Abstract:

Accessible education for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing often varies depending on the characteristics of the group members, the communication modality of the participants, available technology, and the cognitive demands of the instructional content. With the recent increase in the use of cochlear implants by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, educational institutions may need to think carefully about how to create accessible learning environments for these students. This presentation will address two questions: (a) What service or access issues arise when students with cochlear implants attend postsecondary institutions? and (b) What are the unique access features and challenges of an online learning environment at the postsecondary level? Drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data from professionals working at over 100 institutions, this presentation offers diverse perspectives on the types of unique challenges that may arise for students with cochlear implants in various face-to-face and online learning formats.

Biography:

I am fortunate to be a part of several projects that investigate issues of equity and access in education. I am a national expert on issues related to standardized assessment and students who are deaf or hard of hearing, particularly in the context of accountability reforms such as No Child Left Behind.

I explore issues related to accessible assessments such as the effects of accommodations or item modifications on test scores for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In a further extension of my focus on access on a national level, I am currently the Associate Director for Research and Evidence Synthesis for pepnet2, a federally funded project to improve system capacity to support transition to postsecondary settings for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

My research also focuses on increasing access through innovations in instruction. I am a part of an interdisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners examining drama-based instruction as a strategy to change the learning culture of schools and to effectively engage all students in the learning process.