

# Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: An International Review

Marc Marschark

Center for Education Research Partnerships  
National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Moray House School of Education  
University of Edinburgh

School of Psychology  
University of Aberdeen





*Working to deliver a better special education service  
Ag saothrú chun uas-seirbhís a sholáthar san oideachas speisialta*



## National Council for Special Education

### Contract Agreement with

## National Technical Institute for the Deaf – Rochester Institute of Technology

**“International review of the literature of evidence of best practice models  
and outcomes in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children”**

02/07/08



# Preliminaries



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- Goals and tone
- Educating deaf children versus others with special needs
- Evolution in science and education (theory, methods, kids)
- Asking the “right” questions (and living with the answers)
- Research challenges and limitations on application
  - Heterogeneity of deaf children
  - Groups versus individuals
  - Comparability of samples
  - Observations and generalizations vs. (good) research



# Preliminaries

- Opportunities and challenges of EPSEN
- Requested visit – 24-28 November 2008
  - Cannistown National School, Navan
  - St. Joseph's Schools for the Deaf
  - Synge Street Christian Brothers School
  - Limerick School for the Deaf
  - Ennis Community College
  - Parents, students, teachers, Visiting Teachers, SENOs, NCSE, DES, Deafhear, Irish Deaf Society, Deaf Strategy Group



# Project Aim(s) and Tasks

- To provide a review of the international literature available on the educational models for deaf and hard-of-hearing children that demonstrate evidence-based outcomes for the child



# Project Aim(s) and Tasks

- Identify the extent to which education and health services need to be coordinated in meeting the needs of this cohort



# Project Aim(s) and Tasks

- Drawing upon the findings, and taking into account the provision of education in an inclusive setting, make recommendations as to the best provision of this service in Ireland with a view to informing national policy and also consider the needs of educators in this regard



# Project Aim(s) and Tasks

- Provide an overview of the implications for the practical implementation of such recommendations in the context of the current Irish education and health systems.



# Educating Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students: Major Issues

*Early Identification and  
Intervention*

*Language (and Cochlear  
Implants)*

*Educational Models*

*Teaching and Learning*



# Early Identification and Intervention

- UNHS and early intervention family services
  - International agreement on developmental and financial benefits
- What it does and what it doesn't accomplish
  - Linguistic, social, early and later achievement
- Importance of comprehensive and philosophy-neutral services
  - Empowering parents and students



# Language (and Cochlear Implants)

- What we know and what we don't know about language development in deaf children
  - Spoken language versus sign language
  - Early language versus later (spoken and sign) language
  - Natural language versus sign language systems
- What we know and what we don't know about cochlear implants in children (versus adults)
  - Language (spoken and signed)
  - Learning
  - Social functioning



# Educational Models

- Preschool programming
  - Language, literacy, and school readiness
- Inclusion, mainstream, and separate programming
  - Definitions
  - Historical confounds and who's where
  - Teachers versus educational settings (and class size)
- Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs), deaf and hearing
  - Training/certification, content, communication and modeling



# Teaching and Learning

- *“Deaf children are not hearing children who can’t hear”*
  - Environment/experience, language, and learning
  - Brains and behavior
  - Domains of similarity and difference
- Accommodating needs and utilizing strengths
  - Cognition/metacognition
  - Independent/dependent learners
- Literacy and language

Deaf of Deaf  
vs.  
Deaf of Hearing



Interesting that I left these out...

- Audiological issues
- Technology
- Parent involvement
- Identity, integration, and peer groups
- Multiple disabilities
- Further/higher education and employment



# Educating Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students: Tentative Recommendations and Potential Implications



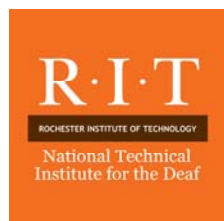
# Early Identification and Intervention: Evidence-Based Recommendations

- UNHS nation-wide
- National, comprehensive and philosophy-neutral early intervention programming
  - Parent education and involvement
- Aggressive hearing aid and audiological program



# Early Identification and Intervention: Implications of Action

- Necessity of DES working with Health Service
- Better training or restructuring of VTS and SENOs
- National network of audiological/speech/language services
  
- Savings both financially (education, health, social services) and in terms of human potential



# Language (and Cochlear Implants): Evidence-Based Recommendations

- UNHS and early intervention programming
- Aggressive cochlear implant program (incremental, if necessary, given sensitivities)
- Aggressive program of Irish Sign Language instruction (incremental, if necessary, given sensitivities)
- Cautious approach to bilingual programming



# Language (and Cochlear Implants): Implications of Action

- National network of implant team services
- Expansion of sign language instruction
- Higher academic achievement, greater employment, fewer demands on social services



# Educational Models: Evidence-Based Recommendations

- Make available separate and inclusive settings plus alternatives in between (e.g., co-enrollment)
- Recognize separate secondary programs
- Encourage and support qualified deaf teachers and current (hearing and deaf) SNAs with ISL skills



# Educational Models: Implications of Action

- Bridging preschools (from early intervention to school)
- Age-appropriate congregated settings
- More ToDs and sign language interpreters
- Personnel (SNAs?) to support access to the curriculum
- Support service network for further/higher education
  
- Higher academic achievement, greater community support/involvement, greater efficiency and efficacy



# Teaching and Learning: Evidence-Based Recommendations

- Encourage and support TOD training programs and professional development
- Include parents and, where appropriate, students in all IEP meetings (not just “keeping parents informed”)
- Provide appropriate support services (including sign language interpreting and text)
- Students need more challenges

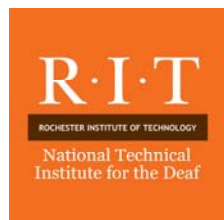


# Teaching and Learning: Implications of Action

- More audiological technology in classrooms
- IEP meetings become more complicated (e.g., SNAs, including sign language interpreters) but also more useful
- Greater achievement, longer persistence, better educated population, feedback into the system



We are on a threshold...





Marc.Marschark@rit.edu

[www.ntid.rit.edu/cerp](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/cerp)

## **Raising and Educating a Deaf Child**

**[www.educatingdeafchildren.org](http://www.educatingdeafchildren.org)**