
PREDICTING KINDERGARTENERS' END-OF-YEAR SPELLING ABILITY BASED ON THEIR READING, ALPHABETIC, VOCABULARY, AND PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SKILLS, AS WELL AS PRIOR LITERACY EXPERIENCES

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Abstract. This study examined the role of home literacy, parental education, and demographic factors in addition to conventional literacy skills at the beginning and end of kindergarten in predicting end-of-kindergarten spelling achievement. The study involved 9 schools and 29 classrooms serving an economically and ethnically diverse population ($N = 288$). Students spelled three types of words: sight words, decodable real words, and decodable pseudowords; spellings were scored to allow partial credit for invented spelling. Results from a three-step hierarchical regression indicated the variables accounted for 66% of the variance in spelling scores, with the single strongest spring predictor being a 1-minute letter-sound fluency test. Implications for instruction and for identifying students at risk for spelling and reading difficulties are discussed.

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Over 40 years of research has focused on early reading development (e.g., National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Relative to this extensive research base, how early spelling develops has received

less attention (Joshi & Aaron, 2005). This is disturbing, because poor spellers typically remain poor spellers (Juel, 1988). Poor spelling impedes the writing process, and the inability to spell and write to communicate