

Joseph Lee MacDonald, BSW, MAdEd

**Using Phenomenology and Action Research to Assist Adults with
Hearing Impairment to Achieve Positive Life Outcomes**

PhD

James Cook University

March 8, 2006

**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at James Cook University**

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Declaration of Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Human (1999), the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997), the James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics. Standard Practices and Guidelines (2001) and the James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H1351).

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Abstract

Progressive hearing impairment in adulthood is often accompanied by debilitating psychosocial problems including major disruptions to a person's ability to communicate orally. This research describes the story of how phenomenology and action research are employed in more visual ways with adults with degenerative hearing impairment in an attempt to enable them to accomplish more acceptable life outcomes. Descriptive analysis, in the form of dialogic, introspective and retrospective phenomenology, is used to capture a deep understanding of the pertinent life experiences of eight individuals who are hard of hearing. Individual action research case studies are then conducted with two members of the original sample. Information obtained from the descriptive analysis enables participants to identify a specific challenge to address in order to achieve a positive life outcome. The phenomenology-action research approach was found to be both suitable and effective for all individuals engaged in this study, particularly for those who completed the action research process. It is, therefore, recommended that further research and development be conducted into the collaborative use of this approach in which the rehabilitation professional works in close co-operation with the individual experiencing progressive hearing impairment to achieve more empowering and self-affirming life goals.

Table of Contents

Statement of Access	i
Declaration of Sources	ii
Declaration of Ethics.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents	vii

CHAPTER 1. RESEARCH FOCUS

Introduction	1
Definitions	2
Background.....	4
Research Statement	5
Research Focus	6
Purpose of Study.....	7
Importance of Study	8
Conceptual or Substantive Assumptions	9
Scope of Study.....	11
Limitations and Delimitations of Study	11
Methodology.....	12
Selection of Participants	12
Qualitative Research.....	13
Phenomenology	13
Research Design	15
Critical Reflection	17
Action Research.....	19

Ethics	23
Conclusion	24

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction	26
Definitions	28
Establishing the Need for the Study	30
Absence of Information for Hard of Hearing Individuals.....	31
Need for Professionals to be Aware	33
Recommendations for This Study	34
Toward a Phenomenological Study	35
Disability as a Social Construct.....	36
A Professional Paradigm of Disability	36
Defining Hearing Impairment as a Disability	37
Moving From a Medical Model to an Ecological Model: Challenging the Modernist Perspective.....	38
Phenomenology and Medicine.....	40
Postmodernist Challenge for Professionals	41
Hearing Impairment as an Individualised Phenomenon.....	42
Hearing Impairment as a Trauma	44
A Psychosocial Approach to Dealing with Issues of Hearing Impairment.....	45
Psychosocial Effects of Disability and Hearing Impairment on Self	45
Fear of Loss of Control	46
Fear of Loss of Self-Image.....	47
Fear of Dependency	47
Fear of Stigma	48
Fear of Isolation	50
Fear of Abandonment	51
Fear of Expressed Emotion	52

Fear of Loss	53
Other Psychosocial Problems Associated with Hearing Impairment.....	54
Depression as a Psychosocial Effect of Hearing Impairment	54
Uncertainty as a Psychosocial Effect of Hearing Impairment	55
Demoralization Syndrome and Hearing Impairment	56
Effects of Hearing Impairment on Family or Significant Others.....	57
Previous Life Experience and Hearing Impairment.....	57
Family and Significant Others	58
Unique Aspects of Hearing Impairment.....	60
Invisibility of Individuals With Hearing Impairment	60
The Insidious Nature of Hearing Impairment	61
The Value of Empathy in Professional Practice	62
Empathy and Medical Practice	62
Empathy and Professional Practice	64
Critical Reflection as a Means for Gaining a Deeper Understanding	65
Critical Reflection and Professional Practice	65
Critical Reflection with Clients.....	68
Therapeutic Interventions.....	69
Client-Centred Interventions	69
Involving Significant Others in the Therapeutic Process.....	70
Other Approaches and Interventions	71
Need for Trained Therapists	72
Giving Voice Through Narration: A Therapeutic Intervention.....	74
Self-Determination	77
Patient, Agent and Locus of Control	77
Gaining Agency through Collaboration	78
Empowerment	80
Transition	83

A State of Becoming	83
Research with Adults with Disabilities Using Phenomenological Or Associated Approaches	86
Summary	88

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction	90
What is Phenomenological Research?	91
The Goal of Phenomenological Research	92
Selecting a Phenomenological Approach	92
Research Methods	93
Study Examples	93
Selection of Participants	95
Length of Study	96
Reduction/Epoche/Bracketing	97
The Interview	101
The Hermeneutic Circle	106
Analysis of the Data	109
Summary	113

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction	116
Introduction of Candidates	117
Recording the Interviews	119
Transcribing the Interviews	119
Reviewing the Transcriptions	120
Length and Frequency of Interviews	121
Special Note	121
Legend	121
Notes From My Diary	122

