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**Timed Repeated Readings in an Elementary Spanish Classroom**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined the observed and reported experiences of 45 students in two elementary Spanish classrooms when implementing timed repeated readings into the curriculum. In order to assist students with increasing their reading fluency in a second language, the teacher used timed repeated readings to practice reading fluency. The teacher modeled how students should read the passage each week including the correct expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Working with a partner, students would read a passage each day for four days and would graph their daily progress, so that they could monitor how they progressed throughout the week. Throughout the study the teacher collected data through student artifacts, observational data, and inquiry data. The data suggest that using timed repeated readings for students who are learning to read in a second language can increase the students' reading fluency.

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## **RESEARCHERS STANCE**

Learning a second language can be a challenge, but it can also be fun and exciting. I can still remember sitting with my older brother and repeating the English words he would say to me. I loved repeating them because I couldn't help thinking they sounded kind of weird. Thankfully, that constant interaction between my brother and me opened up the English-speaking world.

My parents left Puerto Rico at a young age and settled in Brooklyn, NY. Although, they learned some English along the way, they were more comfortable speaking Spanish at home, and therefore, Spanish became my first language. As a young student, I only spoke Spanish, until I was able to learn enough English from my brother and from the television programs we watched.

As time went on learning in English became very natural for me. I had excellent teachers and had the help and support of my older brother at home. By the time I reached first grade I was put in a bilingual classroom. I couldn't understand why after two years in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten regular education class I had been moved into an English as a Second Language (ESL) only classroom. My mother was also surprised and made it a point to advocate on my behalf. As a result, I tested out of the ESL program and re-joined the regular education classroom. By the time my younger sister and brother entered school they did not face any problems speaking English, therefore, were never a part of an ESL program. My older brother and I were proud that we were able to teach them to speak well, to avoid ESL and enter a regular education classroom from the beginning of their school careers.

Thankfully, I had the support I needed to learn a second language seamlessly. However, this may not be the same for some students that educators may have in their own classrooms. These students sometimes don't have the necessary support at home to develop language proficiency. Many times, parents want to help, but need help themselves to learn the language. Their intentions are good, but they may not have the necessary tools to help their children.

During my elementary school years, there were many times that I was called to assist translating for students who had just arrived from a Spanish speaking country. I was fluent in both languages and could help my teachers and peers communicate. I enjoyed working with my teachers and friends and found it exciting every time I was called upon to assist. This is where I began to fall in love with teaching. I found it rewarding and sometimes challenging. However, the challenge provided me with new opportunities to work outside my comfort zone, and even though I didn't understand it at the time, it also allowed me to grow as a student.

From these experiences emerged a passion for teaching. Once I reached high school, I was tutoring and helping as much as I could in the classroom. Upon entering high school, I decided to be a part of the teaching house section. It provided me an opportunity to work with pre-kindergarten students, learn how to create lesson plans and on occasions, also teach.

During these four years, I also worked with English language learners. With guidance from my advisor, I worked with small groups and helped students learn the phonics they needed to be successful in kindergarten. Once I graduated from high school

I knew I wanted a career in education, so I headed to college to earn my elementary certification.

After graduating college, I obtained my first job as a substitute teacher at a charter school. It was a great school that had many opportunities for students to learn and succeed in their academic goals. It offered diverse learning opportunities for students and that was fascinating to me. The school offered programs to meet the needs of diverse learners. As a result, when the opportunity was available at a different charter school, I applied for a full-time position.

The school's vision for helping students become fluently bilingual in English and Spanish captivated me. The school's focus was to help students whose first language was Spanish and use their native language to help them learn English. Additionally, they were committed to helping English speaking students learn Spanish. By the end of eighth grade, students would not only be bilingual but they would also be multicultural since the school also teaches students about various cultures.

In an ever-changing world, it has been a great opportunity to be part of a school that understands the importance of empowering students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as learning a second language. Our school's dual language curriculum allows students to learn in English for half of the day and Spanish for the other half. English Language Arts and Math are taught in English. Science and Social Studies are taught in Spanish along with Spanish Language Arts.

Many of my students entered the school in kindergarten, but a few entered in second and third grade as well. Students who have been in the school since kindergarten have mastered both languages, and can fluently speak, write, read and in both. Students

who arrive in a higher grade sometimes struggle the same way an English language learner (ELL) struggles when he or she is learning a second language for the first time. For some, if Spanish is spoken at home, they do not struggle as much.

