

## Honors Committee Guidance to Students

The Honors Committee has approved ten categories of senior projects/theses, although of course students may combine genres.

- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Scholarly (qualitative)   | 6. Experiential Learning |
| 2. Scientific (quantitative) | 7. Action Research       |
| 3. Creative                  | 8. Leadership Portfolio  |
| 4. Pedagogical               | 9. Wellness Project      |
| 5. Service Learning          | 10. Culture Project      |

The following definitions are provided to the students at the beginning of their fall term thesis prep class. They create the thesis/project proposal according to these guidelines.

### **What is a Thesis/Senior Project?**

The purpose of a thesis is to articulate and investigate a question that is both personally stimulating, useful to others, and presented in discipline-specific ways. It is a culmination of the student's unbiased research and balanced analysis, sensitive to the arguments on both sides of the rhetorical equation. Students should start not with a presumption but with an observation, then devise a way to seek explanations for that observation.

These are the components of a thesis proposal:

- **Abstract:** a thumbnail sketch of the proposal: What questions will you explore? A summary of the main point(s) of each major section of the proposal; not an introduction but rather a synopsis of the project.
- **Personal Interest:** discuss any relevant connections between your project and such things as courses taken, personal or work experiences, hobbies, volunteerism, study abroad, etc.
- **Larger Context:** the "so what" & "who cares" section. When completing this section, it will help to address some of the following questions: Who is the audience? Why is this work important to them? How could your results/project contribute to the discipline? References to two scholarly sources are required in this section.
- **Methods/Process:** What are you doing? How – specifically! – will you do it? Do you have sufficient resources? What will be the end-result? Make sure to define any discipline-specific terminology.
- **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations:** minimum of 8 sources, with 4 brief annotations.

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**Acknowledging African American Contributions to  
American Horsemanship: A Revision of Common Perceptions  
Through Visual Art**

Thesis Advisor: Pending, Has Asked Sociology & Art Profs

Student Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Thesis/Project Genres: Creative / Scholarly

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**Abstract:**

This scholarly and creative project will examine what African American representation and presence in horse-related fields looks like today, and then research the historical circumstances that have led to this presence. Western horsemanship, the field associated with the cowboy and rodeo industries, and horse racing will make up the majority of my focus. I will then compare accurate historical and contemporary African American presence in these fields to corresponding media and artistic representations of African Americans in horsemanship. Finally, I will use the context and understanding that I gain from my research to make my own art which aspires to correct some of the historical erasure that perpetuates and justifies racial bias in modern equine settings. The art itself will be made to mirror 19th century cowboy art, which has a very classic American West aesthetic. The first part of this project will be largely research based, looking at both popular and scholarly sources, and the second part will be art based. Three relatively large pieces will be done in a watercolor medium, as this is where I feel most comfortable. This project stems from a place of personal interest with the intent to contribute to and correct perceptions about African Americans and their relationship to horses today.

**Personal Interest:**

I've always had a deep love of horses, even though I never really came in contact with them growing up. I was born and raised in an urban middle class Seattle, so I was acutely aware from a young age how *inaccessible* horses were. This didn't hinder my fascination though, and I ate up any horse-related content I could get my hands on into my early teens. Movies like *Spirit*, which from an adult perspective offers a genuine critique of westward expansion and culture, and *Secretariat*, became major influences on who I am today. The few times I did get to be around horses were at state fairs, where the stables would usually be open for spectators to wander around. I remember being in awe at how I was dwarfed by the draft horses, and how gentle they were. Even though I was a complete outsider in the environment, looking in at the 4-H girls with no small

amount of jealousy, I was so excited to just be there. I found a major outlet for my passion, which I obviously couldn't express with real horses, in drawing them. The focus on African American representation in my thesis is less based on interactions in my childhood, although Secretariat's groom, a Black man, was always a character that interested me deeply in the movie because of his relationship with the horse.

I shelved my passion for horses as a teenager. I had other interests that were more prominent in my life, and although my art during that period still represents horses sometimes, they aren't nearly as common. Moving to Monmouth, somewhere significantly more rural than Seattle, and becoming close friends with someone who is deeply involved with and knowledgeable about horses were major factors in reigniting my interest. I've had the opportunity to walk through a few different barns -- a smaller one mostly boarding paint horses and a larger veterinary and racing facility -- and just being around the horses, their smell and their sounds and their soft noses, was so good for me. This renewed interest in horses was picked up by my social media's algorithm, so I started getting a lot of horse related content on apps that I use frequently like Instagram and TikTok. At one point I came across a video on TikTok by user Justnicky21. His account mostly features himself and his Tennessee walking horse Sunny, and his more viral videos are filmed from a car while he rides bareback with a bitless bridle, which struck me. I immediately questioned the ethics of the situation. Was it healthy to ride the horse like this? Then I checked myself and realized (to my own discomfort) that some of this concern might have come from the rider being a Black man, something that I don't often see depicted, and that what he was doing was actually an incredible feat of horsemanship and a token to his bond with Sunny. This brief interaction really prompted me to think more critically about how Black Americans might be unfairly perceived in the horse world, despite deep historical ties to the animals. We don't see Black cowboys in mainstream western film, literature, and art, even though they clearly played a part in the history and are still a part of the rodeo and equestrian worlds today. I realize that as a white woman, it is not my place to speak for these people, and that is not what I want to do. In light of the last few years and what I've learned, I know I need to be very careful about not overstepping. As someone who's removed from the horse world though, I think I can offer a unique perspective on what erasure looks like to people who are only vaguely involved with horses, and perhaps attempt to rectify and further understand this misconception.

My current career path does not involve horses, art, or technically any official interest in social justice (obviously from a moral perspective, this is a value I will strive for no matter where I end up). However, these are all things that I someday hope to fill personal areas of my life with, and I really hope that someday when I have an adult job and adult money, I'll be able to learn and experience horses in a more hands-on way. I don't even know if I really want to get great at riding -- it's intimidating to think about, honestly. As much as I like horses I also realize that they're 1200 lb animals who aren't

always gentle or predictable. At this point, my project is mostly just a culmination of some of my lasting passions. I know I will learn from it though, and hopefully help others learn, and I think that that alone makes it worthwhile.

### **Larger Context:**

In most aspects of culture and lifestyle in the U.S., Black Americans have been historically disenfranchised, robbed of opportunity, and denied the visibility necessary to acknowledge their cultural contributions in a way that does them justice. This historical erasure is especially apparent in the field of horsemanship, where modern day accessibility issues combine with Jim Crow era expulsion from the industry to create a widespread and wholly neglected understanding of African Americans and their association with horses. With this in mind, the intended audience for this discussion and subsequent art will be those who have a more casual understanding of horse-related sport, with an intent to rectify some of the white dominated narratives that distort perceptions of who “horsemen” actually are.

In recent years, plenty of popular sources have taken steps to shed light on the contributions of Black jockeys, trainers, and cowboys, but Tracy Owens-Patton and Sally M. Schedlock state that “Nevertheless, most visual images in the literature do not show the diversity of rodeo in the United States historically or currently. In fact, due to white supremacist U.S. law and practices, ethnic minorities have had, and continue to have, a complicated role in rodeo competition” (2011). This is an unfortunate truth that shows both the continued effects of racial prejudice in the realm of western horsemanship and how this relates to media depictions of minorities in the industry. The media that we consume makes it easier to excuse prejudice in the industry because it fails to acknowledge historical Black presence at all. It creates an environment where African Americans are more likely to be seen as out of place when the reality is that horsemanship is just as much in their lineage as any white individual. Michael Leeds and Hugh Rockoff note how Jim Crow America cut Black jockeys away from their livelihoods, stating that “The simple fact is that African American jockeys were forced out of American racing at the end of the 19th century despite their stellar record” (2020). Essentially, media erasure is a continued contributor to a longstanding and inaccurate history of Black horsemen that continues to erase them from a narrative from which they were physically removed from over a century ago.

The tension between the historical reality versus the romanticized, white-washed fantasy is particularly apparent when one considers the cowboy art genre, which began appearing during the 19th century in the western United States. For many, it is probably these artworks that come to mind when one visualizes the traditional mounted cowboy. In 1992, J. Gray Sweeney published a piece that took an in-depth look at the problematic undertones of the art and its consumers, looking at the racist depiction of

Indigenous Americans specifically, and noted that the very concept of analyzing the work critically, or taking “a revisionist approach to western American art hit a very sore nerve among conservatives. The cultural values exposed here are racism, nationalism and nostalgia.” It is for this reason that a revisionist approach *must* be taken in order to create a more complete picture (both literally and figuratively) of African American horsemen and their contributions. It is my hope and intent that in doing so, I can contribute to an improved widespread historical and modern day acknowledgment.

### **Methods/Process:**

This thesis will be a combination of scholarly research and creative work, as it will have both anthropological and original artistic elements. Fully fleshed out, the project will be an in-depth analysis of African American representation in North American horse-related industries juxtaposed with how historical and modern media and art choose to depict it. I will then consider how these fantastical renderings could potentially be altered to more accurately represent history.

The first part of this project will be to research and understand what the African American presence looks like in horsemanship today. I intend to look at various divisions of the industry, such as rodeo/Western style competition, racing, and English divisions. The goal of this portion of the paper will be to unpack and understand Black perspectives and presence, as well as to recognize current barriers and how the overall experience is different from the majority white population in the industry. Much of this section will likely be anecdotal, with an intent to research and report what Black individuals are saying about their respective divisions, and better understand how they got to where they are.

Next, I will research the historical events that have set the scene for modern day Black horsemen and horsewomen. Because the focus will be specific to the United States, this section will have a strong focus on the cowboy and horse racing industries, as these were two major businesses that historically called for the presence of enslaved people early in the country’s formation. It will first delve into how the practice of slavery forced African Americans to interact with horses and how generational expertise during this period of enslavement gave way for continued work amongst horses after abolition. It will then touch on the major factors, one of which being Jim Crow, that led to a sudden and rapid decline of Black horsemanship around the turn of the century. The point of these first two sections in relation to the later creative parts of my thesis is that they will aspire to paint an accurate and realistic picture of what historical and modern Black presence in horsemanship looks like. I will then contrast this with historical depictions of Black horsemen in media and art with the intent of understanding how erasure from popular sources impacts a more widespread public perception of the relationship between African Americans and horses. Although this

conversation could be held around virtually any form of media, my main focus in this thesis will be on 19th century western art.

I will attempt to understand this art stylistically through scholarly interpretations and unpack some of the successful artists during this era's motivations and intentions. Once I have an understanding of these traditional influences, I will begin the process of making original pieces that more accurately depict the historical Black presence in relation to horses. Currently, I intend to make three pieces, and although subject matter will vary slightly based on the information gathered during the research section of this thesis, they will all focus on an American West style. Major artists who pioneered this genre include Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, and Charles Schreyvogel and it is with their works (and the works of similar contemporaries) in mind that I will create my own pieces. The general scenery, color palette, light and shadows, and depiction of horses will all be adopted in some manner from their work, as this will hopefully evoke in the viewer the same feelings of nostalgia that the original pieces draw out. However, I will also be making some major changes. The most obvious one will be the inclusion of Black cowboys, who, mounted independently on their horses, will be central to the subject matter. I don't intend to depict real historical figures, but research in this area may change this. A further change will be in the activities of the subjects. Remington, Russell, and Schreyvogel's works are very dynamic, with a tendency to depict violent (and tragic) interactions with Indigenous Americans. This is not my focus or intent. Rather, I want to depict the relationship between horse and man in my paintings at a moment of peace or rest. Although I believe many of the painters at this time were working in oil, I will use watercolor on a sketch base because it is the medium I am more familiar with.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Cascone, Sarah. "A Plagiarism Row Ignited Over Paintings of a Black Cowboy at the Guggenheim. Now, Both Works Will Be Shown Side by Side." *Artnet News*. 13 July 2022. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/black-cowboy-guggenheim-bilbao-plagiarism-2146338>. Accessed 25 October 2022.

Enelow-Snyder, Sarah. "Teaching the next generation of Black horseback riders." *The Washington Post Magazine*, 2 August 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2022/08/02/black-horseback-riders-history/>. Accessed 25 October 2022.

This article, which relies on personal and individual experiences, touches on modern day areas where horses play a role in traditionally African American communities. It discusses how introducing young people to horses and opportunities with horses can be enriching on both an involvement level and a cultural learning level.

Although mostly anecdotal, this article has a few major things I want to consider. First, by discussing Ahesahmahk Dahn's experience with horses from childhood, it fills in some gaps for me that appear between modern day and the decline in the demand for cowboys and Black jockeys. We see horses being a part of everyday life for Dahn from childhood, understood especially in the context of the Great Migration. This article also brings up an interesting point about the origins of the very word "cowboy," and how it in and of itself might reference the historical presence and racism toward Black men in the industry.

Gray Sweeney, J. "Racism, Nationalism, and Nostalgia in Cowboy Art." *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1992, pp. 67–80. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1360489>. Accessed 25 Oct. 2022.

This article takes a revisionist stance as it looks at traditional cowboy art, produced around the turn of the century, and considers its impact with a critical eye. Even in relatively modern times (1992, when this article was published), people are quick to defend the work on a basis of nostalgia. Realism is a major component in these pieces, and Sweeney proposes that it is this supposed realism that actually disguises how glorified and inaccurate the art really is. We think that because the art appears heavily detailed, that it is exactly what the artist perceived when this could not be further from the truth.

This is an interesting article, in the sense that it is more focused on how traditional cowboy art, which emerged in the late 19th century with cowboys, depicts indigenous peoples grossly at times. However, it is relevant to me in its discussion of the values that the art often stands for today- racism, nationalism and nostalgia- and stylistically how it captures this energy. It is also helpful because it discusses major cowboy artists at the time (Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, and Charles Schreyvogel), and this gives me a reference from which to base an analysis of this art and potentially create my own modernizing that style.

Hall, Azure. "Black History Month: Black Cowboys on the American Frontier." *U.S. Bureau of Land Management*, 22 February 2022. <https://www.blm.gov/blog/2022-02-22/black-history-month-black-cowboys-american-frontier>. Accessed 25 October 2022.

Leeds, Michael & Rockoff, Hugh. "JIM CROW IN THE SADDLE: THE EXPULSION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN JOCKEYS FROM AMERICAN RACING." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*. December 2020.



[https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w28167/w28167.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28167/w28167.pdf).

Accessed 25 October 2022.

Mooney, Katherine. "Author Talks About The History Of Black Equestrian Erasure" *All Things Considered*, interviewed by Ailsa Chang. National Public Radio, 26 July 2021. Transcript, <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/26/1020866532/author-talks-about-the-history-of-black-equestrian-erasure>. Accessed 24 October 2022.

In this interview, author Katherine Mooney provides a brief summary of her research findings on the historical relationship between African Americans and thoroughbred race horses in America. Up until the end of the civil war in 1865, many of the most skilled individuals involved in the racing business were also enslaved. This makes sense because wealthy southerners could afford to fund both elite horses and own the people that cared for and rode them. Horse racing was a high-profile sport at the time, so successful but enslaved (or recently emancipated) jockeys and trainers could reach a status of celebrity, which was concerning to white competition. Black individuals could not be in a position to be idolized, and Jim Crow segregation took them out of the spotlight around the turn of the 20th century.

This interview is really helpful to me because it provides a good basis for understanding a major area of African American involvement in relation to the horse business, and it helps to set the stage for how and why we perceive an absence of Black equestrians today. Although there's a clear generational connection between the people who were involved in the business hundreds of years ago and today, and likely a wealth of knowledge passed down, Mooney states that often, "associations were informal or not discussed."

Nodjimbadem, Katie. "The Lesser-Known History of African-American Cowboys." *Smithsonian Magazine*, 13 February 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lesser-known-history-african-american-cowboys-180962144/>. Accessed 24 October 2022.

This article discusses the role of African American cowboys in Texas, specifically, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the circumstances that led to their prominence during the era. Because Texas was a confederate slave state during the civil war, white supporters of slavery left to fight, resulting in a shortage of workers. Enslaved Black men found themselves trained as cowboys, and after the war and emancipation, there was still demand for their skills and work (lack of railroads meant cattle drives were critical). Naturally, this meant that they were also skilled horse people.

This article is relevant to me because it not only discusses the prominence of Black cowboys and explains their rightful involvement in rodeo culture later down the line, but it also shows the extent of cultural erasure Black equestrians have historically faced in this division. Black cowboys were common and lived and worked the same heavily romanticized rugged lifestyle that white cowboys did, but we rarely see them represented in the media. I like this article because it also provides pictures, names of specific cowboys, and discusses their roles in rodeo culture today.

