A Study of Academic Achievement in Terms of Television Viewing Practices.

Louis Boissac Roth Jr

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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A STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN TERMS OF
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THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND
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A STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN TERMS OF TELEVISION VIEWING PRACTICES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

in

The Interdepartmental Program of Education

by

Louis Boissac Roth, Jr.
B.S. University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1956
M.Ed. Louisiana State University, 1964
August, 1979
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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the author's father, Louis B. Roth, Sr., and to his mother, the late Agnes G. Roth, who were the motivating factors in the realization of this lifelong dream.
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ABSTRACT

Research into the correlation between television viewing practices and academic achievement has long been a major concern of educators. This study established that a negative correlation coefficient existed between the number of television viewing hours per day and SRA Achievement Test scores of selected fourth and seventh grade students in one Southwest Louisiana Parish. The general hypothesis tested was that an increased number of television viewing hours resulted in decreased achievement test scores in all components of the SRA Achievement battery.

The control group to be tested consisted of 457 fourth grade students and 445 seventh grade students in one parish school system. After the necessary authorizations were obtained from parents and school authorities, the investigator conducted the surveys of two viewing days per week for four weeks. Each subject marked the appropriate item (program viewed). Number of hours viewed and SRA Achievement Test data were then correlated by computer, and a coefficient was established by using Pearson's Product Moment procedure. A negative correlation indicated that there was an inverse relationship between the number of television hours viewed and scores on the SRA Achievement Tests. The correlation was statistically significant at viii
the .01 level of confidence. In the group surveyed, SRA scores decreased when number of hours of television viewing increased.

Because of the demonstrated correlation at the .01 level of confidence in the control group, the investigator recommends that further study be conducted which would include use of more variables (socio-economic background, race, reading level, sex) so that data can be used more effectively in academic counseling. The length of the data collection period should be extended to allow for varying academic maturation rates of the subjects. Finally, a comparative study among parishes would provide more data in order to establish a paradigm for both gathering such data and for evaluating its effect on the educational process.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The debate concerning the effects of television usually polarizes between those who cite its positive impact on society (Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961; Lyle and Hoffman, 1972) especially children, and those who list its negative results (Cohen, 1977; Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Somers, 1977; and Starkey and Swinford, 1974). For example, television has been hailed by some as a great source for educating the masses in terms of providing instantaneous newsworthy information to an international audience. Moreover, many educators (Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961; Lyle and Hoffman, 1972) believe that television is a good learning resource for children. Some say that the child learns more from television than is immediately measureable. For example, Mason (1969) and Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) noted that television viewing can be a tremendous source of vocabulary building for preschool children. Bean (1974) stated that the average first grade child's vocabulary has almost doubled since he began viewing television. Lyle and Hoffman (1972) reported that the more intelligent child actually watches better television programs and reads more books as a result of his/her viewing. Other educators
(Greenstein, 1959; Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961) relate television viewing of the more intelligent tenth grade students to the fact that these students normally participate more in multiple activities, both in school and at play.

On the other hand, there are data which help to condemn the medium as a deterrent to the educational process, in particular as it affects creativity and active participation. Lyle and Hoffman cited a decrease in creative play activity among first graders who were viewers of excessive television. Somers (1977) stated that parents believe that television inhibits creative thinking and that excessive viewing leads to poor utilization of leisure time. Fisher and Bruss (1976) indicated that the number of television viewing hours was significantly related to perceptual passivity. This situation affected school related activities such as homework and spontaneous reading for information. Starkey and Swinford (1974) reported that there was a definite relationship between reading abilities and the amount of leisure time spent viewing television. The above average readers view less television than slow readers. They concluded that viewing time was negatively related to the intellectual development of the child. According to Cohen (1977), "television is to reading what cancer is to the human cell: slowly, but surely, it destroys."

Fisher and Bruss (1976) noted that many parents are also concerned about the educational impact of the great amount of time their children spend in front of the
television receiver. Parents feel that something must suffer from the uneven allotment of use of waking hours, and that schoolwork is the most likely activity to be diminished. One of the areas of inquiry in this study was the determination of whether the parents' concern over television viewing was legitimate or not.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between television viewing practices of 1978-79 fourth and seventh grade public school students and their academic achievement. The following questions were the basis of the study for the fourth grade students:

1. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the composite SRA score?

2. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Reading score?

3. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Language Arts score?

4. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Mathematics score?

The data on seventh grade students were based on the following questions:

1. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the composite SRA score?
2. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Reading score?

3. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Reading Comprehension score?

4. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Reading Vocabulary score?

5. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Language Arts score?

6. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Language Arts Usage score?

7. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Language Arts Spelling score?

8. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Mathematics score?

9. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Social Studies score?

10. What was the relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Science score?
Importance of the Study

This study provides information to educators on the pattern of television viewing hours of fourth and seventh grade students and also determines if there is any relationship between television viewing practices and student academic achievement. In addition, the data yield valuable information for parents and educators relative to the use of television by children. Parents can formulate a basis for controlling programs their children view, and educators can utilize the influences of the medium to develop pedagogy criterion referenced to the child's needs. In summary, reading difficulties and successes and television viewing can be studied for use in curriculum development.

Delimitations of the Study

Collection of data for the study was limited to fourth and seventh grade students in randomly selected schools of a designated South Louisiana parish.

Interpretation of the data was confined to the relationship between number of television viewing hours and academic achievement as measured by the SRA examinations. Furthermore, the results of this study represented data and correlations for only one parish. No inference was made concerning correlation to other parishes in Louisiana or to other areas of the United States.
Definition of Terms

HUT - Houses Using Television is one classification of the major control groups being studied.

NAB - National Association of Broadcasters is a source of viewing time statistics and bibliography.

TIO - Television Information Office is a resource for viewing and programming statistics.

SRA - Science Research Associates, Inc. is a national testing service company in the United States.

ACH - SRA's Achievement Test series covering grades one through nine.

ACH PRIMARY II - Explores the three basic skill areas of grades two and three: Language Arts, Reading and Mathematics and other major concepts presented in most of today's basal programs.

Reading total score is based on comprehension and vocabulary sub-tests.

Comprehension questions measure understanding of short story content. Questions require children to restate material, follow steps in a story, and make predictions about the story.

Vocabulary questions measure knowledge of the meaning of common words, those that have only one meaning, and those with more than one meaning.
Language Arts total score is based on sub-tests in alphabetization, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and usage.

Mathematics total score is based on sub-tests in concepts and computation.

ACH MULTILEVEL - Consists of three separate, but overlapping, tests of graduated difficulty designed for use in grades four through nine.

Reading total score is based on comprehension and vocabulary sub-tests.

Comprehension questions measure understanding of central themes and main ideas, retention of specific details, and ability to draw conclusions and apply them to new situations.

Vocabulary questions measure recognition of synonyms for short phrases and knowledge of words as they appear in written text.

Language Arts total score is based on usage and spelling sub-tests.

Usage questions measure knowledge of capitalization, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structures; use of modifiers, nouns, verbs, and pronouns; and diction.

Mathematics total score measures understanding of basic numerations and mathematical operations, knowledge and application of concepts in measurement, geometry, and problem-solving. It also measures
ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, whole-number groups, fractions, decimals, and percents.

Social Studies score reflects knowledge and appropriate application of concepts in geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, political science and history, plus ability to use written and illustrated materials.

Science score reflects knowledge and appropriate application of concepts in biology, matter and energy, earth and space, and experimentation, plus ability to use written and illustrative materials.

ABILITY GROUPING - Students are assigned to classes according to their academic ability.

HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING - Students are assigned to class randomly.

MIXED GROUPING - One school using both homogeneous and ability groupings within one class level.

LEISURE TIME - Free, unoccupied time during which most recreation takes place.

Organization of the Study

A survey instrument was designed to test randomly selected subjects in order to investigate possible correlation between television viewing procedures and academic achievement. Both a historical perspective of the development of television viewing practices and the concomitant problems as manifested in an observable decline in
educational achievement were presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 is a summary of related literature which bears upon the polarity axes of the thesis. Chapter 3 is a detail of research procedures and explicates the design of the research instrument. Data is analyzed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study and recommendations relative to curriculum development.
Chapter 2

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Within a decade after television receivers were first placed in American homes in the early 1940's, there was serious concern about their effect on the younger generation in our society. Early studies in the 1950's (Greenstein, 1959; Witty, 1951; Clark, 1951; St. John Mahony, 1953; and Scott, 1956) examined both the quantitative and qualitative data on television viewing practices of preschool and school age children and began to draw conclusions concerning relationships between television viewing, social behavior, and academic achievement. These concerns are both social and educational because of the impact this medium has on behavior (e.g., violence and crime) and because of the number of hours that school age children spend in front of the television and the correlation to decreased literacy skills.