Currently, I am the third-grade Spanish teacher at our school. It is my third year teaching third grade, and I have previously taught fourth grade for one year. In third grade students are reading to obtain new information and learn from it rather than only learning to read. As a result, I know how important it is for my students to have a strong reading foundation.

For the students in the school, when they are unable to read fluently in both languages their reading comprehension suffers. Therefore, reading comprehension has gained more focus. Similarly, I have looked for and implemented strategies to help my students comprehend when they read in Spanish. I want to be able to help the students who have been learning Spanish since kindergarten and the students who are learning Spanish for the first time. I often refer to these students as my Spanish language learners (SLLs).

Reading comprehension is a skill that students can always improve. I believe that the more strategies students learn, the more they can better understand what they read. Working with third graders for the last three years, I have learned that one way in which students can improve their reading skills, is by completing repeated readings to become fluent readers. In addition, for readers in third grade, modeling the appropriate way to read and think about what we read, can help increase their comprehension of text.

From my own experience, I knew how difficult it could be to learn to read in a second language. Having been an ELL myself, I was looking for a way to help my

students so that they could have a stronger reading foundation. I knew that I would need to develop an intervention to meet the needs for the diverse learners in my third-grade classroom.

After some research, I discovered Timed Repeated Reading (TRR), designed to help students read more fluently. I have seen for myself that when students read at an appropriate rate, they can comprehend more of what they read because they are not spending too much time decoding words that are unfamiliar to them. When they read at a better rate they are spending more time comprehending what they are reading.

What I like about this intervention is that students can work in pairs and learn from each other. Third grade students enjoy working together and reading to each other and my planned intervention provided students an opportunity to learn from each other. Additionally, this strategy will allow students to work towards their own individual goals and oversee their own growth as the study progressed. I am a firm believer that when students take ownership of their learning and goals, they are much more motivated to achieve them.

I am looking forward with much excitement to see how timed repeated readings help my students become fluent readers. Therefore, my research question is: **What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of Spanish language learners when using timed repeated readings to increase reading fluency in Spanish?**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

Reading proficiently by the end of third grade (as measured by NAEP at the beginning of fourth grade) can be a make-or-break benchmark in a child's educational achievement (Fiester, 2010). About 67% of children nationwide are not proficient readers by the end of the third grade. Learning to read by the end of third grade is crucial to lay a foundation of student success for the rest of their educational journey.

There are many factors that have an influence on the ability of students to read by the end of third grade. One factor that is described by Ryan (2010) is the teacher factor. What teachers know about reading instruction, how they focus their teaching, and how much time their classes spend on reading can all affect students' reading skills (Ryan, 2010). As a third-grade teacher, I am faced with the challenge of making sure that my students are reading proficiently. That is why, as a teacher, I must continue to use and implement research based instruction that will help me teach students how to read proficiently before they enter the fourth grade.

To address this challenge, it is important to understand the reading stages into which my students fall so that I can help them move forward. An important reading researcher by the name of Jeanne Chall (1996) identified five stages of reading.

- *Pre-reading or emergent literacy stage:* In preschool and kindergarten, children focus on oral language skills they will need to learn to read. By the end of kindergarten, they should know and be able to write all the letters and should have developed a vocabulary of about 6,000 words.
- *Stage 1, Initial reading:* In first grade, children learn that letters represent sounds and use relationships between letter sounds and spelling, typically through the process known as "decoding."

- *Stage 2, Confirmation and fluency:* In grades one through three, children learn to integrate knowledge of sound-symbol relationships, to recognize "sight words", and broaden their knowledge of the language conventions of connected text to create smooth reading.
- *Stage 3, Reading for learning the new:* In grades four through eight, students encounter a wide variety of texts and contexts and expand their vocabulary to learn information from text.
- *Stage 4, Multiple viewpoints:* In high school, the language and cognitive demands on students increase, and they are expected to analyze texts critically and understand multiple points of view.
- *Stage 5, Construction and reconstruction:* In college and beyond, students' reading is considered constructive; they take in information and make their own sense of it based on analysis and synthesis.

