

Using Videos to Teach Literacy

Summary: Videos are often seen in a negative light when it comes to their use for serious academic instruction in the elementary grades. In an article for *The Reading Teacher*, two NYU professors discuss what recent research has shown about the most effective ways to use video to supplement literacy instruction.

Practical Applications

The authors explain that there is a growing body of research showing very positive effects of using video as part of literacy instruction, when it's used strategically. Best practices include:

- When focusing on comprehension and not decoding/fluency, using short video version of stories can level the playing field so that students can dig into the text for comprehension. Video presentations have been shown to have greater effects on building students' general understanding of a story than even an adult's read-aloud of that story.
- Video instruction is particularly impactful with English Language Learners and students with disabilities or special needs.
- Teachers can model comprehension strategies by considering the elements raised by a video of a story, such as inference. Alternatively, students could watch a video and use that as a jumping-off point for comprehension skills such as inference.
- Vocabulary is a particularly promising area in which video can be used; in one study, students were shown short clips that created the context for new words, and then re-watched the clips in between doing other paper-based vocabulary activities. This group, compared to a group that just did the paper-based activities, learned more words.
- In general, the key is to *blend* video learning with teacher instruction and pen-and-pencil word.

Conclusion and Citation

Just putting on a video will have little effect on student learning, but as teachers learn to utilize video strategically as part of their broader literacy instruction, it can become a powerful tool.

Dougherty Stahl, K. & Hall, M. "Deviianizing Video in Support of Comprehension and Vocabulary Instruction." *The Reading Teacher* 65.6 (Mar. 2012), pp. 403-406
<http://bit.ly/zrsbCC> (subscription only).