Scherer, Lauri. “How and Why Black Riders Were Driven from American Racetracks.” *National Bureau of Economic Research*. January 2021. <https://www.nber.org/digest/202101/how-and-why-black-riders-were-riven-american-racetracks>. Accessed October 25, 2022.

Tracy Owens Patton, and Sally M. Schedlock. “LET’S GO, LET’S SHOW, LET’S RODEO: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE HISTORY OF RODEO.” *The Journal of African American History*, vol. 96, no. 4, 2011, pp. 503–21. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.5323/jafriamerhist.96.4.0503>. Accessed 25 Oct. 2022.

This article examines the myth of the rodeo cowboy, and the whitewashed all-American values he stands for while ignoring BIPOC contributions to the rodeo culture we know today. Although the intent of this paper wasn’t to discuss horsemanship specifically, it proves to me that talking about horses is inherent to conversations about Black cowboys.

Although this paper focuses on rodeo and cowboy culture in general more broadly than just horsemanship, it discusses some critical points relating to my preliminary thesis on the erasure of African Americans. The authors write that “the information about African American cowboys has been ignored or purposely left out of most accounts in favor of white cowboys in the written and visual history of rodeo,” with visual being a key component for me, considering my interest in artistic representation.

JA /

## **Leadership and Battling Bipolar Disorder**

Thesis Advisor: Anna Mahony, Business Division

Student Pronouns: he/him

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### **Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Leadership Portfolio**

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#### **Abstract:**

For my thesis project I will be creating a leadership portfolio to analyze (and also strategize against) bipolar disorder's effects on leadership. Leaders have always been portrayed as strong and unwavering. It's because of this fact that we overlook the wellbeing of those who lead. There is a large population of leaders who struggle with mental illness. I will be using the works of various leadership authors as well as athletes to articulate how crucial it is to control one's behavior and mood in roles of leadership. Each of the core texts I will be using will articulate the effects of mental instability within leadership. Per the leadership portfolio requirements, the purpose of my project will be to analyze texts, then apply methodology to my past leadership experiences to create a framework that can be applied to my future careers and endeavors. My end goal is to have a digitally published project composed of works and best practices that address how Bipolar disorder symptoms impact one's ability to lead.

#### **Personal Interest:**

Bipolar disorder is a mental health illness that causes extreme mood swings that can include sweeping changes in behaviors or actions. I am part of the 2.8 percent of Americans that struggle with this disorder. Over time I have found that the best way to combat this is through group activity and interaction. Through Middle and High School I started to adopt the mindset of constant participation to keep busy and distract myself from my mood changes. I was a part of mentoring, tutoring, sports, school government, and other volunteering type activities. I was able to use these activities to distract myself from self-reflection and examination, but soon the activities became a heavy influence on my mood swings. The more experience I had in my activities, the more I was put into leadership roles. I was put into stressful situations with none of the stability or consistency tools that I needed to lead effectively. Reflecting on my past I realized that while I may have been able to imitate a leader I do not feel that I demonstrated its qualities. I appreciate having the leadership portfolio option to finally do this important work of self-reflection, coupled with best practices drawn from influential, hand-picked leaders.

For me, COVID 19 caused a blank spot in my leadership resume. It limited my ability to get involved with new programs, and was an easy way to be less involved. Currently in college I have accomplished a fraction of what I had accomplished in high school. In high school my biggest leadership roles were found in student government and underclassmen mentoring. In student government I was a rally commissioner and a board member for dances and banquets. My responsibilities included planning, budgeting, prep, and performance. In underclassmen mentoring I would plan orientation events and check-ins to make sure that kids were acclimating well to high school. I also was a certified tutor and was given groups of kids to aid. I was also a part of AVID, a college prep program and I was a part of the interview committee to help decide on incoming students to be a part of the program. Throughout that time I also participated in volunteering for the church, school, and town events.

Now in college my biggest leadership role has come from the athletic department. Off the field I have done cold calls for fundraising and helped organize recruiting and team events. For the recruiting events I was in charge of assigning incoming players to older athletes, and helping give a tour of the WOU campus. For team events I helped arrange senior night by gathering and organizing player guests for the sideline at the game. I also helped organize a team camp for hopeful WOU football players. For the team camp I hired workers for various jobs from parking to registration, and then made sure I had camp branded shirts and prizes for the camp participants and staff.

My personal experience with leadership and working with my own bipolar disorder will be the focus of my project. I will apply the experiences of others that have suffered in a similar way to come to a strategic solution on how to lead while combating the symptoms of bipolarism. In my personal experience I have found that a set structure helps to minimize the negative consequences of bipolarism, and in my thesis I would like that to be demonstrated. I think the greatest tool in being a good leader is being able to self reflect, and analyze and compare your own experiences. This project will help me to gather different ideologies and concepts from those who have lifetimes worth of experience, so then I can compare it to my own experiences. In the future I hope to be someone that can demonstrate how to take on bipolarism while continuing to be a successful leader.

### **Larger Context:**

In the modern era, leaders are overly exposed to stress that contributes to anxiety. Anxiety paired with Bipolar disorder can result in negative consequences for not only the leader themselves, but the group they are trying to lead. It has always been a common expectation that leaders be the strongest and most secure of the group. "All leaders experience fear. They feel that clutch in their gut, the rush of energy, the quickening of the heart....This is fight or flight"(Lombardi 340). Leadership in itself is a

daunting task, and this is before you combine it with Bipolar disorder. But the goal for someone who suffers from Bipolar disorder should not be to ignore or hide leadership, but understand how to combat the expectations and anxieties that come along with it.

Bipolar disorder, while defined, does not tell the full story of someone's experience. Each case of bipolar disorder is different from the last; In an article written by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) it is written that Bipolar disorder can lay dormant or at an unnoticeable level until triggered. "Thus, a person's handling of stress may also play a role in the development of the illness" (NAMI). Putting people that are predisposed, or suffer from bipolar disorder, in leadership roles is a quick way to induce stress. Ideally my research will be a helpful resource for the population of leaders that struggle with bipolar disorder in hopes to give them a framework on how to fight the symptoms. With Bipolarism being so unique, there is a constant need to record new ways to strategize against it.

Although the world has progressed in accepting the effect of mental illness, and more specifically Bipolar disorder, the base of knowledge continues to evolve. The hope is to discover how bipolar disorder impacts leadership experiences. My goal is not to pursue a scholarly study of bipolar disorder but rather to examine the words of proven leaders who have dealt with mental illness. It is through a reflection of past leaders, and a deeper knowledge of bipolar disorder that we can hope to help support future leaders. Brian Dawkins, NFL Hall of Famer, states that, "It's not as taboo as it used to be. In the past, if someone did that, people would say 'he's just not tough enough'". Dawkins furthers my argument addressing the strength expectations of leaders. His book talks about the negative effects of ignoring mental illness and bipolar disorder. It is too often that leaders find themselves in a moment of vulnerability and are criticized for it. My project will hope to normalize the impacts of bipolar disorder in hopes to open conversations for support.

Through my thesis and personal experience, I hope to provide leaders who suffer from bipolarism a framework on how to handle the symptoms of the disorder as well as continuing to be successful in their leadership. Similarly my goal is to inform those who don't suffer from bipolarism on what it looks and feels like to have the disorder while leading.

### **Methods/Process:**

For my thesis I will create a framework to help leaders that suffer from bipolar disorder to help strategize against the negative effects of bipolar disorder. I will gather texts by people who have lived through mental illness in a leadership setting, as well as writings by acclaimed authors who have documented the effects of inconsistent leadership styles. With this knowledge I will reflect upon my own challenges with

leadership, so that I will be able to contextualize and create a written framework to apply to future leadership experiences.

Per the leadership portfolio requirements, the first part of my project will consist of written analysis of at least five books that relate to leadership and the consequences of Bipolar disorder. For example, in Brian Dawkins biography (*My Journey to Canton and Beyond*) he talks about his ongoing battle with severe depression stemming from bipolarism. He is a Hall of Fame football player who was seen as one of the greatest leaders in the league, but his stress of failing was a constant reminder of his bipolar disorder. At one point, he states, "I didn't want to make a mistake, because I didn't want players to get mad at me." In his book he talks about how the high expectations lead to additional stress and anxiety that impact leadership. In my core texts I will possibly have two more biographies by sports figures and two academic texts which are more of a textbook to leadership. I will use the texts in order to demonstrate the importance of self-reflection when dealing with bipolar disorder. I believe that the weaker the base the easier it is to crumble under the pressures and expectations that stand in front of you.

In the second half of my project I will focus on my experiences of leadership from 2019 to present. In this section I will examine the successes and failures of my past experiences, and use the readings to see what I could do differently moving forward. My past experiences will include my time spent planning events in student government, being a part of the interview committee for my high school AVID program, and planning a team camp for WOU's football program. In each of these instances I have had to develop leadership and organizational behaviors to combat my bipolar disorder. For example, knowing that overwhelming myself with a large task can trigger mood swings, so in order to avoid it I would break down projects into small obtainable tasks. Similarly my social anxiety can also contribute to mood swings, so anytime I was put into a public speaking or large group setting I would make sure I was well versed in what I was talking about. This made it feel as though I could recite a script instead of fumbling my words and thoughts in front of people.

In the final part of my project I will use the knowledge and experience I have gathered through reflection and reading to create a framework on how to be a successful leader even through the consequences of bipolar disorder. Throughout my leadership experiences I have found that Bipolar disorder can exaggerate the effects of stress and anxiety, but in this project I will hopefully be able to construct a new way of combating stress in order to be successful. My end goal is to create an example of how to combat bipolar disorder in order to maintain quality and successful leadership. I will demonstrate for those who read this project how to build a stable foundation so that your leadership will never shake. My hope is that the stability of one's goals is what will help them to achieve success in whatever leadership setting they are in.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

“Bipolar Disorder.” NAMI, NAMI, Aug. 2017, <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Bipolar-Disorder>.

Bryant, Kobe. *The Mamba Mentality: How I Play*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.

This book's main focus is to give the reader an understanding of Kobe Bryant's lifestyle and mindset as he approaches the game of basketball. It demonstrates the effects of an isolated leader who attacks everything he does. Because of this there are plenty of good examples of self initiative and motivation. Kobe was a leader who went unappreciated, because of his aggressive demeanor. That being said the book does not really take an academic or ideological approach to leadership. In Any sense it is just a biography and insight into the mind of one of the most obsessed competitive athletes of all time. It's a book that shares and demonstrates what it takes to lead by example.

For my thesis I would use his experiences to demonstrate how even an extreme approach of isolation and hostility leadership can still work when consistent. My goal for my thesis is to demonstrate how structure combats the consequences of bipolarism, and I think that using one of the most meticulous and successful leaders of all is a good example of structure. This book gives deeper insight into the preparation of how Kobe leads. I think that him being the type of media and sports icon that he was, gives validation for the importance of analyzing his methods

Connors, Christopher D. *Emotional Intelligence for the Modern Leader: A Guide to Cultivating Effective Leadership and Organization*. Rockridge Press, 2021.

This Source is an academic breakdown of emotional stability as a leader. Written as much more of a textbook each chapter gives various approaches to key categories that are required in leadership. I would mainly be using the second chapter of the book as it is a focus on self-awareness and management. This book will be extremely helpful in demonstrating the importance of self-reflection before trying to lead groups. Being able to understand one's own motivations, strengths, and weaknesses is crucial in demonstrating stability in a leadership role.

I think this book will help in strategizing for ways to lead. More specifically, the effects of mental illness or mood instability when trying to communicate and cooperate with others. I can easily apply emotional intelligence to understanding your own symptoms of bipolarism. Being intelligent when it comes to your own

self is a key pillar in maintaining a structure to ward off the instability of bipolarism

Dawkins, Brian, and Michael Bradley. *Blessed by the Best: My Journey to Canton and Beyond*. Camino Books, Inc., 2021.

This book, similar to the Kobe book, is more of a biography. I chose it, because I could remember when Brian Dawkins came out and talked about his bipolar disorder. He was one of, if not the best player in the league and he said he came to a place where he couldn't look himself in the mirror. If that doesn't scream the false face of leadership, I don't know what does. The book takes less of an academic approach with ideology, so I would use it solely for his experiences and interactions with teammates. For example, his mentoring of younger players that battled the same depression and anxiety that he suffered from.

My project runs on the basis of self stability in a leader, and this man was known to be one of the greatest team captains who openly fought mental illness. I think my project wouldn't be complete with someone so outspoken in sports mental health issues. His book gives examples of the internal battles that he faced on a daily basis while showing what he did to continue to be successful.

Jackson, Phil. *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success*. Penguin Books, 2014.

Phil Jackson is known for being a part of two of the most winning programs of all time in the NBA world. This book gives incite to how he has consistently been able to get the most out of himself and his players. This source will help in self and group reflection, and depict the importance of management of people in leadership. Not only do you need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your team but also you need to understand the dynamic of your team and how to effectively and efficiently produce. Phil Jackson dealt with players of various egos and characters, but was able to maintain hold as leader through all.

I will use his understanding of team chemistry to talk about the importance of emotion and ego within teamwork. Understanding what role everyone needs to play and being able to lay this framework is essential to structural leadership. My thesis will be based around the fact that structure is required to battle the symptoms of bipolarism, so I will need reading on how to lay group oriented frameworks. Jackson's book talks about him working with two of the highest expectation teams and being able to be successful through both. His leadership style is on par with one of the greatest coaches in all of sports.

Jones, Kaylor. "Historical Figures Who May Have Had Mental Illnesses." *GCU*, 13 May 2019,



<https://www.gcu.edu/blog/psychology-counseling/historical-figures-who-may-have-had-mental-illnesses>.

Kets de Vries, Manfred F.R. *Helping a Bipolar Leader*. Harvard Business Review, 2 Nov. 2014, <https://hbr.org/2014/03/helping-a-bipolar-leader>.

While this is not one of my core texts. This article helps give a psychological interpretation of what bipolar leaders go through. Speaking on the highs and lows of emotions, and what that means for the surrounding team are important to establishing the importance of why one must be structured in their approach to leadership.

I can use the examples given to push the narratives that are found within leaders that suffer from Bipolar disorder. This will help add evidence with previous artists and leaders who suffer from the most severe cases of bipolar disorder. This will be a good secondary source that can help to strengthen the connection of leadership and bipolar disorder.

Lencioni, Patrick, and Charles Stransky. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. Jose-Bass, 2002.

This book is more of your basic guide to leadership. Written similarly to a text book it lays down the proven concepts and methods of leadership and how to prevent dysfunction. In the core of the reading the author lays out the 'five main dysfunctions' that lead to the deterioration of a team, and therefore one's leadership. My goal is to use evidence from the book to support the idea that unstructured leadership leads to dysfunction.

I will use this source to give some much needed academic style text to my list of sources. Less experiences based more ideologically based, this book is a revised version of leadership styles for success. The book gives a great chapter on team assessment that starts with self-reflection and accountability. I will use the laid out framework as another piece of evidence to combat stress and understand the importance of self structure.

Lombardi, Vince. *What It Takes to Be #1: Vince Lombardi on Leadership*. McGraw-Hill, 2003.

This book has a couple chapters that focus on how self-reflection leads to success. I can easily take passages and quotes to demonstrate how Lombardi, one of the greatest coaches of all time, valued self-reflection as one of the key tools of leadership. While Lombardi does not speak much on bipolar disorder he does

write about the necessity of building character, integrity, and understanding what as a leader you are trying to utilize from your followers.

I will focus on the developmental process of creating a successful environment for those you are trying to lead, so that one minimizes the impact of bipolarism or mental illness in general. This would support my thesis of preliminary structure and framework to combat the possible consequences of bipolarism later.

Lombardi is regarded as the best football coach of all time. He has dealt with many players throughout his career and his set in stone framework will give me more evidence on the importance of self reflection

Marcus, Elena. *Bipolar Disorder and Leadership*. National Elf Service, 14 Aug. 2015, <https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/bipolar-disorder/bipolar-disorder-and-leadership-evidence-from-a-total-population-study/>.

This article will help me to establish evidence of the connection between bipolar illness and struggles in stable leadership. The study reviewed cases of over 91,000 people through the years 2001-2009 and was done with sets of siblings and similar demographic groups to utilize non biased statistics.

