BLENDING DEAF AND HEARING CULTURES

SANA EBRAHIM

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Scenarios for Social Cohesion

SANA EBRAHIM

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Science, in the Graduate Programme in
Culture, Communication and Media Studies,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.**

December 2015

DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

I, Sana Ebrahim, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced
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5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References sections.

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ETHICS DECLARATION

The use of the words 'interview' and 'interviewee' below should be taken to include focus groups, surveys and observation.

- I will obtain informed consent from all interviewees *before* interviewing them — this means that I will explain to my interviewees exactly what my project is about and exactly what I will do with their contributions before they decide to take part. I will obtain this consent in writing (this can be in the form of an email or a signature on a release form, for example).

- If I plan to publish, broadcast or post online any work using interview material, I will make this clear to interviewees before the interview.

- I will not deceive any interviewees about the nature or intended outcomes of the project.

- I will not attempt to interview anyone under the age of 18.

- I will not attempt to interview anyone who is unable to give informed consent and/or is a member of a vulnerable group.

- I will not interview anyone about their own illegal behaviour (e.g. illegal drug use).

- I will not interview anyone if their participation in my project could expose them, me or the University of KwaZulu-Natal to significant risk (other than the risk normally encountered in day to day life).

- In my project, I will render my interviewees anonymous (by excluding any information that might identify them) unless their specific identity is important and relevant to the reader's, viewer's or listener's understanding of the project, in which case I will obtain their written permission to name them in my work.

- I will keep copies of any recordings and transcripts securely, and will keep these separate from any information that might personally identify my interviewees. All material will be kept for a period of five years.

- I will seek advice from my supervisor if, at any time, I become unsure whether my research might be in breach of these rules.

Signed ………………………………………………………

Sourced and adapted from: University of Stirling. n.d. School of Arts and Humanities: Research Ethics Declaration. *University of Stirling* (online). Available: https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/schools/artsandhumanities/documents/SAH%20Ethics%20Declaration%20UG&T PG.doc (Accessed 30 December 2015).

For my cousin, Humairah Bassa (23 July 1988 - 30 November 2015)

*"What really matters for me is… the more active role of the observer in quantum physics…
According to quantum physics the observer has indeed a new relation to the physical events
around him in comparison with the classical observer, who is merely a spectator"*
Wolfgang Pauli.

ABSTRACT

Sign language practice is gaining prominence as inclusive eco-art interventions assist with integrating the Deaf into wider society in the City of Durban. Urban-nature adventures that attract both Deaf and hearing participants include Deaf Theatre, Silent Cinema, Skywriting Poetry and Board Gaming at pavement cafés and Deaf-friendly spaces in Durban.

Skywriting is a term originated by the Green Heart Movement to illustrate the 'mirroring of sign language to writing in the sky or Air'. The idea introduces an imaginative and accessible terminology to describe the term 'sign language' and encourages the hearing to become familiar with Deaf culture and its visual language.

Eco-arts offer entry points into social solidarity and inclusiveness. The activations hone poetry skills and encourage interaction through sensitised socialisation.

The self-generative poetry sessions assist multi-cultural groups from across the age spectrum to form a dynamic community of practice. Active citizenship showcases participants performing poetry in eco-cultural spaces across the City.

The theoretical framework is informed by the Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication (Lester, 2006), Intergroup Contact Theory (Pettigrew, 1998) and Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Central to the study are visual culture and two disparate social groupings.

The research design incorporated 'arts-based critical auto-ethnography' (Taylor, 2014) as a focusing lens to achieve a holistic understanding of the complexity and convergences of Deaf and Hearing Worlds. Through action inquiry the researcher explored ways of facilitating interaction between Deaf and hearing participants. The study sample comprised eight Deaf and eight hearing respondents who participated in arts and ecology interventions that featured sign language.

Data production tools included conversation notebooks that provide a record of written dialogue between Deaf and hearing participants, focus groups, interviews, participant

observation, and a video titled 'The Durban Deaf Room'. Narrative inquiry was employed to reflect on the data and represent the outcomes of the study.

There is minimal literature associated with the South African experience of mixed media practice and its potential for value-added engagements that combine Deaf and hearing cultures. The study contributes to the literature by providing a lived ethnographic account of ways that Deaf culture and eco-arts act as progressive enablers in advancing mutually-beneficial social programmes for Deaf and hearing communities.

Keywords: Deaf culture, Skywriting, sign language, Ubuntu, communities of practice, social cohesion, cultural entrepreneurship, eco-arts, Open Data, transformative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

List of acronyms

ASL	American Sign Language
ATFT	Association for Transformation in Film and Television
Auslan	Australian Sign Language
BSL	British Sign Language
C4SJ	Cycles 4 Social Justice
CODA	Children of Deaf Adults
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCTO	Durban Community Tourism Organisation
DeafSA	Deaf Federation of South Africa
DStv	Digital Satellite Television
DTV	DeafTV
DWCPD	Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities
Efsli	European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters
FEDHASA	Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa
FIL	Frameside Industrial Lounge
FTH:K	from the hip: khuluma kahle
IAMCR	International Association for Media and Communication Research
ICTA	International Commission on Technology and Accessibility
ISA	International Symbol of Access

JSL	Japanese Sign Language
KZNSLA	KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSQ	Quebec Sign Language
QASA	QuadPara Association of South Africa
R&B	Rhythm and Blues
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANDA	South African National Deaf Association
SASL	South African Sign Language
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLED	Sign Language Education and Development
TGCSA	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa
UIA	International Union of Architects
WDF	World Federation of the Deaf

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IMAGE 7 Butterfly Beret Accolades 2013 recipients: Siyanda Vato (*left*), Nqobile Khuzwayo, Amanda Hadebe, Tasnim Amra and Maritza Snyders. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

A note on terminology

Through observation at local hospitals, shopping malls and function venues, the researcher has noted that parking for people with disabilities is always denoted by a symbol showing a person in a wheelchair; sometimes accompanied by the text 'Disabled Parking'. According to Perry (2003: 4):

> Language and how groups of people are described can have a powerful influence on how people are perceived. Many in the disability movement therefore advocate for the use of "people first" language. People first language calls for use of the term "people with disabilities" rather than disabled people or disabled persons.

While the researcher has opted to use "people first" language in relation to "people with disabilities," she acknowledges that the term "people with disabilities" is in itself not entirely accurate in describing people with a *single* disability, for example, Deafness. The researcher also notes a further complication when attempting to make reference to "Deaf people," as "people first" language would demand the term "People who are Deaf". Odette Swift (Director: Deaf Education at Deaf Federation of South Africa – DeafSA) clarifies: "[The term] 'Deaf people' is preferred by those who are culturally Deaf but those who are oral or hard of hearing may prefer to be called a 'person with a hearing loss'."

In keeping with global conventions, the terms 'Deaf,' 'deaf,' or 'hard of hearing' will be used in this thesis, as opposed to 'hearing impaired' or 'hearing challenged'. "Many individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing prefer the terms 'deaf' and 'hard of hearing,' because they consider them to be more positive than the term 'hearing impaired,' which implies a deficit or that something is wrong that makes a person less than whole" (University of Washington, 2013: n.p.).

In this study, 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' denotes membership of a linguistic and cultural minority; whereas 'deaf' denotes an audiological condition or inability to hear and is spelled with a small 'd' (Sacks, 2000: 131).

"Hard of hearing" refers to a hearing loss where there may be enough residual hearing that an auditory device, such as a hearing aid or FM system, provides adquate (*sic*) assistance to process speech.

"Deafened" usually refers to a person who becomes deaf as an adult and, therefore, faces different challenges than those of a person who became deaf at birth or as a child.

Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing individuals may choose to use hearing aids, cochlear implants, and/or other assistive listening devices to boost available hearing. Alternatively, or in addition, they may read lips, use sign language, sign language interpreters, and/or captioning. (University of Washington, 2013: n.p.)

In the absence of a sounding board, "people who are deaf or hard of hearing may have speech that is difficult to understand due to the inability to hear their own voice" (University of Washington, 2013: n.p.). "They may have unconscious and often very energetic vocalizations of various sorts–accidental or inadvertent movements of the vocal apparatus, neither intended nor monitored, tending to accompany emotion, exercise, and excited communication" (Sacks, 2000: 186).

Nonetheless, the researcher acknowledges that the layperson (often hearing) might use the terms 'Deaf,' 'deaf,' 'deafened,' 'hard of hearing,' 'hearing impaired,' or 'hearing challenged' interchangeably. References to Deaf people in some of the interviews conducted with hearing participants in the present research bear testament to this assertion. Prior to embarking on a literature search in Deaf Studies, the researcher was unaware of the specific terminologies around Deafness and Deaf culture, particularly the distinction between 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' and 'deaf' with a small 'd'.

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INTRODUCTION

THAT DEAF GUY
BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE

DEAF CULTURE 101: THE INTRODUCTION

A HEARING INTRODUCTION
THIS IS MY FRIEND, KRISTI.
NICE TO MEET YOU.

A DEAF INTRODUCTION
REMEMBER I *TOLD* YOU ABOUT MY DEAF FRIEND WHO ATE *15* EGGS ON A DARE? *THIS* IS THE GUY, BRAD. HE DATED MY ROOMATE'S SISTER WHO *KNOWS* YOUR BROTHER...

— Daigle, M. and Daigle, K. 2013a[1]

Contemporary policy discourse buzzwords and phrases include 'social cohesion and integration', 'inclusivity', 'cultural diversity', 'Ubuntu[2] and nation-building'. Access to education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities has been placed on the national agenda, with various government sectors advocating greater integration in schools, the workplace and other social settings (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). Of direct bearing to this study is the requisite of facilitating communication and interaction with people with disabilities.

The purpose of this research is to explore the potential of integrating Deaf and hearing communities through Deaf culture and eco-arts. Central to the concept of ecology is "interrelationships of organisms with their environment and each other" (Pimm, 2014: n.p.). In addition, foregrounding the human 'heart-in-art' heightens sensitivity towards greater cooperation and compassion. Collaboration between Deaf and hearing communities can then present mutually enriching experiences.

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[1] Deaf Culture 101: The Introduction. *That Deaf Guy* (online), April 25. Available: http://www.thatdeafguy.com/?p=488 (Accessed 3 May 2014).

[2] 'Ubuntu' is a word used by the Zulu people of South Africa, and is difficult to translate into English because it has many different connotations associated with it. Roughly, it means humanness, and it often figures into the maxim that 'a person is a person through other persons'. This maxim has descriptive senses to the effect that one's identity as a human being causally and even metaphysically depends on a community. It also has prescriptive senses to the effect that one ought to be a mensch, in other words, morally should support the community in certain ways. (Metz, 2007: n.p.)

Durban ranks above average overall in the African Green City Index (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011: 60). Visual cues include the beachfront promenade; sustainable building design of the Moses Mabhida Stadium; development of a clip-on cycle bridge that crosses over the mouth of the uMngeni River; and, as a legacy symbol arising out of the COP17 United Nations Climate Change Conference[3], the Living Beehive structure in Durban Botanic Gardens, Africa's oldest surviving botanic gardens.

'Skywriting' is growing increasingly popular in eco-art interventions around the city, involving both Deaf and hearing participants. The term 'Skywriting,' created by Dr Mikhail Peppas (co-founder of the Green Heart Movement in South Africa), refers to the 'mirroring of sign language to writing in the sky or Air'. The concept is to activate inclusivity by using an imaginative term to describe sign language, and so encourage the hearing person to learn sign language. The terms 'sign language' and 'Skywriting' shall be used interchangeably henceforth in this study.

The Green Heart Movement is a citizen-based organisation that encourages arts and poetry experiences around themes of sustainable living, fashion and cycling. A key objective is to promote the widespread wearing of green heart badges with the consequence of Durban becoming affectionately known as Green Heart City. The reference to Durban as Green Heart City has similarities to the promotional branding of New York as the Big Apple and Paris as the City of Love. The strategy is to establish an international Green Heart Movement originating from Durban and spreading throughout the world. The Green Heart project is being internationalised through formalities such as registration with the World Poetry Movement.

Green Heart collaborates with the KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy and with the Alliance Française de Durban to present regular inclusive eco-art interventions. A weekly course, *Sundowner Skywriting – Adventures in South African Sign Language Basics* was started in May 2012. Key elements of the course included the South African Sign Language

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[3] The 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011. "Since the UNFCCC entered into force in 1995, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC have been meeting annually to assess progress in dealing with climate change" (COP17-CMP7 Durban, 2011: n.p.).

(SASL) manual alphabet (see Appendix A) and SASL poetry. The initial classes were followed by a Skywriting Social or "HAPPY TIME" where Deaf and hearing guests interacted in a 'coffee-comfort' setting, using conversation notebooks and basic sign language. The 11-week sign language course culminated in an Interactive Skywriting Poetry Performance and Certificate Ceremony.

IMAGE 1 Learning the SASL alphabet with course facilitator Alison Swannack at Alliance Française de Durban. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

The KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy was established in 1991. The organisation has three directors: Alison Swannack (founder member and South African Sign Language [SASL] trainer), Monique Sutcliffe (member and SASL trainer), and Odette Swift (coordinator and SASL interpreter).

Alison Swannack facilitated the basic sign language course jointly presented by Green Heart Movement, KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy, and Alliance Française de Durban during May - August 2012. A prominent member of the Durban Deaf community, Swannack relocated to Johannesburg to serve as SASL academic programme coordinator and curriculum developer at the Wits Language School in September 2013. Some of Swannack's accolades include: Exhibition Convenor at the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre Durban, 18-24 July 2011); Festival Director, 'Talking Hands' – First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa at Catalina Theatre, Durban (25-30 September 2012); Intern at Catalina Theatre (2012);

Playwright/director of *Talking Hands, the Play* (2012); Producer/director of 'Listen With Your Eyes' (2012); Recipient of the Valhalla Arts Tributes Women with Disabilities Award for Education (2013); only Deaf project team member writing the SASL National curriculum with the Department of Basic Education in Pretoria (completed in 2013); and a judge at the Zwakala Contest[4] (2015) (Listen With Your Eyes, n.d.: n.p.). She is in the process of establishing a new production company, Isithulu Productions.

Alliance Française de Durban provided the ideal backdrop for sign language classes and eco-art events featuring signed poetry. Founded in 1936, the cross cultural non-profit organisation serves as a language and cultural centre that presents French, isiZulu and Portuguese courses and a variety of socio-cultural activities (Alliance Française, n.d.: n.p.). Accorded the status of Greenest Alliance Française in the world, the Durban centre is situated in an eco-friendly building with solar panels and rainwater harvesting tanks complemented by indigenous and permaculture gardens, energy-saving light bulbs and waste separation bins (République Française, 2012: n.p.). See Appendix B for invitations to two eco-art events featuring sign language jointly hosted by Alliance Française de Durban and Green Heart Movement, and Appendix C for print media coverage of these events.

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[4] Zwakala (a Zulu term for "be heard") is a DTV (Deaf TV) Project that "was born out of a need to recognise creative talent within the Deaf community, and it follows DTV's infamous creed of by the Deaf, for the Deaf" (Meier, 2014: n.p.). The Zwakala Contest is open to schools for the deaf in South Africa and now also involves learners from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Meier, 2014: n.p.).

IMAGE 2 Deaf Pavement Poets render a nature-themed performance using sign language at the Francofête hosted by Alliance Française de Durban on Human Rights Day 2012 at Sutton Park, Morningside Durban. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Catalina UnLtd presented 'Talking Hands,' the First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa in September 2012 (see Appendix D for copy of 'Talking Hands' Festival flyer). Themed 'Accessibility, Freedom of Expression and Opinion, and Access to Information,' the festival was held to commemorate Deaf Awareness Month. As part of the Deaf Rainbow Tour, three Durban-based Deaf cast members, Bo Tasker, Darren Rajbal and Ismael Mansoor, and Deaf director, Alison Swannack were invited to stage the play 'Listen With Your Eyes' at the Festival Clin d'Oeil, International pluridisciplinary meeting on Deaf Arts in Reims, France in July 2013. The production debuted at the 'Talking Hands' Festival at Durban's Catalina Theatre in 2012. Preview shows were held at the Catalina Theatre from 30 May to 1 June 2013 to create awareness around the production prior to its international debut in France (see Appendix E for 'Listen With Your Eyes' preview production run poster).

IMAGE 3 Integrated World[5] with Green Heart City kick-start the awareness drive in support of a France tour for three local Deaf artists and a Deaf director with a R500 contribution. Catalina UnLtd's Deaf production 'Listen With Your Eyes' is set to grace the international stage with Festival Clin d'Oeil in Reims, France during 5 to 7 July 2013. Signing the phrase 'Deaf Rainbow Tour France' (*from left*) are Bo Tasker, Alison Swannack, Darren Rajbal and Ismael Mansoor with Sanabelle Ebrahim (*centre*, Integrated World/Green Heart City). *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Following the success of the Deaf Rainbow Tour in France, the director and cast of 'Listen With Your Eyes' were invited to stage the production as part of the Entertainment programme at Deaffest, the UK's leading Deaf-led Film & Arts Festival in Wolverhampton, 14-17 May 2015. Deaffest was launched by Zebra Uno, Light House and the University of Wolverhampton, and celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2015 (Deaffest, n.d.: n.p.). The event provides "deaf filmmakers with an opportunity to be recognised for their talents, to show their work and be supported in achieving their aspirations" (Deaffest, n.d.: n.p.). Such

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[5] Green Heart Movement envisages that Integrated World Expo (IWE) serve as an annual platform for integrating global artists and designers through poetry, moving images, design and industry. The inaugural 2016 edition will incorporate a Deaf Pavilion to encourage Deaf/Hearing artistic collaborations. One of the prime aims of IWE is to encourage greater integration on a global scale. As an example, IWE seeks to immerse South Africa more fully into the whole of Africa, and then Africa and South America increasingly into the wider world.

The legacy of IWE will see Durban benefit from the support of visual practitioners in setting up iconic green heart activations around the City. Themed "X-citement from Your City," each Friendship and Sister City to Durban will be invited to send a heritage item to IWE. A Friendship & Sister City Pavilion will showcase the heritage items which could range from a comic book to an eco-vehicle, art piece or opera star.

opportunities enable Deaf artists from across the globe to engage on a common platform and hone their craft.

Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic

Green Heart Movement presented a fun and festive Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic as the closing performance of the 'Talking Hands' Deaf Theatre Festival on Sunday 30 September 2012. The performance was titled 'Integrated World and Social Cohesion through Arts & Heritage in Green Heart City' and themed 'Environmental Sustainability linked to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7[6]' (see Appendix D). The stage role play picnic sought to blend Deaf culture with mainline society in the build-up to Integrated World Expo 2016. The line-up included a nature-themed poem performed by Deaf Pavement Poet Ismael Mansoor; a work verse titled 'Party Time' performed by hearing Skywriting participants; incidental accordion, flute and drum tunes; a short clip from the movie 'Children of a Lesser God' (1986); signing 'Welcome to Green Heart City Durban'; and an introduction to Integrated World Expo (IWE). The interactive performance piece culminated in a 'Bring & Share' picnic with children and adults communicating in sign language and cutting out green felt hearts on stage.

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[6] Millennium Development Goal 7 is "Ensure Environmental Sustainability" (World Health Organization, n.d.i: n.p.).

> The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are eight goals that all 191 UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000 commits world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The MDGs are derived from this Declaration, and all have specific targets and indicators. (World Health Organization, n.d.ii: n.p.)

IMAGE 4 Integrated World Expo scheduled for launch by the Green Heart Movement in 2016 will feature a Deaf Pavilion. The 'hand' and 'eye' are highly valued by Deaf cultures while hearing cultures prize the 'ear' and 'mouth'. *Artwork: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

The multimedia production provided fascinating insights into the many innovative ways that Deaf culture can be applied using eco-arts. This novel venturing in theatre can be adapted to different settings beyond the theatre. Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic can be re-created as an installation in shopping malls, parks and school grounds.

Another revolutionary alternative method of theatre originated at the performance was the real-time interpretation into SASL of a flute rendition of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' from the musical score sheet. BunnyKat puppets – which double-up as 'ice-breakers' – added a playful element to the experience. A whiteboard was passed around the audience so that hearing participants could write down phrases they wanted to learn to say using sign language. The event provided an opportunity for hearing participants who undertook the 11-week sign Skywriting course at Alliance Française de Durban to display what they had learned to a broader audience.

IMAGE 5 The Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic features Odette Swift (*left*) interpreting into SASL a flute rendition by Thandeka Khoza (KwaZulu-Natal Youth Wind Band) of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Beret Accolades

The Boulevard Beret Accolades was launched in December 2011 at the Durban City Hall. The initiative is jointly presented by Green Heart City, South African National Historical Society (SANS) and eThekwini Municipality.

The Accolades recognise six trailblazers (21 years or above) who contribute towards advancing the arts, heritage and ecology in the city of Durban and surrounds. One of the six recipients is a person with disabilities and a second is presented posthumously.

Darren Rajbal, Deaf hip-hop dancer and winner of SA's Got Talent 2009, received a Boulevard Beret Accolade in 2012. He was a student at the Centre for Fine Art, Animation and Design (CFAD) at the time of receiving the accolade. Rajbal rendered a hip-hop performance as part of the programme at the Boulevard Beret Accolades 2012.

IMAGE 6 Multi-award winning designer Karen Monk-Klijnstra presents the Boulevard Beret Accolade to Darren Rajbal. Recipients of the 2012 Boulevard Beret Accolades are: Gcina Mhlophe, Haroun Hansrot, Fiona Kirkwood, Guy Redman and Werner Dannewitz (posthumous). *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

The Butterfly Beret Accolades was launched on Spring Day 2012 at the Imagine Durban Sustainable Living Expo at Durban Exhibition Centre. The initiative is jointly presented by Green Heart City, South African National Historical Society (SANS) and eThekwini Municipality.

The Accolades recognise five youths (16-20 years) who contribute towards advancing the arts, heritage and ecology in the city of Durban and surrounds. One of the five recipients is a youth achiever with disabilities.

Maritza Snyders, Deaf aspiring Olympic swimmer who is winning medals and breaking records, received a Butterfly Beret Accolade in 2013. She represented KwaZulu-Natal at the SA Games Limpopo 2011 and received two gold and five silver medals. Snyders was a Grade 11 learner at Fulton School for the Deaf at the time of receiving the accolade.

IMAGE 7 Butterfly Beret Accolades 2013 recipients: Siyanda Vato (*left*), Nqobile Khuzwayo, Amanda Hadebe, Tasnim Amra and Maritza Snyders. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Deaf Theatre Advances in Durban

In early 2014 Durban-based veteran theatre-maker Gisele Turner began mentoring Deaf talent Sibo Masondo who had completed his schooling at Fulton School for the Deaf in 2013. They work in a number of non-verbal forms including dance drama, object manipulation and puppetry. Turner has a 10 year history working at Fulton School for the Deaf as the Creative Drama Teacher.

The researcher attended two performances by Turner and Masondo *aka Le Mot* (The Word) from 'Point Blank,' a collection of mime vignettes that takes its cue from the French Mime Tradition at *Mondays at Six at St. Clements*, Musgrave Durban in 2014. St. Clements Restaurant provides the backdrop for soirées hosted by well-known playwright Pieter Scholtz.

The Musho! International Theatre Festival of One and Two Person Theatre held at the Catalina Theatre celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2015. Deaf theatre has featured as part of the Musho! festival line-up since 2012. Sibo Masondo was the Face of Musho! 2015 and appeared in various promotional materials including street pole posters, programme guides

and newspaper articles. He performed an extract combining mime and object manipulation from 'Eenie Meanie Greenie GROW!' an eco-comedy devised and directed by Gisele Turner, geared to young audiences.

IMAGE 8 A poster depicting Face of Musho! 2015, Deaf performer Sibo Masondo in 'Point Blank,' a Happy go Lucky production devised and directed by Gisele Turner at the Catalina Theatre. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Masondo's achievements since being under Turner's mentorship include: a year's contract with uShaka Marine World entertaining crowds at the Dolphinarium every weekend and over public holidays; two appearances at the #Red Eye Durban arts festival; ongoing Schools tours with 'Eenie Meanie Greenie GROW!'; running workshops at various schools on mime, mask and improvisation; securing a regular workshop slot at Fulton School for the Deaf; and a secured offer to participate in both the Sibikwa Storytelling Festival and the Festival of Fame in Johannesburg in March 2015. Turner and Masondo are currently working on a production titled 'Sunshine Baby' for 0-4 year olds and refining 'Point Blank' for the forthcoming festivals.

IMAGE 9 Deaf performer Sibo Masondo portrays an extract from 'Eenie Meanie Greenie GROW!', a Happy go Lucky production created and directed by Gisele Turner at the Musho! Festival 2015. *Photograph: Rodney Prynne*

Another Deaf theatre production to grace the Catalina stage is 'Slipped Through My Fingers' written and directed by Verne Rowin Munsamy and produced by Keep the Dream and Catalina UnLtd (What's On, n.d.: n.p.). The play deals with disability from the perspectives of a mother and her Deaf daughter. They have a troubled history and are thrown together in the midst of a recent tragedy following years of no contact (Newman, 2015: 8). Elements of spoken word poetry (projected on a screen) and classical Indian dance intertwined with drama complement each other in the progression of this tale (Newman, 2015: 8). The production ran from 19 to 29 March 2015.

International Sign Poetry Festival

The South African Sign Language Department at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) hosted a 'Signing Hands Across the Water 2' International Sign Poetry Festival in Johannesburg from 12 to 14 April 2014. The event featured poetry workshops, poetry performances and academic workshops for Deaf and hearing guests (Wits Language School, 2014: n.p.).

International festival participants included Paul Scott and John Wilson (renowned deaf poets from the UK), Dr Johanna Mesch (established deaf poet from Sweden), and Dr Rachel Sutton-Spence from the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil (author of *Analysing Sign Language Poetry* published by Palgrave Macmillan) (University of the Witwatersrand, n.d.: n.p.). Local deaf poets were provided a platform to showcase their work (Caxton & CTP Printers and Publishers Ltd., 2014a: n.p.). Dr Michiko Kaneko, head of the Wits South African Sign Language (SASL) department said one of the aims of the festival was to "invite renowned deaf poets from different countries to support local deaf people in the host country as they create stories and poems in their own sign language" (Caxton & CTP Printers and Publishers Ltd., 2014a: n.p.). The first 'Signing Hands Across the Water' International Festival of Sign Language Poetry from the United Kingdom and the United States was held at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, USA from 16 to 18 March 2012 (Cooper Series Swarthmore College, n.d.: n.p.).

'War Horse'

Deaf learners in the Western Cape were afforded an opportunity to participate in workshops based on the internationally-acclaimed 'War Horse' theatre production by The National Theatre in the United Kingdom in association with Handspring Puppet Company in Cape Town (Skinner, 2014: n.p.; Artscape, n.d.: n.p.). Three-hour workshops were held at the Dominican School for Deaf Children and De La Bat School for the Deaf either in preparation for the performance or as a post-performance experience. Aspects covered in the workshops were "puppetry, theatre skills, visual arts, and the play's central theme of war" (ASSITEJ SA, 2014: 1). In an e-mail communication on 22 March 2015, Jaqueline Dommisse (ASSITEJ South Africa[7] Western Cape Project Coordinator) stated: "The workshops were run by two hearing and two deaf facilitators with a sign language interpreter. One of the deaf facilitators was a guest specialist in theatre mediation for deaf learners from the United Kingdom, visiting South Africa with the support of theatre company, FTH:K[8]." 100 learners from the

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[7] A registered non-profit organisation which "operates as a networking platform for people working with or interested in theatre for children and young people" (ASSITEJ South Africa, n.d.: n.p.).
[8] FTH:K (acronym stands for 'from the hip: khuluma kahle') is "South Africa's premier Deaf and hearing theatre company with the goal of integrating Deaf and hearing artists, educators and audiences through shared artistic and educational experiences" (FTHK, n.d.: n.p.).

two aforementioned Deaf schools attended the signed performance of 'War Horse' at Artscape Theatre on 5 December 2014. The intervention of Deaf children attending 'War Horse' was part of an extensive mediated theatre education project run by ASSITEJ SA in partnership with FTH:K and funded by Rand Merchant Bank (Skinner, 2014: n.p.).

'The Durban Passion Play'[9]

A special signed performance of 'The Durban Passion Play' took place at the Playhouse Drama Theatre during Easter 2015 (ShowMe Community Websites, 2015: n.p.). The booking page for the production on Computicket.com listed as part of the Event Information section, 'PLEASE NOTE: The performance on 12 April at 14h30 is for the hearing impaired' (Computicket.com, 2015: n.p.). Although the term 'hearing impaired' is not acceptable to the Deaf community, it is encouraging to note the listing on a prominent event ticketing website (Swannack, 2012a: 6). "The preferred and politically correct term to use when referring to individuals with hearing loss is "deaf and hard of hearing"" (Swannack, 2012a: 6).

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[9]   The … Passion Play, based on Jesus Christ's last days on earth, was first performed in Durban … in 1952 when the then Mayor and community of Oberammergau in Bavaria granted special permission to the Durban Catholic Players Guild to stage an abridged version of the play here. So successful was this performance that the Oberammergau village fathers later allowed Durban to stage the production every five years. It was first enacted in South Africa at the Greyville racecourse, moving later to the Durban City Hall and now takes pride of place every five years at the Playhouse Drama Theatre. (Bukhosini, 2015: 1)
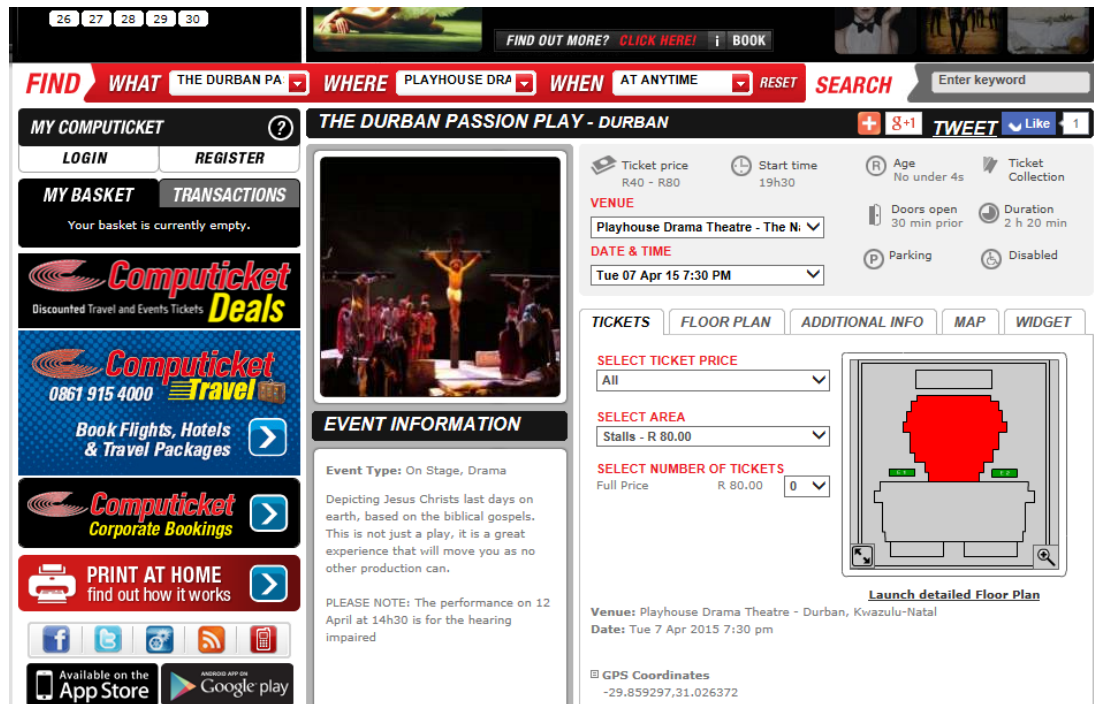
IMAGE 10 Screenshot of the event page for 'The Durban Passion Play' on Computicket.com (2015: n.p.).

Surveying the Deaf Scene in Ireland

The researcher visited Deaf Village Ireland whilst in Dublin for the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Conference – June 2013. Deaf Village Ireland is located in Cabra, "a suburb on the northside of Dublin" (Locate Online Ltd., n.d.: n.p.). Sign language in South Africa traces its roots to a mission endeavour from Cabra, Dublin, to the Cape of Good Hope in the 1860s (Leeson and Saeed, 2012: 44; Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489).

IMAGE 11 Artefacts depicting original Irish Sign Language since 1850 spotted in the Deaf Heritage Centre at Deaf Village Ireland. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Deaf Village Ireland is an inclusive state of the art social, administration, religious, community, sports, heritage and educational complex providing a range of facilities for both Deaf and hearing people. Deaf Village Ireland is Deaf led with a unique integrated communication ethos where both Irish Sign Language (ISL) and spoken English are used. The Deaf Village Ireland is a collaborative organisation represented by all Deaf organisations in Ireland. (Deaf Village Ireland, n.d.: n.p.)

IMAGE 12 Deaf Village Ireland. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

While in Ireland the researcher on 28 June 2013 attended a graduation ceremony at Trinity College Dublin. Deaf ambassador for the global community of the Deaf, Liisa Kauppinen from Helsinki, Finland was awarded an honorary doctorate (Doctor in Laws LL.D) from Trinity College Dublin at the graduation (Handspeak, n.d.: n.p.). Dr Kauppinen's accolades include: 2013 United Nations Prize in the field of Human Rights; World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) Vice-President in 1983; WFD General Secretary in 1987; first female president of the WFD and served as WFD President from 1995 to 2003; WFD Emeritus President since 2003 and WFD Honorary President since 2011 (Handspeak, n.d.: n.p.).

> During her WFD presidency, she involved the WFD in various meetings at the United Nations. She was passionately involved in advocating for recognition of sign languages in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She served as the permanent WFD representative to the United Nations for 20 years. (Handspeak, n.d.: n.p.)

The researcher interacted with Dr Kauppinen at an interview with a staff member from the Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College Dublin. The interview took place in the Deaf Heritage Centre at Deaf Village Ireland on 29 June 2013.

IMAGE 13 BunnyKats are presented by Sanabelle Ebrahim at Deaf Village Ireland to Dr Liisa Kauppinen (*left*) and Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of the Centre for Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Institut Raymond-Dewar

During the IAMCR 2015 conference, the researcher visited a Deaf centre called Institut Raymond-Dewar in Montréal, Canada. The Centre has a permanent staff complement of about 250 including audiologists, speech therapists and social workers. Opportunities for an exchange between Deaf youth in Durban and Montréal will be explored.

IMAGE 14 Handcrafted gifts from Green Heart City Durban are presented to social worker Julie Lefebvre (*right*) at Institut Raymond-Dewar. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Founded in 1848 as the Institution for the Deaf in Montréal, the Deaf centre was renamed Institut Raymond-Dewar in 1984 after a young Deaf leader who was a key role player in promoting recognition for Deaf people (Institut Raymond-Dewar, n.d.: n.p.). In 1981 Raymond Dewar (1952-1983), Paul Bourcier and Julie-élaine Roy developed the first Quebec Sign Language (LSQ) dictionary (Institut Raymond-Dewar, n.d.: n.p.). In 1982 Dewar adapted and performed the LSQ piece 'Children of Silence' in collaboration with members of the Théâtre du Trident in Quebec City (Institut Raymond-Dewar, n.d.: n.p.). The mission of Institut Raymond-Dewar is to increase "autonomy and facilitate social integration of the deaf, deafened, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, [people] with neurological communication disorders, … dysphasia [or] central hearing disorders, [and promote] the acquisition of communication skills" (Accès Bénévolat, n.d.: n.p.).

IMAGE 15 The towering Institut Raymond-Dewar in Montréal, Canada. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Deaf Awareness Initiatives in South Africa

Talk Sign Day was launched on Friday 14 March 2014 by the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society. The Talk Sign campaign is held in March which is considered Human Rights Month. In an e-mail communication on 17 March 2015, Nad Ramsarup (Deputy Director, KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society) highlighted:

> We felt it would be best to celebrate a campaign of this nature during this time [March] because communication is a human rights issue. For far too long, the Deaf have faced communication barriers and in turn feel isolated. This was the reason behind the introduction of the Talk Sign Campaign. We all need to communicate with each other. Imagine how lonely it must be when you don't understand what the people around you are saying and, no-one understands what you are trying to say? This is how people who are Deaf feel, around those who do not understand South African Sign Language (SASL).

The Talk Sign slogan is 'Access Through Communication' (Talk Sign, n.d.: n.p.). The initiative seeks to promote SASL and raise funds through the sale of Talk Sign stickers to help educate and find employment for people who are deaf (Get It Durban, 2014: n.p.). "The goal is to fully integrate the Deaf community into schools, social and competitive sports, in the workplace and in all aspects of life" (Talk Sign, n.d.: n.p.). "The campaign also aimed to put pressure on Government to make it the 12th official language and for Sign Language to be taught as a syllabus subject at schools and tertiary institutions" (Talk Sign, 2015: 1).

Norma Millar, a Talk Sign Ambassador, and her best friend, Samantha Antoncich, from Durban North climbed Mount Kilimanjaro from 6 to 14 February 2015 to raise awareness and funds for the Talk Sign Campaign (*Berea Mail*, 2015a: 12). Millar's "parents are both deaf and she is very much part of the deaf community, and, in turn, passionate about raising awareness for Sign Language" (*Berea Mail*, 2015a: 12).

Community and local newspapers featured various articles and photographs in the build-up to Talk Sign Day 2014 and 2015. Talk Sign Ambassadors include cricketer Shaun Pollock; comedian Carvin H Goldstone; Miss Ballito 2013 and Miss Deaf SA 2011 Shelley Buckle; winner of SA's Got Talent 2009 Darren Rajbal; singer Marion Loudon; fashion designer Kathrin Kidger; Lloyd Paul from Lotus FM and Abi Ray from East Coast Radio (Get It Durban, 2014: n.p.).

IMAGE 16 *The Weekly Gazette* community newspaper features a front page story about Talk Sign Day in its 12 March 2015 edition. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Green Heart Movement purchased Talk Sign stickers and received resource materials such as the Sign Language Manual Alphabet, Talk Sign posters and flyers from the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society. The researcher wore a Talk Sign sticker and passed on stickers to friends on Talk Sign Day, Friday 13 March 2015. She was acknowledged by colleagues for conscientising them about Deaf awareness.

