



DEAF CULTURE, HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY

National Report on Deaf Studies Curriculum Survey

Work Package 2

Deaf Culture, Heritage and Diversity

2023-2-NL02-KA220-YOU-000177070



ISTITUTO DEI SORDI
DI TORINO

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Italy

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Version:
1.0 (22.3.2024)



Co-funded by
the European Union



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National Report on Deaf Studies Curriculum Survey

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a national survey conducted as part of the Erasmus+ funded project "Deaf Culture, Heritage and Diversity" (DHCD) (Project number: 2023-2-NL02-KA220-YOU-000177070).

The DHCD project aims to develop a comprehensive Deaf Studies curriculum to empower Deaf youth and promote a deeper understanding of Deaf culture, history, and experiences within the wider community.

The survey was designed to identify the most important themes and topics to be included in the Deaf Studies curriculum, ensuring that it meets the needs and interests of the Deaf community. By gathering input from Deaf youth, educators, and professionals, we aimed to create educational materials that are relevant, engaging, and culturally appropriate.

This Italian national report is part of a broader European effort, with similar surveys conducted in the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Austria. The collective insights from these national surveys will inform the development of a curriculum that reflects the diversity of Deaf experiences across Europe while addressing common educational needs.

The survey focused on several key areas:

- a. Current access to and quality of Deaf Studies Education
- b. Preferred learning methods and accessibility needs
- c. Important themes and topics for inclusion in the curriculum
- d. Gaps in Existing Deaf Studies Education

The findings presented in this report will directly contribute to shaping the content, structure, and delivery methods of the Deaf Studies curriculum. This collaborative approach ensures that the resulting educational materials will be rooted in the expressed needs and preferences of the Deaf community.

2. Methodology

The survey was conducted online using [Google Forms](#) between 23 June and 5 August 2024. The questionnaire was distributed through the National Deaf Youth Association (CGSI), at their Deaf Youth Festival (22-23 June), and social media platforms catering to the Deaf community. To ensure accessibility, the questionnaire was available in both written Italian and Italian Sign Language (LIS). A total of 39 responses were collected, which met the target of 30 responses from Deaf youth and 5 responses from Deaf youth workers.

3. Executive summary

The survey of 39 respondents in Italy yielded significant findings regarding the importance of Deaf identity and culture in the educational curriculum. The majority of respondents (97.4%) rated these topics as "very important" for inclusion in the curriculum, underscoring the strong interest in these areas among the Italian Deaf community. Sign language linguistics (97.4%) and Accessibility and Technologies for the Deaf Community (92.3%) were also identified as areas of significant priority. Conversely, Deaf Art and Literature is identified as the less well-served area (71.8%), although all areas have a rating of over 72% as "very important". Significant deficiencies were identified in the current educational provision for Deaf Studies. 92.3% of respondents reported that they had never received any instruction in Deaf Culture at school, and over half of them (59%) stated that they had never or rarely encountered any Deaf role models or leaders in their educational pathways. Furthermore, the survey indicated a necessity for the provision of more accessible educational materials, with less than half of the

respondents (46%) expressing satisfaction with the current resources. These findings indicate the necessity for the immediate creation of a curriculum that prioritises cultural affirmation, practical language skills and empowerment through rights education, in order to most effectively address the needs of the Deaf community.

4. Survey Demographics

Total respondents: 39

- 34 Deaf youth (ages 16+)
- 5 Deaf youth workers

Age distribution:

- 87,2% aged 26 or older
- 5,1% aged 22-25
- 5,1% aged 19-21
- 2,6% aged 16-18

The primary mode of communication:

- 53,8% primarily use sign language
- 35,9% use both sign and spoken language
- 5,2% primarily use spoken language
- 2,6% signed exactly written language
- 2,6% use both spoken language and signed exactly written language

Geographic distribution:

- 81,9% from North Italy
- 12,9% from South Italy
- 5,2% from Central Italy

Status:

- 79,5% Deaf
- 17,9% Hearing
- 2,6% Deafblind

5. Current Access to Deaf Studies

The survey revealed limited access to formal Deaf Studies education:

- Only 7,7% of respondents have taken Deaf Culture lessons in school
- Only 25,6% of respondents have taken a Deaf Studies course or program
- Of those who have taken courses:
 - 41,7% as "good"
 - 25% as null
 - 16,7% rated them as "excellent"
 - 8,3% as "average"
 - 4,2% as "poor"
 - 4,2% as "very poor"

Exposure to Deaf role models in education is infrequent:

- 35,9% rarely encounter Deaf role models
- 30,8% sometimes encounter Deaf role models
- 23,1% never encounter Deaf role models



- 5,1% often encounter Deaf role models
- 5,1% very often encounter Deaf role models

These statistics highlight a significant gap in Deaf Studies education and the need for increased representation of Deaf individuals in educational settings.

6. Educational Preferences

Respondents indicated a strong preference for interactive and visual learning methods in the classroom:

- 84,6% prefer hands-on activities
- 71,8% prefer classroom lectures
- 69,2% prefer visual aids
- 69,2% prefer group discussions

Regarding educational materials:

- 41% are satisfied with the accessibility of current materials
- 28,2% are dissatisfied
- 28,2% Neutral

These preferences underscore the need for a visually oriented, interactive curriculum that prioritises accessibility and authentic Deaf perspectives.

