

Role Models as Facilitators of Social Capital for Deaf Individuals: A Research Synthesis

RS
Research
Summarized

Summary of Cawthon et al., "Role Models as Facilitators of Social Capital for Deaf Individuals: A Research Synthesis"¹

Why was this work done?

- Deaf individuals often experience barriers to increasing social capital, the advantage gained through relationships and social networks.
- Barriers in access to social capital can result in weaker incidental learning, economic attainment, language development, and social skills.
- Role models generally provide guidance and support and promote skill development in others. This research aimed to explore the unique contributions role models can provide for deaf individuals.

How was this work done?

- Researchers conducted a literature review of previous research that assessed role model programs, informal role model encounters, teacher supports, personal guidance, and social support for deaf individuals.
- Authors summarized findings from research, identified common themes across articles, and discussed the concept of social capital.

What did researchers find?

- Researchers identified four key themes across the literature:
 - Significance of role models for deaf individuals
 - Contributions of role models during important developmental processes for deaf youth
 - Key elements of effective role modeling
 - Importance of role models from diverse ethnic/minority groups
- Parents who had access to role models and mentors had positive attitudes about their child's future. Role models also contributed to the development of identity, language, social skills, and emotional skills of deaf youth.

"Although hearing individuals can provide high levels of support and advocacy on behalf of deaf individuals, their support may be complemented by the unique contributions of role models who are deaf themselves."

- Effective communication with and high expectations of deaf individuals were the two main components of successful role modeling.

¹Cawthon, S., Johnson, P., Garberoglio, C. L., & Schoffstall, S. (2016). Role models as facilitators of social capital for deaf individuals: A research synthesis. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161(3), 115–127.



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What do these results mean?

- Role models for deaf individuals seem to influence personal development, which contributes to future achievement in academics and employment.
- There is a need to recognize differences in guidance between role models who are deaf versus hearing.
- The degree to which the cultural identities of a role model and mentee match is important to providing holistic guidance.



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