Roxanne	124
Identification of Hearing Impairment	124
External Locus of Control.....	125
Employment	126
Adjustment to Hearing Impairment	127
Compensatory Strategies	127
Isolation.....	128
Self-Image/Self-Confidence	130
Independence and Internal Locus of Control	134
Stressors.....	135
Summary.....	135
Aaron.....	136
Identification of Hearing Impairment	136
Independence	136
Schooling	137
Isolation/Alienation.....	137
Imprisonment	138
Peer Relationships.....	139
Teasing and Bullying.....	140
Self-Image.....	141
Locus of Control.....	142
Compensatory Strategies	143
Compassion.....	145
Critical Reflection	145
Summary.....	146
Sherry.....	147
Identification of Hearing Impairment	147
Teasing	148

Schooling	150
Hearing Aids	151
Isolation.....	151
Family Issues	154
University/Education	158
Employment.....	159
Invisibility.....	161
Control	164
Summary.....	165
Rod.....	165
Identification of Hearing Impairment	165
Denial.....	167
Pride.....	169
Isolation, Loneliness and Alienation.....	170
Employment.....	172
Compensatory Strategies	173
Music.....	173
Family Issues	174
Changes After Being Fitted With Hearing Aids	174
Regrets Over Lost Time and Experiences	175
Insights.....	176
Bringing Hearing Impairment into Perspective.....	179
Summary.....	179
Mindy.....	180
Identification of Hearing Impairment	180
Medical Professionals and Audiologists.....	181
Compensatory Strategies	182
Learning.....	186

Self-Image/Confidence	186
Imprisonment/Escape	187
Stigma–Ridicule and Teasing	187
Minimising of Hearing Impairment	188
Family Relations	190
Adjustments to Digital Hearing Aids.....	190
Counselling	191
Advantages to Hearing Impairment	192
Positive Aspects of Hearing Impairment and the Use of Hearing Aids	192
Relationship Issues.....	193
Acceptance of Hearing Impairment and Accommodations	194
Exhaustion and Fatigue	196
Misunderstanding by Society	197
Critical Reflection	198
Invisibility of Hearing Impairment	199
Isolation/Alienation.....	200
Liberalism versus Autocracy in the Classroom	201
Selective Hearing.....	202
Social Activities	202
Using Disability for Self-Serving Purposes	203
Locus of Control.....	203
Future Plans.....	204
Summary.....	205
Nils	205
Introduction	205
Identification of Hearing Impairment	206
Stigma/Ridicule/Teasing/Discrimination.....	206
Invisibility of Hearing Loss	208

Tinnitus – A Catch-22	210
Working Environments.....	211
Employment.....	211
Medical/Psychological Ramifications	212
Audiologists.....	212
Relationship Issues with Family	213
Isolation.....	214
Critical Reflection	215
Plans Altered.....	216
Music.....	217
Summary.....	218
Andre.....	219
Frustration.....	219
Identification of Hearing Impairment	222
Alienation	223
Stigma.....	228
Self-Image/Self-Confidence	231
Employment/Advancement	236
Children.....	239
Relationships	240
Denial/Avoidance	241
Fatigue	244
External Locus of Control.....	244
Internal Locus of Control.....	246
Acceptance	249
Critical Reflection	249
Relationship, Marriage and Communication	252
Summary.....	255

Sharon.....	256
Identification of Hearing Impairment	256
Isolation.....	257
Fear of Loss of Control	259
Denial.....	261
Stigma/Ridicule/Teasing	263
Compensatory Behaviours.....	265
Self-Image.....	266
Music.....	267
Critical Reflection	268
Independence	269
Uncertainty.....	269
Employment.....	270
Adjustment to Digital Hearing Aids	272
Empowerment.....	272
Summary.....	273
Conclusions.....	274

CHAPTER 5. ACTION RESEARCH

Introduction	276
What is Action Research?	276
What is the Goal of Action Research?	277
Selecting an Action Research Prototype.....	278
Action Research: An Educational Process.....	279
Types of Action Research.....	279
History of Action Research	280
Critical Thinking	282
Critical Reflection	282
Critical Self-Reflection.....	283

Transformation Perspective	285
Role of the Facilitator	285
Conceptual or Substantive Assumptions	287
Action Research: Methodology	288
Assumptions About the Action Research Prototype	289
The Action Research Prototype	290
Step 1: Identifying a Challenge.....	290
Step 2: Defining the Project.....	292
Step 3: Establishing Measurements	293
Step 4: Implementation and Observation	295
Step 5: Evaluation.....	296
Andre.....	296
Step 1 – Identifying a Challenge.....	297
Step 2 – Defining the Project	299
Step 3 – Measures.....	300
Step 4 – Implementation and Observation.....	300
Step 5 – Evaluation.....	303
How This Approach is Different	306
Summary.....	309
Postscript	310
Sharon.....	311
Step 1 – Problem Posing	312
Step 2 – Defining the Project	312
Step 3 – Measurements.....	314
Step 4 – Implementation and Observation.....	315
Step 5 – Evaluation.....	318
Discussion.....	325
Summary.....	328

CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction	329
Summary	329
Chapter 1	329
Chapter 2	333
Chapter 3	336
Chapter 4	341
Roxanne	342
Aaron	343
Sherry	344
Rod	345
Mindy	346
Nils	347
Andre	349
Sharon	350
Chapter 5	351
Andre	353
Sharon	354
Conclusions	355
Roxanne	356
Aaron	357
Sherry	358
Rod	358
Mindy	359
Nils	361
Andre	361
Sharon	362
Recommendations	368

REFERENCES	371
APPENDIX 1	392
APPENDIX 2	393
APPENDIX 3	395
APPENDIX 4	396
APPENDIX 5	397