I can utilize this source to give a relatively current numerical statistic of the effect of bipolar disorder in leadership. With the lack of statistics and hard facts in the books, this is a good piece of evidence to go along with my writing.

Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. Zondervan, 2015.

While this book has a more religious undertone. It is a great source of self-reflection and balance in one's own life. The first half of the book is labeled "Inner Life" and focuses on stability and structure within one's life, prior to exposure to leading groups.

I will use this passage as part of a framework of self reflection so that I can push the narrative of stability when battling Bipolar Disorder.

MB /

## **Bald Eagles, their effect on the urbanized Pacific Northwest, and proposals for protection**

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stephen Scheck, Biology Department  
Student Pronouns: she/they

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Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Scholarly / Action Research

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### **Abstract:**

With the 1972 ban of the pesticide DDT as well as Fish and Wildlife's Eagle Protection Act, bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) populations in recent years are making a steady comeback. With this, those new populations are infringing upon urban cities built over natural habitats, specifically in the Pacific Northwest in Seattle and Portland, two cities built near water. The further humans encroach upon animals' territory, the further animals will encroach upon ours. Due to recent increases in bald eagle population, the ecology of bald eagles in urban cities has not been studied in depth. Along with this, the laws surrounding bald eagles as well as Native American culture surrounding the bird make the situation of them living within urban cities much more complex. Because of this gap, I would like to use my thesis to study the effects of humans and bald eagles on each other in urban settings while keeping respect for both the laws and Native Americans. Although there are many possible effects, I will focus on human observations in Seattle and Portland as well as mortality statistics of bald eagles. Along with the effects, I would like to present two ways to further conserve bald eagles: either by protecting current urban populations living in cities or by repelling bald eagles from cities, thus encouraging them towards better suited habitats. By using other birds and strategies, I will extrapolate how bald eagles will be affected as well as honoring the law and Native American culture.

### **Personal Interest:**

In the summer of 2022, I messed up. I was studying to be an American Sign Language interpreter with a concentration in medical interpreting. For years, I have been interested in biology, and I thought that I could combine my skills with ASL and provide support for the Deaf community. I messed up because I misinterpreted the word "interpreter." It's ironic to misunderstand the literal thing I was majoring in, but I found out that there are two definitions during my interview for Northwest Trek, a conservation park in Washington. The first definition is a person who is the bridge between two languages and cultures; the second definition is a person who is the bridge between natural science and humans. Surprisingly enough, I was hired. Since then, I fell

in love with conservation and animals. At my job, I had to absorb every animal fact, name, age, habitat, diet, everything I could possibly know and become an expert on them so I could tell the public. I found myself drawn to the bald eagles more than any other animal. Out of the four bald eagles there, Cheveyo was my favorite. She is 20 years old with an amputated left wing from a hunting accident, and she is a fighter. She could tell exactly when I was talking about her and would scream at me whenever I did. I became so knowledgeable about the bald eagles to the point where if there was a question I couldn't answer, I would find it out before the end of the day.

Currently, as I am still studying to be an ASL interpreter, I have found myself watching the birds and raptors on Highway 22. I will often give out animal facts or bird facts, but my most knowledgeable subject is still the bald eagles. One thing that I am very aware of is just how much humans affect animals. The further we encroach upon their habitat, the further they will encroach upon ours, something I would tell guests every day. In turn, they would tell me stories about bald eagles on their properties or in dumps or on shores and lakes with the other birds leaving gaps for them. America is continually building, and therefore these animals will continue to adapt to our way of life, to our housing developments, to our infrastructure, to our cities. They can be our national symbol and yet live in a dump.

In the future, my dream life would be me medically interpreting on the weekdays and doing conservation projects or bird watching on the weekends. I know once my senior project is done, I will have no more connections to raptors, no matter how desperately I want to minor in biology or volunteer at bird hospitals. I don't know if anyone will make the mistake of hiring an interpreter of my kind again. However, someday I would like to continue my journey with biology and ornithology.

### **Larger Context:**

Throughout American history, the bald eagle was considered controversial for different reasons. When deciding our national symbol, Benjamin Franklin famously wanted the turkey instead of the bald eagle, quoting that bald eagles are scavengers and pests, especially to farmers who made up most of America at the time. Bald eagle population decreased for many years due to hunting and poaching, which not only affected the birds but also the Native Americans who considered the bald eagle sacred. From the 1940's-1972, the introduction of the pesticide DDT threatened bald eagle populations by causing them to produce eggs with thinner shells and accidentally be crushed. The creation of the Eagle Protection Act of 1940 as well as Fish and Wildlife's Eagle Management Program created laws and permits surrounding eagles in conservation efforts.

Today, bald eagle populations have made a comeback and have since returned to their natural habitats, which consist of large trees near water. Despite this, the further

humans encroach upon animal habitats, the further they will encroach upon ours. America is rapidly urbanizing, extending cities towards these natural habitats. According to a study done on nest sites in British Columbia, the ecology of bald eagles within urban cities has not yet been studied in depth; their findings were that after the frequency of nesting in natural habitats, bald eagles would utilize city architecture (Goulet, Bird, Hancock 2021).

For places such as Seattle and Portland, two urban cities along the water, bald eagles could end up affecting people living there and vice versa. Bald eagles have been found to live and scavenge in dumps, leaving dead animal or carrion remains wherever (Opell 2019). In turn, the leading causes of death for bald eagles are poisoning, trauma, and electrocution, two of which are man-made and trauma referring to the eagles running into windows, vehicles, or wind turbines (Russel and Franson 2014). By determining a way to protect bald eagles in urban cities -- while keeping both the laws and Native American culture in mind -- we can minimize the effects and conserve bald eagles further.

### **Methods/Process:**

Within my thesis, I would like to compose the laws, ecology, and effects of bald eagles that potentially disrupt or facilitate life in urban Pacific Northwest cities. I will specifically use Seattle and Portland, two major Pacific Northwest cities that are both located where natural habitats of bald eagles would be, to investigate their population levels of bald eagles and their effects on human activity and vice versa. My main goal will be to find two potential solutions to protect our national bird: protect their habitats within cities or to repel them in order for them to move to more natural habitats.

First, I would like to lay out the general facts, histories, current populations, and laws surrounding bald eagles for context about why the issue is both important and delicate. The history of bald eagle populations is important due to their exponential growth in recent years and why. Within laws, I will be comparing Fish and Wildlife and the Eagle Protect Act and Native American culture and religious exemptions in order to discuss the issues surrounding bald eagle conservation in large cities.

Next, I will have a section about the effects of bald eagles within cities and the main conflicts between humans and bald eagles. Since there are many that have been studied, I will focus on death statistics for bald eagles and potential human conflicts such as windows and dead animal, or carrion, disposal that are affected by bald eagle's living within cities. I will also focus on benefits bald eagles bring such as being a natural pest control. I would like to determine whether bald eagles will be able to coexist or will become pests.

Finally, for each conclusion, there are two different solutions: protecting them within cities or repelling them from cities. Based on studies done for other birds, I would like to propose a potential solution for either outcome. A repel solution would be inferencing how the effects of bird spikes on pigeons could affect bald eagles, a much larger bird. A protection solution would be inferencing how steps taken to protect peregrine falcons, another large bird of prey, could translate to bald eagles. At the same time, I would like to make sure the solutions are respectful of both laws and Native American cultures.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Kalasz, K. S. and J. B. Buchanan. (2016) *Periodic status review for the Bald Eagle in Washington*. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington, <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/01825/wdfw01825.pdf> .

This source is from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife from a report in 2016 on Bald Eagle populations and distribution throughout the state, as well as information about their historical numbers. This is the most recent report on the fact.

This source is for my general knowledge and background area, specifically in Washington state. This can help by establishing a baseline of habitats, diets, nesting and breeding season, and other general knowledge that will be built upon. While it does focus on Washington, the article also compares to Oregon populations, which is the other state I am researching. It's important to know both the population numbers and their history because it directly relates to how much of an impact on humans they have and vice versa. The effect of the pesticide DDT effected the population largely from the 1940's - 1972, up until it was banned, and is one way that humans effected bald eagles and we are still witnessing the effects of today as populations continue to grow and recover from that. It can also give an estimate on where bald eagles typically nest and their habitat range in either rural or urban areas. I have another article specifically about nesting within Vancouver in British Columbia, but since that is not my target area, this will support the Pacific Northwest portion better.

United States Fish and Wildlife. (2022) *Eagle Management Program*. <https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management> .

This source is from United States Fish and Wildlife about the laws and programs, as well as recent updates to both populations and laws. One example of laws being updated recently was the idea of "take permits" which is specific permit for when someone is within close proximity to a bald eagle or nest (whether or not it is active or inactive) frequently. One example is if a nest were to be on someone's property.

This source will help explain why the solution is not simple. The laws that are in place will affect how we treat bald eagle populations and we cannot just take a nest and move it elsewhere. By laying out the grounds for their population levels and the reasons for these laws, such as the impact of DDT and poaching, I can also explain why the problem itself is tricky to solve.

Abernathy, J. (2011) *Native Sun News: Proposed eagle regulations stir controversy*. Ho-Chunk Inc, Winnebago Tribe, <https://www.indianz.com/News/2011/003307.asp> .

Fish and Wildlife's govern over the bald eagles protection has not been without debate. The decision that was being debated was whether or not bald eagle populations could have been used to control other pests and animals, almost using them as a game bird and/or allowing falconers to train them. Native Tribes view bald eagles as sacred beings. This article lines out the controversies of allowing Fish and Wildlife to make decisions without the reference of Native Tribes, as well as line up the history of protections bald eagles have gone through. DDT, which was a pesticide that killed mosquitoes but affected bald eagles egg fragility, was banned in 1978, but the under reported reason why bald eagles almost went extinct was due to hunting.

This article will help because this is from a Native American source and because it lines out controversies with the above law and how those are handled in relation to religious exemptions. The American law is important, but keeping in mind that bald eagles are also sacred to Native tribes adds another layer to just how tense the situation may become. While I won't focus on the controversy behind Fish and Wildlife's sovereignty on laws and regulations for bald eagles, I will focus on the Native significance and why handling bald eagle populations in a way that honors them is incredibly important.

Goulet, R., Bird, D., Hancock, D. (2021). *Aspects of the Ecology of Urban-Nesting Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in South-Coastal British Columbia*. Journal of Raptor Research, <https://doi.org/10.3356/0892-1016-55.1.65>.

Study done in Vancouver, Canada about bald eagles and their ecology in a heavily populated and city area, focusing on nesting habits within the area. This will help in comparison to Seattle/Portland, where multiple other articles have found bald eagles living more in dumps in America. However, Canada has much different laws than America on bald eagles, as well as a larger population number.

This data is important due to population numbers and nesting numbers near large cities. By getting a gauge for bald eagles in other parts of North America and cities they reside in, their effects on human population can also be gauged. This also shows how much bald eagles have and can adapt to large city areas instead of being pushed back upon their habitat. I liked what they said about ecology and the long term

effects on bald eagles in these areas - there is still not enough information about it since the development is recent.

Oppel, R. (2019) *Bald Eagles, Symbol of America, Are Dumping Trash on the Seattle Suburbs*. New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/02/us/bald-eagles-trash-seattle.html>

Real examples of bald eagles being pests on urbanized life in Seattle Washington, just one of many examples of why human habitats and bald eagle habitats will face interference in the PNW. It shows that bald eagles tend to nest in large dumps where there is plenty of food to scavenge. On the opposite side, they dump their carrion wherever they can, which happens to be Seattle suburbs.

While this is a more opinion article, it does show modern, everyday people's opinions on bald eagles in their cities as well as one of the effects they have on urban life. This problem could also become much larger as populations within cities increase exponentially. This could also help with population tracking; if they are found to live in dumps, what could be proposed to fix that problem?

Johnson, E. (2022). *Bald Eagle Family Fights to Save Chick*. Oregon Metro, Portland, OR, <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/bald-eagle-family-fights-save-chick>

This is another example of bald eagles and human populations butting heads. Since bald eagles are territorial, they will defend off people if they are perceived as a threat and humans are not allowed to do anything because of the protective laws surrounding them. Humans must be the ones who are careful, which could become controversial.

I will use this to show another effect that bald eagles have on urbanized life, this time specifically in the Portland area since there are not many articles about Oregon. In addition to the law section, I can also explain how the people involved in this story can do nothing about it, which is why their increased presence in urban cities could become a problem and effect the city more often.

Williams, W. (2017). *When the National Bird Is a Burden*. New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/magazine/bald-eagle-national-burden.html>

This is an opinion piece that uses historical examples of how bald eagles effect urbanized life and are considered pests.

Russel, R., Franson, J. (2014). *Causes of mortality in eagles submitted to the National Wildlife Health Center 1975-2013*. Wildlife Society Bulletin, vol 38, issue 4, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wsb.469>.



Study about bald eagles and golden eagles from 1975 - 2013 and their leading causes of death. This study is from Madison, WI and from carcasses of bald/golden eagles from across the country (bald eagles and golden eagles are found in different parts of the country and in different habitats) The leading cause of death for bald eagles was poisoning, followed closely by “trauma” which means the trauma caused by vehicles, wind turbines, or windows. There is information about things that do not apply to my topic, like natural diseases that affect the population, but there are statistics about man made causes to bald eagle deaths. Again, the poisoning is manmade and the rat poison and pest control within cities affect bald eagle populations, especially since they are scavenging for these animals and inadvertently ingest the poison.

These statistics are important due to the sheer amount of human caused deaths and the potential for those to happen in cities. While natural deaths do occur, the main goal is to protect birds within the city or protect birds via moving to a new location.

Raptor Inc. (2022). *Raptor Conservation*. <http://raptorinc.org/raptor-conservation/>.

This source is about raptors and why their contact with man-made objects affects them. They line out how and why raptors will end up dying, such as running into windows (which is a huge problem for all birds and architectures) and cars hitting them (whether they are hunting or scavenging). Most city’s architects have regulations about windows and their reflectiveness to decrease bird deaths via running into them. While raptors are a large category, bald eagles do fall under that umbrella and are affected by these things if they are within close contact.

Like the other source about bald eagle deaths, this source is important to recognize how much humans affect bald eagles in close contact. Infrastructure of cities is important to how bald eagles are protected or repelled from a certain site. Window architecture is increasingly important due to brain trauma that could happen when birds of all kinds run into them. A proposed way of protecting bald eagles would be to maintain window regulations and make sure a city is safe for eagles.

American Eagle Foundation (2021). *Dangers Facing Bald Eagles*. Pigeon Forge, TN, <https://www.eagles.org/what-we-do/educate/learn-about-eagles/bald-eagles-current-dangers/#:~:text=For%20a%20large%20bird%20with,today%20are%20less%20than%2050%25>.

This article lines out additional information about bald eagle deaths in addition to the scientific study done.. Things like DDT, poisoning, rodenticides, electrocution, and lead poisoning all have to do with human interference and perhaps benefits our lives while harming wildlife. Wind turbines are also a huge problem to all birds; however, it is a great renewable energy (lots of renewable energies damage the ecosystem in some way). Wind turbines are not found in cities though, but more in

flat lands. The information about rodenticides and electrocution will be the most helpful in how big city populations affect bald eagle populations, since those two things are found to reduce rodents and power the city respectively. This article both outlines a couple of human made effects such as poisoning and electric lines while also providing resources of potential solutions for these effects. By no longer using harmful chemicals to kill rodents and instead using the natural food chain, we can support bald eagles instead of harming them.

<https://www.raptorsarethesolution.org/>

Bird, D., Varland, D., Negro, J. (1996) *Raptors in Human Landscapes*. Academic Press, Harcourt Brace and Company Publishers, San Diego.

Although this source is older and does not specifically discuss bald eagles and their impact on human habitats, other raptors are studied and some examples could be compared to bald eagles. For example, peregrine falcons have a chapter about living in urban America as well as eggshell thickness and contamination (like DDT on bald eagle eggs). There is another chapter on Western Burrowing Owls, setting up human made nests, and how success for those. There is another chapter about cost benefits of urban nesting for lesser kestrels. One chapter is about ospreys on the Willamette River, which is within the PNW and what I want to focus on.

In my findings, this book has been used many times by other articles here for why bird populations frequent certain places. Most birds can adapt easily and the programs that have been tried by other birds of prey in different parts of the country can help me infer what will be best for bald eagles. Closely affected birds (not related) will help me the most, such as peregrine falcons (due to the effects of DDT) and ospreys on the Willamette river.

