

## The Effects of Dialogic Reading (DR) on the Understanding and Use of Tier 2 Vocabulary in Preschoolers

Michala Niden & Sofia Cadden

Communication Sciences and Disorders, Springfield College, Springfield, Massachusetts 2020

### Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the foundational building blocks of language development in children. An extensive vocabulary enables children to think deeply, express their own thoughts and ideas, and learn new skills such as reading and writing more quickly (Canizares, S., n.d.).

A well known method used to teach children vocabulary is reading. It allows adults to create an experience that engages and motivates children to learn vocabulary. Storybooks have tier 2 vocabulary words. Tier 2 vocabulary words are "high frequency words of mature language users" (Kindle, 2019).

Adults can highlight tier 2 vocabulary words using a technique called Dialogic Reading (DR).

Dialogic Reading:

- Is an interactive, child-centered, reading technique
- It is an evidence-based intervention used to promote language
- Has been studied for more than three decades
- Has positive effect on oral language development, specifically vocabulary (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000), (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006).

The purpose of our study was to investigate the effects of dialogic reading (DR) on vocabulary growth compared to traditional storybook reading (TSR) in 3-4 year old children.

### Materials and Methods

#### Participants

8 typically developing children ranging from 3-4 years old with normal hearing from a daycare center in Western Massachusetts were included in the study. English was the primary language of the participants.

The children were randomly assigned to either the experimental condition, dialogic reading (DR) or the control condition, traditional storybook reading (TSR). They were pre- and post-tested on targeted vocabulary. In both groups, the children were individually read to two times a week for four weeks by trained readers. The DR group received enhanced reading with conversation and questions about targeted vocabulary while the TR group received standard reading.

#### Readers

Researchers were trained in Dialogic Reading techniques PEERR and CROWD by watching the video, *Read Together, Talk Together: A DIALOGIC READING PROGRAM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN*.

The researchers role-played reading under both conditions before beginning the study.