IMAGE 17 BunnyKat wears a Talk Sign sticker on Talk Sign Day 2015 and assists with creating awareness around sign language. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Hands with Words – a Cape Town religious organisation that works with deaf people – is set to translate the Bible into sign language (Ntuli, 2015: 1). The Visual Bible project was started in 2013 and is spearheaded by Hands with Words executive Lisa Craye with friend Agnes Kunene (Ntuli, 2015: 1).

> In order to make the Bible available to the Deaf in South Africa, a team of Deaf translators have come together to translate the written English Bible into South African Sign Language, in DVD format. They will do this by filming each Bible story translation, together with an introduction, as well as questions and answers to each story being translated. What the Deaf translators will actually be producing is more like a study Bible in South African Sign Language! (Hands with Words, 2013: n.p.)

The initiative is especially relevant in light of the fact that "75% of the Deaf population of 600 000 in South Africa are functionally illiterate" (Hands with Words, 2013: n.p.). A contributing factor is that visual communication differs vastly in structure as compared with written communication. In recognising this communication dichotomy, Hands with Words seeks a born-deaf translator, a deaf editor and a deaf consultant as specialists in the sign language to join the hearing experts on the team and assist with fluency of the translated text (Ntuli, 2015: 1).

"Nothing About Us Without Us"

A raging debate was started on Facebook by Alison Swannack on 1 March 2015 about hearing individuals being accorded greater authority than Deaf individuals in matters around SASL and Deaf education. Swannack (2015a: n.p.) posted:

> Enough is enough! There are hearing SASL subject advisors, hearing trainers who teach hearing and deaf teachers and teacher aides SASL and more hearing people controlling our language SASL.
> I like this guy who says that Deaf schools should have 75% Deaf people working at the schools. Your thoughts?

The 'guy' Swannack refers to is Joshua Beckman who makes a case for the future of Deaf education using sign language in a vlog[10] uploaded to YouTube (Beckman, 2015: n.p.). Beckman advocates that 75% of the staff at Deaf schools – including "chefs, landscape maintenance workers, custodians, teachers, education assistants, staff, support staff, administration" – should be Deaf (Beckman, 2015: n.p.). Swannack's Facebook post attracted 18 likes, 5 shares and 19 comments as at 1 March 2015. Many of the comments reflected the need for Deaf individuals to further their studies and obtain the relevant qualifications to become educators at Deaf schools, and for Deaf people to be empowered and not allow hearing people to control the Deaf World (Swannack, 2015a: n.p.).

The debate recognises the motto "Nothing About Us Without Us" used by "Disabled Peoples Organizations throughout the years as part of the global movement to achieve the full participation and equalization of opportunities for, by and with persons with disabilities" (United Nations, 2004: n.p.). "The alarming lack of academic achievement in schools for Deaf children indicates that the majority of educators of Deaf children cannot use South African Sign Language as a language of learning and teaching well enough to support the required learning outcomes for Deaf learners at all grade levels" (DGMT Confluence of Ideas and Practice, n.d.: n.p.). Deaf learners would thus benefit greatly if they were taught by Deaf educators with a high level of proficiency in their first language, namely SASL.

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[10] "A video log. A journalistic video documentation on the web of a person's life, thoughts, opinions, and interests. A vlog can be topical and timeless, instructional and entertaining. The main thread is trying to communicate on a personal level with your audience" (ZMD, 2005: n.p.).

Sign Language Education and Development (SLED)

It is interesting to note that Deaf-oriented organisation, Sign Language Education and Development (SLED) with offices in Western Cape and Gauteng adheres to the 75% Deaf staff principle.

> Since 2001 Sign Language Education and Development (SLED) has become known throughout South Africa and its neighbouring countries, as a Deaf non-profit organisation that is committed to providing the Deaf child of South Africa with an equal and democratic right to literacy, learning and access to information through the promotion of South African Sign Language (SASL). The SLED team (75% of whom are Deaf) is made up of highly professional people with many years of expertise in Deaf education and culture from Pre-School to Grade 12, ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) and tertiary education; television presentation, production, directing and editing; SASL poetry and storytelling; educator training and SASL interpreting. (SLED, n.d.i: n.p.)

SLED endorses bilingualism in Deaf education. Differences between a visual language and an oral (or spoken or written) language have particular bearing in this regard.

> To further complicate the world of learning for the Deaf child, Sign Language is not written, so it is necessary for Deaf children to master both the national Sign Language (in South Africa this is South African Sign Language (SASL)) and a native spoken language in its written form. In other words, Deaf children must necessarily become bilingual, not in the usual sense but in the differing and dual modes of a signed system and a written system. Bilingualism, the ability to competently switch between the two languages, increases a Deaf individual's ability to participate in society. (SLED, n.d.ii: n.p.)

The researcher visited the SLED offices in Mowbray, Cape Town in March 2014. She was introduced to various resource materials produced by SLED that include SASL literature DVDs, accompanying reading books, literacy puzzles and games (SLED calendar, 2014: inside front cover). She also encountered Phuti, one of the four persona dolls used by SLED during SASL storytelling workshops conducted at schools.

IMAGE 18 Phuti is one of four Deaf characters from SLED's Opening Doors to Literacy for Deaf Learners Reading Scheme (SLED calendar, 2014: back cover). The other characters, namely Thandiwe, Yasmin and Jan were out at schools when the researcher visited the SLED offices in Cape Town on 10 March 2014. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

The BunnyKat Folk Craft Puppet

Steeped in 'magical realism'[11], the BunnyKat is a storypuppet popularised by the Green Heart Movement. The green-hearted 'socialheroes' are symbolically-weighted cultural signifiers of Green Heart City. BunnyKats are not superheroes; rather their power is 'making a difference' in simple heartfelt ways.

The puppets wear South African flags and have green hearts on their jerseys. They are handmade by Woza Moya crafters from the Hillcrest Aids Centre on the outskirts of Durban. Their costuming is mainly green-themed while others scamper about in brightly-coloured attire. The BunnyKats have a strong 'crossover flair' in that they have a diversified appeal and are able to leap across boundaries of geography, ethnicity and age. They are fashioned using upcycled materials displaying modern and indigenous motifs patterned with African symbols of zigzags, circles and triangles. The culturally-based materials are influenced by a

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[11] "The genre of magical realism is defined as a literary genre in which fantastical things are treated not just as possible, but also as realistic" (Pryor, n.d.: n.p.).

version of traditional attire known as shweshwe fabrics and occasional beaded trimmings for the more ceremonial puppets.

The awareness processes for the 'Down BunnyKat Lane' comic series currently in development by the Green Heart project include the iconic puppets photographed with miniature classics (literature range) to encourage children to read and draw in the spirit of the BunnyKat motto 'Read Write Draw… X-plore'. The comic strip will act as a preview to an animated series and video game revolving around themes of City Identity, socialheroes and eco-arts.

The attractive puppets have been pictured at quaint Durban spaces and places from bookshops to parks and galleries. They are portrayed as being at their happiest and most radiant 'sunbathing' on a giant heart sand sculpture on the beach; at heartful play at Bulwer Park in Glenwood Durban; or performing in a Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic at the Catalina Theatre. The puppets enthuse an atmosphere of 'fantasy play'[12] and love shouting out, 'No strings attached'.

Amongst the pack of BunnyKats, some are Deaf but no one can tell them apart, so both Deaf and hearing BunnyKats are treated as equals. Their equality is a critical element in the storylines of 'Down BunnyKat Lane' as it celebrates inclusivity accepting that Deaf and hearing cultures attach different values to activities that favour vision or sound. Walking out with awareness, the Deaf Pavement Poets assist hearing inhabitants in reading the rich texture of the sidewalk, and treating the streets as living beings.

The BunnyKat is used as an 'ice-breaker' in encouraging participation amongst Deaf and hearing learners. Green Heart sets up a stand with BunnyKats, Leprechauns and Irish rag doll Bridie Beag relaxing with miniature classics on a BooK Bench at the annual Imagine Durban Sustainable Living Exhibition at the Durban Exhibition Centre. Learners from Deaf schools who visit the stand appear to be shy and inhibited as they watch the hearing learners playing

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[12] "Without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable." (Carl Jung) See BrainyQuote. 'Carl Jung Quotes', Viewed 29 December 2014, http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/carljung157289.html.

with the soft puppets. The researcher then uses sign language to let the Deaf learners know that one of the BunnyKats on the BooK Bench is Deaf, but no one knows which one it is, so they all have fun playing together. The response is phenomenal as the Deaf learners gather around the soft puppets and engage with hearing learners at the stand.

IMAGE 19 BunnyKats, Leprechaun and Irish rag doll Bridie Beag relax with miniature classics on the BooK Bench as part of the Parks4Read activation presented by the Green Heart Movement at the Imagine Durban Sustainable Living Exhibition 2013. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Sightseers from across the world increasingly associate the BunnyKat as an iconic character that originates from Green Heart City Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. As the BunnyKats spring into local and international consciousness, the activities and scamperings of the socialhero puppets enhance the image of Durban as a modern city at the forefront of the Green Economy finding its place in a rapidly-interconnecting world.

The handcrafted puppets were encountered by the Green Heart Movement in June 2012 at a crafters workshop held in the Durban City Hall. The puppets were promptly named BunnyKats as they fitted the bill of an indigenous character sought by the Green Heart project to promote their eco-arts movement through character merchandising linked to comic books and video games. The next phase in the creative and merchandising process is to find BunnyKats appearing in the frames of comic strips and scampering in animated series and video games.

Deaf Talent

On the literary front, a graphic novel titled *El Deafo* by Cece Bell won Newbery Honors in the American Library Association Youth Media Awards 2015 (Foxe, 2015: n.p.). As memoir, *El Deafo* is about "a deaf rabbit going to school with a bulky hearing aid that embarrasses her before she discovers she can use it to overhear gossip, like a particularly nosey superhero" (Foxe, 2015: n.p.). The author seeks to help others through her tale which resonates with people with disabilities (Cavna, 2014: n.p.).

Two international Deaf performing artists that feature prominently in the news and continue to serve as an inspiration to Deaf and hearing communities alike are Emmanuelle Laborit and Evelyn Glennie. Deaf actor director of the International Visual Theatre in Paris, Emmanuelle Laborit aims "to build a bridge between deaf and hearing people by demonstrating that they can communicate perfectly with one another onstage as well as with an audience also made up of the deaf and hearing" (Riding, 2007: n.p.). Productions such as 'K. Lear' in the renovated 185-seat theatre near Pigalle comprised both deaf and hearing performers, with the "sign language doubling as a passionate form of choreography" (Riding, 2007: n.p.). French Sign Language classes are offered at the theatre and stage productions aim to attract both deaf and hearing audiences (Riding, 2007: n.p.). Laborit remains committed to the theatre's longevity. "What's great is that people who are learning French Sign Language here can see it in action in the theater. And they can see that it is not owned by the deaf. It can be used by everyone. I once used sign language as an act of resistance, but it is really just one more language" (Riding, 2007: n.p.).

Evelyn Glennie is a United Kingdom-based Grammy-winning percussionist and composer (TED, 2007: n.p.). She is the "first person in history to successfully create and sustain a full-time career as a solo percussionist, performing worldwide with the greatest conductors, orchestras, and artists" (Evelyn Glennie, 2015: n.p.). The documentary film 'Touch the Sound – A Sound Journey with Evelyn Glennie' explores a universe of sound – rhythms, oscillations and vibrations – that catapult into the realm of our origins (Skyline Productions, 2004: n.p.).

Her vision is to "Teach the World to Listen" (Evelyn Glennie, 2015: n.p.). For Glennie, "The body's like a huge ear. It's as simple as that" (Like Success, n.d.: n.p.). She advocates "listening to music with your whole body" to arrive at a "soul-deep understanding of and connection to music" (TED Blog, 2007: n.p.). Glennie "talks about a music that is more than sound waves perceived by the human ear" (TED Blog, 2007: n.p.). In her TED speech, Glennie illustrates her approach to sound-creation as a "richer picture that begins with listening to yourself, and includes emotion and intent as well as the complex role of physical spaces — instrument, concert hall and even the bones and body cavities of musician and listener alike" (Evelyn Glennie, 2015: n.p.; TED Blog, 2007: n.p.). She seeks to open a centre that embodies her mission: "to improve communication and social cohesion by encouraging everyone to discover new ways of listening. We want to inspire, to create, to engage and to empower" (Evelyn Glennie, 2015: n.p.). Losing nearly all of her hearing by the age of 12 did not deter Glennie from pursuing a career in music (TED, 2007: n.p.). Instead, her hearing loss brought her a unique connection to the music she loves, and is testament to the triumph of the human spirit (TED, 2007: n.p.).

Deaf CSI Programmes

Shifting attention from the arts to business, it is encouraging that corporate social investment (CSI) programmes in South Africa include opportunities for Deaf people. The researcher is often greeted by Deaf packers wearing T-shirts that state on the back: 'I AM DEAF – How may I help you?' at Checkers supermarkets. "They all have a small notebook and pen at hand which they hand over to customers to improve communication" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.).

The project was piloted in Gauteng and comprised a four month Sales Skills Programme wherein the "Shoprite Group undertook the training of the deaf learners in conjunction with eDeaf and guaranteed simultaneous job placements and career path development" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.). "40 Learners started the Skills Programme in November 2008 with theoretical training and were placed in 11 stores for practical training. 38 Deaf learners completed the Skills Programme and were found competent on 4 unit standards" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.).

The Shoprite Group is the:

> first retailer in South Africa which has put this qualification in place. Further skills programmes for deaf learners in conjunction with eDeaf, a deaf-owned company established to provide holistic service to the employer and the deaf employee, and the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) will follow. (Bizcommunity, 2009: n.p.)

The first Skills Programme involved the learners working in the "product reception area where they did physical receiving of products and capturing of invoices. In mid-December 2008 they moved to the various shops' sales floors, where they worked in Groceries, Non Foods and the Perishables departments. Their main duties were to practically do merchandising, Price Indicator labels, housekeeping, interaction with customers and maintaining displays" (Bizcommunity, 2009: n.p.). A contributing factor to the success of the project is that prior to the training, all the relevant Checkers managers embarked on a "sensitisation process with the eDeaf team on how to communicate effectively with a deaf person" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.).

In announcing the first Graduation Class of 38 Deaf learners on 19 May 2009, Callie Burger, Human Resources Director of the Shoprite Group, identified fighting prejudice as one of the biggest challenges facing learners with disabilities when entering the workplace (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.). "Shoprite took the decision to help break down these barriers, which impact on disabled individuals seeking gainful employment" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.). Burger explains:

> Our learning programmes count under the most advanced in the retail industry. This has paid dividends across all brands and we are pleased to announce entry into this sector where it is estimated that there are about 500 000 deaf people living in South Africa of which 70% are unemployed.
>
> For almost all the learners this Skills Programme was their first entry into the workplace. It was met with huge enthusiasm and the group is proud and excited to have these Deaf learners in its employ.
>
> The successful completion of a further three Skills Programmes will see these learners achieving the full qualification – a National Certificate in Wholesale and Retail Operations at National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 2. (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.)

Director of eDeaf, Jesse Kotze highlights the merits of the initiative: "This is a massive breakthrough for the Deaf Community and a giant step for the Wholesale and Retail SETA. We foresee that this pilot project in the Gauteng region will eventually be executed nationally in all the regions of our country. We are elated that through this project Deaf workers can compete on equal basis with the Hearing work force!" (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009: n.p.).

The initiative prompted a tweet by Yolande Jonker (2013: n.p.) @blaze001sa on 27 March 2013: "@CheckersSA LOVING the deaf packers at the Gateway Checkers Hyper!! So friendly and funny and kind!!" Checkers (2013: n.p.) responded with: "@blaze001sa Thanks Yolande, we'll pass the message along :)". The visibility of Deaf staff at Checkers and social media exchanges between customers and Checkers that recognise the merits of integrating Deaf people into mainline society assist with raising consciousness around Deaf issues.

Woolworths initiated a 'Give the Gift of Hearing' project ahead of Christmas 2014. Customers were encouraged to swipe their MySchool or linked Woolies Card from 3 November to 24 December and Woolworths would donate extra to the Children's Hospital Trust to give hearing aids to 200 kids at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town, in addition to the normal contribution towards a customer's school or charity (Woolworths, 2014: n.p.). The promotional material tugged at customers' heartstrings by citing: "With your help, kids with hearing loss can experience the sounds of Christmas - the crinkling of wrapping paper, the jingles of the bells and the popping of crackers. All the sounds of Christmas we love" (Woolworths, 2014: n.p.).

The question of handing children hearing aids traverses contested territory as contending medical/physical and social/cultural approaches to deafness exist. Advocates of the Deaf culture approach view hearing loss as "just a normal variety of human experience. This view is associated with remediation and educational approaches for the deaf child that do not rely on medical or technical approaches to improving the child's hearing" (Ccewb.net, n.d.: n.p.) such as the "use and development of sign language as a means of communication" (Deaf websites, 2013: n.p.). The medical approach views deafness as a physical ailment or disability (that is, an inability to hear) that warrants treatment in the form of interventions such as hearing aids and cochlear implants (Deaf websites, 2013: n.p.). Further considerations

include the high cost of hearing aids and cochlear implants, and hygienic care required to maintain hearing aids (Hear-it, n.d.: n.p.).

'Turkish Delight'

Further afield, a heart-warming story that went viral on social media in March 2015 highlights the importance of breaking down communication barriers and the meaningful consequences of such interactions for individuals who experience those barriers every day (Dovas, 2015: n.p.). Neighbours of Muharrem, a deaf man living in Istanbul, surprised him immeasurably when one morning, they responded to him using sign language (Dovas, 2015: n.p.).

> A team of people from Samsung and the Leo Burnett ad agency spent a month setting up cameras and teaching people throughout his neighborhood sign language. On the appointed day, Ozlem went for a walk with her deaf brother, who was stunned to meet so many signing people in a world where those who can communicate in sign are often few and far between. (Dovas, 2015: n.p.)

The advertisement was "designed to raise awareness about Samsung's new call center for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in Turkey" (Dovas, 2015: n.p.). The experience should be replicated in South Africa and other settings so that many more Deaf lives may be touched.

Research Problem

The Bill of Rights, as enshrined in the South African Constitution, recognises that "everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms." So to discriminate unfairly directly or indirectly against anyone on the ground of disability is a violation of their human rights (South African Government, 1996).

From observations and informal discussions with guests at local social gatherings such as book launches and knowledge-share sessions, it is evident that many individuals with physical and mental health problems are on the periphery of mainline society. One seldom now sees blind people with traditional mobility tools such as white canes or guide dogs, or

Deaf people communicating using sign language in public spaces, such as at flea markets, shopping malls or the beachfront. This in part could be due to a fear of ridicule and prejudice faced by people with disabilities. To quote one author, "In some cultures children with disabilities are seen as a curse, and as such are hidden away from the wider community" (Right to Education Project, n.d.: n.p.). The researcher also observed that students with disabilities on the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College campus are generally accompanied by a fellow-student with a less disabling condition, for example, a blind student with a cane assisted by a partially sighted person.

This study aims at dealing with the issue of inclusion/exclusion. Deaf people tend to talk to Deaf people; hearing people talk to hearing people, but interaction beyond family groupings is not as common as it should be. The potential of eco-arts in helping to eliminate the Deaf/hearing boundaries (in talk, in interaction, and in spaces of all kinds) is explored. The questions are clear and concise: How can this inclusion/exclusion dichotomy be bridged? And, what new kinds of inclusions might result from an innovative eco-arts approach?

Research Rationale and Motivation

There is pressure from various government, education and employment sectors for people with disabilities to be integrated into mainstream school and work settings. This is not confined to South Africa, but is a global phenomenon (Perry, 2003). And, indeed, several colleges and universities around the world offer credit-bearing modules in sign language and Deaf Studies. These include the University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), Durban University of Technology, Gallaudet University (USA), Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), University of Wolverhampton (UK), and Griffith University (Australia).

Various sectors of society, such as educators, family members and work colleagues need to be adequately equipped to communicate and interact with people with disabilities. The present study proposes methods in facilitating such communication for societal integration, with a particular focus on the Deaf.

Research Milieu

The study is based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The research location is significant as KwaZulu-Natal has the largest population with hearing difficulty in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The first Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa, 'Talking Hands' was held in Durban during September 2012. The Deaf community in Durban is 'making waves' with performers invited to participate in international Deaf theatre and arts festivals during 2013 and 2015. Durban University of Technology (DUT) is the only university in KwaZulu-Natal that offers Sign Language as a subject (DUT, n.d.: n.p.). The SASL course is part of the Translation and Interpreting Practice (TIP) programme in the Department of Media, Language and Communication (DUT, n.d.: n.p.). Director of Deaf Education at the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), Odette Swift is based in Durban and was consulted regarding Deaf culture and sign language at various stages during this research.

The Cornubia Integrated Human Settlement Development is located in KwaZulu-Natal and could present opportunities for apartments to be alternated with Deaf and hearing families. By extension, people with disabilities other than Deafness may also be integrated in such housing developments.

The research is topical as the Talk Sign campaign was launched in KwaZulu-Natal in March 2014. In an e-mail communication on 18 March 2015, Nad Ramsarup (Deputy Director, KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society) indicated that: "Public service announcements were aired on e.tv, ZEE TV, SABC TV, SAFM and other SABC radio stations and East Coast Radio about the Talk Sign Campaign this year [2015]. Consequently, several inquiries from people country-wide were received. We have decided to take the campaign national in 2016."

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is recognised on March 24 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015: n.p.). A growing concern is that South Africa faces one of the highest rates of drug-resistant TB in the world (Bosworth, 2014: n.p.). "Patients on treatment for multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB may risk permanent hearing loss caused by the drugs they are taking, according to medical experts" (SAPA, 2009: n.p.). A South African invention by Dr Dirk Koekemoer, the KUDUwave Mobile Clinical Diagnostic audiometer is being used in early detection of hearing loss (eMoyo, n.d.: n.p.). The scenario of a person losing their

hearing as a result of MDR-TB as opposed to being born Deaf and growing up as part of Deaf Culture poses fresh challenges for the individual, their families and colleagues.

Project Scope

The research focuses on creative methods of enhancing communication and interaction between Deaf and hearing communities. Issues surrounding cued speech, lip reading, hearing aids and cochlear implants were not probed during focus groups and interviews due to time and resource constraints.

Three of the four research questions listed in the research proposal were included in the study. The fourth research question 'How can mutual recognition and respect for Deaf and hearing communities be engendered?' was omitted due to time constraints. Questionnaires were prepared during the research proposal phase but later omitted due to time constraints.

The inability to secure a sign language interpreter for one of the interviews with a Deaf artist led the researcher to improvise by engaging in a written dialogue with him. The researcher recognises that conducting an interview with a Deaf respondent in the absence of sign language interpretation is not ideal; for an oral language such as English and the visual language of South African Sign have different syntax structures. The interview with the Deaf artist was complemented by various documents that he brought along to the interview, namely his curriculum vitae (CV), reference letter, certificates, newspaper clippings and artworks.

A relatively small sample of eight Deaf and eight hearing respondents who had attended at least one eco-arts event featuring sign language in Durban and surrounds was selected to gain in-depth insights into eco-arts and inclusivity considerations. Within these limitations the material might not be fully generalisable, yet key themes may be extrapolated for further research around Deaf culture and eco-arts.

Researcher Orientation

The researcher is a hearing artist, published poet and eco-arts practitioner with a passion for creative mediums of expression. She is a co-founder of the Green Heart Movement and coordinates various nature-themed arts and poetry activations. Dr Mikhail Peppas, also a co-founder of the Green Heart Movement and at the time a Senior Lecturer in the Journalism Programme at Durban University of Technology (DUT), approached a fellow work colleague, Odette Swift, then a lecturer in Translation and Interpreting Services in the Department of Media, Language and Communication at DUT, about coordinating a group of Deaf Pavement Poets in June 2011 ahead of COP17. The researcher has since been instrumental in coordinating events where Deaf Pavement Poets collaborate with hearing poets and musicians to render nature-themed poems in sign language at pavement cafés and inviting outdoor spaces in Durban and surrounds.

Prosocial points of entry were sought by the researcher to gain access to the Deaf community in Durban at various events and gatherings. She was introduced to Skywriting (or sign language) through her involvement in the Green Heart Movement and completed a basic sign language course in 2012 (see Appendix F for copy of certificate).

The researcher runs informal sign language workshops with river rangers and amblers during nature trails at the Palmiet Nature Reserve in Westville and the Beachwood Mangroves in Durban. Some of the phrases and words that are practised using SASL on these trails include: 'Welcome to Green Heart City Durban', 'fish', 'crab', 'butterfly', 'penguin', 'seal' and 'octopus'.

Green Heart Movement coordinated the Frameside Industrial Lounge (FIL) at KwaMuhle Museum as part of the Fringe for the International Union of Architects (UIA) World Congress Durban in August 2014. The FIL KwaMuhle Museum served as a meeting place for writers, illustrators, publishers, literary agents, booksellers, designers, architects and social entrepreneurs to network and exchange ideas trending on the literary and design landscape. The researcher facilitated a green felt heart-cutting workshop and taught visiting learners from Inanda Seminary to sign 'Welcome to Green Heart City Durban' at the FIL in the courtyard at KwaMuhle Museum.

IMAGE 20 Inanda Seminary learners practise signing 'Welcome to Green Heart City Durban' with poet Timothy Sparks at the Frameside Industrial Lounge (FIL) KwaMuhle Museum. Sanabelle Ebrahim runs a green felt heart-cutting workshop at the FIL as part of the Fringe at UIA 2014 World Congress of Architects Durban. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Research Objectives

- To explore the potential of eco-arts as a channel for integrating the Deaf into mainline society.
- To deconstruct some of the stereotypes and misconceptions that hearing cultures may have about Deaf cultures based on external opinions, and vice versa.
- To propose methods in facilitating communication and interaction between Deaf and hearing cultures.

These objectives lie at the core of exploring the potential of integrating Deaf and hearing communities through Deaf culture and eco-arts.

Research Questions

The key research questions to be answered in this study are:

i.   How can eco-arts be used to integrate the Deaf into mainline society?

ii.   How do hearing cultures perceive Deaf cultures, and vice versa?

iii.   What is the Deaf community in Durban doing to integrate itself into mainline society?

These research questions are directly linked to the objectives of the study in terms of attempting to bridge the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy between Deaf and hearing cultures.

Chapter Outlines

The study comprises four chapters. Chapter One – Background and Literary Review – provides insight into national and local policy around disability; the potential of eco-arts in working towards realising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Number 11 and Number 17; public awareness around the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing, the traditional International Symbol of Access (ISA) and the modified ISA; principles of social cohesion; the history of sign language in South Africa and abroad; the sign language field; Skywriting as an inclusive term to describe sign language; a guide to understanding the Sign Language Immersion Model; and the role of this study in exploring Deaf culture and eco-arts as progressive enablers towards integrating the Deaf into mainline society.

Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework – presents a discussion of key theories that have informed the study with especial bearing on visual communication and Deaf-hearing interaction. These include the Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication; Intergroup Contact Theory; and Communities of Practice. Agenda-Setting Theory and the Spiral of Silence Theory are also touched upon.

Chapter Three – Methodology – introduces the research design as an arts-based critical auto-ethnography grounded in the integral paradigm. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach guides the researcher as she embarks on consultative processes with Deaf and hearing participants around ways to facilitate greater interaction between the two social

groups. Sections include sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis, reliability and validity considerations, ethical issues, and limitations and biases.

Chapter Four – Findings and Analysis – maps research findings against the research questions for interpretation and to arrive at a final synthesis. Narrative inquiry is employed as the data analysis tool. Findings are presented according to the narrative constructs of story, character, focalisation and plot (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 78).

The study concludes with a summary and discussion of the salient points that emerged from the research findings and analysis. A recommendation is included for local integrated housing developments to consider alternating Deaf and hearing families as neighbours so as to encourage social cohesion. Suggestions for further research include the cohesive potential of Board Gaming[13] and Open Data[14] networking sessions that provide Deaf-friendly spaces for Deaf and hearing participants to connect with each other and happenings around the city.

*Parts of the Introduction; Background and Literary Review; and Theoretical Framework chapters of this study were first published in the conference proceedings of the International Association for Media and Communication Research – IAMCR 2013 Dublin. See Peppas, M. and Ebrahim, S. 2013. Deaf-Hearing Poetic Ecology: Integration and Skills Development for Social Cohesion. In: *Crises, 'Creative Destruction' and the Global Power and Communication Orders: Papers presented at the 2013 conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research*. Dublin, 25-29 June 2013. Montevideo: Fundación Comunica. ISBN: 978-9974-8067-3-3.

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[13] A board game is an unplugged tabletop "game of strategy, [such as Scrabble, Monopoly, Ticket to Ride, Catan, and Kingdom Builder], played by moving pieces on a board and sometimes involving dice" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011: n.p.).

[14] "Data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and sharealike" (Open Knowledge, n.d.: n.p.).

**The section on 'BunnyKat puppets' has been conceptualised by Dr Mikhail Peppas and Sanabelle Ebrahim and appears in various forms in conference proceedings and papers. These include:

Peppas, M. and Ebrahim, S. 2014. Towards a Future African Cityscape: Deco Nouveau Afrique (DNA). In: Osman, A., Bruyns, G. and Aigbavboa, C. eds. *International Union of Architects (UIA) 2014 World Congress*. Durban, 3-7 August 2014. Durban: UIA 2014 Durban, 1453-1465. ISBN: 978-0-86970-783-8. Available: http://www.designsocietydevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/pub/DSD%20DESIS%20Lab%20Proceeding_2014_UIA2014Durban%20(1).pdf (Accessed 26 November 2015).

Peppas, M. and Ebrahim, S. DNA (Deco Nouveau Afrique) – Futurising Through an African Lens, Approaches to Comic Art: Writing in Pictures. In: Peppas, M. and Ebrahim, S. eds. (*forthcoming* - a) *Framescapes: Graphic Narrative Intertexts*. United Kingdom: Inter-Disciplinary.Net.

***The researcher is also known as Sanabelle Ebrahim.

CHAPTER ONE

Background and Literary Review

Each person is partly like all others, partly like some others,
partly like no-one else.

– Christopher Leeds[15]

The National Development Plan (NDP) aims to "eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030" (National Planning Commission, 2010: 14). As a blueprint for a new development approach, the plan foregrounds active citizenry involving communities, youth, workers, the unemployed and business in partnership with a capable state (National Planning Commission, 2010: 51).

> In line with the priorities of the [NDP], people with disabilities must have enhanced access to quality education and employment. Efforts to ensure relevant and accessible skills development programmes for people with disabilities, coupled with equal opportunities for their productive and gainful employment, must be prioritised (National Planning Commission, 2010: 42).

The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (DWCPD) was established on 10 May 2009 when the president of South Africa Jacob Zuma appointed his cabinet for the fourth term of the democratic government (DWCPD, n.d.: n.p.). In appointing this cabinet, President Zuma announced that, "A new ministry has been created for women, children and persons with disabilities, to emphasise the need for equity and access to development opportunities for the vulnerable groups in our society" (DWCPD, n.d.: n.p.).

However, the DWCPD was dissolved following the 2014 general elections, with the creation of a separate Ministry of Women under the presidency and support for children and people with disabilities transferred to the widely mandated Department of Social Development (Thelwell, 2014: n.p.). Head of Communications at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Isaac Mangena (2015: n.p.) reflects:

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[15] Leeds, C. A. 1997. Managing Conflicts Across Cultures: Challenges to Practitioners. *The International Journal of Peace Studies* (online), 2(2). Available: http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol2_2/leeds.htm (Accessed 18 November 2012).

> Unfortunately, the area of disability rights has not escaped the ever present gap between good policy and implementation in the South African context. There is still more that must be done to ensure, for example, that schools catering for pupils with special needs have resources including specialised teachers and professionals, and appropriate learning material. And also that government departments reach the 2 percent employment representation of people living with disabilities. We need to remind institutions, including the government that disability rights are human rights which must be respected by all.

Local government policy is also aligned towards the building of an inclusive society. At the focus of the 2011/2016 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is eThekwini Municipality's commitment to developing a 'caring and liveable city' (eThekwini Municipality, 2011: 8). The eight-point plan represents the municipality's delivery plan to ensure greater impact in delivery and, for the goals and outcomes of each of the eight separate but related plans to be achieved (eThekwini Municipality, 2011: 10). Plans five and six have direct implications for the outcomes of this study.

Creating a Platform for Growth, Empowerment and Skills Development (Plan 5) speaks to the dynamism of a 'Creative Arts Precinct' in the city centre. "The establishment of the Creative Industries Precinct is aimed at strengthening the Creative Industries Sector and enhancing its overall competitiveness by improving access, capacity, productivity and sustainability in the short, medium and long term" (eThekwini Municipality, 2011: 84). A platform such as this could provide opportunities for Deaf Pavement Poets to render performances before diverse audiences amidst incidental accordion, harmonica and flute tunes.

Embracing our cultural diversity, arts and heritage (Plan 6) is directly linked to promoting societal integration. The goal is to "create the conditions under which sport, recreation, arts and culture, and heritage opportunities can be realised for personal growth, social cohesion, economic advantage and the promotion of cultural well-being in line with national efforts to build social cohesion, to promote nation building, and most importantly to build an inclusive society" (eThekwini Municipality, 2011: 154).

Eco-art as a progressive enabler towards realising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Number 11 and Number 17

> The Sustainable Development Goals, otherwise known as the Global Goals, build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets that the world committed to achieving by 2015. The MDGs, adopted in 2000, aimed at an array of issues that included [reducing] poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and [improving] access to water and sanitation. Enormous progress has been made on the MDGs, showing the value of a unifying agenda underpinned by goals and targets. Despite this success, the indignity of poverty [continues to persist].
>
> The new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.: n.p.)

The realisation of SDGs Number 11 and Number 17 can be facilitated through eco-art activations that combine Deaf and hearing performers, musicians, visual artists and board gamers. SDG Number 11 on sustainable cities and communities seeks to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, n.d.: n.p.). Integrated housing developments that alternate as neighbours families with Deaf members and those with hearing members could be considered.

SDG Number 17 on partnerships for the goals aims to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" (United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, n.d.: n.p.). Cultural entrepreneurship projects could offer mutually beneficial partnerships for Deaf and hearing artistic producers.

The International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing, the traditional International Symbol of Access (ISA), and the modified ISA

In conducting informal discussions with friends and colleagues, the researcher discovered that public awareness around the traditional International Symbol of Access (ISA), also known as the (International) Wheelchair Symbol, outweighs that of the modified ISA and the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing. Deafness is regarded as an 'invisible

disability'[16]. Public campaigns to popularise the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing could increase the focus on Deaf issues amongst the wider community.

IMAGE 21 International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing. (*Source:* State of Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, n.d.)

Robyn D. Swannack (2015b: n.p.) recognises that: "The symbol for deafness is intended to act as a summarising key symbol. The universal use of this symbol for deafness has various contexts: (1) it is being used to show that there are Deaf people in such places; (2) it is used to define Deafness; and (3) it is being used for medical interpretation." Her findings (2015: n.p.) revealed that the symbol is heavily contested, ambiguous and "operates more as an elaborating symbol, by fitting complex and possibly indistinguishable beliefs, practices, concepts and emotions into a workable framework."

Many of the Deaf respondents in her study (2015: n.p.) believed the symbol "provoked a sense of prohibition of ears [and by extension the person] rather than a lack of hearing … So, does the sign mean no ears allowed? No hearing people allowed? No Deaf people allowed? Deaf people do not have access?" They felt that *hands* should be used instead of the *ear* to represent the centrality of sign language in Deaf culture (Swannack, 2015b: n.p.).

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16   The term *invisible disabilities* refers to symptoms such as debilitating pain, fatigue, dizziness, cognitive dysfunctions, brain injuries, learning differences and mental health disorders, as well as hearing and vision impairments. These are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can sometimes or always limit daily activities, range from mild challenges to severe limitations and vary from person to person … Someone who has a *visible* impairment or uses an assistive device such as a wheelchair, walker or cane can also have *invisible disabilities* [original emphasis]. (Invisible Disabilities Association, n.d.: n.p.)

Some of the hearing respondents "immediately [correlated the symbol with] hearing loss, where hearing is positioned as the norm" (Swannack, 2015b: n.p.). They viewed deafness as a medical condition and thus approved of the symbol for it emphasised 'hearing loss' as a deficit (Swannack, 2015b: n.p.).

A Deaf respondent suggested that the symbol is "more culturally acceptable for the [induction] loop, the hearing aid for hard of hearing people, because their community and culture is not rich in Deafness, and the language of Sign Language" (Swannack, 2015b: n.p.). "The hearing [or induction] loop consists of a microphone to pick up the spoken word; an amplifier which processes the signal which is then sent through the final piece; the loop cable, a wire placed around the perimeter of a specific area [that is] a meeting room, a church, a service counter … to act as an antenna that radiates the magnetic signal to the hearing aid" (Hearing Link, 2012: n.p.).
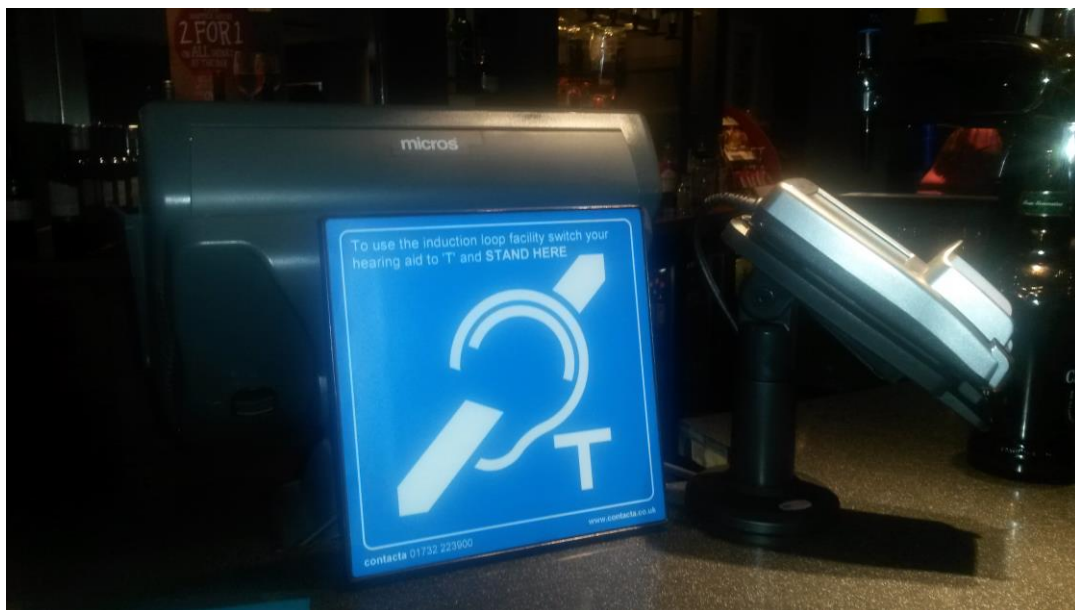
IMAGE 22 A "label notifying that an induction facility is installed and available" is detected by the researcher at the service counter at Thyme Restaurant, Premier Inn London Kew Hotel, Brentford, July 2015 (Hearing Link, 2012: n.p.). *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

The now familiar International Symbol of Access (ISA) was designed by Susanne Koefed in 1968 upon request of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility (ICTA), Rehabilitation International (RI Global, n.d.: n.p.). "The symbol which is a milestone in disability advocacy is often criticized for being passive" (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.). Brendan

Murphy from Ireland initially modified the symbol in 1994 (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.). He "updated the image by pushing the figure's posture forward and putting the arm behind the body. Still, the symbol was not adopted as many feared that it will violate the American Disability Act" (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.).