Anthony, R., Steidl, R., and McGarigal, K. (1995) *Recreation and Bald Eagles in the Pacific Northwest*. Wildlife and Recreationists; Coexistence Through Management and Research, Island Press, Washington D.C.

Harris, E., de Crom, E., Labuschagne, J., Wilson, A. (2016). *Visual deterrents and physical barriers as non-lethal pigeon control on University of South Africa's Muckleneuk campus*. SpringerPlus, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40064-016-3559-5>.

The University of South Africa did a study about pigeons and spikes used to control the population. They found that the spikes and visual deterrents affected pigeons. They reduced by 50%, but it was also found that seasonality affects their presence. Bird spikes had the most efficacy.

Pigeons are a much smaller bird and can be deterred by the presence of large predators such as bald eagles, but by using another bird, I can make inferences on how the bald eagles will react to the bird spikes more so than the deterioration. Bald eagles do not have a natural predator except for humans (we are the top killer of bald eagles, specifically cars, but we do not hunt them [in recent years] nor eat them). However, since spikes seem to have the most efficacy, they also might work for larger birds that want to nest. One good thing about this is by repelling bald eagles from ever nesting on a place, their territoriality and protection laws do not have to be big problems. Bird spikes are good for large birds since they are a visual and physical barrier to perching. One problem with this is that bird spikes are aesthetically ugly and can have bird feathers and feces get stuck in them, which could become a sanitary problem as well as a legal problem. The keeping of bald eagle feathers is illegal and needs to be returned to a Native tribe or to a repository that can legally handle them. I don't know the legal situation that would occur if a feather were to get stuck on a building and could not be removed. The question that arises is "How do the people involved know whether or not the bald eagle was simply resting or being poached?". The obvious solution to that question are cameras, but smaller businesses who cannot afford cameras could potentially have issues.

AJ /

## **Resistance Training with the Purpose of Injury Prevention in the Female Endurance Runner Population**

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Lex Gidley, Exercise Science

Student Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Wellness Project / Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

This thesis project will work to generate a strength training plan specifically designed for collegiate, female endurance runners with the goal of preventing common overuse injuries in one's hips and IT band. There is currently a great deal of research regarding strength training used within this population to improve performance and running economy, but there are far more gaps within the literature regarding how strength training can be used for injury prevention. I will begin my research by reviewing the current literature on hip-related overuse injuries within female runners, what potentially causes those injuries, and the current methodologies used for treatment. I will particularly focus on muscular weaknesses and imbalances within the hips that lead to overuse injuries, then I will research exercises/strength training methods that may be used to strengthen those areas. Based on this research, I will generate a strength training program that a female endurance athlete could employ into their training specifically as a method of injury-prevention. Finally, I will attempt to employ this strength training plan into my own personal training in order to determine whether this is an effective, workable strength training plan for a female endurance athlete. Based on the results, I will analyze whether this strength training plan was effective, in addition to expressing areas in the current literature where further research is needed to better understand how the rate of these overuse injuries could be reduced.

### **Personal Interest:**

As far back as I can remember, I have always loved to run. Even during PE class in grade school, running the pacer test was something I considered fun while the rest of my peers tended to complain about it. When I reached middle school I got involved in track and field, and this hobby blossomed into a passion for running that led to me competing in cross country and track and field all four years of high school. Running was my main passion, and as I competed throughout high school I was always looking for ways to improve my running performance. During my sophomore year of high school I enrolled in a weight training class, (honestly expecting to hate it), but as time went on I genuinely started to enjoy weight training. This was an unexpected discovery

for me, the tall distance runner with hardly any muscle mass on my body. Prior to this class I had bought into the stereotype that distance runners did not need to lift weights and did not have a place in the weight room. As I gained more experience in the weight room I realized that I loved the way that weight training made me feel, and growing muscle made me feel much more confident. I continued on with weight training year round through the rest of my high school years, and each year as I got stronger in the weight room I also saw my performances improve in cross country and track.

Fast forwarding to my present-day self, I am now a junior at Western Oregon University studying exercise science and am an athlete on the women's cross country/track and field teams. I continue to have a huge passion for running and have continued to weight train over the years, although as a collegiate runner I have not always found myself prioritizing lifting as much as in the past. With my busy schedule I was afraid of overworking myself with both strength training and collegiate-level training for distance running. Furthermore, as a collegiate runner I have had more than a few injuries over the past two years of running, and I continue to struggle with being healthy enough to run consistently. One of the pieces of advice I have continuously received is to focus on strengthening my hips and core in order to prevent my injury from relapsing. Ironically, taking time off weight training to give my body extra rest may have actually been a contributing factor to my recurring running injuries. Currently, I have been working to determine what combination of strength training, mobility, and treatment work best to help me become a healthier, more consistent runner. The passion I have for both running and weight training, along with my background as an exercise science major, all intersect well to help me create my thesis regarding how strength training can be used in female collegiate runners to reduce risk for injury.

With the research that I conduct during my thesis, I hope to be able to apply what I am learning within my major to a subject area that is close to my heart. Ideally I will discover information that may allow me to become a healthier runner, and I hope that I can convince fellow female endurance runners that strength work can be beneficial both for performance enhancement and injury prevention. Furthermore, my thesis will give me an opportunity to tie together my work/experiences as an undergraduate student here at WOU, and will be a demonstration of my great potential as a future professional in the exercise science field as I start applying to Doctor of Physical Therapy programs.

### **Larger Context:**

Throughout a competitive endurance runners' career, the likelihood that they will experience some form of injury as a result of the intense training is high. Due to the repetitive nature of the movements during long distance running there is a great amount of harmful stress repeatedly put on the body. Even when proper measures are taken (such as having effective running form, stretching, working on mobility, taking rest

days, etc), injury can be difficult to avoid when one is intensely competing and training year round.

Although current research in the exercise science field has focussed on how strength training may be used to benefit an endurance runner's performance, there has not been equal research devoted to how strength training plans may reduce overuse injury risk. Generating more strength within the runner's body in areas that are commonly weak via strength training may reduce the risk of the body breaking down over time due to repetitive training.

Studies have found that overuse injuries tend to occur more frequently within female athletes compared to male athletes, and there are far more gaps in the literature regarding overuse injuries compared to the literature on acute injuries, (Yang, 2012). With the prevalence of overuse injuries within this population, particularly female endurance runners, the need for effective injury prevention is high. Athletes are constantly exploring a variety of training methods and injury-prevention methods in order to determine what works best for them, because there is no "one-size-fits-all" plan for all runners.

For the purpose of this thesis project, the main focus will be on hip and IT band related overuse injuries. A great number of female endurance runners deal with hip and IT band injuries as a result of their training, but there is also evidence that dysfunctional hip muscles may be the root cause of additional overuse running injuries including lower back pain and lower extremity pain such as shin splints (Brummitt, 2009). Gaining a better understanding of how strengthening the athlete's hips could reduce a wide variety of overuse injuries would benefit this population, and unfortunately sufficient research does not currently exist. More experimental evidence is needed, especially when it comes to females in the endurance runner population. Currently the majority of research in this subject contains a lot of theoretical literature and observational studies on male athletes. While the current literature gives *some* understanding of how strength training could be used to prevent injury in runners, there is not enough explicit, experimental evidence currently within this specific population.

### **Methods/Process:**

With my thesis project, I plan on using both scholarly and personal wellness project methods to construct a thesis regarding how female endurance runners can effectively use strength training as a method of injury prevention. I plan on focusing on some of the most common overuse injuries seen in female endurance runners – particularly hip pain and IT band overuse injuries. I will analyze the current research on strength training methods used to reduce overuse injuries in order to determine the best practices. I will generate a usable strength training plan that is designed for my specific population that should be effective in helping to reduce the risk of injury. While strength

training has been recognized as being beneficial to improving an endurance runner's performance, I feel that it is under-utilized as an injury-prevention method in this specific population of athletes. Overuse injuries often lead to endurance runners having to take significant time off from training which may lead to a decrease in overall fitness. Maintaining a relatively injury-free state is extremely important for endurance runners to be able to compete at their best, so I will generate a usable strength training plan that is designed for female endurance runners that should be effective in reducing their risk for injury.

In order to create my strength training plan, I will first consider which muscle groups in particular female endurance runners need to strengthen in order to prevent injury. From there, I will narrow down what types of exercises will be most beneficial to strengthen those muscles based on which exercises have been used within this population successfully. Finally, I will be looking at the best practices for collegiate female endurance runners regarding how many days of strength training per week is beneficial without taking away from the running portions of their training, and what intensities of strength training tend to have the most effective results. Although there is not a huge amount of literature regarding best practices for strength training plans designed solely for female endurance athletes, looking at the methods used in the limited current literature is still important. Doing so will allow me to analyze the efficacy of previous strength training plans designed for this population and what aspects of those plans I may need to improve upon in my own project. By following these steps, I will be able to produce a functional training plan that could be used by a female endurance runner.

As I am creating the training plan, I may potentially be able to put it to the test personally because I am a collegiate runner. I will take this thesis into a more strict wellness project format if my training, competition schedules, coaches, and physical health allow me to do so. I run year-round for both the women's cross country and track teams, focusing on the 6000m race during cross country season then any distance from the 800m to the 5000m during track season. Given that I am in season year-round, carrying out my thesis as a strict wellness project may not be feasible. If that is the case, I will still be creating a specific strength training plan that could be enacted by a female endurance runner with the goal injury-prevention. I just will not personally be testing it out.

With this thesis project, I hope to better understand how I can use strength training to improve my running career by reducing my risk for the recurrent injuries I have struggled with as a collegiate runner. The majority of endurance runners tend to encounter an overuse injury sometime during their competitive running career, so my hope is that my thesis will give other female runners with similar difficulties a possible long-term preventative method to reduce their risk of future injury.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Balsalobre-Fernández, Carlos & Santos-Concejero, Jordan & Grivas, Gerasimos. (2015). The effects of strength training on running economy in highly trained runners: a systematic review with meta-analysis of controlled trials. *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*. 30. 10.1519/JSC.0000000000001316.  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285588167> The effects of strength training on running economy in highly trained runners a systematic review with meta-analysis of controlled trials/

This article is a meta-analysis of multiple studies, all of which focus on whether implementing resistance training programs for competitive distance running athletes can improve running economy, and thereby improve performance. Running economy is the steady state VO<sub>2</sub> max necessary to maintain a given submaximal speed, and is thought to be an important indicator for running performance. The meta-analysis concludes that there is strong evidence for resistance training improving the running economy of middle and long distance runners, which would support that resistance training can be effectively used to improve distance runner's performance.

Although this study does not only focus on *female* endurance runners, its participants are middle and long distance competitive runners which is the population I am focusing on for my thesis. This meta-analysis helps to give me insight into multiple successful studies regarding resistance training in endurance runners which allows me to look at a variety of ways experiments/trials were set up. Looking at the styles of resistance training that were used in these particular studies gave me a better idea of what strategies are effective when implementing resistance training into an endurance runner's training plan.

Blagrove, Richard C.<sup>1,2</sup>; Brown, Nicola<sup>3</sup>; Howatson, Glyn<sup>2,4</sup>; Hayes, Philip R.<sup>2</sup>. Strength and Conditioning Habits of Competitive Distance Runners. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*: May 2020 - Volume 34 - Issue 5 - p 1392-1399 doi: 10.1519/JSC.0000000000002261.  
[https://journals.lww.com/nsca-jscr/fulltext/2020/05000/strength\\_and\\_conditioning\\_habits\\_of\\_competitive.23.aspx?casa\\_token=FpAYYy04VDAAAAAA:7cOGluDPnEJxKiv\\_fOUEk4C5UwtuIlyhXa2fIQxmSQOszJLcXaaKskVOHYUHa8VWU5vJUEpAeoDeEQOipr\\_rjA](https://journals.lww.com/nsca-jscr/fulltext/2020/05000/strength_and_conditioning_habits_of_competitive.23.aspx?casa_token=FpAYYy04VDAAAAAA:7cOGluDPnEJxKiv_fOUEk4C5UwtuIlyhXa2fIQxmSQOszJLcXaaKskVOHYUHa8VWU5vJUEpAeoDeEQOipr_rjA)

This article recommends the widespread usage of strength/resistance training in the endurance runner population in order to improve performance, and to prevent injury. In particular, this article looks at a wide range of competitive endurance runners and delves into what types of strength training they use in their training regimen, and whether there is any correlation between



their history of injury and their usage of strength training. When looking at the study's results, it becomes clear that there is a large segment of the endurance runner population that does not include any strength training in their overall training methods.

This article is important for my thesis because it shows that there are many endurance runners who still do not include any strength training in their training program. One of the goals I have with my thesis is to reduce the stigma that strength training is not beneficial or needed in the endurance running population. This research article makes a strong point that endurance runners who do not strength train could potentially be missing an opportunity to improve performance or reduce injury risk.

Brumitt, Jason. Injury Prevention for High School Female Cross Country Athletes.

Published in *Athletic Therapy Today*, 2009; 14(4): 8-12

[https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=pt\\_fac](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=pt_fac)

This study discusses the higher prevalence of injury within the female endurance runner population, oftentimes due to hip muscle dysfunctionality. The article's main emphasis is how strength training can be used for injury prevention for female endurance runners. There are specific training plans designed for hip and core strengthening which is meant to prevent some of the most common overuse injuries seen in female distance runners. The article also emphasizes that female runners tend to be at a greater risk for reinjury, implying that the injury prevention process is continual and dynamic.

This study is a particularly helpful resource because it directly addresses the population that I am focussing my thesis on, which is competitive female endurance runners. Furthermore, having an article focused on the injury prevention aspect of strength training is important. The issues discussed within this article relate directly to the main injuries that I will be focussing on within my wellness project, as it discusses lack of hip muscle strength and how that can lead to overuse injuries in female endurance runners.

Denadai BS, de Aguiar RA, de Lima LC, Greco CC, Caputo F. Explosive Training and Heavy Weight Training are Effective for Improving Running Economy in Endurance Athletes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Sports Med.* 2017 Mar;47(3):545-554. doi: 10.1007/s40279-016-0604-z. PMID: 27497600.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27497600/>

This study is also a meta-analysis, looking at whether strength training improves running economy and endurance running performance. More

specifically, this article shows that the use of explosive strength training and/or heavy weight training improves running performance by improving the athlete's running economy. Furthermore, this study determined that in order for endurance runners to see the best performance results, long term strength training was far more effective than short term programs.

This article is helpful to my thesis because it gets even more specific with the types of strength training that can improve an endurance runner's performance. Rather than simply discussing strength training as a broad topic, this study specifically regards heavy resistance training and explosive resistance training. Understanding that longer term strength training plans are more beneficial to runners' performance is also important as I create my wellness project.

García-Pinillos F, Lago-Fuentes C, Jaén-Carrillo D, Bujalance-Moreno P, Latorre-Román PÁ, Roche-Seruendo LE, Ramirez-Campillo R. Strength Training Habits in Amateur Endurance Runners in Spain: Influence of Athletic Level. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020 Nov 5;17(21):8184. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17218184. PMID: 33167485; PMCID: PMC7663942. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7663942/>

Jingzhen Yang, Abigail S. Tibbetts, Tracey Covassin, Gang Cheng, Saloni Nayar, Erin Heiden; Epidemiology of Overuse and Acute Injuries Among Competitive Collegiate Athletes. *J Athl Train* 1 March 2012; 47 (2): 198–204. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-47.2.198> <https://meridian.allenpress.com/jat/article/47/2/198/111325/Epidemiology-of-Overuse-and-Acute-Injuries-Among>

Tenforde, A.S., Sayres, L.C., McCurdy, M.L., Collado, H., Sainani, K.L. and Fredericson, M. (2011), Overuse Injuries in High School Runners: Lifetime Prevalence and Prevention Strategies. *PM&R*, 3: 125-131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmrj.2010.09.009>. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1934148210011573>

Tyler J. Moffit, Melissa M. Montgomery, Robert G. Lockie, Derek N. Pamukoff; Association Between Knee- and Hip-Extensor Strength and Running-Related Injury Biomechanics in Collegiate Distance Runners. *J Athl Train* 1 December 2020; 55 (12): 1262–1269. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0532.19> <https://meridian.allenpress.com/jat/article/55/12/1262/447919/Association-Between-Knee-and-Hip-Extensor-Strength>

This article discusses the biomechanical and physiological influences leading to some of the most common injuries found within collegiate endurance

runners, which is important when trying to understand what type of resistance training would be most beneficial to this population. The article looks at whether strength gains due to resistance training may be able to offset some of the biomechanical factors that can lead to these common injuries. The study found that the use of strength training tended to strengthen muscles that are commonly weak within endurance runners, which therefore could reduce injury risk as those muscles were strengthened.