7. Priority Themes for Curriculum

The survey identified the following top 15 themes, rated by importance:

1. Deaf Identity and Culture (97,4% rated very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Deaf community events and organisations, Deafhood and Deaf pride, Deaf cultural practices and traditions
2. Sign Language Linguistics (97,4% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Grammar and structure, history and evolution, acquisition and development
3. Technology and Accessibility (92,3% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Interpreting services and technologies, Deaf-friendly emergency communication systems, Text display of video content
4. Deaf History and Heritage (89,7% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Deaf education history, Deaf community milestones and achievements, International Deaf history
5. Deaf community events and organisations (89,7% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY), CGSI (Youth section of Italian Deaf association), ENS (Italian Deaf association), World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section (WFDYS)
6. Mental Health and Well-being (89,7% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Deaf identity development and self-esteem, Coping with audism and discrimination, Deaf-friendly therapy and counseling
7. Deaf role models and leaders (87,2% very important)



- a. Subtopics: Deaf educators and researchers, Deaf business owners and entrepreneurs, Deaf activists and advocates, Deaf artists and performers
8. Deaf Education (84,6 very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Deaf education technology and resources, Bilingual-bicultural education, History of Deaf education, Deaf students' rights and accommodations
9. Deaf Arts and Literature (71,8% very important)
 - a. Subtopics: Deaf theatre and performance art, Deaf filmmakers and movies, Deaf artists and their works

8. Key Findings for Curriculum Development

1. There is a clear necessity for Deaf Studies training, as 92.3% of respondents indicated that they had not participated in such a programme during their educational journey.
2. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of Deaf Youth acquiring knowledge about deaf culture and identity (97%), as well as the history and heritage of the deaf (90%).
3. There is a significant demand for knowledge about Sign Language grammar and linguistic structures (97%).
4. There is a pressing need for more accessible educational materials, as only 41% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the resources currently available to them in their educational institutions.

9. Recommendations for Curriculum

Based on the survey results, we recommend the following for the Deaf Studies curriculum:

1. Content:
 - It is recommended that a robust foundational module on Deaf identity and culture be developed, with particular emphasis placed on the concepts of Deafhood, Deaf organisation and Deaf events.
 - The curriculum should include comprehensive units on Deaf rights and advocacy, with an emphasis on practical self-advocacy skills.
 - It is recommended that sign language linguistics be integrated throughout the curriculum, with an emphasis on combining theoretical knowledge with practical application.
 - The curriculum should include content addressing mental health and well-being among the Deaf population, including coping strategies and the identification of resources.
2. Delivery Methods:
 - It is recommended that visual learning materials, including infographics, videos and interactive online modules, be given priority.
 - It is recommended that each module include practical activities and group discussions to enhance engagement.
 - All content must be made available in both written and sign language formats.
 - It is recommended that face-to-face activities be given priority.
3. Accessibility:



- All materials must be created with digital accessibility in mind, ensuring compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- It is recommended that all video content be accompanied by transcripts or captions.
- It is recommended that materials be made available in a variety of formats (e.g., text, video, interactive) to accommodate diverse learning preferences.

4. Representation:

- It is recommended that the curriculum include a variety of narratives, experiences, and contributions from diverse Deaf role models.
- The curriculum should feature content created by Deaf artists, writers, and educators.

5. Assessment:

- It is essential to develop assessment methods that align with the visual and interactive nature of the content.
- It is recommended that project-based assessments be included, which would allow students to apply their learning to real-world scenarios.

10. Challenges and Limitations

While the survey provided valuable insights, some limitations should be noted:

- a. The sample size was 39. The sample size of 39 respondents may not be sufficiently representative of the diverse Deaf population in Italy.
- b. The survey was distributed online. The online nature of the survey may have resulted in the exclusion of individuals with limited internet access.
- c. The age range of respondents is limited, with only 12.8% being under 25. Consequently, the perspectives of Deaf youth are not adequately represented.
- d. Concerning regional representation, Despite the efforts made to ensure a representative sample, the majority of participants were from Northern Italy, with Central and Southern Italy underrepresented in the responses.

These factors should be considered when interpreting the results and developing the curriculum.

11. Conclusion

The findings of this survey have yielded invaluable insights into the educational requirements and preferences of the Deaf community in Italy. The results unambiguously demonstrate a clear preference for a comprehensive curriculum in Deaf Studies that places particular emphasis on the Deaf identity, culture, and practical knowledge of rights and advocacy. The clear preference for visual and interactive learning methods highlights the necessity for innovative pedagogical approaches that are centred on the needs of the Deaf community.

The findings have significant implications for curriculum development:

- a. The content should be firmly grounded in the affirmation of Deaf culture, while also encompassing the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge.



- b. The delivery methods employed must prioritise visual learning and interactive engagement.
- c. Accessibility must be a fundamental aspect of the curriculum in all of its aspects.

The subsequent phase of the project will entail the following steps:

In collaboration with Deaf educators, detailed lesson plans will be developed based on the prioritised themes.

The creation of sample materials that align with the preferred learning methods identified in the survey is also a priority.

It is recommended that small-scale pilots of curriculum modules be conducted to gather feedback before the implementation of the full programme.

Adherence to these recommendations will facilitate the development of a Deaf Studies curriculum that is genuinely responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Deaf community.

