

RUNNING HEAD: Vocabulary Development

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN THROUGH TELEVISION  
PROGRAMS

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine if young children can learn better from television clips shown in class than from face-to-face instruction. Differences in ages and content of programs should be considered when examining trends among television watching and vocabulary development. Research shows that the quantity of television watched by children is not as important as the quality in terms of vocabulary development. In this study, the vocabulary development of 18 toddlers ages 36 months to 55 months in a special education setting were examined before and after exposure from television programs to teach low-frequency vocabulary words. Half of the students in this study receive television clip instruction and the other half receive face-to-face instruction of the same vocabulary words from a teacher. In each group, there are four 3-year-olds and five 4-year-olds. In addition, in each group, 3 students have behaviors and speech-language needs and are in the lower language group based on ability, 3 students have only speech-language needs and are in the middle language group based on ability, and 3 students have no needs and are in the higher language group based on ability. The results from this study are then entered into a database and tested to determine which method is most effective for teaching vocabulary words in a blended setting. In addition, certain programs are analyzed to determine which children's programs are most essential to vocabulary development, and the amount of time students spend watching television is surveyed and examined. This study found that while young children are able to learn new vocabulary words from watching television clips, young children learn better from face-to-face instruction.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Background, issues and concerns*

The American Academy of Pediatrics released a statement that children younger than 24 months of age should not be exposed to television, and the agency continued to warn against the exposure of television in young children. However, television watching among infants and children is growing in popularity. It has been reported that 99% of households in America have at least one television set (Consumer Electronics Association, 2013). Because of this prevalence, studies have been conducted to determine if television can actually increase vocabulary development in children. Many studies have aimed to discover if some television programs are more beneficial for learning and vocabulary development in children than others. While some agencies and parents of young children have expressed concern for children being exposed to television too early, other agencies and parents believe that television can promote vocabulary development and early learning skills in children. This study will determine if children learn new vocabulary words best from television clips or from in-person instruction from a teacher in a school setting.

### *Practice under investigation*

The practice under investigation will be examining vocabulary development as a result of television programs for young children. An investigation will be conducted to determine if young children are able to learn from watching television clips and programs that are age-appropriate through a pre- and post-assessment process. This study will determine if children are able to retain vocabulary information more effectively after watching television clips or after being

taught face-to-face from a teacher in the classroom. Children will be post-assessed one week after receiving instruction. Literature from previous studies regarding television exposure time and content will also be consulted in this study.

#### *School policy to be informed by the study*

Each preschool classroom a Midwestern school district is provided computers and videos/multimedia clips are to be incorporated into instruction. Each computer is equipped with Safari Montage© technology to show video clips to children, as determined by the copyright policy of the district. *Word World*, the PBS program used in this study, is a part of the Safari Montage© program. If it is determined that the practice of using television clips/programs within the classroom can increase vocabulary development, the use of this strategy should be more heavily required within the district, and teachers should use this strategy for introducing new vocabulary words.

#### *Conceptual underpinning*

Theories regarding vocabulary development through television exposure in young children often discover that certain programs can help to teach new words to children. Most notably, “Sesame Street,” has been linked to expanding young children’s vocabularies through repetition of word use and visuals. Studies have found that children as young as 18 months may be able to react to stimuli long enough to attend to a television program and yield educational benefits. A recent study by Linebarger and Walker found that the content of television programs is more essential in learning than the quantity of television watched. They found that programs like, “Dora the Explorer” and “Blue’s Clues” may help to expand vocabularies in young children than programs like “Teletubies” and “Barney and Friends”. (Linebarger and Walker, 2005).

Based on this research, television watch has proven to lead to vocabulary development in young children when programs are educational and age-appropriate and use repetition of new words.

*Statement of the problem*

If television programs and clips are able to teach vocabulary words, teachers should utilize such programs more frequently in the classroom to expand children's vocabularies and introduce new vocabulary words.

*Research questions*

RQ #1: Is there a difference between children learning vocabulary from television clips and children learning vocabulary from face-to-face instruction?

RQ #2: Is there a correlation between time spent watching television and vocabulary development?

RQ #3: Are certain television programs more beneficial for vocabulary development than others?

RQ #4: Are children displaying more on-task behaviors when learning from television clips than when learning from face-to-face instruction?

*Null hypothesis*

Young children do not learn vocabulary words more effectively through television clips as opposed to face-to-face instruction from a teacher.

*Anticipated benefits of the study*

A goal was to determine whether showing video clips or administering face-to-face instruction is the best method of teaching new vocabulary words to young children in a preschool setting. It was also determined how the amount of television a child watches affects his/her performance in face-to-face and video-based groups. Finally, it was discovered which television programs may be more beneficial than others for teaching new vocabulary words.

*Definition of terms*

Incidental vocabulary learning-learning without direct instruction; learning new words through independent reading, computers, television, etc.

Screen time-time spent using electronic devices (computers, television, games consoles, etc.)

Direct instruction-explicit teaching of skills through systematic instruction

AAP-American Academy of Pediatrics; professional association of pediatricians in Washington D.C.