The staggering expansion of the television industry has complicated the problem. In the last quarter century "television has achieved a place in the American home unmatched by any other appliance, convenience, or medium of communication" (Lyle, 1972). Today, ninety-seven percent of all households in the United States (Nielson Television...
Report, 1977) contain at least one television receiver. About ninety-eight/ninety-nine percent of the school age children have access to a television set (Lyle, 1972). The Nielson Report also estimated that about seventy-seven percent of school age children now watch television on color receivers.

The 1971 Volume of Broadcasting Yearbook estimated that home receivers were operating on an average of six hours and eighteen minutes per day. School age children usually view television every day. The amount of time a child views television varies according to age, sex, and race. Paul Witty (1951) found that first grade students viewed television an average of fifteen hours per week; fifth graders viewed television twenty-five hours per week; and high school students viewed television twelve to fourteen hours per week. In 1972 Murray found that kindergarten and first grade black males viewed television from five to forty-two hours a week. Stein and Friedrick (1972) found that nursery school girls viewed television thirty-two hours per week and nursery school boys viewed television thirty-four hours per week. In 1974 Starkey and Swinford found that fifth and sixth grade girls viewed television twenty-eight hours per week and that boys viewed television an average of thirty hours per week.

By 1977, the Nielson Television Report indicated that children two to five years of age watched television twenty-nine hours per week; children six to eleven years of age
watched television twenty-six hours per week; male teens watched television twenty-two hours per week; and female teens watched television twenty-one hours per week. The categorization of the Nielsen data is included in Table 1.

The research (Fisher and Bruss, 1976) conducted on television viewing time of various age groups may be significant since the amount of time available for homework and studying is crucial to academic achievement, and television time may reduce study time. Lyle and Hoffman (1972) found that a large number of children of all age levels watched television five hours on school days. Two-thirds of the children in Lyle and Hoffman's experiment viewed television mostly in the afternoon and one-fifth viewed television before school. One-third of the sixth graders viewed television until 10:00 p.m. while the teenage audience viewed until 11:00 p.m. The concern of parents and educators with the enormous amount of time spent viewing television is justified in terms of these data.

The Research on Parental Control of Viewing Time and Programs Viewed by Students

Studies (Lyle and Hoffman, 1972) show that parents exert little or no control over selection and/or amount of programming which their children watch. What control is exerted is related proportionately to educational level and socio-economic background of the parents. Lyle and Hoffman (1972) also found that the majority of mothers of first
Table 1
Weekly Viewing Activity for Men, Women, Teens and Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRIBUTION OF HOURS IN WEEK</th>
<th>MON-SUN</th>
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<th>MON-FRI</th>
<th>SAT-SUN</th>
<th>MON-SUN</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOMEN 18-24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32:14</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOMEN 55+</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35:23</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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NIELSEN ESTIMATES
NTI/NAC AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS REPORT
NOVEMBER 1976
graders said that no effort was made to establish hours or to restrict the amount of television viewing time of their children. Three-fourths of the parents stated that they exercised some control over program selection. Hess and Goldman (1962) reported that mothers felt the choice of programs more important than the amount of time their children spent viewing and felt parents were the best judges of what their children should view. Chaffee, McLeod, and Atkins (1970) interviewed teenagers and parents and found that only ten percent of the families represented had established viewing rules for the children. Greenburg and Dominick (1969) found that children in poor homes reported less adult control over viewing than their peers from economically affluent environments.

**Television Viewing and Academic Achievement**

Since the American public first brought television receivers into their homes in large numbers in the mid 1940's, the medium has engaged the interest and curiosity of both scholars and non-academics. The fact that television has captured so much of the school age child's leisure time has caused parents and educators to articulate charges against the television industry (Cohen, 1977; Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Somers, 1977; Starkey and Swinford, 1974). The major complaints center around:

1. The deterioration of reading skills (Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Starkey and Swinford, 1974)
2. Low academic achievement (Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Starkey and Swinford, 1974)

3. Corruption of the child's mind through the showing of violence in programs (Cohen, 1977; Somers, 1977)


The first educational research on the effects of television on the pre-school and school age population was conducted in the early 1950's (Greenstein, 1959; Witty, 1951; Clark, 1951; St. John Mahony, 1953; Scott, 1956, and Himmelweit, 1958). The research has increased considerably since 1950, but no conclusive findings have convinced parents or educators that the amount of time a child spends viewing television was either good or bad educationally (Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961; Ridder, 1963; Childers and Ross, 1973; Starkey and Swinford, 1974; Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Somers, 1977).