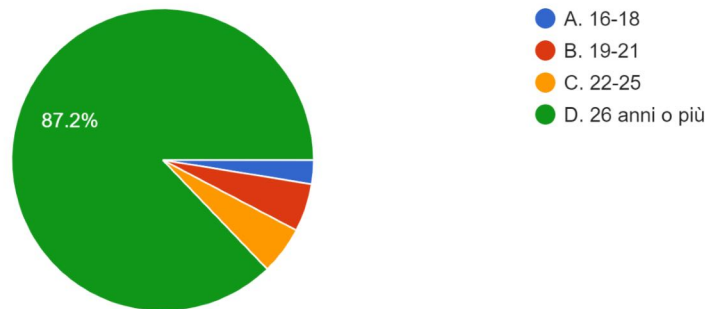
12. Annexes

Annex A: Survey Questionnaire, Results, and Graphs

Note: This questionnaire has been translated from Italian/LIS to English for this report. The original survey was conducted in Italian/LIS. The results and graphs presented here reflect the responses received in our national survey. This can also be attached as a PDF merged with this national report.

1. Qual è la tua età?

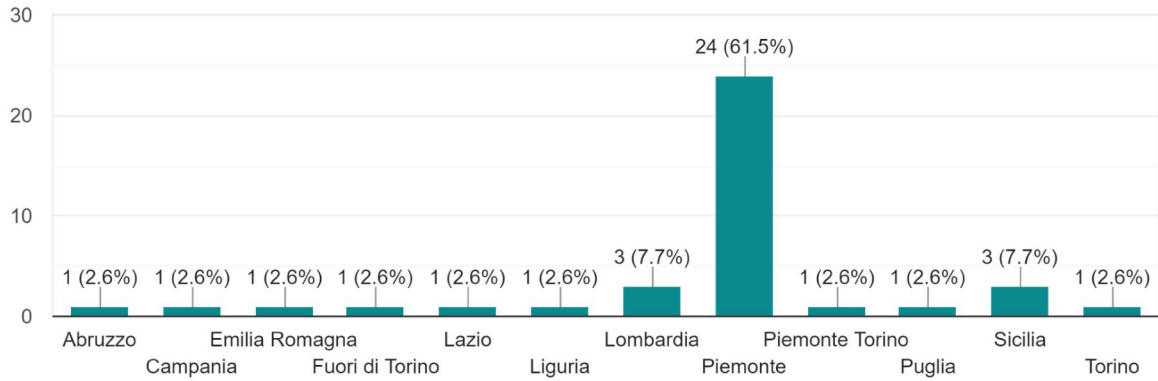
39 responses





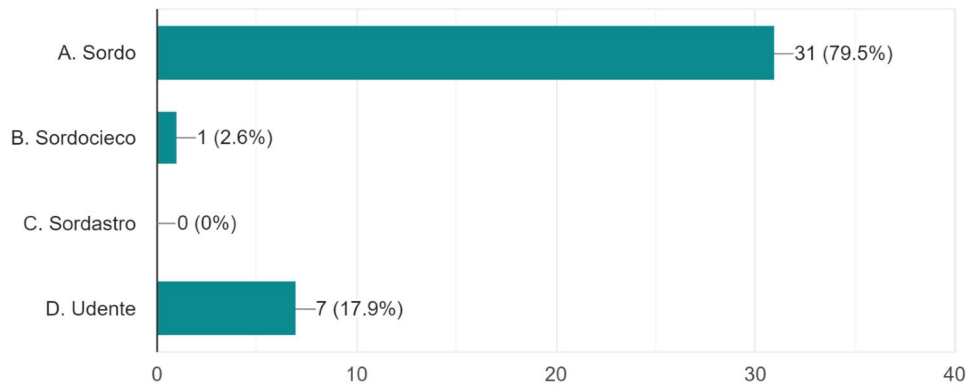
2. In quale regione vivi?

39 responses



3. Sei:

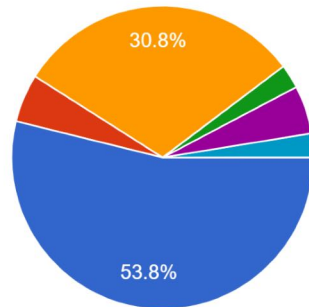
39 responses





4. Qual è la tua principale modalità di comunicazione?

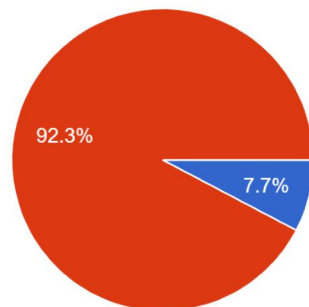
39 responses



- A. Lingua dei segni
- B. Lingua parlata
- C. Sia la lingua dei segni che la lingua parlata
- D. Italiano Segnato
- C. Sia la lingua dei segni che la lingua parlato
- Sia la lingua parlata che l'italiano segnato