Expressive language-the output of language by an individual for the purpose of communicating with another individual

Receptive language-ability to understand language that is read or heard

*Summary*

A study was conducted to determine if children learn vocabulary words more effectively from watching television clips as opposed to receiving face-to-face instruction from a teacher. If the study is successful, teachers should incorporate more television clips/programs into instruction to increase children's vocabulary development. Since children in the study are 36-55

months old, their developmental level is higher than most studies conducted in children 24 months and younger. However, the approach of integrating popular television shows into instruction could help to better reach a wide variety of learners and increase student engagement to in turn increase vocabulary expansion.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With increasing advances in technology has come an equal increase in the push for technology in the classroom. However, because the popularity of watching televisions has risen recently in households, there is not a great deal of research determining whether children learn best from watching television. Most research has determined that the quantity of time spent watching television is not as relevant as the quality of programs watched by children. Research by Linebarger and Walker has discovered that programs such as “Dora the Explorer”, “Blue’s Clues”, “Clifford”, “Dragon Tales” and “Arthur,” are more beneficial and led to larger vocabularies in children than those vocabularies in children who watched shows, “Teletubies” and “Barney and Friends” (Linebarger & Walker, 2005, p.630).

Linebarger and Walker’s study, “Infants’ and toddlers’ television viewing and language outcomes,” also discovered that programs that tended to repeat phrases and have children repeat phrases were more likely to lead to an increase in children’s vocabularies than those programs that just showed words on the screen without having children repeat them or view them repeatedly (Linebarger & Walker, 2005, p.643). Therefore, the quality of programs should be highly considered when selecting television programs for young children. Research conducted by Webb (2009) seconds this notion, finding that the number of words within a program may also be a factor in increasing vocabulary development. Webb analyzed the number of low-frequency words promoted throughout the program. This study found that eighty-eight children’s programs used 264,384 words total. Next, Webb placed these words into categories based on word families and frequency. After compiling all words into categories, Webb discovered that if an individual



were to have knowledge of words among the most common 3,000 word families, there is evidence that one hour of television watching a day could lead to significant vocabulary expansion (p.341).

However, in order for children to be successful in expanding their vocabularies, they must first have basic knowledge of 10 or more words in the English language in order to show that they understand what words are and how words are formed (Webb, 2009, p. 342). Therefore, very young children or children without this prior knowledge may not be successful in learning from television programs. The developmental level and prior vocabulary knowledge of children must be considered when examining vocabulary advancement through television watching.

Therefore, in order to conclude if watching television is beneficial to vocabulary expansion in a child, his/her knowledge of words in the most common word families must first be examined. Furthermore, Webb's research did not determine that any television watching exceeding one hour led to any vocabulary benefits for children; children who watched 2-3 hours of television a day did not show an increase in vocabulary compared to those children who watched only one hour a day (Webb, 2009, p.365).

Research on the quality of children's television programs found many similarities among programs in terms of the presentation and content of each program. In Klein's (1997) study, "Evidence of Vocabulary Development in Television Programs for Preschoolers," television shows on both PBS and Nickelodeon were examined, and research determined that programs showed an average number of 20 words per each 30-minute episode. Klein also discovered that strategies used to teach children vocabulary words were very similar. Strategies used included visual, visual and audio, and the spell-out-on-screen methods (Klein, 1997). He determined that

children can learn new vocabulary words from the repeated use of words within a 30-minute episode. However, Klein did discover that children are only able to obtain 3-4 words out of the 20 new vocabulary words introduced within each episode.

Likewise, research by Huston, Truglio, and Wright (2001) determined that preschoolers ages 3-5 are able to learn new vocabulary words from watching “Sesame Street”. Through their research, parents encouraged children to watch, “Sesame Street” and completed diaries in which they recorded their child’s age and gender and then entered the number of minutes spent watching the show. Parents were also asked to record whether or not a sibling was present, and how they were able to encourage their child to watch the show and remain engaged throughout the program. Research from this study determined that preschoolers ages 3-5 were able to increase their vocabularies from watching, “Sesame Street” as determined by post-tests, but children ages 5-7 did not display an increase in their vocabularies.

The researchers believe this may be due to the age of the program being too low and thus less engaging for older students. They also believe that because vocabularies are vaster at the elementary level, children may be better able to learn new words from reading at their independent level or from face-to-face instruction (Huston, Truglio & Wright, 1990). Therefore, the age of the child and his/her vocabulary level should be considered when using television as a strategy for increasing vocabulary. Parents should consider their child’s age when allowing them to watch television within the home, while teachers should also consider children’s development levels when using television clips in the classroom.

Another age-targeted study found that television programs may have a “middle-aged sweet spot” of toddlers who are more likely to learn new vocabulary words effectively from

television shows. This study, “Can toddlers learn vocabulary from television?” conducted by Krcmar, Grela and Lin (2007), found that toddlers ages 15-17 months and toddlers ages 22-24 months did not show an increase in vocabulary in their post-assessment after watching age-appropriate television programs. However, toddlers ages 18-21 months did display an increase in vocabularies and were able to point to a targeted word defined in a television program in the post-assessment, unlike their younger and older peers (p.50).