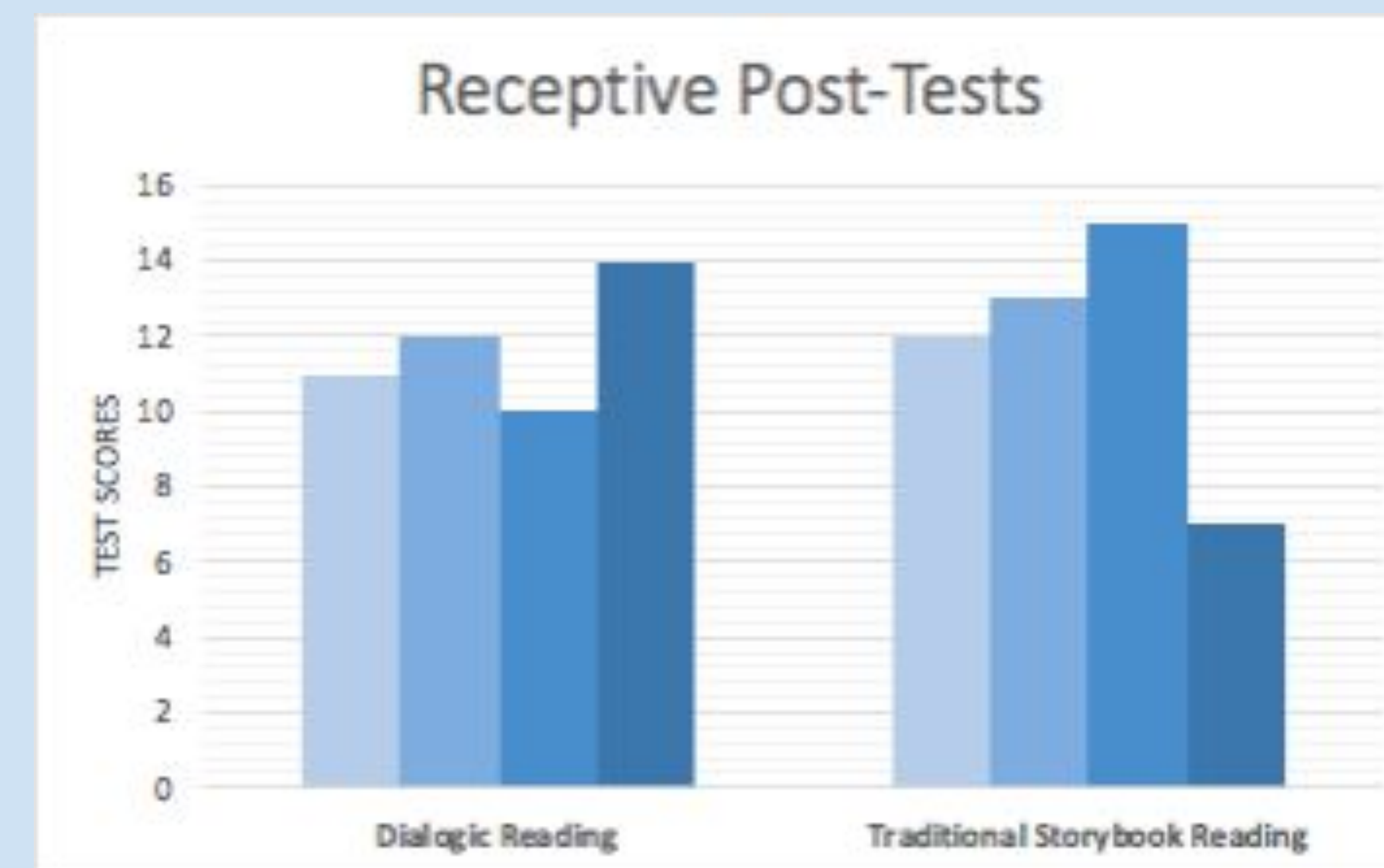