5. Hai mai avuto lezioni di Deaf Studies mentre eri a scuola?

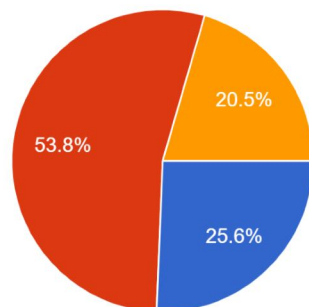
39 responses



- Si
- No

6. Hai mai seguito un corso o frequentato un programma incentrato su Deaf Studies?

39 responses

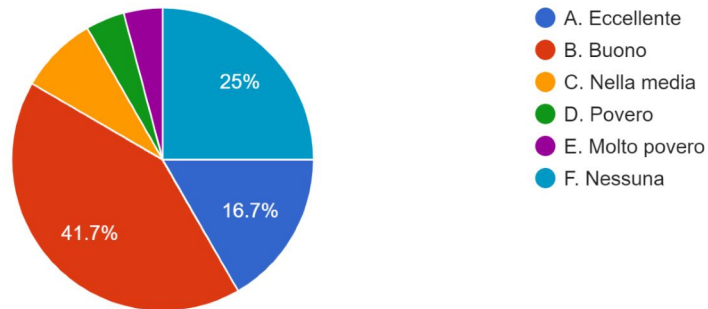


- Si
- No
- Non sono sicuro



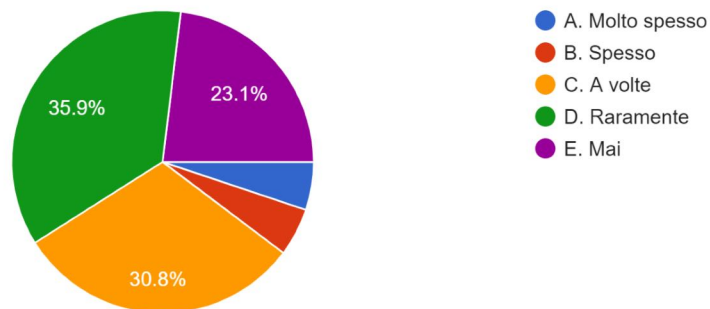
7. Se sì, come valuteresti la qualità di quel corso o programma di Deaf Studies?

24 responses



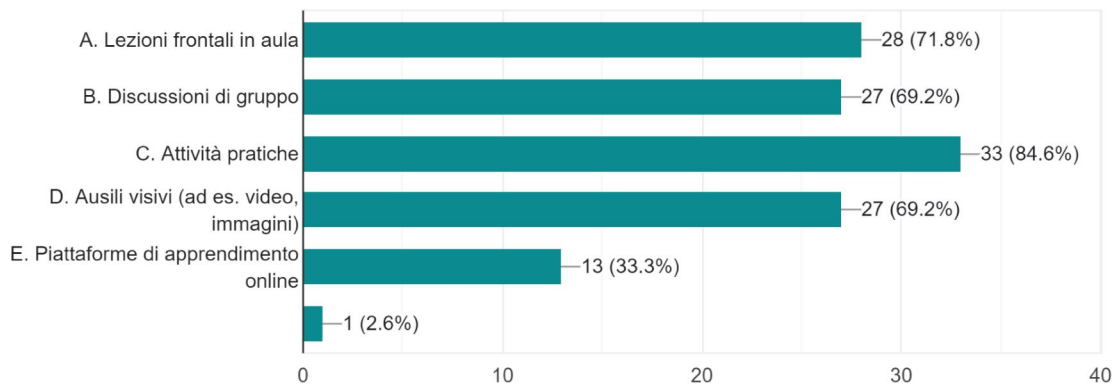
8. Quante volte ti capita di incontrare modelli di ruolo o leader sordi nella tua istruzione?

39 responses



9. Quali sono i metodi di apprendimento che ritieni più coinvolgenti ed efficaci? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

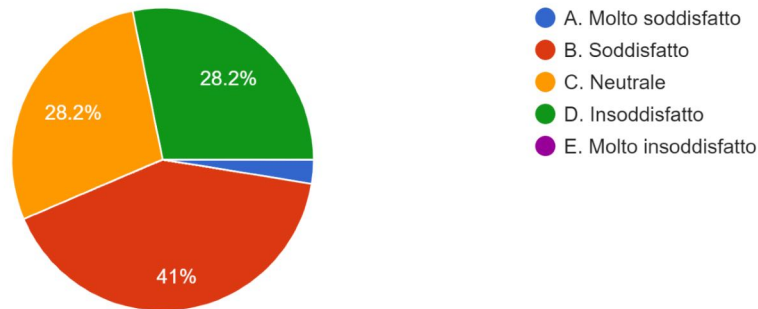
39 responses





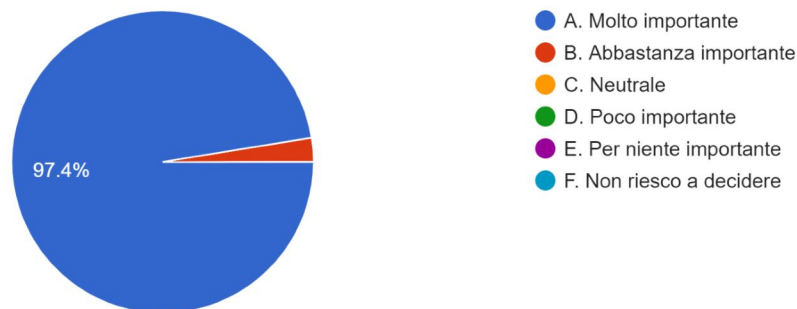
10. Quanto sei soddisfatto dell'accessibilità dei tuoi materiali e delle tue risorse didattiche?

39 responses



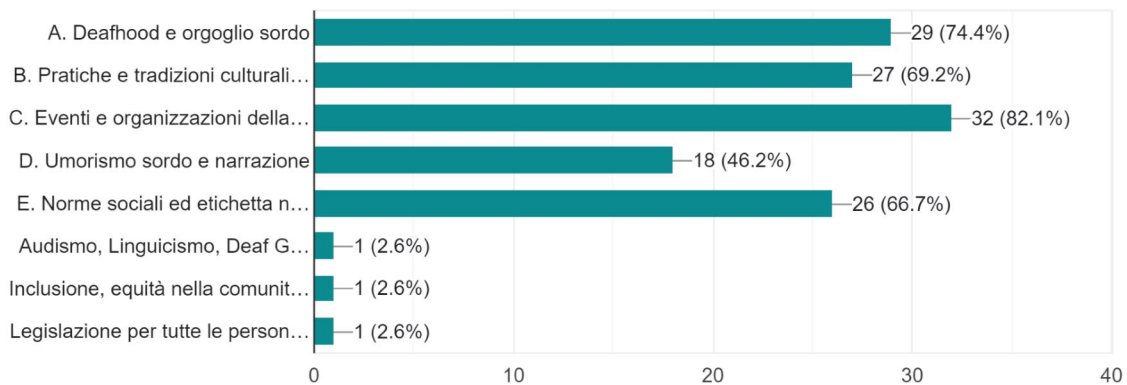
11. Quanto è importante per i giovani sordi conoscere l'identità e la cultura sorda?

