

# **The Effect of Reader’s Theater on the Fluency and Comprehension of English Language Learners**

Dr. Beth Egmon, Reading Specialist  
Daniel Bauza, Second Grade Bilingual Teacher  
Walter Moses Burton Elementary

## **Abstract**

*The purpose of reading is comprehension. Research has shown that to improve comprehension, fluency must be increased. One way to do this is through repeated readings, such as Reader’s Theater. Research has also shown that English language learners learn to read in much the same way as native English speakers. The purpose of the current study was to describe the effect of Reader’s Theater instruction on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners. Participants for this study were drawn from the population of second grade students in a suburban school district in the southwestern United States. The instrument used to measure both reading fluency and reading comprehension was the 3-Minute Reading Assessment developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005). Results of the study indicate that students instructed in English made gains in all categories. The results for second grade English language learners instructed in Spanish indicated that these students made fewer gains than the students instructed in English and in fact, experienced a loss in two categories – Phrasing and Intonation as well as Pace. Clearly, Reader’s Theater instruction positively impacted the fluency and comprehension of second grade English language learners. This leads to student success – the goal of all educators.*

## **Background**

When examining the best methods of reading instruction, a savvy instructor first examines the purpose of reading. The purpose of reading is comprehension (Bender & Larkin, 2003) and like any other skill, it must be taught and must be practiced. Inasmuch as the purpose for reading is comprehension, instructors seek to find the most effective methods for improving comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that fluency was closely associated with comprehension.

Thus, to improve comprehension, one must increase fluency. Rasinski and Padak (2000) pointed out that “reading fluency is a significant obstacle to proficient reading for elementary students and many older readers experiencing difficulty in learning to read”

(Rasinski & Padak, 2000, p. 104). In 1983, Richard Allington published “Fluency: The Neglected Reading Goal” in *The Reading Teacher* where he contended that reading fluency as a skill was not being taught. Thirteen years later in 1996, Rasinski and Zutell looked at current reading programs and discovered that Allington’s warnings about fluency being overlooked had not been heeded. Fluency was being ignored as part of the reading instructional process.

### **Need for the Study**

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*(2002), students must be reading on grade-level by third grade. Thus it is incumbent upon the first and second grade teachers to have the students reading on grade level at those respective primary grades as well. It is evident, however, that not all students are reading on grade level at this time; in fact, not even a majority are reading on grade level. The Nation’s Report Card for Reading is based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which is given to grades four and eight. The NAEP measures reading comprehension in three contexts of reading: reading for literary experience, reading for information, and reading to perform a task (Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007). The NAEP achievement levels are basic, proficient, and advanced. The Nation’s Report Card for Reading in 2007 indicated that only 41 percent of fourth graders and 34 percent of eighth graders were reading at proficient or advanced levels. 67 percent of fourth graders and 74 percent of eighth graders were reading at or just above basic level. “Basic denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade” (Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007, p. 6). (Note: Percentages do not equal 100 percent because of rounding.)

The problem becomes further complicated when examining the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Research Report entitled *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence* (2007). In this report, NEA pointed out three alarming conclusions: (1) "Americans are spending less time reading. (2) Reading comprehension skills are eroding. (3) These declines have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic implications" (NEA, 2007, p. 7). The NEA report discussed the implications of these trends and pointed out that "employers now rank reading and writing as top deficiencies in new hires" (NEA, 2007, p. 16).

With that many students reading below grade level and less and less time being devoted to reading, the question becomes what can be done instructionally to help the nation's students become better readers. The National Reading Panel (2000) cited five components of reading that need to be in place in order for reading to occur: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Of these five components, "fluency has been shown to have a 'reciprocal relationship' with comprehension, with each fostering the other" (Stecker, Roser, & Martinez, 1998, p. 306).

