sent them to sea

to die in order to restore the families' honor.  In "Forgetful Porcupine," Porcupine thoughtlessly humiliates Dog several times in front of Dog's prospective in-laws, thereby making him lose his bride.  In anger at the humiliation and loss of his bride, Dog kills Porcupine, and ever since then, dogs chase porcupines.

Enkoomiak's beautiful memoirs raise the question of the right of individuals to be judged for their actions versus the submergence of the individual for the sake of the family in our society. Where the individual is so highly valued, most people would find punishing the innocent to clear the family name unacceptable. Similarly, the violent retribution by Dog shocked undergraduate students in this author's children's literature class.  What can teachers do to build understanding  and tolerance?

Teachers in English education and social education have been grappling with the issue of introducing stories that reflect different customs and values over the last few years.  The following are suggestions for approaches to build greater understanding through children's literature.

Norton's five-phase model for studying multicultural literature is especially useful because it addresses the need to deal with different genres in their own right.  Thus, teachers  can help children see the distinction between the traditional stories of a culture that functioned to make sense of the universe and the place of humans in it, and those stories that shed light on today's culture.  Such an approach helps readers compare myths and legends, many of which tend to be violent, with each other, rather than with stories about ordinary people and their interactions. Such an approach would help place the African folktale about the "Forgetful Porcupine" within the context of a traditional tale that teaches social conventions about the importance of respecting another's honor and, at the same time, provides a humorous explanation for why dogs chase porcupines.

Norton's five phases constitute a sequential study of the literature of other cultures.  She begins in phase 1 by studying myths, legends, folklore, and fables common to a broad cultural group, such as Native Americans.  In phase 2, she narrows the study to the same type of traditional literature, limited to one or two tribal or cultural areas, such as the legends of the Plains Indians or the Mayas. In phase 3, she studies autobiographies, biographies, and informational literature from earlier times, and in phase 4, she continues with historical fiction.  Norton concludes the sequence in phase 5 with contemporary realistic fiction, poetry, biography, and informational books written by authors representative of the cultural group.

The importance of this five-phase model is that each step helps extend understanding and build in touchstones for measuring authenticity and accuracy.  Children can find common threads between heroes of oral literature and modern realistic fiction, and they can evaluate the accuracy of historical fiction after having also read biographies and informational books about a place and an era (Norton, 1990, p. 30).  In short, children develop a whole picture, not isolated images, which are hard to explain out of context.

Making cross-cultural comparisons is another approach suggested by both Norton (1990) and Stott (1991).  Stott pairs children's books from different cultures that deal with the

same theme. For instance, he compares views of the wilderness by Western and Native American cultures. He compares Max's quests in Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are with the quest of the boy hero in Goble's The Gift of the Sacred Dog, a story based on the Sioux worldview of interrelationships among and respect for all elements of creation. The Western view of the wilderness as something alien to be conquered is contrasted with the Native American view of the wilderness as life-giving and bountiful. Stott shows that while Max must conquer the Wild Things, which represent the wildness within himself, the boy in *Gift of the Sacred Dog* must be ready to receive the guidance of the Great Spirit by journeying into the hills. He must show that he is a small part of the creation. By examining the values a culture holds important, readers can view the literature as integral to the culture and interpret it in terms of those values rather than out of context as mere curiosity (Stott, 1991, p. 4).

Exploring the values a culture takes pride in, which form the foundation of a culture's self-respect, is the approach Olds uses when introducing his high school students to modern Chinese literature. He suggests several preliminary activities before attempting to read the literature, the most valuable of which for elementary schools are as follows: finding background resources for the teacher which help the teacher gain greater knowledge about the culture (Olds gives specific resources); reading folktales to pain an understanding of the enduring values of the culture; and providing visual images in the form of slides, videos and pictures in informational books (Olds, 1990). This last suggestion is especially valuable for use with elementary-age children whose frames of reference are minimal. Visual images can provide context for the actions in stories and accounts, thereby extending the reader's understanding of the culture and the forces and circumstances that shaped it.

Inviting representatives of the culture into the classroom to provide their perspectives on the stories children read is another helpful suggestion (Barrera, 1992, pp. 238-239). Finally, Gilliland and Reyhner urge teachers to compare customs as they were depicted in the past with customs of people elsewhere at the same time rather than today. An example they give is that of scalping by American Indians. That was a custom in the past, during which Europeans offered bounties for scalps and engaged in scalping themselves (Gilliland & Reyhner, 1988, pp. 88-89).

One final point to make with respect to approaching conflicting values in children's literature is to view these values not as something alien and other, but as reflections that shed light on our own culture as well. Let us return to the examples of Eskimo families that expected their sons to uphold the family name even at the cost of their lives. Is honor, for which battles have been fought, not a major theme throughout Western literature and history? Examples abound. Similarly, personal retribution, while forbidden by law, pervades our consciousness—the countless films and television shows that feature retribution as their themes attest. Reading stories from other cultures can not only help children learn to understand that culture's worldview, but also help them see their own culture more clearly, both in its positive and negative aspects.

Through stories, teachers can help children affirm the values of our culture that we hold important and also help them learn to recognize other values that might be worth adopting into

the mainstream of U. S. culture (Forouzesh & Gunatilake, 1990). While barriers abound in the form of inadequate materials and difficulties with translation and interpretation, the opportunities offered by children's literature far outweigh them. Through thoughtful use of children's literature, children can discover not only those features which create an "ourness" versus an "otherness," as Stott (1991) puts it, but also an "ourness" among all people.

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*International Research and Review* is the official journal of the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars. It is a multidisciplinary journal whose primary objectives are to: (1) recognize, disseminate and share the scholarship of our members with the global academic community; (2) provide a forum for the advancement of academic inquiry and dialogue among all members and stakeholders; and (3) cultivate support for international education among campus leadership by working with university administrators to expand the support for international education among campus leaders.

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Authors whose articles are accepted for publication are required to ensure that their data are fully accessible. Authors of quantitative empirical articles must make their data available for replication purposes. A statement of how that is done must appear in the first footnote of the article. Required material would include all data, specialized computer programs, program recodes, and an explanatory file describing what is included and how to reproduce the published results. The IRR is published four times a year online by Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society of International Scholars.

**Please send your submissions to the Director of Publications at:  [ms@smitheeassociates.com.](mailto:ms@smitheeassociates.com)**

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As part of the submission process, authors must check off their submission's compliance with all the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these requirements.
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3. All URL addresses in the text are activated and ready to click.
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Phi (philomatheia)-love of knowledge

Beta (biotremmonia)-valuing of human life

Delta (diapheren)-achieving excellence

ΦΒΔ