39 responses



12. Quali aspetti dell'identità e della cultura sorda dovrebbero essere inclusi nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

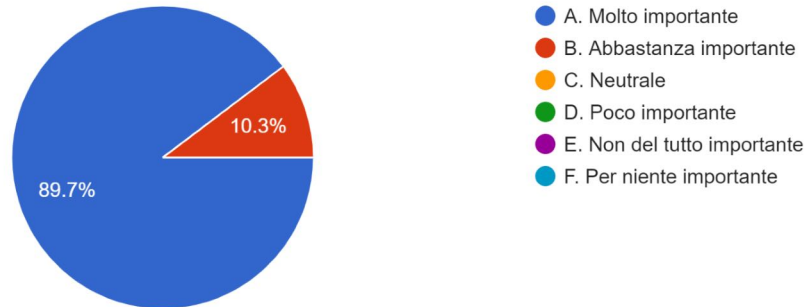
39 responses





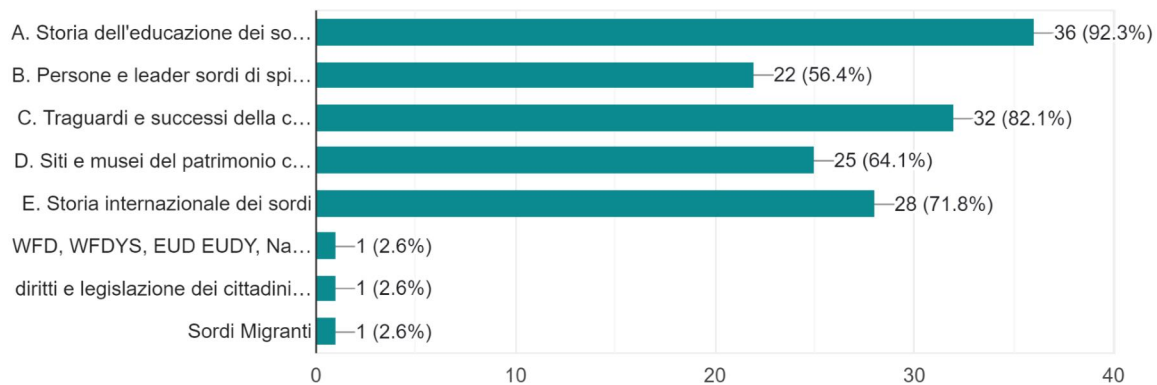
13. Quanto è importante per i giovani sordi conoscere la storia e il patrimonio dei sordi?

39 responses



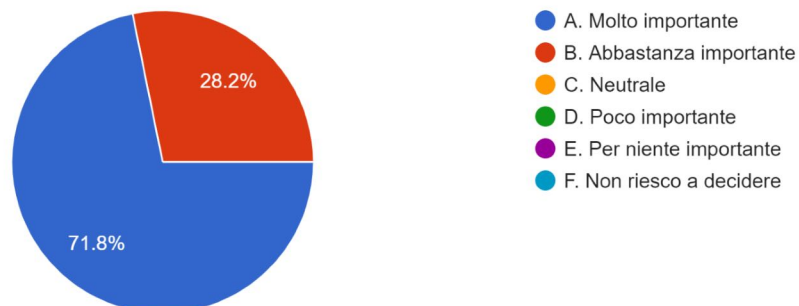
14. Quali argomenti relativi alla storia dei sordi dovrebbero essere trattati nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



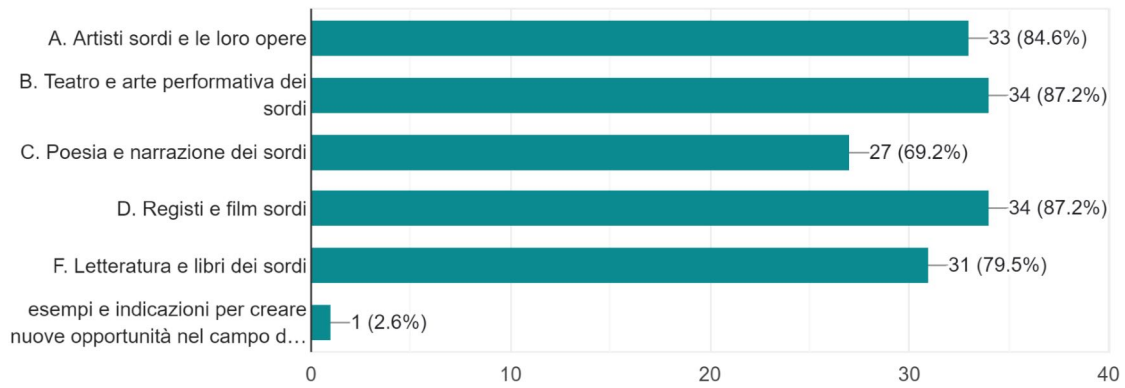
15. Quanto è importante includere l'arte e la letteratura sorda nel curriculum?