Next, researchers decided to determine whether these children were as likely to display an increase in their vocabularies after receiving face-to-face instruction from a teacher. Krcmar, Grela and Lin (2007) discovered that younger participants (toddlers ages 15-17 months) and older participants (toddlers ages 18-21 months) were more likely to locate a target item after being taught the word through a face-to-face instruction manner. Participants aged 22 months were slightly more likely to locate a target item after viewing television clips. From these results, researchers concluded that older children may be less engaged in learning through television, while children in the middle age range may be more likely to learn from such strategies.

One possible reason that research suggests children can learn new vocabulary words from television exposure is the idea of incidental learning. This concept is defined in the research article, “Learning from Television,” as, “learning that is not immediately expressed in an overt response,” or, “learning that occurs without formal instruction and reinforcement” (Schramm, 1989, p. 76). Schramm believes that children are able to learn incidentally from watching television if they are of an appropriate age, display an ability to learn, have low needs at the moment that they are watching television and display a certain level of focus (Schramm, 1989, p. 78). He examined 56 toddlers ages 2-4 and found that when these factors are considered, the likelihood that a child will retain information is valid. Schramm believes there is no doubt that

children are able to learn from television because they are able to quote phrases and name characters from television shows. His research found that children with higher IQ levels are able to learn new vocabulary words from television shows with more ease than children of average or lower intelligence levels (Schramm, 1989, p.95). He also discovered that all children tend to learn new vocabulary words best in new videos/movies/television shows because they pay closer attention, as opposed to shows they watch repeatedly and may be less engaged in watching. After an advanced age study, Schramm discovered that children ages 3-8 were able to best pay attention and learn new vocabulary words from television shows (Scharm, 1989, p.97). He believes this is because children at these ages were better able to focus for the 30 minute time period needed, and they were able to take care of their own needs as they arose during television watching (feeding, bathroom breaks, repositioning for comfort, etc.).

With the increase of technology use and an increase in televisions in homes across America comes an increase in the areas of concern regarding screen time and overexposure. In the research article, "Television and Very Young Children," by Pempek and Anderson (2005), research displayed that even very young children are able to learn new vocabulary words from television programs that are age-appropriate. This contradicts research stating that children may have to be a certain age or have certain prior knowledge before being able to learn new words from television.

Although most research found that very young children, ages 24 months and younger, were more likely to retain vocabulary information from face-to-face instruction, even these children showed evidence of vocabulary learning from television programs in their post-assessment results (Pempek and Anderson, 2005). This study showed that children were more drawn to programs targeted at their specific age group. Over the course of this study, Pempek

and Anderson researched a great deal of literature regarding early television exposure in order to prove if the American Academy of Pediatrics is valid in recommending that children younger than 24 months should not be exposed to television programs. After conducting this study, Pempek and Anderson were able to prove that even children as young as 10 months can become engaged in age-appropriate programs and can, therefore, become likely to develop pre-vocabulary education skills that may be beneficial later in life (Pempek and Anderson, 2005). This study did, however, determine that background television noise can be very distracting for toddlers and young children when they are being asked to obtain new information or complete tasks throughout the day (Pempek and Anderson, 2005).

Another study researching concerns regarding screen time and over exposure is, “Media and Young Children’s Learning,” by Kirkorian, Wartella, and Anderson (2008). This study found that over the past two decades, concerns regarding the age students should begin watching television and overexposure of television has risen greatly. After observing literature regarding these two concerns, Kirkorian and Wartella discovered a way to minimize the negative impacts of television watching while maximizing the positive impacts. This research team believes that parents should be responsible for viewing and selecting well-designed, age-appropriate programs for their children while preventing their children from watching television programs with little educational content. They found that programs such as, “Dora the Explorer” and “Dragon Tales” were very age-appropriate and educationally-driven (Kirkorian & Wartella, 2008, p.42).

Research by Linebarger and Walker (2005) also discovered that these programs were the most educational age-appropriate programs popular today. They also agree that children are able to learn a great deal from these programs, especially in the area of new vocabulary words. This study highlights parents asking themselves the following questions: “Does the program ask for

audience participation (asking questions to the child, getting the child involved in the program)?”, “Are new vocabulary words introduced to my child?”, and “What subjects are being introduced to my child?” (Kirkorian & Wartella, 2008, p.58). They believe that only when a child’s parents are able to carefully filter television programs for their children and encourage them to watch high-quality educational programs are children able to effectively learn from watching television.

Benefits of children watching television have been closely examined within the last two decades. Research by Huston, Kotler, Murphy, Pinon, Scantlin, St. Peters and Wright (2001) found that when children in low-income homes watch age-appropriate television programs, their test scores are able to increase in multiple areas and their vocabularies increase. However, when toddlers in low-income homes watched general-audience programs as opposed to child-audience programs, their assessment scores were much lower than that of those watching child-audience programs. This research was conducted by having parents record television diaries in which they included information about their child, the amount of time spent watching television and the type of television shows watched by their child.

