

An evaluation of the impact of phonological processing ability and vocabulary development on access to the curriculum for hearing impaired children in a classroom environment.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between phonological processing ability and vocabulary acquisition in children with a moderate hearing impairment. The impact of these areas on ability to access the mainstream mathematics and literacy curriculum was also explored.

This research used between methods triangulation, incorporating a case study approach with participant observation. Two children with a moderate hearing impairment, matched regarding age and English as an additional language status, were assessed using the Phonological Assessment Battery and British Picture Vocabulary Scales II. These results were viewed in conjunction with data obtained through observation of lessons and teacher interviews.

The results suggest that a moderate hearing impairment did not necessarily lead to impaired phonological processing skills and the learning of English as an additional language did not appear to be a significant factor affecting this area of development. Also, the presence of delayed vocabulary acquisition did not always lead to difficulties accessing mainstream lessons.

In conclusion, it is difficult to identify the impact any one particular factor investigated may have on a child's ability to access the mainstream curriculum. However, this study appears to substantiate the need for every hearing impaired child to be treated individually, in order to identify their specific needs and devise appropriate interventions in order for them to successfully access the mainstream curriculum.