According to Chall's theory, fourth grade students are reading to learn instead of learning to read which occurs in the previous stages. How can students use text to learn new information if they are unable to read and comprehend what they read? As a teacher, I must focus on ways to improve my students' abilities to read and to comprehend what they read. One way in which I can achieve this is using timed repeated readings.

### **History of Repeated Readings**

Research has identified five components that are necessary for skillful reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (O'Brien & Zakariya, 2008). When teachers focus on these five components, students are more likely to become better on-level readers. One component that is sometimes left out and not focused on as much is reading fluency. Reading fluency has been defined as readers having the ability "to read text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little attention to the mechanics of reading such as decoding" (Meyer, 1999, p. 284) and

the ability to combine information from various sources while reading under intense time constraints (Grabe, 2010).

Reading fluency is very important because of the connection between reading fluency and comprehension. As students become fluent readers they can understand or comprehend in a greater sense what they are reading. A fluent reader is not easily distracted and reads in an effortless, flowing manner (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). However, the most compelling reason to focus instructional efforts on students becoming fluent readers is the strong correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. According to previous studies, each aspect of reading fluency has a clear connection to text comprehension (Allington 1983, Johns 1993, Samuels 1998, Schreiber 1980).

When students are unable to read fluently they labor through the text and lose the author's intended meaning, therefore leading to misinterpretation of the text. Since slow reading can result in weakened comprehension, many fluency interventions focus on increasing the reading rate (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). One intervention that has been used in classrooms is repeated readings (RR). The repeated readings method, with its iterative cycles of readings, provides the required practice for struggling, non-fluent readers (Roundy & Roundy, 2009). The fluency gains made in one session have been found to carry over to future readings (LaBerge & Samuels 1974).

This intervention has been a great tool for learners in their first language (L1). However, in recent years, RR has also been used in the second language classroom as well. Before we can see how RR can help second language learners (L2), let's look at how RR has been used with L2 learners.

## **Repeated reading in a second language**

For many foreign language learners or learners learning a second language (L2), reading is performed to obtain meaning from a text, from which vocabulary and grammatical structure are acquired at the same time (Chang, 2010). For these L2 learners, reading can be a difficult and arduous activity. This is because as L2 learners read they often do so word by word and check unfamiliar words as they encounter them, implying that they lack automaticity of word recognition (Coady, 1979). By reading slowly, comprehension can be poor, and reading for pleasure nearly unthinkable (Chang, 2010). A successful L2 learner not only has to master the target language knowledge but must also be able to apply the knowledge in an appropriate fluent manner (Davies, 1982; Segalowitz, 2007). However, this is not an easy task for L2 learners.

Despite how important reading fluency is in a second language, this issue has not received much attention until recent years (Chang, 2010). Undoubtedly, the most significant contributor to L2 reading fluency research to date, Taguchi and his colleagues, in a series of studies, investigated the training effects of fluency instruction on reading rate and comprehension development (Jeon, 2012). They examined how increasing reading fluency in a second language had an effect on reading comprehension in a second language. They could see how improving reading fluency increased reading comprehension.

Chang & Millett conducted a study in 2013 with L2 learners. Twenty-six students who were learning English as a foreign language participated in the study. Students were eighteen to nineteen-year-old college students in Taiwan. All participants in the study had received at least seven years of English instruction and their participation in the study

was voluntary. The intervention was given once a week during their English course. The study lasted for thirteen weeks.

The purpose of the study was to improve the reading fluency of students learning a second language. In this case, the second language was English. Students were divided into two groups. One group completed the repeated reading intervention and the second group did not. The group who used the repeated reading intervention read the passage five different times while being timed. The first and fifth time they read the passage they also completed a set of the same comprehension questions.

Chang and Millet (2013) were seeking to understand how repeated reading influenced the developing second language learners' reading fluency. Additionally, they wanted to see if the RR influenced the reading comprehension of the students after reading the passage or text more than once. The students were timed using a stopwatch to see how long it took them to go through the passage.

The students' reading fluency and comprehension were measure before, and after the study with the use of pretests and posttests. A pre-vocabulary test was also given prior to the beginning of the study. Additionally, students were given rereading activities to prepare them for the repeated reading they would complete throughout the study.

Students were taught the following steps so that they could carry out the RR intervention correctly.