Sara Hendren and Brian Glenney collaborated on the original wheelchair icon project in 2009 and founded the Accessible Icon Project (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.). Hendren is an artist and researcher based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Glenney is a philosophy professor at Gordon College, Massachusetts (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.).

> Accessible Icon Project provides supplies and services to transform the old International Symbol of Access into an active, engaged image. We think visual representation matters. People with disabilities have a long history of being spoken for, of being rendered passive in decisions about their lives. The old icon, while a milestone in ADA history, displays that passivity: its arms and legs are drawn like mechanical parts, its posture is unnaturally erect, and its entire look is one that make the chair, not the person, important and visible. As people with disabilities of all kinds—not just chair users—create greater rights and opportunities for social, political, and cultural participation, we think cities should evolve their images of accessibility too. (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.)

The humanising ISA "symbol is gradually finding acceptance" (The Enablist, 2013: n.p.). Initiated in 2010, the Accessible Icon Project has become an "activist design campaign that begins with a question about icons and representation. [The broader vision is to ensure that] socio-political structures become materially, meaningfully inclusive: through grassroots work and official policy, by organized efforts and by single acts" (The Accessible Icon Project, n.d.: n.p.).

IMAGE 23 The traditional ISA and modified ISA. (*Source:* The Enablist, 2013: n.p.)

In an e-mail communication on 2 December 2015, Raymond Perrier (Director, Denis Hurley Centre) acknowledged: "I love the new ISA. Anything which promotes the abilities of disabled people rather than their disability. The problem with the deafness symbol is that it reinforces the view that deafness is a disability that belongs to the individual rather than a disability that is constructed by society."

Principles of Social Cohesion

According to the Department of Arts and Culture, "social cohesion and nation building can only be based on the following principles: constitution and democracy; human rights and equality; non-racialism, non-tribalism and non-sexism; unity in diversity; inclusivity and social justice; redress and transformation; intergroup and community co-operation; social solidarity; active citizenship; civic responsibility; and national consciousness" (SouthAfrica.info, 2012: n.p.).

President Jacob Zuma noted in his opening address at a Social Cohesion Summit held in Kliptown, Soweto, that South Africans are unique, "a people with an inspiring history" who do not hesitate to tackle difficulties and challenges (SouthAfrica.info, 2012: n.p.). The summit took place on 4 and 5 July 2012 at the location where the Freedom Charter, the original road map to democracy was drawn up in 1955 (SouthAfrica.info, 2012: n.p.). The

need for a care-friendly society, united in diversity, was stressed. A further consideration was the importance of languages in gaining social cohesion (SouthAfrica.info, 2012: n.p.). South African Sign Language (SASL) then, could serve as a co-operative structure towards bridging language barriers for a nation that has 11 official languages.

History of Sign Language

Sign language has endured a 'contested history' in many parts of the world. At times in the past, sign language was discouraged and even banned in such countries as France and Italy, when oral education was thought to be better than manual (sign) education for those with hearing difficulties[17] (Berke, 2009: n.p.).

The first "official" signed language may be traced to Paris (Larson, 1998: n.p.). French priest Abbé Charles-Michel de l'Épée (1712-1789) is "generally considered the father of the French System for teaching the deaf … Early in his priesthood, [he] focused on the poor and, after an encounter with two young deaf sisters in the slums of Paris, dedicated himself to working with the deaf" (Gallaudet University, n.d.: n.p.). De l'Épée founded the first school for the deaf in 1755. "His development of a signed system for the French language and advocacy for deaf French people enabled them to gain access to religious services and to defend themselves in court" (Gallaudet University, n.d.: n.p.).

Advancements in sign language development in France and other European countries were soon imported to USA through Laurent Clerc and Thomas Gallaudet (Larson, 1998: n. p.). The French sign system rapidly amalgamated with the indigenous sign languages in the US to form a uniquely expressive and powerful hybrid, American Sign Language (ASL) (Sacks, 2000: 20). "A special indigenous strength … was the contribution of the Martha's Vineyard deaf to the development of ASL. A substantial minority of the population there suffered from a hereditary deafness, and most of the island had adopted an easy and powerful sign

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[17] The Oralists "argued that the deaf must be able to speak in order to communicate with the hearing" (Larson, 1998: n.p.). The Manualists were "those who thought the language taught should be a signed language, such as abbé de l'Epée, arguing that signed language is the natural language of the deaf and that their education should be primarily in their own language" (Larson, 1998: n.p.).

language" (Sacks, 2000: 21). The rise of deaf literacy and deaf education spiraled to other parts of the world (Sacks, 2000: 21).

"Internationally, 1880 was a watershed year in Deaf education, with oralism becoming the formally adopted system of education in the wake of the Milan Congress decision" (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). "At the notorious International Congress of Educators of the Deaf held at Milan in 1880, where deaf teachers were themselves excluded from the vote, oralism won the day and the use of Sign in schools was "officially" proscribed" (Sacks, 2000: 24). The result was that since deaf teachers could not teach using oralist methods, they were now replaced by hearing teachers (Harris, 1995: 2). In turn, "deaf pupils were prohibited from using their own "natural" language, and thenceforth forced to learn, as best they might, the (for them) "unnatural" language of speech … More and more, English became the language of instruction for deaf students, taught by hearing teachers, fewer and fewer of whom knew any sign language at all" (Sacks, 2000: 25).

> This state of affairs began to change as of 1960, with the publication of the first linguistic studies demonstrating that signed languages are in fact complex, fully syntactic, natural languages (Stokoe 1960; Stokoe, Casterline, and Croneberg 1965; Klima and Bellugi 1979). From that time on, a change in outlook began to occur in the universities in relation to sign languages, and the deaf community, encouraged by the legitimizing voice of "science," began to revalue its own language and lobby for its legal recognition and its use in education. The deaf began to develop more aggressively a consciousness of their own "signed orality." (McCleary, 2003: 108)

Considering the historic contestations surrounding sign language, it is encouraging to note that as there exist "thousands of different languages of the world--**there are several different signed languages** [original emphasis]" (Start ASL, n.d.i).

Sign Language Explained

By its very nature sign language is not a universal language, in that each visual language differs from each other in idiom and expression. Each country or language 'group', therefore, tends to have its own distinctive sign language, for instance, South African Sign Language (SASL), British Sign Language (BSL), Japanese Sign Language (JSL), Australian Sign Language (Auslan). "However, over the years, Deaf people who regularly meet

internationally have developed an International Sign system (which is based on gestures and borrowed signs from widely-known sign languages such as American Sign Language) that they use at meetings and conferences [example the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) Congress and the Deaflympics]" (Deaf Australia Inc., n.d.: n.p.; World Federation of the Deaf, n.d.ii: n.p.).

> Even when two Deaf people from different countries do not know International Sign they can usually find a way to communicate with a mixture of their own sign languages, gesture and mime. Characteristically, this communication happens much more quickly and easily than communication between two hearing people who do not speak the same language. (Deaf Australia Inc., n.d.: n.p.)

A manual alphabet is used for fingerspelling names of people and places for which there is no sign (British-Sign, n.d.).

> Fingerspelling can also be used to spell words for signs that the signer does not know the sign for, or to clarify a sign that is not known by the person reading the signer. British Sign Language (BSL) uses a two-handed alphabet however some other sign languages, such as American Sign Language (ASL), use a one-handed alphabet. (British-Sign, n.d.)

While it may be argued that one only has to learn 26 signs (the alphabet) to be able to fingerspell, proficiency in a sign language is valued so as not to prolong conversations by spelling out each letter in a word (Fingerspelling Alphabet, n.d.: n.p.). Apart from being impractical, "it would be very hard to add feeling and expression to a conversation that just used fingerspelling" (Fingerspelling Alphabet, n.d.: n.p.). Moreover, fingerspelling in dialogue would be rendered ineffective if the two signers did not 'speak' the same language, example English.

Skywriting for inclusivity

Skywriting is a term invented by Dr Mikhail Peppas, co-founder of the Green Heart Movement, which derives from the 'stark semblance of sign language to writing in the sky or Air'. In Skywriting nature as symbolised by the sky and humanity through utilising human fingers, create two vehicles by which the hearing person can 'write' and the Deaf person can 'hear'. By this device both are connected in the compound word 'Skywriting'. It is because of this that sign language can be termed 'Skywriting in arts and ecology interventions'. Sky

reading refers to the act of sign language interpretation. This type of mirrored communication may be seen in itself as an art form, by way of combining movement with facial expression to evoke emotion and a myriad of reactions for both the reader and emitter/signer. But the matter goes further, for out of Skywriting has developed various subsidiary applications, such as Deaf karaoke, Deaf theatre and Deaf poetry.

Capital D for Culturally Deaf

Carol J. Erting (1987: 132) highlights the problem of "competing definitions of Deafness". Her study (1987: 140) found that hearing educators see Deafness in purely audiological terms, describing it in such terms as 'hearing impairment' and 'range of hearing loss'. In contrast, the Deaf parents did not regard Deafness as a handicap (Erting, 1987: 140), viewing it instead as a way of life with Deaf persons tending to emphasise their positive capabilities (Harris, 1995: 9). 'Cultural conflict' in Erting's (1987) study may be conceptualised in terms of the hearing educators working to a 'medical model' (Oliver, 1990) of Deafness, whereas the Deaf parents viewed Deafness as a social phenomena (Harris, 1995: 9-10). The two worldviews are depicted in internationally recognised conventions of "Deaf" with a capital "D" versus "deaf" with a lowercase "d".

> "Deaf" with a capital "D" identifies particular members of the deaf community whose culture is passed through sign language; "deaf" with a lowercase "d" refers to those who have an audiological hearing problem, but who may not consider themselves members of the Deaf culture. It is important to note, as well, that much of the discussion about how and under what conditions there can be epistemological and cultural crossover between the hearing and the Deaf often downplays, or omits altogether, the discussion of the hard-of-hearing. While it is the case that some hard-of-hearing individuals consider themselves as hearing but wear an aid, there are others who are not hearing and also not Deaf. It is useful to consider the notion of a "third space" as a way of articulating a site where the hearing, Deaf, and hard-of-hearing come together. (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2006: 418)

Brewer (2002), Burch (1997) and Clark (2006) consider only hearing, "Deaf" and "deaf" communities. This study will include hearing, Deaf and hard of hearing respondents in keeping with the researcher's identified sample set.

Sign Language Immersion
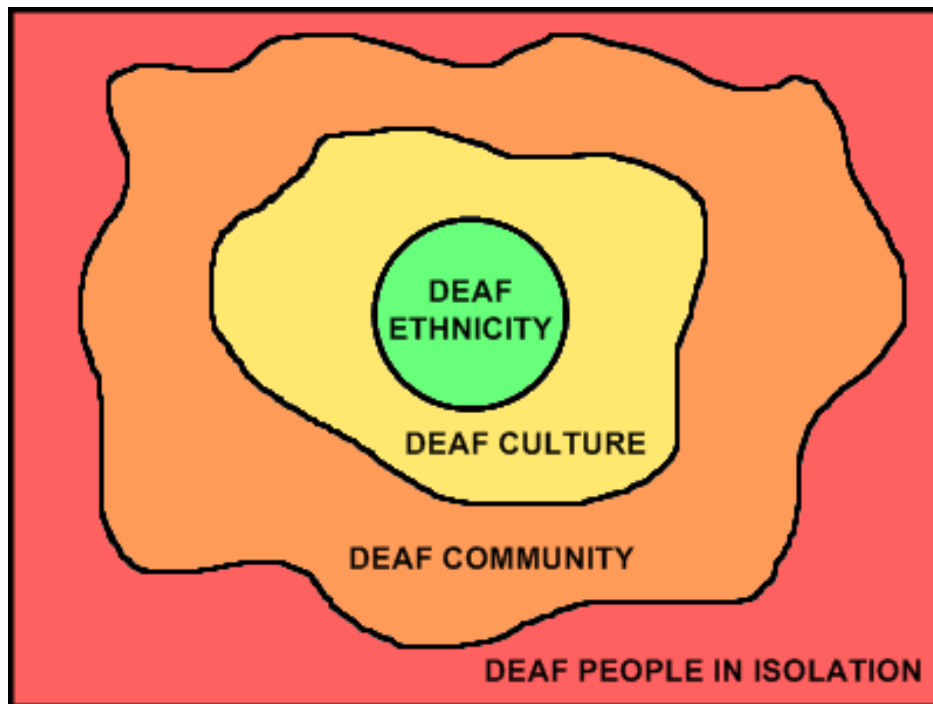
FIGURE 1.1 **Sign Language Immersion Model**. (*Source*: Start ASL, n.d.ii)

The link between language and cultural identity is strong in most societies but it would seem that Deaf people perceive Sign Language as *intrinsic* to their identities (Padden, 1980: 99). As such, some Deaf authors have claimed that, "language choice *is* identity choice" (Padden, 1980: 99).

"[SASL] immersion is part of learning [South African Sign Language (SASL)] and being a part of Deaf culture" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). The term refers to immersing oneself "in the language and the community of the Deaf" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). According to the Sign Language Immersion Model, "there are four "levels" of being involved with the Deaf" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). The Deaf Experience comprises: "deaf people in isolation, the Deaf community, Deaf culture, and Deaf ethnicity" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). These levels are mutually exclusive.

The following descriptions of the four levels of Sign Language Immersion have been sourced from Start ASL (n.d.ii). The term American Sign Language (ASL) has been interchanged with South African Sign Language (SASL) and references to the history of sign language in Deaf education in South Africa have been included so as to render a locally specific scenario.

1. **Deaf People in Isolation**

"Deaf people who are part of the hearing world are on this level. They are the furthest from being involved [in the Deaf World]. They are <u>deaf</u>, but they are not <u>Deaf</u> [my emphasis]. These individuals are often products of oral schools and are trying to fit into the hearing society" (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

2. **Deaf Community**

"A community is a social group that lives in a certain geographical area, shares common goals, and carries out certain responsibilities [towards] each other" (Padden, 1980, in Start ASL, n.d.ii). "[SASL] immersion in the Deaf community is different from [SASL] immersion in Deaf Culture" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). This may be seen in the following instances:

➤ *Location*

"A Deaf community is relative to its location. There are many Deaf communities in [South Africa], but only one Deaf Culture" (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

➤ *Language*

"The Deaf community is more flexible with its language use than Deaf Culture. When Deaf people converse in a situation involving hearing people, they may use a variety of Signed English to help support understanding. However, the strict language in Deaf culture is [South African Sign Language (SASL)]" (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

➤ *Goals*

"Deaf people have faced restrictions and [oppression] while being the minority group in a hearing world. However, when they band together to further the goals of the deaf, they define their culture" (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

"Members of the Deaf community share common goals. One of the main goals of the Deaf community is to achieve recognition of deaf people [as the equals of those in the hearing community]" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). They also want their history and language (SASL) to be acknowledged (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

> South African Sign Language (SASL) is not yet accorded official status, but it is officially recognized in the Constitution of 1996 and other bodies of law as the language that needs to be developed and should be used as the learning and teaching medium in schools for the Deaf, because of the fact that SASL is a necessary language for the purposes of learning in a public school. (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489).

The South African Schools Act, 1996 states, "A recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school." SASL thus serves as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has included SASL in the school curriculum from 2015. The subject is being "rolled out in four phases – first to the foundation phase (Grades R-3), then to the intermediate phase (Grades 4-6), senior phase (Grades 7-9) and further education and training phase (Grades 10-12). The new curriculum [follows] a phased-in approach [that will have] all grades eventually using the curriculum by 2016" (Murugan, 2014: n.p.).

Sign language in South Africa can be traced to the arrival of six nuns from the Dominican Convent Cabra, Dublin, to the Cape of Good Hope in the 1860s (Leeson and Saeed, 2012: 44; Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). "The first school for the Deaf in South Africa was established in Cape Town in 1863 by the Irish Dominican Order under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Grimley and was known as the Dominican Grimley Institute for the Deaf" (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). Sign language in the form of "Irish signs and the Irish one-handed alphabet" was introduced as a medium of instruction (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489).

The German Dominican sisters followed from 1877 (Everything. Explained. Today., n.d.). They brought with them not only German signs and the two-handed European alphabet, but also an oral approach to educating Deaf learners, thereby introducing South Africa to the modality debate (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489).

In response to the Milan Congress decision of oralism as the formally adopted medium of Deaf education, the Dutch Reformed Church established the Worcester School for the Deaf and Blind in 1881 in the Western Cape (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). The school combined oral and manual (sign) methods (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). In 1884 German Dominican nuns established a school for the deaf in King William's Town, Eastern Cape that enforced a strict oralism policy (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489). "Both these schools were for "European Deaf children" only" (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489).

> In 1933, the Dutch Reformed Church set up another school in the Cape region, this time for "colored deaf" children known as Nuwe Hoop. It, too, combined oral and manual methods. The first school for Black Deaf children, Kutlwanong, was opened in 1941 in Gauteng Province. That school used a system of signs invented in Britain known as the Paget-Gorman System, a sign system that is a manually coded form of English using 37 basic handsigns and 21 distinct hand postures. Although it did not correspond to the natural signs of the Deaf community, it did allow for the development of a strong, visually based communication code that facilitated rather than repressed a vigorous Deaf culture. (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 489-90).

"Beginning in 1948, as part of the apartheid educational system, manual sign codes for spoken language were used in schools for the black deaf, while schools serving the white population remained strictly oral in orientation" (Reagan, Penn and Ogilvy, 2006: 190-1). This distinction was largely motivated by economic considerations: "oral education involves relatively expensive hearing aids and intensive, on-going speech and language therapy to be effective" (Reagan, Penn and Ogilvy, 2006: 191).

> Thus, ironically, because these [Black, Coloured, and Indian] schools used visually based communication that enhanced the development of their sign language and strengthened their identity as part of a Deaf culture, they reaped some benefits from apartheid and were in some ways superior in their education offerings to those offering education to "privileged" White Deaf learners. (Storbeck and Martin, 2010: 490)

In recent years, a more bilingual approach to Deaf education combining both SASL and spoken language has been adopted in schools (Reagan, Penn and Ogilvy, 2006: 191-2).

> Members of the Deaf community [comprise] deaf and hearing people (including hearing family members, interpreters, … [and others]) that share in the culture and use [SASL]. These people do not have to be deaf themselves

and can be part of other cultural groups, but they support the goals of the Deaf and help to achieve them. Membership in the Deaf community is not as strict as membership in Deaf Culture or the Deaf Ethnicity. (Start ASL, n.d.ii)

The line around the 'Deaf community' is thus more fluid in Figure 1.1 – the membership varies (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

3. Deaf Culture

The culture of the Deaf is much more restrictive. On this level, [one] would more closely identify [oneself] with Deaf culture before any other culture. Normally, [one needs] to have a degree of hearing loss to be a part of this culture. However, some hearing children of Deaf adults (CODAs) are on this level because they have been brought up learning [SASL] and the cultural values natively. (Start ASL, n.d.ii)

"People who are part of this level generally include: deaf and hard of hearing individuals who identify with Deaf cultural values and behaviors, and know and use [SASL] (not the thought-up language systems like Signed English)" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). "Hearing children of Deaf adults can also sometimes be involved in Deaf culture because they were raised in it" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). Rarely are hearing people without Deaf parents; who learn SASL and become involved in the community, part of Deaf culture (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

The line around 'Deaf culture' in Figure 1.1 is less fluid than the one for the 'Deaf community,' which means it is more restrictive, but it is more fluid than the one for Deaf Ethnicity (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

4. Deaf Ethnicity

This is the "most restrictive group and is rarely discussed. [SASL] immersion can take place with people who are at this level, but [a hearing person] will most likely never be a part of it. [Membership] is reserved for those who are Deaf and were raised with [SASL] in Deaf culture. This usually involves a Deaf child of Deaf parents. [Such a] situation is surprisingly rare, but highly valued" (Start ASL, n.d.ii).

Bridging Cultures

Culture, deaf communication

Hearing people aside

Hearing mind aside

Listen with ears, no!

Listen with eyes, yes!

Force you? Force me? No!

You and me

Part of one culture

Bernard Bragg, "Culture" (Burch, 1997: 126)

Central to deaf studies is the 'Deaf versus hearing world' problematic. The above poem by acclaimed American Sign Language (ASL) poet, Bernard Bragg (1994) accentuates the goal of his work: to educate and to create common ground between hearing and Deaf people (Burch, 1997: 126).

Other ASL poets, such as Clayton Valli (1995), search for no common ground between hearing and Deaf worlds (Burch, 1997: 127):

> Indeed, his rigorous attention to technical aspects of ASL as well as to his overt political message epitomize his desire to undermine the hegemony of hearing perceptions of the Deaf community and of its language as lacking or disadvantaged. By forcing his audience to understand him in only a Deaf language (ASL), he compels all discourse to enter a realm dominated by a historically voiceless minority. (Burch, 1997: 128)

A similar analogy may be drawn with oral tradition. "An important cultural value", oral tradition "can be regarded as the oldest form of narrating history" (Mafunisa, 2008: 119). In many traditional societies, oral poetry was favoured over the written form in places such as Athens, Ireland and Zululand. The transmission of poetry from 'tongue to ear – ear to tongue – tongue to ear' would no doubt have excluded Deaf poets and audiences. One would, therefore, appreciate the visual nature of signed poetry which translates into a performance, creating an intimate connection between poet and audience.

Katherine Jankowski (1997, in Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 276-7) "suggests that frequent association of hearing people with deaf people is likely to minimize the "mystery" of Deaf culture and generate a sense of deaf people as equals." The research of this thesis will explore the perceptions of Deaf and hearing communities towards each other, and ways of enhancing human development through collaborative eco-arts projects. The possibilities for South African Sign Language (SASL) poetry to work visually as a potential bridge between languages--SASL and English--as well as between peoples will be investigated (Burch, 1997: 125).

See the Talk

Ambience and novelty are of particular significance to the Green Heart Movement as it seeks to unpack serious ecological issues such as climate change in an 'enchanting and entertaining' manner. Dr Peppas created the phrase 'See the Talk', which was included in the initial promotional material for the launch of 'Sundowner Skywriting – Adventures in Basic Sign Language'. This course was presented in collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy and Alliance Française de Durban. The phrase, which is a play on the well-known adage, 'Walk the Talk,' refers to the visual nature and attentiveness of sign language communication.

> Numerous deaf studies scholars—including Lennard Davis, H-Dirksen Bauman, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, Mairian Corker, Owen Wrigley, Carol Padden, Tom Humphries, Jonathan Rée, and Harlan Lane—have addressed the cultural and political histories of the Deaf community… Simply put, deafness, as these critics have shown and begun to redress, is undertheorized because it is generally eclipsed by the framing of sound practices from an audist standpoint. Since sign language is a visual, spatial, and kinesthetic modality, the communicative, expressive, and lived space of deafness emphasizes the hands and eye. (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2006: 419)

"Deaf poet Earl Sollenberger … believed visual experiences were equal in value to auditory ones" (Clark, 2006: 6). This contrasts the "still widespread notion that signing is a group of gestures that are only second-best methods of communication. The mouth and ear are first; the hand and eye are second" (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2006: 418).

The term 'audism' was invented in 1975 by Tom Humphries to describe "an oppressive attitude that some people, agencies, businesses, or organizations have towards people who are Deaf or hard of hearing" (Deaf Choice, Inc., 2012: n.p.). Audism refers to "an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks" (Humphrey and Alcorn, 1995: 85).

Another term that is used to describe deaf discrimination is 'deafism'. "Daily discrimination is a common experience for many Deaf people in their work and private lives … Whether that is direct deafism or indirect, the outcomes are often the same – exclusion, isolation, hurt, harm, disadvantage or just simply another bout of tears. Deaf people are fair game it seems" (Deacy, 2015: n.p.).

It is evident that Deaf people often find themselves at the margins of mainline society due to the apparent communication barrier that exists between signing Deaf and non-signing hearing people. "'Oppression' for Deaf people appears to be strongly linked to sign language suppression" (Harris, 1995: 22). Paul C. Higgins (1987, in Harris, 1995: 24) asserts that "*perceiving a condition as a disability leads to stigmatisation*." As an example, "if sign language becomes acknowledged by the majority as a valued skill, it is possible that more hearing people will attempt to acquire it. Under these conditions, exclusion may become a thing of the past" (Harris, 1995: 24). This thesis will consider Deaf and hearing respondents' attitudes towards Skywriting as well as their awareness of different applications in which this visual form of communication can be used to encourage inclusivity.

Aspects of the following studies are referenced within this research for their relevance to Deaf culture and social integration. Marion Heap's (2006: 35) concept of 'sign-deaf spaces' foregrounded in 'Speaking Hands and Silent Voices: Exploring the Identities of d/Deaf Teachers through Narratives in Motion' by Ansuya Ram (2010) is identified as a possible consideration for the BAT Centre in Durban. The importance of a local Deaf Club in affording Deaf people a sense of place and identity is highlighted in 'Going, going, but not gone: the impact of social and technological influences on the Australian Deaf community' by Ingrid van Steenwyk (2008). However, the sustainability of Deaf Clubs is a challenge as confirmed by the closure of the Deaf Clubs in Australia and Durban. Swannack's (2015b)

essay titled: '"No ears allowed?" An Anthropological Exploration of the International Symbol of Deafness' presents divergent interpretations of the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing. A recommendation is for further studies to explore public awareness around the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing, the traditional International Symbol of Access (ISA), and the modified ISA.

There is minimal literature associated with the potential of the South African experience of Deaf Theatre, Silent Cinema and Signed Poetry to offer value-added engagements that combine Deaf and hearing cultures. The study contributes to the literature by providing a lived ethnographic account of ways that Deaf culture and eco-arts act as progressive enablers in advancing collaborative ventures for Deaf and hearing communities. A key outcome of the research would be to ascertain whether, "as deaf and hearing people expand their experiences and increase their opportunities to interact and work together, new understandings and respect may be the result" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 277). An overview discussion of theories that inform this study follows (Chapter Two).

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework

Something is happening. We are becoming a visually mediated society. For many, understanding of the world is being accomplished, not through words, but by reading images.

– Paul Martin Lester[18]

Deaf people as a linguistic minority identify themselves as belonging to a cultural group that shares a sign language and a common heritage (World Federation of the Deaf, n.d.i: n.p.). Central to group membership is Deaf culture, which includes "beliefs, attitudes, history, norms, values, literary traditions, and art shared by Deaf people" (World Federation of the Deaf, n.d.i: n.p.). Article 30, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises Deaf culture in the following statement: "Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture" (United Nations, 2006: n.p.).

Deaf and hearing cultures attach different values to activities favouring vision or sound. Walking out with awareness, Deaf Pavement Poets could assist hearing urban landscapers in reading the rich texture of the sidewalk, and treating the streets as living beings.

> In most of the world's cultures, which are overwhelmingly comprised of hearing people, hearing itself and its associated activities, such as singing and listening to music, are highly valued… By the same token, in the cultures of the DEAF-WORLDS all over the globe, vision and its associated activities, such as visual/manual language and attentiveness to the visual environment, are highly valued. (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 408)

Proficiency in visual language and culture could serve not only to bridge the deaf-hearing divide, but also to enhance individual and group capabilities. Infographics, which present a "data-rich visualization of a story or thesis", are becoming increasingly popular in today's fast-paced world that relies on byte-sized information (Customer Magnetism, n.d.: n.p.). The

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[18] HP Invent. 2004. *The Power of Visual Communication* (online), July: 2. Available: www.hp.com/large/ipg/assets/.../power-of-visual-communication.pdf (Accessed 8 March 2013).

potential to capture succinctly meaning through images, as opposed to strings of text, is considered a sought-after skill in embracing future technologies.

This chapter outlines three theories: Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication (Lester, 2006), Intergroup Contact Theory (Pettigrew, 1998), and Communities of Practice Theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication was selected according to its relevance to visual language (Sign) and culture; whilst Intergroup Contact Theory and Communities of Practice Theory were identified in relation to cross-group contact and connection between the two social groups represented in the study, namely Deaf and hearing cultures.

Empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 1990) and participatory communication theory from a Freirean perspective (Servaes, 1996) were considered however not detailed due to the scope of this study. These theories have particular relevance in seeking an understanding of marginalised communities – "the assets that people bring to their efforts, how they are already handling their own problems, what activities and outside resources are necessary to further their aims, and how their current efforts extend their capabilities for future action" (Feldman and Westphal, 2000: 108).

Further considerations – though not explicated herein – include Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and the Spiral of Silence Theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Agenda-Setting Theory purports that the media (mainly the news media) has the power to influence public attention based on the emphasis placed on a news item, which guides readers and viewers in determining how much importance to attach to a particular topic (McCombs, 1979: 1). The researcher noticed a lack of coverage or attention given to Deaf people in the local media which might account for why there is little active interest regarding Deaf issues amongst hearing people. This was evident in the markedly low audience attendance at the 'Talking Hands' First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa at Catalina Theatre Durban during Deaf Awareness Month (September) 2012.

The Spiral of Silence Theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) refers to a phenomenon in which an individual may be reluctant to express divergent opinions to the dominant view out of fear of isolation from the majority (Levina, Waldo and Fitzgerald, 2000: 740):

> In the face of this silence, society then assumes that there is no opposition to the prevalent view and continues to accept it as the norm. As a result, those in disagreement have even greater incentive to remain quiet. Noelle-Neumann (1974) proposes that the media represent one of the main creators of the spiral of silence. (Levina, Waldo and Fitzgerald, 2000: 740)

Similarly, there might be hearing people who wish to speak out about Deaf issues but do not voice their opinion as they fear being ostracised. Insufficient media attention is then a contributing factor towards the Deaf becoming more 'hidden' and somewhat detached from the public consciousness.

The case of the 'fake' interpreter Tamsanqa Jantjie at Nelson Mandela's memorial service raised the profile of sign language internationally. "I was appalled by the standard of interpreting obviously," said Peter Llewellyn-Jones, president of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli), referring to the incident at Soweto stadium on 10 December 2013 (Euronews, 2013: n.p.). "But I think I would say that man has done more for our cause that we could have achieved in 10 years of campaigning. Because now everybody is talking about the standards of interpreting and that's what we have been trying to raise the profile of" (Euronews, 2013: n.p.).

Wits Language School in Johannesburg reported online that their "SASL courses are increasing in popularity after the 'fake' SASL interpreter at Nelson Mandela's memorial service scandal" (Wits Language School, n.d.: n.p.). A YouTube video on their website enables viewers to "easily compare signing by the 'fake' interpreter with that done by Thelma Kotze, one of the top SASL interpreters in the country and a sign language interpreter trainer for Wits Language School" (Wits Language School, n.d.: n.p.).

The lack of qualified or 'quality' SASL interpreters in South Africa is identified as a serious concern. Wits Language School (n.d.: n.p.) asserts:

> We strongly believe that a commitment to using only qualified SASL interpreters would have prevented this sad situation from occurring. Unfortunately the use of unqualified interpreters happens far too often. There is a severe shortage of qualified SASL interpreters, so we are happy to see that more people are being exposed to this unique language and

taking it as a career option. Nothing less than a qualified interpreter is ever acceptable. We are pleased to see more people enrolling for SASL courses in order to learn to communicate properly with the Deaf.

Placing sign language on the global agenda meant that hearing people were able to discuss Deaf issues freely in conversation and on social media platforms. They in turn learned that sign language is not universal; that the term 'Deaf' is widely accepted amongst the Deaf community; and that sign language is a central element of Deaf culture.

Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication

Paul Martin Lester (2006: n.p.) asserts that a communication medium in which words and pictures have equal status allows for powerful and effective processing within the mind. Blending the visual and the verbal adds another dimension to the (communication) material and creates an entirely new path toward understanding—or "seeing"—its meaning (HP Invent, 2004: 3). As the researcher and academician Edward R. Tufte (1990) has observed, "To envision information—and what bright and splendid visions can result—is to work at the intersection of image, word, number, art."

The three tenets of the syntactic theory of visual communication are:

➢ Mediated words and pictures have equal importance in the communication process.[19]
➢ As symbols with similar historical roots, mediated words and pictures are both symbolic representations.
➢ Images are remembered by thinking about them in words. (Lester, 2006: n.p.)

Sign language may be conceptualised as a refreshing take on 'motion media'[20] as the user conveys their message through a combination of "hand-shapes, body-shapes, facial

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[19] Before we are four years old, most of us have learned *The Alphabet Song*. Sung to the same tune of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, it is unlike any other song because no pictures come to mind when singing it. With *Twinkle*, we can look up in the night's sky an imagine a little star out of the billions shining just for us. But a song about the letters in the alphabet do not carry any visual equivalents. Children soon match up, however, concrete nouns with images for each letter in the song. Children's books help to solve the mystery. "A is for apple ...." Each letter of the alphabet becomes a picture that corresponds with a complex set of direct and mediated images. We no longer have to think of an actual red, juicy apple. We can simply see the letter 'A' and know that it stands for that fruit. (Lester, 2006: n.p.)

[20] Motion Media and Digital Storytelling involve a person using "digital means to relate a story or lesson to others" (IMT365, n.d.: n.p.). Content creation and sharing of ideas can be facilitated using these digital sources

expressions and movement symbols" (Sassoon and Gaur, 1997: 114). The term Skywriting (as referring to sign language) aptly captures this nuance of meaning production mediated by 'writing' imagery in the Air. Nature adventure performances by the Deaf Pavement Poets foreground the human 'heart in art' to heighten consciousness around wind, wave and sun technologies.

It should be noted that syntax as applied in written and spoken language differs considerably from that of visual communication. "Syntactics is the study of the ways in which signs are combined with each other to form complex messages" (Lester, 2006: n.p.). A written sentence comprises words arranged serially in a specific rule-based order (Lester, 2006: n.p.).

> [Conversely,] signs within an image are presented in various ways, many times depending on the style of the image-maker. The chain of signs is more tightly controlled with text than with images. One exception might be poetry in which the order of the words can have non-linear, presentation qualities. In fact, the Greek poet Simonides around 500 BC wrote that paintings were "silent poetry and poetry painting that speaks." (Lester, 2006: n.p.)

One of the 'Ten Commandments' of Deaf Culture states that "You [hearing person] shall not be the deaf person's English Grammar teacher"[21] (Deaf Center, 1999: n.p.). It is evident that a Deaf person's mother tongue is often a visual language (Sign) which differs from an oral language such as English in syntax. A glossary of the signed equivalent of unfamiliar words is used as an aid in teaching Deaf children to read (Sassoon and Gaur, 1997: 107). "It is possible for children to be able to 'read' every word from a text by signing, fingerspelling or speaking, but not actually to understand what they are reading" (Sassoon and Gaur, 1997: 107). 'Silent reading' is one method that "allows the children to use whatever strategies help them to understand the text. It also helps to stop them from seeing reading as an exercise where they 'perform' for the teacher and to start to see it as a task in looking for meaning in information" (Sassoon and Gaur, 1997: 107). Graphic novels, comics and cartooning can assist in encouraging Deaf children to read and thereby improve their literacy skills.

"Without written forms, signed languages do not permit the type of textual record available to speakers of English and other written languages. Deaf signers have generally relied on the

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(IMT365, n.d.: n.p.). A video can be produced and uploaded to an online platform such as YouTube or Vimeo to be shared with others (IMT365, n.d.: n.p.).
[21] See Appendix G.

language of the dominant hearing culture for this purpose. Because of their visual-gestural modality, signed languages present a unique set of challenges for developing written forms" (McCarty, 2004: 129). For the Deaf individual, much learning is accomplished through seeing. The rich visual texture in board games could present viable opportunities for Deaf game developers and championship players.

Visual Culture

The visual nature of sign language presents wide-ranging benefits for both Deaf and hearing cultures. An obvious application is the facilitation of communication amongst Deaf-Deaf and Deaf-hearing individuals or groups. Other functions include assisting hearing individuals to communicate with each other if the band at a party is too loud or they are seated across a long dinner table. The ubiquitous library sign, 'Silence!' would be rendered void when confronted with speechless, signing users.

The field of visual culture "opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another, lending over-accruing layers of meanings and of subjective responses to each encounter we might have with film, TV, advertising, art works, buildings or urban environments" (Rogoff, 1998: 14). Our daily experiences are mediated by numerous screens, images and objects; placing at the helm of our schematic reference visual interpretation and negotiation (New York University Council for Media and Culture, n.d.: n.p.).

According to recent research from investigators at the University of California (UC) Davis campus and UC Irvine campus, "Deaf people who use sign language are quicker at recognizing and interpreting body language than hearing non-signers" (UC Davis, 2012):

> The work suggests that deaf people may be especially adept at picking up on subtle visual traits in the actions of others, an ability that could be useful for some sensitive jobs, such as airport screening… This work is important because it suggests that the human ability for communication is modifiable and is not limited to speech, Corina[22] said. Deaf people show us that

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[22] David Corina is a professor in the University of California Davis Department of Linguistics and Center for Mind and Brain. "Corina and graduate student Michael Grosvald, now a postdoctoral researcher at UC Irvine, measured the response times of both deaf and hearing people to a series of video clips showing people making

language can be expressed by the hands and be perceived through the visual system. When this happens, deaf signers get the added benefit of being able to recognize non-language actions better than hearing people who do not know a sign language, Corina said. (UC Davis, 2012)

Irit Rogoff (1998: 18) proposes the notion of '*the curious eye*' to counter the Eurocentrism of conservative 'good eye' art history (Shohat and Stam, 1998: 27). The premise rests upon an attempt to guard against "developing 'the mean eye, the jaundiced, skeptical eye'" so as to "engage with the fantasy formations that inform viewing subjectivities" (Rogoff, 1998: 18). As Einstein has said, 'I have no special talent – I am only passionately curious' (MoveMe Quotes, n.d.: n.p.).

