

## ABSTRACT

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Identification Of Criteria For Successful Inclusive Placement  
Of Elementary Students Who Are Deaf  
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The purpose of this study was to identify specific criteria for successful placement of elementary students who are deaf in general education classes. A secondary focus was to verify agreement of relative importance of identified criteria among practitioners, administrators, and researchers. The study, utilizing survey research methodology, employed a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was established as highly reliable with a Chronbach's Alpha of .93. Participants in the nationwide study represented 243 stakeholders categorized as Practitioners, Administrators, and Experts, from 46 states. The mailed survey consisted of (a) 96 indicators with Likert-type scale responses, (b) 4 questions regarding acceptable age/placement differentials, and (c) 3 open-ended questions about instruments and procedures used to establish student performance levels.

Descriptive statistics, MANOVA, and Principal Components Analysis were utilized in data analysis. Descriptive statistics yielded rankings of relative importance for the initial 96 indicators. Subsequent procedures identified 11 factors pivotal for successful inclusion of elementary students who are deaf (a) general educator facilitators, (b) family influence, (c) program design, (d) student social/emotional attributes, (e) communicative facilitators, (f) communicative potential, (g) detriments, (h) support personnel, (i) interpreter functions, (j) facilitative student characteristics, and (k) outside influences.

Statistically significant differences were detected between Practitioners and Experts on 4 factors, but similarity of response patterns for all three groups supported the relative importance attributed to identified criteria. Item ranking confirmed the impact of 74 indicators as criteria for successful inclusive placement decisions. Respondents asserted that age/placement difference should not exceed 1.5 years, and primarily used standardized tests to establish students' math and language levels. Informal procedures established social levels.

Study findings indicate that a majority of the identified criteria for successful inclusion of elementary students who are deaf represent factors within the control of the school program. The general educator, supported by administrative allowances and support personnel, emerged as central to facilitating successful inclusion. The overwhelming influence ascribed to the general educator and program design conveys a conviction that the success of these students can be partially engineered by the educational system.