39 responses



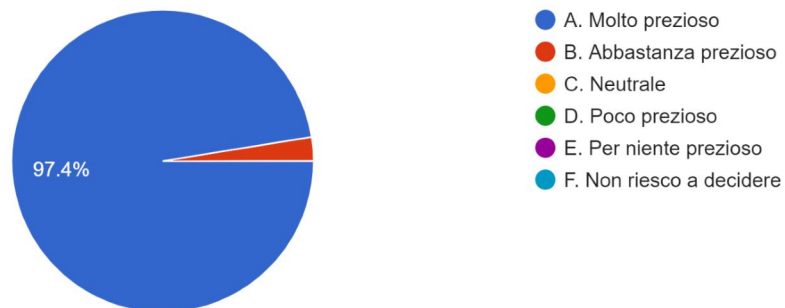
16. Quali argomenti relativi all'arte e alla letteratura sorda dovrebbero essere inclusi nel curriculum?
(Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



17. Quanto pensi che sia importante per i giovani sordi imparare la linguistica e la struttura della lingua dei segni?

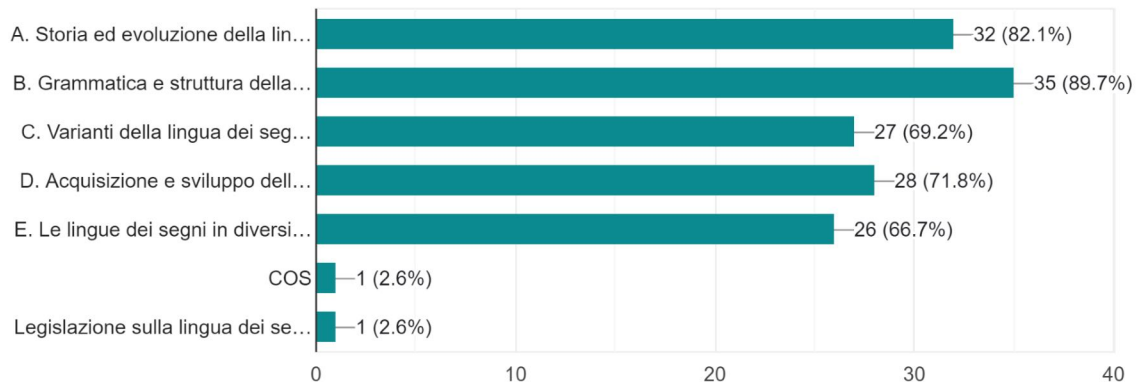
39 responses





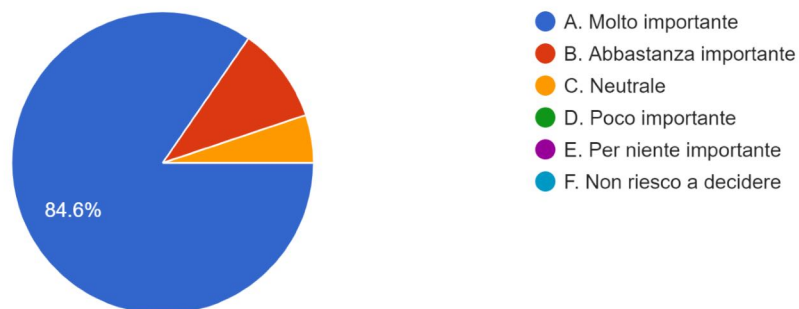
18. Quali aspetti della lingua dei segni dovrebbero essere trattati nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



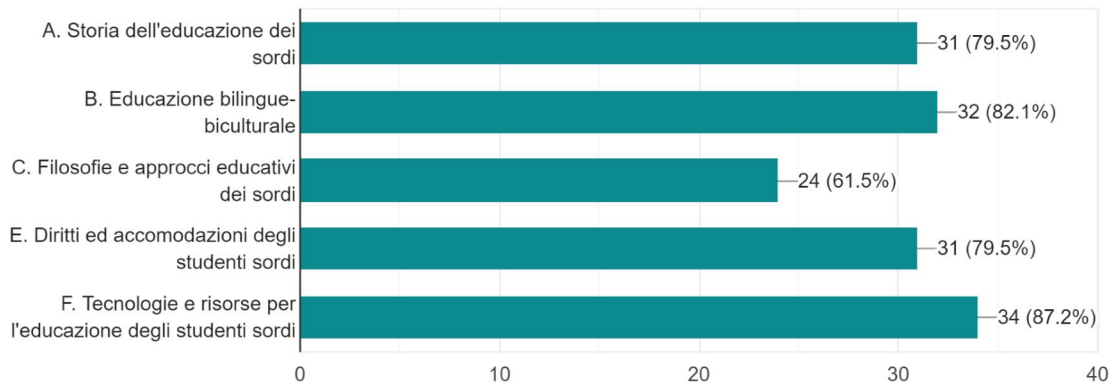
19. Quanto è importante includere nel curriculum argomenti relativi all'educazione dei sordi?