"Curiosity implies a certain unsettling; a notion of things outside the realm of the known, of things not yet quite understood or articulated; … the optimism of finding out something one had not known or been able to conceive of before" (Rogoff, 1998: 18). From observations at cafés and other public spaces, it is not uncommon to find a Deaf group communicating in sign language being met with stares from hearing people who might find this a novel sight. Insights into the role of curiosity in hearing respondents' first-hand encountering of Skywriting will be explored. Lester (2006: n.p.) recognises that "when words and images have equal status within all media of communication, the cultural cues that define a society will not only be more efficiently passed from one generation to the next, but within this generation, here and now, diverse cultures will be able to understand each other a little better."

Linked strongly with visual culture and multimodal[23] learning through media is Sensory Stimulation Theory (Laird, 1985). The basic premise of traditional sensory stimulation theory is that effective learning occurs when the senses are stimulated (Laird, 1985). Research quoted by Dugan Laird (1985) found that 75% of knowledge held by adults is learned through seeing; 13% through hearing; and 12% through the other senses – touch, smell and taste:

American Sign Language signs or "non-language" gestures, such as stroking the chin. Their work was published online Dec. 6 in the journal Cognition" (UC Davis, 2012).
[23] "Multimodal approaches have provided concepts, methods and a framework for the collection and analysis of visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments, and the relationships between these" (Jewitt, 2009: n.p.).

> By stimulating the senses, especially the visual sense, learning can be enhanced. However, this theory says that if multi-senses are stimulated, greater learning takes place. Stimulation through the senses is achieved through a greater variety of colours, volume levels, strong statements, facts presented visually, use of a variety of techniques and media. (Dunn, 2002: 1)

Multidisciplinary arts are useful in engaging Deaf audiences by compensating for audio effects through visual and other sensory stimuli. Such integrated art forms underlie a sense of community and collective mindedness[24].

Intergroup Contact Theory

Post-World War II, social scientists began theorising about intergroup contact (Watson, 1947: 165). Gordon W. Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Hypothesis sought to prove, "the most influential by specifying the critical situational conditions for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice" (Pettigrew, 1998: 66). The hypothesis asserts that "positive effects of intergroup contact occur only in situations marked by four key conditions: equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law or custom" (Pettigrew, 1998: 66). Critics propose a fifth condition for the contact hypothesis: "The contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends" (Pettigrew, 1998: 76).

Recent advances in intergroup contact theory and research suggest that Allport's original conditions for optimal contact facilitate the (intergroup contact) effect but are not necessary conditions (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2011: 271). Contact theory as developed by Miles Hewstone *et al.* (2007) cites evidence that "contact between groups does bring about positive (or at least less negative) attitudes, reduces prejudice and builds lasting friendships. The creation of intergroup friendships is seen as more important than simple cooperation" (Institute of Community Cohesion, 2010: n.p.).

In contrast to Allport's hypothesis which predicts only *when* positive contact effects will occur, not *how* and *why*; Hewstone considers the process, and *how* that will be facilitated (Pettigrew, 1998: 80; Institute of Community Cohesion, 2010: n.p.). He "maintains that the type of

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[24] A new term in vogue that has similar connotations to community-minded: "interested in helping the wider community; socially concerned" (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.: n.p.).

contact, and the conditions under which it occurs, are all important and if these are not optimal they can lead to an increase in prejudice" (Institute of Community Cohesion, 2010: n.p.). A series of negative intergroup contact situations could thus heighten prejudice over time.

A Reformulation of Intergroup Contact Theory
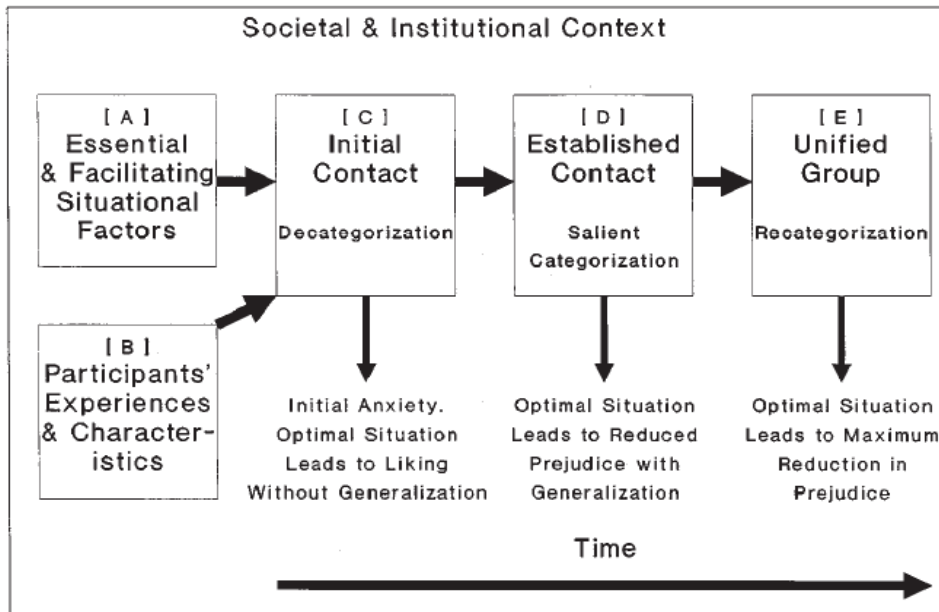
FIGURE 2.1 **Reformulated contact theory**. (*Source*: Pettigrew, 1998: 77)

Considerations such as "friendship potential" emerging from Allport's hypothesis provide direction for a reformulated contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998: 75, 80). Instead of a list of conditions, Thomas F. Pettigrew (1998: 76) proposes a longitudinal model as schematically outlined in Figure 2.1.

> Note first that this version of intergroup contact theory involves the meso-level of analysis. Yet it is placed within the micro and macro level contexts of (*B*) the participants' experiences and characteristics as well as the larger societal setting of the situation. The basic features of this reformulated version consist of (*A*) the essential and facilitating situational factors and (*C, D, E*) the time dimension. Each of these features involves details not shown in Figure [2.1].
>
> (*A*) … The theory posits Allport's four conditions and friendship potential as essential situational factors for positive intergroup outcomes–less negative stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. An array of additional factors, such as equivalent group status outside the situation, act

as facilitating factors for such effects. Complicating the picture further, such factors might prove important at different stages of the intergroup contact.

(*C, D, E*) in Figure [2.1] designate only three stages. As diagrammed, this time dimension is obviously oversimplified. The stages will overlap, and at any point the groups can break off contact. (Pettigrew, 1998: 76-7)

The two social groups represented in the study are Deaf and hearing cultures. Eco-art interventions comprising mirrored Skywriting and Skyreading presentations afford hearing cultures an opportunity to discover the enriching world of Deaf culture through visual theatre, silent cinema, and signed poetry. Conversation notebooks are used in such interventions to facilitate communication and interaction between Deaf and hearing guests. The potential for social cohesion as embodied by greater trust, reduced anxiety, empathy, and intergroup friendship will be explored (Pettigrew, *et al.*, 2011: 271).

Communities of Practice

Drawn together by a shared interest, communities of practice create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002: 4, 42):

> These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs. They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards. They may create tools, standards, generic designs, manuals, and other documents – or they may simply develop a tacit understanding that they share (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002: 4-5).

Through various nature-themed activations, the citizen-based Green Heart Movement brings together Deaf and hearing poets, musicians, and visual and performing artists, providing opportunities to hone their skills. Young and old assist with cutting out green heart pin-ons from felt fabric, attaching safety pins to each cut-out and pinning these onto visitors. The pin-ons serve as emblems of green-consciousness, often creating a subtle conversation point around nature as the wearer goes about their daily tasks. Deaf Pavement Poets serve as beacons to hearing participants awestruck by their emotive Skywriting performances on climate change and nature's beauty. Conversation notebooks are used to facilitate

communication as Deaf and hearing guests exchange written dialogue back and forth. Hearing participants are encouraged to write a poem and witness it being translated into sign language in real time by the Deaf poets. The "Hearts of the City" ad hoc ensemble showcases wind instruments in action, such as harmonicas, flutes, accordions and African drums.

Such Deaf/Hearing collaborations can lead to enhanced communication strategies, job prospects, and mutual recognition and respect. Harlan Lane, Robert Hoffmeister and Ben Bahan (1996: 452-3) purport that the "best hope for alliances between Deaf and hearing people lies in the creation of bilingual and bicultural education for Deaf children. This model allows for both languages and cultures to be treated with equal respect." When the Deaf child learns that "hearing people value Deaf language and culture as they value their own", greater cooperation and cohesion may be fostered (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 453).

The theories that underpin this study and the motivation for their selection were outlined in this chapter. The theoretical framework positions, informs and guides the research process. Chapter Three frames the research methodology, including reliability and validity, ethical and reflexivity considerations.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

All theory, dear friend,
is gray,
but the golden tree of life
springs ever green.

– Goethe[25]

Navigating through a variety of generated data requires a map or strategy guided by the purpose of the study. Focused on ways in which eco-arts and Deaf culture can be used to integrate Deaf and hearing societies, a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach characterised by the coming together of the researcher and those involved in a more 'communitarian way' is the thread that connected a range of elements intrinsically linked to the research process (Lincoln, 2001: 127). This chapter outlines the research design, approach and paradigm; sampling techniques; research instruments; data analysis method; validity and reliability issues; biases and how these were minimised; and limitations of the study.

Research design describes the plan or strategy for conducting the research study. Its role is to meet the objectives by connecting research questions to data (Oso and Onen, 2005: 31; Rakotsoane, 2012: 50). The researcher employed an arts-based critical auto-ethnography research design grounded in the integral paradigm. "This multi-paradigmatic perspective enables practitioner-researchers to combine a variety of innovative research approaches – auto/ethnography, autobiography, narrative inquiry, poetic inquiry, critical action research, …, performance ethnography … – to inquire deeply into and radically reconceptualise their own socioculturally situated experiences" (Taylor, 2013: 177).

Integralism incorporates the positivist, interpretive, critical, and postmodern research paradigms to provide a holistic four-quadrant model. This study combines three of the quadrants, namely interpretivism (to understand contextually), criticalism (to facilitate social justice) and postmodernism (to promote pluralism) to arrive at 'arts-based critical auto-

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[25] Quotes. All theory, dear friend, is gray, but the golden tree of life springs ever green. *Stands4 LLC* (online). Available: http://www.quotes.net/quote/1160 (Accessed 30 December 2015).

ethnography' as a focusing lens through which to achieve a holistic understanding of some of the complexities and convergences of Deaf-hearing interaction (Taylor, 2014: 49).

This study is guided by a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. As a specific type of action research, PAR seeks to enhance the relevance of research findings to community needs by means of involvement and participation. "Action Research is achieved through collaboration between researchers and participants and by following a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting" (Gilbert, 2008: 104).

PAR could be situated within an advocacy and participatory worldview in its focus on "how participants come together to co-create their understandings of the issues under investigation," thereby giving voice to participants (Crotty, 1998; Heron and Reason, 1997). "Most types of PAR have an explicit … commitment to the empowerment of participants and to changing the social conditions of the participants" (Mouton, 2001: 150-1).

The researcher studied the Deaf group as a cultural and linguistic minority in "much the same way as an ethnographer or social anthropologist would" (Rugg and Petre, 2007: 111). Ethnographic research involving disclosed participant observation provides an "in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the actors and their practices" (Mouton, 2001: 148). It was important for the researcher, in gaining a deeper understanding of the Deaf World, to look beyond the front version of how the group behaves – that is the sanitised version for public consumption – and become privy to the behind-the-scenes reality (Rugg and Petre, 2007: 112). Probing and follow-up questions during the focus groups were particularly effective in this regard.

The study involves Deaf respondents as an integral part of the design by investigating what the Deaf community in Durban is doing to integrate itself into mainline society (Mouton, 2001: 150). The researcher collaborated both with Deaf and hearing respondents to explore ways of facilitating communication and interaction between them. The Common Ingroup Identity Model by Samuel L. Gaertner, John F. Dovidio, *et al.* (1990, 1993) illustrated below proved useful in understanding the various dimensions and stages of cross-group identification.

Transdisciplinarity in Action

The Green Heart Movement collaborated with the KZN Sign Language Academy and Alliance Française de Durban to present an 11-week course in sign language basics. Course participants represented a wide spectrum of cultures, ages and professions. Deaf youth joined in some of the sessions to assist course participants with translating their poems into sign language. A sense of camaraderie developed between the Deaf and hearing participants as they engaged with each other; the hearing participants grappling earnestly with a visual language at which the Deaf participants were exceedingly adept.

The process was transdisciplinary in nature as Deaf culture, poetry, eco-arts and visual language skills came to bear. Basarab Nicolescu (1997: 12-4) purports that transdisciplinarity "takes us beyond disciplines by weaving a new kind of knowledge. As the prefix "trans" indicates, transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all discipline. Its goal is the understanding of the present world, one of the imperatives of which is the unity of knowledge." Apart from the transdisciplinarity (TD) discourses of transcendence (unity of knowledge) and problem solving, the third major TD discourse, that of transgression recognises a shift from "solely "reliable scientific knowledge" to inclusion of "socially robust knowledge" that transgresses the expert/lay dichotomy while fostering new partnerships between the academy and society" (Klein, 2014: 69-72). The 60-second video production, 'The Durban Deaf Room' (2012) [documentary attached to dissertation] illustrates the "hybridity and contextuality" of the emergent dynamic learning circle in an Interactive Skywriting Poetry Performance and Certificate Ceremony following the 11-week Skywriting course (Klein, 2014: 68).

The Common Ingroup Identity Model
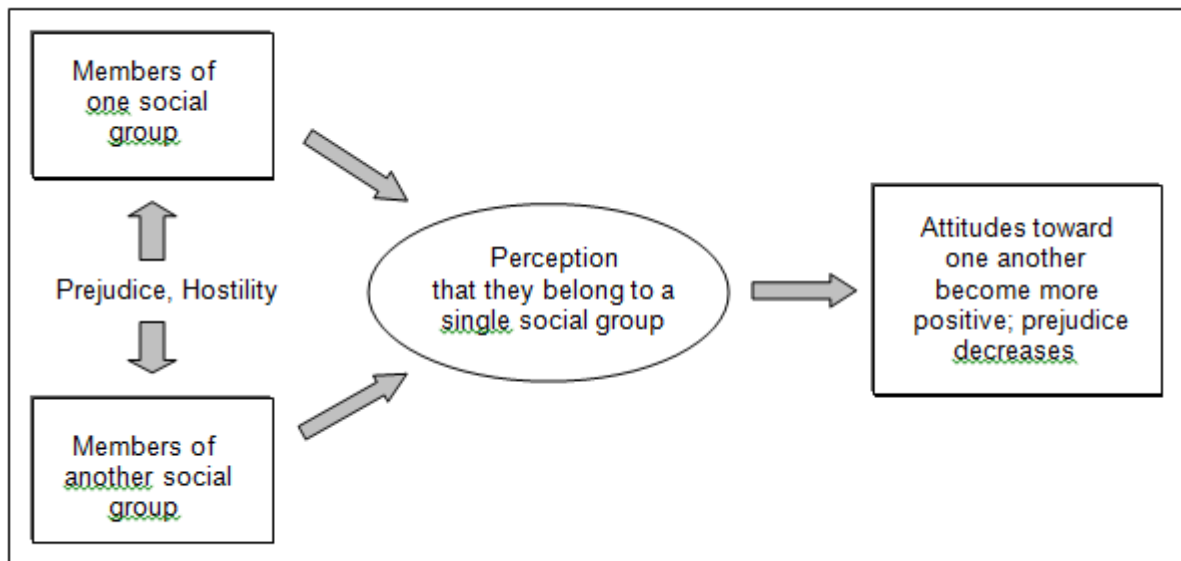
FIGURE 3.1 **The Common Ingroup Identity Model**. The model suggests that when individuals belonging to different groups come to perceive themselves as members of a single group, their attitudes toward each other become more positive. This increases contact between members of the groups, which reduces intergroup bias still further.

(*Source*: Based on suggestions by Gaertner, Dovidio, *et al.*, 1990, 1993, in Baron and Byrne, 1997: 218)

The model suggests that it is possible for shifts or recategorizations in the boundary between "us" and "them" to be used to reduce prejudice (Baron and Byrne, 1997: 218). The concept may be explicated as follows: It is common for prejudice and hostility to exist between individuals belonging to two different social groups. "When individuals belonging to initially distinct groups work together toward shared goals, they come to perceive themselves as a single social entity" (Baron and Byrne, 1997: 218). In short, weakening or eliminating initial us-them boundaries reduces intergroup bias, thereby promoting cultural understanding and acceptance.

The two social groups represented in the study are Deaf and hearing cultures. Eco-art interventions comprising mirrored Skywriting and Skyreading presentations seek to deconstruct some of the stereotypes and misconceptions that hearing cultures may have about Deaf cultures, and vice versa, based on external opinions. To this end, such activations provide a first-hand account of the Deaf and Hearing Worlds. Hearing participants explore the benefits of sign

language in sharpening their visual attentiveness skills, while both Deaf and hearing participants develop friendships and deeper conversation.

Sampling

The sample comprises eight Deaf and eight hearing respondents. The recruitment strategy was determined by participant attendance at one or more Durban-based arts and ecology interventions featuring Skywriting prior to the study. The non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling was employed. Such a technique is characterised by the researcher making a judgement – based on his/her knowledge of the population – regarding which subjects ought to be selected so as to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (Rakotsoane, 2012: 58).

"Quota sampling is a type of purposive sampling in which relevant characteristics are used to stratify the sample in an attempt to improve the representativeness of the sample" (Coldwell and Herbst, 2004: 81). The advantage of this type of sampling is that it is more representative of the population than is a purposive or convenience sample, but the reliance on the judgement of the researcher to select the subjects may be a limitation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 138-9).

Each of the two groups of eight Deaf and eight hearing participants comprised four male and four female participants, representative of the four major race groups in South Africa – African, Indian, Coloured, and White. An equal race ratio was decided upon as opposed to percentage of the city's demography as societal integration is a central element of this research. The sample thus represents a race and gender cross section.

Age was *not* a necessary selection criterion in the two cohorts. But for the record, members of the Deaf group were between the ages of 22 and 38. These participants regularly attend and/or perform at eco-art events featuring Skywriting around Durban. Two of the participants in the Deaf cohort, Shelley Buckle Ferreira and Pearlene are hard of hearing. They are able to communicate verbally, and also "identify with Deaf cultural values and behaviors" (Start ASL, n.d.ii). The researcher identified the Deaf group in collaboration with Alison Swannack, a director at the KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy.

The hearing group comprised participants between the ages of 25 and 65. The wide age spectrum for the hearing group is representative of the participants who had attended the sign language course at Alliance Française in 2012 and/or are 'regulars' at eco-art events around Durban.

The 11-week Skywriting course attracted participants across the age and racial spectrum with the youngest participant being 10 years old at the time (2012). The researcher felt it important to include some older participants (50 years or above) in the hearing research sample as various terminologies which are not politically correct today, for example 'deaf and dumb,' 'handicapped' and 'crippled,' dominated everyday discourse in their youth.

Data Generation Plan

Qualitative research was favoured over more quantitative approaches, as a small core sample (16) was selected to "get an in-depth opinion from participants" (Dawson, 2002: 14). As Birhanu Moges Alemu (2013: 53) recognises: "The rich data produced (in qualitative research) provide an illuminating picture of the subject, with great attention often given to pointing out intricate details."

Both primary and secondary sources of data were considered in the data generation phase. Primary data production methods included conversation notebooks, focus group discussions, participant observation, and a 60-second video titled 'The Durban Deaf Room'. Dr Mikhail Peppas moderated the focus group discussions and interviews. A digital voice recorder was used during focus groups and interviews. Secondary data sources included Facebook comments, newspaper articles and a Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 handbill.

Primary data sources

➢ **Focus Groups and Interviews**[26]

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[26] See Appendix H for focus group and interview schedules.

It was envisaged that two focus groups would be held, one comprising eight Deaf participants and the other, eight hearing participants. This was not possible however due to availability of participants. Taking into consideration participant schedules, four focus groups and five interviews materialised.

Details of the focus groups and interviews are provided below:

Focus Group 1: Bo Tasker, Ismael Mansoor, Divashya and Mr Rajbal (Deaf respondents). Odette Swift (SASL interpreter). Alliance Française de Durban. 16 November 2013.

Focus Group 2: Morgan and Vino (Hearing respondents). Royal Natal Yacht Club. Durban. 6 February 2014.

Focus Group 3: Linda and Pearlene (Deaf respondents). Sandile Mngadi (SASL interpreter). Alliance Française de Durban. 8 February 2014.

Focus Group 4: Timothy Sparks, Angela and Wayne (Hearing respondents). Alliance Française de Durban. 15 February 2014.

Interview 1: Simon Manda (Hearing respondent). Alliance Française de Durban. 23 November 2013.

Interview 2: Nise Malange (Hearing respondent). BAT Centre. 2 April 2014.

Interview 3: Shelley Buckle Ferreira (Deaf respondent). Wakaberry. Florida Road Durban. 13 April 2014.

Interview 4: Odette Swift (Hearing respondent). St. Clements Restaurant. Musgrave Road Durban. 14 April 2014.

Interview 5: Thabani Msomi (Deaf respondent). BAT Centre. 21 May 2014.

Three focus groups and an interview were held at Alliance Française de Durban, the site where Skywriting classes and other eco-art events take place. The choice of Alliance Française as a research site was informed by the institute's functioning as a language and cultural centre[27]. A further motivation was the provision of an integrative environment with an eco-sustainable focus[28].

Focus group was chosen as it "relies on the interaction within the group rather than on a question-and-answer format of interview" as well as to "obtain consensus about specific issues" (Rakotsoane, 2012: 57). Louis M. Rea and Richard A. Parker (2005: 75-6) acknowledge that "as a general rule, focus groups are more effective when they consist of participants who share many of the same key characteristics. Homogenous groups tend to exchange ideas and opinions more freely than do groups with widely divergent backgrounds." In this respect, separate focus groups were conducted with Deaf and hearing participants respectively.

➢ **Conversation Notebooks**

Skywriting Social or "HAPPY TIME" is an informal Mix & Mingle opportunity for Deaf and hearing guests to interact over a cup of coffee and discover the enriching world of Deaf culture. Conversation notebooks that provide a record of written dialogue between Deaf and hearing participants were used to facilitate communication during "HAPPY TIME". The method proved useful in 'breaking the ice' as Deaf and hearing participants exchanged written conversation back and forth.

➢ **Participant Observation**

The term 'participant observation' refers to the direct involvement of the researcher in the data collection exercise through observation (Alemu, 2013: 136). As a data collection instrument, observation is often used to complement the use of other instruments (Alemu, 2013: 136). It was used in this study to cross-validate certain responses from the focus group discussions (Alemu, 2013: 136).

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[27] Alliance Française de Durban offers courses in French, isiZulu, and Portuguese. The researcher coordinated an 11-week South African Sign Language (SASL) course at Alliance Française during May to August 2012.
[28] Alliance Française de Durban is the world's "greenest" Alliance Française (République Française, 2012: n.p.). The eco-sustainable venue features solar panels, rainwater harvesting tanks and a permaculture garden.

➢ **WhatsApp communication**

The researcher engaged in WhatsApp communication with some of the respondents and SASL interpreters to gain clarity on Deaf-related matters. Sandile Mngadi's reflections on interpreting 'The Durban Passion Play' 2015 were conveyed through WhatsApp.

➢ **Video**

'The Durban Deaf Room,' a 60-second video production documents an Interactive Skywriting Poetry Performance and Certificate Ceremony of a sign language course held at Alliance Française de Durban. The video showcases aspects of Deaf culture through eco-arts as participants deliver their poems in sign language backed by wind instruments such as the accordion and African drum. The Skywriting course was jointly presented by Green Heart City, KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy and Alliance Française.

IMAGE 24 Screenshot from 'The Durban Deaf Room' video documentary.

<u>Secondary data sources</u>

➢ **Facebook posts and comments**

Excerpts from Facebook posts and comments relevant to Deaf culture and eco-arts by some of the Deaf and hearing respondents were analysed. The role of social media in facilitating Deaf-hearing interaction was explored.

➢ **Newspaper articles**

Complementary data on Deaf issues from newspapers in both print and online formats were referenced. Articles included press releases covering Deaf events in Durban submitted to local newspapers by the researcher.

➢ **Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 handbill**

A handbill about *Talking Hands, the Play*[29] authored by Alison Swannack, Festival Director of the 'Talking Hands' First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa, served as useful source material for it sheds light on the South African Deaf experience. Of particular relevance were references to "the strengths and possibilities that exist if Deaf and hearing people work together" (Swannack, 2012c: 3)

Data Analysis

Narrative inquiry was employed to reflect on the data and represent the outcomes of the study. This data analysis method views narratives as interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others (Lawler, 2002). "The analysis does not seek to find similarities across stories, and is not interested in conceptual themes, but instead values the messiness, depth and texture of lived experience" (Etherington, 2004: 81).

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[29] Alison Swannack is playwright/director of *Talking Hands, the Play*.

The narrative is organised and presented in the following sequence: story, character, focalisation and plot (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 73). For Mieke Bal (1985: 4), these elements are tools which are "useful in that they enable us to formulate a textual description in such a way that is accessible to others".

Story and character	Focalisation	Plot
What character am I in the story?	In what voice will I speak?	Who are my readers?

TABLE 3.1 Narrative components mapped against Lincoln's (1997) questions for qualitative researchers.

The following table illustrates the research design for this study.

Research Question	Objective	Method/Tool	Theory	Analysis
i. How can eco-arts be used to integrate the Deaf into mainline society?	To explore the potential of eco-arts as a channel for integrating the Deaf into mainline society	Focus groups Interviews Participant observation Conversation notebooks Video	Intergroup Contact Theory Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication Communities of Practice	Narrative Inquiry
ii. How do hearing cultures perceive Deaf cultures, and vice versa?	To deconstruct some of the stereotypes and misconceptions that hearing cultures may have about Deaf cultures based on external opinions, and vice versa	Focus groups Interviews Participant observation Handbill	Intergroup Contact Theory Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication	Narrative Inquiry
iii. What is the Deaf community in Durban doing to integrate itself into mainline society?	To propose methods in facilitating communication and interaction between Deaf and hearing cultures	Focus groups Interviews Participant observation Video Handbill	Communities of Practice Intergroup Contact Theory	Narrative Inquiry

TABLE 3.2 **Research Design**.

Reliability and Validity Considerations

The findings were critically analysed against the theories that inform the study, to ensure plausibility of the research synthesis (Savin-Baden and Major, 2010: 176). Data generation through focus groups, interviews, conversation notebooks, participant observation, video and

questionnaires was administered at the Alliance Française de Durban and local coffee shops in keeping with the natural setting of eco-art activations around the city. The research supervisor reviewed the data production and analysis process to ensure credibility of research findings.

Validity is an important research consideration and may be defined as "well-founded, convincing and justifiable, demonstrated through using consistent and objective research methods" (Winstanley, 2009: 143). A logical link between the questions and objectives of the study sought to check face validity of the research findings through data collection instruments appearing to measure what they purport to measure (Oso and Onen, 2005: 42).

Crystallisation ensured that multiple, divergent perspectives of a single phenomenon, namely Deaf-hearing interaction, were explored.

> Laurel Richardson (1994) argues for the metaphor of crystallisation which conveys a holistic, multifaceted and dynamic perspective when compared to the two-dimensional fixity of triangulation (based on plane geometry). Richardson favours the metaphor of the multi-faceted crystal (based on light theory) that reflects externalities and refracts within itself, creating a spectrum of dynamic and colourful images. In relation to narrative research writing, crystallization values texts that provide "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic". (Taylor, 2014: 44)

Arts-based research genres such as poetry and performance open our doors of perception (Huxley, 1959) and cast a spectrum of multiple and contingent interpretations of participants' meaning-perspectives (Taylor, 2014: 44). It seems therefore that "crystallisation, rather than triangulation, is a better fit for interpretive research when it comes to understanding and representing the complexity of social realities" (Taylor, 2014: 44).

Ethical Considerations[30]

The purpose of using a pseudonym in research (to ensure anonymity and confidentiality) was explained to the Deaf and hearing research participants. Respondents were given the choice of being referred to by their real name or a pseudonym during the focus groups as well as in the writing up of the findings.

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[30] See Appendix I for ethical clearance approval letter.

Deaf and hearing adult participants were selected. An informed consent form was signed by each subject. This form details, *inter alia*, the nature of the study, and how anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects' details and information will be protected.

➢ **Research Trust**

In building trust with the Deaf community, the hearing researcher did not take photographs or make video recordings during the initial Skywriting and eco-art sessions. While she is from Durban, it was important that she instilled confidence in the Deaf respondents as she is not part of their subcommunity. From exploratory readings, she was cognisant that if the Deaf respondents were suspicious of her intentions ("Nothing About Us Without Us") she would not elicit open and frank responses.

Through collegiality and gaining their confidence she was accepted into the Durban Deaf community and they became accessible as respondents. The researcher presented alongside their productions at the Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 and is supportive of their tours overseas. She employed the assistance of SASL interpreters, Odette Swift and Sandile Mngadi, who are known to the Deaf respondents to ensure that they would be comfortable providing responses in their presence during the focus groups. Permission was sought from the relevant parties to include photographs in the final copy of the dissertation.

Limitations and Biases

Questionnaires were completed by Deaf and hearing respondents in the initial stages of the research (see Appendix J for copies of questionnaires). It was later decided not to include data from this research instrument as the study would become too extensive.

Photographs taken at eco-art activations featuring Deaf and hearing performers and audiences have been included in the dissertation to illustrate various con-texts, scenes or scenarios (Tomaselli, 1996: 56). Due to time constraints the photographs did not undergo semiotic analysis.

The researcher relied on hearing sign language practitioners' interpretations of signed responses from Deaf participants during the focus groups and performances by the Deaf Pavement Poets. She has completed a basic SASL course and thus attempts to improve her proficiency in the visual language by poring through the *Finger Talk* South African Sign Language (SASL) Dictionary (2011). The researcher found that conversation notebooks proved to be useful in exchanging written dialogue with Deaf respondents so as to gain clarity on certain issues.

Video recordings of focus groups and interviews were not made due to ethical considerations in terms of assuring anonymity and confidentiality. A further consideration is that of the obtrusive video camera which tends to prompt people to behave and respond differently when the camera is rolling. As Leland McCleary (2003: 114) postulates: "The mere presence of the technology [recording equipment] and the knowledge that the conversation is being recorded has an important effect on the interaction. If this is true of unobtrusive handheld tape recorders, how much more true of video cameras?"

➢ **Reflexivity**

As participant-observer, the researcher made field notes and was conscious of her own subjectivity in the research process. "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001: 483-4). As a poet and participant in the Cycles 4 Social Justice (C4SJ) Project[31] and later Green Heart Movement, the researcher's sensitivity towards people with disabilities guides her practice in attempting to change mindsets so as to make a difference in society.

The robust research design which encompassed a variety of data production techniques culminated in a trove of rich data from which to draw parallels and contrasts. Chapter Four presents an insightful analysis of the findings using narrative inquiry. The ultimate goal is to uncover a "thick description" of ways to facilitate communication and interaction between Deaf

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[31] Established in January 2010, the C4SJ Project aims to instil a love for the cycle and widen the enthusiasm for cycling as sport and transport in South Africa. A specific emphasis is placed on making the cycle a central aspect in the lives of youths with challenges.

and hearing communities based on mappings and penetrations of messy 'reality' (Tomaselli, 1996: 59-60).

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Analysis

— Daigle, M. and Daigle, K. 2013b[32]

The primary data analysis tool employed to establish validity and reliability of the research findings is narrative inquiry. Following a thorough overview of data analysis tools, the researcher selected narrative inquiry as the most appropriate tool considering the richly textured data. The researcher acknowledged the "importance of accessing and understanding participants' different social constructions of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), examining issues in depth through exploratory, open-ended conversations, [and] prioritising holistic understanding situated in lived experience" (Trahar, 2009: n.p.). Narrative inquiry is particularly relevant in light of this research as it "has evolved from the growing participatory research movement that foregrounds a greater sensitivity to social and cultural differences" (Trahar, 2009: n.p.).

A large proportion of the findings was drawn from a combination of truncated and full transcripts of data generated from focus groups and interviews. Complementary data production tools included conversation notebooks that provide a record of written dialogue between Deaf and hearing participants, participant observation, WhatsApp communication; a video titled 'The Durban Deaf Room,' and secondary sources such as Facebook posts and

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[32] Deaf Culture 101: Giving Feedback. *That Deaf Guy* (online), May 2. Available: http://www.thatdeafguy.com/?p=490 (Accessed 3 May 2014).

comments, newspaper articles and the Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 handbill about *Talking Hands, the Play.*

Separate definitions highlight 'narrative' as both product and process (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 72). A simplified definition favoured by Julia Colyar and Karri Holley (2010: 73) combines the "importance of sequence and action: narrative is the telling (or retelling) of a story or set of events in a specific time sequence. The elements of story, character, focalization and plot shape how the narrative is organized and presented to the reader."
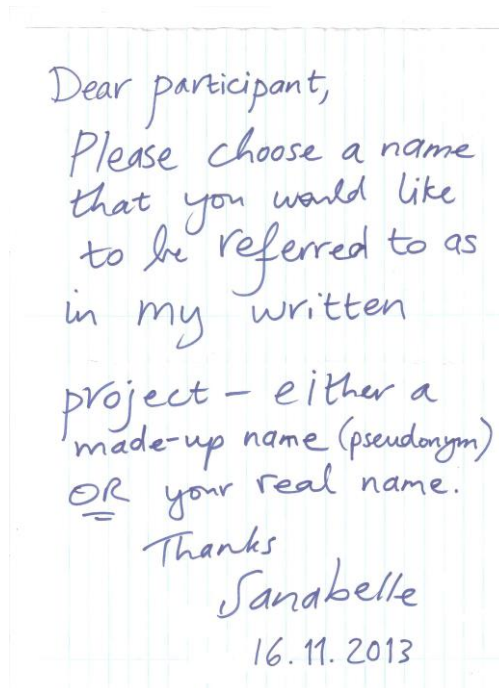
In constructing the narrative, the chapter is structured according to the narrative components of story and character; focalisation; and plot:

> Narrative components can also provide different perspectives from which to address Lincoln's (1997) questions for qualitative researchers: In what voice will I speak? What character am I in the story? Who are my readers? When researchers attend to questions of focalization, they address questions of voice – theirs and those of participants. Thinking about character brings researchers to think about their roles in the inquiry and writing process, but also the roles of various participants, and whether or not they are central or non-central to the telling. Questions of plot (as well as focalization) can assist researchers as they deliberate over audience. Different audiences will likely resonate with different points of view and textual organization. (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 74)

The holistic premise of narrative inquiry enhances both collective and divergent processes towards meaning-making; inviting a more comprehensive understanding of the living histories of the Deaf and hearing participants.

Establishing story and character

Research participants were given the choice of being referred to in the dissertation by their real names or pseudonyms. The participants opted for their real names. The eight Deaf participants are: Bo Tasker (Actor, circus artist, drummer); Ismael Mansoor (Deaf Pavement Poet, model, actor); Mr Rajbal (Hip-hop dancer, actor); Divashya (Accountant and Manager – SharDiva Boutique); Linda (Administrator/Personal Assistant – eDeaf Durban); Pearlene (IT specialist); Shelley Buckle Ferreira (Beauty queen; model; designer, marketer and web developer – Jeep Apparel South Africa); and Thabani Msomi (Visual Artist – BAT Centre).

FIGURE 4.1 Notice that was passed to Deaf participants around the table prior to the focus group discussion.

The eight hearing participants are: Simon Manda (Managing Editor – *Thisability* newspaper); Angela (International performance poet, Drama lecturer, scriptwriter); Wayne (Musician, Fine Art lecturer); Timothy Sparks (Poet); Morgan (Poet, accordion player); Vino (Poet); Nise Malange (Director – BAT Centre, poet, scriptwriter, theatre director); and Odette Swift (Director: Deaf Education – Deaf Federation of South Africa). As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, Dr Mikhail Peppas assisted the researcher with facilitating the interviews and focus group discussions and note-taking.

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that is both practical and collaborative guided this study (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007: 282):

> Participatory action research engages people in examining the *social practices* that link them with others in social interaction. It is a process in which people explore their practices of communication, production, and social organization and try to explore how to improve their interactions by changing the acts that constitute them, that is, to reduce the extent to which participants experience these interactions (and their longer-term consequences) as irrational, unproductive (or inefficient), unjust, and/or unsatisfying (alienating). Participatory researchers aim to work together in

reconstructing their social interactions by reconstructing the acts that constitute them. (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007: 282)

The cyclical process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Gilbert, 2008: 104) that is critical to action enquiry directed various stages of this study. The stages comprised the initiation of eco-art activations, collecting data, analysing the data, trying a new practice, checking what the data mean, reflecting on alternative ways to behave, and fine-tuning practice (Schmuck, 2006: 35).

Deaf participants were selected in consultation with Alison Swannack, a director at the KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy and facilitator of the 11-week Skywriting course. As an eco-arts practitioner, the researcher coordinated various eco-art events featuring SASL in collaboration with the Deaf Pavement Poets and hearing musicians at venues such as Alliance Française de Durban and Sutton Park, Morningside Durban. The process was participatory and involved suggestions that were refined to best suit each event and associated audiences. Encouraging feedback was received, with guests lending expression to what one participant described as 'the heart-warming experience of witnessing an emotive Skywriting performance'. The Deaf community in Durban celebrated a series of milestones since the researcher coordinated the first outing of the Deaf Pavement Poets ensemble in 2011. Such milestones included the *Talking Hands* First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa in September 2012 and international tours of the 'Listen With Your Eyes' Deaf theatre production in 2013 and 2015.

Towards focalisation

In constructing the narrative around Deaf culture and integrated eco-art activations in Durban, the researcher tells the story from her own point of view complemented by the insights of Alison Swannack, Sandile Mngadi, Mikhail Peppas and the 16 respondents. Data sources included the views expressed by Alison Swannack in the Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 handbill about *Talking Hands, the Play*, and those of Sandile Mngadi in a WhatsApp communication about her experience of being a sign language interpreter with Odette Swift at a special performance of 'The Durban Passion Play' 2015 for the hearing impaired.