1. Read passage 1 and time the 1<sup>st</sup> reading.
2. Answer the comprehension questions for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. (Five questions were asked)
3. Read passage 1 and time the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

4. Read passage 1 and time the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.
5. Read passage 1 and time the 4<sup>th</sup> reading.
6. Read passage 1 and time the 5<sup>th</sup> reading.
7. Answer the comprehension questions a second time.
8. Check answers to the comprehension questions.

The group who did not complete the activity read the same timed passage but read it only two times instead of five. Additionally, they only answered one set of comprehension questions. Both groups could check their answers to the comprehension questions that they answered.

The result of the study was that the group with the repeated reading passages had a greater increase in words per minute (wpm). They increased their wpm by 47 words and by only completing the intervention once a week as opposed to the other group who only increased by 13 words. Before the study there were students who read less than 100 wpm. After the study, not one student read less than 100 wpm. It is important to note that the passages selected for the study were specifically designed for L2 learners trying to develop their reading fluency in English.

The pretests showed that the reading comprehension for these students was at 50% for unpracticed comprehension tests. This percentage went up to 66% for unpracticed comprehension tests and 70% for practiced comprehension tests. The practiced tests were questions related to passages that the student had practiced reading before, as opposed to the unpracticed tests, which were passages they were seeing for the first time. Therefore, we can see that the RR intervention helped these L2 learners increase their reading fluency and reading comprehension.

## **Implementation in the classroom**

Before we implement RR in a second language classroom there are five aspects of RR that we must understand. These five factors are timing, modeling, selection of reading passages, feedback/error correction, and graphing student progress. Each of these factors is essential to the successful implementation of RR in the classroom.

### **Timing**

According to Hudson, Lane & Puller (2005), repeated readings have been the basis of several methods available to develop reading fluency. These methods usually focus on increasing rate and accuracy. One version of repeated readings is timed repeated readings (TRR). During timed repeated readings, a timer or a stopwatch is used to time the students while they read. The students are asked to read as many words as they can in one minute. After reading for a minute the oral reading rate is determined. The reading rate is based on how many words the student reads correctly during the established time (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Incorrect words are subtracted from the number of correct words the student reads. The teacher or the student may then record the percentage of correct words read during the one-minute timing. Both the teacher and the student can calculate the words read per minute.

TRR should be implemented daily for better results. However, if time does not allow for daily sessions, it should at least be done three times a week. The more times the intervention is used throughout the week, the more practice the student will get to become a more fluent reader (Alber-Morgan, 2006)

### **Modeling**

So that the routine can be executed daily it is imperative that before the study begins the teacher model or demonstrate the steps of TRR. The steps should be explicitly taught so that the students are aware of what they need to do throughout the study. If the student works with a partner, he or she must understand the role of the reader and the role of the listener. The expectations should be explained so TRR is done correctly. In addition, students should be made aware of the purpose of TRR. The student should be able to understand that learning to read entails practice and that practice can be fun. As Shay (1999) asserts, giving students this information will increase student motivation during the intervention and will allow the student to improve over the course of the study.

### **Selection of Passages**

Although, repeated readings can be a great intervention to help students become fluent readers, it is important to select the appropriate reading material (Therrien & Kubina, 2006). First, the teacher must select passages or texts that are of high interest to the student (Cohen, 2011). Finding out about a student's interest is an important tool that teachers can use to motivate and engage students in learning, especially when it comes to reading. Using a survey or interviewing a student can help a teacher determine a student's interest and can then help the teacher choose reading materials that peek their interest.

In a study by Roundy and Roundy (2009), reading surveys were used to measure students' attitudes and reactions to reading at the beginning of the study. The survey that was administered was the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. The survey asked questions to determine the students' attitude towards reading situation, which were both academic and recreational. Using the information from the survey, fiction and nonfiction texts were selected for the study.

The study lasted five weeks and the TRR was administered three times a week. The participants in this study were one hundred and ten middle school students in seventh grade. They were part of a school with a diverse population. The school population consisted of 44% white, 26% Hispanic, 24% Black, 3% Multiracial, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. In the group of one hundred and ten students there were various reading levels. The range included students who were in the gifted program to students who were reading below grade level. However, all students participated in the study.

Initial baseline data were collected including the reading surveys. Once the passages were selected, students read a story that consisted of four to six pages. Students would begin with the first story in the basal series and work their way through. They were asked to read, rehearse, and reread until they could read one hundred twenty words in one minute (wpm). The teacher kept track and read the time at one-minute intervals. Once the students met this criterion, they would move on to the next story and use bar graphs to record their progress throughout the study.

