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# Standardization Within and Differentiation Between Undergraduate Sign Language Interpreter Education Levels: Admission Criteria, Courses, and Learning Outcomes

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## Abstract

In undergraduate sign language interpreter education in the United States, scholars have observed a lack of standardization among programs of the same academic level and called for greater definition of the differences between academic levels. This study sought to quantify programs' degree of standardization within and differentiation between academic levels regarding admission criteria, program courses, and program learning outcomes and identify practices contributing to the standardization and differentiation. Publicly available data on these components were collected from 73 associate, 58 bachelor's, and 19 certificate programs. All programs had publicly available data on program courses, while one- to two-thirds in each academic level had explicit admission criteria or publicly available program learning outcome statements. Jaccard and Bray-Curtis similarity coefficients indicated that, on average, when compared to their peers, programs at all levels have a low degree of similarity in admission criteria and program learning outcome content words, certificates are moderately similar in program courses, and associate and bachelor's programs are highly similar in program courses. When programs were compared between academic levels (associate–bachelor's, associate–certificate, and bachelor's–certificate), similarity coefficients indicated that, on average, programs in all pairs have a low degree of differentiation in all components, except certificates, whose program courses are moderately differentiated when compared to either associate or bachelor's programs. Practices contributing to these results include a low prevalence of the same admission criteria among programs across academic levels, a high prevalence of the same course subject matters among associate and bachelor's programs, and a reliance on a handful of content words to describe target outcomes among programs of all academic levels. Key findings highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to grouping programs beyond the academic level alone. The potential for using similarity coefficients to cluster similar programs is highlighted. Further implications include contemplating the relationship among admission criteria, program courses, and program learning outcomes; highlighting the need for transparency in interpreter education components; and reflecting on the equity and inclusiveness of interpreter education practices.