The researcher deconstructs the 60-second video, 'The Durban Deaf Room'. The video was produced by Sanabelle Ebrahim, directed by Mikhail Peppas and filmed by André Smith. Focalisation in the plot narrative shifts between "internal or external points of view, where the researcher allows participants to voice their own experiences or serves as the omniscient narrator of the tale" (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 76).

In her message as Festival Director/*Talking Hands, the Play* Playwright-Director Alison Swannack (2012c: 1) shared:

> This festival provides a direct window into the experiences, perceptions and world-view of Deaf people. It builds a bridge between the Deaf and Hearing worlds, so that hearing people can, for the first time, access the hidden lives of Deaf South Africans. The festival encourages Deaf artists to rise above their challenges by sharing their artistic talents with diverse new audiences, promotes public awareness of the potentials of Deaf people and reveals the unique culture between sound and silence.

Swannack's (2012c: 1) reference to the "hidden lives of Deaf South Africans" infers a somewhat greater need for the media to highlight Deaf issues. Theories such as Agenda-Setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and the Spiral of Silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) are of direct bearing as they foreground the role of the media in shaping public opinion and drawing attention and relevance to certain issues.

Several stories with a Deaf focus have dominated the news during the period that this research was conducted. These include: the unexpected fame of Bloomberg's sign language interpreter following Hurricane Sandy (Llorente, 2012: n.p.); the 'fake' interpreter at Nelson Mandela's memorial service (2013); corridors-of-power around the debacle over alleged 'fake' sign language interpreter Tamsanqa Jantjie at the SASL curriculum reference during President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address (Du Plessis, 2014: n.p.); Talk Sign Day (2014 and 2015); the Hands with Words Visual Bible project (2015); and the hosting of a KwaZulu-Natal Disability Summit without a sign language interpreter (Pieterse, 2015: n.p.). The Talk Sign Day and Hands with Words Visual Bible project stories have been discussed in the Introduction to this study. The 'fake' interpreter news item has been explicated in the Theoretical Framework chapter. Brief summaries of the remaining aforementioned stories are

included below. In terms of agenda-setting, it is interesting to note that such stories made front page news due to a strong political slant.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's sign language interpreter, Lydia Callis became an unexpected celebrity when she animatedly interpreted the Mayor's descriptions of dire scenarios, tough decisions or confusions related to Hurricane Sandy which descended on USA on 29 October 2012 (Llorente, 2012: n.p.). "And what got the most love were her hands – essential to signing, of course, but Callis's hands became stars all themselves, like those of Manhattan's most theatrical white-gloved traffic cops, or a masterful mime" (Llorente, 2012: n.p.). Amidst the tension and devastation, Callis added an extra dimension to the press conferences and to a "day when people found little else to captivate them in a warm way" (Llorente, 2012: n.p.). "New York magazine said that Callis gave those who watched the press conference "a legitimate reason to smile"" (Llorente, 2012: n.p.).

Laughter erupted in parliament during the 2014 State of the Nation Address as Members of Parliament (MPs) recollected the 'fake' interpreter debacle which "caused international embarrassment at former President Nelson Mandela's memorial service" on 10 December 2013 (Du Plessis, 2014: n.p.). "The MPs burst out laughing, causing [President] Zuma to laugh too," when he announced that the South African Sign Language curriculum would be offered at schools from 2015, "to promote inclusivity and diversity" (Du Plessis, 2014: n.p.).

The researcher was intrigued by *Daily News* and *Weekend Witness* newspaper headlines on street pole posters around Durban with reference to sign language outrage at a KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Disability Summit (Mkhabela and Ndaliso, 2015: 1). Deaf delegates at the Summit organised by the KZN Premier's Office and Disabled People SA in Imbali, Pietermaritzburg from 25 to 26 March 2015 felt excluded at the absence of a competent sign language interpreter (Mkhabela and Ndaliso, 2015: 1). "Disabled People South Africa provincial manager Thami Nkosi said one of their representatives, Vusi Dlamini, who was present at the summit and not a professional sign language interpreter, tried to assist the disgruntled deaf delegates by signing as best he could" (Pieterse, 2015: n.p.). In noting the "protests by a section in the meeting representing the deaf", Premier Senzo Mchunu proposed that the Summit be "reconvened as it was not representative of the province's demographics", to the agreement of the delegates (Pieterse, 2015: n.p.; Mkhabela and Ndaliso, 2015: 1).

Responding to the KZN summit fiasco, communications manager of the National Institute for the Deaf, Andries van Niekerk cited factors such as SASL interpreters being scarce and not always available; and few structures in the country that manage SASL interpreters (Mkhabela and Ndaliso, 2015: 1).

It appears to the researcher that even at a Disability Summit, the Deaf were regarded as an 'afterthought' voiceless sector of society. As one of the hearing respondents reflected during a focus group discussion: 'They [Deaf people] feel [that in the absence of a sign language interpreter or subtitles in the case of a film] there's nothing in a lot of social settings for them so therefore they feel well what's the point of going.' The need to create socially inclusive, enabling environments through the "removal of disabling barriers and attitudes" is thus paramount to facilitate wider integration amongst disparate social groupings (Watson, 2004: 110). *Thisability* managing editor Simon Manda expressed that he is passionate about mainstreaming integration and attends functions 'to see how it could have been done better or differently to include people with disabilities.'

In addressing discrimination against people with disabilities, Mairian Corker (1999, in Watson, 2004: 110) attempts to "promote resistance to the cultural conditions which shape and cause disablement. These cultural conditions are, in the main, general and systematic." Society disables people with impairments, physically or culturally; by failing to take into account their rights and needs, as groups or individuals thereby denying their access to full economic and social participation (SAHRC Report, 2002: 9). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that "there is no such thing as a barrier free environment; facilitating some people excludes others. Even in the absence of barriers, people with impairment may still be excluded" (Watson, 2004: 113).

Deconstructing 'The Durban Deaf Room'

'The Durban Deaf Room,' a 60-second digital video production, documents an Interactive Skywriting Poetry Performance and Certificate Ceremony of an 11-week SASL course held at Alliance Française de Durban. The video casts a spotlight on aspects of Deaf culture through eco-arts as participants deliver their poems in SASL backed by wind instruments

such as the accordion and African drum. The Skywriting course was jointly presented by the Green Heart Movement, KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy and Alliance Française.

The video illustrates ways in which social cohesion between Deaf and hearing participants is fostered through poetry and moving images. The process hones poetry skills and encourages interaction through sensitised socialisation.

The self-generative poetry sessions assisted multi-cultural groups from across the age spectrum to form a dynamic community of practice. Active citizenship had participants performing their poems in the public sphere at pavement cafés, parks and other cultural spaces across the City.

Available on the Green Heart City YouTube channel:

> the video serves as a powerful reference tool that showcases the impact of 'The Durban Deaf Room' (2012) experience to a wider audience.[33] The documentary was screened as part of the video submissions in the Interpret Durban 2012 arts and culture event and formed part of the Deaf Culture Theatrical Picnic at the 'Talking Hands' Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 as well as [the researcher's] presentation in the Community Communication section of the IAMCR 2013 Dublin Conference[34]. Feedback received from viewers of the video included the following reflection: 'The unconventional style of the sign language course that foregrounds poetry as a means of learning new vocabulary and socialising with the Deaf appears to be a definite drawcard. New vistas to visual attentiveness and communication are unlocked by exploring artistic and creative avenues to gaining proficiency in Deaf culture and sign language.' (The Durban Deaf Room, 2012)

The video further sparked interest in the Skywriting course and there are plans to hold basic, intermediate and advanced courses in SASL at Alliance Française de Durban.

The opening sequence of the video features hearing Pavement Poet and musician, Morgan playing the piano accordion. The accordion is a visual instrument[35] that does not require

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[33] View 'The Durban Deaf Room' video documentary at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iroO2C0Ye34.

[34] The presentation was titled 'Deaf-Hearing Poetic Ecology: Integration and Skills Development for Social Cohesion'.

[35] The actual visuals of an accordion being played present a beautiful experience for Deaf people witnessing the musician "curl [their] fingers up and over the bass buttons" and controlling the air in the bellows with their hand or arm pulling the bellows open and close while they are moving (Mediawiki, n.d.: n.p.).

electricity and often complements performances by the Deaf Pavement Poets at Green Heart City activations. Accordion tunes play as a continuous loop throughout the 60-second video.

A child shows off a green heart biscuit before the scene shifts to the courtyard at Alliance Française where eco-arts practitioners are practising the work verse 'Party Time' ahead of their performance. It is envisaged that restaurants in Durban will serve green heart beverage biscuits as a conversation point around the Green Economy.

Mr Eric Apelgren (Head: International and Governance Relations, eThekwini Municipality) and Ms Sarah Doignon (Director, Alliance Française de Durban) presented certificates to course participants. Each participant rendered an original poem in SASL before an audience. They were asked to dress up as a fairy tale character or as the character represented in their poem. A ten-year-old participant – the youngest in the course – dressed up as Alice in Wonderland. Other characters included Rain Queen Modjadji and a Hillbilly.

A policewoman was amongst the course participants, and attended one of the sessions in police uniform. She explained that she enrolled for the course as she was tired of not being able to communicate with Deaf people, some of whom might have been wrongly accused, in the charge office.

Deaf course facilitator Alison Swannack appeared most impressed at the hearing participants' signed poetry performances[36]. The event culminated with Swannack and the group performing the work verse 'Independence Day'. A line from the verse that is accorded prominence in the video is, "The Durban Deaf Room is hard at work practising…" An animated Green Heart City Durban logo is the final visual that draws the video to a ceremonious close. The Green Heart City Durban logo features a butterfly representing the location of Durban on the Africa heartmap.

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[36] Prior to enrolling for the course, one of the hearing participants expressed concern about the course being facilitated by a Deaf trainer. The researcher set her at ease by explaining that the hearing participants could engage in written dialogue with the Deaf facilitator.

Constructing the plot

The plot unfolds through reflections of the participants; their perspectives providing insight into ways of fostering greater integration between Deaf and hearing communities through eco-arts (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 77). In seeking to analyse the evidence collected several key questions require to be answered. The narrative plot is structured in relation to the three research questions that inform this study, namely:

i.   How can eco-arts be used to integrate the Deaf into mainline society?
ii.   How do hearing cultures perceive Deaf cultures, and vice versa?
iii.   What is the Deaf community in Durban doing to integrate itself into mainline society?

> Research questions within the text not only orient the reader to main ideas, but also provide a key indication of the narrative plot… The plot of the research text is not restricted to chronological order, but reflects a logical understanding of the events under consideration. The plot mirrors the story, not simply the data or the role of the researcher. The plot of the research narrative, then, reveals the message the researcher intends to convey to the audience. The message results from the active decision making of the researcher. (Colyar and Holley, 2010: 76-7)

In developing the narrative plot, the researcher grouped similar and divergent responses in relation to topic areas that included poetry; theatre; cinema; Skywriting; silence; Deaf-hearing perceptions about each other; Ubuntu; and profiles of Deaf trailblazers. The findings were then analysed with reference to the literature, theories and practice informing the study.

i.   How can eco-arts be used to integrate the Deaf into mainline society?

The researcher discovered that the participants in themselves had also gone through a process of enhancement by the end of the 11-week SASL course. Initially the 'hearies' were a bit 'stiff' or inhibited, but as the activity of inclusivity had heightened with each passing week, they exhibited greater spontaneity in rendering their signed poetry. Their practice had improved; they were more confident and better equipped to converse with the Deaf participants. Poetry served as a cohesive mechanism that chiselled away the barriers between the Deaf and hearing participants; allowing the two groups to interact shoulder-to-shoulder as equals, for they each were able to produce poetry of comparable standard. With increased

contact over time, the "we" and "they" boundary is obscured and *recategorization* possibilities as emphasised by the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner, Dovidio, *et al.*, 1990, 1993) begin to favour an inclusive strategy that highlights similarities among the interactants (Perdue, *et al.*, 1990):

> Typical members of real groups are different in many ways, but people with similar interests and status seek each other out the similarity principle (Byrne 1971). People from different groups who have contact, then, are more likely to share similar interests and values. And outgroup members with similar interests to the ingroup often will not typify their group or make group membership salient. (Pettigrew, 1998: 74-5)

Deaf theatre can serve as a progressive enabler towards blurring the "us" and "them" boundary and foregrounding similar points of reference. Swannack (2012c: 2) reflects: "*Talking Hands, the Play* will give a diverse audience insight into the past and present life experiences of Deaf South Africans, as well as a glimpse into a future where Deaf and hearing people focus more on what makes us the same and less on the differences."

During the initial stages of the SASL course, conversation notebooks were used to facilitate communication between Deaf and hearing participants. Drawing on the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner, Dovidio, *et al.*, 1990, 1993), the two social groups – Deaf and hearing – at first exhibited resentment, but as they learned more about each other, they found common interests and began to express themselves freely, with a touch of humour.

The following excerpt from a Conversation Notebook (2012) transcript illustrates the wondrous possibilities towards social cohesion that might arise when Deaf and hearing communities move beyond the "awkward segregation" of language barriers that stilt the dialogue (Turner, 2012: n.p.). In finding common ground, a metaphorical 'social bridge' is built between the Deaf and the hearing participant exchanging written dialogue about their dreams and aspirations (Turner, 2012: n.p.). Parenthetically, the SASL course precipitated "four interrelated processes underlying contact effects: learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal. Intergroup friendship has strong positive effects, because it potentially entails all four processes" (Pettigrew, 1998: 80).

Excerpt from a Conversation Notebook (2012) transcript

Hearie (H): "I heard you did a great play – Shakespeare. I also love theatre."

Deaf Pavement Poet (DPP): "One day you will see my poem… Plus I'm a poet performer. One day I would be a writer"

H: "You and I are both left handed! But I write better! Joking"

DPP: "Now you talking"

The syntax of a visual language (Sign) differs vastly from that of a spoken language such as English. At times the hearing participant would correct the Deaf poet's English grammar in a written dialogue. The Deaf poet would sometimes refuse to provide a written version of a signed poem he had performed. "Signing poetry performance is really hard to translate into English," he would write in the conversation notebook. "If I sign this – it won't be the same – If I sign follow the poem – it won't make sense or beautiful – more like bored."

A 'community of practice' was born, as the Deaf and hearing participants looked forward to the next class or eco-arts event where they would have the opportunity to interact and share ideas on how best to render their signed poetry pieces. Timothy Sparks, a hearing poet in the group reflected:

> The sign language course was an amazing example of the dynamic of working with deaf people. Sometimes the benefits were almost accidental and allowed one to appreciate the dramatic gap in our lives. It was this divide itself, the pauses, the uncertainties and of course, the humour that made all the difference. Trying to fold our fingers and arms, into the correct shape was pretty difficult and although this improved with practise, it certainly made one aware of the large divide that separates deaf and hearing folk. I was taken by surprise by the group dynamic as we tried to make sense of these differences. When we were joined by our deaf friends it became immediately clear that what we observed was all important; especially in relation between a signed and a spoken language.

The first poem practised by the hearing group that participated in the 11-week Skywriting course is reproduced hereunder. Participants were alerted to the evident 'role shift' in the poem with reference to the value placed on visual attentiveness amongst Deaf communities and aural emphasis within hearing communities. The unifying quality of experiencing the

same phenomenon through different sensory appreciation – sight and sound – is stressed. As homework, participants were required to add four lines to the poem shadowing the format:

You hear…
I see…

Short Deaf Poem

My friend, you hear
I can't hear but I see your face

You hear a bird singing
I see a bird sitting on a branch

You hear a child crying
I see tears running down his face

You hear thunderstorms
I see black clouds threatening

The following work verses by Mikhail Peppas were practised and performed collectively by course participants. The *Finger Talk* South African Sign Language (SASL) Dictionary (2011) published by Fulton School for the Deaf was used to generate the verses. Emphasis is placed on the likenesses between Deaf and hearing cultures for they both wear slippers and stockings in a similar fashion.

Party Time

Stars and stockings
in the shop window
made the parents
talk of party time

Wise men in red
shirts and green slippers

wearing stockings
sold omelettes
for school games.
The streets smile with joy

Independence Day

Hello Team
Today the weather is beautiful.
The calendar shows July 4.
In America the people are celebrating Independence Day.
The Durban Deaf Room is hard at work practicing signs for Cinderella, White Rabbit and Alice in Wonderland.
Wife and husband love telling fairy tales to their daughter who makes cupcakes and fruit salad.

Deaf youth were invited by Alison Swannack to assist the hearing course participants with translating their original poems into SASL at one of the Skywriting sessions. The participants performed their poems at an Interactive Skywriting Poetry Performance and Certificate Ceremony at the end of the course.

The researcher found the process of learning to sign her poem, 'Nature's Song' highly enriching. Deaf Pavement Poet Ismael Mansoor, who assisted the researcher in translating her poem into SASL, commented that it was an easy poem to translate due to the many visual references.

Nature's Song

The wind whispers in my ear
Calling my name
Sweet melodies play
As I follow the tune

On and on I wander
Through the winding path

Alas! I find myself in a place of
Everlasting beauty and serenity

Trees sway gracefully
Leaves rustling in the breeze
Holding out their branches
As though welcoming the birds

Flowers bloom
Each brightly-coloured petal
Attracting insects
Big and small

As I hold an orchid to my nose
A feeling of utter peace and harmony fills me
My spirits soar
As I lie in the shade of a huge peach tree

Listening to the songs of nature
As they sing me to sleep

Sanabelle Ebrahim

In an email correspondence on 16 February 2013, Deaf Pavement Poet Ismael Mansoor shared the following verse he had authored. The researcher notes that various original sayings and poems shared by Mansoor on Facebook and other online platforms seek to inspire readers to be resilient and adopt a positive outlook on life.

Free the life
Of the love
Free feeling
In the magic of the dancing
Love has a song
A song has to play
And love has being
Sing, sing, sing

Ismael Mansoor

The following poems by Mansoor have been sourced from the online site, PoemHunter.com (2015: n.p.).

Can I Smile? - Poem by Ismael Mansoor

Can I smile? Just smile for life?
If I smile for life
The world might offer its warmly smile

I can do is just smile
Smile, smile, smile

Smile makes me smile
I know, I can't resist

Can you smile?
Just smile for life?
If you smile for life
The world might offer its warmly smile

All you need to do is just smile
Smile, smile, smile

I smile, you smile, we feel good deeply
Smile cherish our being

Smile to heart
Smile to mind
Smile to body

This feeling I smile
It runs so deep I cannot stop inspire

Its nice to feel to know
That smile is uplifting my life

So can I smile?

Peace To Me - Poem by Ismael Mansoor

Peace, open, open the door, good peace!
Stay with peace, say I'm peace.
The magic of peace blossom! It is like a blossom flower,
All bright, or vivid is shining out:
They wave, carefree, and warm in each way
What peace can guard me, or what peace can do?
They are masterpiece, through my breathe;
They don't stop trying, and they board me.
The substance is sacred, the peace is free;
Every breathe I take peace shines upon me;
Then from living walks forth the man of breathing,
Peace to catch me just at,
Is there much peace in breathing,
Just like rhyming,
Freedom my soul to the rhyming of breathe
With deepest calm round my self centre
All fly to peace, and in humble strain
Peace apply to me, to keep my heart open,
Or make my mind to the rhyme of peace
I, who gladly enjoy accepting the peace.

Mansoor's poems exemplify a strong sense of aspiring towards social change and rising above everyday challenges. His ability to adroitly capture the essence of humanity and nature through poetry signals the potential of eco-arts to provide "opportunities for both social integration and meaningful ecological contribution" (Turner, 2012: n.p.). Prospects include the launch of an anthology of verse coupled with a video trailer for the publication hosted on YouTube that would attract Deaf and hearing communities to celebrate the work of a Deaf poet who influences society through his creative ingenuity, resilience and will to succeed despite the odds. Mansoor has explored various written forms such as:

> affirmations, poetry and some stories, and feels that writing has become his compass in life, and his passion. He hopes to motivate and encourage others through his writing.

> In his writing Ismael wants to motivate people to look at the positive side of life more than the negative, and he hopes that it will give people a different perspective and bridge the natural gap between reality and imagination.

> Through his writing he wants to tell people about who he is and how he sees
> the world. (DTV, 2015: n.p.)

Peppas reflected on the value of a book as a tool in fostering integration: 'If you pick up a book you not gonna know, unless you read there that it's written by a Deaf person. You pick up a book there on the table. This is such a motivational, this is such a beautiful [story]. This must be a great soul. This must be a lovely person you know. And then you discover the person's Deaf.'

Simon Manda: It will change your mindset. It will be like this is just like any other person.'

Mikhail Peppas: And in fact in some ways it comes from a deeper part of the person in some ways if possible.

Poetic licence[37] could serve to encourage budding Deaf poets who might be conscious about their written skills owing to the fact that the visual language of Sign employs a different system of syntax and grammar to written English:

> [SASL] employs a visio-spacial grammar, and because of its visual nature, [SASL] sentence structure is often likened to drawing a picture. For example, the English sentence "The green cup is on the table" would be signed in [SASL] something like "TABLE, CUP (COLOR GREEN) CUP-ON" so that first the table is set up, then the cup and its descriptor, and then the cup's place in relation to the table. Because of its lack of the verb "to be" and the noun, then adjective word order, [SASL] is actually more syntactically and grammatically similar to Japanese than English. (Redeafined, 2012: n.p.)

In reflecting on sign language poetry, Manda shared: 'I see that Deaf poetry has got a certain depth to it. Yah, it's got a certain depth because it's feelings that are being conveyed. That's the only way of convey-sion let me say and it comes from a deep point, deep deeper source – emotionally.'

Peppas suggested publishing an anthology of verse titled 'Deaf Poets of Durban' that includes ecopoetry[38] by Deaf Pavement Poets and holding a book launch at a mainstream

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[37] "License or liberty taken by a poet, prose writer, or other artist in deviating from rule, conventional form, logic, or fact, in order to produce a desired effect" (Dictionary.com, 2015: n.p.).

bookstore such as Adams Books. The nature-themed poems would be accessible to a wider audience of hearing people in contrast to a story about struggles in the Deaf World. Manda suggested that some of the poems be selected to be performed using SASL by Deaf learners linked to the Zwakala Contest and broadcast on a national platform such as SABC3.

The 2015 Poetry Africa Festival featured a Poetry Exchange with poets Nii Parkes (United Kingdom/ Ghana) and Makhosazana Xaba (South Africa) at Alliance Française de Durban on 13 October. The researcher asked the poets during the Question-and-Answer session: 'I know of Sign Language Poetry Festivals, but what are your thoughts on mainstream poetry festivals such as Poetry Africa featuring performances by Deaf poets?' The poets agreed that an enriching experience would greet both the participating poets and audiences should Deaf poets be included on the programme. Parkes said he once participated in a mainstream poetry festival in Austin, Texas that featured a Deaf poet. The participating Deaf poet's work was presented on a screen for those who did not understand his signed poetry. The researcher will put forward suggestions of Deaf poets at a meeting with the Management of the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal that hosts Poetry Africa.

Skywriting is an imaginative and accessible terminology that describes the term 'sign language'; created by Mikhail Peppas to activate inclusivity. When asked to share his views on the efficacy of such a term in encouraging the hearing to become familiar with Deaf culture and its visual language, Manda expressed:

> Remember this word – it comes from the mainstream so it shows a level of integration. And if you move from that – from the norm of the Deaf people driving it and also people being involved in calling it another name, I think that's the first step we can take to integrate because we are changing mindsets. So that's the whole idea. So if you move away from sign language and say Skywriting, people will go: Wow, Skywriting. Let's Skywrite. You know, it becomes a trend.

Some of the hearing respondents lent considerable thought to innovative ways of facilitating interaction between Deaf and hearing participants by foregrounding Skywriting in social

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[38] "'Ecopoetry' is a relatively new term for describing contemporary poetry that has a strong ecological emphasis. Whilst precise definitions vary, ecopoetry is generally recognized by its focus on humanity's interrelationship with the natural world in such a way that implies responsibility, engagement and a striving for ecological integrity" (Resurgence Poetry Prize, 2015: n.p.).

eventing. Vino and Morgan suggested that the Green Heart Movement develop a Skywriting game. Morgan said the game would bring sign language into focus and could advance into a worldwide competition. Vino agreed that the Skywriting game be rolled-out at regional, national and international level.

The researcher had a similar idea about creating a Skywriting game. She has presented twice at PechaKucha[39] Night Durban and feels that a similar model could be devised around 'Sundowner Skywriting – The Platform Sessions'. The experience would involve five teams each comprising four hearing participants and a Deaf poet. A theme will be announced on the evening. The challenge would be for the Deaf poet to assist the team in learning to perform their theme-based verse using SASL within 15 minutes. The teams will then have an opportunity to present their verse on stage. Deaf and hearing audience members will vote for the team that best portrays a themed verse using SASL. The prize would include a course in SASL.

'Sundowner Skywriting – The Platform Sessions' could have wide-ranging appeal. The Skywriting game may be considered as a response to Manda's deliberations on the Deaf World and the Hearing World:

> I think there's a lot of integration that needs to take place in terms of in order to mainstream. I know that Deaf culture exist, but I think it should be more open to people who are hearing, hearing people because that's how we can get to learn sign language. It's easier to learn in the environment than out of it so if it opens up it allows other people to you know come in.'

The significance of immersion in learning a new language is hinted at in Manda's response. "The premise is that people learn a foreign or second language in much the same way as they learn their first, and that languages are best learned in contexts where the person is socially stimulated to acquire the language and is exposed to it in its natural setting" (Feinstein, 2006: 118).

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[39] PechaKucha 20x20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk along to the images … The first PechaKucha Night was held in Tokyo … in February, 2003. PechaKucha Nights are informal and fun gatherings where creative people get together and share their ideas, works, thoughts, holiday snaps -- just about anything, really -- in the PechaKucha 20x20 format. (Klein Dytham Architecture, n.d.: n.p.)

Divashya echoed Manda's stance on language immersion, stating: 'You've got to socialise. Workshops and things are cool, you learn stuff. But you'll forget if you don't socialise. Because as you socialise you will learn. You will improve your signing and I will probably improve my English as well.'

Bo Tasker, Mr Rajbal and Ismael Mansoor shared Divashya's sentiments:

Bo Tasker: You have to have regular contact with the other person so if you hearing with the Deaf people.

Mr Rajbal: If you are friends with a Deaf person or with a hearing person your communication will improve because you see each other often. It's very important to work together to make it a regular thing.

Bo Tasker: It's also a good idea maybe to play games together.

Ismael Mansoor: Yah playing games is nice because it's fun and you get to learn at the same time.

Their thoughts on traversing the Deaf World and the Hearing World were somewhat less definitive:

Divashya: It's like we're in between. Like we're caught between two worlds sometimes.

Bo Tasker: Yah, the same. Exist in both. The hearing world is one place where certain things happen and the Deaf World another place where we have different experiences. The big question is whether the two can come together and mix together, I don't know.

Ismael Mansoor: I think they can.

Bo Tasker: But only if the hearing people are interested.

Ismael Mansoor: Some Deaf people want nothing to do with hearing people so that's also a problem.

In linking the Deaf and Hearing Worlds, the Green Heart Movement proposed an interconnected poetry activation called 'Alternate Line'. Respondents were asked to share their thoughts regarding the efficacy of 'Alternate Line' in fostering integration. The initiative involves three people: one Deaf and one hearing co-authoring a poem and a sign language interpreter. Manda reflects on furthering the goal of mainstreaming integration: 'Deaf people can't interpret for each other; they need a hearing person.' The Deaf person performs the first

line using sign language which is simultaneously voiced by an interpreter; the hearing person reads out the next line which is rendered into Sign by the interpreter, and they alternate lines of the poem in this fashion. The activation encourages Deaf and hearing cultures to work together 'in rhythm and harmony' (Pearlene) to produce an art form to be showcased before an integrated audience. Opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship may be furthered through such initiatives.

Pearlene suggested that a video projector be included as part of the 'Alternate Line' experience. Then, should the interpreter be unavailable, the lines performed by the Deaf person could be displayed on a screen using a video projector.

Hearing poets Vino and Morgan acknowledged the value of learning from Deaf people and instilling in them a sense of confidence. The potential of eco-arts in offering entry points into social solidarity and inclusiveness is highlighted. Poetry is identified as a cohesive mechanism in bridging the communication divide and inculcating a sense of belonging for both groupings. They reflected on the 'Alternate Line' activation:

Vino: It will be very, very valuable because you can get across to both [Deaf and hearing] at the same time. And then also you know it also stimulates and bring that interest to the person who doesn't do sign language to say: I enjoyed this, now let me try and see if I can get somebody to show me how to do it. Yah integration.

Morgan: As I said before when you do something and share with somebody else your knowledge and you always learn more. So in this case here I will have the opportunity of learning from the Deaf because I mean their thinking is very, very deep.

Mikhail Peppas: And what do you think the Deaf person will feel like if you're admitting that you're learning from them?

Morgan: Oh they'll be very, very happy. I mean they'll want to think themselves as even better than the normal people.

Vino: And they also feel that they belong and that they are wanted. You know poetry, it's a medium that should be used so widely.

Morgan: Their [Deaf Pavement Poets'] expressions, they say a world.

Vino: You know they made us feel so happy. They made us feel that we belonged even though we couldn't express ourselves.

Peppas reflected that in working together, the Deaf and hearing poets develop a friendship, while the audience comprising Deaf and hearing members are afforded an opportunity to mix-and-mingle. The audience would have spent an evening watching Deaf and hearing poets engaging on stage and when they return to their World, they will not forget the experience they were part of, and will be encouraged to come along the next time and try it themselves.

Angela highlighted the role of performance poetry and the interpreter in encouraging social cohesion through engaging integrated audiences on a range of contemporary issues:

> Well, I think that poetry's got a great part to play in that integration as do all the arts but with performance poetry there's obviously a growing genre so there's also the visual part of it in that in performing poetry one uses their hands and for it to be more informed by sign language means that you know it can be integrated right there in terms of reaching a larger audience. But in addition to that I think that the whole idea of having somebody signing all poetry events would then also be a good stop-gap to involve more partially hearing people in poetic arenas until more people get used to using sign language themselves. I think poetry is such an important medium and a way to address all sorts of social issues, environmental issues, current affairs. So it's a dialogue that includes and should include all people.

Drama was identified as an effective tool in combining Deaf and hearing cultures. As Linda who is a cast member of *Talking Hands, the Play* acknowledges:

> [Alison] trained me and I was amazed. There was a lot of hard work and with the rehearsals with the Deaf, the Deaf cast, there were also hearing people there. They did help, they helped a lot and also with the communication it was amazing. But most of the people that were part of the show were very nice. I met a lot of nice hearing people and we were communicating with the hands, the movements and all that and it was easy to communicate because most of the hearing people who were part of the show did drama. They had drama education. So drama is part of my life. I would love to act in the future but I still talk with Alison about different projects that we want to do; we want to create more awareness and all that.

In Mansoor's opinion, '[the Deaf theatre production] 'Listen With Your Eyes' had a very big impact on hearing people. So it was a good opportunity to explain about Deaf culture and it had a big impact on awareness of Deaf culture rather than standing and explaining this is this, this is this. This was a good way to express.'

Both Angela and Wayne stressed the multidisciplinary, multimedia and intercultural approaches to art forms in affording Deaf and hearing communities 'a sort of connected or a shared experience' (Wayne). Angela elaborated:

> When I say multidisciplinary arts I mean that art should not separate from dance, from visuals, from you know the word. So it engages the senses, basically. So if you looking at something that engages all the senses then even if you do not have one sense you can still join the dialogue from another sensory angle. So sometimes I'll have a screen which has a dancer dancing to what I'm saying in poetry and the music will also be informing what the theme is. So everybody in some kind of way can engage with the theme and engage with some or at least one of the you know mediums.

Alongside poetry and drama, Sparks identified the potential of cinema in drawing together Deaf and hearing cultures:

> Because for someone who is Deaf may be able to look at silent cinema they can involve and absorb themselves into this fantasy world which gives the imagination you know full wings because they can look at a film [and discover] that silence. That the main character can draw into that visual world because everyone thinks ah film, it's all about talking and music in the background. A lot of the great films have enormous scenes of silence. 'Lawrence of Arabia' for instance, there's music but … the desert itself … becomes almost a character in the film and silent movies recently. Of course we had a film ['The Artist' (2011)] which won an Oscar, several Oscars and it was reinterpreting that sort of silent era. So you can see words appear on the screen and of course you talked earlier about computers. And I don't think enough is being done about this – about using words and even silence and the lack of sound or the experience of the hearing and the Deaf and looking at the common ground. Because the eyes can become the ears in a sense, in a way. Because you know when I first found out about Deaf people it was the sign language and there was a barrier. But with art I believe the barrier's collapsed. Collapsed more often than not because art is such you know, you can look at Picasso and you can hear the vibrations of African drums back to Sankofa[40] et cetera. So I think it's fundamental to look at art as being a reference point. Almost a goal, a goal in the end for some integration.

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[40] The principle of Sankofa is symbolized as a prophetic bird … born from the wisdom of Ghana's Gyaman and Asante cultures. The West African symbol represents the importance of understanding one's past in order to build for the present and future. The symbol itself is a bird, which signifies the human spirit. The head of the bird points backwards toward the past, and it holds an egg in its mouth, which represents the wisdom of our origins. Sankofa is a principle of hope, which states that in order to know how to obtain one's goals and dreams, one must understand his or her history and use that knowledge to make healthy choices and decisions for the future. (Sankofa Community Empowerment, Inc., n.d.: n.p.)

Sparks touched upon communication systems appearing to be less audio-intensive and more visual-oriented in contemporary society. Peppas added that he sometimes uses the expression: 'We are living our lives a foot away from our eyes,' in reference to his students spending any second they have spare in the computer labs. Vino commented that people 'look for something – quick-reading, easy to digest, quick to understand … visual stuff and then of course with TV and all the electronic media'. Such observations are in congruence with Lester's (2006: n.p.) Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication that recognises: "There are strong indications that the status of images is improving. We live in a mediated blitz of images. They fill our newspapers, magazines, books, clothing, billboards, computer monitors and television screens as never before in the history of mass communications."

While poetry is based on the word, drama and cinema may be regarded as a form of visual word. Angela suggested that in the spirit of Sankofa, present-day activations could look back to Charlie Chaplin and include silent cinema experiences complemented by sign language poetry during interval. Peppas reflected that while Deaf theatre is gaining momentum in Durban, not many films with Deaf characters have been produced in the city. Deaf schools and Deaf organisations across South Africa were invited to screenings in their communities of the premiere of 'Home'[41], the first Deaf feature film in South Africa, on the weekend of 24-26 May 2013 (CVC Media, 2013b: n.p.). The film is an evangelistic outreach project produced by CVC Media in partnership with Hands With Words (CVC Media, 2013a: 1).

Sparks shared further insights into the visual art form of theatre and film:

> So in a sense we're entering another world – Aladdin's Cave perhaps we often take for granted the fact that we can hear something. But if you have a theatre piece which might be designed for hearing people, tell your friend who's Deaf and you saying come along, come to the theatre. And because the theatre for most of us is when we were young, memories of going to either your first theatre production or film production, you enter this world unbeknown – you don't know what to expect. The same thing is expectations might be different in many ways between the Deaf and hearing, but you'll come out with an experience. The Deaf person would come out with an experience which is different but there are similarities because of

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[41] 'Home' is a "contemporary adaptation of the biblical story The Prodigal Son, featuring a lead cast made up exclusively of Deaf actors" (CVC Media, 2013a: 1).

the visual like Mikhail was saying about the visual aspect and we are living in an extremely visual world.

A Deaf Karaoke teaser showcase proved popular amongst guests at a Sundowner Soirée hosted on 25 April 2012 at Alliance Française de Durban to launch the course, Skywriting Adventures in South African Sign Language Basics. A YouTube video titled 'Hot and Cold - Deaf karaoke feat. CarlaQuin, MOnique and CloudyCAT' (Smith, 2010: n.p.) was screened and guests at the soirée were invited to sign the Katy Perry song lyrics to 'Hot N Cold' portrayed in the video. Manda shared his thoughts on Deaf Karaoke: 'I think all forms of integration that also align to what people know would help in going a long way for us to learn from each other.'

One of the inclusive eco-art activations suggested by Peppas during the focus group with hearing participants was a life-size book stand-up cutout that could be featured in a play. Deaf and hearing members of the audience would interconnect by posing for photographs side-by-side flanking the book cutout (see image below). The photographs would add to the enchantment of graphic novels[42] co-produced by Deaf and hearing authors, illustrators and photographers. "The visual medium [of graphic novels] is used to great advantage in literacy instruction, learning new languages, and social justice projects" (Peppas and Ebrahim, *forthcoming* - b: n.p.). Apart from stage productions, the life-size book stand-up cutout would serve as an installation at Book & Design Fair Durban[43].

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[42]   "Graphic Novel" is a format, not a genre. Graphic novels can be fiction, non-fiction, history, fantasy, or anything in-between. Graphic novels are similar to comic books because they use sequential art to tell a story. Unlike comic books, graphic novels are generally stand-alone stories with more complex plots. Collections of short stories that have been previously published as individual comic books are also considered graphic novels. (Get Graphic, n.d.: n.p.)

[43] Durban's first Book & Design Fair was piloted from 6 to 13 September 2015 at the KwaMuhle Museum, Durban Central. The launch of the annual event on Durban's cultural calendar is scheduled for September 2016.

IMAGE 25 Life-size Book Stand-up Cutout at the National Leprechaun Museum, Dublin Ireland. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

Through her interactions with the Deaf participants, the researcher discovered that many of them preferred engaging with visual material over long volumes of written text. She attributes this preference to the stark differences in visual and written language syntax and grammatical structure. One of the Deaf respondents remarked that she reads to improve her English. The life-size book stand-up cutout then serves a dual purpose of fostering integration and inspiring Deaf and hearing audiences to develop a love for reading. The following conversation between Pearlene who is hard of hearing and Linda who is Deaf refers:

Pearlene: Okay Linda, do you love reading?

Linda: Yes, yes. I read magazines, I read books, I read poems. It helps me improve my English.

Pearlene: That's good. Yes I agree, I agree, help with English.

Linda: And I keep reading.

Linda further expressed that many companies seek Deaf employees. Once eDeaf Durban places a Deaf jobseeker in a company, they are taught 'the right vocabulary, the Code of

Ethics … how to fill in a form. We help them in that we also motivate them. We help them improve their English for the outside world.'

Pearlene acknowledged the efforts of the Green Heart Movement in coordinating inclusive eco-art events around Durban:

> And I think even though Sanabelle and Mikhail is trying to achieve bridging the gap between Deaf and hearing people I think we should also play a role and I feel that now I have me and you [Linda], we have played a role today so that when we go home at the end of the day we can jot down ideas; we can actually have a journal you know of yes, of all this ideas.