This reciprocal relationship between fluency and comprehension has brought these reading components to the forefront of the literacy community. Beginning in 1997, Jack Cassidy, former president of the International Reading Association, has led the annual publication of a survey in *Reading Today* entitled "What's Hot, What's Not." His team continues to survey twenty-five notable literacy leaders throughout the world to determine the hot topics in the field of literacy. When the survey was first released in 1997, fluency was not even considered a topic and comprehension was considered to be "not hot" (Cassidy & Wenrich, 1997, p. 34). Respondents for the 2008 survey indicated

that fluency was again a “very hot” topic and comprehension was not only “hot” but “should be extremely hot” (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2008, p. 10).

In order to comprehend, the current literature on fluency indicated that there is a positive relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. In a 1990 study, Rasinski used a correlational research design to examine that relationship between fluency and comprehension in seventy-seven third grade students and sixty-five fifth grade students in a large Midwestern city. His findings indicated that fluency is a reasonable predictor of comprehension in third and fifth graders (Rasinski, 1990). A study by Stahl and Heubach (2005) indicated that fluency-oriented reading instruction leads to gains in comprehension in second grade students. Using a pretest-posttest design, researchers discovered that students who received fluency-oriented reading instruction made “significantly more than one year’s reading growth in one school year” (Stahl & Heubach, 2005, p. 190).

At this time, the research indicates there is a relationship between the reading fluency and reading comprehension of students and the Rasinski (1990) study along with the Stahl and Heubach (2005) study are indicative of the nature of that relationship in second, third and fifth grade students. But what about English Language Learners? Gersten and Geva (2003) report “the latest research indicates that both English learners and native speakers of English take similar paths of development in such prereading skills as phonological awareness” (p. 44). Could this be true in reading skills such as fluency and comprehension as well? “Many fluent bilinguals read their two languages with equal levels of comprehension but read their second language at a slower rate” (Favreau & Segalowitz, 1983, p. 565). Taguchi, Takayasu-Maas, and Gorsuch (2004)

found that repeated readings were “effective in increasing the fluency of beginning-level FL [foreign language] readers” (p. 17). One form of repeated reading is reader’s theater which includes simple play scripts that students can perform in the classroom without the need for props, costumes, or a set. This study seeks to determine if reader’s theater will improve the fluency and comprehension of English language learners.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of the study was to describe the effect of reader’s theater on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners. Given this purpose, the study addressed the following research question: What is the effect of reader’s theater on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners?

### ***Hypotheses***

**Null Hypothesis.** The research question posed in the previous section of this paper is the basis for the following null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant effect of reader’s theater on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners.

**Directional Research Hypothesis.** In April 2000, the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* was released in which the panel concluded that fluency was closely associated with comprehension and teachers needed to be aware of this so that they could teach for fluency to improve comprehension (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development – Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read website, Fluency subsection). The National Reading Panel cited a study by Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough, and Beatty (1995), which indicated that 44% of the fourth and fifth grade students sampled were dysfluent readers. Furthermore, this dysfluency resulted in students having difficulty with comprehending

the text that they were reading (Fluency subsection). Grace Oakley concurred with the findings of the panel but reported that the nature of the relationship between fluency and comprehension remained unclear (Oakley, 2003, Fluency section). Inasmuch as the aforementioned literature in this proposal suggests that there is a positive relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension, this study will test the following directional research hypothesis: There is a statistically significant positive effect of reader's theater on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners.

### ***Definitions of Terms***

**Reading Fluency.** The phrase “reading fluency” is defined as involving “accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody or expression” (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005, p. 702). Thus, when considering a reader's fluency, one looks at accuracy, rate (speed), and prosody (expression).

**Reading Comprehension.** The phrase “reading comprehension” is defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning” (Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1). Reading comprehension is actually thinking about the text and making meaning out of it.