In 1959 Greenstein conducted a study on sixth grade students in Chicago who owned television receivers. His study revealed somewhat higher achievement scores (although not significantly higher) for those students owning television receivers than for those who did not own television receivers. Greenstein found that those students who viewed four to six hours of television daily had a higher mean grade than those who viewed more than six hours daily. His findings indicated a negative relationship between amount of viewing time above six hours and grades. Greenstein also
discovered that for students viewing up to six hours, television was sometimes helpful to academic achievement. The principal of the school in which Greenstein's study was conducted stated the following:

Apparently grades improve as the hours increase up to the six hour level and then reach a point of diminishing return and slump sharply . . . It is my contention that students who neglect their homework because they are watching television would fail to do their homework for some other reason if they had no TV.

In 1951 Clark did a survey of approximately 1,000 sixth and seventh grade children in sixteen public and parochial schools. He correlated children's mental age, achievement in school subjects, and television viewing hours. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between children who owned television receivers and those who did not own television receivers and that learning was not affected by the way their parents controlled their televiewing.

Clark further commented:

... But it would be a gross misrepresentation of the data to hold that in the case of a given child his habits of watching television could not affect his school achievement. The data showed that poor television habits, lower IQ's, lower parental control and poorer school achievement tend to be found in the same child.

Witty (1951) found that intelligence was unrelated to the amount of time spent viewing television in a study of children in grades three through six. However, he concluded that excessive viewing of television may be associated with somewhat lower academic attainment.
St. John Mahony (1953) surveyed 500 elementary students attending the parochial schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. Of the students in the fifth grade, 67.5 percent felt that viewing television did not help their schoolwork. About one-sixth of the children questioned admitted that their school marks were lower; however, some pupils felt that selected educational television programs were an aid in school achievement.

Lloyd F. Scott (1956) conducted a study to determine the relationship between the amount of television viewing by children and (1) achievement in reading, arithmetic, language and spelling; (2) intelligence quotient; (3) personal and social adjustment; (4) educational and leisure time interest; and (5) occupational rating of parents. He reported that comparison of the upper and lower twenty-seven percent of the 407 fourth and sixth graders studied revealed that a comparison of mean achievement test scores for these two groups showed no significant statistical differences of the 1.5 percent level in language and spelling achievement. There were, however, significant differences in arithmetic, reading and total achievement. Children who viewed television the most scored the lowest on the proficiency tests and had the lowest IQ's.

Hilde Himmelweit (1958) conducted a study in England, which is one of the most frequently cited sources in the field (Fisher and Bruss, 1976; Noble, 1975; Quisenberry, 1976; Schramm, Lyle, and Parker, 1961; and
Starkey and Swinford, 1974). Himmelweit was one of the first to indicate that the higher the intelligence the less the child viewed television. She also found that at first, reading of purely entertainment literature suffered when television became a prime recreational medium; but in England reading of popular magazines and comics returned to pre-television levels. Her data supported the theory that television is a medium primarily identified as entertainment, and that its educational use depends largely on this appeal. Using this premise, Himmelweit further discovered that pre-school children seem to reap the greatest advantages from television. When children who watch television at an early age begin school, they are six months to one year advanced in vocabulary development compared to non-viewers. Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) found that in the early years the more intelligent children seem to view many hours of television. Also, fourth and fifth grade television viewers were more active than their younger or older counterparts, whether it be television viewing, reading, or listening to radio. They observed that at some time between the tenth and thirteenth year (fifth and eighth grade) a change occurred. The more intelligent children tend to disappear from the ranks of the most frequent viewers. The analysis showed that in the sixth grade, children with a low I.Q. viewed television seventy-six percent of the time while children with a middle I.Q. viewed television seventy-three percent of the time. Furthermore, low I.Q. children in the
tenth grade viewed television sixty-seven percent of the
time, while middle I.Q. children in the same grade viewed
television fifty-one percent of the time. The study also
showed that children of college educated parents viewed
television a lot less than children from families with
educational levels below twelfth grade. Schramm, Lyle and
Parker further concluded that television probably gave
children better preparation in learning vocabulary and gen­
eral knowledge about their environment, but this advantage
vanished after a few years when compared proportionately to
decreased reading and fewer activities. There was no evi­
dence that children in the upper grades who were frequent
viewers were superior in general knowledge to children who
were less frequent viewers. Additionally, Schramm, Lyle
and Parker reported that the percentage of children who
thought television helped them in school decreased as they
grew older. The elementary school percentage was seventy;
the eighth grade percentage was less than fifty; and the
twelfth grade percentage was less than forty.

