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Lauren M. McGonagle



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Introduction

It is widely known that teachers are at high risk for voice disorders caused by abusive behaviors, due to increased vocal demands of their profession.¹ Previous studies suggest that training modules may be effective in educating practicing teachers about vocal hygiene and vocally abusive behaviors.^{2,3}

The purpose of this study was to pilot an online training module targeting student teachers before they entered their teaching professions. The goals were to provide instruction about vocal hygiene, strategies for healthier voice production, and determine the effectiveness of the training in their vocal practices in their future careers. It was hypothesized that an online educational module will increase undergraduate students' knowledge of vocal hygiene, thereby reducing their risk of developing voice disorders in the future.

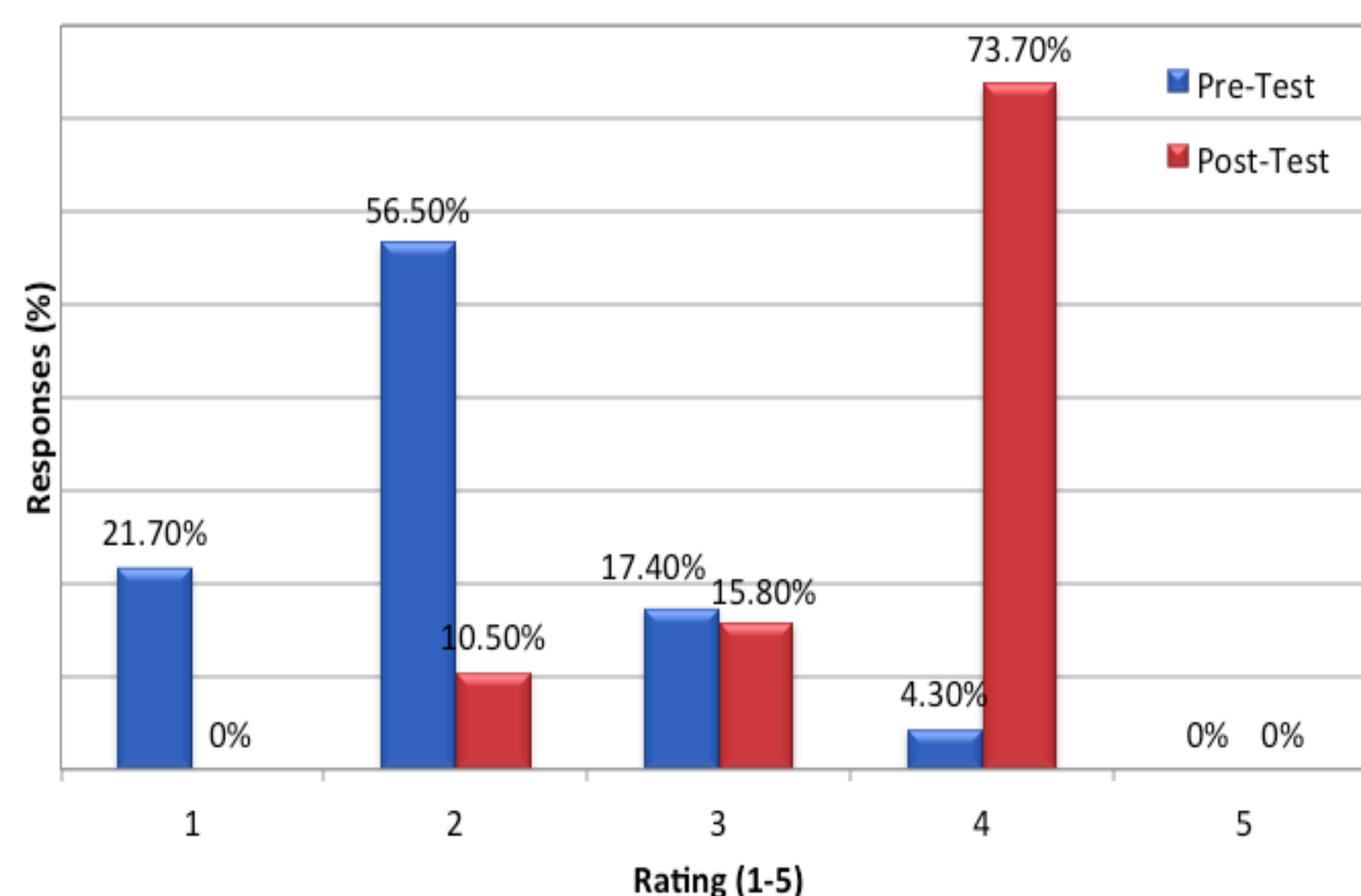
Vocal Training Online Module



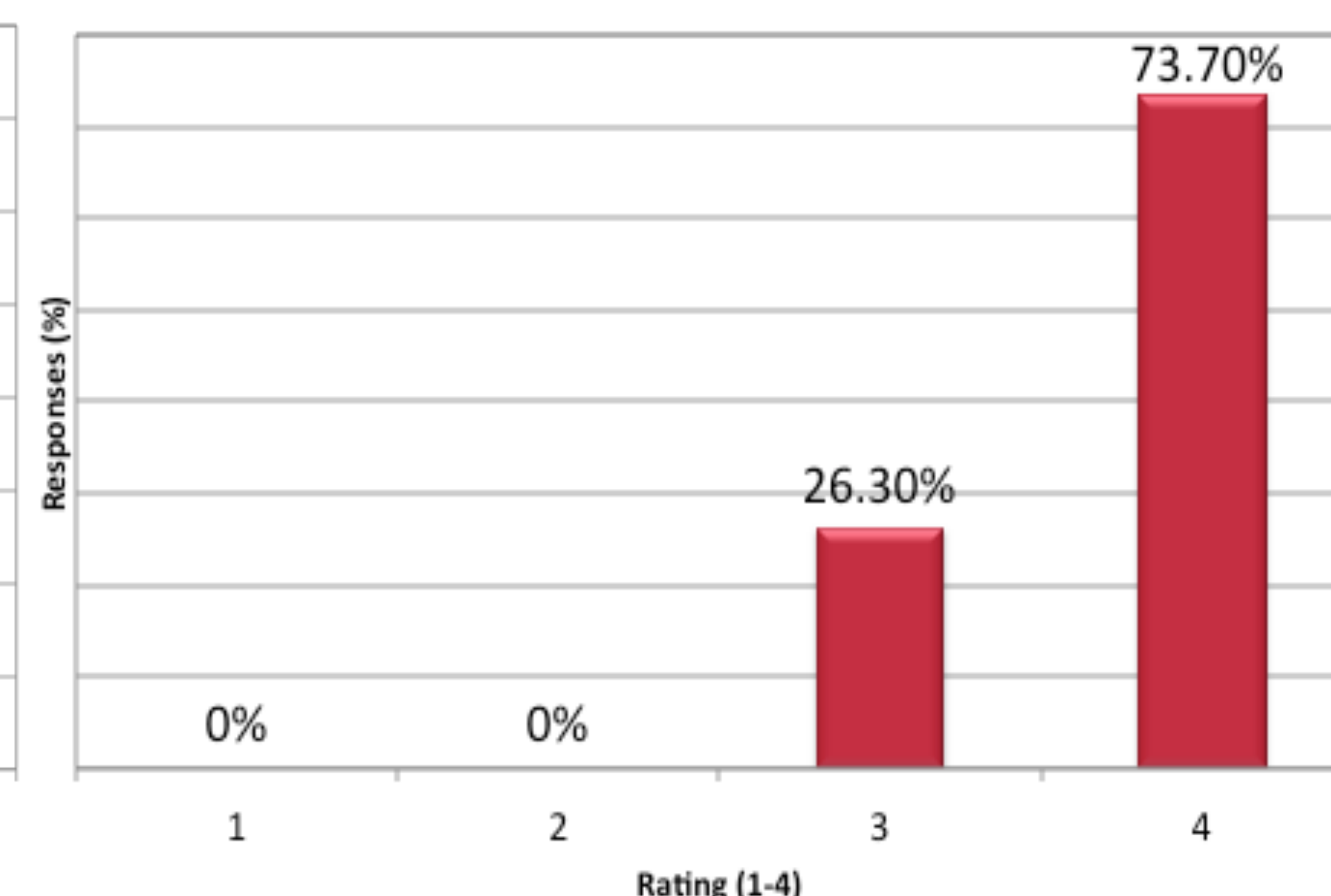
Methods

- Participants were Longwood University education majors enrolled in a student teaching practicum.
- An online pretest was given to the participants in order to assess their knowledge of vocal hygiene, voice disorders, and vocally abusive behaviors.
- Participants watched a 5 minute online training module that contained a comparison of effective and ineffective vocal hygiene habits, information on the benefits of protecting the voice, instruction to take better care of the vocal mechanism, and tips for future teachers to promote healthy voice use, including modifying the classroom environment.
- Two weeks after the training, participants took a post-test to determine the retention of the information and the impact of the training on their current vocal behaviors.

