

Video-chatting may be the answer to literacy problems for rural and isolated students

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Distance may no longer be an obstacle for struggling students living in rural and isolated areas. According to the new study "Voice-over-the-Internet-Protocol as a Medium for Delivering Reading Intervention: Evidence from a Single Case Study," published in *SAGE Open*, video-chatting technology is an effective way for educators to teach their students from remote locations.

Authors Craig Wright, Elizabeth G. Conlon, and Michalle Wright set out to determine if voice-over-the-Internet Protocol (VoIP), internet-based systems that allow for two or more individuals from remote locations to communicate via videoconferencing, could be an effective tool for educators with students who would otherwise have difficulty travelling to a classroom. In this single-case study, a teacher met with a nine-year old student with reading problems four times a week over a ten-week period via the VoIP program Apple iChat. The authors found that the student was better able to recognize and make sense of new words and comprehend the provided reading material after the ten-week period. For example, by the time the course was complete, the student's [test scores](#) on reading accuracy tests were more than five times better than the original scores. These improvements were maintained at a ten-week follow-up assessment.

According to the authors, videoconferencing software allows for a teacher to open documents with their teaching material on their own computer and share their screens with their students. The teacher can then highlight and modify parts of the documents using their mouse, "in

the same way traditional teaching would use a [whiteboard](#)" wrote the authors.

The study identified several advantages to utilizing VoIP technology as a primary means for teaching such as easier accessibility, saving time and money on travel for [students](#) and their parents, and potential savings for both public and private educational programs.

"It is unlikely that VoIP will produce better gains than traditional face-to-face teaching or therapy (although it may produce comparable gains). However, where such services are unavailable it may represent an effective alternative" wrote the authors. "VoIP could also be a useful tool in an urban area to reduce travel time and costs for parents. It would allow reading specialists to provide services to a larger client base due to reduced travel time."

More information: The article "Voice-over-the-Internet-Protocol as a Medium for Delivering Reading Intervention: Evidence from a Single Case Study" published in SAGE Open, is available free at: [sgo.sagepub.com/content/early/ ... 158244011428159.full](http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/early/.../158244011428159.full)

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