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# Research on Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)

A handout for teachers, parents, students, and administrators, updated summer 2018

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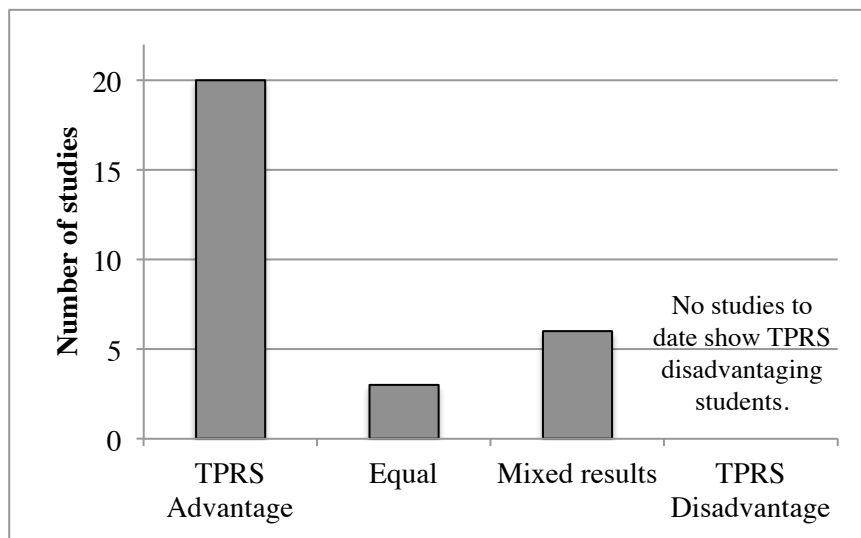
## What is TPRS?

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.

## Is TPRS supported by research?

Yes—there have been 29 studies to date directly comparing TPRS with traditional foreign language teaching (using a textbook and grammar-based syllabus). In most studies, TPRS students outperform traditional students on some or all of the language skills tested. The rest of the studies show that TPRS students perform the same as traditional students, or better in some areas and worse in others. There have also been 25 studies on the efficacy of TPRS by itself, which show that it significantly improves motivation, vocabulary, and fluency.

### Research studies comparing TPRS to other teaching methods



For references and more information about the studies, see page 364-379 of *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling*, Ray & Seely, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2015) or visit [forlangs.niu.edu/~klichtman/tprs.html](http://forlangs.niu.edu/~klichtman/tprs.html).

Lichtman, 2018

## What benefits can I expect from TPRS?

The strongest benefits of TPRS over traditional teaching are on **vocabulary** (13 studies), **speaking** (13 studies), and **reading** (20 studies). TPRS also benefits students' grammar (10 studies) and motivation (11 studies). For the skills of listening and writing, TPRS students tend to equal traditional students, but sometimes outperform them.

## Why does TPRS outperform traditional language teaching?

TPRS is an input-based method: students hear and read larger amounts of *comprehensible input* in the target language in TPRS classes than in traditional classes. Class time is spent using the language for real communication, primarily in the interpretive and interpersonal modes, but also in the presentational mode. TPRS focuses on the most useful vocabulary, and is highly engaging. All these factors help TPRS to build students' language proficiency.