Knowledge of Vocal Hygiene Rating



Likelihood of Implementation Rating



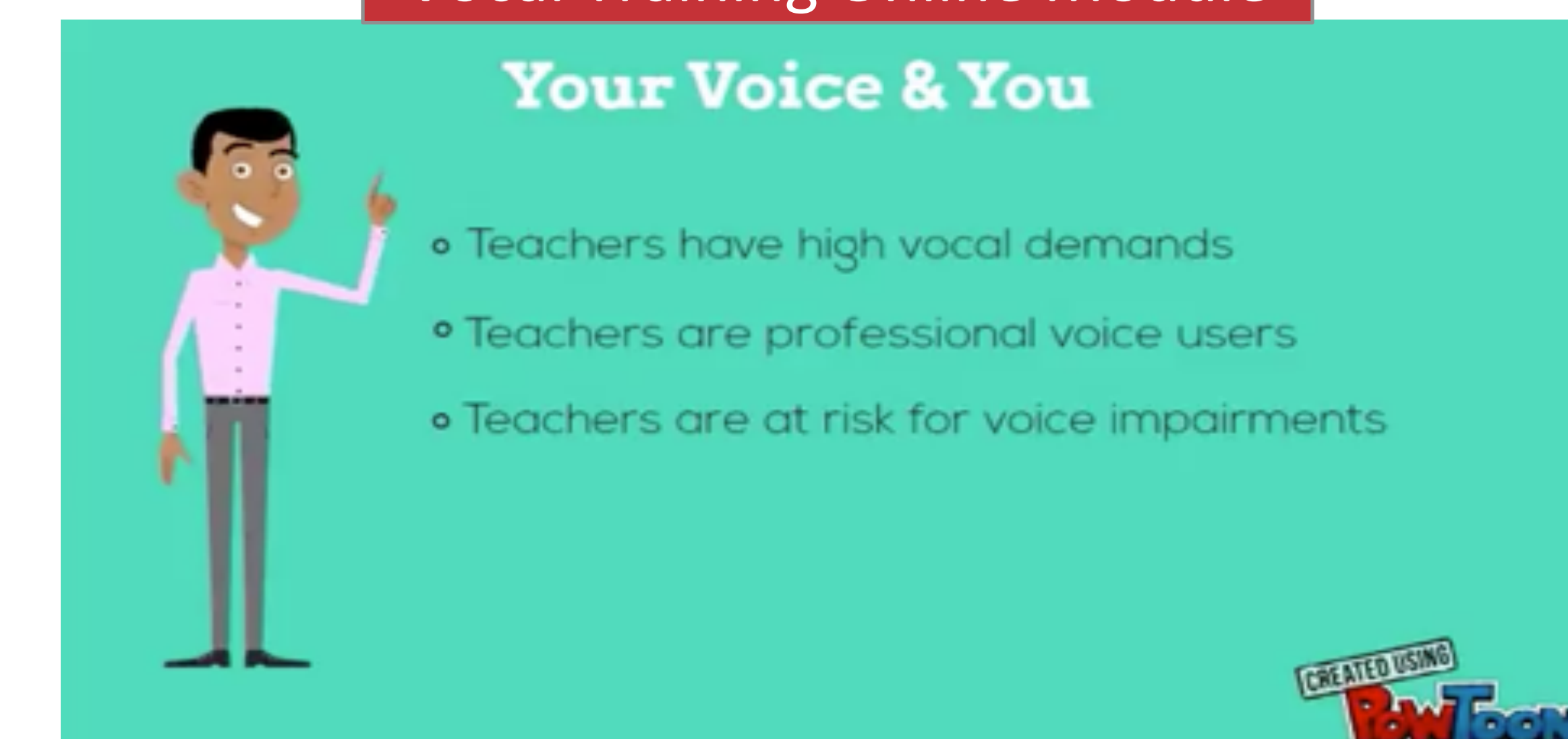
Results

- The Longwood education program currently contains no instruction on vocal hygiene practices.
- At the time of the pre-test, 78.2% of participants felt that they had less than average knowledge of vocal hygiene.
- At the time of the pre-test, 17.4% did not recognize teachers as being at risk for vocal problems.
- At the time of the post-test, 100% of participants said that they were likely to implement this information, with 73.7% saying that they were highly likely to implement.
- The average performance on the pre-test was 14.1/20, while the average performance on the post-test was 17.6/20.
- $t(18)=-3.05, p<0.007$, showing that there was a significant difference between the pre- and posttest performance.

Conclusions and Future Research

We must factor in that the distribution of this experiment would clue the participants in to the fact that teachers are, in fact, at risk for vocal problems. The majority of participants, at the time of the posttest, rated their knowledge of vocal hygiene as a 4 out of 5, demonstrating that they need more information built into their educational program. The likelihood of implementation rating depicts that the participants found this information to be very useful. We plan to follow up with the participants at the end of the semester to see if the information presented was useful and implemented. Future research should focus on expanding the participants to include teachers who are currently working to determine the validity and usefulness of the online training in vocal hygiene designed specifically for teachers.

Vocal Training Online Module



References

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