Joyce Marion Ridder conducted a study in 1963 that
concerned itself with television viewing habits and opinions
of seventh and eighth grade public school pupils in three
junior high schools in the city of Ontario, California. The
questionnaire consisted of twenty-five items regarding tele­
vision habits and opinions. Results revealed that sixty­
ine percent of the pupils had at least one television
receiver in the home; 26.4 percent had two television
receivers; and 4.3 percent had three television receivers. Twelve percent of the boys had television receivers in their bedrooms while only 4.6 percent of the girls had their own television receivers. Approximately two-thirds of the sample were of the opinion that television viewing was beneficial to their academic achievement and one-fifth indicated that television was detrimental to academic achievement. One-fifth of the subjects indicated that television viewing had increased their desire to read fiction, and one-fourth indicated that television viewing had stimulated their desire to read non-fiction books. Four-fifths of the sample indicated that most of the time they preferred television to reading.

The Ridder study also revealed that there was no significant relationship between academic achievement and the total number of hours spent viewing television. Her report indicated that even though many good educational programs were available, the majority of the participants would rather view television programs of a more recreational nature.

Childers and Ross (1973) conducted a survey of one hundred pupils and found no significant difference in the numbers of hours viewed and GPA, IQ, and achievement scores. Their survey revealed that there has been very little change in viewing practices in the last twenty years. They also suggested that parents who blame television for low achievement and who punish their children for low scores by
curtailing their television viewing may be using an ineffective method of discipline. Childers and Ross recommended that teachers and parents should educate children in the effective use of television viewing. The three hours per day viewing time should be structured so that it can be utilized to better educational advantage.

Starkey and Swinford (1974) found that better readers viewed less television. They also noted that parents' supervision of programs viewed was minimal. In fact only thirty-eight percent of the children participating indicated that their parents exercised any control over the programs that they viewed.

Fisher and Bruss (1976) were concerned that students who viewed more than four hours of television could be developing ineffective work and study habits because they were lazy. This laziness could lead to low achievement in reading. Their hypothesis was correct insofar as the number of hours of viewing television is significantly related to perceptual passivity; however, they had no indication that a correlation existed between perceptual passivity and reading achievement.

Eric Somers (1977) raised the question of whether television was inhibiting creative ideas in school age youngsters. The reason for this question was the manner in which television presents its information. Somers stated that television information was similar to information presented
by primitive tribal man, characterized by being haphazard, unorganized, and dependent on experience, either direct or vicarious.
Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between television viewing practices of 1978-79 fourth and seventh grade public school students and their academic achievement.

Preliminary Procedures

Survey of Possible Target Areas

After surveying data on school enrollment for several parishes, the investigator selected the target parish and began preliminary inquiries concerning the feasibility of using it for the study. Initial contact was made with the superintendent of schools for the parish who requested a letter of intent from the investigator. The superintendent then wrote an authorization for the study. Personal contact was made with each principal of the selected schools; the study was explained and questions were answered concerning procedures and use of data.

Selection of Geographical Area to be Served

The subjects for the study were students from a Southwest Louisiana parish who were in the third and sixth grades during the 1977-78 school year and the fourth and
seventh grades during the 1978-79 school year. The parish was selected because of its multiethnic, bilingual, and socio-economic strata. Grade levels were selected because of their position in the vertical educational process, especially as related to transfer of decoding reading and computational skills to content and conceptual learning (fourth grade) and increasing sophistication in developing these skills as preparation to entering junior high school (seventh grade).

