

Title: "Learning to Read and Write: A Longitudinal Study of 54 Children from First through Fourth Grades"

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Subject(s): Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Comprehension

Grade Level: 1–2, 3–6

Synopsis: Research focused on literacy development in children through fourth grade and followed an earlier study (Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986). The Simple View of reading and writing received support in this earlier study and was examined in this research. Of particular concern were these questions: Do the same children remain poor readers year after year? Do the same children remain poor writers year after year? What skills do the poor readers lack? What skills do the poor writers lack? What factors seem to keep poor readers from improving? What factors seem to keep poor writers from improving? The probability that a child would remain a poor reader at the end of fourth grade if the child was a poor reader at the end of first grade was .88. Early writing skill did not predict later writing skill as well as early reading ability predicted later reading ability. Children who became poor readers entered first grade with little phonemic awareness. By the end of fourth grade, the poor readers had still not achieved the level of decoding skill that the good readers had achieved at the beginning of second grade. Good readers read considerably more than the poor readers both in and out of school, which appeared to contribute to the good readers' growth in some reading and writing skills (e.g., in ideas for stories). Poor readers tended to become poor writers. The Simple View received support in accounting for reading and writing development through fourth grade.

Quote(s): ". . . the study once again illustrates the criticality of phonemic awareness in learning to decode words. . . . It would appear that more phonemic awareness training should occur in preschools and kindergarten, and, if needed, even in first grade."