Some of the ideas that Pearlene refers to could include board gaming and Open Data networking sessions that combine Deaf and hearing cultures. Pearlene cited poetry workshops, group cycling and marathons as possible activations for engaging Deaf and hearing participants. Peppas suggested encouraging a group of Deaf people to participate in the annual Gandhi Luthuli Salt March[44] which is a social walk for Ubuntu and nonviolence.

Sparks echoed Pearlene's sentiments with respect to the efforts of the Green Heart Movement in encouraging social cohesion: 'Green Heart City is the first time I've actually heard – in my whole life – about a group concerned and wanting to have some sort of engagement with Deaf Pavement Poets.'

Another integrative eco-art activation is adult colouring-in, which is the latest rage, inviting creativity and bringing comfort (King, 2015: n.p.). Amongst its many therapeutic properties, adult colouring-in enhances imagination and focus by stimulating concentration (Wilson, 2015: n.p.). The researcher visited an Adult Colouring Competition stand hosted by Exclusive Books Midlands Mall at the Hilton Arts Festival 2015 in KwaZulu-Natal. She can appreciate the potential for adult colouring-in to precipitate social events that draw together Deaf and hearing guests in the name of art. Shelley Buckle Ferreira posted to Facebook on 21 September 2015 with a photograph of a partly-coloured in page: 'Enjoying the colouring in book for grown ups!' The post attracted several responses and a follow-up comment by

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[44] "This walk celebrates the life of Mahatma Gandhi and chief Albert Luthuli, both of who have been vocal in their support for the development of a culture of nonviolence and ubuntu" (Gandhi Development Trust, n.d.: n.p.).

Buckle Ferreira on 22 September: 'I bought this as a gift for my mom's birthday. It's actually meant to be a de-stressing technique. It's incredibly relaxing.' She posted another semi-coloured in page on 27 September with the text: 'Relaxing afternoon with my own colouring book for grown ups! A perfect sunny day, not a cloud in the sky. Bliss'. Alongside the inspiration factor is the sense of accomplishment that greets the individual upon making something beautiful (Power, 2015: n.p.).

Deaf and hearing visual and performing artists creating art exhibitions; board games; adult colouring-in books; poetry, theatre and film experiences would further the cultural entrepreneurship goal of adding value to the social milieu. At the crossroads of culture-blending, entrepreneurship and Open Data networking platforms emerges a haven for innovation and social development (Tullin, 2012). The humanitarian practice of Ubuntu emphasises "harmony, righteousness and the need to locate and understand one's actions with reference to a larger whole" (Mkhize, 2008: 36). Deaf-hearing cultural entrepreneurship is underpinned by Ubuntu principles that have the transformative potential to build sustainable societies. "Those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all" (Reddy and Ajmera, 2015: 55). A life is measured by the lives it touches (Hutcherson, 2013).

Angela reflected that hearing artists could be 'part of the solution' by creating inclusive theatre productions featuring Deaf and hearing performers that implicitly raise awareness around Deaf culture. She acknowledged that 'our one little play can't say everything for everybody.' Angela's acknowledgement recognises that the Deaf sub-community is a heterogeneous grouping and dissuades the "tendency to essentialize or stereotype behaviors, values, and beliefs in ways that ignore individuality and diversity contexts" (Anderson and Reimer Kirkham, 1998, in Johnson *et al.*, 2004: 255). "A critical concern of professionals, hearing or deaf, must be the accurate and realistic representation of the experiences and issues that affect deaf people. The Deaf community is at least as diverse as any other community; therefore, no one deaf person can represent the perspectives of all deaf people" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 279). Angela expounds that by widening the creative industries, 'we need to let people know that we're aware of it [Deaf culture] and plant that seed in all of them that: Don't forget wherever you can integrate. Something's going to be accessible to the Deaf will be great and then … even if it's a type of signer at poetry events – widen it.'

ii.   How do hearing cultures perceive Deaf cultures, and vice versa?

Hearing couple, Vino and Morgan shared an insightful anecdote of how a Deaf man who became a part of their family used fish as a prosocial point of entry. The researcher recollected her own experience of seeking prosocial points of entry to encourage interaction with the Deaf community in Durban at events and gatherings.

Vino's reference to the couple (hearing cousin and Deaf husband) having 'normal' children in the excerpt below reflects the subtle nuances that arise in attempting to be politically correct when discussing matters around disability. "Words like "normal person" imply that the person with a disability isn't normal, whereas "person without a disability" is descriptive but not negative" (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.: n.p.). The researcher consulted Simon Manda (Managing Editor, *Thisability*) regarding the politically correct term for people without disabilities. Manda's response was 'Non-disabled persons'.

The recognition of the Deaf person as a multi-dimensional character displaying several (even conflicting) character traits and thus being reasonably complex enables Vino to identify with the Deaf person as she would a hearing person (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, n.d.: n.p.). She states: "He would get cross too. But the way he would take care of people – he had the patience. He loved people." Contact theory as developed by Hewstone *et al.* (2007) validates this scenario for as positive attitudes between members of the two social groups (Deaf and hearing) are fostered; prejudice is reduced and lasting friendships built (Institute of Community Cohesion, 2010).

Vino: I have a hearing girl cousin who married a deaf man. She was quite happy.

Morgan: He was a great fisherman. So I guess you could say he used the fish to draw him closer to hearing people.

Vino: He loved other people – even though he couldn't speak.

Morgan: He made himself to be loved by everybody.

Vino: We should take a drive up there to visit them at Sezela Sugar Mills – Illovo Beach, South Coast Sugar Mill area. He guts and cleans the fish and gives it to you all ready to cook and eat. His sister was my aunty's neighbour. He even worked as a clerk.

Morgan: They took to him.

Vino: He got along so well. And they had so many children normally – normal children. They got married 48 years ago. He's now 70 years old. He would get cross too. But the way he would take care of people – he had the patience. He loved people. I was a little girl when he came into our family.

Morgan: When you give or show love to others, they respond likewise. It's something that you don't need to use words to throw back good feelings. And one of the ways is to write poetry and share it with them.

Morgan's reference to the reciprocating of love and kindness is aptly conveyed in a quote by Mark Twain: "Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see" (Goodreads Inc, n.d.: n.p.). In interpreting the quote, Denise Portis (2008: n.p.) reflects in her hearing loss diary: "Kindness is a language the deaf can hear, the blind can see, and the mute can speak. Kindness heals the injured, and moves those who are now immobile. Kindness is a language that knits together the hearts of every person; if we will only learn it. It's not a tough language. We can all be bi-lingual in this regard!"

When asked what motivated her interest in sign language, interpreter Odette Swift replied:

> Unlike most hearing people who have taken an interest in sign language and who become interpreters, I don't have any Deaf people in my family. There's no members of my family who are Deaf. My earliest memory of Deaf people is my parents were members of the Landrover Club and we used to go camping one weekend a month with the Landrover Club and there was a Deaf couple who were members of the club as well. And as a young girl– 5, 6, 7 years old I remember going away for the weekends and being in the bush in the middle of nowhere with nothing but gas and camping lights and stuff for fires and hiding behind trees and watching this Deaf couple sign to one another in the light of their caravan and just being completely fascinated by it.

In Grade 10, when the school guidance counsellor asked Swift what she planned to become when she grew up, she replied that she wanted to teach Deaf children. The counsellor was surprised, as Swift was a straight-A student and the other boffins in the class had aspirations of studying medicine or accounting. 'I said I wanna teach and she said: 'Why on earth do you wanna do that?' And I said 'Well, why not.' Swift attributes her career path in sign language interpretation to the Deaf couple standing at their caravan signing to one another by firelight.

The interpreting field facilitates "access to the importance of creating a profession that values and prioritizes the recruitment and advancement of marginalized communities" such as Deaf people (Nelson, 2012: n.p.). "Interpreters have the ability to gain intimate connections to marginalization and oppression through analyzing, understanding and acknowledging [their] own privilege" (Nelson, 2012: n.p.). Swift said interacting with Deaf people has enriched her life; she relates well to Deaf people and Deaf culture and the learning process is continual:

> I feel like part of me has become Deaf … I've learnt about a culture that I didn't realise existed … But learning about Deaf culture … it just made things so much more real for me in terms of things like oppression and marginalisation and this sign, what's the word for this sign, the disregard of human rights and the daily struggle that a particular group of people and the constant fighting to get anything and so I think I have become a more aware person.

Swift's reference to: 'and this sign, what's the word for this sign' shows that despite being hearing she sometimes thinks in sign language. In acknowledging the equal status of words and pictures for memorable meaning-making, Lester (2006: n.p.) asserts: "If you have seen the picture, you remember it not only because it is a highly emotional image, but because you have thought about the image in your mind with words. Words and pictures become one powerfully effective communicative medium inside your own mind." Context is identified as the "glue that binds visual and verbal symbols together" (Lester, 2006: n.p.). "Signs have no meaning outside of their context. Visual and verbal thoughts combine to create the context that links signs together to form symbols that can be remembered and recalled" (Lester, 2006: n.p.).

To elucidate 'thinking in Sign,' Oliver Sacks (2000: 144) relates:

> I recently met a young woman, Deborah H., the hearing child of deaf parents, and a native signer herself, who tells me that she often falls back into Sign, and "thinks in Sign," whenever she has to puzzle out a complex intellectual problem. Language has an intellectual no less than a social function, and for Deborah, who hears, and lives now in a hearing world, the social function, very naturally, goes with speech, but the intellectual function, apparently, is still vested for her in Sign.

Relatedly, Deaf respondent Divashya shared that she is fond of sign language for she can express herself: 'Like if I'm talking to my family or even sometimes when I'm talking to myself I sign to myself.'

Upon reflection of interpreting 'The Durban Passion Play' 2015, Sandile Mngadi (Freelance sign language interpreter) stated in a WhatsApp communication on 15 April 2015:

> Preparation before the play was not so easy because I'm not used to the theatre setting and finding the right signs for the religious terms was a bit challenging. But working with someone (Odette) who has done the Passion play was so much of assistance. Interpreting at the actual play was a learning curve and exciting at the same time and seeing a Deaf person in the audience made it even more exciting. I'd love to do more in the future.

Swift interpreted 'The Durban Passion Play' in 2005, 2010 and 2015. It is uncertain as to whether SASL interpretation was provided at productions prior to 2005, but interpretation at the three most recent productions highlights continuity as well as commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the interpreters. Mngadi completed a National Diploma in Translation and Interpreting Practice at the Durban University of Technology. She was fascinated by the language of Sign as she was growing up and decided to pursue a career as an interpreter. Mngadi's reflections on her experience of interpreting 'The Durban Passion Play' indicate the rewarding and enriching nature of such a career.

A critique in relation to sign language interpretation as part of period theatre such as 'The Durban Passion Play' would be to minimise disruption to the 'willing suspension of disbelief.'[45] As a suggestion, the sign language interpreters should dress in period clothes rather than contemporary or modern dress as they are positioned on the stage and thus part of the period experience.

The researcher attended a Provincial Authors Symposium at the BAT Centre where Mngadi was one of two sign language interpreters. It was encouraging to witness sign language interpretation at the BAT Centre which is a grassroots community oriented arts and culture

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[45] "The temporary acceptance as believable of events or characters that would ordinarily be seen as incredible. This is usually to allow an audience to appreciate works of literature or drama that are exploring unusual ideas" (The Phrase Finder, n.d.: n.p.).

space located at the Small Craft Harbour, off Durban's Victoria Embankment (now Margaret Mncadi Avenue) (BAT Centre, 2013: n.p.). The Authors Symposium was hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture on 24 April 2015.

The stigma attached to Deafness emerged as a common theme in the second focus group with Deaf respondents, Linda and Pearlene. Some hearing people inappropriately correlate Deafness with lack of intellectual ability. They regard Deaf people as being stupid for mispronouncing words uttered orally or 'speaking in strange hands' by waving their arms around. Other notions associated with deafness as a pathological condition in search of a treatment for the "impaired" auditory condition include the belief that sign language is inferior to spoken language (Baynton, 1996; Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996), and that spoken language is the preferred language for all, including those who are deaf (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 276). "If [Deaf people] speak, they may speak very loudly, and with very poor modulation, since they cannot monitor their own voices by ear" (Sacks, 2000: 186). According to Buckle Ferreira:

> Many deaf people experience prejudice … A girl in my class thought I was 'retarded' because I 'spoke funny' and in the working environment I have had to prove that I am capable. People think that people with disabilities lack intelligence. Deaf people can do anything, except hear. If more people were proficient in sign language it would improve communication and bring the deaf and hearing communities together. (Ord, 2014: n.p.)

Another reason that some hearing people consider Deaf people as lacking intelligence is they are unaware that sign languages and spoken languages have different syntax and grammar systems. The researcher and Mikhail Peppas explored the nuances of visual-manual and oral communication systems in the focus group with hearing poets, Morgan and Vino:

Sanabelle: It's difficult for them to learn to read if they haven't learned the phonics. So sometimes you even see it on Facebook when they construct a sentence. Because sign language has a different sentence construction [to written English] so it comes out a bit confusing to people who are used to reading and writing [English].

Mikhail Peppas: This is the problem. When you're reading Facebook there's a hearing person. They're writing comments. The next comment happens to be a friend of – is a Deaf person. The way they structure the language; they can have the highest IQ out of everybody in the column – IQ. But when you are just reading it and you don't know that they're Deaf;

when you see that the way they've put the language because of the way they do the signing, it doesn't translate exactly – the different syntax that they're using.

Sanabelle: Word order

Mikhail Peppas: We've asked, they have told us that this person is stupid. They don't know they're Deaf and they can be the most clever person in that thread of comments. But just casually you see the person's name: You don't want to mix with that moron who's a bit stupid – look at the clumsy way they're using [language]. Am I wrong – that's what people tell us. Very tough business.

Similarly, Mr Rajbal shared:

> Facebook is nice but I don't like reading a lot … Sign language is better. I like face-to-face interaction more than using Facebook. It's [Facebook] nice to catch up a little bit every now and then. But I prefer to be face-to-face to hear long experiences. So you don't want to write essays on Facebook. So I like face-to-face interaction more but I do use Facebook from time to time … Deaf people do not always have such good English skills so it's very important to have access to social media and things that enable us to sign to one another or to video message. Because it's like playing Hangman when we have to read lots of sentences and things and it's difficult.

Mansoor expressed that he uses social media mostly to stay in touch with friends and 'I also try and use it to improve my writing.' In keeping with the deliberation around Deaf attitudes towards reading and written communication, Tasker highlighted the importance of expression:

> At Fulton School and V N Naik School we passed matric and we understood some basic English. But some people didn't finish matric. They don't understand English well. And if I met a hearing person I would manage to cope because I can write with them. But if somebody can't write or can't read very well it's important that they know how to communicate with those kinds of people as well and that requires a lot of expression. When we went to France we use South African Sign Language. They have their own sign language and we had to adapt. And we communicated – 80 percent of our communication was through expression and through gesture.

In advocating a "truly bilingual approach to educating deaf children, where the child is immersed in a full natural sign language for part of the day and trained orally and in written English at other times", Daphne Bavelier, Elissa Newport and Ted Supalla (2003: n.p.) recognise that:

Reading and writing English is a widespread and vexing problem among deaf people. The typical deaf individual reads at the fourth-grade level; the majority find reading arduous, and as a result few deaf adults achieve the educational or occupational levels that they might otherwise reach ... But the treasure trove of information available through reading increases daily, guaranteeing that literacy will remain indispensable in everyday life. To improve English literacy in the deaf community, intensive training with English appears to be necessary.

The following ethnographic vignettes[46] (Erickson, 1986: 151) shed light on Linda and Pearlene's perceptions of hearing people. "Without the voices of the "insiders," there can be little confidence in the authenticity of an "outsider's" perspective" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 278). The dialogue below speaks to "the ways by which minorities may become dehumanised, devalued and stigmatised by the powerful majority" (Goffman, 1961, 1963, in Harris, 1995: 24):

Linda: They are very, very, very different. Some of them are friendly. They are so friendly most of them. Some of them are I can say they feel that Deaf people lead a difficult life. The only thing about Deaf people is they can't hear. We are human beings just like them. We go to work, we have lives, we have hands, we do things. Deaf people don't suffer like they think. It's hard to explain to a hearing person for them to understand and that yes okay you do face difficulties and a Deaf person does face difficulties but a lot of hearing people are very friendly, yah they are.

Pearlene: I also agree with you because even though I'm hard of hearing – I'm not completely deaf, people still look at me like I'm mad you know. People look at me yes like I'm stupid; like I'm not supposed to be with them. Like I'm a mistake; like they think my problem's like a disease you know like Aids or something. And then I don't like how they perceive the hard of hearing people or Deaf people like something of shame, shame. I mean we not looking for sympathy, we are all one yes.

Linda: Yes that is so true. When I'm with the hearing people at times they forget that I'm there and I'm part of them. And with the hearing people they look at you like you nobody, like you are not there. But I am there. They would just sit and look the other direction or the other way.

Pearlene: When there's a group and they talking and they talking and talking and talking and I'm like I'm trying to get into the circle in the group and I'm like hey please include me … and they talking and it makes me feel sad that they trying to show me: 'Sorry, you deaf. We are talking you see.'

…

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[46] Frederick Erickson (1986: 151) uses the term 'ethnographic vignette' to describe a "narrative about the event told from the perspective of an insider" (Johnstone, 2000: 142).

Linda: … And when there's a group of people and then a Deaf person is part of the group and it's a circle like so hearing people are busy talking and they are talking and they don't talk to [the Deaf person]. They talk to themselves because they think that I can't speak. But I can sign you know, I can write. I can write down, they can write what they are talking about and if we accept and we are talking about something that's happening and something is happening there they don't ask me to participate in whatever they are doing.

For instance like gym. I go to gym. When I go to gym there's a class for sit-ups and when I get there okay there's first row, second row and then I lie down. And then when I'm doing sit-ups and I feel like I'm tired, the person, the instructor, the trainer tells people that okay. He leaves me because I'm Deaf and he tells other people. So he thinks: Aah she's Deaf you know. But to other people she tells them or he tells them do something, continue. But he just ignores me. It depends if a person understands Deaf people and Deaf issues because other hearing people don't know how to deal with Deaf people so that's what it is.

Pearlene: I don't know why when you talking about how you feel and when I'm talking about how I feel, maybe I should come up with some idea of spreading the message especially to my hearing friend and many hearing people out there because I have the advantage of communicating with hearing people and maybe put on Facebook how I feel as a deaf person. I'm thinking – my mind's going into overdrive to be able to bridge the gap between hearing people and Deaf people.
…

Linda: … If I'm with hearing people and a Deaf person walks by, I ignore [the Deaf person]. If I'm with Deaf people and then my hearing friend comes by I ignore them. So I tend to do that so that must change. I'm planning on if I'm with a hearing person then a Deaf person comes by then I must accommodate the Deaf person so I'm trying. The same thing applies when I'm with a Deaf group and a hearing person or a friend of mine who's hearing walks by then I must make them feel as they are part of the group.

…

Linda: And yes not all hearing people – others do sideline me or sideline the Deaf. Like people that don't know me so they feel that aagh this Deaf person. But my friends from college like if we going out with my friends like in the past they would say okay this is Linda. It was actually fun with those three years we'd go out, party with the hearing people.

Mikhail Peppas: Those three years sounds different now.

Linda: It was different 'cause it was totally, totally different.

Mikhail Peppas: Just one follow-up. Did any of these hearing people who you felt you were becoming close to them, you felt they were becoming close to you, you were best pals. Did any of them express any interest in learning sign language so they can come and join you in your World. Are any of them doing sign language now? Did any of them say to you: You're a great friend, I love you, I'm gonna learn sign language so we can talk together?

Linda: Very few because I can say, I would say it's my fault. But I think it was like two people from my neighbours but most of my friends I try. Some of them I tried. Others said I want to learn sign language. But the thing is I didn't have enough time and they wanted to meet other Deaf people and I said okay I'll make a plan and then I forgot and I got busy and so I can say it's my fault.

…

Pearlene: And then when I talk my voice is different and I'm scared to talk in the oral presentation because people will look at me and say: My goodness, her voice is so funny. And I lose confidence in myself because I'm thinking maybe I should have a lovely sing-song voice, that's what I thought. So I keep quiet you know because it's people judge. I don't like judgemental people. They judge with their eyeball and then they whisper and say: Aagh she can't talk properly shame, she can't say that word properly. Because I try to pronounce the word properly, like a big word and then I pronounce and then some of them are laughing and say: Why she can't say properly. So I feel it's not fair. Give me a chance, I'm learning yes. So it was challenging yes.

The audist and deafist tendencies highlighted in the above dialogue are debilitating for Deaf people who are:

> survivors of this atrocious mental torture. They put up with this daily discrimination and just get on with making the best of it. They do that because they have no choice! Ultimately, as human beings, we need to ask whether that is right … Individually, as a one off, any of these experiences would be annoying, and someone could just laugh it off, but when several of these are experienced in a single day or a week, week in week out, it goes well beyond annoying or inconvenient. It becomes damaging, detrimental to health and well-being, and generates doubt about self worth and being valued. (Deacy, 2015: n.p.).

Natural sign languages, such as SASL, ASL and BSL, are regarded as being indispensable in a deaf child's development for they provide:

> Natural and efficient communication between deaf children and their peers, enabling the children to develop cognitively and emotionally. Unfortunately, fewer than one in ten deaf children is born within a community or family where signing is readily available--usually, of course, within a deaf family. For the 90 percent who are born to hearing parents, access to a natural language (signing) is limited or nonexistent, especially during the first few years of life. (Bavelier, Newport and Supalla, 2003: n.p.)

A lack of early or full language communication skills may be attributed to Deaf individuals … sometimes described as suffering from social ailments, such as being withdrawn and shy. (Bavelier, Newport and Supalla, 2003: n.p.)

Olof Hanson, president of the National Association of the Deaf of the USA from 1910 to 1913 wrote that the Deaf are "foreigners among a people whose language they never learn" (Van Cleve and Crouch, 1989: 9). Sparks alluded to an analogy of the Deaf considered as foreigners or strangers:

> It estranges people from – you know the book 'The Outsider' conjured by Colin Wilson. In many ways the Deaf can be regarded as strangers you know. You have the stranger in someone comes from the countryside to the city. They are immediately seen as someone apart. The same thing with the Deaf; they often depicted in a strange way. They've got some – not just the deafness – there's something else, there's a stigma which says that they mad, they crazy, they can't be part of the world because they are Deaf. On the brink, on the edges of society.

Angela commented: 'But they bring something unique to the table, unique to theatre, unique that somebody else would bring.'

Sparks added: '… You have this mindstorm when you think ah voilà! I'm actually part of the world that doesn't just – is not just about saying something and talking; it's paying attention to hands, the Skywriting.'

The first focus group with Deaf respondents confirmed that Deaf people are sometimes suspicious of the motives of hearing people:

Ismael Mansoor: Some [hearing people] are great; some are not great. They all different. Some have like a bad attitude; some have good attitude. So it depends on the person that you with; the person that you talking about.

Divashya: We're the same; we're human beings. It just happens that I'm Deaf and they're hearing. But I think essentially we're the same – we're people.

Bo Tasker: Some Deaf people hate hearing people. Like they've had a bad relationship with some hearing people in the past. But for me I'm fine with most hearing people. But it depends on the experiences.

…

Bo Tasker: Some Deaf people feel that hearing people should be involved in an organisation or whatever and some people don't because they suspicious that hearing people are wanting to take advantage of the Deaf people for financial gain or becoming famous for you know to be in the newspaper or you know whatever. And then also we don't know what the hearing people are doing once they go out and they talk and they make plans and things without involving the Deaf people. So Deaf people do get a bit precious about their own organisations because at least then they feel they know what's being said and what's being done. Sometimes it's better to have a Deaf person who's in charge and hearing people who are kind of subordinates in some way so that protocols all go through a Deaf person.

Ismael Mansoor: If Deaf people see that there is a Deaf person in charge then they generally would be satisfied. But they don't like if hearing people are controlling those kinds of organisations.

In a Facebook post on 3 April 2015 titled 'Stop Anti-Deaf Hatred Now!' Matthew S. Moore (Publisher, *Deaf Life*; Founder, We the Deaf People[47]) asserts: "Hearing-controlled organizations do not have the right to determine what is best for Deaf people. They are practicing oppression and a form of hate. We will not tolerate this. (And this goes for Deaf organizations that do not make Deaf people's rights a top priority!)"

Swift stressed that 'Deaf people want to control things themselves: "Nothing About Us Without Us" … I'm very humbled and the position that I hold at DeafSA now [Director: Deaf Education], the fact that DeafSA approached me and offered me a directorship within an organisation that is for and by Deaf people; it was like a huge huge honour and so humbling because I've come a long way …'

Three of the respondents, Pearlene, Simon Manda and Morgan, raised an interesting consideration about the Deaf and silence albeit independently. Congruences may be drawn between introspection and the principles of Ubuntu. "It can be argued that *ubuntu* is the inner inspiration that comes from the heart, the inner being[48] and the centre of human values" (Mafunisa, 2008: 116). Ubuntu may be conceptualised as the essence of God's presence within humanity and the manifestation of God to humanity (Mulemfo, 2000: 57).

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[47] "A [USA-based] political-activist group lobbying for the rights of Deaf citizens" (We the Deaf People, 2012: n.p.)
[48] This "inner being is understood to be the centre of human personalities, feelings, thoughts and will" (Mafunisa, 2008: 116).

Pearlene expressed that she is 'lonely in [her] thoughts':

> You know I have such good faith in god. You know I talk to Him because I'm always on my own … So I want to talk to god from now on: Please Lord, Help me. Open my eyes. Give me ideas to help the Deaf people. You know, open up a computer school maybe you know, come up with many, many different things. Only god can help you. Without Him you will get nowhere.

Manda explained that he is involved in the iStart2 – Sustainability Through Art[49] programme:

> One of the core beliefs is the ability of Deaf people to listen to the earth's core. By virtue of the silence they can hear the core of the earth do you understand. In silence there's so much of discovery. In silence there's so much deep analysis of oneself and those issues or those questions that you ask yourself in the silence of the moment will give you deep solution. And iStart2 advocates for that and they very, very target events, initiatives towards that and this is where you find also Miss Deaf SA pageant, the winners and the team is also involved in ambassadorship programmes.

Morgan shared: You know the saying goes that you hear the voice of god in silence. Yes, and you know in that silence your IQ can only get higher and higher and higher. Because why, you not hearing any nonsense. You hearing the words of god. You not in any way distracted from that silence. I think they are really blessed human beings with their silence.

…

Vino: They could create better [poems] than us.

Morgan: And they do, they do I mean. Look they do. Because they are not distracted when they are on a subject. They are not distracted because their concentration is only on that. It can't be anything else like you know I mean. Like us now when we busy writing the dog starts barking and you start wondering now you know you are disturbed already at who's coming into the yard.

Sanabelle: We even had someone say to us. Someone telling us about a Deaf girl who wears hearing aids and she advised her: You are a good match for cochlear implants. And the Deaf girl said to the lady: I don't want to because I prefer wearing hearing aids. Because if I don't want to hear anything I just take the hearing aids out and I can concentrate…

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[49] "iStart2 is a not-for-profit company partnering with government, business, multiple celebrities, the arts and the community as a whole. It has identified seven sustainability concepts [water, waste, energy, health and safety, people with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous people] to be addressed to create economic, environmental and social wellbeing" (iStart2, n.d.: n.p.).

Morgan: Complete silence.

Sanabelle: And then when I want to hear then I just put the hearing aids on. Otherwise it's too distracting she says if she wants to study.

On silence, Mother Teresa articulated: "In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence" (New World Library, 2010: n.p.).

Sans the distraction of sounds, the ability to focus and concentrate coupled with heightened attention to visual cues are advantageous skills that would propel Deaf people into the imaginative world of fantasy, entrepreneurship and strategy board games. The visual appeal of board games could prompt a new wave of sharpened Deaf game designers. Further, integrated gaming opportunities exist for Deaf and hearing board gamers to interact as equals in the tabletop gaming room.

Often it is the evident communication barrier that stifles interaction between Deaf and hearing cultures. When asked to reflect on the type of social events they attend, respondents in the first Deaf focus group shared:

Ismael Mansoor: For me, if there's a lot of Deaf people going somewhere it's nice because I can feel free. I can chat to anybody that I want to talk to so it's really nice when lots of Deaf people–like in Clin d'Oeil.

Bo added: At Clin d'Oeil Festival in France – oh! It was fantastic. There were so many Deaf people there. We just socialised. It was a fantastic time.

Divashya: When there's lots of Deaf people it's fantastic because you feel like you can express yourself freely. When you with hearing people it's quite difficult. We can– as Deaf people we have different perspectives and we can share our ideas freely and it's a satisfying feeling. Amongst hearing people we often feel like we blocked up so it's very nice to socialise with Deaf people.

Mr Rajbal: When Deaf people are all together it's good because we can talk with easy access – there's no barriers in those situations. If there's hearing people there we constantly come across communication barriers.

Ismael Mansoor: If it's all hearing people, I'm quite confident to try and make myself understood but it is quite a challenge to communicate when it's all only hearing people.

[Divashya agrees.]

Ismael Mansoor: My experience like when I play cricket with the hearing people I don't have any problem. But I know there are some Deaf people who get frustrated because of the communication barriers. Communication is always the issue but if there's communication barriers that does tend to lead to frustration.

Vino said she felt 'we should do a little bit more for ourselves to understand them [Deaf people] but basically there's nothing wrong with them':

> It's just a matter of us understanding what they are trying to convey so I would say with a little bit of understanding and a little bit of sign language they could be able to fit in any sphere of work and you know living and what have you …
> It is us who cannot understand – not reply back to them – are at a loss. So we need that mechanism that can help us understand and be able to communicate to them. So that is the important part – is us trying to get through to them and it's unfortunate that sign language is not something that's free and open in anywhere. Even if it was somewhere, even at school maybe. You know a few words here and there if somebody had to teach.

Vino and Morgan suggested that basic SASL be made a requisite for students training to become educators at tertiary institutions so that they will be able to communicate with Deaf learners who might be present in their class. 'A little bit of sign language won't go amiss,' expressed Vino. Hearing people might experience a sense of disablement at not being proficient in sign language. "As with any symbolic communicative system, if you do not know the language, you will have trouble deciphering the message" (Lester, 2006: n.p.).

In commenting on Vino's reference to accessing free platforms for learning SASL, it is important to note that the initial sessions of the weekly course, *Sundowner Skywriting – Adventures in South African Sign Language Basics* at Alliance Française de Durban were followed by "HAPPY TIME". The free hour-long Skywriting Social, "HAPPY TIME" sought to include guests who might find the course fees exclusionary and offered opportunities for Deaf and hearing guests to dialogue in a 'coffee-comfort' setting, using conversation notebooks and basic SASL. The initiative had to be dismissed after a few weeks due to poor attendance. The researcher attributes the dismal response to a somewhat non-existent nightlife in Durban and believes that a greater response to "HAPPY TIME" would be felt in other parts of the world.

Both Morgan and Vino stressed the need for hearing people to make an effort to learn SASL so as to appreciate and acknowledge Deaf people. They shared their experiences of interacting with Deaf people at eco-art events around Durban:

Morgan: … And once you get close to them then you realise that they are very, very special.

Vino: Yes, they have the love of poetry as well.

Morgan: And I notice you think they can't hear, but when you go out in the front like I play [accordion] music in the front and they seem to be happier than most people and you think they didn't hear anything you know. And many of them were shaking hands with me and things like that. So how do we communicate that, how, and yet we know they are hearing impaired – amazing.

Mikhail Peppas: So when they were shaking hands with you, what were you feeling?

Morgan: You feel a good vibration about the whole thing you know. And then I've always been close to them, hugging them and things like that. Because they are like our children you know.

…

Morgan: I don't think they are really missing anything. We might feel sorry for them. But really they are comfortable amongst themselves. And it's for us to help as many ways as we can you know so that they feel more comfortable.

Vino: But a little of that basic sign language knowledge I think will integrate the society very well if we can do a little bit to go out of our way to learn to communicate with them in sign language.

Peppas identified one of the greatest advantages of communicating using sign language as 'appreciating the person opposite you'. He expressed that some of his hearing friends are 'interested in signing because they say it helps them to focus when they are talking to somebody. You can't do sign language unless you appreciate the person in front of you'. Although his competence in SASL is currently at a basic entry level, he has psychologically learned being with Deaf people that he cannot talk to them while he is looking out the window. He must acknowledge them. 'It's actually Ubuntu in practice because I have to acknowledge the person and I have to regard them as being my equal otherwise I'm talking to you over here and I know I have to be facing the person so they can lip read.'

Sparks shared Peppas' view, adding that shoppers at Checkers supermarket might encounter Deaf packers and just by saying 'Thank You' in sign language 'even if you don't understand [sign language] … you making eye contact that's half the battle and that you showing interest even if you don't understand much of sign language and have to have someone to translate it.' Sparks' comment resonated with the researcher who recalled demonstrating as an ice-breaker the phrase, 'Welcome to Green Heart City Durban' using SASL and inviting audiences to practise signing the phrase at various eco-art and conference platforms in Durban and abroad. She received awe-inspiring feedback and appreciation from guests who had subsequently communicated the phrase in their interactions with Deaf people. They were especially touched that the acknowledgement by the Deaf person prompted a heart-warming experience for both parties, as they were able to share in the immense joy that beamed on the Deaf person's face.

The principles of Ubuntu are further referenced in Nise Malange's reflection on how interacting with Deaf artist Thabani Msomi hones her communication skills:

> You know Thabani is the son of the BAT Centre. And strangely we share the same birthdays. And I think he's one person that has made me much more aware of myself when I communicate with people – be able to look at people. I used to talk very fast but he has taught me to slow down; be able to look at him and the reading of lips you know hands, gesture, facial expression – yourself, just how you look today. It just makes your whole of yourself to be conscious when you communicate with people and very sensitive to expression. And I think because of that one has learned a lot and it has made [communication] easier. Because Thabani is not shy to communicate with anyone and he likes to do that. He always wants to make sure that you stop what you are doing and you look at him and you talk to him. Because sometimes we talk but we don't really communicate with people … In terms of communicating and in terms of fitting in he's done that very well.

The concept of Ubuntu foregrounds a sense of community with people that are "mutually responsive to one another's needs" (Mkhize, 2008: 39). The expression, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, "can be translated to mean that a person is a person through other people" and presents the "distinctive idea of community that underlies so much of African culture, traditional practices and institutions" (Shutte, 2008: 27).

"*Ubuntu*, like the ancient Egyptian concept of Maat, incorporates ideas of social justice, righteousness, care, empathy for others and respect" (Mkhize, 2008: 43). Both Ubuntu and Maat capture:

> the understanding that morality or ethics is an indispensable part of personhood[50]. To be a fully moral person, one needs to belong. Belonging is not synonymous with group membership; it requires one to conduct oneself in a manner befitting of a fully moral being (*umuntu*), maintaining social justice, respectfulness and truthfulness, and being empathic towards others, among other attributes. (Mkhize, 2008: 42)

In a similar vein to Ubuntu, "membership in a community of practice is … a matter of mutual engagement. That is what defines the community … Being included in what matters is a requirement for being engaged in a community's practice, just as engagement is what defines belonging" (Wenger, 1998: 73-4). In considering a reformulation of Intergroup Contact Theory, Pettigrew (1998: 75, 78-9) asserts that "societies shape contact effects … When a society embraces intergroup harmony, equal-status contact between groups is no longer subversive. Normative support makes attainment of other optimal conditions far easier."

Peppas' reference to the humanitarian practice of Ubuntu predisposing the regard for others as equals and inculcating a sense of belonging is echoed by Philip Lee (2004: 3-5) in his discussion on "communication in freedom, equality and solidarity":

> Human beings are not "born free". They come into existing relationships in families and communities. Here they encounter the personal and collective understandings of other people and only by experiencing and accepting such encounters can they find genuine solidarity. This experience reveals another dimension of communication, that of equality. People cannot communicate with other people if they consider them "inferior" in any sense. Communicative freedom presupposes the recognition that all human beings are of equal worth.

In relation to communities of practice, another significant consideration highlighted by Etienne Wenger (1998: 57) is that as a "constituent of our identities … participation is not

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[50] "Personhood may be described as the sum total of the numerous biological, social and cultural strands that are woven into the human being. It is the visible and invisible presence of individual and collective imprints and memories made by human beings in communication with others" (Lee, 2004: 6).

something we turn on and off." Congruently, the researcher continues to maintain links with the Deaf and hearing respondents following the data generation phase. Deaf Pavement Poets and hearing poets and musicians are invited to perform at Green Heart Movement activations; the researcher meets up with Alison Swannack and Deaf colleagues when Swannack visits Durban from Johannesburg; she supports Talk Sign Day by purchasing Talk Sign stickers and handing these to friends and colleagues to create awareness around Deaf issues; celebrates Deaf Awareness Month (September) by following Deaf-related stories in the news and social media and making a donation towards a Deaf organisation; and visits Deaf organisations such as Institut Raymond-Dewar in Montréal, Canada on her travels. Her future research interests include board gaming and Open Data networking sessions that combine Deaf and hearing participants.

iii.   What is the Deaf community in Durban doing to integrate itself into mainline society?

Non-profit organisations such as the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society and the KwaZulu Natal Deaf Association do exist but, according to Swift, the lack of a coordinating body within the province of KwaZulu-Natal results in the kinds of activities offered tending to be isolated. As a lobbying organisation, DeafSA assumes an umbrella function and promotes Deaf rights and access. However, DeafSA does not have a provincial office with full-time staff in KwaZulu-Natal. Swift highlighted that DeafSA seeks to engage with the leadership of the national advocacy and consumer organisation, South African National Deaf Association (SANDA) to present a unified voice on areas of common interest such as interpreter training and SASL as the 12th official language.

Of concern is that some Deaf people feel isolated and uninformed of events around the city. Pearlene expressed that she is not always informed of Deaf events and hopes to get more involved in the Deaf community. 'I feel like I'm in my own world in my area. I feel there's only hearing people around me you know so I need to be more aware, that's all I can say yes.'