This article in particular is helping me to better understand some of the key biomechanical and physiological factors that are often the root cause for overuse running injuries. Understanding the underlying causes for these injuries will better allow me to create an effective resistance training program that is specifically designed to combat endurance runner injuries.

Vikmoen O, Raastad T, Seynnes O, Bergstrøm K, Ellefsen S, Rønnestad BR. Effects of Heavy Strength Training on Running Performance and Determinants of Running Performance in Female Endurance Athletes. *PLoS One*. 2016 Mar 8;11(3):e0150799. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0150799. PMID: 26953893; PMCID: PMC4783109. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26953893/>

KK /

## **The Effects of Discriminatory Barriers to Transgender Healthcare Access**

Thesis Advisor: Margaret Manoogian, Gerontology Department  
Student Pronouns: He/They

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Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Culture Project

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### **Abstract:**

In the United States, there are an estimated one million individuals who identify as transgender. This nation presents a complicated and formidable healthcare system for these individuals, with countless barriers and distressing impacts. I will be analyzing existing literature on transgender experiences in the medical field, as well as performing an analysis of the existing structures and complications in the field. This will result in a list of major barriers that fall into two categories: insurance coverage barriers and discriminatory barriers that are caused by a lack of provider education and awareness. I will then move to discussing the real world implications of this analysis and the impacts that these barriers have on trans lives. I will discuss the most prominent effects on immediate health risks to individual trans people. Then, I will analyze lasting effects on both individuals and the community at large. My own experiences in medical settings will be used to expand and enhance the educational perspectives of trans individuals and activists provided through current literature.

### **Personal Interest:**

I began medically transitioning at age 16. At the time, I lived and attended high school in a highly conservative and hostile town, where my trans identity was loud and visible no matter what I did. I have been navigating the medical field as a trans patient for nearly 5 years now, primarily on my own. Transgender individuals are almost always the ones who must lead their own care, educating everyone from family and friends to their own providers and care team. I have been many doctors' and counselors' first transgender patient and have been forced to learn much of the barriers and bureaucratic mazes without any outside guidance. In fact, I am far more used to educating my own doctors on my conditions and needs than I am to receiving help or perspective that is beneficial. I will be medically transitioning for the rest of my life; the care I currently fight daily to receive will never finish or remove itself from my needs. I have faced every kind of barrier and denial, whether outright transphobia and blatant discrimination or subtle and systemic barriers that are more complex to confront.

My current motivation for this topic stems primarily from my experiences in trying to receive gender-affirming “bottom” surgery. The surgical process I have been working on is a lengthy and highly personalized one. The entire journey for this one “procedure” is actually six or more individual surgeries and takes over a year to complete. After four surgeries, with about 11 months of procedures planned, my care has been ended and the process denied. These kinds of denials and obstacles are far too common for trans and gender-nonconforming (GNC) individuals. The extensive barriers and the overall hostile nature of the healthcare world to trans people has an immense impact on quality of life and general health.

As stated, I will be involved in the medical world as a transgender individual for the rest of my life. If I change majors or even careers, this information and the reality of these barriers will remain vital to my wellbeing. There are so many other transgender people who are impacted daily by these barriers, and most do not have proper access to the information and resources that could allow them to fight these battles alone. No one should have to navigate this by themselves, but it is our reality that many of us in the community are left with little to no help from a professional standpoint.

### **Larger Context:**

The World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) has determined transition-related and gender-affirming medical care to be medically necessary. In fact, "every major professional medical and healthcare association in the United States has affirmed the necessity for transgender-specific care. This includes the American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the National Association of Social Workers" (Bakko & Kattari, 2021, p. 72). However, transgender individuals are significantly more likely to be denied health care access or to avoid healthcare settings as a result of their frequently hostile nature towards trans and gender-nonconforming identities. According to the 2015 USTS (United States Transgender Survey), about one third of trans people report negative experiences in healthcare settings, and nearly one quarter report avoiding healthcare settings out of anticipation of discrimination. There are countless barriers to health care for transgender people, including provider discrimination and bias, coverage and affordability barriers, and a lack of providers that can administer trans specific care. The level of accessibility of trans-specific care is instrumental in the health and wellbeing of trans individuals. For example, "studies by Lundstrom and by Kuiper and Cohen-Kettenis estimated that suicidality in transmen dropped from 20 % to 1 % after treatment" (Padula et al., 2016, p. 395).

Insurance coverage for trans health care is vital for these services to be truly accessible by the community. The rate of unemployment within the trans community is approximately three times that of the national average, with those living in poverty

making up over 2.5 times the national average. "Compared to the general population, transgender and non-binary (TNB) individuals face higher rates of unemployment, poverty, homelessness, discrimination, psychological distress, substance abuse, HIV infection, suicide, and violence" (Warner & Mehta, 2021, p. 3559). This is clearly an extremely high risk population that currently lacks the resources and supports necessary on a large scale to promote livable lives and positive well-being. The majority of gender-affirming and transition-related health care is covered on a highly inconsistent basis with many insurance providers, both state and private, denying coverage by qualifying trans health care as cosmetic, medically unnecessary, as a pre-existing condition, or by other criteria.

The vast majority of training and education programs for healthcare providers barely touch on any LGBT+ related care, with about a third of schools neglecting to include any information on the topic. This leaves trans individuals with a healthcare system that is not educated or informed on trans issues or healthcare needs. "A 2017 qualitative report on the healthcare provided to transgender and gender non-conforming (TGGNC) patients in emergency departments found that 45.7% of patients witnessed medical personnel gossiping, mocking, or telling jokes about TGGNC patients, 8.6% reported being outed by a healthcare professional, and 62.9% had an experience with healthcare staff refusing to use their correct pronouns" (Warner & Mehta, 2021, p. 3560). Trans people are often put in the position of needing to educate their own care team about gender-related issues and care. The systemic discrimination prevalent throughout the current healthcare field both directly and indirectly denies trans and GNC individuals the right to comprehensive, effective, and compassionate care. "By relegating transgender individuals as the Other, cisnormativity and cisgenderism create an architecture of social exclusion, breeding prejudice and oppression against transgender identities" (Kcomt et al., 2020, p. 2).

Despite the overwhelming need, there are significant gaps in the research and coverage of transgender health care barriers. There must be an increase in discussion concerning the specific barriers that trans individuals face, as well as the specific short and long term effects of these barriers. This report partly hopes to serve as a call to increased education and awareness on these issues, as lack thereof is a direct cause of many challenges and much harm.

### **Methods/Process:**

In my research, I will focus on two primary categories of barriers for transgender individuals and analyze their causes and effects. I will discuss insurance-related barriers and denials and the most prominent complications that arise from this financial element. Additionally, I will touch on common discriminatory practices and structures in the healthcare industry that are direct results of a lack of provider education and

awareness. For both of these categories, I will generate a concrete (yet in no way exhaustive) list of major barriers, as well as the brief causes and complications for each. Each list will consist of at least three specific barriers discussed in detail.

I will be using a set of scholarly resources to compile and prioritize barriers existent in medical settings for transgender people. I will use a similar approach in compiling and analyzing the effects of those barriers in two scopes. This will divide my analysis into stages of short to long term effects, with long term considerations given to both individual health and the health of the overall trans community.

First, I will discuss the immediate impacts on individual health and wellbeing. The transgender community represents a population that is at uniquely high risk for numerous physical and mental health complications, which are both caused and exacerbated by the discussed barriers. My research will synthesize these impacts down to better understand how these barriers lead to unlivable lives for trans and gender-nonconforming patients. To allow for a comprehensive analysis, I will concentrate on the most prevalent risk factors and health problems associated directly with the specific barriers I previously identified.

Secondly, effects on longer lasting trends amongst trans communities and lives will be considered, as immediate distress is important but not the only risk factor present. This can be discussed through the study of quality-adjusted life years, or QALYs, as well as larger trends and statistics that concern the systemic barriers identified in my research. I plan to discuss how these specific barriers contribute to certain major health risks and perpetuate negative experiences within medical settings for gender-diverse populations. This section of my research will broaden my focus a bit, allowing me to provide a more nuanced representation of the community and what it means to be a trans person navigating the medical field.

In addition to formal and published research, my own experiences as an openly trans person navigating the medical field will be brought in to supplement the impacts and details of relevant struggles. I will expand on the effects of certain identified barriers that I have personally experienced, relating these back to the systemic issues present. My own learning and goals will be incorporated to serve as an educational perspective for those who may not have personally faced many of the challenges discussed in this thesis. I hope to humanize and illuminate the scholarly perspectives of the other sections present.

My hope is that my work will be able to draw attention to the complex and nuanced minefield of trans healthcare, educate cis readers and practitioners on such issues and their impacts, and to influence the general response to such discrimination with the best intentions to improve quality of life. Additionally, I aim to help fill the gaping hole in current literature that addresses these issues and barriers.

### Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations

Bakko, M., & Kattari, S. K. (2020). Transgender-related insurance denials as barriers to transgender healthcare: differences in experience by insurance type. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 35(6), 1693-1700.

- There are many factors to healthcare denials, and transgender individuals are at a significantly high risk to face barriers. This article will be helpful in evaluating some of the factors that can cause barriers and how socioeconomic status affects transgender individuals by demographic. It lays out a good foundation for suggesting future studies and questions that would lead to a broader understanding of denials and discrimination. This source will also help in analyzing existing policies and access, as insurance coverage is a major yet often unrecognized aspect of supporting and maintaining non-discrimination policies. Solid statistics on rates and likelihood of care denials will be important for the scholarly section of my thesis.

Bakko, M., & Kattari, S. K. (2021). Differential access to transgender inclusive insurance and healthcare in the United States: challenges to health across the life course. *Journal of aging & social policy*, 33(1), 67-81.

- This source delves into the long term effects of healthcare barriers on trans people, analyzing youth, adults, and older adults. Within this study, over half participants report being denied transition-related surgery and 1/4 were denied insurance coverage for hormone therapy. The lasting impact of these kinds of discrimination changes the course and quality of an entire lifetime. The article also discusses barriers by specific types of insurance, making for a possible cross-reference with another source.

Carter, S. P., Cowan, T., Snow, A., Cerel, J., & Tucker, R. (2020). Health insurance and mental health care utilization among adults who identify as transgender and gender diverse. *Psychiatric Services*, 71(2), 151-157.

Cicero, E. C., Reisner, S. L., Silva, S. G., Merwin, E. I., & Humphreys, J. C. (2019). Healthcare experiences of transgender adults: An integrated mixed research literature review. *ANS. Advances in nursing science*, 42(2), 123.

Gonzales, G., & Henning-smith, C. (2017). Barriers to care among transgender and gender-nonconforming adults. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 95(4), 726-748.

- This source is one of the more detailed layouts of the variety of barriers that harm trans adults in healthcare settings. It discusses how trans people are more likely to be uninsured and have unaddressed health issues. Trans people are statistically more likely to be part of another minority as well, adding



intersectional layers to the discrimination. This source will be useful in highlighting the importance of access and increased coverage, as the trans community is a very at risk population.

Khan, L. (2011). Transgender health at the crossroads: Legal norms, insurance markets, and the threat of healthcare reform. *Yale J. Health Pol'y L. & Ethics*, 11, 375.

- This article demonstrates a good discussion of existing legal understandings of transgender healthcare and access. There is detailed discussion of discrimination in healthcare settings and insurance barriers to medical care for trans people. The impact of these barriers is not only on medical transitioning, but medical access and treatment across the board. Two major points discussed that I will find useful are as follows: the social and legal ramifications of how we go about changing coverage and access for trans individuals, and the significance of trans and GNC identities being heavily medicalized. This source will be useful in addressing counterarguments and the rationale for existing healthcare barriers. Aside from obvious discrimination and stigma, the financial and legal impacts of transgender specific healthcare access affect how this issue should be addressed. Transgender healthcare is a constantly changing battlefield, and this article will be very useful in determining a better path forward that considers all the obstacles and nuances of the issue.

Kcomt, L., Gorey, K. M., Barrett, B. J., & McCabe, S. E. (2020). Healthcare avoidance due to anticipated discrimination among transgender people: a call to create trans-affirmative environments. *SSM-Population Health*, 11, 100608.

Padula, W. V., & Baker, K. (2017). Coverage for gender-affirming care: making health insurance work for transgender Americans. *LGBT health*, 4(4), 244-247.

Padula, W. V., Heru, S., & Campbell, J. D. (2016). Societal implications of health insurance coverage for medically necessary services in the US transgender population: a cost-effectiveness analysis. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 31(4), 394-401.

- This source discusses the social and health impacts of healthcare barriers on transgender individuals, analyzing cost per quality-adjusted life year. This will be very useful in detailing how insurance coverage can improve the lives of transgender people in a quantifiable manner. It will also better enable me to address cost concerns and assess the genuine consequences of a potential solution to the existing barriers. The article also prevents good discussion of how providers may act as a result of certain insurance policies. The impact on phalloplasty providers is of particular note.

Warner, D. M., & Mehta, A. H. (2021). Identifying and addressing barriers to transgender healthcare: where we are and what we need to do about it. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 36(11), 3559-3561.

Westbrook, L. (2020). *Unlivable lives: Violence and identity in transgender activism*. University of California Press.

- In this text, Westbrook analyzes identity politics in anti-violence activism and the effect of activism on trans people's ability to live what they define as livable lives. A livable life is a common goal of activist movements, and Westbrook assesses whether common anti-violence activism strategies rooted in identity-based politics accomplish this goal. They claim that many strategies, while effective in their goals, have unintended consequences that cause harm to the groups they are trying to protect. Westbrook analyzes the wellbeing and sustainability of the trans community, considering many complications and potential solutions.

This source will help greatly in my analysis of various factors to barriers and quantifying the idea of a livable life. It is important that any attempt to address the discrimination present in the medical field genuinely promotes livable lives for trans individuals. There are several factors to be accounted for when investigating systemic discrimination that Westbrook describes in detail.

AM /

## **Monstrous Femininity in Ari Aster's *Midsommar***

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiara Good, Communication Studies

Student Pronouns: She/they

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Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

My senior project will be an investigation into the role of “monstrous femininity” in the film *Midsommar* by Ari Aster. I will be looking at how monstrous femininity impacts the main character Dani, her relationship to femininity, and how it evolves over the course of the film. From that, this thesis will provide an explanation as to how Dani’s position in the patriarchy and her relationship with Christen prevents her from receiving the help she needs. I will analyze the treatment of femininity in the stereotypical patriarchy and how it impacts Dani in the film. What brings Dani peace is empathy and support from her fellow women. The theory of “monstrous femininity,” formulated by Barbara Creed, will provide insight into how Dani’s relation to patriarchy versus matriarchy allows her to embrace womanhood and recover from the trauma of losing her family. Dani’s subsequent feminine power will provide inferences about feminism and female power.

### **Personal Interest:**

I was first introduced to *Midsommar* (2019) by my roommate in my freshman year of college. The film follows a dysfunctional couple and their friends as they travel to a rural village in Sweden known for its midsommar festival. As time progresses, they soon realize they’ve been caught in the middle of a violent and bizarre cult. I remember watching it for the first time and being blown away. I had never seen such an interesting story. On one hand, I was appalled by the deadly rituals of the cult, but I also felt a sense of empathy toward the character Dani, who had finally found a community she felt safe in. That simple conflict stuck with me, I couldn’t put my finger on exactly why *Midsommar* was so horrifying. There weren’t stereotypical jumpscare, nor was there much gore in the movie, but something about it still scared me.

Flash forward to this year, I took an honors class titled “The Rhetoric of Horror,” taught by Dr. Tiara Good in the Communication Studies department. The class specifically focused on horror films. For the final paper, I chose to research *Midsommar* in which I talked about monstrous femininity and how it related to the movie. I learned so much about the topic and was finally able to understand why *Midsommar* stood out

among other horror films. It subverted expectations by using womanhood as the foundation to instill fear in the audience. I enjoyed working on the final so much and completed enough research to require a cut down on what I turned in because I had so much information. I kept talking to my roommates, friends, and family about it because I found the topic so fascinating.