After the study, the data analysis demonstrated that the repeated readings were effective. Not only were students able to meet their goal of one hundred twenty wpm, but the attitudes of many students towards reading also changed in a positive way. They could see the difference between the answers to the survey at the beginning of the study and compare them to the results at the end of the study. The reading surveys became an instrument that allowed the teachers to use appropriate material for TRR.

In addition to selecting passages of high interest to the students, passages or reading material should be at the students' instructional reading level (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). If the passage is too hard, the students may lose their confidence while

reading and may not feel motivated to do better in subsequent readings. Passages that are too easy will defeat the purpose of exposing the student to new vocabulary that will assist the student in transferring that knowledge to new passage or text.

Lo, Cooke, & Starling (2011) chose three second grade students who were at risk for not meeting their second-grade reading benchmark. These students were from a Title 1 urban elementary school, where 87.7% of students were African American, 5.4% were Hispanic, 4.4% Asian, 1.6% multi-racial, and 0.8% American Indian. The students who participated in the study were all African American. Their reading level at the time of the intervention was at a first-grade level. Therefore, Lo et al. decided to see if using a repeated reading intervention would help these students increase their reading fluency so that they could be closer to meeting their second grade benchmark after a few weeks of this intervention.

A few steps were used to implement repeated reading in the study. First, the reading passages that were chosen were at a first-grade level since they presented the current independent reading level of each of the student. They wanted to make sure that students could be successful using the reading skills they already had to decode unfamiliar words they encountered in the passages.

Secondly, before having students read the passages, teachers went over a list of words with the students. These words were selected because they would be difficult for the students to read. Students previewed the words and learned how to read them before being asked to read the passage independently. Flashcards were used to practice the words with the students. Before the students were instructed to read the passage for 1

minute without assistance from the teacher. As the student read the passage the teacher would record the errors on her sheet.

The teacher would then write down the words that the student got wrong on a separate set of flashcards. After reading the passage the teacher would review the misread words using the flashcards. These words would then become part of the preview words for the next time the student read the same passage. In addition, the teacher would read the passage in unison with the student to practice rate and expression while reading. Students would read the passage three to four times before moving on to a new passage.

In conclusion, all three students increased their reading fluency and were close to meeting their second-grade reading fluency benchmark by the end of the study. The boy in the study increased his wpm by twenty-six words. The girls increased their wpm by ten to fifteen words. Overall, all three participants increased their wpm and were approaching reading fluency expectations for their grade level. Being able to use the students' instructional reading levels allowed the researchers help students from the level they were at to a level that was closer to their second-grade benchmark.

Graphs were used each time the students read. At the beginning of a new passage students were shown their graphs so that they could see how they improved over time. In addition, the graph was used as a motivational tool so that students could try and beat their previous recorded time.

In addition, to selecting the appropriate reading level, teachers may opt to allow students to select the passage they would like to read for the week. Stewart (2015) recommends students choose what they want to read so that they are motivated to read the passage or text. Guthrie and Anderson (1999) explain that "an interested reader

identifies with the conceptual context of a text so fully that absorbing its meaning is an effortlessly activity” (p. 19) As a result, the student becomes an engaged reader who is constantly learning from their text. In TRR the student would then be able to be engaged each time they read even though they will be reading the same passage or text several times.

Student choice in the selection of the passages can empower students. Allowing students to choose and to be involved in their learning gives them the tools to be much more successful. In this case, we are allowing them to be successful fluent readers. This will then allow students to gain responsibility, real-life skills, and independence that are all important skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners (Shoemaker, 2016).

### **Feedback/Error Correction**

During repeated readings, it is important for students to receive feedback so that they can improve their reading fluency. Cohen (2011) states that the feedback can come from the teacher, a tutor, or another student. Providing feedback after reading the passage allows the student to see their mistakes and can help them to improve their reading rate and accuracy the next time they read the same passage. Therefore, this will help the student read the passage more fluently.

Additionally, providing student feedback in a meaningful way can greatly enhance learning and improve student achievement (Stenger, 2014). Feedback is important because reading errors provide opportunities for corrective feedback and additional active responding (Alber-Morgan, 2006). Greater gains in reading fluency have been achieved when feedback is given correctly, and after the student reads a passage for the first time (Alber-Morgan, 2006).