Some members of the Deaf community use social media platforms such as Facebook to alert their friends about events. Hip-hop fan Linda was delighted to attend the Kendrick Lamar Concert at The Wave House, Gateway Durban on Friday, 7 February 2014. The researcher

mentioned to Linda in the focus group on Saturday, 8 February 2014 that she noticed Linda had posted to Facebook a photograph of herself with her ticket prior to the concert. Linda responded:

> Yes, yes I try to market it so that Deaf people will know okay if I want to be part of this concert I can go as a Deaf person. So I try to post things so that Deaf people can see what is happening and then they know … But I feel that Deaf people are not independent. It's more like independence means Deaf people and hearing people together sharing information. It's more Deaf people are on their own with their own World because I'm always with Deaf people I don't feel free. I want to belong in both the Hearing and the Deaf World.

While she is unable to hear the music, Linda says she feels the beat. 'I use the rhythm, the rap sound; the rhythm like when it comes to R&B and things like that – soft music I can't hear as such. And I do write hip-hop.'

She 'felt a bit alone [at the concert] but there were a lot of hearing people. I was the only one who was Deaf but it was a new experience … I met a lot of new friends and people were very friendly; they were very nice.' When probed as to why other Deaf people might not have attended the concert even though there were street pole poster advertisements around Durban, Linda cited the following reasons: Deaf people are unfamiliar with Lamar and his music; they do not love music that much; they do not watch TV that much as programmes are not subtitled; and when they meet with friends at The Workshop shopping centre in central Durban, they mainly discuss Deaf sports. She acknowledged that she heard certain programmes on DStv include subtitles[51] but Deaf people seldom have access to that kind of information.

Despite the fragmented outlook to Deaf initiatives in Durban, Deaf individuals in the city are making strides in the local and international arts scene. The talents of four such Deaf trailblazers, Mr Rajbal, Ismael Mansoor, Thabani Msomi and Shelley Buckle Ferreira, are illuminated below.

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[51] "Although the [DStv HD] device is capable of displaying subtitles, these are only available on certain programmes where the channel suppliers include subtitles" (MultiChoice Support Services (Pty) Ltd, n.d.: n.p.).

Deaf hip-hop dancer Mr Rajbal won the inaugural SABC2 reality competition, SA's Got Talent 2009. He "joins such luminaries as Bianca Ryan and Paul Potts, the inaugural winners of the American and British versions of Got Talent respectively, as a first time national winner" (TVSA Team, 2009: n.p.). Manda shared: "Coming to the forefront like what Darren did and winning the coveted prize, I mean that's another level of integration. It's almost like: I can compete, I can be the best even in the World of the Hearing and he did prove that.'

Angela exclaimed that a dance performance presents a visual story that does not rely on words but very much engages Deaf people on stage:

> Some of the best dancers that we know of would have hearing issues you know, but their speaking very loud and clear with their bodies. And so we as hearing people have so much to learn from that. So there's so many avenues for exchange and growth for all concerned if we all just you know, take what people uniquely bring to the table, to their own personal development.

Morgan recognised that 'some of them [Deaf performers] without even hearing can keep up to beats of music perfectly while dancing and that is amazing. Vino added: 'They have a rhythm without sound.'

Mr Rajbal won the Mr Bollywood award for his debut performance in 2006 (Alexander Moore Partners Limited, n.d.: n.p.). He facilitated a workshop for aspiring hip-hop dancers of all ages and was a judge in the Deaf SA's Got Talent[52] contest presented by DeafSA during the 2012 'Talking Hands' – First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa in Durban. He graduated with a diploma in Integrated Fine Art, Animation and Graphic Design from the Centre for Fine Art, Animation and Design (CFAD) in 2013. His ambition is to study and choreograph film dance in USA.

Mr Rajbal stars in 'Hip Hope Hero,' a children's theatre production that has been touring the UK since 2012. "The Hip Hope Hero knows the world's biggest secret…that inside everyone lurks a hero, even a super hero!" (*Spaghetti Gazette*, 2012: n.p.). Created by Moving Hands[53]

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[52] The show featured "amateur dancers, magicians, comedians and other performers of all ages competing for a prize" (Catalina Theatre, 2012: 2).
[53] "Moving Hands is a visual theatre company producing innovative and original shows for family audiences. Their performances combine puppetry, mask, mime, physical theatre, dance, animation, projection and drama

and Birmingham Repertory Theatre[54], the stage show features dance, poetry, animation, music and puppets (Young, 2012: n.p.). "To develop ideas for the show the two companies have worked closely with school children from Robin Hood Primary School and Longwill School for the Deaf in Birmingham and also Hawston Primary Western Cape in South Africa" (*Spaghetti Gazette*, 2012: n.p.).

Deaf Pavement Poet Ismael Mansoor was a finalist in the Mr India South Africa 2013 competition. He became the first-ever Deaf person to be a part of this event. The contest – which is open to all South African males – aims to "motivate excellence in young men that have an appreciation for the Indian Arts and Culture" (Moodliyar, 2013: 1). Contestants are required to present motivational talks on topics such as Aids Awareness; Drugs; Education; and Water Conservation, and a PowerPoint presentation on India as a preferred tourist destination (Moodliyar, 2013: 1). Integrated World kick-started the sponsorship drive by presenting Mansoor with R600.

IMAGE 26 Sharing in the jubilation of Ismael Mansoor selected as a finalist in the Mr India South Africa contest on 1 November 2013 are Mikhail Peppas (*right*) and Sanabelle Ebrahim of Integrated World at St. Clements Restaurant, Musgrave Durban. *Photograph: Robyn Knipe*

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and they also have a long history of working with artists and theatre practitioners in South Africa" (*Spaghetti Gazette*, 2012: n.p.).

[54] "Birmingham Repertory Theatre is one of the UK's leading producing theatres … Creating new work and learning and participation lies at the core of The REP's programme and its productions regularly tour nationally and internationally" (*Spaghetti Gazette*, 2012: n.p.).

Mansoor is no stranger to the poetry and theatre scene. A selection of his poems appears online at PoemHunter.com (2015: n.p.). He participated in the 'Signing Hands Across the Water 2' International Sign Poetry Festival at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in April 2014. His tear-jerking signed poetry performance titled 'Soweto 1976' rendered at the 2014 Sign Poetry Festival can be viewed on the video streaming community platform, Deaf Africa Web TV (Shush Productions, n.d.: n.p.; Shush Productions, 2014: n.p.). He joined Alison Swannack as a judge at the Zwakala Contest 2015 (DTV, 2015: n.p.). Both Mr Rajbal and Mansoor are cast members of the 'Listen With Your Eyes' production that showcased at the 'Talking Hands' Deaf Theatre Festival 2012 in Durban, Festival Clin d'Oeil 2013 in France, and Deaffest 2015 in the UK. Manda expressed: 'Amazing stuff. For us to have a team that can perform and represent South Africa at an international stage; it shows that even in the first attempt we are good enough because this was an international [festival].' They formed part of the cast of *Talking Hands*, *the Play* that was billed as the major production of the 'Talking Hands' Deaf Theatre Festival.

Mansoor is a key proponent of the Deaf Pavement Poets ad hoc ensemble. He has performed nature-themed signed poetry alongside hearing musicians and poets as part of Green Heart City activations featuring Deaf Pavement Poets at various outdoor spaces around Durban such as the 'Dressing the Wooden Heart' Celebration at Corner Café and the Francofête at Sutton Park.

In exploring Deaf-hearing synergies, the researcher previewed Thabani Msomi's exhibition, 'Light of Beauty' and submitted a version of the press release below to various local newspapers. The mutually beneficial partnership ensures that the researcher who is also a freelance journalist assists Deaf participants with publicity for their artistic pursuits. Through her interactions with Deaf participants she is provided "insights into and connections with many other deaf people, organizations, and resources that are less accessible to [her] as an outsider, [offering] a window into the world experiences of some of these individuals and entities" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 279).

The press release was subsequently published in *The Weekly Gazette* (1 November 2012, 12. Pp.) and *Thisability* (October-November 2012, 7. Pp.). A fortuitous spin-off from the researcher's submission of the press release to *Thisability* newspaper had three of Msomi's

woodcut prints auctioned at *Thisability*'s inaugural annual Golf Day at Papwa Sewgolum Golf Course in Durban on 28 November 2012 (Manda, 2012: 2).

IMAGE 27 Woodcut prints by Thabani Msomi on display at the 'Light of Beauty' Exhibition. *Photograph: Sanabelle Ebrahim*

PRESS RELEASE: *Deaf artist presents 'Light of Beauty'*

Thabani Msomi mesmerises with an exhibition of woodcut prints titled 'Light of Beauty'. The exhibition opened on Wednesday 24 October 2012 at the BAT Centre's Menzi Mchunu Gallery.

Msomi was born in Congella in 1973. From an early age he had a vision that one day he would become an artist but being Deaf he found difficulty in expressing his feelings. He made paintings as a reflection of what he could not verbally articulate. After four years of attending Saturday art classes at Technikon Natal he achieved a certificate in Visual Arts and was accepted into the BAT Centre Artist Residency Project. He has since worked as a fulltime artist specialising in printmaking and ceramics.

Drawing inspiration from his life Msomi incorporates sign language in his artwork so that the wider audience may become aware of the Deaf community. He intends to work with more

people with disabilities so as to share the knowledge and experience he has acquired over the years as a visual artist.

IMAGE 28 The promotional poster for the 'Light of Beauty' Exhibition features an image of a woodcut print by Thabani Msomi incorporating the handshapes for 'CHURCH' (BAT Centre, 2012).

Malange said the exhibition was scheduled to coincide with Disability Month (October) because it was important to recognise Msomi within the space. The event marked Msomi's second exhibition and every art piece was sold.

In acknowledging Msomi as being 'part and parcel of the BAT Centre', Malange shared insights into some of the projects that he is involved in. These include painting murals and facilitating art workshops for learners. During October and November 2013, Msomi led a group comprising a Deaf student and hearing artists in painting a SASL mural connected to an integrated public space at the BAT Centre. Conceptualised by Msomi, the mural features the SASL alphabet; signs for words such as 'work', 'where', 'understand', 'year', the phrase, 'Can you read?'; and musical notes. The researcher noticed a group of visiting learners from Amsterdam stand before the mural practising the SASL alphabet.

The SASL mural initiative accorded prominence to Msomi as a Deaf artist leading a group of predominantly hearing artists. Malange noted: 'He felt very important as well in that I can also now command; use my language to people that are a majority and command them.' Recognition is an important motivational factor for people with disabilities. According to Nick Watson (2004: 110), "disablement is felt as the outcome of the withholding of social and

cultural recognition". Further, German philosopher Axel Honneth (1995, in Watson, 2004: 110) notes that "self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem provide the possibility of identity formation."

Malange said the mural sparked interest from parents wanting to enrol their children in art classes and there are plans to kick-start SASL classes at the BAT Centre. She encourages younger people to learn SASL so that 'Deaf people would realise that they're also important. So you not just talking about it but you share.' In an effort to ensure that people not only see Deaf people but also hear them, she said that the SASL mural serves as:

> An interactive space for Deaf and hearing and for people to learn how to communicate with Deaf artists. And so when we have students, we have days where students are just supposed to communicate in sign [language]. So each one must understand the five signs and what those signs [convey] – his name in sign language … [so that highlights the efficacy of the mural in raising awareness around Deaf culture and SASL].

Malange's reference to 'days where students are just supposed to communicate in sign [language]' resonates with Heap's (2006: 35) concept of 'sign-deaf spaces'. While sign language may be characterised as a distinctive marker of Deaf identity and recognition in hearing contexts, the visual communication method serves more to diffuse or disperse Deaf identity in the sign-deaf space where there is signing amongst the Deaf and the hearing (Ram, 2010: 39). "The paradoxical outcome of a dispersed identity is that in the sign-deaf space the Deaf are rarely 'deaf', certainly not in any socially handicapped or deficit way" (Heap, 2006: 35). Heap's (2006: 35, in Ram, 2010: 39) conceptualisation of sign-deaf spaces confirms the mutability of identities and its contextually specific grounding that straddles between a 'creative coexistence' or 'entangled tension' with the hearing society.

IMAGE 29 A South African Sign Language (SASL) mural painted by Deaf and hearing artists on the outer wall of the Visual Art Studio at the BAT Centre attracts interest amongst local and international visitors. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Shelley Buckle Ferreira has a hearing husband and is a wonderful role player for the integration of Deaf and hearing cultures. She appeared on the cover of a mainstream South African wedding magazine titled *Real Brides* (April 2015 edition). She was crowned Miss Deaf SA 2011 and Miss Ballito 2013. Buckle Ferreira was in the Top 6 of the Miss Deaf World 2012 contest held in Prague, Czech Republic. Her beauty queen status affords her involvement in various community projects. She was part of the 2014 'Queen For A Day' initiative hosted by the Reach For A Dream Foundation[55], where she spent time with a "group of girls who are hospital bound and do not enjoy the opportunity to socialise out of the medical facility" (Caxton & CTP Printers and Publishers Ltd, 2015: n.p.). Both Mr Rajbal and Buckle Ferreira are Talk Sign ambassadors.

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[55] "Reach For A Dream Foundation is a non-profit organization that fulfils the dreams of children of all income groups and of any race, colour or creed between the ages of 3 and 18 years who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness by a doctor" (CharitySA, n.d.: n.p.).

Buckle Ferreira said she decided to enter Miss Ballito 2013 as her 'first hearing pageant 'cause I thought why not like just try something new. And I ended up winning it. It was a big achievement because I was the only deaf person in the whole contest … I wasn't expecting it.' She said she did not disclose her deaf status to the organisers of Miss Ballito for she 'didn't want them to treat me any differently by telling them':

> So the reason why I didn't say I'm deaf was that I didn't want to be at an advantage you know. And then on stage on the actual final night of Miss Ballito on stage they asked me a question. But the lady had the mic over her mouth. Now I was standing so far I couldn't see what she was saying so … the MC was next to me, I turned to him and I asked him to tell me what she said and he repeated it for me so I was lucky.

She went on to add: 'But I have to think if I meet someone. If I meet someone I won't tell them I'm deaf and wait for like see. I just like to be treated the same I think.' She said her previous job as a graphic and web designer at East Coast Radio 'was lovely. Like because I was deaf they didn't treat me any differently. They were really nice.' The stigma attached to deafness is hinted at as well as a sense of possible discrimination or 'preferential treatment' should her deaf status be disclosed. Inherently, deafness as an 'invisible disability' presents a unique set of considerations.

A participant in the Saturday Club at Padayachee School in Ballito, Buckle Ferreira assists hearing learners with homework, languages, writing and mathematics. She motivates the learners by encouraging them to focus on their dreams and never stop working towards their goals. She said they enjoyed learning basic SASL for phrases such as 'I love you'. Buckle Ferreira posted to Facebook on 9 April 2014:

> Last Saturday I visited the Padayachee School in Ballito. I absolutely loved teaching the kids a bit of Sign Language!
>
> "We never know which lives we influence, or when, or why." - Stephen King

The researcher attended two events hosted by Buckle Ferreira: a free sign language workshop at the Protea Hotel Edward on 25 February 2012 and 'A Redeafined Fashion Affair' at The Boathouse in Ballito on 16 June 2014. Participants at the sign language workshop were:

treated to a presentation on Deaf Culture by Alison Swannack, SASL poetry by Ismael Mansoor and Didier Peinke and basic SASL lessons led by Monique Sutcliffe and Odette Swift. Co-founder of the Green Heart Movement, Mikhail Peppas delivered an interactive presentation on initiatives hosted by the citizen-based organisation that encourage societal integration. (*The Weekly Gazette*, 2012a: 8)

Such initiatives include nature adventures and Deaf theatre at pavement cafes, parks and Deaf-friendly spaces in Durban (*The Weekly Gazette*, 2012a: 8). The researcher covered the event and an article titled 'Sign language workshop held' consequently appeared in *The Weekly Gazette* (1 March 2012, 8. Pp.).

'A Redeafined Fashion Affair' included a fashion show, SASL lessons, an auction, a raffle and motivational talks (Caxton & CTP Printers and Publishers Ltd, 2014b: n.p.). The event marked her first official fundraiser as Miss Ballito, and being deaf, she chose DeafSA to benefit from the proceeds towards Deaf education in KwaZulu-Natal (Caxton & CTP Printers and Publishers Ltd, 2014c: n.p.). The multifaceted events bring both Deaf and hearing performers and audiences together on a single platform and feature basic lessons in SASL as a key element of the proceedings.

Playing an active role in the community and participating in arts events both on a local and international scale increases the social mobility of the Deaf. Agenda-setting is enhanced as newsworthy inserts about Deaf pursuits are featured in the media, thereby reducing the spiral of silence around Deaf issues.

The data findings were described as a "result of applying methods to answer the research questions" (Pratt, 2011: 1). The outcomes of the study were represented in relation to the narrative components of story and character; focalisation; and plot. The conclusions follow with a summary of the research findings matched against the general objectives of the study; an explanation of the significance of the findings and conclusions for the area/field researched; and suggestions for further avenues of exploration (Pratt, 2011: 1).

CONCLUSIONS

–   Daigle, M. and Daigle, K. 2013c[56]

The Durban Deaf arts scene has made significant progress since the researcher began this study. Some of the creative developments include: the origination of the Deaf Pavement Poets ad hoc ensemble by the Green Heart Movement in November 2011; the 'Talking Hands' – First Deaf Theatre Festival of South Africa at Catalina Theatre in September 2012; and local and international tours of the 'Listen With Your Eyes' theatre production since 2012.

While Deaf poetry and theatre have blossomed in Durban, advancements are required on the cinematic frontier. To date, 'Home' (2013) is the only South African Deaf feature film. US-produced Deaf films include 'Audism Unveiled' (2008) and 'Children of a Lesser God' (1986). 'Audism Unveiled' helps "educate and spread the knowledge that the oppressed are not alone, and share a common bond with many others who have experienced [audism first-hand]" (DawnSignPress, n.d.: n.p.). The documentary serves as an educational tool that unmasks "the many faces of audism, and the deep emotional scars resulting from this discrimination" (DawnSignPress, n.d.: n.p.).

'Children of a Lesser God' originated as a play in 1977 by the National Theatre of the Deaf in the USA (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 144). "Deaf actress Phyllis Frelich starred in this winner of three Tony awards, about love between a speech therapist and a Deaf woman

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[56] For my Class Report, "Why I am unique." *That Deaf Guy* (online), September 19. Available: http://www.thatdeafguy.com/?p=531 (Accessed 3 May 2014).

proud of her Deaf culture … Finally, the play was brought to the screen by Deaf actress Marlee Matlin in an Oscar-winning performance, and millions more Americans learned about Deaf culture and Deaf pride" (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 144).

Taking a cue from "one of the most critically-acclaimed films of the 80s", 'Children of a Lesser God', the time has come for a great play or film with Deaf characters originating out of KwaZulu-Natal (DVD Movie Guide, n.d.: n.p.). Enabling structures such as the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission[57] and the Association for Transformation in Film and Television (ATFT)[58] could facilitate the process towards the production of an epic Deaf culture film showcasing local talent.

A discussion follows that matches the research findings against the general objectives of the study. Key outcomes include the efficacy of Deaf culture and eco-arts in combining Deaf and hearing cultures and enhancing the social mobility of Deaf artists.

Exploring the potential of eco-arts as a channel for integrating the Deaf into mainline society

Eco-arts present opportunities to address human needs such as that of socialising and developing friendships between Deaf and hearing cultures. Social cohesion between the two groupings can be fostered through poetry, drama and moving images. Poetry was identified as a key interface in bridging the social divide that resulted in enhanced human development. 'Skywriting' proved an enchanting term to integrate Deaf and hearing people including drawing hearing people in and creating interest in SASL. A dynamic community of practice was formed as Deaf and hearing participants exchanged poetry and written dialogue. Active citizenship showcases participants performing poetry in eco-cultural spaces across the City.

Alongside Deaf-hearing collaborative arts projects that promote cultural entrepreneurship, it is envisaged that the Deaf respondents will produce anthologies and graphic novels. South African Deaf writers include Zohra Moosa and Nenio Mbazima. Moosa has published two

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[57] An entity established in terms of the 2010 KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission Act that promotes the film industry in the province (KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission, n.d.: n.p.).
[58] "A non-profit company that promotes and assists the transformation and the growth of the film and television industry in South Africa" (The Department of Trade and Industry, 2015: n.p.).

anthologies, 'Silence' and 'Echo of Silence' that provide readers with a "glimpse into her world of silence" (Moosa, n.d.: n.p.).

Mbazima is an "accomplished film producer, some time fashion model and the author of an autobiography, 'Strong Winds', which tells the story of his struggle for access to education and employment as a deaf person" (Africa Century International African Writers Conference, n.d.: n.p.). The cathartic[59] process of writing imbues Deaf artists with a sense of resilience and self-belief.

Deconstructing some of the stereotypes and misconceptions that hearing cultures may have about Deaf cultures based on external opinions, and vice versa

Anecdotes featured prominently in Deaf participants' evaluation of their interactions with hearing individuals, and vice versa. Politically correct terminology around disability matters emerged as an area requiring attention for hearing participants. "Perception is always an active process of incorporating and reevaluating different vantage points" (Doctorow, 2015: n.p.). The first-hand opportunities presented by eco-arts activations featuring sign language for Deaf and hearing guests to interrelate were useful in challenging stereotypes and shifting perceptions about the two disparate social groups.

Themes that dominated the discussions included foregrounding the reciprocation of love and kindness; the enriching process of interacting with Deaf people; the stigma attached to Deafness; lack of awareness amongst hearing participants that sign and spoken languages have different syntax and grammar systems that might have led them to consider Deaf people as stupid for their 'strange' articulation of written communication; Deaf people being suspicious of the motives of hearing people; the centrality of 'Not About Us Without Us' in Deaf people taking control of their organisations; the apparent communication barrier as stifling to both social groups; hearing participants' willingness to learn sign language and demanding greater accessibility to this visual communication medium; and meaningful engagement with the Deaf community that extends beyond tokenism. An aspirational goal

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[59] Catharsis is "the act or process of releasing a strong emotion (such as pity or fear) especially by expressing it in an art form" (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, n.d.: n.p.).

may be concretised in mutual respect and understanding between Deaf and hearing communities based on Ubuntu principles.

Proposing methods in facilitating communication and interaction between Deaf and hearing cultures

Social media is a useful tool in connecting Deaf and hearing individuals. The networking platform provides access to news and event listings. Hearing individuals are privy to Deaf issues and debates that they might not otherwise encounter. They are able to engage in discussions with Deaf people and find common ground in realising that Deaf people share similar experiences in their relationships, travel and career aspirations.

'The Durban Deaf Room' video documentary provides a useful resource that showcases the culmination into an Activity Poem of the learning that took place during the 11-week Skywriting course. The video is available on YouTube and enables Deaf course facilitator Alison Swannack and Deaf personalities that assisted the hearing participants with their poems to witness the impact of their efforts. Swannack and the hearing participants are able to see themselves in the video which doubles as a record of their Skywriting performance and membership of a dynamic community of practice.

The increased visibility of Deaf artists and performers enhances their social mobility and reduces the spiral of silence around Deaf issues thereby influencing agenda-setting. Cultural entrepreneurship projects that explore Deaf-hearing synergies provide win-win partnerships adding value to the social milieu.

Observations on the way forward

The hospitality industry, Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) and Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) should expand opportunities for the employment of Deaf staff. The researcher is a committee member of the Durban Community Tourism Organisation (DCTO) and will explore avenues for greater inclusion of Deaf staff in the hospitality industry. Global restaurants that employ Deaf staff include: Signs Restaurant (Toronto, Canada), Deaf-Run KFC (Cairo, Egypt), 'Sign With Me' Social Café (Tokyo,

Japan), and Citrus Café at Lemon Tree Hotels (India). The researcher encountered Deaf waiters and joined them in viewing the 2014 FIFA World Cup Final between Germany and Argentina at Citrus Café at Lemon Tree Premier, HITEC City, Hyderabad during the IAMCR Conference. In an e-mail communication on 2 December 2015, Raymond Perrier (Director, Denis Hurley Centre) stated: "I commend KFC for running a franchise in North Beach Durban where the staff are predominately deaf and where it is explained to the customers how to interact with the staff."

The researcher attended the TGCSA Stakeholder Function at the Durban Tourism Indaba 2015. Guest speaker at the event, SA Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Mr Derek Hanekom highlighted universal accessibility as part of the Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP)[60]. He encouraged accommodation establishments to "make themselves more disability friendly" in "moving towards sensitive tourism" (Hanekom, 2015). He cited the case of Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands Hotel partnering with DeafSA which had ownership of the (hotel) land (Hanekom, 2015). DeafSA owns 40% of the hotel and a third of the staff at Park Inn Newlands is deaf (Kearney, 2014: n.p.). The hotel was opened on 4 December 2014, a day after the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Kearney, 2014: n.p.). It is encouraging to note that amidst the vast number of exhibitor and stakeholder stories clamouring for attention during the three-day trade fair, the Tourism Indaba newspaper, *Indaba Daily News* carried a story, 'Hotels employ deaf people' on page 8 of its 9 May 2015 edition.

Alongside the mixed-income mandate, integrated housing developments such as Cornubia[61] located on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal could accommodate people with disabilities and non-disabled people next door to each other so as to encourage social cohesion. The 'us-them' boundary between the two groupings could be weakened and greater collaboration,

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[60] Launched by Minister Derek Hanekom on 10 March 2015, the Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP) will "focus on creating better access to new markets, encourage greater participation in the grading system and will seek to implement renewable energy sources to key tourist attractions in South Africa. The programme will also be expanded over time to offer subsidies for improved disability access" (Tourism Business Council of South Africa, 2015: n.p.).
[61] "The first proposed sustainable and fully integrated human settlement in the region [that] has been declared a national priority project" (Tongaat Hulett Developments, n.d.: n.p.).

mutual recognition and respect fostered. The model could be extended to other regions in South Africa and globally.

Statistics show that more than 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents (Mitchell and Karchmer, 2004). In Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, "parents of deaf children have a right to 240 hours of sign language instruction free of charge during the child's preschool years. Siblings to deaf children and hearing children of deaf parents are offered one-week courses at the special schools" (Brentari, 2010: 91). A similar structure offering SASL support to families with deaf and hearing members could be adopted in South Africa.

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has prescribed that all frontline staff (hospital public relation officers, admitting clerks, porters and pharmacy assistants) at Durban's state hospitals complete a sign language course (Nair, 2015: n.p.). Dhlomo has also enrolled in a sign language course and says he will soon be asking the doctors to comply (Nair, 2015: n.p.). "This will greatly enhance the patient-doctor confidentiality, as the patient will be able to speak directly and confidently about his or her ailment," said Dhlomo (Nair, 2015: n.p.).

Respondents Vino and Morgan echoed a similar view on the education front when they suggested that sign language courses be introduced at university level for students training to become educators. The proposition is useful when considering the global trend for people with disabilities to be integrated into mainstream school and work settings (Perry, 2003). In an e-mail communication on 20 November 2015, Ari Seirlis, CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA), said: "My view on schooling for people with disabilities who also might need special needs, is that all schools should be integrated into one campus, meaning that there would be classes providing the necessary teaching methodology, but the children would mix in an integrated environment during the break time, assembly and sports time".

Congruently, in an e-mail communication on 2 December 2015, Raymond Perrier reflected: "I think that integration in education (gender, race, ability) is key while at the same time ensuring that every learner gets the kind of education that can best benefit. So a mixed

system is ideal. I remember a Catholic High School in the North of England wich (*sic*) had a 'special needs unit' right in the heart of the school. It meant that students had lessons separately but were together for almost all other activities – playtime, sports, co-curricula, meals. Which is what the real world is like – or should be!"

On the employment front, eThekwini Municipality announced its commitment to invite applications from people with disabilities for municipal jobs at a Disability Awareness Day 2015 held at City Hall Durban in the week of the International Day of People with Disability (3 December) (*Berea Mail*, 2015b: 2). Deputy City Manager for Corporate and Human Resources, Cllr Dumisile Nene explained that:

> the aim of the awareness day was to highlight the challenges that people with disabilities go through on a daily basis. "The Municipality has set a target of employing more people with disabilities and this awareness day is one of the interventions to accommodate and attract people with disabilities to work for eThekwini. We are committed to the empowerment of people with disabilities by creating employment opportunities." (*Berea Mail*, 2015b: 2)

Interestingly, the United Nations announced the 2015 theme for the International Day of People with Disability as: "Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities" (Australian Government – Department of Social Services, 2015: n.p.). The three sub-themes for 2015 are:

> • Making cities inclusive and accessible for all
> • Improving disability data and statistics
> • Including persons with invisible disabilities in society and development.
> The annual theme provides a frame for considering how people with disability are excluded from society by promoting the removal of all types of barriers; including those relating to the physical environment, information and communications technology (ICT), or attitudinal barriers. This has been occurring since 1992 when the General Assembly proclaimed 3 December as the International Day of Disabled Persons. (Australian Government – Department of Social Services, 2015: n.p.)

Deafness is considered an 'invisible disability'. Thus greater visibility of Deaf people in hotels, restaurants, integrated housing developments, school and work settings will create awareness around Deaf culture and sign language. Newsworthy items involving Deaf

personalities and organisations will enhance agenda-setting and in turn reduce the spiral of silence surrounding Deaf issues.

Suggestions for further avenues of exploration

Honing the visual attentiveness and intense concentration of Deaf people presents a privilege rather than a disadvantage; with imagination that swirls around the production of pop-up books, comics series and board games. Plaiting the way of board games with the ways of the Deaf will catapult them into the fraternity of board games that is filled with imagination. Dedicated board game stores and cafés present safe spaces where Deaf and hearing game designers and players can interact as equals and collaborate on cultural entrepreneurship projects.

Fantasy board games unite "every human's need for social interaction with every gamer's need for full immersion into another world - a world where you are the marine, the warrior, the detective , the wizard, the general or even the villainous mastermind" (Unplug Yourself, 2014: n.p.). Emphasis is placed on "'handmade' skills in the spirit of the Maker Movement that is gaining momentum alongside the advances in digital processes" (Peppas and Ebrahim, *forthcoming* - b: n.p.).

> Casting the complexities and prospects of the graphic narrative into the future, the central problematic becomes: Are comic books and graphic novels where the publishing industry is or should be going? If the industry is heading somewhere, is it the right direction? The issues can be unsettling for readers, writers and the industry.
> Considerations include:
> Are graphic novels the way of the future for the publishing industry?
> What will bookstores be buying for their comic departments over the next ten years?
> The potential contribution of tabletop gaming rooms to the economic survival of comic books, figurines and the retail store?
> Africa – The springboard for the next Golden Age of Comic Books?
> (Peppas and Ebrahim, *forthcoming* - b: n.p.)

> In an e-mail communication on 27 September 2015, Peter Rorvik, the Secretary General of Arterial Network (African arts think tank and networking platform) states: 'Comics already have a strong and sometimes under-exploited presence in Africa, especially in Francophone Africa. Synergies between comics and gaming also represent fertile potential, both

at the level of design and production, and in associated marketing and activity hubs.' (Peppas and Ebrahim, *forthcoming* - b: n.p.)

"The above considerations will need to be typically addressed as the publishing industry grapples with a rapidly transitioning edutainment environment that will see certain knowledge and gaming platforms make way for a looming unchartered terrain in the delivery and reception of literary merchandising by diverse audiences" (Peppas and Ebrahim, *forthcoming* - b: n.p.)

Deaf people are perpetual foreigners due to an overt language barrier. Becoming proficient at fantasy board games can assist them in meeting a diverse group of people on their travels by visiting the nearest board game store and joining a popular game such as 'Ticket to Ride' or 'Catan'. Through socialising with the locals in the tabletop gaming room they can find out where the dentist, hairdresser and photography store are located.

In 2015 Dr Mikhail Peppas and the researcher originated Board Game Champions, an entrepreneurial startup that designs and implements board game cafés for hotels and other entertainment venues. Further to the fixed situations, board game tabletop experiences are set up in unexpected spaces around Green Heart City Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

IMAGE 30 Playing 'The Settlers of Catan' board game on the verandah of KwaMuhle Museum to celebrate the closing of Book & Design Fair Durban 2015. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

A Board Game Championship and Conference on the 'unplugged' entertainment world is scheduled to coincide with the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Green Heart City Durban. The board game cafés and integrated tabletop gaming experiences will create awareness in the

build-up to the Board Game Championship and Conference 2022. Permutations in the team-playing opportunities include mixed doubles comprising Deaf and hearing players.

IMAGE 31 Acquaintances of various ages interact over board games aboard The Holiday Express festive train. Board Game Champions coordinated a board game experience featuring Checkers (Draughts), Exploding Kittens, and Ticket to Ride in the boardroom of the KZN Business Express on day-trips from Durban to Scottburgh, 27 and 28 December 2015. *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Game designers, both Deaf and hearing, will be encouraged to develop board games set in Green Heart City Durban. Drawing inspiration from the 'King of New York' board game title emerges the 'BunnyKats of KZN Durban' board game. The BunnyKat indigenous character made by crafters in the Valley of a 1000 Hills will feature prominently in the board game, thereby linking the city centre to the valley.

Board Game Champions is already at work establishing a Board Game Circuit that rotates between the loop cities of Durban and Montréal, Canada. The route passes through event cities of Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos, London and New York. Plans include a tour group comprising Deaf and hearing game designers and players visiting board game cafés, comic book and board game stores along the route.

IMAGE 32 Surveying the comic art and board gaming scene at Chez Geeks in Montréal with co-owner of the store, Giancarlo Caltabiano (*right*), Hello Kitty and BunnyKat LimeSoda (now known as Inviting Ivy). *Photograph: Mikhail Peppas*

Through applied theory and community-based action research, the researcher arrived at the complementary plaiting of Deaf culture with board games. These ideas were concretised directly from her adventures into the comic art world. Allowing BunnyKat LimeSoda; a Hello Kitty jewellery box; and three beaded superheroes: Batman, Superman and the Hulk to take up residence in the Chez Geeks gaming and hobby store in Montréal served instrumental in the conceptualisation process.

Practical application of the sub-themes of the 2015 International Day of People with Disability finds cadence in Open Data networking sessions liberating data around the creation of cities that are inclusive and accessible for all; improvement of disability data and statistics; and inclusion of persons with invisible disabilities in society and development (Australian Government – Department of Social Services, 2015: n.p.). The interactive Open Data platform provides opportunities for Deaf and hearing people to jointly examine open data, data science, data journalism and urban development topics (Meetup, 2015: n.p.).

Studies should be undertaken that explore public awareness around the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing, the traditional International Symbol of Access (ISA) and the modified ISA. The connotations of encountering the International Symbol of Deafness and Hard of Hearing in public settings should be further investigated.

Another area of interest is the role of the Deaf Club in rooting a sense of place that "creates identity, home, power and connection - and is heavily linked to the construction of self" (Van Steenwyk, 2008: n.p.). The researcher was alerted to the fact that a Durban Deaf Club had been established but is no longer in existence. Van Steenwyk (2008: n.p.) purports that the "destruction of place through the disappearance of Deaf Clubs and other significant material spaces threatens the development of a positive Deaf identity, and thus the sustainability of Deaf culture." The consequences of the "disappearance of Deaf Clubs and the rapid destruction of their sense of place" for the Deaf community should be probed (Van Steenwyk, 2008: n.p.).

Ubuntu focus

Application of the humanitarian principle of Ubuntu enables hearing cultures to "intimately connect to systematic marginalization and oppression that the Deaf community experiences" (Nelson, 2012: n.p.). Consistent with Batho Pele (meaning "People First" in seSotho) principles (Education & Training Unit For Democracy & Development, n.d.: n.p.), "*ubuntu* is concerned with the welfare of everyone in the community. In theory, at least, it is intended to ensure that no voice goes unheard" (Nicolson, 2008: 9). "Thus, human action is geared toward reconstructing, preserving and enhancing the community" (Mkhize, 2008: 41). "The ethics of *ubuntu* is a call to action because an ethical being (*umuntu* – a being with moral sense) cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected" (Mkhize, 2008: 43).

This study foregrounds the potential of Deaf culture and eco-arts in "contributing to communication access and striving to dismantle systems of oppression" (Nelson, 2012: n.p.). The findings and conclusions are significant for the field of Deaf Studies in that "through conversation and experience with "Others," we raise our self-awareness and intimate understanding of marginalization and oppression" (Nelson, 2012: n.p.). "Persons who are treated as other often experience marginalization, decreased opportunities, and exclusion"

(Johnson *et al.*, 2004: 254). "Hearing and deaf professionals should be alert to situations that exclude or diminish the value of deaf people, and support full and meaningful participation for everyone" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 282). Figure 5.1 below illustrates the importance of underscoring inclusivity in everyday interactions between Deaf and hearing persons.
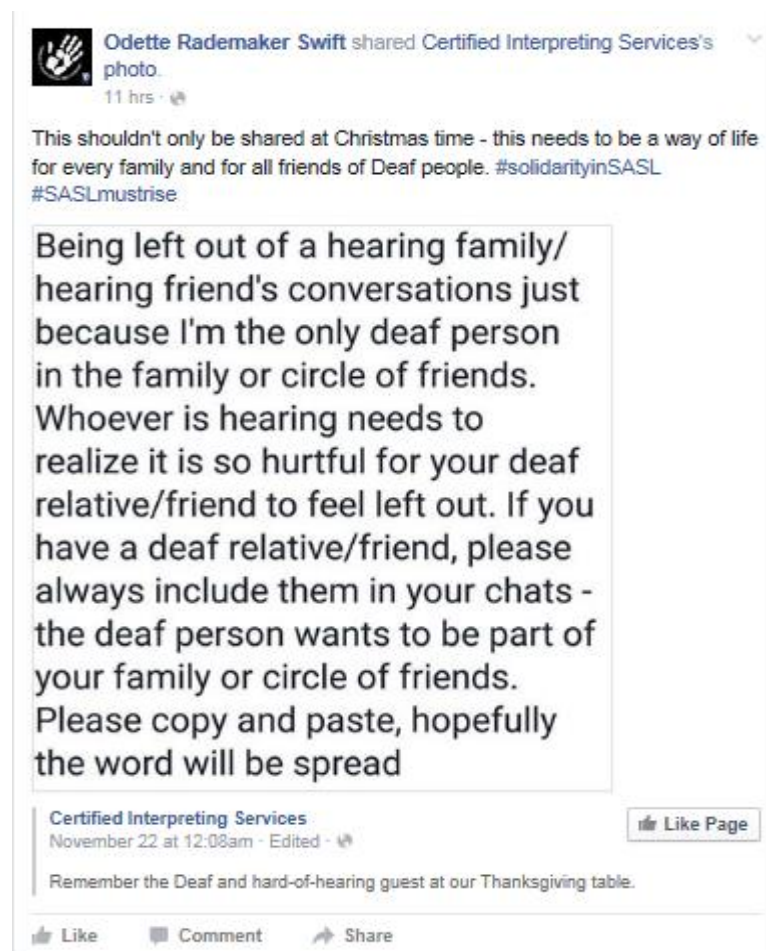
FIGURE 5.1 A genuine sense of inclusivity should govern interactions between Deaf and hearing individuals. (*Source:* Swift, 2015)

'Signing in the circle of purpose' is a phrase originated by Dr Mikhail Peppas to describe the dynamic learning circles or communities of practice that emerge when Deaf and hearing participants are able to communicate using sign language and share common interests. From the perspective of "sustaining enough mutual engagement in pursuing an enterprise together to share some significant learning … *communities of practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning* [original emphasis]" (Wenger, 1998: 86).