## **Review of the Literature**

### ***Current Research in Fluency and Comprehension***

Fluency is a key to reading instruction. One text described it as the “bridge between word recognition and comprehension” (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, Tarver, & Jungjohann, 2006, p. 141). In fact, the reader must indeed use comprehension in order to support fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Daly, Chafouleas & Skinner, 2005). But, as Topping (2006) pointed out “fluency is of little value in itself – its value lies in what it

enables” (Topping, 2006, p. 106). Fluency is important because fluent readers are more likely to comprehend and thus are more likely to choose to read. Fluent reading also requires less effort than decoding (Daly, Chafouleas, & Skinner, 2005). “Fluency enables students to focus on constructing meaning from text” (Walley, 1993, p. 526). However, it is important to note that a reader can be fluent without comprehending. Cole (2004) described a group of English language learners who could read English fluently with absolutely no comprehension. They had mastered decoding but not comprehension. Research has shown that

Most children develop into fluent readers by third grade. Approximately 75 percent of students who are poor readers in third grade continue to be lower achieving readers in ninth grade and, in essence, do not recover their reading abilities even into adulthood. (Corcoran & Davis, 2005, p. 105)

Cole (2004) described the attributes of a fluent reader. First, they have a large sight vocabulary. Second, a fluent reader effectively uses decoding strategies. A fluent reader also reads audibly and in phrases or chunks. When reading a rehearsed text, a fluent reader can read at a smooth, steady pace. Fluency is impacted by variables such as type of text being read, purpose for reading, and prior knowledge about the topic of the text (Johns, 2005). It is noteworthy that students will have different needs in regards to the amount of practice time they will require in improving both their fluency and accuracy (Carnine et al., 2006). Reading fluency is impacted by the different demands text features place on readers. For example, familiarity with a genre type will facilitate fluency, as will prior knowledge about text structures, content, themes and ideas, language and literary features, vocabulary and words. The complexity of sentences will

also impact a reader's fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). Worthy and Broaddus (2002) compared reading fluency to being a musician.

O'Connor, Bell, Harly, Larkin, Sackor, and Zigmond (2002) conducted a fluency intervention study on upper elementary students, specifically third through fifth grade students. O'Connor et al. (2002) found that those who were the farthest behind in terms of fluency made the greatest gains if they were continuously given books to read that were on their reading level (Rasinski, 2003). Stahl and Heubach (2005) conducted a similar study on second grade students with similar results. Further research reported that explicit fluency instruction should begin no later than second grade (Moskal & Blachowicz, 2006) with some contending that fluency measures should actually begin during the middle of first grade (Chard, Pikulski, & McDonagh, 2006, p. 56).

The importance of fluency cannot be overstated. In a study of struggling older readers by Archer et al. (2003), fluency was determined to be a foundation skill. Students who did not become fluent readers in primary grades, grew further and further behind as they advanced in years. Archer et al. (2003) recommended that struggling older readers receive reading practice in the areas of guided reading, choral reading, partner reading, and repeated reading activities to enhance fluency development. Garriot and Jones (2005) stated "building fluency is a major issue with struggling middle grade readers, who may have done well in elementary school but find themselves stymied by more demanding middle school texts" (Garriot & Jones, 2005, p.67). Blau (1999) recommended that students in second through fifth grades receive fluency instruction through the following strategies: modeling of fluent reading, repeated readings in class, use of phrased reading in class, use of tutors in class, and use of reader's theater in class.



Bullion-Mears, McCauley and McWhorter (2007) recommended some of these performance techniques, such as reader's theater and poetry, not only for fluency practice but also to build comprehension. They recommend taking nonfiction text and turning it into poems and reader's theater. This allows the students to work on both fluency and comprehension, while navigating the more difficult nonfiction text.

Repeated reading is a method developed by Samuels (1979). "The method consists of rereading a short, meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Then the procedure is repeated with a new passage" (Samuels, 1979, p. 403). Repeated readings combined with word boxes, a phonics technique, have also proved useful in increasing the fluency rates of high school students that had severe reading delays. Devault and Joseph (2004) studied three high school students who were severely delayed readers. Their research indicated that all three students increased their fluency rates when presented with the instructional techniques of repeated reading coupled with word boxes. Therrien and Kubina (2006) describe repeated reading as an efficient technique for helping students to gain reading fluency.

