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# Research on TPR Storytelling (TPRS)

A handout for teachers, parents, students, and administrators, updated summer 2014

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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 are studies directly comparing TPRS with traditional foreign language teaching (using a textbook and grammar-based syllabus), as well as studies on the efficacy of TPRS alone. In the comparative studies (listed in the table below), TPRS students consistently outperform traditional students on some or all of the language skills tested. The eight studies on TPRS without a comparison group all report that TPRS improves motivation and promotes positive attitudes towards class and language learning.

Research results on TPRS (comparative studies)	TPRS outperforms another teaching method	TPRS equals another teaching method	Another teaching method outperforms TPRS
1. Garczynski (2003)	✓	✓	
2. Perna (2007)	✓	✓	✓
3. Jennings (2009)	✓	✓	✓
4. Spangler (2009)	✓	✓	
5. Varguez (2009)	✓	✓	
6. Watson (2009)	✓		
7. Castro (2010)	✓	✓	
8. Nijhuis & Vermaning (2010)	✓		
9. Beal (2011)	✓	✓	✓
10. Foster (2011)	✓	✓	✓
11. Oliver (2012)	✓		
12. Dziedzic (2012)	✓	✓	
13. De Vlaming (2013)	✓		

## What benefits can I expect from TPRS?

The strongest benefits of TPRS over traditional teaching are on **speaking** (3, 4, 6, 8, 12), **grammar** (6, 9, 10, 11, 13), and **reading** (3, 5, 6, 9, 11). TPRS students typically outperform traditional students on these skills on a variety of assessments. For the skills of listening, writing, and vocabulary, TPRS students sometimes equal and sometimes outperform traditional students.

## 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.

## How can I learn more about research on TPRS?

For references and more information about the above studies, see page 304-311 of *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling*, Ray & Seely, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2012) or visit [forlangs.niu.edu/~klichtman/tprs.html](http://forlangs.niu.edu/~klichtman/tprs.html).