Shared knowledge and "a belief in *ubuntu* can enable Africans to respect the values of all members of South African society and to realise that a person exists to serve others" (Mafunisa, 2008: 115). Alongside the presupposition of communicative freedom recognising human equality, Lee (2004: 5-6) affirms that:

> there is another type of reciprocity that supports the claim to a right to communicate, namely solidarity with the weak and most vulnerable in society, such as the physically or mentally ill, or the very young and very old. Solidarity means active commitment to individuals and groups who have been relegated to the margins of society, such as refugees, the poor, outcasts (for whatever reason), the exploited and oppressed … Our common being-in-the-world is ontologically inclusive and morally transforming. A morality of intersubjectivity[62] implicitly strives for an equitable social order and, ultimately, for the "good society", both of which depend on the transforming potential of communication.

Public consciousness around sign language and its associated Deaf culture paves the way towards meaningful interaction between Deaf and hearing communities. Human development is enhanced through cultural diplomacy[63]; collective mindedness; shared values; mutual recognition, respect and trust between the two disparate groupings. Enshrined in the Bill of Rights is the human dignity clause that: "Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (South African Government, 1996).

"Cultural understanding and sensitivity has been a hallmark" of the researcher's interactions with members of the Durban Deaf community (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 279). She is aware that "superficial involvement is often rejected as tokenism by the Deaf community" and maintains links with the Deaf respondents following the data collection phase (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 280). "A desire to consider each other's perspectives, when they differ, has resulted in increased appreciation of … divergent life experiences as hearing or

---

[62] People coexist with others and are socially and culturally conditioned by others. Consequently, communication is vital to creating and maintaining the unique social and cultural habitat that is the source of individual and collective identity. It can be argued, therefore, that the right to communicate is essential to that "morality of intersubjectivity" (Pasquali, 1997: 24-45), whose prime characteristic is the relationship and which sets freedom, equality, and solidarity above all else. Since all relationships presuppose interactions that are mutual, there can be no relationship without dialogue. (Lee, 2004: 1-2)

[63] American political scientist and author, Milton C. Cummings defines 'cultural diplomacy' as: "the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding" (Hemming, n.d.: n.p.).

deaf individuals as well as … common goals and dreams" (Benedict and Sass-Lehrer, 2007: 279). This study confirms the assertion by Beth Benedict and Marilyn Sass-Lehrer (2007: 277) that "as deaf and hearing people expand their experiences and increase their opportunities to interact and work together, new understandings and respect may be the result."

Concluding remarks

In conducting the study, the researcher enhanced her eco-art practice and sensitivity toward people with disabilities. She gained insights into the Deaf-World and expanded her capacity to coordinate integrated experiences for Deaf and hearing participants. She intends carrying forward the skills she has acquired into new ventures and future research activities that combine Deaf and hearing board game players and designers.

Alliance Française de Durban presented a familiar space for Deaf and hearing participants to engage in Skywriting and eco-art activations. The venue signified a neutral setting that was welcoming to both social groups. The establishing shot in 'The Durban Deaf Room' video documentary foregrounds the culturally friendly environment. There are plans to hold further SASL courses at Alliance Française de Durban.

The researcher established links with key personalities and organisations on the Deaf theatre and advocacy scenes during the research process. It is envisaged that collaborative social programmes for Deaf and hearing participants will be pursued and that Deaf youth will serve as ambassadors for social cohesion.

'SASL is my first language'

APPENDIX A
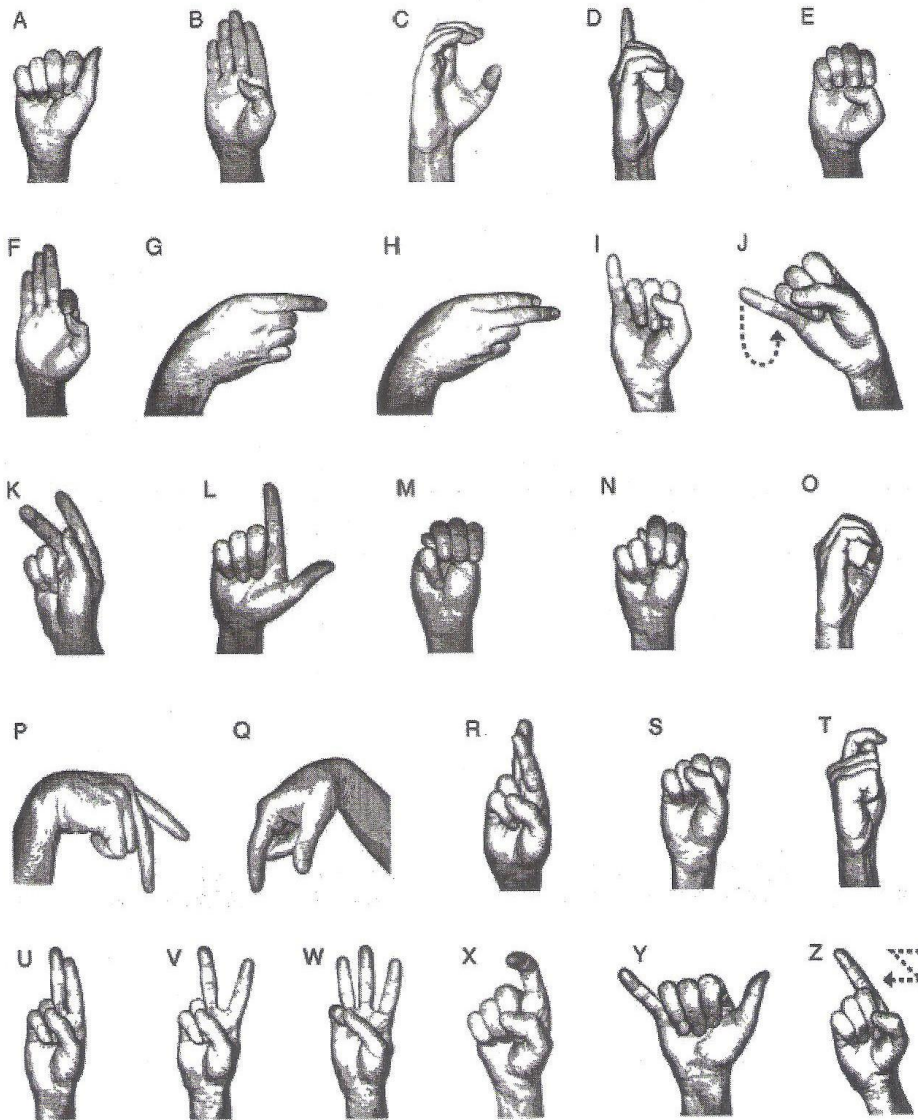
SASL manual alphabet

Source: Mohlamme, I. 2010. SASL manual alphabet. *Thibologa Sign Language Institution* (online), August 2. Available: http://www.thibologa.co.za/basic/images/alphabet_image_large.gif (Accessed 14 May 2012).

APPENDIX B

Invitations to Eco-Art Events featuring SASL

APPENDIX C

Print Media Coverage of Eco-Art Events featuring SASL

SIGNING UP: A deaf person uses sign language to communicate.

Breaking the silence with communication

Sibusisiwe Tongo

A PERFORMING arts group from KZN who use sign language will be breaking communication barriers between the deaf and the hearing tonight.

The group will show off their talents at the Sundowner Soirée which takes place at the Alliance Française de Durban in Morningside from 5.30pm.

The soirée has a green element with a strong environmental message.

It will also see the launching of skywriting activities, integrated world theatre and cinema of deaf festival and conference.

Guests will be informed, while being entertained, about deaf culture, there will be loads of activity including deaf karaoke, deaf theatre, deaf pavement poetry and lots of prizes.

"Basically it is important for everyone to learn to communicate with the deaf. Sign language is a medium of access for deaf people, but often the lack of sign language interpreters prevents their messages getting across," said Odette Fwift of the KZN Sign Language Academy.

Logie Naidoo, the speaker of eThekwini municipality, will be the guest of honour.

Sanabelle Ebrahim from the Green Felt Heart, one of the organisations involved, said: "We are using poetry and art to make people aware of climate change without taking a serious approach. We will also focus on integrating people with disabilities."

She said that the green movement encouraged people to foster love and care for the environment, get marginalised communities to participate in green activities and promote sustainable living.

sibusisiwet@thenewage.co.za

Source: Tongo, S. 2012. Breaking the silence with communication. *The New Age*, 25 April: 6.

Green, French romance at Alliance Française

Guests were intrigued by the live art, by Durban artist Steve Mandy who painted a French-themed design onto a model's dress. Seem here are Steve Mandy, Melody, Sanabelle Ebrahim and Senamile Zuma. PHOTO: Rodney Prynne

LOVE filled the air on Valentine's Day when Alliance Française joined with Green Heart City to present a romantic evening of French cinema, cuisine, live painting and music.

The Frenchly Green Valentine's began with French love songs by Natalie Winter accompanied by Nicolas Creach on guitar.

A definite highlight in the romantic evening was live painting by well-known artist Steve Mandy.

Guests were invited to watch him paint a French-themed design onto a dress sported by a model. Mandy's live painting is a popular feature at various fashion weeks in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

A Deaf culture demonstration by Green Hearts had guests making their partners swoon with 'Will you be my Valentine?' in sign language.

Teenage artists Kianja and Arianna graced the festivities with timeless tunes from 'Autumn Leaves'.

The Alliance Française terrace provided the ideal backdrop for Valentine's open-air cinema.

The French movie 'Donkey Skin', which had English subtitles was the perfect Valentine movie, based on the Cinderella story by Jacques Demy.

Café Saint-Germain, Alliance Française's new French corner, prepared lovely picnic baskets showcasing authentic French cuisine.

Alliance Française de Durban is situated at 22 Sutton Crescent, Morningside. Call 031 312 9582 or visit www. alliance.org.za for more information

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Source: Berea Mail. 2013. Green, French romance at Alliance Française. *Berea Mail*, 22 February: 8.

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HIP HOP DANCE WORKSHOP WITH DARREN RAJBAL (SA's got Talent 2009 winner)
Date: Fri 28 Sep at 2pm - Cost: R50 incl boat rides/R30

Mr Darren Rajbal, (SA's got Talent 2009 winner) will give a dance workshop which will be an opportunity for aspiring hip-hop dancers of all ages both Deaf and hearing to come and hone their skills.
Come and join the workshop to learn some of the tricks of the trade that had him wowing South African television audience and winning the hotly contested title. No previous experience necessary.

SASL WORKSHOP
Date: Wed 26 Sep at 10am - Cost:R350 incl. workshop, lunch and show.
"ENSURING ACCESS FOR DEAF EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS"

KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy (Pty) Ltd, is offering an orientation workshop for corporate and government role players. The workshop "Ensuring access for Deaf Employees and Customers" will introduce participants to topics such as reasonable accommodation for Deaf employees, service delivery and accessibility issues for Deaf clients and general communication guidance when interacting with Deaf people. Participants will be treated to performances and role-play routines by some of the top Deaf entertainers in KZN during the workshop and will also learn some basic South African Sign Language. Your ticket includes the informative workshop, lunch and the first play about Deaf people with Deaf actors in KZN, "Talking Hands". The play is expected to conclude at 3pm. For more queries about SASL please email at info@kznsla.co.za

SASL WORKSHOP
Date: Fri 28 Sep at 11am - Cost:R60
"FUN WAY TO LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE!"

KwaZulu-Natal Sign Language Academy (Pty) Ltd is offering an introductory workshop on South African Sign Language to the public. This two hour workshop will introduce participants to this unique language and the Deaf Community who are proud to use it. You will learn about the Deaf experience in South Africa and will learn some SASL signs and the manual alphabet.
This workshop will be fun and interactive and suitable for all ages. Join us in this exciting venture, acquire a new view of the Deaf world and leave empowered, with greater insight into the Deaf Community. For more queries about SASL please email us at info@kznsla.co.za

TALKING HANDS
Date: Wed to Sat - 26, 27, 28 and 29 Sep at 7.30pm - Cost: R60

This production is about how the Deaf people of all races share the same experiences, suffer from oppression and are deprived of their language - SASL (South African Sign Language). Despite the undeniable hardship of Deaf South Africans, there remain stories of great love, romance and triumph and Talking Hands will provide insight for the audience into the tenacity and humour that are also central characteristics of the Deaf Community. Talking Hands will make a diverse audience aware of the past and present life experiences of Deaf South Africans, as well as give a glimpse into a future where Deaf and hearing people focus more on what makes us the same and less on the differences.

ULTIMATE DEAF SIDE STORY
Date: Fri 28 and Sat 29 Sep at 5:30pm - Cost: R50

Universe Deaf Theatre (the only surviving Deaf Theatre company in South Africa) presents Ultimate Deaf Side Story funded by the NAC (National Arts Council).
This play is about friendship, conflict of interest and anger. Two Deaf friends, Max and D were best friends for two decades until a hearing newborn baby arrives on the scene.

LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES
Date: Tues 25, Wed 26 & Thurs 27 Sep at 5.30pm - Cost: R50

This is a Deaf only comedy based in a science lab. The hearing scientist and his Deaf assistant find communication a big challenge and they set about designing a robot to interpret for them. While designing the robot the hearing scientist learns a lot about Deaf people's communication needs but not without loads of humour. The cast includes Ismael Mansoor, Darren Rajbal and Bo Tasker of Isithulu Creative and Performing Arts (soon to be a registered performing arts company)

DEAF SA'S GOT TALENT
Date: Sat 29 Sep at 10am - 4pm - Cost: R15

The Deaf Federation of KwaZulu-Natal proudly presents DEAF SA'S GOT TALENT. The show features amateur dancers, magicians, comedians and other performers of all ages competing for a prize.

SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
Date: Sun 30 Sep at 10am and 2pm - Cost: Free

The screenings of short films produced by International Deaf filmmakers. 4 films (2 in the morning and other 2 in the afternoon)

INTEGRATED WORLD AND SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH ARTS & HERITAGE IN GREEN HEART CITY
Date: Sun 30 Sep - 12 - 1pm Cost: Free

Green Heart City presents its theme: Environmental Sustainability linked to Millennium Development Goal no 7, Deaf Pavement Poets, Skywriting Participants and introduction to IWAH 2014 (Integrated World of Arts & Heritage) Duration 1 hr.

APPENDIX F

Sundowner Skywriting Course Completion Certificate

APPENDIX G

The Ten Commandments of Deaf Culture

For the non-Deaf (missionary, pastor, evangelist, interpreter, etc.)

while in the presence of a Deaf person.

1. You shall not put "Hearing Culture" above Deaf Culture.
2. You shall not lose eye contact when communicating.
3. You shall communicate in sign language at all times.
4. You shall not be the deaf person's sign language teacher.
5. You shall not be the deaf person's English Grammar teacher.
6. You shall not be the deaf person's speech therapist.
7. You shall not tell non-deaf jokes and puns (and slang).
8. You shall not be the deaf person's "Mother".
9. You shall view deaf as an ethnic group not as handicapped.
10. You shall believe Deaf can do all things through Christ.

Source: Deaf Center. 1999. *The Ten Commandments of Deaf Culture* (online). Available: http://www.deaf-center.org/culture/ten_commandments2.htm (Accessed 11 March 2013).

APPENDIX H

Focus Group and Interview Schedules

Focus Group and Interview Schedule – Deaf participants

Note: All participants would have attended at least one Durban-based eco-arts intervention featuring SASL prior to the focus group session.

1) Describe your hobbies/interests?
2) What sort of social events or gatherings do you attend?
3) Do you interact with people with disabilities?
   - How did you meet or get to know them?
   - What sort of disability do they have?
   - How often do you interact with them?
   - How do you communicate with them?
   - Where do you meet with them?
4) Do you interact with hearing people?
   - How did you meet or get to know them?
   - How often do you interact with them?
   - How do you communicate with them?
   - Where do you meet with them?
   - Your perceptions of hearing people
5) Your schooling/education
6) Describe your very first sign language encounter.
7) Your thoughts on the Deaf and Hearing Worlds
8) Sign Language
   - History: International and South Africa
   - Communication
     Are you able to sign?
     Do you feel hearing people should learn sign language?
     Do you feel South African Sign Language (SASL) should be accorded official language status? Elaborate.
9) Have you come across any other term/s for sign language?
10) Do you feel Deaf and hearing communities should be integrated?
11) Is the Deaf community in Durban working towards integrating itself into mainline society? Elaborate.
12) What motivated you to attend and/or perform at an eco-arts event featuring sign language?
13) Describe the event.
    - Who were the event hosts?
    - What did you like most/least?
    - Did you attend with friends and/or family?
    - Was the event held outdoors or indoors?
    - What was the atmosphere/vibe like?
    - What languages were spoken at the event?
    - Would you go again?
    - Would you recommend the event to a friend?

14) Do you know of any other art forms and/or theatre productions featuring sign language?
15) Your thoughts on Deaf karaoke, Deaf poetry, Deaf theatre.
16) Do you have any suggestions for ways of facilitating communication and interaction with people with disabilities, particularly the Deaf?

Focus Group and Interview Schedule – Hearing participants

Note: All participants would have attended at least one Durban-based eco-arts intervention featuring SASL prior to the focus group session.

17) Describe your hobbies/interests?
18) What sort of social events or gatherings do you attend?
19) Do you interact with people with disabilities?
    - How did you meet or get to know them?
    - What sort of disability do they have?
    - How often do you interact with them?
    - How do you communicate with them?
    - Where do you meet with them?
20) Do you interact with Deaf people at all?
21) Your perceptions of Deaf people
22) Describe your very first sign language encounter.
23) Have you heard people refer to sign language by any other term/s?
24) Your thoughts on the Deaf and Hearing Worlds
25) What motivated you to attend an eco-arts event featuring sign language?
26) Describe the event.
    - Who were the event hosts?
    - What did you like most/least?
    - Did you attend with friends and/or family?
    - Was the event held outdoors or indoors?
    - What was the atmosphere/vibe like?
    - What languages were spoken at the event?
    - Would you go again?
    - Would you recommend the event to a friend?
27) Have you heard of any other art forms and/or theatre productions featuring sign language?
28) Your thoughts on Deaf karaoke, Deaf poetry, Deaf theatre.
29) What do you know about sign language?
    - History: International and South Africa
    - Communication
      Are you able to sign?
      Would you consider learning sign language?
      Do you feel hearing people should learn sign language?
      Do you feel South African Sign Language (SASL) should be accorded official language status?
30) What do you know about Deaf culture?
31) Do you feel Deaf and hearing communities should be integrated?
32) Would you say the Deaf community in Durban is working towards integrating itself into mainline society? Elaborate.
33) Do you have any suggestions for ways of facilitating communication and interaction with people with disabilities, particularly the Deaf?

APPENDIX I

Ethical Clearance Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

24 June 2012

Ms Sana Ebrahim (204504327)
School of Applied Human Sciences

Dear Ms Ebrahim
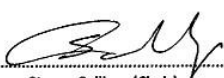
Protocol reference number: HSS/0311/012M
Project title: Blending Deaf and Hearing Cultures: Scenarios for Social Cohesion

In response to your application dated 21 May 2012, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social Science Research Ethics Committee
/ms

cc Supervisor Professor Donal McCracken
cc Academic Leader: Professor JH Buitendach
cc School Admin: Ms Doreen Hattingh

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social SC Research Ethics Committee
Westville Campus, Govan Mbheki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 **Facsimile:** +27 (0)31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ▨ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

Inspiring Greatness

APPENDIX J

Questionnaires

Deaf respondent

Pseudonym _____ **OR** Real Name _____

Gender | MALE | OR | FEMALE |

Race Group | BLACK | | INDIAN | | COLOURED | | WHITE |

Please place a cross[X] over the option of your choice.

1) Do you communicate using sign language? | YES | | NO |

2) Do you feel hearing people should learn sign language? | YES | | NO |

3) Do you feel excluded from mainstream society on account of being Deaf? | YES | | NO |

4) Do you enjoy:

Deaf Theatre | YES | | NO |

Silent Cinema | YES | | NO |

Deaf Karaoke | YES | | NO |

Deaf Poetry | YES | | NO |

5) Do you feel Deaf and hearing communities should be integrated? | YES | | NO |

6) Are you a member of any Deaf associations/projects/groups? | YES | | NO |

If YES, please list.

_____

_____

_____

7) Are you a member of any arts/literature/theatre groups? | YES | | NO |

If YES, please list.

_____

_____

_____

8) Think back to a Durban-based eco-arts event that you attended - comprising Deaf and hearing participants.

8.1 What was the name of the event? _____

8.2 Where was the event held? _____

8.3 Who hosted the event? _____

8.4 Did you feel | INCLUDED | OR | EXCLUDED | at the event?

8.5 Was the event held | INDOORS | OR | OUTDOORS | OR | BOTH (INDOORS & OUTDOORS | ?

8.6 Would you go again to a similar event? | YES | | NO |

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Hearing respondent

Pseudonym _____ **OR** Real Name _____

Gender | MALE | OR | FEMALE |

Race Group | BLACK | | INDIAN | | COLOURED | | WHITE |

_____

Please place a cross[X] over the option of your choice.

1) Are you able to communicate using sign language? | YES | | NO |

2) Do you feel hearing people should learn sign language? | YES | | NO |

3) Do you feel Deaf people are excluded from mainstream society? | YES | | NO |

4) Do you enjoy:

| **Deaf Theatre** | YES | | NO |

| **Silent Cinema** | YES | | NO |

| **Deaf Karaoke** | YES | | NO |

| **Deaf Poetry** | YES | | NO |

5) Do you feel Deaf and hearing communities should be integrated? | YES | | NO |

6) Have you heard of any Deaf associations/projects/groups? | YES | | NO |

If YES, please list.

_____

_____

_____

7) Are you a member of any arts/literature/theatre groups? | YES | | NO |

   If YES, please list.

_____

_____

_____

8) Think back to a Durban-based eco-arts event that you attended - comprising Deaf and hearing participants.

8.1 What was the name of the event? _____

8.2 Where was the event held? _____

8.3 Who hosted the event? _____

8.4 Did you feel | INCLUDED | OR | EXCLUDED | at the event?

8.5 Was the event held | INDOORS | OR | OUTDOORS | OR | BOTH (INDOORS & OUTDOORS) | ?

8.6 Would you go again to a similar event? | YES | | NO |

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

APPENDIX K

Glossary

Audism

"Tom Humphries invented the term 'audism' in 1975 to describe an oppressive attitude that some people, agencies, businesses, or organizations have towards people who are Deaf or hard of hearing" (Deaf Choice, Inc., 2012: n.p.). He defined audism as "the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears" (Deaf Choice, Inc., 2012: n.p.).

Janice Humphrey and Bob Alcorn (1995: 85) describe audism as, "an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks."

Board game

An unplugged tabletop "game of strategy, [such as Scrabble, Monopoly, Ticket to Ride, Catan, and Kingdom Builder], played by moving pieces on a board and sometimes involving dice" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011a: n.p.).

Catharsis

"The act or process of releasing a strong emotion (such as pity or fear) especially by expressing it in an art form" (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, n.d.i: n.p.).

Cochlear implant

"A cochlear implant is an electronic device that is surgically placed under the skin behind the ear. It provides a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing by bypassing the damaged cochlea and sending sounds electronically to the brain" (Ear Institute, 2015: n.p.).

Collective mindedness

A new term in vogue that has similar connotations to community-minded: "interested in helping the wider community; socially concerned" (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.: n.p.).

Cued speech

> A visual communication system — mouth movements of speech combine with "cues" to make all the sounds (phonemes) of spoken language look different… Literacy is the original and primary goal of Cued Speech, by providing the appropriate phonemic language base for learning to read. Cued Speech also supports the development of lipreading, auditory discrimination, and speech. (Cued Speech Discovery, 2008: n.p.)

Cultural diplomacy

American political scientist and author, Milton C. Cummings defines 'cultural diplomacy' as:
"the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding" (Hemming, n.d.: n.p.).

Cultural entrepreneur

> Like [entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs], cultural entrepreneurs (CEs) offer products that have use value (e.g., decoration in the case of art or leisure in the example of a theatrical performance). Their goods and services also have economic value: the cultural and creative industries create jobs and historic preservation has the multiplier effect of boosting different sectors of local economies through tourism and regeneration. More uniquely however, CEs deal in products and experiences that have intrinsic and instrumental value in and of themselves. These values, as identified by scholars and organizations, include:
>
> Intrinsic
> • Evidential - Sites and intangible cultural expressions are evidence of age, history and culture. They point to rare natural phenomena or exemplary scientific achievements.
> • Aesthetic – They are objects of beauty that inspire appreciation or elicit emotional responses.
> • Non-use and intergenerational value – Their mere existence is a resource that can be enjoyed by present and future generations which is why conservation is important.
>
> Instrumental
> • Educational – They are touchstones for learning; produce knowledge, impart skills, effect behavioral and attitudinal change (e.g., tolerance, empathy, creativity).
> • Symbolic/spiritual – Cultural products serve as sources of identity, express ideas, offer an encounter with the sacred (in the case of religion) or the sublime (in the field of art).
> • Social/communal – Cultural activities bring communities together and help develop relationships among individuals.
> • Historic – They connect people with the past.

- Political/institutional – They are useful in implementing government agendas and policies and at times improve people's perception of public agencies. (Gonzalez, 2015: n.p.)

Deaf

'Deaf' with a capital 'D' denotes membership of a linguistic and cultural minority (Sacks, 2000: 131).

deaf

Spelled with a small 'd', 'deaf' denotes an audiological condition or inability to hear (Sacks, 2000: 131).

Deaf culture

"Members of the Deaf-World are bonded by a common language, as well as common mores and values" (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 124). Two other bonding forces in Deaf culture are its athletic, social, and political organisations, and its artistic expression (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 124). The bonds that hold Deaf people together are collectively called *Deaf culture* (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 124).

Deaf karaoke

"A form of entertainment in which a device plays the music of popular songs and people [sign] the words to the songs they choose" (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, n.d.ii: n.p.).

Deaf poetry

See 'Sign Language Poetry' below.

Deaf Pride

A sense of positive pride developed by Deaf people through the recognition of sign language in advancing identities, culture and community (Harris, 1995: 23).

Deaf theatre

A theatre form that "has been around for generations, and serves a dual purpose: deaf culture entertainment for deaf audiences, and education about deafness and sign language for hearing

people. When deaf theatre began, it was deaf people performing for deaf audiences; today it is deaf and hearing together" (Berke, 2014: n.p.).

Deaf World

> In the cultures of the Deaf-Worlds all over the globe, vision and its associated activities, such as visual/manual language and attentiveness to the visual environment, are highly valued. They are, indeed, embedded in everyday life, from conversations with Deaf co-workers to socializing at the Deaf club, from formal lectures in signed language at a university to face recognition at a large party. (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 408)

"The Deaf-World agenda for Deaf people is founded on the premise that Deaf people are members of a linguistic and cultural minority" (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 409).

Deafened

"Usually refers to a person who becomes deaf as an adult and, therefore, faces different challenges than those of a person who became deaf at birth or as a child" (University of Washington, 2013: n.p.).

Deafism

An alternate term to 'audism' that is used to describe deaf discrimination. "Daily discrimination is a common experience for many Deaf people in their work and private lives … Whether that is direct deafism or indirect, the outcomes are often the same – exclusion, isolation, hurt, harm, disadvantage or just simply another bout of tears. Deaf people are fair game it seems" (Deacy, 2015: n.p.).

Disability

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, n.d.: n.p.):

> Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

In line with the WHO definition, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities describes persons with disabilities as including "those who have long-term physical, mental,

intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, n.d.i: n.p.).

> A distinction is further drawn internationally between a medical and a social model of approaching disability. The medical model focuses on the diagnosis of a medical condition or impairment and the curing or 'normalisation' of disability. The social model in contrast expresses the view that disability experienced by a person is determined by barriers relating to physical access, attitudes and mindsets, rather than the actual medical condition. Legislation and disability activist groups accept the social model of approaching disability. (eThekwini Municipality, 2007: 5-6)

Discrimination

> Discrimination means the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. In other words, discrimination means treating people differently, negatively or adversely without any reasonable justification. People should not be placed at a disadvantage simply because of their racial and ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. (Voices of Youth, n.d.: n.p.)

Eco-arts

"Artwork from an ecological perspective that can inform and deepen our understanding of the Earth and our place in its ecosystems" (Ecology Communications Group, Inc., 2015: n.p.). Artists create eco-art by re-envisioning "our relationship to nature, proposing through their work new ways for us to co-exist with our environment" (Citron-Fink, 2011: n.p.).

Ecopoetry

"A relatively new term for describing contemporary poetry that has a strong ecological emphasis. Whilst precise definitions vary, ecopoetry is generally recognized by its focus on humanity's interrelationship with the natural world in such a way that implies responsibility, engagement and a striving for ecological integrity" (Resurgence Poetry Prize, 2015: n.p.).

Exclusivity

"The fact or policy of not [including] members or participants on the grounds of gender, race, class, sexuality, [or] disability" (Dictionary.com, 2015a: n.p.).

Fingerspelling

- Instead of using pen, paper and the written alphabet, this method is like "spelling in the air"
- Finger spelling is typically used to supplement South African Sign Language
- Proper names and terms for which there are no signs are usually finger spelled. (Swannack, 2012b: 6)

Graphic novel

A format, not a genre. Graphic novels can be fiction, non-fiction, history, fantasy, or anything in-between. Graphic novels are similar to comic books because they use sequential art to tell a story. Unlike comic books, graphic novels are generally stand-alone stories with more complex plots. Collections of short stories that have been previously published as individual comic books are also considered graphic novels. (Get Graphic, n.d.: n.p.)

Hard of hearing

"Refers to a hearing loss where there may be enough residual hearing that an auditory device, such as a hearing aid or FM system, provides adquate (*sic*) assistance to process speech" (University of Washington, 2013: n.p.).

Hearing aid

"A small electronic apparatus that amplifies sound and is worn in or behind the ear to compensate for impaired hearing" (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007: n.p.).

Hearing culture

"In most of the world's cultures, which are overwhelmingly comprised of hearing people, hearing itself and its associated activities, such as singing and listening to music, are highly valued" (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 408).

Hearing World

The culture of the Hearing World is the dominant culture in society. In the cultures of the Hearing World, orality and its associated activities, such as spoken language and listening, are highly valued. The Hearing World is often viewed as oppressive by members of the Deaf World.

Impairment

"Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function" (World Health Organization, 1980, in Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 336).

Inclusivity

"An intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who [have learning or physical or mental disabilities], or [are] racial and sexual minorities: *'you will need a thorough understanding of inclusivity and the needs of special education pupils'*" (Oxford University Press, 2015: n.p.).

Induction loop

"A hearing loop [or induction loop] is a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids. The hearing loop provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting" (Hearing Link, 2012: n.p.).

Invisible Disabilities

> The term *invisible disabilities* refers to symptoms such as debilitating pain, fatigue, dizziness, cognitive dysfunctions, brain injuries, learning differences and mental health disorders, as well as hearing and vision impairments. These are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can sometimes or always limit daily activities, range from mild challenges to severe limitations and vary from person to person … Someone who has a *visible* impairment or uses an assistive device such as a wheelchair, walker or cane can also have *invisible disabilities* [original emphasis]. (Invisible Disabilities Association, n.d.: n.p.)

Lip reading

"Lip reading allows you to "listen" to a speaker by watching the speaker's face to figure out their speech patterns, movements, gestures and expressions. Often called "a third ear," lip reading goes beyond simply reading the lips of a speaker to decipher individual words" (Custlabs, Ltd., n.d.: n.p.).

Magical realism

"The genre of magical realism is defined as a literary genre in which fantastical things are treated not just as possible, but also as realistic" (Pryor, n.d.: n.p.).

Open Data

"Data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and sharealike" (Open Knowledge, n.d.: n.p.).

Personhood

"The sum total of the numerous biological, social and cultural strands that are woven into the human being. It is the visible and invisible presence of individual and collective imprints and memories made by human beings in communication with others" (Lee, 2004: 6).

Poetic licence

"License or liberty taken by a poet, prose writer, or other artist in deviating from rule, conventional form, logic, or fact, in order to produce a desired effect" (Dictionary.com, 2015b: n.p.).

Profound deafness

"Profound deafness means the person cannot hear anything at all; they are unable to detect sound, even at the highest volume possible" (MediLexicon International Ltd, 2015: n.p.). People who are profoundly deaf are totally reliant on lip-reading and/or sign language in order to communicate spontaneously and rapidly with people (MediLexicon International Ltd, 2015: n.p.). "People who are born deaf find lip-reading much harder to learn compared to those who became hearing impaired after their (*sic*) had learnt to communicate orally (with sounds)" (MediLexicon International Ltd, 2015: n.p.).

Progressive enabler

An element, structure or activation that facilitates the making of "progress toward better conditions; employing or advocating more enlightened or liberal ideas, new or experimental methods" (Dictionary.com, 2015c: n.p.).

Sankofa

> The principle of Sankofa is symbolized as a prophetic bird … born from the wisdom of Ghana's Gyaman and Asante cultures. The West African symbol represents the importance of understanding one's past in order to build for the present and future. The symbol itself is a bird, which signifies the

human spirit. The head of the bird points backwards toward the past, and it holds an egg in its mouth, which represents the wisdom of our origins. Sankofa is a principle of hope, which states that in order to know how to obtain one's goals and dreams, one must understand his or her history and use that knowledge to make healthy choices and decisions for the future. (Sankofa Community Empowerment, Inc., n.d.: n.p.)

Scenario

Internally consistent verbal picture of a phenomenon, sequence of events, or situation, based on certain assumptions and factors (variables) chosen by its creator. Scenarios are used in estimating the probable effects of one or more variables, and are an integral part of situation analysis and long-range planning. The name comes from a script used in film/television industry that contains all the details on the appearance of characters, scenes, and the sequence of episodes. (WebFinance, Inc., 2015a: n.p.)

Sign language

"A language that uses a system of manual, facial, and other body movements as the means of communication, especially among deaf people" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2011b: n.p.).

Sign Language Poetry

A literary form that evolved from the art of sign-language storytelling. Like English oral poetry, signed performance poetry uses the conventions of repetition, rhyme, alliteration, rhythm, and meter to construct linguistic patterns that add emphasis, meaning, and structure to word forms. Unlike traditional verse, modern ASL [American Sign Language] poetry transforms "phonetic nuances into visual ones and one-dimensional words into three-dimensional shape[s]" (Burch, 1997). Put simply, ASL poets use their hands to sign words and their bodies to express vivid images, related concepts, sudden realizations, conflicting thoughts, and underlying emotions. (Hawk, 2007: n.p.)

Signed English

A signed form of the English spoken language which is a mere transliteration and lacks the structure of a genuine sign language (Sacks, 2000: 131).

Skywriting

A term invented by Dr Mikhail Peppas, co-founder of the Green Heart Movement, which derives from the 'stark semblance of sign language to writing in the sky or Air'. In Skywriting nature as symbolised by the sky and humanity through utilising human fingers,

create two vehicles by which the hearing person can 'write' and the Deaf person can 'hear'. By this device both are connected in the compound word 'Skywriting'. It is because of this that sign language can be termed 'Skywriting in arts and ecology interventions'. Sky reading refers to the act of sign language interpretation. This type of mirrored communication may be seen in itself as an art form, by way of combining movement with facial expression to evoke emotion and a myriad of reactions for both the reader and emitter/signer. But the matter goes further, for out of Skywriting has developed various subsidiary applications, such as Deaf karaoke, Deaf theatre and Deaf poetry.

Social cohesion

> A socially cohesive society is one where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. Such societies are not necessarily demographically homogenous. Rather, by respecting diversity, they harness the potential residing in their societal diversity (in terms of ideas, opinions, skills, …). Therefore, they are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide. (United Nations, n.d.ii: n.p.)

Social entrepreneur

Driver of "social innovation and transformation in various fields including education, health, environment and enterprise development. [A social entrepreneur pursues] poverty alleviation goals with entrepreneurial zeal, business methods and the courage to innovate and overcome traditional practices" (Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, n.d.: n.p.).

Social inclusion

"The process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities - that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's (*sic*) participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives" (United Nations, n.d.ii: n.p.).

Social integration

> A dynamic and principled process in which societies engage in order to further human development. Successful social integration processes encourage "coming together" while respecting differences, and consciously and explicitly putting great value on maintaining diversity. Social integration represents the attempt not to make people adjust to society, but

rather to ensure that society is accepting of all people. (United Nations, n.d.ii: n.p.)

Social justice

"The fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion … are to be treated equally and without prejudice" (WebFinance, Inc., 2015b: n.p.).

Social mobility

A person's movement over time from one class to another. Social mobility can be up or down and can be either intergenerational (occurring between generations, such as when a child rises above the class of his or her parents) or intragenerational (occurring within a generation, such as when an individual changes class because of business success). Societies differ in the extent to which social mobility is permitted. (Crossman, 2015: n.p.)

South African Sign Language (SASL)

Recognized and used as a first language by approximately 500 000 Deaf South Africans. Since 1996, SASL has been officially recognized as the language of learning and teaching for the majority of Deaf learners in South Africa. Government policies also acknowledge SASL as the means through which Deaf people become economically and intellectually empowered. This in turn has increased the awareness of the need for accessible social and legal services, equal education opportunities and therefore, SASL interpreter services. (Wits University, n.d.: n.p.)

Stigma

"The possession of, or belief that one possesses, some attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context" (Crocker, Major and Steele, 1998: 505).

Ubuntu

A word used by the Zulu people of South Africa, and is difficult to translate into English because it has many different connotations associated with it. Roughly, it means humanness, and it often figures into the maxim that 'a person is a person through other persons'. This maxim has descriptive senses to the effect that one's identity as a human being causally and even metaphysically depends on a community. It also has prescriptive senses to the effect that one ought to be a mensch, in other words, morally should support the community in certain ways. (Metz, 2007: n.p.)

Universal design

"The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed" (United Nations, n.d.i: n.p.).

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