Other studies have used similar parent diary logs in order to determine what children are watching and how often they are watching these programs. Research by Nathanson, Alade, Sharp, Rasmussen and Christy (2014) used parent diaries to conclude that children’s vocabularies are positively impacted through age-appropriate television programs. Findings stated that children with already average or above average vocabularies reported additional vocabulary words seemingly directly linked to television exposure. One student was able to tell the examiner that he learned a new vocabulary word from, “Bob the Builder” (Nathanson, Alade,

Sharp, Rasmussen & Christy, 2014). The examiners state that further research should be conducted in the future on the positive effects of television exposure on vocabulary.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### *Research Design*

A quantitative study was conducted to determine if young children can have positive effects in the area of vocabulary development through watching television. The study is aimed to determine if young children can learn new vocabulary words through television examination, and if these results are better than those obtained from face-to-face instruction from a teacher. The independent variable being tested was television program content exposure while the dependent variable was vocabulary post assessment results. The clips used are from the, “Word World” PBS television program. Strategies used during the video group include introducing students to the television clip and asking them to watch for new vocabulary words. Throughout the video, the teacher provided verbal redirections, as needed. Strategies used during the face-to-face instruction group include viewing flash cards with photos, playing a memory game with vocabulary word flash cards, clapping out syllables and verbally saying the words. The assessment was a word list administered by the researcher. The pre-assessment was conducted to determine if children already knew vocabulary words which would then impact results. The words used on the list were taught exclusively through the television programs, and were not words taught using direct instruction from the teacher. The same assessment was conducted one week later to determine long-term retention through repeated exposure of television programs. In addition, parents submitted television hour logs in order to determine the amount of television watched by students and the number of vocabulary words these children display.



*Study group description*

Students from an elementary school in the Midwest were examined for this research study. These students ranged in age from 36 months to 55 months old and are currently enrolled in a half-day preschool program. This program is a blended program, and each group of 9 students contains 3 students with behavioral and speech-language needs, 3 students with only speech-language needs and 3 students with no special needs.

*Data collection and instruments*

A pre-assessment and post-assessment of vocabulary words was conducted and results were entered into charts based on findings. The pre- and post-assessments are the same and contain the following words accompanied by visuals (to ensure the measurement is developmentally appropriate): nest, bug, sled, cookie and doll. These words are spelled out and shown on the screen multiple times during the television clip provided. The administrator showed children a card with both the word and visual and asked children to verbally label each card. In addition, parent surveys were collected in which the amount of time a student watches television was recorded, along with a list of programs the child regularly watches.

*Statistical analysis methods*

Within this study, 18 toddlers age 36 months to 55 months were examined and divided into two groups of 9 children each: television clip instruction and face-to-face instruction. Each group contained four 3-year-olds and five 4-year-olds. Each group contained 3 students with behavioral and speech-language needs in the lower language group based on ability, 3 students with speech-language needs only and are in the middle language group based on ability, and 3 students with no needs from the higher language group based on ability. Within

this t-test,  $O_1$ =pretest scores,  $X$ =experimental treatment,  $O_2$ =posttest scores, and  $D=O_2-O_1$  (gain scores). In addition,  $n=20$ . These results also provided the mean, mean  $D$ , t-test,  $df$  and  $p$ -value. The Alpha level was set to .01 to test the null hypothesis: Young children do not learn vocabulary words more effectively through television clips as opposed to face-to-face instruction from a teacher.

*Findings***Diagram 1***t-Test Analysis Results for Video-Based and Face-to-Face Instruction Methods*

Source	Mean	S2	Mean D	t-Test	Df	p-value
Video (n=9)	3.89					
Face-to-Face (n=9)	4.11	1.36	-0.22	-0.35	16	0.73

Note: Significant when  $p < 0.25$

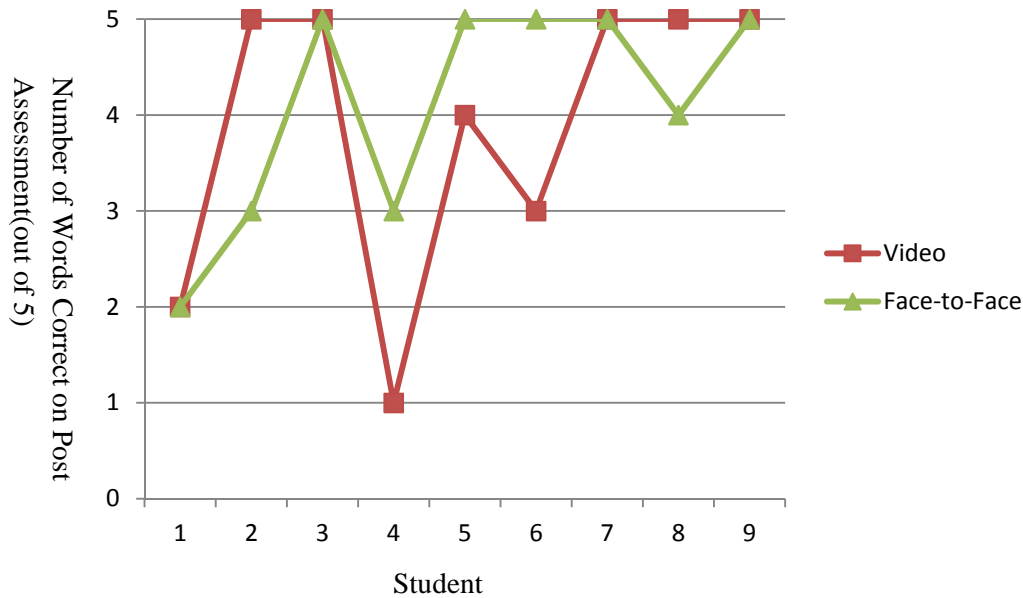
The independent variable for this study was the method of instruction: either television clips or face-to-face instruction. Eighteen students were placed into two groups of 9, with each group containing 3 students with behavioral and speech-language needs, 3 students with only speech-language needs, and 3 students with no special needs. These students ranged in age from 36-55 months and attend a half-day blended preschool program. The mean score out of a possible 5 words was 3.89 for the video group, and 4.11 for the face-to-face instruction group. The difference of the mean score was -0.22. The t-test was -0.35. The degrees of freedom was 16. The null hypothesis was: Young children do not learn vocabulary words more effectively through television clips as opposed to face-to-face instruction from a teacher. The null is not rejected because the p-value of 0.73 is greater than a p-value of 0.25. This means that young children do not learn more effectively by watching television clips than from face-to-face instruction. Therefore, face-to-face instruction methods may be better for teaching new

