

Research on TPR Storytelling

A handout for teachers, parents, students, and administrators

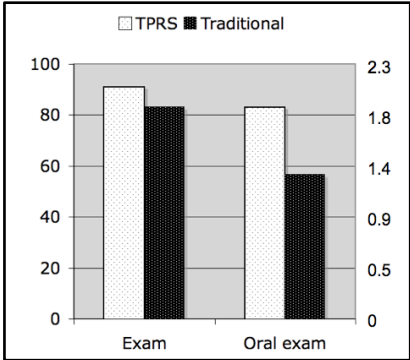
What is TPRS?

TPRS is a language teaching method designed to develop real fluency. Students and teachers spend class time speaking in the target language about interesting, comprehensible stories.

Has any research been done on TPRS?

Yes—articles have been published in the *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *CATESOL*, *Dimension*, and ProQuest Digital Dissertations.

What do the studies show?

<p>Varguez (2009) compared four beginning high school classrooms with different teaching methods and socioeconomic status, using a standardized Second Language Proficiency Examination. Her study showed that when socioeconomic status was held constant, the TPRS classroom outperformed the traditional classroom, and disadvantaged students who were taught with TPRS equaled the traditional students in the more affluent school district. This tells us that TPRS is effective in both rich and poor schools, and can be used to close achievement gaps caused by socioeconomic status.</p>	<p>Watson (2009) compared two beginning high school TPRS classrooms and one traditional classroom by testing the students with a final exam and an oral exam. Results showed that the TPRS classes outscored the traditional students on both tests, and that the distribution was wider in the traditional classes. This means that when taught with traditional methods, some students fail and others succeed, whereas more students can succeed with TPRS.</p>  <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Exam Type</th><th>TPRS Score</th><th>Traditional Score</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Exam</td><td>90</td><td>82</td></tr><tr><td>Oral exam</td><td>82</td><td>58</td></tr></tbody></table>	Exam Type	TPRS Score	Traditional Score	Exam	90	82	Oral exam	82	58
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<p>Spangler (2009) found that middle school and high school students in TPRS classrooms significantly outperformed classrooms using Communicative Language Teaching on speaking, and that the two groups of students performed the same on reading and writing.</p>										
<p>Davidheiser (2001) reports that TPRS improves pronunciation and vocabulary memory, reduces anxiety, is a natural way to learn language, promotes active learning, and is good for different types of learners. He discusses the integration of grammar instruction with TPRS at the college level.</p>	<p>Braunstein (2006) found that even adult ESL students, who expected more traditional instruction, responded positively to TPRS. Students were enthusiastic about the class and reported that the methods helped them to remember vocabulary, and understand English.</p>									

Every empirical research study on TPRS to date has found that TPRS students outperform traditional students on some measures of language skills—particularly on speaking. No study has found that TPRS students underperform traditional students.

Braunstein, L. (2006). Adult ESL learners' attitudes towards movement (TPR) and drama (TPR Storytelling) in the classroom. *CATESOL*, 18:1, 7-20.

Davidheiser, J. C. (2001). The ABCs of TPR Storytelling. *Dimension*, 2001, 45-53.

Spangler, D. E. (2009). Effects of two foreign language methodologies, Communicative Language Teaching and Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling, on beginning-level students' achievement, fluency, and anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest LLC. (854554814)

Varguez, K. C. (2009). Traditional and TPR Storytelling Instruction in the Beginning High School Classroom. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5:1 (Summer), pp. 2-11.

Watson, B. (2009). A comparison of TPRS and traditional foreign language instruction at the high school level. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5:1 (Summer), pp. 21-24