Reader's Theater is a form of repeated readings. The scripts are adapted from a piece of prose or poetry so they are suitable for oral reading (Hertzberg, 2000, p. 22). Corcoran and Davis (2005) conducted a study assessing the effects of readers' theater on second and third grade special education students' fluency. The results from this study indicated both reading attitudes and confidence levels of these struggling readers improved as they repeatedly practiced these readers' theater scripts in their groups. Furthermore, their fluency rates improved as well: "the number of words read correctly per minute increased overall as a class by an increase of 17 additional words read

correctly in spring versus winter” (Corcoran & Davis, 2005, p. 110). Griffith and Rasinski (2004) reported students in Griffith’s classroom made 2.3 years reading growth in terms of comprehension and increased their reading rate by 47.4 words per minute as a result of the use of readers’ theater in the classroom throughout the year. Keehn (2003) conducted a readers’ theater study wherein one treatment group received readers’ theater intervention and the other treatment group received readers’ theater intervention plus explicit instruction. Both groups made “statistically significant growth in oral reading fluency during the nine-week Reader’s Theater intervention ... but there was no significant difference in growth made by the two treatment groups...” (p. 49).

Fluency research was brought to the forefront with an examination of the research by Kuhn and Stahl (2003). Their pivotal work examined the significant pieces of research on fluency. They found that

(a) fluency instruction is generally effective, although it is unclear whether this is because of specific instructional features or because it involves children in reading increased amounts of text; (b) assisted approaches seem to be more effective than unassisted approaches; (c) repetitive approaches do not seem to hold a clear advantage over nonrepetitive approaches; and (d) effective fluency instruction moves beyond automatic word recognition to include rhythm and expression, or what linguists refer to as the prosodic features of language. (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003, p. 3)

As indicated during the aforementioned review of the literature, comprehension is the main goal of reading. Research has shown that reading fluency is directly correlated to reading comprehension. Repeated readings, such as reader’s theater, have been shown

to increase fluency thereby increasing comprehension. The current study will examine the effect of reader's theater instruction on the fluency and comprehension of second grade English Language Learners.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

Given that the purpose of the study was to describe the effect of reader's theater on the fluency and comprehension of English language learners, the research design for this study was an experimental – control group design. Borg and Gall (1989) stated “single-variable experiments involve the manipulation of a single treatment on one or more dependent variables” (Borg & Gall, 1989, pp. 640-641). This study examines the effect of reader's theater instruction in English (the intervention) on the experimental group as compared to no intervention on the control group (students instructed in Spanish).

### ***Participants***

The participants for this study were drawn from the population of second grade students in a suburban school district in the southwestern United States. The participants selected were from the classrooms of one of the researchers. All participants were in the bilingual program. Fifteen were male and twenty-four were female. All thirty-nine participants were Hispanic. Twenty-nine were on free/reduced lunch. There were nineteen students in the experimental group and twenty students in the control group.

### ***Instrumentation***

The instrument used to measure both reading fluency and reading comprehension was the 3-Minute Reading Assessments developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005).

Rasinski and Padak designed these assessments to quickly measure word recognition

(decoding), reading fluency and reading comprehension. A sample of the instrument can be found in Appendix A. In the assessment, students read a passage in English. The researcher takes a running record of the timed oral reading, and then calculates word recognition accuracy. Fluency is then measured through reading rate and through expression via a multidimensional fluency scale. Included in the fluency scale are expression and volume, phrasing and intonation, smoothness, and pace. Comprehension is measured through a comprehension rubric.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

In order to collect the data the ensuing procedures were followed. First, human subjects approval was obtained from a suburban school district in the southwestern United States. Then permission of parents of participants was sought. Upon approval of the parents, the pretest using the 3-Minute Reading Assessment was administered. Students in the experimental group then underwent seven weeks (March 2009 – May 2009) of reader's theater instruction in English and students in the control group underwent six weeks of reader's theater instruction in Spanish. Upon the completion of the six weeks of intervention, the posttest was administered using the 3-Minute Reading Assessment.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

All data was analyzed utilizing the software Microsoft Excel. The researchers compared the averages of scores from pre-test to post-test as well as standard deviations from pre-test to post-test.