39 responses



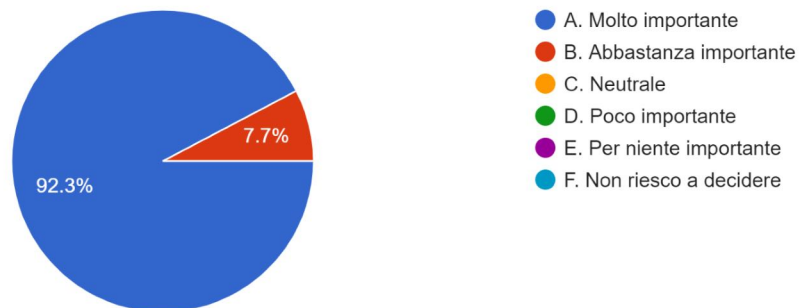
20. Quali aspetti dell'educazione dei sordi dovrebbero essere trattati nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



21. Quanto è importante includere argomenti relativi all'accessibilità e alla tecnologia per la comunità sorda?

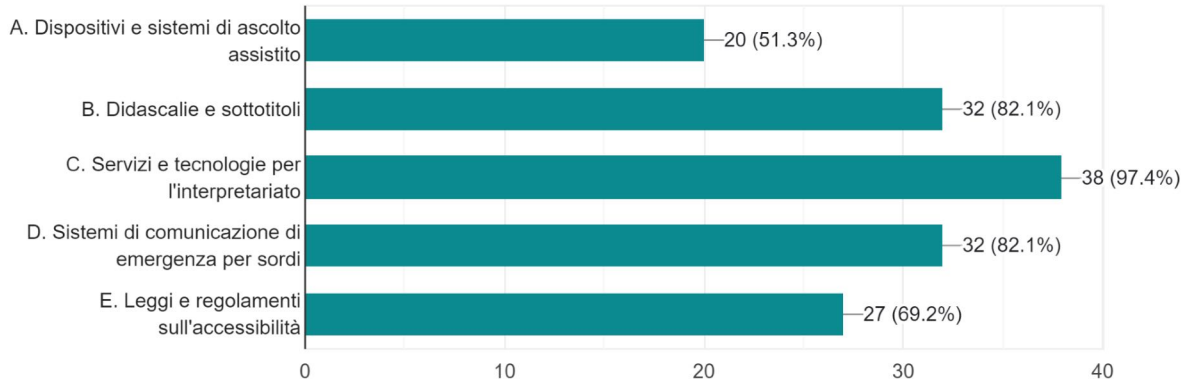
39 responses





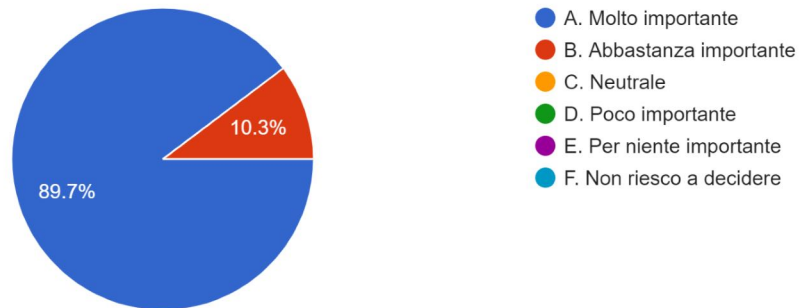
22. Quali argomenti relativi all'accessibilità e alla tecnologia dovrebbero essere inclusi nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



23. Quanto è importante per i giovani sordi conoscere gli eventi e le organizzazioni della comunità sorda?

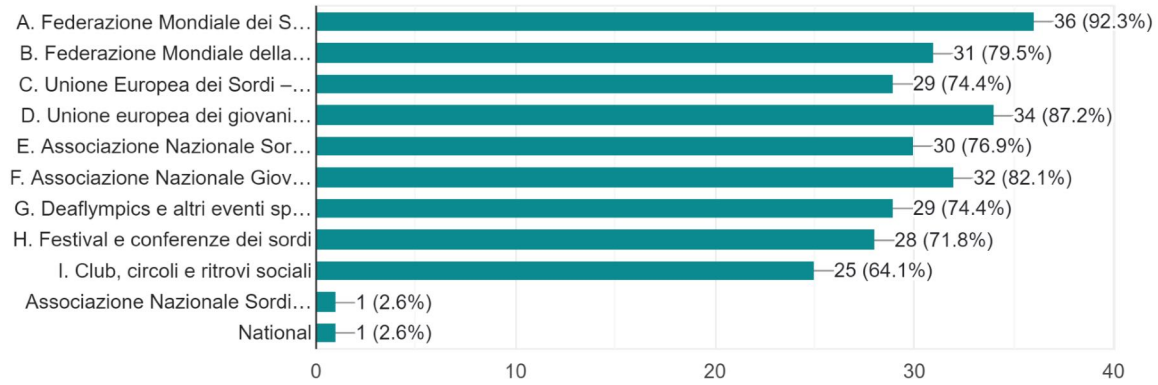
39 responses





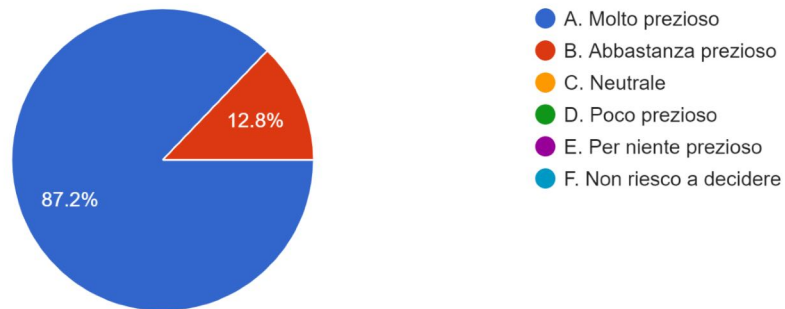
24. Quali eventi e organizzazioni della comunità sorda dovrebbero conoscere i giovani sordi? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



