

# iPad apps teach kids just as well as humans: study

November 15 2016

---



Young children learn just as well from interactive media as from face-to-face instruction, a new University of British Columbia study has found.

Researchers in UBC's department of [psychology](#) compared how well children learned new facts using an iPad app versus being taught in-

person by an instructor. The results of the study, recently published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, found no statistical difference in learning between the two groups of children.

"Parents currently have a fairly negative view of [interactive media](#)," said senior author Susan Birch, a UBC psychology professor. "When [parents](#) are asked the top three reasons they give their children a mobile device, learning is not one of them. What our research tells us is that, while interactive media can never replace face-to-face interaction, parents might not recognize the potential role that it can play in education and learning."

The researchers asked two groups of 43 children aged four to eight years old to play a game on either an iPad or with an adult instructor. The game involved guessing how many children would know different facts about animals. When the children were later tested on their knowledge, both groups showed the same amount of learning, whether they had played the game on the iPad or with an adult.

Co-author Siba Ghrear, a PhD psychology student at UBC, said the results indicate that parents can use interactive technology to enrich their children's [learning](#): "The iPad is a good tool for parents because it's portable and convenient, and it can teach children wherever they may be, whether it's on the bus or in the mall."

The findings may come as a surprise to parents who are used to hearing messages about the dangers of [screen time](#). While previous research has found that children do not learn some types of information from TV or videos, little work has been done on interactive media.

"What this shows is not all screen time is bad," said Birch, noting that 80 per cent of iPad apps are targeted at children. "This was one of the first pieces of evidence that interactive media can be beneficial for [children](#)."

"Children can learn new facts equally well from interactive media versus face to face instruction" appears in *Frontiers in Psychology*.

**More information:** Kristine Kwok et al. Children Can Learn New Facts Equally Well From Interactive Media Versus Face to Face Instruction, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2016). [DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01603](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01603)

Provided by University of British Columbia

Citation: iPad apps teach kids just as well as humans: study (2016, November 15) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-11-ipad-apps-kids-humans.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.