

What We Have Learned About Home Visits in Two Countries: Insights from Early Interventionists

Dr. Paula Pittman
Dr. Claudine Störbeck

SKI-HI Institute
Utah State University
paula.pittman@usu.edu

The University of the Witwatersrand
The Centre for Deaf Studies
claudine.storbeck@gmail.com

Background Information

- ▶ 2005 Began Discussions with South Africa to Implement SKI–HI Model of Early Intervention Service in the Province of Gauteng, with a Hope of Becoming a National Early Intervention Program
 - ▶ At that Time Home–Based Early Intervention Programs had never been offered anywhere in South Africa
 - ▶ A five year proposal was written to create an early intervention program in South Africa for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and obtain funding for that program
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Background Information

- ▶ Program received funding in 2006 from the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and in Fall of 2006 HI HOPES began
- ▶ HI HOPES –
Home
Intervention
Hearing and language
Opportunities
Parent
Education
Services

Our First Challenge: Training

- ▶ There are a very small number of individuals in South Africa living in areas where families need services who have knowledge of deaf education or early childhood—Townships, squatter villages, etc.
 - ▶ The field of early childhood is not seen as a profession in South Africa, and home-based services have never been provided there for any child with any disability.
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Our First Challenge: Training

- ▶ SKI– HI Training is designed to meet the needs of a North American audience, incorporating small group learning, reflection, and instruction with personal application activities. These learning approaches were foreign to our first group of participants.
- ▶ Some of the participants were working in schools for the deaf, most had never met a person who was deaf or hard of hearing, none had ever worked in a home setting with young children and their families

Our First Challenge: Training

- ▶ South Africa proudly boasts 11 national languages. Most participants spoke at least 3 languages, most spoke 4–7. For many of them, English was their 3rd or 4th learned language, yet training was provided in English.
 - ▶ South Africa's history with Apartheid created a didactic education system, where students were not encouraged to think on their own or think outside of the box. Rote memory was the modality incorporated in every classroom for learning.
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Our First Challenge: Training

- ▶ Training challenges were even more complex in Deaf Mentor Training, where Oral Deaf Mentors had to lip read an American, and South African Sign Language (SASL) and Signed English Mentors had to gather information in training from an interpreter since training was not provided in SASL or Sim Com using South African Signs. There are also a variety of dialects in SASL, no research has been done, but fluent signers suggest there are probably as many as 6 or 7 dialects of SASL still used in South Africa.

What We Learned: Training

- ▶ Because there are few people with background in deaf education in the townships and varied areas in South Africa, training had to be extended to 7 days with intensive mentoring and ongoing training in areas of need for early interventionists working with families. We are hoping to establish a pre-service program that provides in depth training and information for the future.
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What We Learned: Training

- ▶ There are professional organizations in early childhood in South Africa that are not specific to children with disabilities. HI HOPES staff have affiliated themselves with these organizations and connect with them for staff development and collaboration.
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What We Learned: Training

- ▶ South Africans learn differently from Americans. Training and training activities had to be changed to better meet the learning abilities of South Africans.
- ▶ A “cultural broker” is a must! Dr. Claudine Storbeck, our accidental cultural broker, is a 4th generation South African, speaks three South African languages fluently, including SASL, and understands Deaf Education. The first training workshops held in South Africa were learning experiences for ALL of us!

What We Learned: Training

- ▶ New vocabulary has to be clarified and written down or at least discussed. Asking, “Does anyone have any questions?” or “Does that seem clear?” are a waste of time because admitting in front of a group that you don’t understand is not common in South Africa and not comfortable for a vast majority of adult learners. The trainer has to assume all concepts may be new to many of the participants.
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What We Learned: Training

- ▶ Participants benefit GREATLY by repeating the training two or three times. They would also benefit from classes in audiology and early childhood development prior to training. These are areas we are developing right now.
 - ▶ Buddy groups were created among participants once Parent Advisors and Deaf Mentors began serving families. In each group was at least one person with strong English skills so they could decipher materials and processes together and talk them through.
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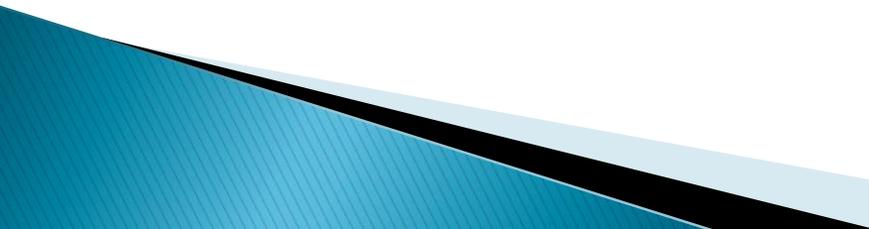
What We Learned: Training