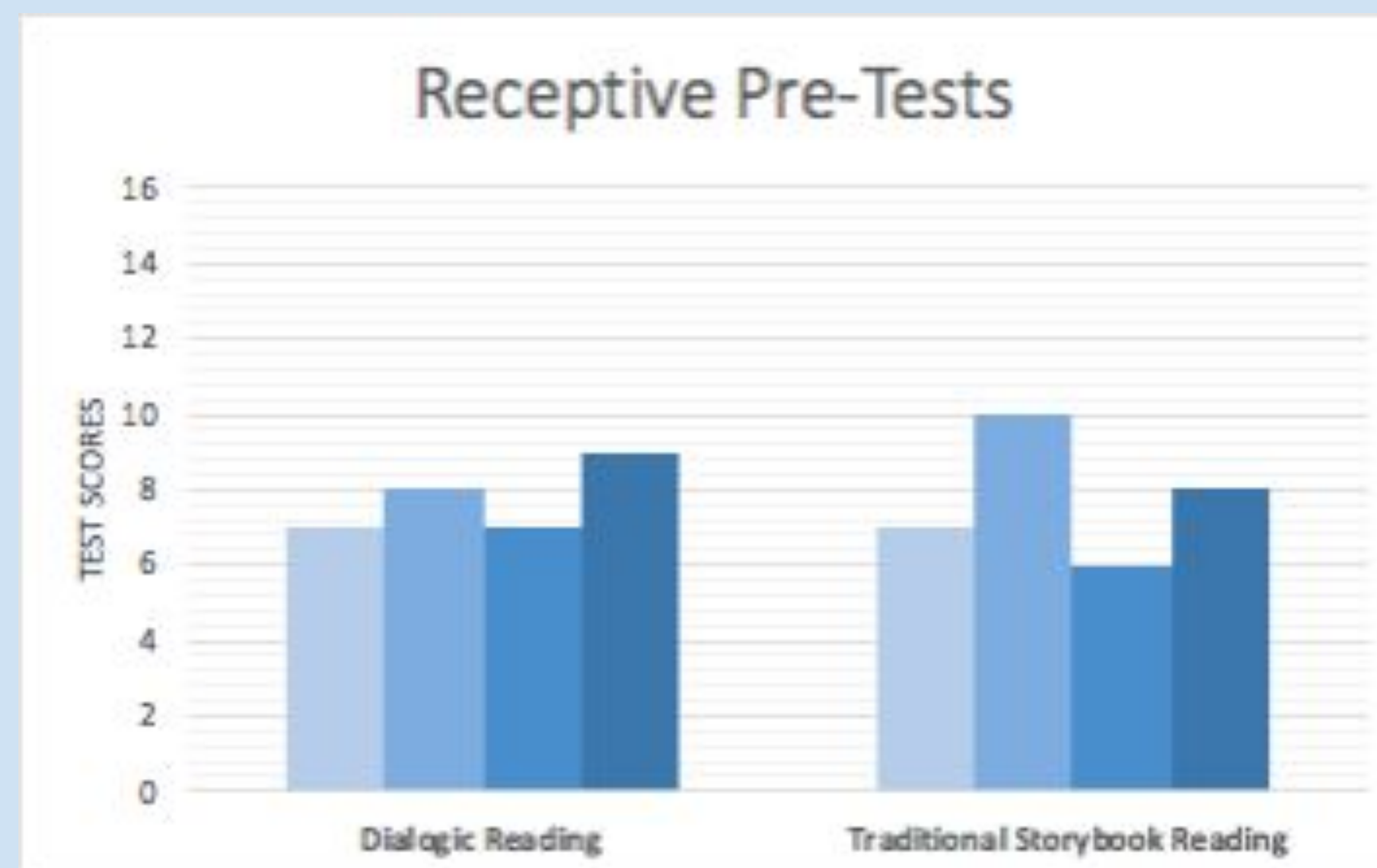
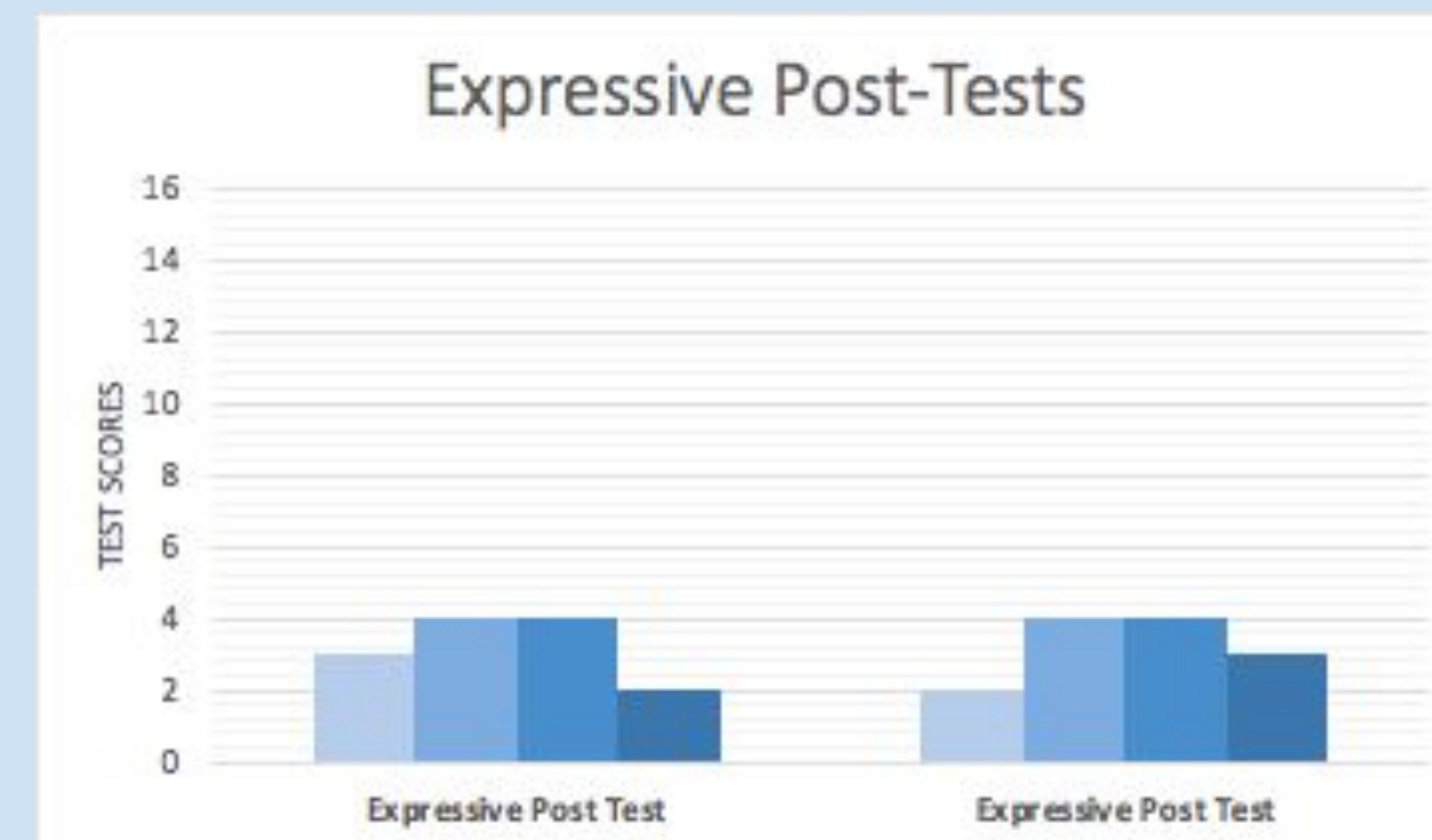