In a metaphorical sense, I can relate to Dani and her experiences with a patriarchal society. In many activities I was involved in as a child through high school, I was often the only girl or one of a few. Being isolated from other female peers and being placed in a setting where males are unfairly uplifted is a challenging and frustrating circumstance. In the same way Dani felt stifled by the men around her, I felt as if the work I was doing would never compare to my male peers. As seen in *Midsommar*, and as I have experienced in my own life, by using femininity as a source of power rather than a source of insecurity, confidence then comes from within instead of external validation. This is a lesson I have had to learn and am still learning, and want to share with others.

In addition to the Rhetoric of Horror class, I simultaneously took another film class – LIT 386, Form and Meaning in Film. This class endowed me with the skills needed to analyze movies for messages not otherwise explicitly said. So many details go into making a movie, and more often than not, mundane details are quite deliberate, and in fact important. In this class, we looked at everything from style and expression to see how cinematography is used as a means to reveal the inner psyche of the characters. My experience with this class will undoubtedly help me in my analytical endeavors.

When it comes to the future, I hope to be able to educate people on this topic. Heteronormative culture supports that femininity is soft and delicate, not scary in any way, and is, therefore, often seen as weaker. There are so many ways to scare someone, but it is always so much more impactful when the method is through unconventional means. And so, by looking at *Midsommar* I hope to show that femininity and the aspects of womanhood are truly capable of horrifying.

### **Larger Context:**

*Midsommar* is a film about female empowerment in a time when patriarchal standards still dominate society. Dani in *Midsommar* feels a great sense of isolation alongside her male peers. In Sojourner McKenzie's "Owning Terror. The feminine power of *Suspiria* and *Midsommar*," the author explains that "This visual isolation is repeated throughout the film where she is frequently placed in the corners of the frame. This reflects her feelings of powerlessness and invisibility to her male peers. She literally cannot measure up. None of the men express empathy for her situation, and see her as extra baggage."

What Dani feels is what many women feel in society. This connection to the main character is built from shared experience and empathy. The perspective of femininity has long been demonized and belittled in a patriarchal society, forcing women to live in a world where they are unable to express themselves or live comfortably. Throughout Western history, women have faced many oppressive forces from society. Even today, with all of the progress made for women's rights, there are still obstacles in everyday life.

The main element that connects Dani and the women watching the film is their gender and how that impacts their life within the patriarchy. The patriarchy exists to empower masculinity and manhood, whereas femininity and womanhood are pushed down. At the same time that femininity is demonized, women are oppressed and expected to obey the man.

In Tashia Maharani's article "The Queen Must Ride Alone: Reconstructing Sexuality and Hysteria in Ari Aster's *Midsommar*," they further explain that "This assumption could be considered as a form of oppression toward Dani and most women; that a woman's worth is measured from her sexual desires, and that she isn't worth as much when she is unable to please her male partner." As Dani is welcomed into the matriarchal Harga community she no longer has to serve her male peers. For women seeing this in film, it becomes a source of inspiration. It is important for women to know that their own power comes from within, not external male validation.

Throughout the movie, the idea of femininity and womanhood is constructed to horrify the audience. The theory of the "monstrous feminine," coined by Barbara Creed, will be used in my analysis to see how Dani slowly transitions from dependence on patriarchy to using her womanhood as a means of strength and freedom. By taking advantage of unity and shared empathy found in womanhood, women come together using the dark aspects, the monstrous side of their femininity as a way to instill fear in their oppressors. This power allows women to reclaim what has been used against them to bring awareness to feminist issues, encourage movements, and change society to disrupt the patriarchy and empower women. It threatens the patriarchy by empowering women, proving that women are strong and capable of burning the structure down if they so desire. During a time when women are still oppressed and at a disadvantage, movies like *Midsommar* inspire women to reclaim what the patriarchy condemns.

### **Methods/Process:**

It is always fascinating when a horror movie subverts everyday things and uses them for horror. *Midsommar* takes femininity, something seen as weaker (in a patriarchal society), and empowers it as a means of horror. I think it's important for

people of all genders and sexes to understand that body parts and identity cannot encapsulate the entirety of what it means to be feminine or masculine. Gender lies on a spectrum, but how people express themselves is a vastly diverse outcome. *Midsommar* shows this is not the case. By celebrating womanhood and creating a matriarchy, *Midsommar* shows that femininity is truly powerful.

I will be looking at a multitude of research papers that cover femininity, horror, monstrous femininity, and how those all relate to *Midsommar*. I will be using these readings to analyze specific scenes within the film to prove that monstrous femininity exists within *Midsommar*. There are several aspects of the film I want to cover including femininity, monstrous feminine, womanhood and matriarchy in the Harga community, and the character arc that Dani goes through during the film. Looking at Dani's mental state in the beginning versus the end will be crucial to explaining her transformation. When Dani lost her family, she sought comfort from her boyfriend and was met with indifference. Whereas, when she finds Christian participating in a sex ritual and is devastated, the Harga women immediately rush to her side and deeply empathize with her. The men in this film represent the negative results of patriarchy: a lack of empathy and connection. And throughout the film, we see them disrespect the Harga who ultimately symbolizes matriarchy. Coming from a society that was built to only strengthen men, they weren't taught to see femininity as equally powerful. The empathy Dani finds in the Harga is a crucial part of her journey to accept her womanhood. Additionally, once she has found community with the Harga, she no longer needs the men who treated her poorly and is able to detach herself. She begins to bond with the other women and sees that femininity is not weak.

At the end of the film, Dani sports a smile as she watches her boyfriend and the other men burn in a temple. Dani is literally and metaphorically burning down the patriarchy. This is the moment when she embraces her monstrous femininity and is fully empowered, subverting the patriarchal expectations of femininity. The ways of men do not survive in a matriarchy and is evident in *Midsommar* as all the male travelers are sacrificed in the end. In a patriarchal society, anything that threatens its existence, harbors fear in men. Men are safe in patriarchy. *Midsommar* features monstrous-feminine where the normal characteristics of the female experience (menstruation, pregnancy, intimacy) are celebrated and used against their oppressors. This film shows men as vulnerable and expendable, switching the gender perspective and making men feel insignificant and powerless. Femininity is the monster in this case, it becomes the "other" as it threatens the safety of men. It is scary, and it is meant to horrify the audience in order to show that femininity is just as capable as masculinity when it comes to being strong.

By the end of this paper, I will have thoroughly explained how *Midsommar* implements monstrous femininity into the film. I want to have more extensive

knowledge on this topic and be able to explain to other people the importance of female empowerment in film. Especially because women in horror are often killed, hunted, tortured, subjugated to biblical punishment, and many more horrible things, I hope to help others see that the range of femininity doesn't end with women being helpless creatures.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

“Femininity.” *Femininity - an Overview* | *ScienceDirect Topics*, ELSEVIER, 2022, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/femininity>.

This article talks about femininity in Western culture specifically. Since I will be talking about how monstrous femininity exists in *Midsommar*, it would be helpful to have a definition of what femininity is exactly. If I explain what femininity is in the first place, then I can talk about it from the perspective of horror.

From the article, I will be using their explanation of what femininity is. It talks about the overarching themes of femininity like characteristics, but also how it relates to masculinity and in a larger social context. The article also talks about femininity and its relation to gender and culture.

Kennedy, Caitlin. “Monstrous Womanhood and the Unapologetic Feminism of 'Midsommar'.” *Screen Queens*, Wordpress, 12 July 2019, <https://screen-queens.com/2019/07/13/monstrous-womanhood-and-the-unapologetic-feminism-of-midsommar/>.

This article talks about how femininity and womanhood exist in *midsommar*. The horror genre typically punishes female characters, but in *midsommar*, femininity is celebrated. The Harga community is a matriarchy; when Dani arrives, she is welcomed with open arms. As she distances herself from her past life and the people she came to the Harga community with, the community comforts and empathizes with her pain, making her feel like she is one with the community.

On the topic of femininity, I will want to go further into matriarchy, and this article delves into how the Harga culture is a matriarchy. There are certain aspects of the community like the celebration of womanhood during the festival and the emphasis on empathy. During the death ritual, when the two elders sacrifice themselves, the Harga all scream out in communal pain. After Dani sees her boyfriend cheating on her, she finally reaches her breaking point and is so overwhelmed with all the emotions coming up that she screams. The women come and comfort her by screaming with her as a way to connect with her, making Dani finally feel like she is understood, loved, and cared for.

McKenzie, Sojourner. "Owning Terror. The Feminine Power of *Suspiria* and *Midsommar*." *The Final Girls*, The Final Girls, 19 Aug. 2020, <https://www.thefinalgirls.co.uk/bloody-women/midsommar>.

This article talks about how Dani feels separated from her male counterparts and how the Harga is the opposite and encourages her to embrace her femininity. This will be important to explain the process of how Dani transforms from depending on the patriarchy to eventually embracing her feminine power to detach from the patriarchy.

In the film, Dani is constantly made to feel powerless. Whether it be by direct quotes from her male peers, or the way she is framed so that she looks out of place when next to her male peers, Dani constantly feels like she does not belong. The men see her as overly emotional, but she genuinely has trauma and the men are emotionally distant, unable to comfort her. Dani's experiences with the Harga are in a more positive setting. With the Harga, she finds a community of women with whom she can relate and express her emotions without fear of judgment. Once Dani has selected Christian as the final sacrifice, she then steps into her feminine power. Plus, the Harga community has many rituals that make space for her to allow her to embrace her femininity, especially since she is the only female in her group. During the May Queen dance, Dani and all the other women dance to compete for the title of May queen, but while they are dancing Dani feels so connected to them that she suddenly can speak and understand Swedish (the language the Harga speaks). Compared to how the men are treated within the community, they are isolated from the members whereas Dani is embraced because she is a woman.

Creed, B. *Monstrous-Feminine: Film Feminism Psychoanalysis*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1993, Accessed 28 Oct. 2022.

This book talks about how a range of different movies use womanhood and femininity as a means to horrify the audience. I want to define what monstrous-femininity means so the reader understands the relationship between gender and horror. I will use the various examples and subtopics within the book to apply them to *midsommar*. I will also use this to explain how femininity itself can be used for horror, and in turn, apply that to *Midsommar*.

Women in horror films have often been portrayed as the victim, but in some movies, women are the monsters. This differs from the male monster, and the distinction comes from gender. I'll be looking into and using the chapter that talks about motherhood to explain how that relates to *Midsommar*. Since, in



Midsommar, the Harga community is a matriarchy and the whole Midsommar festival is to celebrate the cycle of life including death and new life, it will help me explain how motherhood connects to monstrous femininity. This book also goes into examples of women who have used their femininity as a weapon against their male abusers, which is also applicable to midsommar.

Haralu, L. (2021). Madwomen and mad women: an analysis of the use of female insanity and anger in narrative fiction, from vilification to validation.

This article goes into detail about the vilification of women, especially when it comes to mental illness. In Midsommar, Dani suffers from many mental health issues from the loss of her entire family but receives no comfort or validation from her boyfriend. Her American male counterparts, instead, ridicule her and ostracize her. As the article explains, when Dani visits the Harga community with her group, the Harga welcomes her and she finally feels supported. They show her that she is valuable to the community, and inevitably turn her against her male counterparts. The men are simply used for reproductive uses and are put in an inferior position where Dani is essentially able to get revenge on how the men treated her. All of this while being supported by the Harga.

This article will help me explain the evolution of Dani relying on the patriarchy and eventually breaking away from it. The article talks about how Dani was overly dependent on her boyfriend. With the Harga, however, she finds a community and is given the space to break away from him and grow in her femininity and is in turn able to use that as her source of power.

Maharani, Tashia. “‘The Queen Must Ride Alone’: Reconstructing Sexuality and Hysteria in Ari Aster's Midsommar Imaji Nation.” *IMAJI Nation*, 7 June 2020, <https://imajugm.com/the-queen-must-ride-alone/>.

Zoladz, Lindsay. “Is 'Midsommar' a Female Empowerment Fairy Tale or an Ugly American Nightmare?” *The Ringer*, The Ringer, 3 July 2019, <https://www.theringer.com/movies/2019/7/3/20679187/midsommar-ari-aster-hereditary-review-florence-pugh>.

Knibbs, Kate. “How 'Midsommar' Turned Tradition and Folklore into Nightmare Fuel.” *The Ringer*, The Ringer, 10 July 2019, <https://www.theringer.com/movies/2019/7/10/20688163/midsommar-nordic-traditions-folklore-ari-aster>.

Braun, A. F. “Everyone Deserves a Family”: The Triple Bind of Family in Ari Aster’s Horror.

Rachmaputri, K. A. (2021). Negotiation of the Abject Through the Representation of the Monstrous-Feminine in Ari Aster's *Midsommar*.

KM /

## **Families Involved in Education**

Thesis Advisor: Kait Hodgin, Math Department

Student Pronouns (voluntary): she/her

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Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Pedagogical

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### **Abstract:**

The importance of math in our everyday lives is evident in most things that we do, from calculating bills, to watching sports, to determining the amount of time it takes to complete a task. If these tasks require using foundational math skills then our question is, “How do we improve the connection between classroom instruction of mathematics and the home unit?” There are academic practices that teachers can use inside their classrooms which also translate to tools that they can send home to families to encourage partnership between classroom instruction and the home unit. Examples of these tools include family math nights that bring everyone together to partake in math activities, weekly letters home that inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom and give support for continued learning at home, and math games that help students see the joy in learning math wherever they are. This thesis will analyze how these mathematical practices for 8 year olds are important not only for teachers and families, but for school administrators, legislative leaders, and curriculum designers.

### **Personal Interest:**

As far as I can remember, children have always been a large part of my life: from babysitting, to volunteering as a Kids Ministry educator at church, to officiating youth soccer games, and working at youth summer camps. I also come from a family where my parents are both very involved in all that my sisters and I do. They have been at every sports event, every music performance, helped us study for tests, and taught us to reread every paper. This not only has made me a more confident person, but has allowed me to succeed in school as it has removed the roadblocks and shifted the perceived power back to me. Knowing my family is always there to support me has connected the opportunity to learn in both the home and school settings. As I prepare to become a teacher I wondered how children without supportive families do in school. Are there ways to help out families who do not know how to support their children in school? Since I have personally experienced the positive impact that family involvement can have on a child’s life I know how important it is to find a way to make it as accessible to as many children as possible. Which means collecting the most efficient ways for teachers to reach their families outside of the classroom.

Currently I am an Elementary Education Major with hopes of becoming an Elementary teacher, so this project is focused towards 8 year old children. My hope is that I compile a list of the 5 best ways to get families involved in education that have the most impact on 8 year old children studying math. Many teachers and parents believe in the misconception that families do not have enough math expertise to teach their children at home. This perceived power causes teachers to not send home support or tools that are easily accessible to families and parents do not ask for tools to help them at home. Math is also a subject that I know families and students can struggle with due to the lack of confidence and the ever-changing methods within the subject. It is important that families realize the impact they can have on their child as they learn math and by having extra practice and support at home students can excel. While taking Education Courses I completed a class on Family Involvement in the Early Childhood Elementary Classroom, where I learned several helpful tips and ways to involve families while keeping children at the center. I also took several classes that focused on how to teach math to elementary students.

When I decided to become a teacher I knew my goal was to have a positive impact on children's lives. I became interested in becoming a professional educator because of the educators I have had in my education career. But what about children who do not have teachers that feel the need to support families or simply do not know how. My teachers emboldened me to become the best reader, writer, leader, and community member I can be. I want to create a list that all teachers can use so that they make their children's success a priority, just like mine did. Throughout my academic career, I have had gifted and impactful educators, yet my first through third grade educators have inspired me to make a difference by removing roadblocks. My career goal is to impact first through third graders in the educational community, though I hope my best practices focused on connecting classroom instruction and the home unit are able to be adapted to any grade level.

Children should have the opportunity to be encouraged in their learning and as a teacher I have a unique role in this. Involving families in school can be daunting: they may not be competent in the subject matter, they may not see it as necessary to be involved, and they may not be confident in their own knowledge. When teachers are assisting families to become more involved we see children achieving more in school, they have a desire to learn, and are overall more focused while in school. Knowing that they have this tool-kit in their back pocket, they should not feel alone in this struggle. In my future school I empower the community and build positive relationships between students, families, and teachers to create the best learning environment for students.