Selection of Subjects and Schools

The 1000 subjects were selected from eight schools randomly chosen from fifteen elementary and junior high schools in the parish. The following criteria were used: (1) racial balance; (2) urban/rural distribution; and (3) representation of schools which use homogeneous or heterogeneous ability grouping.

The selected schools were each given a code number. These numbers were used throughout the study. Code numbers were determined by assigning two digit figures to each school in an alphabetical list. The first school was given the number 01 and the last school was given the number 15. Table 2 lists student population by school and grade selected in 1977-78 to be surveyed the following year. Table 3 lists those students who were surveyed in 1978-79. Figures for grade four remain constant in the same code school for both years because these children did not change
facilities. Figures for grade seven show three coded schools (08, 14, 15). Students in School 08 remained in that facility for seventh grade. All others in the sixth grade selected in 1977-78 attended either school 14 or 15 for 1978-79 and were surveyed there.

The total population in the selected schools was 1,432. This number made it possible to maintain approximately the original designated survey sample regardless of absenteeism, transfers, and refusals to participate.

Table 2

School and Student Population Surveyed: 1977-78

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>02</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>Total - 662</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>GRADE</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>08</td>
<td>168</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total - 770</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Table 3
School and Student Population Surveyed: 1978-79

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>06</td>
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<td></td>
<td>07</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Procedures

Meetings with Teachers

After the preliminary contact with the principals, the investigator returned to each school and met with individual teachers of the selected survey group. The principals authorized the meetings and in some cases presided, answering questions and providing necessary assurances of authorization. At these meetings, teachers were given a release of information form for each student so that all legal procedures would be satisfied. A letter explaining the purpose of the study and a set of instructions for completing each survey form were given to each teacher.
Schedules for delivering and retrieving the completed survey instrument were distributed. The students completed two survey forms each week for a four-week period. During this period, students supplied data on their viewing for eight days: two Mondays, two Tuesdays, two Wednesdays and two Thursdays (See Table 4).

Table 4
Schedule for Delivery and Retrieval of Survey Instruments: 1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE DISTRIBUTED</th>
<th>DATE COMPLETED</th>
<th>DATE PICKED UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>October 17 - for October 16</td>
<td>October 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 19 - for October 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>October 25 - for October 24</td>
<td>October 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 27 - for October 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>November 2 - for November 1</td>
<td>November 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 3 - for November 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>November 7 - for November 6</td>
<td>November 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 8 - for November 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were asked not to divulge in advance the viewing days to be surveyed to avoid situations which would invalidate the data, for example, students watching so that they could mark the form.

Parental Permission

Louisiana State University's Committee on the Use of Humans and Animals as Research Subjects has a standard form
that requests the subject's or parent's signature. This form grants permission for the student to participate in the study. The form, along with a letter to the parents, was given to each teacher for each child. All permission forms were returned to the teachers by these students who participated in this study.

Coding of Students

An alphabetical list of all students was compiled and code numbers beginning with the numerals 001 were assigned to the fourth grade students. Seventh grade students were assigned numerals beginning with 1000. Students were identified by code numbers only.

Academic Information

Information on academic achievement was gathered on all fourth and seventh grade students of the participating schools. This information was requested from the testing supervisor of the parish. The investigator provided the testing supervisor with a list of names of the students who were given permission to participate in the survey. The supervisor then released the testing results of all the students participating in the study.

Student Survey - Instrument and Administration

The survey instrument was developed to gather information concerning the number of hours of television viewed by the target student population. The survey listed
all of the programs to be shown during the times that students are available to view television, for example, those aired between 6:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. The survey form was designed for Monday through Thursday with the programs listed in thirty-minute time blocks. If a child checked a time block, the investigator assumed the child viewed for the full thirty minutes. If the child had viewed more than one program, he was to check the program viewed for the longest period of time. If he accidently checked two programs, he would be credited with viewing only one thirty-minute program.

Teachers distributed survey forms on the morning after each viewing day, and students checked the programs they had viewed the previous day. This procedure was established to avoid contrived responses (see above). The investigator collected the completed forms each week.

A correlation between hours of television viewing and each aspect of the SRA Achievement Test was determined using Pearson's Product Moment procedure. The dependent variable was SRA Achievement Test scores and the independent variable was the number of hours of television viewing.
Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study was designed to determine the relationship between television viewing practices of selected 1978-79 fourth and seventh grade public school students and their achievement test scores. Data used in this study were gathered primarily from SRA Achievement Test results and a survey conducted by the investigator to determine the number of hours that students viewed television each day. A coefficient correlation between hours of television viewing and each component of the SRA Achievement Test was determined.