## Results

The purpose of the study was to describe the effect of reader's theater on the fluency and comprehension of second grade English language learners. This section will explain the results of the study in regards to the relationship between reader's theater and the fluency and comprehension of the second grade English language learners.

In examining the results in Table 1 below, one can see that students instructed in English made gains in all categories. In terms of accuracy, the mean percentage increase was 2.53 with a standard deviation in March of 9.62 and in May of 7.93. The mean increase in automaticity for students instructed in English was 3.89 words correct per minute with a standard deviation in March of 32.54 and in May of 29.98. Expression and volume for students instructed in English grew from a mean of 2.05 in March to 2.32 in May with a standard deviation in March of 0.78 and in May of 0.89. Phrasing and intonation for students instructed in English grew from a mean of 2.68 in March to a mean of 2.95 in May with a standard deviation in March of 1.11 and a standard deviation in May 0.97. Smoothness means for students instructed in English grew 0.37 with a standard deviation of 1.03 in March and 0.96 in May. Pace means for students instructed in English also grew over the course of the intervention from 2.74 in March to 2.95 in May with a standard deviation 0.93 in March and 1.03 in May. Overall fluency for students instructed in English was an increase of 1.11, going from a mean scaled score of 10.26 in March 2009 to a mean scaled score of 11.37 in May 2009 (see Graph 1 below). Overall fluency standard deviation went from 3.45 in March to 3.42 in May. Comprehension for students instructed in English was an increase of 0.47, going from a

mean scaled score of 3.42 in March 2009 to a mean scaled score of 3.89 in May 2009 (see Graph 2 below). Standard deviations went from 1.26 in March to 1.15 in May.

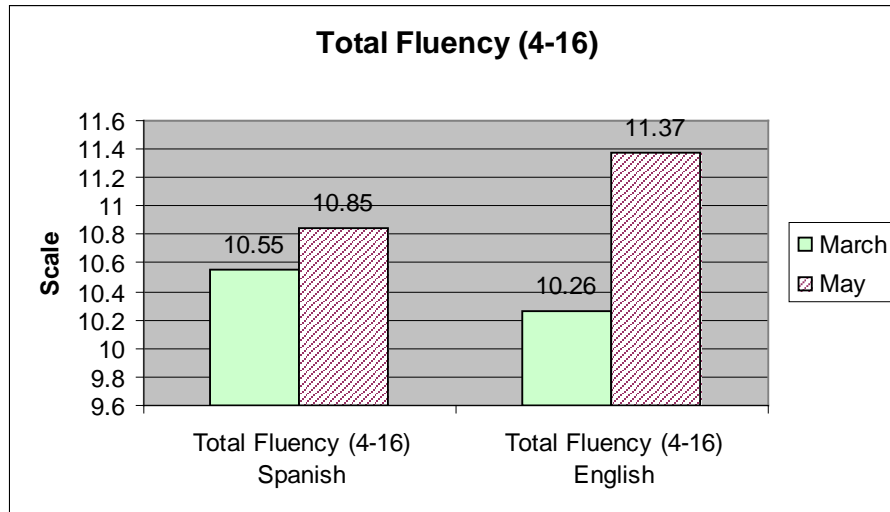


Figure 1. Total fluency.

