

STUDY

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prosocial behaviors, we saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to painstakingly, convincingly test the potentially beneficial effects of television on young children," he said.

He pointed out that the study's significance hinges on several factors, including sophisticated research methods that combined selected in-home interviews, diaries kept by some caregivers, and questionnaires and other tests to measure flexible thinking and problem-solving abilities. For some time, Bryant said he has been interested in measuring the direct effects of positive influences of television programming and that the launch of the two Nick Jr. programs offered a rare opportunity for study.

In the study, children were selected from three areas of the country: Tuscaloosa/Birmingham, Alabama; Santa Barbara/Goleta, California; and Providence/Narragansett/Kingston, Rhode Island. Some children were encouraged to watch the programs regularly; some were informed about the programs but not encouraged to watch; a third group was unable to watch because of lack of cable access. Children were analyzed for flexible thinking and social behavior characteristics before launch of the programs and at intervals after the programs began airing.

The researchers used flexible thinking as an umbrella term to describe qualities such as curiosity, a tendency toward exploration, the ability to consider various points of view and the willingness to try different approaches to solving problems. The broad measures of social behavior are partnership, empathy/sympathy, self-confidence and the willingness to accept criticism.

"Children who regularly viewed the two programs showed measurable improvements in all these areas except willingness to accept criticism," Bryant said. "That exception may be linked to developmental readiness on the part of the children rather than the curriculum itself."

The study breaks new ground in the area of measuring effects of television viewing on children, Bryant said. No other research has measured the long-term effects of viewership both by comparing viewing to non-viewing groups as well as by assessing changes in viewers' attitudes and behavior before and after launch of a program, he explained.

The two curriculum-based programs tested are designed to help young viewers learn specific life skills. The primary goal is to help children learn how to think for themselves.

"Through these results, parents can be better informed about the effects of television on their children. When they find television programs they can trust, they tend to be elated. This shows what children's television can do. If you have the right goals in mind, you can do well and do good at the same time," he said.

"Allegra's Window," which is broadcast from 11-11:30 a.m., combines puppets and live actors and story with song to take a look at the everyday world through the eyes of a 3-year-old girl as she explores themes and issues important to preschoolers. Immediately following is "Gullah Gullah Island." Set against the backdrop of Gullah, an African-American culture indigenous to the South Carolina Sea Islands, "Gullah Gullah Island" stars real life husband-and-wife team Ron and Natalie Daise, who welcome preschoolers to their home for songs and games.

The study was conducted by the Institute for Communication Research at the University of Alabama, in partnership with the University of Rhode Island and the University of California, Santa Barbara. Major funding was provided by the University of Alabama, Nickelodeon and research funds of UA's Reagan Chair of Broadcasting.

DURACELL CHALLENGES STUDENT INVENTORS FOR 14TH YEAR Student Competition Now Offers Over \$100,000 In Prizes

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With prizes now totaling over \$100,000 in savings bonds, the Duracell/NSTA Scholarship Competition is challenging all ninth through twelfth graders to create and build battery-powered devices for its 14th annual competition.

Recognized as the nation's leading high school invention contest, 100 students will receive awards and personalized certificates in the 1996 Duracell/NSTA Scholarship Competition. The first place winners will receive a

\$20,000 U.S. Series EE savings bond, five second place winners will receive \$10,000 bonds, ten third place winners will receive \$1,000 bonds, twenty-five fourth place winners will receive \$500 bonds, and up to 59 finalists will each receive \$200 bonds.

The top six winners, their parents and sponsoring teachers will be guests of Duracell at awards festivities held in St. Louis in March during the National Science Teachers Association's annual convention, where the students will present their inventions to teachers and

scientists.

Past winners personify the best of what American students have to offer in creativity and ingenuity. A new survey of all past winners and their sponsors shows that the competition is a major source of personal and professional growth for students. Past entrants report that they are pursuing a wide variety of degrees and careers. Many past winners have further developed their devices, some as commercial products.

Nick Frankovits, an Akron, Ohio high school science teacher

and sponsor of 30 entrants over the last 14 years, says the Duracell/NSTA Scholarship Competition is "one of the grandest platforms from which students can launch their inventiveness." Frankovits tells his students, "You don't become an inventor by trying to think of something that doesn't exist. Identify a problem and the solution is your inventive idea." Frankovits and other teachers report that the Duracell competition helps students
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Wed., Dec. 13	Noon-2:00 p.m.	Kick-Off Luncheon*	Riviera Hotel
	6:00-7:00 p.m.	LV Bowl IV Pep Rally	Riviera Hotel
Thurs., Dec. 14	3:30-6:00 p.m.	KLUC Pre-Game Bash	Sam Boyd Stadium
	6:00 p.m.	Las Vegas Bowl IV*	
	10:00 p.m.	LV Bowl IV Post-Game Party	Riviera Hotel

All events are open to the public. *Admission charged.