

# A Study on the Development of Self-disclosure and Self-advocacy Awareness in Hearing-impaired Students

– Including leading to the preparation of a *torisetsu* (user’s manual)” –

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We conducted semi-structured interviews with high school and university students that graduated from special support classes for the hearing impaired at a regular middle school, and examined factors encouraging the development of self-disclosure and self-advocacy awareness before and after puberty. The interview items included a review of reasonable accommodations that they had received, along with other accommodations that they themselves had requested, i.e., accommodations and advocacies in communication, and plans for self-disclosure when facing transitions in their environment, such as when attending university or finding a job. A matrix was then made of two factors, the degree of hearing aid use and the intelligibility of speech, and this was administered to three groups of the hearing-impaired student subjects. We then conducted group analysis and case analysis on a time axis.

The results showed seven factors that were found to encourage the development of self-disclosure and self-advocacy after puberty in the hearing-impaired students. These included: 1) the influence of both peer groups and people without hearing impairment, 2) self-selection and self-decision regarding the hearing aids used, methods, and modes of communication that were better suited to the characteristics of each hearing-impaired student, 3) improvement of their fundamental linguistic abilities and their awareness of the characteristics of information, 4) awareness of changes of thought regarding their impairments over time, 5) acquisition of an objective point of view regarding oneself, including insight into new human relations such as interactions between a “funny man” and a “straight man,” 6) experiencing success in self-advocacy, or transforming the experience of failure into a desire to succeed, and 7) continuing conversations not only with mentors but also with unfamiliar people. In addition to those seven factors, it was found that a *torisetsu* (user’s manual) would be appreciated, and thus the subject hearing-impaired students made one for use when transitioning within their environment, all in order to promote self-understanding and self-disclosure with an awareness of self-advocacy.