

Critical Review: Are there communicative advantages or disadvantages to training symbolic gestures to typically-developing hearing infants?

Jessica Tong

M.Cl.Sc SLP Candidate

University of Western Ontario: School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

This critical review evaluates

focused on participants and trainers that were typically-developing with normal hearing, therefore

An observer measured the duration of crying and whining, and the frequency of gestures per minute, following an ABAB design (A=baseline, B=gesture training condition). It was not reported if the observer was blind to the study purpose.

attributable to differences in symbolic gesture training.

Many of the studies failed to report if the participants were blind to the purpose of the study, possibly resulting in participant bias. Góngora et al. (2009), Pizer et al. (2007) and Vallotton (2008) used videotaping to record gesture use, however awareness of the video camera could have caused the participants (including family members) to alter their behaviour and gesture use. Therefore it was difficult to know if the symbolic gestures recorded represent naturalistic use. The researchers could overcome this by videotaping through a one-

References

- Góngora, X. & Farkas, C. (2009). Infant sign language program effects on synchronic mother infant interactions. *Infant Behavior & Development*, 33, 216-225.
- Johnston, J. C., Durieux-Smith, A. & Bloom, K. (2005). Teaching gestural signs to infants to