

**Claire Darmstadter**

Hey everybody, I am joined today by Justice Moore who is a freshman here at UW-Madison. Thanks for taking a couple of minutes to chat with me!

**Justice Moore**

Thank you so much. I'm excited to meet with you today.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah, great. So would you be able to give us a little bit of background about where you grew up and what your experience with language has been?

**Justice Moore**

I have grown up in Appleton, Wisconsin my entire life. I was born deaf in both ears. I started off my life with hearing aids, but I had my first cochlear implant surgery when I was 4 years old, and then I had my second cochlear implant surgery when I was 10 years old. I grew up with a sign language interpreter in the classroom up until high school, and in high school I stopped with the sign language interpreter and I began to learn Spanish, and now I am here in college double majoring in Spanish and English on the pre-law track.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Great, so let's first start with sign language and being deaf, and then we can move onto Spanish part kinda towards the end. While it is incredible that we do have the technology to help individuals hear better or at all, I would imagine it's not a magic fix that works perfect the moment someone gets a cochlear implant. Could you talk a little bit about that experience getting used to that technology and assistance?

**Justice Moore**

For sure, it is a multi-year-long process just to get used to a cochlear implant. I don't remember too well with my first one because I was pretty young, but it just involves a lot of trips to the audiologist. My audiologist was in Milwaukee, so I had to drive two hours every time just to go there, and it is a lot of one-on-one work with an audiologist, and yeah, I mean I had my second one when I was ten years old, and I am still getting used to the sounds. I was, oh gosh, I'm almost 20 so that was almost ten years ago, I'm still getting used to it. I'm still learning to translate those sounds into words I guess.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure, yeah, and you know although Wisconsin does have one School for the Deaf, most students who are deaf or hard of hearing will attend school alongside their hearing peers, and sometimes, these students and even teachers are a little bit unsure about the best way to interact with students who may have an interpreter or other assistance. Is the best advice for them just to act and speak as they would with any other person, or are there certain

ways of interacting or speaking that may be more helpful or kind to the other student, keeping in mind that of course everybody has different preferences and circumstances?

**Justice Moore**

Yeah, for sure. I mean, I am very very grateful because I grew up in the same school district my entire life. So my peers knew me very well. There were not many problems with bullying. My school just had a very serious no-tolerance for bullying, and then for the teachers, in order to get along with me, they would do extensive research with my IEP, they would get to know my mom and my deaf teachers, my team, just to see my preferred ways of communication. And then as I got older, it was up to me to kind of communicate my needs. Like, *Hey could you speak up a little louder?*, *Can I sit in the front of the classroom?*, but I mean my main piece of advice would just be to look at your student's IEP and really familiarize yourself with how they prefer things.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Of course, yeah, for sure, and again knowing that we have a very different experiences that everybody has, and your experience may be very different from other students and we don't want to make any blanket statements, is there anything as a result of covid that has happened that has made learning online or just daily life even more difficult for deaf or hard of hearing students?

**Justice Moore**

For sure, I mean, I think lectures and discussion have gotten very difficult just because I depend heavily on lip reading and computers sometimes make things sound static-y and unclear, so I find myself asking people to repeat themselves a lot more, but it's also kinda better in a sense because like there is no background noise. There's no — you don't have to work to try to tune out the background when you are talking with your group members, because when you're in a group, like a breakout group, it's just you guys, so that's all you're listening to, so it has its pluses and negatives, but I think, yeah, definitely the lip reading thing over the computer is the most difficult part.

**Claire Darmstadter**

And do you find accommodations are readily available and pretty easy to access, or is it really like you have to go out of your way to make sure you are getting that assistance you might need?

**Justice Moore**

Yeah, for sure. Well, in elementary school and growing up in public schools I was very grateful because I had an IEP team that met annually to help take care of that, but as I got to college, UW-Madison their disability office McBurney you have to really plan ahead. You have to have your class schedule months in advance, you have to submit your accommodation requests and if you make a schedule change, you have to let them know

immediately just so they can get things together on their end. You just have to be very organized and proactive in order to get accommodations in college, but it's definitely not an impossible task. The folks at McBurney are very great.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah, I've interacted with them in the past and they are just some of the kindest people, so yes, definitely take advantage of those resources, but it's also important to remember right it's really hard and there is a lot of extra work required to get those services.

So if listeners wanted to learn more about how to best support deaf or hard of hearing students, are there any groups or organizations or resources that they could check out or that you're aware of?

**Justice Moore**

Well, in order to support deaf and hard of hearing people I would definitely recommend learning a few basic signs. I think, well, for example, before COVID hit, I was a cashier for a very long time and I just ended up quitting my job when the pandemic hit just because I couldn't read peoples' lips anymore. It was just impossible with masks and it was very frustrating, but I think if everyone just knew a few basic signs, that would make everyone's life much easier, especially in public and day to day life. There are a lot of free resources on YouTube and a lot of great websites. I really don't know about too many organizations on campus just yet, but I am still trying to learn and figure out what would benefit me too.

**Claire Darmstadter**

And let's finish up by chatting about Spanish. So, I know you are planning on going into law, so not exactly language education, but what motivated you to continue taking Spanish in college?

**Justice Moore**

I took a lot of Spanish classes in high school. So, I did this program in my junior year which is called CAPP, so we collaborated with the local college UW-Oshkosh, so I took Spanish 204 in my junior year because I had doubled up in every level of high school, and I was like oh my gosh now what, my senior year and I have no Spanish classes at my school because I took all of them. So I ended up becoming a part time student at a different high school just so that I could take their college Spanish classes, and by the time I graduated, I was like I have so many Spanish credits, I may as well major now. That's why I'm doing it. But also I love Spanish, I love language, and I love the structure of it, and that is also why I am majoring in English. I believe learning one language helps you understand the other one better, and especially with my sign language knowledge, it just, it all bounces off of each other, and it really helps me understand all three.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Right, yeah, it is so cool, that additive bilingual and multilingualism, right? And of course it has been a little bit harder to study languages without in person speaking or community events or study abroad and all those other parts that we love usually about language education. What is something you wish language educators were aware of or would do that could maybe enhance or improve virtual learning experiences during this time, when we are trying to learn languages despite everything that is going on in the world?

**Justice Moore**

I think my favorite thing that my Spanish teachers do to help me learn is they are in close contact with me on email. So, if you are a language educator in this pandemic, I would encourage you to reach out to students via email, or just if they reach out to you, just bounce ideas off each other. Sometimes, you have to ask your student what you need because sometimes students won't ask you -- I always ask, but that is just my main piece of advice for working with deaf or hard of hearing students. Yeah that's definitely it.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah for sure. And one last question - what is one reason why being multilingual is a superpower?

**Justice Moore**

Honestly, being multilingual will give you so many opportunities in your future, like it helps you in your everyday tasks, like if you come across someone that speaks your second language, it makes their day if you can talk with them. Or, it will help you in your career and it will open up so many different pathways for you, like you will be able to collaborate with more people and make more connections, but that's honestly -- it's so cool, like to be multilingual.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah, for sure, well thanks again Justice for chatting with me. I know your perspective will be very valuable to our listeners, and I hope you have a great rest of your semester!

**Justice Moore**

Thank you for having me; have a great day!