### **Larger Context:**

Throughout history there have been multiple philosophies regarding education, yet the progressivism educational philosophical approach promotes critical thinking, putting the student first, problem solving, and social responsibility. Studies show that having families involved in the classroom is paramount: “parents are the first and foremost influence on their children’s development and school success” (Bogensneider & Johnson, 2004, para. 7). This philosophy is based on a balance or connection between the environments of school and home. If we as educators can develop this connection then we can increase the confidence of not only our students but their families. Since their influence is so great, when families are not involved in their child’s education we see a decline in participation, understanding, and overall performance in students. Families that are given letters detailing the math for the week, helpful videos on how to teach and practice a new math concept, and games to play with their children have students that are more involved in school. The effect of perceived power is greater when teachers and families believe that families do not have the ability to educate their students in math at home.

According to Van Voorhis et. al. “parents from diverse backgrounds, when given direction, can become more engaged with their children on literacy and math activities — and that their children can increase their reading and math skills, on average, more so than children whose parents are operating without support or direction”(2013, p. ES-3). This study particularly focused on giving parents direction and support. So it is important to acknowledge that by giving families videos, detailed letters, example problems, and math games to use with their children, teachers have the ability to change the outcome students have in the classroom. It is also essential to recognize that this particular study focused on the demographic of parents from diverse backgrounds. These families typically are not given opportunities to support their children due to language barriers, social/cultural barriers, etc. By giving this particular demographic an opportunity to learn, teachers are able to see students grow and succeed more in the classroom.

Despite research findings like these, teachers are often unfamiliar with what practices work best to get families involved in school and their child’s education. Some of the things that families struggle with when working with their children are the “differences between parents’ own experiences of mathematics at school and children’s mathematics learning now, and difficulties negotiating home–school communication, particularly relating to a perceived power discrepancy between teachers and parents”(Jay, Rose, & Simmons, 2018, para. 32). This study connects the distorted perception that parents have incomplete expertise regarding math with the inaccurate perception that the classroom educator has ultimate expertise which provides insights into the many roadblocks when it comes to supporting their child in school. By utilizing

best practices like math games, letters home, videos, and math songs teachers can lessen the amount of roadblocks and improve the expertise of parents and families when supporting their children.

### **Methods/Process:**

My thesis project is focused on a pedagogical approach for 8 year old children and their families. Teachers are required to become proficient in the subject matter of math in order to teach their students a fundamental portion of education. The state of Oregon and school districts have required curriculums that have identified math and english as the core subjects that need to produce proficiency within the classroom instruction. I decided to focus on 8 year old math education not only because of the importance it holds in our current education, but also because of how little students enjoy learning math concepts and how little teachers feel encouraged to teach them.

I am going to be creating a list of 5 best practices, drawn from tested studies, for math education that teachers will easily be able to use in their classroom. In these practices I will be highlighting activities that teachers can do at school with families and that families can work on together at home. Since learning happens at home and at school it is important that I incorporate both of these environments into my final list.

I have chosen sources that focus on strategies to support mathematical learning in the home unit and at school. These sources mentioned 8 year old learning abilities, family involvement, misconceptions of mathematical ability, and positive impacts. It was important that I chose articles that highlighted perceived power between teachers and families. I also looked for studies that assessed students who had support in school and those who did not and the impact this had on their future schooling. I would like to pull several practices from these articles that have proven to be beneficial to both families, students, and teachers and select the top 5 to create my list.

By identifying 5 best practices for enriching mathematics, I am developing a tool that will be accessible to other professional educators, future colleagues, and most importantly the families that we will serve. The practices will focus on math memorization, use of everyday objects, outside math games, and math nights with families. Then I will connect these practices that I found to the benefit it has on supporting children in their present and future education. Within this project my goal is also to address challenges and difficulties families have navigating their own experiences and connecting them to the math education their children are being taught. These practices will allow teachers to bridge this gap by giving them videos, books, and detailed answer keys to support them in the home environment. One example of connecting the school and home environments is by hosting a Family Math Night.

I chose these practices to focus on, because they align with the progressivism educational philosophy. The progressivism philosophy is a belief that focuses on the whole student and what they need in order to best learn. Knowing that my thesis will be published online, I hope that teachers will look at it and be motivated to involve families into their students' education and to include these beliefs in their teaching. Even though my practices will be focused on involving families in math specifically, I know other teachers can add to these practices and make them their own for their classrooms. Going into a professional career as a teacher, I hope to make use of these 5 best practices and be a connector between school and home while focusing on the student.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Bogensneider, K., & Johnson, C. (2004). Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars. *Family Involvement in Education: How Important Is It? What Can Legislators Do?*

This article is helpful, because it says that parent involvement is better for children. They get better grades and score higher. This article states several specific reasons why parents' involvement is good for students and that the more involvement there is the better children do in elementary, high school, and even college. Shows that having parent involvement while they are young will support them as they get older. Education doesn't stop after elementary school, so students should start getting support as soon as possible. But parents typically do not get the support that they need, they do not know how their children are doing in school and do not care what grade they get in classes. This article talks about how much it will cost legislators to support districts in creating more family and community involvement. It also lists how policymakers can assist families with their children's education, three examples are out-of-school programs, child care, and summer school.

Caspe, M. (2018). Making Math a Family Thing. *Strategies for Parents and Teachers on Closing the Math Gap between Home and School*. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/01/making-math-family-thing#:~:text=The%20recommend%20informal%20get%20together%20using%20math%20in%20everyday%20life>.

Davis, J. M., & Kelly, L. (2017). *Encouraging Family Involvement in Math During the Early Years*, 45(3). Retrieved 2022, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338490985\\_Encouraging\\_Family\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Math\\_During\\_the\\_Early\\_Years](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338490985_Encouraging_Family_Involvement_in_Math_During_the_Early_Years).

First off this article lists reasons why there are barriers in math with family involvement. No mathematical knowledge, anxiety and negative feelings about math, and focusing more on literature and language arts rather than math. Three

ways that teachers can support their families with math at home are listed within this article. Those three ways are Family Math Nights, Math Buddies, and sending home tools and manipulatives for parents to help teach their children at home. These methods help children and parents to associate positive attitudes with math, which is important since they will change their minds about how they interact with mathematics. This article explains that by giving families the support they need they are making sure that the children in their classes are receiving the help they need. Teachers are not only benefiting themselves, but also their students. Solid ways that family involvement can be encouraged in the classroom.

Girard, C., Bastelica, T., Léone, J., Epinat-Duclos, J., Longo, L., & Prado, J. (2021). The relation between home numeracy practices and a variety of math skills in elementary school children. *PLOS ONE*, 16(9). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255400>

Jacobbe, T., Ross, D., & Hensberry, K. (2012). *The effects of a family math night on preservice teachers' perceptions ...* SAGE Journals. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042085912447805>

Jay, T., Rose, J., & Simmons, B. (2018). Why is parental involvement in children's mathematics learning hard? parental perspectives on their role supporting children's learning. *SAGE Open*, 8(2), 215824401877546. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018775466>

This article describes a study where parents worked on math at home with students. This led to some not great results, because the parents did not have a structure to support them in this teaching of math at home. Parents and students can become quickly frustrated and misunderstand concepts, especially when they work on them at home. This explains why with helpful tips and guidance teachers can encourage families to work on math problems at home and to feel confident teaching them to their children. The study's outcome is negative towards my topic, but I will focus on how with the proper support families can teach their students math at home. The other study included in the article researched what would happen when parents were given structure and direction. Those parents were more successful in helping their children in math. They were less fearful of making mistakes, ready to ask for assistance when needed, and had a desire to learn how to do the math correctly to teach their children correctly.

Johnson, P. (2016). Culminating Projects in Teacher Development. *Types of Parental Involvement and Their Effect on Student Mathematics in Secondary Education: Attitudes, Self-Efficacy, and Achievement*. Retrieved 2022, from [https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=ed\\_etds](https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=ed_etds)



Skwarchuk, S.-L., Douglas, H., Cahoon, A., LeFevre, J.-A., Xu, C., Roy, E., Simms, V., Wylie, J., Maloney, E. A., Osana, H. P., & Susperreguy, M. I. (2022). Relations between the Home Learning Environment and the literacy and mathematics skills of eight-year-old Canadian children. *Education Sciences*, 12(8), 513.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12080513>

Beginning to teach children before they come into school and continuing to teach them at home once they get into school helps them as they get older. In the article they did a study on 8 year old children which is important for my paper, because I am looking for tools to help this specific age group. The article explains that in literacy and numeracy it is important to have learning at home. Since I am focusing on math it is important to acknowledge numeracy. Home and school learning come together to benefit the child's learning as a whole. Families then should be encouraged to teach at home and be given the resources to do this. If schools focus especially on the home learning environment they will find that it affects the child's entire learning experience. Positive relations between family/parent involvement at home and how children achieve in math and literature. This article has great support for supporting parents at home and the impact it has on children.

Van Voorhis , F. L., Epstein, J. L., Lloyd, C. M., & Leung, T. (2013). The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8 . *A Focus on Literacy and Math Achievement Outcomes and Social-Emotional Skills*. Retrieved 2022, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545474.pdf>.

This article helps me by explaining that not only are students affected positively in mathematics when families are involved, but they also benefit socially and emotionally when they are involved. There are many benefits to having families involved in practice and education of math with children. Just because a parent does not have a higher education or has a more diverse background, does not mean that they are not the best person to teach their child. If teachers equip them to support their children, then they will be just as important in changing their child's life. Engagement is key. In this article there are helpful tools that teachers can use to involve families that they are having a hard time with getting involved in their child's education. This is important because just because teachers use certain tools doesn't mean that all families will immediately want to be involved. There may need to be more effort on the teacher's end to interest the families.

BS /

## **Departing the Monolingual Form of Instruction: Best Practices for Supporting Emergent Bilingual Elementary Students**

Thesis Advisor: Jessica Dougherty, Education and Leadership  
Student Pronouns: she/her

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Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Pedagogical

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### **Abstract:**

In the ever-growing diverse populations of our elementary schools, there is an increasing need for classroom teachers to scaffold, differentiate, and support students in innovative ways in order to provide access to knowledge for every student. Across the nation, the emergent multilingual population is growing in schools. These are students whose first/home language is something other than English and have the potential to further develop bilingual or multilingual skills. There are clear advantages to expanding one's linguistic repertoire; however, it requires cultivating language development within the classroom to make this happen successfully. This project will seek to amass the most effective and far-reaching instructional approaches for serving emergent bilingual students in the elementary classroom. It will serve as a list of best practices that classroom teachers can implement to transition their perspective away from a monolingual form of instruction.

After contextualizing my project using data from two Oregon school districts' English Language Learner Plan, I will use the Castañeda Standards to judge the effectiveness of current program models. With a foundation established, this project will conclude the most effective methods of reaching emergent bilingual students within the classroom, regardless of a teacher's ESOL training or certification. What will result is a fully informed scope of practice that can be implemented as research-backed, pedagogical strategies in elementary classrooms. In addition, an argument is made for why students' first/home language should be integrated into instructional approaches and leveraged for the benefit of the student.

### **Personal Interest:**

I am someone who has grown up with educators as parents. Ever since I was old enough to be asked the question of what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said that I wanted to be a teacher. Many assumed this was a direct correlation to my parents; that I simply wanted to be in the profession they were in because I looked up to them. While I may have been exposed to the profession of teaching through my parents, this

assumption certainly was never the only reason. I looked up to educators in general. I used to pretend to be a teacher, offer to help other students in class, and was often situated next to a struggling peer for support. This fascination of helping others never faded; it only became more refined.

While exploring the field of education through internships, jobs, and lots of volunteerism, I quickly realized how I was able to fit in among those in the field. It felt almost too easy to be seen as an educator. A lot of this, I think, is attributed to the fact that I represent the majority group of educators in the US. I am a white woman who speaks English as her first language. While this is not something I can change, I desperately wanted to connect to the diverse student population that I could see in the schools. I had a front row seat to the disparities between educators and young students who hailed from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. I feel passionate about helping students to step into the strength that is their unique experiences, and encouraging them to leverage their abilities to find success. I needed to find a way to feel like I was truly making a difference in my students' lives, rather than trying to change them to fit the Americanized standard of academic achievement.

I am currently an Early Childhood/Elementary Education major with an ESOL minor/endorsement. After taking the only required ESOL class for the typical degree, I quickly realized that this practice was exactly what fueled my passion and gave me something to feel like I could make a difference. The class focused mainly on debunking myths held by many about students who spoke English as a second or other language and a few pedagogical strategies for making them feel included in the classroom and school. I related this back to my time spent working with underrepresented populations and felt the need for this instruction was critical. Not only that – I wanted to become an ally, a resource, and an advocate for this population of students. I knew that as a white majority in the field, I had the duty to use my privilege in a position of influence, especially around the youngest minds.

I never want to be a teacher who helps my students discard their diverse linguistic repertoire in order to conform to the society around them. This starts early in our schools. It begins with teachers who adopt an asset-based approach to instruction and a belief in pedagogical practices that are beneficial to a diverse student population. I believe that when educators seek connection with students, meet them where they are, and help them to realize the strength in their own ability, students are free to explore learning through the variety of lenses they carry. I feel a deep obligation to be an advocate for catering to our diverse student population through the instruction introduced in our classrooms.

**Larger Context:**

There is significant growth in the diversity of our school populations, which can partially be marked by the number of emergent bilingual learners in our communities. It's estimated that by 2025, emergent bilingual learners will make up 25% of the K-12 student population (*Emergent Bilinguals are the Future*, 2020). It is critical that educators become equipped to teach to and leverage their students' unique linguistics repertoires, as this population is only expected to grow further. The clear need for instructional approaches catered towards emergent bilinguals is what drives the conversation around moving away from a monolingual form of education.

According to existing research, bilingual program models seem to be the most effective approach to supporting the development of both a students' home language and English. These programs contain English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, first language development, and sheltered instruction for content-specific topics (Cornwall, 2022). Together, these practices give students the necessary support needed to become bilingual while also achieving grade-appropriate standards. This type of instructional design, while effective, is not attainable for every elementary teacher. This research lacks the pedagogical practices that can be implemented into a diverse classroom regardless of the ESOL training of any given educator. The reality is that most elementary classrooms do not exist within a dual language immersion or bilingual environment. The question remains: how can we support EB students within a typical classroom setting?

The situation in our diverse schools means that 55% of teachers will have at least one emergent bilingual student, yet only 33% have received a "modest level" of training to be able to support their academic needs (*Emergent Bilinguals are the Future*, 2020). There is an evident disparity between educators and the students in their classrooms, which is why this work is important. Teachers need to be better equipped to help every student excel, not only the ones that can communicate with them best. By compiling a list of practices that every elementary teacher can access, emergent bilingual students in Oregon classrooms will be supported outside of their specialized English Language Development (ELD) classes. The goal of this contributing research is to provide a streamlined awareness of the benefits to transitioning away from monolingual instruction as well as strategies to implement current approaches. By engaging in this transition, teachers will contribute to the educational opportunities given to the future of our communities by closing the gap between high-quality education and emergent bilingual students.

**Methods/Process:**

For my thesis project, I will be creating a list of best practices for supporting emergent bilingual students in the elementary classroom. To do this, I will start by

looking at what practices are currently in use by evaluating the Lau Plan, or English Language Learner Plan, of two school districts in Oregon. I will choose one district with more rural community populations and one district that is more urban in order to provide a more accurate representation of instructional approaches. When evaluating the Lau Plans, I will specifically look for the district's progress towards English language proficiency through the ELPA (English Language Proficiency Assessment) scores and percentages. Then, I will note the program models in place within the district, correlating them with the respective ELP progress. I will use the Castañeda Standards from the landmark *Castañeda v. Pickard* case to judge the execution of each Lau Plan. This will give me a view of the effectiveness of certain program models, which I will use to guide my search for the most effective pedagogical practices for supporting English language proficiency.

In order to compile the best instructional approaches for emergent bilinguals, I will choose a minimum of three and a maximum of five instructional models that can be implemented by elementary teachers, irrespective of their ESOL training or certification. I will be using research from experts in the field to cross-reference pedagogical approaches and weigh them against each other. I will also use the data I gather from the two school districts in Oregon to inform my decision and research of classifying best practices. Because I have some basic knowledge in this field of study already, I anticipate finding significant support of translanguaging, or using one's full linguistic repertoire, as a tool to scaffold and/or elevate instruction. Due to this, I will make a case for incorporating students' first/home language into curriculum instruction in the mainstream classroom.