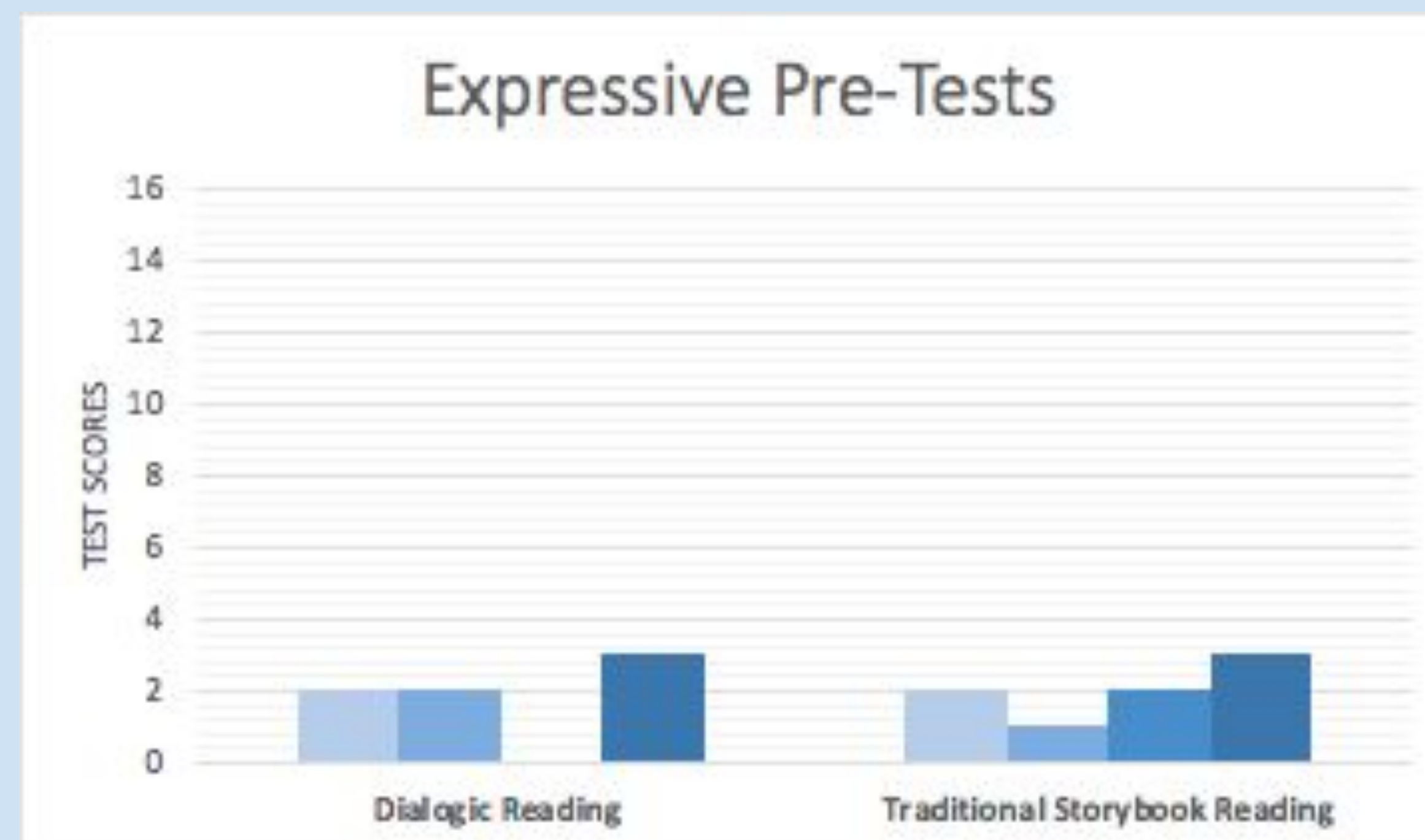


