

# **The Impact of COVID-19 and Emergency Online Learning on D/Deaf College Students' Experience of Social Isolation, Self-Efficacy, and Well-Being**

**M. Elizabeth Bowman<sup>1</sup>, Teresa Crowe<sup>2</sup>**  
Gallaudet University, Washington

## **Abstract**

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, many universities in the United States converted face-to-face classroom teaching to remote, online based learning formats. Gallaudet University was among these universities and faced particular challenges due to the need for visually accessible classrooms for d/Deaf students. Because college students are primarily made up of early and emerging adults, and d/Deaf college students have been shown to have better academic success when social connection is fostered, the current study sought to determine how d/Deaf students at Gallaudet University were emotionally impacted by the change to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The research question for this study was: How did the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent emergency switch to online course participation influence college students' experience of well-being, self-efficacy, and loneliness? Results indicated that overall, d/Deaf students at Gallaudet university had positive emotional adjustment during this transition, despite challenges. Discussion describes within-group differences by age and how the University supported students and the campus community to encourage this positive outcome.

**Keywords:** Deaf; higher education; COVID; online learning; well-being; isolation