vocabulary words to young children, most notably young children in a blended preschool program. However, the difference of the mean score is very slight, and results did not conclude that children are unable to learn new vocabulary words from watching television clips, as 17 of the 18 students were able to increase their scores from the pre-test to the post-test.

The results of this t-test support research from Pempek and Anderson (2005) in the article “Television and Very Young Children,” in which young children were found able to learn from television clips, but found to learn more effectively from watching television. Although the margin is slight, my research supports the theory that children retain more vocabulary words from face-to-face teaching methods. This data is also supported by research of Kirkorian and Wartella, (2008) who discovered that showing educational, age-appropriate material is more beneficial to learning than showing adult-based television shows. The television clips used in this study were from the PBS program *Word World*, which is aimed at children ages 3-5. Another study, “Vocabulary demands of television programs”, conducted by Webb found that young children are able to engage in incidental learning in which they unintentionally learn new vocabulary words from programs that are demanding on retaining low-frequency words.

**Diagram 2**

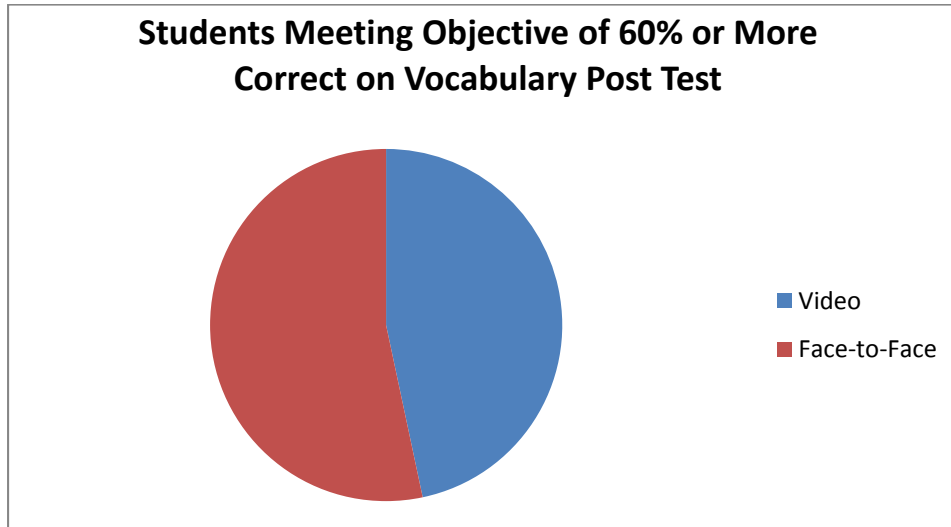
*Comparison of Number of Vocabulary Words Correct-Video Group and Face-to-Face Group*



When examining the results of the number of vocabulary words correct by the video group and the number of words correct by the face-to-face instruction group from the post assessment, results are very similar. One student in the video group was only able to identify one vocabulary word, but the average number of words correct for this group is 3.8 words. The lowest number of words correct for a student in the face-to-face instruction group was 2 words, and the average number of words correct for this group was 3.5 words. Therefore, the average number of words correct per group is slightly higher in the video group, even though the lowest performing student score (1 word) occurred in this group. However, these results must be compared to pre-assessment results in order to determine effectiveness of strategy.