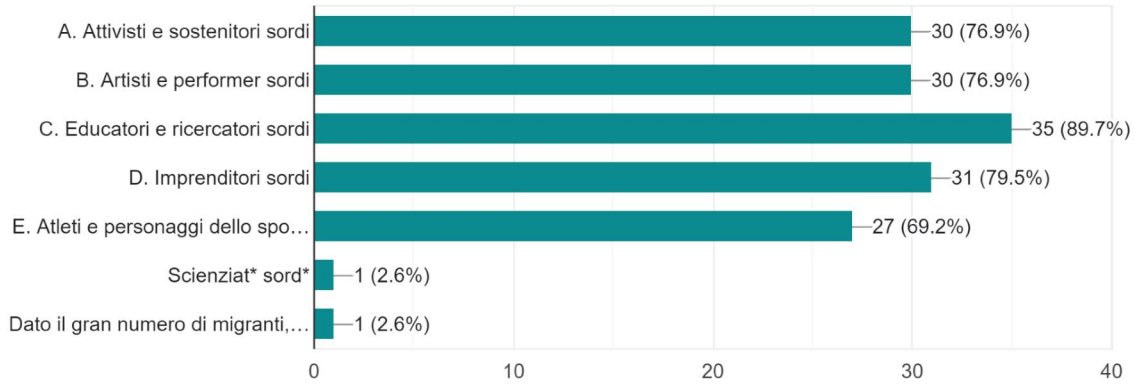
25. Quanto è importante per i giovani sordi esplorare i modelli di ruolo e i leader sordi?

39 responses



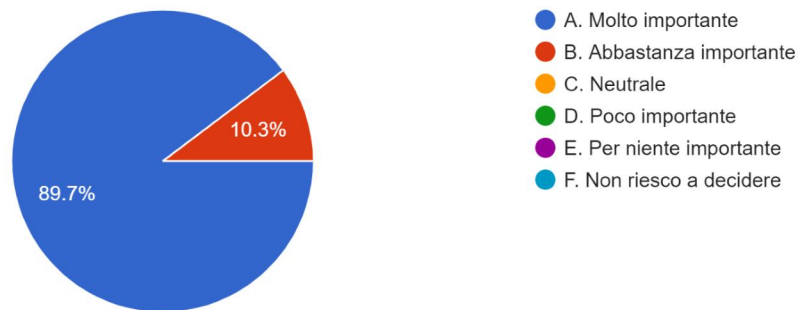
26. Quali categorie di modelli di ruolo e leader sordi dovrebbero essere incluse nel curriculum?
(Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



27. Quanto è importante includere nel curriculum argomenti relativi alla salute mentale e al benessere dei sordi?

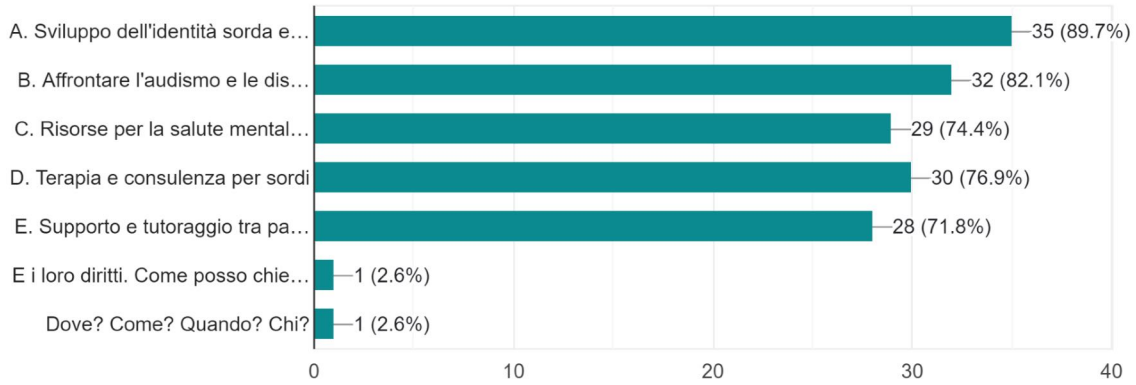
39 responses





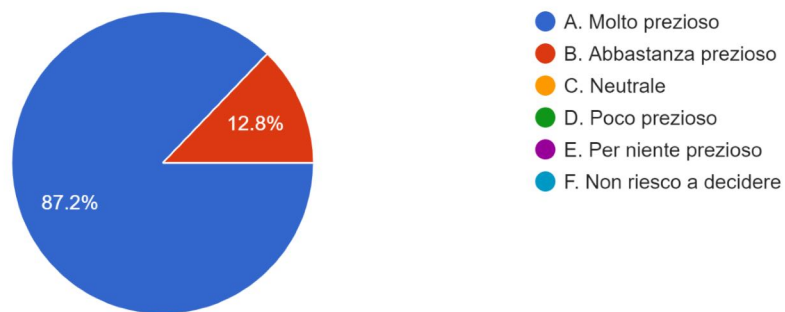
28. Quali argomenti relativi alla salute mentale e al benessere dei sordi dovrebbero essere inclusi nel curriculum? (Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses



29. Quanto è importante trattare i diritti dei sordi e l'advocacy nel curriculum?

39 responses





30. Quali aspetti dei diritti e della autodifesa dei sordi dovrebbero essere inclusi nel curriculum?
(Seleziona tutte le risposte pertinenti)

39 responses