Feedback can be provided in different ways. One way is showing the students the words they got incorrectly when they first read the passage. While each student is reading, the person listening to the student should mark down the words the student reads incorrectly (Therrien & Kubina, 2006). The student should then be shown the words and then told how to correctly read and pronounce the word.

In addition to showing the students the miscued words, the student can be shown how to correctly read the passage with the correct rate and expression. This allows the student to compare his or her own reading of the passage, to how the reading is then modeled for the student. Reviewing miscued words should be immediate, direct, and result in the student emitting the correct response (Alber-Morgan, 2006). As a result, the student can apply the appropriate corrections in the next reading.

### **Graphing Student Progress**

During repeated readings, it is imperative to involve students in monitoring their own progress. One way in which this can be addressed is using student graphs (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). Students are taught how to graph how many words per minute (wpm) they read each time they read the passage. The chart allows students to see their progress and improvement over time (Stoller, 2013). Using charts can motivate students to perform better each time they read (Alber-Morgan, 2006). This, too, allows students to take ownership of their learning.

Using the graphs students can also set their own goals. The goal can be from week to week or what they hope to achieve by the end of the study. Criscione (2015) suggests that when setting a goal with a student the goal should be specific. The goal should always involve the student's input. Using this goal set by the student, the teacher can then

show students how they are progressing and how they are getting closer to achieving their set goal.

In the study mentioned above by Lo, Cooke, & Starling (2011), graphs were used to show students their progress. They were shown their graph before each session began. The three second-grade students could see how they performed in the previous session. Once they knew where they were they had a goal to work toward. In the end, they could use the graph to see if they had met their second-grade goal. Although, not all students in the study met their goal, the progress they made each week was clearly visible in their personal graphs.

### **Conclusion**

Reading fluency is as important for L2 learners as it is for L1 learners. The more fluent readers are the better they comprehend what they read. They go from learning to read to reading to learn and this happens even when the student is learning a second language. Although, there is much research that shows that repeated readings have been successful for students L1 learners there are studies that also suggest that it has also been successful for L2 learners.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of my study was help students increase reading fluency in Spanish. I accomplished this goal by having students complete timed repeated readings. I was confident that through this intervention and the use of self-monitoring students would be able to increase their fluency in the reading of a second language.

### **Setting**

I conducted the research for this study in the third-grade classes I teach in Eastern Pennsylvania. Ninety-seven percent of the student population has a Latino/Hispanic heritage. The school runs from Kindergarten to eighth grade with an enrollment of 450 students. The average class size is about twenty-seven students. Each grade has two sections. Students receive instruction in English for half the day and the other half they receive instruction in Spanish.

### **Participants**

The participants in my study are the students in the two third grade classes at the school. A total number of forty-five students participated in the study. In the study there were 13 male students and 32 female students (2% African-American, 4% White, 4% Multi-racial, 90% Hispanic). Between the two classes there were 43 students who have been at our school since Kindergarten. There were two new students who spoke Spanish, but had never read in Spanish.

### **Procedures**

I collected data in three different formats to ensure credibility and a valid conclusion at the end of my study. I used student artifacts, observational data, and inquiry data to document the results of my research. The data collected allowed me to analyze whether or not I was able to meet my goal regarding reading fluency.

**Student Artifacts.** First, I began by collecting various student artifacts. Collecting student artifacts allowed me the ability to measure students' attainment of learning objectives or students' progress towards the goals in my action research (Hendricks, p. 91, 2013). All students took a reading fluency test using Aimsweb. It is a test used to measure reading fluency in Spanish and it is given three times a year. While students were reading to me, I completed a fluency rubric (Appendix B). This rubric helped me measure expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. As students read during the Aimsweb evaluation, I gave each participant a score based on the rubric.

The results from the reading fluency test and fluency rubric were kept in the students' data folders along with an individual goal sheet that students filled out on their own (Appendix A). This goal sheet provided students with their reading fluency score, and an area for them to decide what their reading fluency goal would be for the winter. I used these reading goal sheets, along with the reading fluency score sheet, as student artifacts in my data collection.