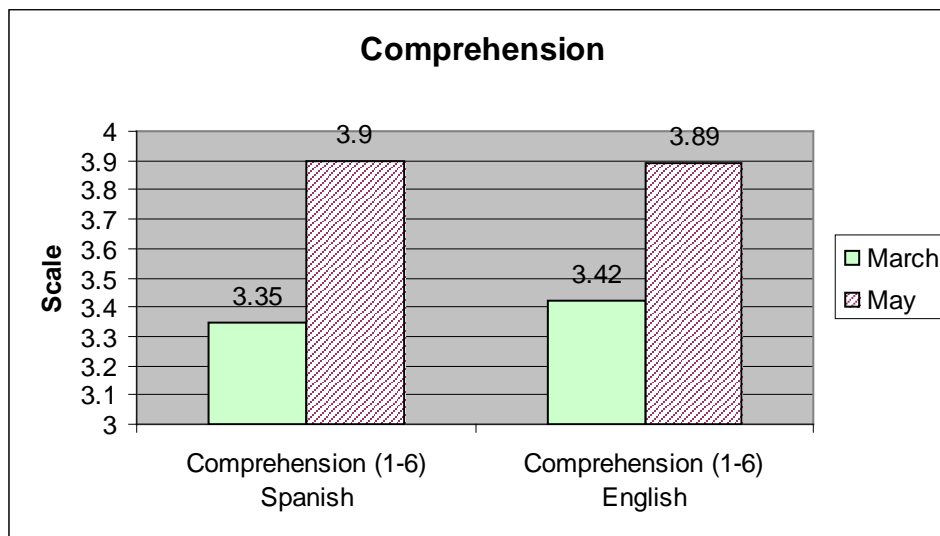


Figure 2. Comprehension.

The results for second grade English language learners instructed in Spanish indicate that these students made fewer gains than the students instructed in English, and in fact, experienced a loss in two categories – Phrasing and Intonation (-.30), and Pace (-.20). The mean accuracy percentage for students instructed in Spanish indicated an increase of only 2.25 with a standard deviation of 14.09 in March and 14.94 in May. The

mean automaticity rates for students instructed in Spanish increased only 2.05 words correct per minute with a standard deviation of 30.08 in March and 24.40 in May.

Expression and volume for students instructed in Spanish grew from a mean of 1.90 in March to 2.15 in May with a standard deviation in March of 0.64 and in May of 0.74.

Phrasing and intonation for students instructed in Spanish decreased from a mean of 2.85 in March to a mean of 2.55 in May with a standard deviation in March of 1.04 and a standard deviation in May 0.83. Smoothness means for students instructed in Spanish grew 0.30 with a standard deviation of 0.85 in March and 0.89 in May. Pace means for students instructed in Spanish decreased over the course of the intervention from 2.95 in March to 2.75 in May with a standard deviation 0.99 in March and 0.78 in May. Total mean fluency for students instructed in Spanish increased 0.30 with a standard deviation of 3.20 in March and 3.33 in May. The mean comprehension rates for students instructed in Spanish increased 0.55, going from a mean scaled score of 3.35 in March 2009 to a mean scaled score of 3.90 in May 2009. Standard deviations went from 1.27 in March to 1.07 in May.

Table 1

Descriptive  
Statistics

Variable	March Mean	March St. Dev.	May Mean	May St. Dev.	Mean Increase/ Decrease
Accuracy % Spanish	89.75	14.09	92	14.94	2.25
<b>Accuracy % English</b>	<b>90.26</b>	<b>9.62</b>	<b>92.79</b>	<b>7.93</b>	<b>2.53</b>
Automaticity wcpm Spanish	77.45	30.08	79.5	24.40	2.05
<b>Automaticity wcpm English</b>	<b>75.68</b>	<b>32.54</b>	<b>79.58</b>	<b>29.98</b>	<b>3.89</b>
Expression & Volume (1-4) Spanish	1.9	0.64	2.15	0.74	0.25
<b>Expression &amp; Volume (1-4) English</b>	<b>2.05</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.26</b>
Phrasing & Intonation (1-4) Spanish	2.85	1.04	2.55	0.83	(0.30)
<b>Phrasing &amp; Intonation (1-4) English</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.26</b>
Smoothness (1-4) Spanish	2.9	0.85	3.2	0.89	0.30
<b>Smoothness (1-4) English</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.37</b>
Pace (1-4) Spanish	2.95	0.99	2.75	0.78	(0.20)
<b>Pace (1-4) English</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.21</b>
Total Fluency (4-16) Spanish	10.55	3.20	10.85	3.33	0.30
<b>Total Fluency (4- 16) English</b>	<b>10.26</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>11.37</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>1.11</b>
Comprehension (1- 6) Spanish	3.35	1.27	3.9	1.07	0.55
<b>Comprehension (1- 6) English</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>1.26</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>0.47</b>