**Diagram 3**

*Percentage of Students Scoring 60% or Higher on Vocabulary Post Test*



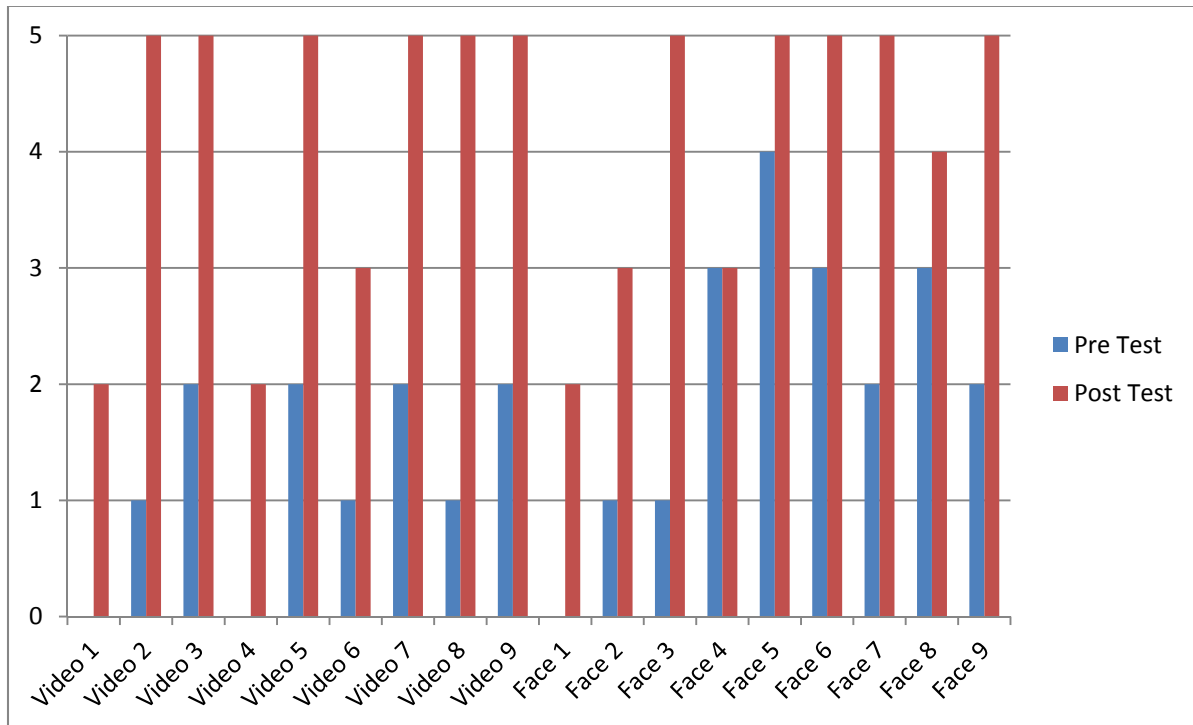
When comparing the video group to the face-to-face group, 5 students in both the video group and the face-to-face group were able to score 100% on the post assessment. In addition, one student in each group was able to score 80% on the post assessment. Two students in the face-to-face group scored 60% on the post assessment, while only one student in the video group was able to score 60%. One student in the face-to-face group scored 40% on the post assessment. One student in the face-to-face group and one student in the video group scored 40% on the post assessment. Finally, one student in the video group scored only 20% on the post assessment. This student has both behavioral and speech-language needs. These results show that students in the video clip group had lower scores than those students in the face-to-face group. However, each student was able to correctly verbally label at least one word.

Research by Klein (1997) in the study, “Evidence of vocabulary development in television programs for preschoolers,” found that television shows on both PBS and Nickelodeon

showed an average number of 20 words per each 30-minute episode. *World Word*, the program used in this study, is a PBS program and showed 7 words in a 15 minute clip, 5 of which were used for this study (as determined by age-appropriate sight words by the Scott Foresman curriculum guide). The study “Can toddlers learn vocabulary from television?” conducted by Krcmar, Grela and Lin (2007) is supported in this study because students were able to increase their post-test scores from their pre-test scores as a result of watching video clips. Because all students increased their scores, support for both face-to-face methods and television watching can be supported.

**Diagram 4**

*Pre- and Post-Test Scores Video Group and Face-to-Face Group*



Each student was able to improve his/her vocabulary from the pre-test to the post-test of five vocabulary words introduced either in a television clip or from face-to-face instruction from

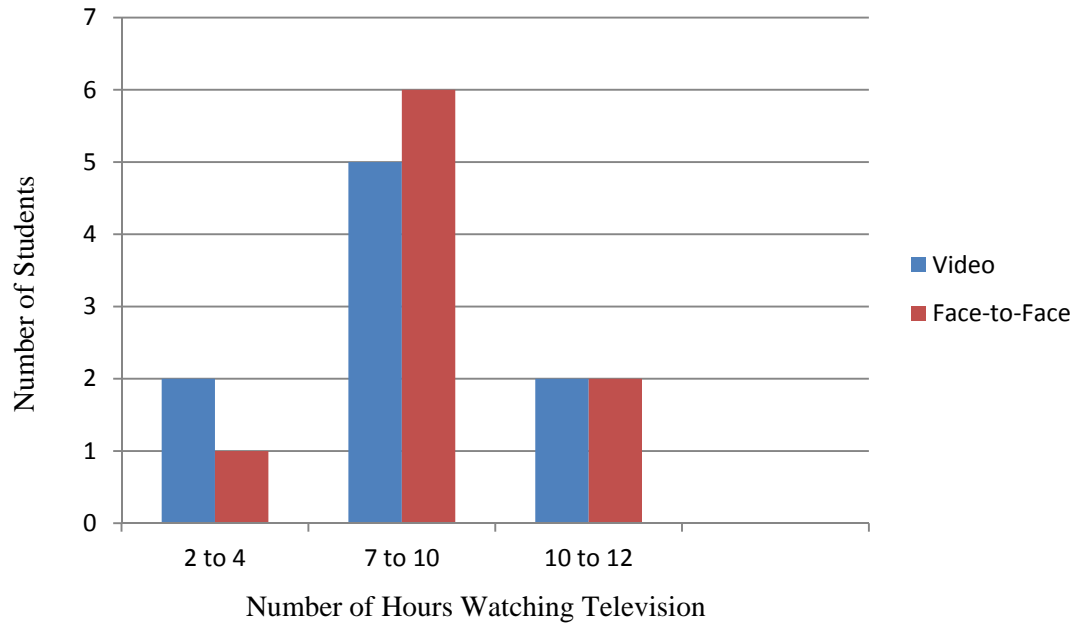
a teacher. Post-test scores show that 11 of the 18 students were able to verbally label 100% of vocabulary words taught from a video or in person. Of these 11 students, 6 students from the video group were able to score 100%, while 5 students in the face-to-face group were able to score 100%. All students in the television clip group were able to increase their scores from their pre-test to their post-test, and all but one student in the face-to-face instruction group were able to increase their scores. Three students were unable to verbally label any vocabulary words during the pre-test. One student, in the face-to-face group, was unable to increase his vocabulary from instruction.