When I am done, I will have a fully informed scope of practice for serving emergent bilingual learners at the elementary school level. As with all honors theses, my work will be uploaded to the Honors Digital Commons website where others will have access to it. Ideally, educators, both future and present, will be able to inform their practice as well. If the opportunity arises to present at the Academic Excellence Showcase, I would be honored to also present my findings there. In addition, this project will serve as a starting ground for the work I will do in my future career as a teacher. I will be able to implement these strategies in my elementary classroom.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Bacon, C. K. (2018). "It's Not Really My Job": A Mixed Methods Framework for Language Ideologies, Monolingualism, and Teaching Emergent Bilingual Learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 2, 172–187.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118783188>.

Cornwall, G. (2022, March 24). *Eight Best Practices for Teaching in Dual Language and Other Bilingual Programs* | *School Library Journal*. School Library Journal.

<https://www.slj.com/story/eight-best-practices-for-teaching-in-dual-language-and-other-bilingual-programs>.

This article discusses the importance of incorporating a student's first/home language into their curriculum instruction in the classroom. It introduces ways to do so, such as scaffolding instruction, providing books in other languages, and rejecting the myth that students learning English as a second language should conduct their learning processes through English only, not their native language.

This article will help me in stating the value in integrating other languages into instruction in the classroom. Specifically, it will help me contribute to the conversation about providing books to students that reflect their language experiences. Encouraging students to read and learn in their home language does not slow down or hinder their literacy skills.

*Emergent Bilinguals are the Future.* (2020). Rosetta Stone Education Ltd.

[https://www.lexialearning.com/sites/default/files/RSE\\_Migration\\_Assets/emergent-bilingual-white-paper-final.pdf](https://www.lexialearning.com/sites/default/files/RSE_Migration_Assets/emergent-bilingual-white-paper-final.pdf).

This article summarizes the data supporting significant growth in the emergent bilingual learner population in our school systems. It touches on why there is an achievement gap, the lack of educator training to work with this population, the need to readdress any one-size-fits-all models, and instead begin to look at students' needs individually.

This article will help me to address the problem that is prevalent in our schools right now and justify the need for my topic. A growing number of students are not being given the tools they need to be successful. It gives relevance to approaching curriculum design and instructional practices in a different way that better serves emergent bilingual students.

Kleyn, T., & García, O. (2019). Translanguaging as an Act of Transformation. *The Handbook of TESOL in K-12*, 69–82.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119421702.ch6>.

This article provides a deeper understanding of the translanguaging practice and discusses the positive outcomes for integrating this practice in the classroom. Translanguaging allows emergent bilingual students to access the full scope of their linguistic repertoire by using both their home language and English to make sense of their learning process. This allows students to feel validated in their learning, as they are free to express themselves through language.

This article will help me better understand the practice of translanguaging and how it can realistically be applied in the classroom. It helps me, also, to

contribute to the conversation around the importance of integrating other languages besides English into instruction. It's a powerful practice that opposes the myth that curriculum should be English only.

Menken, K., & Sánchez, M. T. (Maite). (2019). Translanguaging in English-Only Schools: From Pedagogy to Stance in the Disruption of Monolingual Policies and Practices. *TESOL Quarterly*, 3, 741–767. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.513>.

Monsrud, M.-B., Rydland, V., Geva, E., Thurmann-Moe, A. C., & Halaas Lyster, S.-A. (2019). The advantages of jointly considering first and second language vocabulary skills among emergent bilingual children. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1, 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1624685>.

Palmer, D. K., Martínez, R. A., Mateus, S. G., & Henderson, K. (2014). Reframing the Debate on Language Separation: Toward a Vision for Translanguaging Pedagogies in the Dual Language Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 3, 757–772. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12121>.

This article addresses bilingual education practices through the lens of a dual language immersion program. It analyzes the practice of two experienced educators to address the issue of separation of languages in academic instruction. The research touches on identity theory to promote bilingual identities and introduces techniques such as, modeling bilingual practices, position students as bilingual even before they are, and promoting language crossing.

This article will help me to compare the situation of typical public schools to the practices employed in a dual language immersion setting. It provides strategies with proven outcomes for bilingual students, which directly translates to instruction strategies for success for emergent bilingual students in our typical programs. It also, again, describes leveraging language crossing, or translanguaging as an instruction approach.

Pontier, R. W., Destro Boruchowski, I., & Olivo, L. I. (2020). Dynamic Language Use in Bi/Multilingual Early Childhood Education Contexts. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 2, 158–178. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2020.18>.

Schmidt, E. G. (2018). First Language as a Resource in Additive Bilingual Education. *University of Calgary*. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/5379>.

This article considers the benefits of utilizing students' first language to employ additive bilingualism in the classroom. This results in an individual maintaining the use of their native language and even leveraging it as a tool to learn English. Research was collected by observing the role of the first language in an

English-Spanish dual language environment. The results concluded that the incorporation of both languages helped develop cognitive mediation, second language development, biliteracy growth, and a bilingual identity for students.

This article will help me to add to the conversation around the importance of leveraging a student's first language as a tool to build the second. It provides proof of positive outcomes for students who are emerging bilinguals, as well as pedagogical observations for bridging the knowledge between L1 and L2 in the classroom setting.

ES /



## **Deaf Representation in Television: Can Silence Spread Awareness?**

Thesis Advisor: Lyra Ehlers, Department of Deaf Studies

Student Pronouns: She/Her

Thesis/Project Genre(s) – Scholarly

### **Abstract:**

My thesis will focus on the amount and nature of Deaf<sup>1</sup> content in today's media, specifically how it is portrayed on television. My plan is to delve into three specific examples over the span of an eight-year period, with the samples coming from the years 2013, 2017, and 2021. The three episodes will be from mainstream TV shows such as *Master of None*, *Switched at Birth*, and *Only Murders in the Building*. While viewing these samples, not only do I plan on performing an in-depth analysis of the stereotypes, misconceptions, identity, and etiquette that one should use when around the Deaf. I also plan on analyzing deafness as a spectrum, the forms and nuance of communication, the Deaf community as a whole, and the technologies that the Deaf use in their lives. After completing my analysis, I will then compare my observations to the findings from the various journals I have read and cited from my research on the issues above. The main question I will be exploring as I work is: Can silence spread awareness? This comes from the fact that all three episodes are silent and that there are many misconceptions about the community that should be brought to society's attention.

### **Personal Interest:**

Although I have never been deaf or part of the Deaf community, I have been influenced by it throughout my life. The first time was during my childhood. It was not as normal as one would think. Growing up with a speech delay pushed my parents to teach me "Baby Sign Language," American Sign Language, which allowed me the opportunity to communicate while learning to speak English. It was not until high school that it crossed my path again, but this time as my foreign language. It was in this class that my interest in Deaf media started because my teacher showed us different types of Deaf media, like movies and TV shows. The two most notable are *Children of a Lesser God* and *Sue Thomas FBI*. *Children of a Lesser God* is about a Deaf woman who falls in love with the hearing teacher at the school she works, and *Sue Thomas FBI* follows the true story of a Deaf FBI agent and how she solves cases. Not only did I get to

<sup>1</sup> When capitalized, "Deaf" refers to someone who is culturally Deaf and uses ASL and is part of the Deaf community. Uncapitalized, "deaf" refers to someone who cannot hear because of an audiological condition.

see it in class, but I also got to watch a bit of Deaf representation in the theaters when my family and I went to see *Baby Driver*. In the movie, the main character's foster father is Deaf, and throughout the film, the audience can see how he lives his life.

Presently, I am continuing my education in American Sign Language and ASL Interpreting here at WOU, and I have had the privilege to spend time with and for the Deaf community. I have attended a few Deaf community nights where ASL students and the local Deaf community meet and catch up. I have also had the opportunity to build bunk beds at a local summer camp for deaf and hard of hearing children. Not only do I involve myself in the Deaf community, but I have also made an effort to involve myself in the DeafBlind community by enrolling in a course that teaches about the community and how to communicate with them. Deaf representation in media has retained my attention because it is engaging to watch since I can understand what the Deaf characters are signing. Like me, Deaf representation in media has evolved. The perspective of the characters has shifted from static and bland background characters to dynamic main characters who can do anything but hear. This new perspective shows how inclusive mainstream media has become, which allows for a limitless amount of media to be produced and watched in a variety of different genres.

With the completion of my project, I hope this will open up a discussion for both more and real Deaf representation in media. It would also be great if this leads to the discussion about other communities within the Deaf and how they can be represented, for example, the DeafBlind community. If all goes well, then this would be a great connection to my future career as an interpreter for the Deaf and the DeafBlind. This project can show the evolution in how Deaf representation was handled from the years 2013, 2017, and 2021 compared to when it will be viewed in the next coming years or decades. Based on the current trends of inclusivity in the modern mainstream media, it is creating a greater demand for interpreters in the workforce regardless of the industry. This will provide me with innumerable opportunities, no matter which direction my career takes me. That being said, it would be an honor to work as an interpreter in the film and TV industries.

### **Larger Context:**

Although the representation of deaf people in media, movies especially, started back in the late 1930's, it was not until the early 1980's that the industry started to evolve, which meant that actual d/Deaf people were starting to get hired to play d/Deaf characters. Not to mention, those characters were also evolving as they were shifting from static or background characters to main or dynamic characters who have motivations and traits other than them being d/Deaf. Roughly 30 years later, in 2011, another major change happened. The TV show *Switched at Birth* was released, and unlike its predecessors, it had all of the characters learn sign language, even if they were

hearing. They even had a silent episode where only sign language was used. A few years after that, in 2015, another show was released, *Master of None*. Although the show was not connected to the Deaf community, they did a silent episode of their own featuring a Deaf woman going about her day. A few years later, in 2021, another show came out, *Only Murders in the Building*, and then their silent episode came out.

Even though each episode had something that the other episodes did not have, most had the same recurring themes, like the lack of understanding verbal communication through lipreading as the rate of understanding is quite low. In both, *Only Murders in the Building* and *Master of None*, when the Deaf character did not understand the hearing or vice versa, they would start writing notes or gesturing instead of trying to lip read because the Deaf person would only be able to understand around “30-40% of spoken sounds” as some sounds look similar to others when said like “g, p, b, and m” and instead of using all their time and energy to try and understand it, they both choose to write which helped both people (McAleer 52).

Another recurring theme that all episodes show is the lack of an individual Deaf identity: deafness is a spectrum and every deaf person may not always be profoundly deaf when they do not have any hearing at all. They might have some residual hearing left allowing them to hear a few sounds. Their ears might also have different levels of deafness. For example, one ear might be profound and the other mild. Again, this goes against the common misunderstanding that there is one type of deafness, profound, and deaf people live in a soundless bubble where they cannot hear anything. In contrast to profound deafness where the quietest sound is a chainsaw, those with mild deafness would have a bit of trouble “following speech, mainly in noisy rooms” (Gulliver and Ghinea 8).

### **Methods/Process:**

My plan and process are quite simple. First, I plan on watching three TV show episodes that are either fully silent or have segments with Deaf characters. The only exception is for any background music or noise that is not spoken language. The three episodes are “New York, I Love You” from *Master of None*; “Uprising” from *Switched at Birth*; and “The Boy From 6B” from *Only Murders in the Building*. I chose these three episodes because they are all silent and fully in ASL. They also show a variety of different ways to convey deafness, either by only using background music like in “Uprising,” having no audio at all as seen in “New York, I Love You,” or a very realistic approach of having some low-frequency white noise type sounds but nothing concrete or discernable.

After that, I will begin detailing each episode, documenting the stereotypes (both good and bad) representing the Deaf community. I will also note what went wrong and how it became a misconception or misunderstanding when it comes to the community.

The myths or misconceptions that I will delve into are lipreading, deafness as a limited or singular identity, and SimCom. I will also explore how the episodes portrayed Deaf etiquette and the technology they use. Of course, if time permits, I will delve into other myths, like their ability to drive.

The third part of my thesis will be where I connect all that I have gathered from my analysis of the three episodes along with the misconceptions and stereotypes that surround the Deaf community. Even though I have mentioned more than a fair share of misconceptions above. I will mainly focus more on lipreading, deafness as a singular identity, and SimCom than the others listed. After focusing on the misconceptions and the stereotypes, I will then expand on what could be done to improve the accuracy of what deafness and the Deaf culture are in the media with the use of the new conceptions as references.

I hope that with the completion of this project, it will do at least one of two things. First, I'd like to spread light on the topic of Deaf representation and show the realities of being d/Deaf. This can then, second, dispel the current representation that the Deaf community has. Not only does it have the opportunity to change the perspective that one may have towards the Deaf and their community, but it may also have the chance to open up the mainstream media for more Deaf representation to be shown.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Janet L. Pray & I. King Jordan (2010) The Deaf Community and Culture at a Crossroads: Issues and Challenges, *Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation*, 9:2-3, 168-193, DOI: 10.1080/1536710X.2010.493486

This article will help me with the different identities that one can be a part of or be associated with in the Deaf community and the technology they use, either assistive or general. By utilizing this article, I will be able to highlight the differences between each character as there is no standard "Deaf person" or "Deaf identity" as both depend on the person.

Barnett, Steven. "Clinical and cultural issues in caring for deaf people." *FAMILY MEDICINE-KANSAS CITY*- 31 (1999): 17-22.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Steven-Barnett-4/publication/13301062\\_Clinical\\_and\\_cultural\\_issues\\_in\\_caring\\_for\\_Deaf\\_people/links/5d1f65c2458515c11c14fc4d/Clinical-and-cultural-issues-in-caring-for-Deaf-people.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Steven-Barnett-4/publication/13301062_Clinical_and_cultural_issues_in_caring_for_Deaf_people/links/5d1f65c2458515c11c14fc4d/Clinical-and-cultural-issues-in-caring-for-Deaf-people.pdf)

This article will help me with the different methods one can use to get the attention of a Deaf person since vocalization is impractical. It also mentions the

amount of lip or speech reading a Deaf person can understand. By utilizing this article, I will be able to understand the etiquette that one should know or be aware of as not to shock or disrespect the Deaf person. It will also help me understand more of the topic of lipreading and how it is commonly perceived.

Gulliver, S., Ghinea, G. How level and type of deafness affect user perception of multimedia video clips. *UAIS* 2, 374–386 (2003).  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-003-0067-5>  
<https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/26641/>

This article will help me understand how deafness is a spectrum of four levels: mild, moderate, severe, and profound, and how to tell when someone was born deaf versus when they became deaf later in life. By utilizing this article, I will be able to understand where each character in the three episodes I analyze falls on that spectrum of deafness. If I can, I also plan on using this article to determine if they were born deaf or lost it later in their lives.

McAlier M(2006) Communicating effectively with deaf patients. *Nursing Standard*. 20, 19, 51-54. Date of acceptance: August 30 2005.  
[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A141843865/AONE?u=oregon\\_oweb&sid=googleScholar&xid=6200ad29](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A141843865/AONE?u=oregon_oweb&sid=googleScholar&xid=6200ad29).

This article will help me understand the skill of lip reading which is where someone who is not native or fluent in the language they are communicating in reads lips to understand what is being communicated. In this source, it is the deaf person trying to understand English from a hearing person.

By utilizing this article, I will be able to understand how lip reading works and which sounds or phonemes trip people up, as some may sound very similar to others. I plan on using this article to compare the reality of lip reading to how the episodes I will analyze portray it.

Newell, William, et al. "Simultaneous Communication: A Description by Deaf Professionals Working in an Educational Setting." *Sign Language Studies*, vol. 69, 1990, p. 391-414. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sls.1990.0023.  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/507083/pdf>

This article will help me understand Simultaneous Communication, SimCom, which is a communication method where the speaker is both speaking and signing at the same time. This article can also help me understand how SimCom works and how it is seen in the Deaf community. By utilizing this article, I will be able to address the common misconception of how SimCom is perceived versus how it is shown and some of the statistics mentioned.

Johnston, Trevor, and Adam Schembri. *Australian Sign Language (Auslan): An introduction to sign language linguistics*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.  
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=dnxDgCvEnJoC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=deaf+myths+misconceptions&ots=03iAQS2rDP&sig=VRwjQaP1Vv73zybellU9LzJ1DdY#v=onepage&q=deaf%20myths%20misconceptions&f=false>

“Myths and Realities.” *VAWnet.org*, <https://vawnet.org/sc/myths-and-realities>.

Faye Kuo, Open and Closed: Captioning Technology as a Means to Equality, 23 J. Marshall J. Computer & Info. L. 159 (2004)

Barnett, Steven. "Communication with deaf and hard-of-hearing people: a guide for medical education." *Academic Medicine* 77.7 (2002): 694-700.

MS /