N =39



## Conclusions

Clearly, Reader's Theater instruction impacted the fluency and comprehension of second grade English language learners. As can be seen in Graph 1, the impact of Reader's Theater instruction was significant on second grade English language learners who were instructed in English. This is significant as studies have shown that over the long-term fluency impacts comprehension (Rasinski, 1990; Stahl and Heubach, 2005). While the results of the study indicate the comprehension of second grade English language learners also increased (see Graph 2), the comprehension of students instructed in Spanish increased more than the comprehension of students instructed in English. These results are surprising and the researchers posit that the results may be different if the intervention, Reader's Theater instruction, had lasted longer than seven weeks.

The researchers also posit that a longer intervention would have increased the mean improvement in both fluency and comprehension. The researchers also posit that students instructed in their native tongue (in this case, Spanish) will ultimately make initial improvements in comprehension faster than those instructed in a second language (such as English) as comprehension is easier in the learner's native tongue. This study supports the English language learner research of Tagachi, Takayasu-Maas and Gorsuch (2004) in that repeated readings, specifically Reader's Theater, increased the fluency of the English Language Learners in this study.

Over the course of this study it became increasingly clear that the end goal of reading instruction in this second grade bilingual classroom was to transition the students from Spanish to English. Based on the results listed in Table 1, one way to improve reading in English is to have the students participate in repeated readings, such as Reader's Theater, in English. While

Spanish instruction yields improvement in English fluency and comprehension, overall more improvement is achieved with English instruction.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

A first limitation in the study was limited to second grade students. Future studies can focus on other grade levels.

A second limitation of the study is the complex nature of reading itself. For example, it is possible for a student to decode effortlessly yet be unable to comprehend. Even though one has mastered one of the component parts of reading, that does not indicate mastery of reading itself. Causal relationship studies break “down complex abilities and behavior patterns into simpler components” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 329).

A third limitation is related to the comprehension measure itself, specifically prior knowledge.

. . . each student’s prior knowledge is likely to influence his or her performance on comprehension questions. Because there is no way to measure what portion of students’ success in answering comprehension questions is based on their prior knowledge, it is impossible to measure the amount of comprehension that was caused by their reading ability alone (Daly, Chafouleas, & Skinner, 2005, p. 137).

### **Reflections and Action Plan**

Through this action research process, the researchers learned that more time was needed for the intervention. As mentioned previously, the researchers posit that results would have been more pronounced with a longer intervention period. The researchers also learned what a valuable instrument Rasinski and Padak’s 3-Minute Reading Assessment can be. The 3-Minute Reading Assessment is designed to be used four times per year. This assessment is true to its

name and can be administered in a very short period of time. An entire class can be assessed in sixty to ninety minutes. The researchers would like to use this assessment again during the next school year to measure fluency and comprehension growth. Professional practices of the researchers will change in the following school year as more emphasis will be placed on repeated readings, such as Reader's Theater, earlier in the school year. The researchers are also considering adding poetry instruction on a regular basis as another form of repeated readings.

As mentioned previously, research has indicated a positive relationship between fluency and comprehension. Research has also shown that fluency can be improved with repeated readings, such as Reader's Theater. The current study bore this out. The current study also indicated that Reader's Theater instruction in English made a greater impact on reading in English rather than instruction in Spanish. Overall, Reader's Theater was found to positively impact both reading fluency and reading comprehension thereby leading to student success – the goal of all educators.