Survey of Fourth Grade and Seventh Grade Students

A survey of the television viewing habits of 457 fourth grade students and 445 seventh grade students was conducted during this study. The data indicated a mean score of 6.826 viewing hours per day for fourth grade students and a standard deviation of 2.351. The seventh grade data indicated a mean score of 5.586 viewing hours per day with a standard deviation of 2.451 (Table 5).
Table 5
Mean Television Viewing Time Per Day for Fourth Grade Students and Seventh Grade Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE LEVEL</th>
<th>MEAN TELEVISION VIEWING TIME PER DAY</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.826</td>
<td>2.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.586</td>
<td>2.451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 6 indicate the correlation coefficient between number of television viewing hours and various components of the SRA Achievement Tests.

Table 6
Correlation Coefficient Between the Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Scores for Fourth and Seventh Grade Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRA TEST</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>CORRELATION WITH HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Reading Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Vocabulary Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Language Arts Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts Usage Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Composite Scores for Fourth and Seventh Grade Students

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for fourth grade students were 455, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Composite scores of this study (-.273) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

For seventh grade students, a coefficient of correlation of -.260 was statistically significant at the .01 level (Table 6).

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Composite Achievement scores decreased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRA TEST</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>CORRELATION WITH HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling Score</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mathematics Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Total Reading Scores for Fourth and Seventh Grade Students

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for fourth grade students were 455, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Total Reading scores of this study (-.204) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

For seventh grade students, a coefficient of correlation of -.229 was statistically significant at the .01 level (Table 6).

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Total Reading scores decreased.

Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Reading Comprehension Scores for Seventh Grade Students

SRA Reading Comprehension Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students were 443, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Reading Comprehension scores of this study (-.217) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence.
The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Reading Comprehension scores decreased.

**Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Reading Vocabulary Scores for Seventh Grade Students**

SRA Reading Vocabulary Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore, scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students were 443, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Reading Vocabulary scores of this study (-.201) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Reading Vocabulary scores decreased.

**Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Total Language Arts Scores for Fourth and Seventh Grade Students**

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for fourth grade students were 455, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Total Language Arts scores of this study (-.234) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

For seventh grade students, a coefficient of correlation of -.226 was statistically significant at the .01 level (Table 6).
Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Total Language Arts scores decreased.

Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Total Language Arts Usage Scores for Seventh Grade Students

SRA Language Arts Usage Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore, scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students were 443, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Language Arts Usage scores of this study (-.219) met the test of significance at the .01 level. Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Language Arts Usage scores for seventh grade decreased.

Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Total Language Arts Spelling Scores for Seventh Grade Students

SRA Language Arts Spelling Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore, scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students
were 443, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Language Arts Spelling scores of this study (-.149) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Language Arts Spelling scores for seventh grade students decreased.

Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Total Mathematics Scores for Fourth and Seventh Grade Students

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for fourth grade students were 455, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Total Mathematics scores of this study (-.182) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

For seventh grade students, a coefficient of correlation of -.236 was statistically significant at the .01 level (Table 6).

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Total Mathematics scores decreased.
Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Social Studies Scores for Seventh Grade Students

SRA Social Studies Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore, scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students were 443, the investigator found that the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Social Studies scores of this study (-0.213) met the test of significance at the .01 level.

Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Social Studies scores for seventh grade students decreased.

Correlation Between Number of Television Viewing Hours and SRA Science Scores For Seventh Grade Students

SRA Science Examinations are not given for fourth grade; therefore, scores were reported only for seventh grade students.

Using a correlation coefficient table (Garrett, 1966) in which the degrees of freedom for seventh grade students were 443, the correlation coefficient (r) of the SRA Science scores of this study (-0.228) met the test of significance at the .01 level.
Therefore, it was concluded that the correlation coefficient was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The data indicated that when television viewing time increased, SRA Science scores for seventh grade students decreased.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between television viewing practices in the 1978-79 fourth and seventh grade public school students in one Southwest Louisiana parish and their academic achievement as measured by the SRA test scores.

