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What childrens' television shows are actually saying: A quantitative content analysis of long running animated educational programming.

Assessing the impact of children's media on young people is a commonly debated topic amongst parents, professionals in related industries, and academics. This research is aimed at providing clarity to all interested groups through quantitative content analysis of closed captioning content of the four longest animated children's shows. Arthur, Blue's Clues, Dora, and Curious George have all been seen by children for over a decade. We intentionally chose two shows from public broadcasting and two shows from commercial cable television. We also researched the educational position statements of each show and contextualized the findings in the stated educational goals of each show.

Using lexigraphic analysis tools the level of word difficulty, trends, language density and other related information will be established. We will compare the quantitative findings to the reading level benchmarks established by literacy education professionals. This data will be used to present a language analysis in the form of a quantitative assessment detailing the shows vocabulary in a context accessible by all interested parties.

This research is guided by prior studies analyzing the language of children's television commercials. To the best of our knowledge, this type of content analysis has never been done on the language of the children's television shows. The goal is to provide specific actionable information on the content of these shows. The motivation of this study is a general lack of unbiased information on the content of children's television shows, as much of this information is provided by the shows themselves and related marketing campaigns.