This diagram would support the theory that children learn from watching television because more students in the video group were able to score 100% on the post-test, and while one student did not learn new vocabulary words in the face-to-face group, all students in the video group were able to improve their test score. Research by Huston, Kotler, Murphy, Pinon, Scantlin, St. Peters and Wright (2001) supports this theory, stating that children can learn new vocabulary words by watching age-appropriate programs. Although overall scores are slightly higher in the face-to-face group, only 100% of students in the video group were able to increase their scores from the pre-test to the post-test.

### **Diagram 5**

*Average Hours Spent Watching Television*

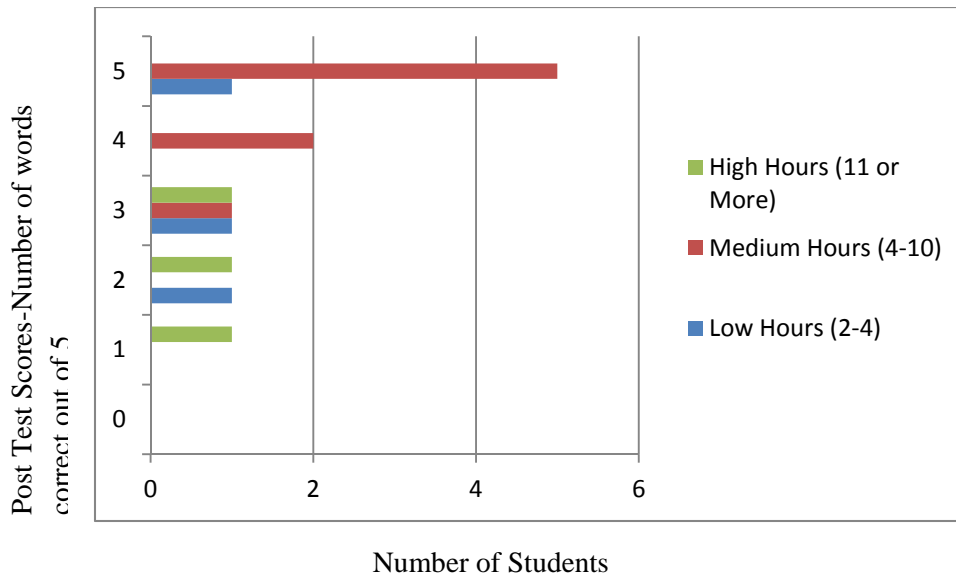




Parents of each student in this study were asked to complete television surveys in which they recorded the total number of hours their child watches television weekly. One student in the face-to-face group and two students in the video group recorded a low amount of weekly television hours watched (between 2-4 hours). In the medium category (7-10 hours weekly), there were 5 students from the video group and 6 students from the face-to-face group. Finally, there were 2 students from both the face-to-face group and the television group who were reported to watch more than 10-12 hours of television per week.

### Diagram 6

*Post-Test Scores as a Factor of Average Amount of Television Watched Weekly (in hours)*