To accomplish the purpose of the study, a survey was conducted of the number of television hours viewed by fourth and seventh grade students on designated weekdays. The survey instrument was designed by the investigator and was administered with the approval of the appropriate school officials and the parents of the subjects involved.

After the initial data concerning SRA scores and number of hours viewed were collected, they were coded, placed on magnetic tape, and correlated in a program designed for use on the MULTICS computer. The correlation between hours of television viewed and each component of the SRA Achievement Test was determined by using Pearson's Product Moment procedure. A negative correlation indicated that there was an inverse relationship existing between
number of television hours viewed and scores on the SRA Achievement Tests. The correlation was statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence. There was, then, a clear indication that the more television a child views, the lower he/she will score on achievement tests. That the correlation exists, as this study indicates, would be the basis for ancillary studies.

Conclusions

The negative correlation between television viewing and academic achievement has been demonstrated in this study. Predictability and broad application of this hypothesis can be tested in further research.

Correlations for Fourth Grade Students

1. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Composite Achievement scores for fourth grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Composite Achievement scores for fourth grade students decreased.

2. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Reading scores for fourth grade students was found to be significant at the .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Reading scores for fourth grade students decreased.
3. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Language Arts scores for fourth grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Language Arts scores for fourth grade students decreased.

4. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Mathematics scores for fourth grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Mathematics scores for fourth grade students decreased.

**Correlations for Seventh Grade Students**

1. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Composite scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Composite scores for seventh grade students decreased.

2. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Reading scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Reading scores for seventh grade students decreased.
3. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Reading Comprehension scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Reading Comprehension scores for seventh grade students decreased.

4. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Reading Vocabulary scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Reading Vocabulary scores for seventh grade students decreased.

5. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Language Arts scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Language Arts scores for seventh grade students decreased.

6. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Language Arts Usage scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Language Arts Usage scores for seventh grade students decreased.

7. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Language Arts Spelling scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Language Arts Spelling scores for seventh grade students decreased.
level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Language Arts Spelling scores for seventh grade students decreased.

8. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Total Mathematics scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Total Mathematics scores for seventh grade students decreased.

9. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Social Studies scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Social Studies scores for seventh grade students decreased.

10. The relationship between the number of television viewing hours and the SRA Science scores for seventh grade students was found to be significant at .01 level of confidence and indicated that when the number of television viewing hours increased, SRA Science scores for seventh grade students decreased.

**Recommendations**

Even though the correlation coefficient between number of hours of television viewed and academic achievement has been demonstrated to be statistically significant in this
study, the writer would like to make the following recommendations for future research:

1. More variables (e.g., socio-economic background, race, reading level, sex) should be isolated, structured into the collection of data, and evaluated, especially with reference to their importance in academic counseling by professionals (counselors and classroom teachers) and parents.

2. The length of the data collection process should be increased to two years to provide a larger sampling of viewing practices and to allow for differing rates of academic maturation in the subjects.

3. Further research should be conducted in different parishes so that a comparative study could be made and inferences could be drawn which would have significance as paradigms for other areas.


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Louis Boissac Roth, Jr. was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1931. He was graduated from Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge in 1951 and received his B.S. Degree in Physical Education from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1956. In 1964, he received his Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from Louisiana State University.

After completing his baccalaureate degree, he served with the United States Air Force for two years. He then returned to education as a physical education instructor and assistant football coach at Redemptorist High School. From 1960-66, he worked as a counselor for the physically handicapped in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Department of Education. After completing his master's degree he was the Supervisor of Title I, ESEA, for the State Department of Education until 1970. From 1970 to the present, he has been employed at the University of Southwestern Louisiana as Assistant Director and then Director of University College. He is presently Director of the USL Conference Center and holds the faculty rank of Assistant Professor in the College of Education.

In addition to his work with the University, he has been active in programs for the deaf community of Louisiana and was co-director of a project to bring humanists and members of the deaf population of Louisiana together in a dialogue about human rights and "The Silent Minority."
His professional memberships include Phi Delta Kappa and the Louisiana Association of Educators. He was also elected to the University of Southwestern Louisiana's Hall of Fame in 1977.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Louis Boissac Roth, Jr.

Major Field: Education

Title of Thesis: A Study Of Academic Achievement In Terms Of Television Viewing Practices

Approved:

Richard A. Mussewade
Major Professor and Chairman

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Date of Examination:

July 18, 1979