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PROMOTING EARLY LITERACY, HEALTH AND BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Statement of Problem: Poor early literacy can be viewed as a chronic disease process that is a public health concern. Data shows children's failure to develop simple word decoding skills in early years is linked to future poor reading, school dropout teen pregnancy, low self-esteem, entrance into crime, and life-long poor health. Letter-sound knowledge is needed for word decoding development; however questions remain on what types of letter-sound knowledge help children decode simple words.

This study investigated the differences in mean number of consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words decoded between two groups of children, a letter-sound reading group and non-letter-sound reading group. Children aged 4 to 6 in both groups attempted to decode a variety of simple words such as *tan*, *sit*, *hen*, *pig*, *dot*, and *fun*.

Analysis determined word decoding differences existed between the two groups. The letter-sound reading group had a significantly higher mean in number of CVC words decoded compared to the non-letter-sound reading group. The study informs the teaching approaches needed to improve early decoding skills showing letter-sound reading ability is an important step for learning to decode simple consonant-vowel-consonant words. Further, promoting early literacy, promotes life-long health, well-being, and living a productive life.

Biography

Gail M. Wolf is a nurse educator and reading researcher who works at Oregon Health & Science University. Wolf's focus is on public health, leadership, and the connection between literacy skills, and health. Wolf's research on early literacy shows the connection between early childhood literacy, later adult literacy, and living a productive, healthy life. Wolf has spent decades teaching preschool children to read. She has presented her work at the National Institute for Healthcare Advancement's Health Literacy Conference in 2010, and 2013. Wolf is currently writing up her research results with bilingual, Latino teachers and First Grade Hispanic children on early biliteracy.

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