#### Materials

- *Noisy Nora* (Rich & Wells, 1984)
- *Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore!* (McPhail, 1993)
- *Those Darn Squirrels!* (Rubin, 2012)
- *NINJA!* (Chung, 2015)
- Pictures stimulus items that represent five tier 2 vocabulary words (20 vocabulary illustrations total)
- Pre-Test/Post-test

### Results

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in receptive vocabulary scores between the dialogic and traditional story book reading groups before and after treatment. Receptive vocabulary increased more in the dialogic reading condition (M = 11.5, SD = 2.52) than in the traditional story book reading condition (M = 12.5, SD = 2.52). The difference was statistically significant, (M = 1, 95% CI [1.49, 9.50], t(6) = .506, p = .032). There was no significant difference in the independent-samples t-test in expressive vocabulary scores between the dialogic and traditional story book reading groups before and after treatment, (M = 0, 95% CI [-.26, 5.76] t(6) = .801, p = .116. Expressive vocabulary post-tests for the dialogic reading condition were, (M = 3.5, SD = 1.89) and for the traditional story book reading condition were (M = 3.5, SD = 1.89).



### Conclusions

As we explored the effects of dialogic reading on the understanding and use of tier 2 vocabulary in preschoolers we found the technique to be influential in vocabulary development. We concluded that:

- Dialogic reading is effective in increasing children's understanding of vocabulary when compared to TSR
- The results are demonstrated statistically significant differences between the groups (DR vs. TSR) in understanding Tier 2 vocabulary
- Dialogic reading is a successful intervention that supports children's vocabulary development and should be more widely used
- Parents, teachers, and siblings can be trained to use dialogic reading
- It is an inexpensive treatment
- DR bolsters understanding of vocabulary and could possibly improve reading comprehension and academic achievement

### References

- Canizares, S. (n.d.). For the Love of Words. Retrieved from <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=8100>
- Chung, A. (2015). *NINJA!* New York: Scholastic Inc.
- Doyle, B. G., & Bramwell, W. (2006). Promoting emergent literacy and social-emotional learning through dialogic reading. *Reading Teacher*, 59(6), 554-564. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.59.6.5>
- Kindle, K. J. (2019, October 8). Vocabulary Development During Read Alouds: Primary Practices. Retrieved from <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/vocabulary-development-during-read-alouds-primary-practices>
- McPhail, D. (1993). *Pigs aplenty, pigs galore*. NY: Penguin.
- Rich, S., & Wells, R. (1984). *Noisy Nora*. Richmond Hill, Ont.: Scholastic-TAB.
- Rubin, A. P. D. (2012). *Those Darn Squirrels!* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our advisor, Deborah Cook for supporting us throughout this study and providing us academic assistance. Funding for this project was provided by the Springfield College Health Science Department.

### For further information

Please contact [mniden@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:mniden@springfieldcollege.edu) or [scadden@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:scadden@springfieldcollege.edu) for further information and resources regarding Dialogic Reading.