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Research Statement
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Since my tenure at Ohio State (in 1998), my research has been a braid of three strands. First, almost all of my scholarly work is grounded in rhetorical approaches to disability and deafness. Critically, I aim to “discover all the available means of persuasion” (as Aristotle defined the art of rhetoric) in relation to any argument about deafness or disability (and sometimes between deafness and disability). My rhetorical approach, which often blends both critical and creative writing, has made my work distinctive in the fields of disability studies and deaf studies. Second, my research always attempts to create, engage, and maintain an interdisciplinary approach to disability and disability studies. I have persistently maintained that the lives of people with disabilities—and the study of disability—will fare better (if not best) through a critical interdisciplinary approach to disability that brings the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, allied medicine, social work, education, and law and policy studies all to the table together. My research attempts to enact what I maintain. Third, my research is always informed by an interest in literacy and more particularly, in the intersections between visual and verbal literacy. In this strand, I attend to the development of American Sign Language literature—a visual, embodied, performed literature—and I also explore the impact and uses of digital media, visual “texts,” and good old fashioned writing (especially through forms of life writing) on individual people with disabilities and on the development of deaf culture and disability culture.

My research is highly collaborative. Such collaboration is necessary, I believe, to cultivate the still relatively new fields of disability studies and deaf studies. It is necessary because it can help us carry out the kind of multi-faceted, rhetorically responsible approach to the imagined and real lives of people with disabilities that I believe is important. It is also necessary because it can help educate and nurture the next generation of scholars in deaf studies and disability studies—many of whom are people with disabilities themselves and coming to college on the wings of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); I often choose to collaborate with my students, both graduate and undergraduate. Finally, such collaboration carries out the important principle of *interdependence* that is often discussed as a critical commonplace in disability studies.

In the future, I intend to conduct even more collaborative research and writing. I hope, as well, to take up some work in (collaborative) documentary film-making with the disability and/or deaf experience as my subject. I also imagine that my future research will send me to basic projects such as: completing an introductory (textbook) on Deaf Studies; authoring an introductory (textbook) on Disability Studies; compiling a digital encyclopedia of American Sign Language literature; and writing and speaking more in the public sphere about disability studies, advocacy, and rights. Finally, I have several research projects already underway that I believe will sustain me for years to come. I intend to continue exploring the relationships and tensions between deaf studies and disability studies and between deaf identity and disability identity. I will complete an essay (or more) on James Castle, an emerging figure in the folk art world, who was deaf and illiterate in Idaho in the early part of the 20th century. I plan to extend my work on the Nazi’s T-4 program against people with disabilities to include (at least) a detailed study of the Hartheim killing center/site and to also conduct a comparative critique between Spartan culture and the Nazi’s T-4 program; there could be another book-length project in this extension. And at last, I hope to return to Kenya—many times—and carry out a sustained, collaborative project about the education and employment of deaf and disabled Kenyans as that country embraces a new national disability act.