- ▶ We brought in one of the Deaf Mentors who was trained in the first Deaf Mentor Training to assist with the next two Deaf Mentor Training workshops, then we trained her as the first South African Deaf Mentor Trainer. She knows SASL and all of the dialects of SASL and makes the curriculum come alive for participants.
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Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ There is no formal referral system follow-up for babies diagnosed with a hearing loss.
 - ▶ Newborn hearing screening is not mandated at all birthing hospitals in South Africa, and many babies in South African are not born in hospitals.
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Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ Parent Advisors struggled to put training into practice in the home, and were not always conveying appropriate information to families.
 - ▶ In South Africa in order to be truly accepted as a Parent Advisor in a home, you must be a member of the area where the child and family live and it helps if the race of the Parent Advisor is the same of that of the family.
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Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ Many South Africans do not own their own cars, making transportation to visits challenging.
 - ▶ Driving long distances to make a home visit is not the mentality of South Africans. Driving long distances for any reason is not highly accepted.
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Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ Family handouts and visuals were created only in English and Spanish, but most of the families served spoke English as a third or 4th language, not as their primary or secondary home language, so Parent Advisors struggled to explain the information and parents struggled to understand it.
- ▶ The Deaf Mentor Materials are based on American Sign Language and American Deaf culture, not SASL and South African Deaf Culture

Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ How do we best serve children with additional disabilities? SKI-HI only addresses these issues on a basic level, although many sections of the SKI-HI Curriculum can be used with these children and families, there was still much needed to serve these children and their families effectively.
 - ▶ Many areas are extremely unsafe, especially if visited at night.
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Our Next Challenge: Home Visits

- ▶ Home visits were often made to families who had very, very limited resources.

What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ EHDI South Africa was established in 2008 to begin a push for newborn hearing screening across South Africa and a hope of a stronger referral system for the country.
 - ▶ We let people know about HI HOPES services and families came! Lots of PR has to happen with any new program to get the word out there. Newspaper, T.V., radio, magazines...anywhere HI HOPES can get a word in, they do.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ One-on-one meetings, group meetings, and South African conferences with audiologists and SLPs as well as other early childhood educators have been essential to let the public know about HI HOPES. Ongoing efforts are constantly being made to collaborate and support the work already being done throughout South Africa for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ Pairing Parent Advisors together to make home visits on a regular basis is sometimes a necessity in some areas because of the safety issue. Police can be asked for help from time to time as well.

What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ We have continued to select Parent Advisors from remote areas, townships, or areas near squatters camps even though they do not have knowledge of deaf education or early intervention before they receive training because they will be accepted in the homes and in the community. They are then provided with lots of direct support and mentoring, and may also be paired with a more experienced Parent Advisor to improve their skills.
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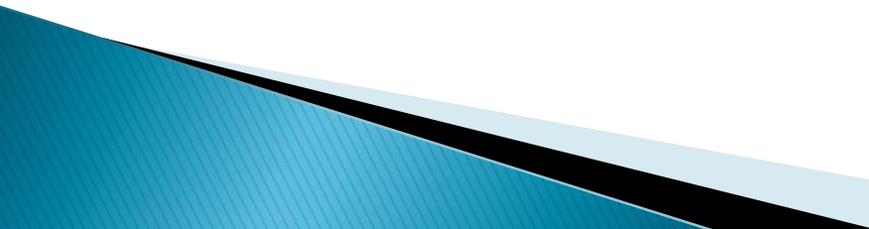
What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ Just as in the states, the initial SKI-HI Training is just a jump off point. No training can provide you with every skill you need to do a job. You have to learn “on the job”. Mentoring and supervision had to be implemented in order to help Parent Advisors learn how to do their jobs effectively.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ Mentoring has become a huge focus of the program. We have brought experienced supervisors/mentors from the US to work directly with select Parent Advisors in South Africa to build a strong mentoring/supervision program in South Africa. These efforts still continue today.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ The buddy group has also helped Parent Advisors as they learn how to be effective early intervention providers by supporting one another and role playing lessons with one another, learning new skills in the process.
 - ▶ On-going workshops were implemented to give more in-depth skills to Parent Advisors.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ For Parent Advisors who do not have cars, we provide assistance to pay for taxis. Those who do have cars are asked to work with families who are further away and they are paid an extra stipend to make the longer drive, but when possible we still hunt for a potential Parent Advisor from the area where we have a child and family.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ Our Deaf Mentor Trainer has adapted Deaf Mentor Training to include the South African Deaf community and Deaf culture, and we hope to obtain funding to translate all of the materials into South African Sign Language.
 - ▶ Individuals who have had SKI-HI Training and have special language translation skills have been selected to translate SKI-HI visuals and handouts in Zulu, Xhlosa, and Afrikaans, the three most dominant languages in South Africa.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ The best Parent Advisors in the program were hand selected to receive INSITE Training to help them deal more effectively with children who have multiple disabilities. The training was a huge success and we will begin a mentoring program in this area in the next year.
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What We Learned: Home Visits

- ▶ Parent Advisors in South Africa have learned that every parent communicates with his or her child everyday in daily routines and activities. If we focus on helping parents develop strategies to make the most of every language opportunity, the need for toys and other resources are not as necessary as some believe.
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