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## Appendix A

ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING AIDS																																																																						
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Word Recognition Accuracy (Decoding)</b></p> <p>Divide the total number of words read correctly by the total number of words read (correct and incorrect). For example, if the student read a total of 94 words in the 60-second reading and made 8 errors, the percentage of words read correctly would be reflected in the following fraction:</p> $\frac{86}{94} \text{ (86 divided by 94) = 91.5\% of words read correctly}$ <p>Instructional reading level: 92–98%. Independent reading level: 99–100%.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Comprehension</b></p> <p>After the student has completed the 60-second oral reading and after you have read the entire passage to the student, remove the passage from view. Ask for a retelling of what he or she remembers. Next, ask if there is anything else the student can recall from the passage. If he or she is unable or unwilling to retell anything, you may probe for specific information (e.g., “What is the main idea of this story?”). When the student has told you as much as he or she can remember from the passage, rate the recall on the Comprehension Rubric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student has no recall or minimal recall of only a fact or two from the passage. <b>Rating Score: 1</b></li> <li>● Student recalls a number of unrelated facts of varied importance. <b>Rating Score: 2</b></li> <li>● Student recalls the main idea of the passage with a few supporting details. <b>Rating Score: 3</b></li> <li>● Student recalls the main idea along with a fairly robust set of supporting details, although not necessarily organized logically or sequentially as presented in the passage. <b>Rating Score: 4</b></li> <li>● Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea. <b>Rating Score: 5</b></li> <li>● Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea. Student also makes reasonable connections beyond the text to his/her own personal life, another text, etc. <b>Rating Score: 6</b></li> </ul>																																																																					
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Fluency-Automaticity</b></p> <p>Count the number of words the student has read correctly during the 60-second oral reading. Words read correctly include those initially misread but corrected by the student. Use this chart to interpret results.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">Grade</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Fall wcpm*</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Winter wcpm</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Spring wcpm</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">1</td><td style="padding: 2px;">0–10</td><td style="padding: 2px;">10–50</td><td style="padding: 2px;">30–90</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">2</td><td style="padding: 2px;">30–80</td><td style="padding: 2px;">50–100</td><td style="padding: 2px;">70–130</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">3</td><td style="padding: 2px;">50–110</td><td style="padding: 2px;">70–120</td><td style="padding: 2px;">80–140</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">4</td><td style="padding: 2px;">70–120</td><td style="padding: 2px;">80–130</td><td style="padding: 2px;">90–140</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">5</td><td style="padding: 2px;">80–130</td><td style="padding: 2px;">90–140</td><td style="padding: 2px;">100–150</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">6</td><td style="padding: 2px;">90–140</td><td style="padding: 2px;">100–150</td><td style="padding: 2px;">110–160</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">7</td><td style="padding: 2px;">100–150</td><td style="padding: 2px;">110–160</td><td style="padding: 2px;">120–170</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">8</td><td style="padding: 2px;">110–160</td><td style="padding: 2px;">120–180</td><td style="padding: 2px;">130–180</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="font-size: small;">*wcpm=words correct per minute</p>	Grade	Fall wcpm*	Winter wcpm	Spring wcpm	1	0–10	10–50	30–90	2	30–80	50–100	70–130	3	50–110	70–120	80–140	4	70–120	80–130	90–140	5	80–130	90–140	100–150	6	90–140	100–150	110–160	7	100–150	110–160	120–170	8	110–160	120–180	130–180	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Fluency-Expression</b></p> <p>Listen to the student’s 60-second oral reading. Rate it on the Multidimensional Fluency Scale.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">Rating</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Expression &amp; Volume</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Phrasing and Intonation</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Smoothness</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Pace</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">Circle one →</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">1 2 3 4</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">1 2 3 4</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">1 2 3 4</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">1 2 3 4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; font-size: 2em;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Reads words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. 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