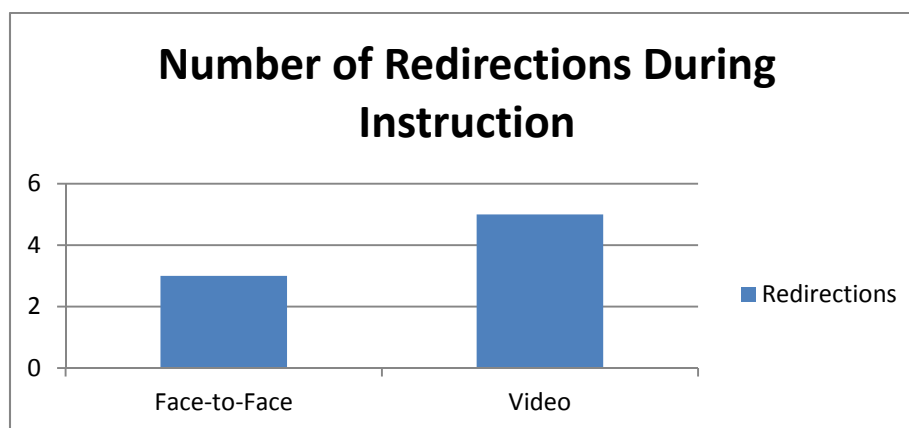


This study found that the amount of time a child watches television may impact how he/she is able to learn new vocabulary words. When assessing both the face-to-face group and video group and comparing these scores to the amount of time children watch television, as reported by parent surveys, there seems to be trends in scores. Children who watch low amounts of television (2-4 hours weekly), scored 2-5 out of 5 words, with no scores lower than 2. Children in the medium hour range (4-10 hours) scored 3-5 out of 5 words correctly. This group had the highest level of 100% scores on the vocabulary post-test. Finally, children who watched a high amount of television (10-12 hours) scored the lowest, with scores of 1-3 out of 5. This means that in this group of young children studied, children who watched 7-10 hours of television per week scored higher than children who watched 2-4 hours or 10-12 hours of television per week. The viewing patterns of children in this study may have impacted their ability to learn from video clips or face-to-face instruction.

Research by Nathanson, Alade, Sharp, Rasmussen and Christy (2014) used parent diaries to conclude that children's vocabularies are positively impacted through age-appropriate

television programs. This research is supported in this study, as parents who recorded having their children watching age-appropriate programs had children who scored higher test scores. All children in the medium and low group reported watching the following television programs: “Dora the Explorer”, “Bob the Builder”, “Dino Dan”, and “Blue’s Clues”. Children in the high hour group reported watching, “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” and adult programming like “Wheel of Fortune”, and “Planet Earth”. Two students in the medium hour group also reported watching, “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” and “Peppa Pig”. Research by Linebarger and Walker discovered that programs such as “Dora the Explorer”, “Blue’s Clues”, “Clifford”, “Dragon Tales” and “Arthur,” are more beneficial and led to larger vocabularies in children than those vocabularies in children who watched shows, “Teletubies” and “Barney and Friends” (Linebarger & Walker, 2005, p.630). This research is supported within this study, as many students who received average and above average test scores reported watching “Blue’s Clues,” and “Dora the Explorer”.

**Diagram 7**



During a 15-minute small group session, children in the face-to-face vocabulary group had to be redirected by the teacher 3 times. In the video group, children needed redirected by the teacher 5 times. Students were seemingly more engaged during the face-to-face group in which concrete items were provided along with visuals with words underneath them. Children were asked to clap out the syllables and repeat each word and then play a memory game in which they flipped over the visual cards and verbally labeled the pictures as they played the game. At the end of the lesson, the teacher recapped the vocabulary words by having each student say each word when looking at the visuals. During the video group, students were asked to watch a 15 minute clip of *Word World* and were then quizzed on words from the video. The teacher asked questions throughout to ensure student engagement and focus.

*Conclusions and Recommendations*

This study found that young children seem to learn new vocabulary words best from face-to-face instruction as opposed to watching television clips. However, this study also determined that students are able to increase their vocabularies both from watching age-appropriate television clips and from receiving in-person instruction from a teacher. This means that teachers could use a combination of television clips and traditional instruction within the classroom to enhance student vocabularies. By showing age-appropriate, educational clips and directing high-quality traditional instruction, teachers can increase student vocabularies.

Students who watched between 7-10 hours of television per week seemed to be more likely to score average and above average scores on post-assessments than those students who watched a low amount (2-4 hours weekly) or high amount (10-12 hours weekly) of television. This means parents should monitor the amount of time their child watches television to ensure that they are exposed to educational, age-appropriate programs, but not receiving too much time watching television. In addition to the quantity of television children watch, the quality of television programs is critical to expanding children's vocabularies. Parents who reported their children watching, "Blue's Clues" and "Dora the Explorer" had children who yielded higher post-test scores than those who watched adult programming or shows that were not educationally based such as, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". The amount of time children spend watching television and the type of programs children watch may have played a role in the post-test scores of students.

Finally, children seemed to display more on-task behaviors during face-to-face instruction than during television clips. This may be due to the variety of methods used during

face-to-face instruction: clapping the syllables, playing the memory game with vocabulary words, and holding concrete objects illustrating the words. In addition, children in this group were able to see the visuals used during the post-test throughout the lesson, and these were the same visuals used for the post-test. Children in the video group only saw these visuals during the pre- and post-test and did not view them throughout the lesson. Another factor could be the engagement level of the television program used, the amount of time the children were asked to focus on the clip (15 minutes), and the existing vocabulary level of the student. In addition, further research should be conducted to determine if a student's disability impacts the method in which he/she learns best. Research involving the amount of time a child can focus on a television clip should also be conducted.

This study found that young students learn best from traditional, face-to-face instructional methods in which teachers use a variety of age-appropriate face-to-face methods to teach new vocabulary words. However, this study did support that young children, with and without special needs, are able to learn from watching age-appropriate educational television programs. By using a variety of age-appropriate instructional methods, teachers can engage students and expand vocabularies. Research from this study determined that young children are best engaged in face-to-face instruction. In addition, parents can support vocabulary development by selecting educational child-based programs and monitoring the amount of time children spend watching these programs to positively impact student vocabulary scores.

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