

Investigating Learning of Fingerspelled Words

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Fingerspelling is a major part of American Sign Language as well as other signed languages. It is primarily used when there is not a specific hand shape, or sign, to convey the desired word. It is often used for very specific, detailed items. Part of this experiment is designed to see how well one can remember the overall shape and sequence of the handshapes without learning the handshapes letter correspondence.

Participants learned to match nonsense words with nonsense objects, called Fribbles. The nonsense words were presented in either ASL Fingerspelling, or in printed form of the nonsense word. The task was to learn the names of the Fribbles by clicking on the correct Fribble when its nonsense name appears either visually or fingerspelled. Nine participants learned both types of association. Learning will be compared between Fingerspelling and print.