Then I tested students on how many Spanish third-grade high frequency words they knew. Then students were given a list of 100 high frequency words in Spanish (Appendix C). We then checked off each word the students got correct. In the end, we calculated the average number of words the student knows. Afterwards, I used this data to come up with a list of spelling words and used the list to choose their reading books.

Another student artifact that I collected was individual student graphs (Appendix D). The graphs were a tool used by students to monitor their growth from one week to another. Since I focused on reading fluency, students could chart how many words per minute they read daily from Monday to Thursday each week. This provided them a visual in which they could see how they were progressing towards the goal they set for the winter.

**Observational data.** According to Hendricks, observational data can help determine why an intervention is successful or unsuccessful and how the context of the setting affected a study (2013, p. 100). This type of data was relevant in making conclusions at the end of the study. Observational data have provided me with a tool to measure the effectiveness of my intervention.

For my observational data, I began collecting field notes using a double-entry journal. This double-entry journal allowed me to collect information using nonparticipant observations. Once a day I used the double-entry journal to write down pertinent information about the implementation of the intervention. On one side, I wrote down observations of how students were performing on the daily passages and any reactions or conversations that they had with their peers about the study. I also took notes about any questions that they ask when I explained the study and any questions they had during the study. On the other side of the journal I wrote about my own feelings and thoughts regarding the observations I was making.

In addition to the field notes, I took photographs of students who have signed consent forms with the school. The photographs displayed students reading the passages

and filling out the charts after they read. I took pictures of them reading the passages to their peers to demonstrate how the intervention was implemented.

The last piece of observational data that I collected was an on-task behavior tally sheet. It allowed me to make a tally mark of all the students that were on task each day when we were reading for 1-minute (Appendix E). I was interested in seeing if students could stay on task and follow the routine for this intervention once it was established in the classroom. Additionally, it allowed me to see if they were engaged with the reading and were trying their best to read as many words as possible each day.

**Inquiry data.** The last piece of data that I collected is what Hendricks refers to as inquiry data. Inquiry data included student interviews (Appendix F) and reading attitude surveys (Appendix G). I began by interviewing a few students about their interest in reading in Spanish. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. The interviews began with a set of specific questions to help guide me. Using a semi-structured approach allowed the participants to speak about other related issues not addressed in the questions I asked (Hendricks, p. 110, 2013). For instance, I followed up on the answers to some of their questions and it provided me with other useful information for the study.

The surveys were on paper and were given to all participants. I made sure that the statements on the survey were written at a third-grade reading level. Additionally, I read the statements to the students that were not at a third-grade reading level. The survey was a reading attitude survey where students could choose if they strongly agreed, agreed, felt neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the provided statements. The statements were specifically about their attitudes towards reading in Spanish and sharing what they

read in Spanish. The statements on the survey also asked students if they enjoyed reading aloud in Spanish or with a buddy.

### **Trustworthiness Statement**

An important part of action research is the trustworthiness of the study. Therefore, I used different measures before, during, and after my study to ensure that all information was collected in a valid and trustworthy fashion. I began by obtaining approval and permission to conduct my research study from Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) (Appendix H). I also obtained consent for the implementation of my study from my building principal (Appendix I), my teacher assistant (Appendix J) and the parents or guardians of the students who participated in the study (Appendix K). Consent forms allowed parents to understand the purpose of the study and what I hoped to achieve throughout the study. Additionally, parents were given instructions on how to withdraw their child from the study without penalty. Students were given assent forms in which they could decide whether or not they wanted to participate in my research study (Appendix L). I also obtained consent from my assistant teacher to participate since she assisted me with the implementation of the study.

To ensure trustworthiness, I used a method defined by Hendricks as triangulation, which is a process in which multiple forms of data are collected and analyzed to help establish credibility (2013). I collected student artifacts, observational and inquiry data, before, during, and after my study. This helped to ensure that the data collected were gathered correctly and would allow me to provide a valid conclusion at the end of my study.

During the study, I maintained all my data and student work in a safe and secure place where only I had access to the information. Students' names were replaced with pseudonyms anytime I wrote about them in my double-entry journal, or in any phase of the writing of my thesis. At the end of study, I discarded all documents and information collected in the best possible way to maintain anonymity of the participants in my study.

During the progress of my study I engaged in self-reflection. Engaging in this reflective practice allowed me to make changes that benefited my students and helped me meet their diverse needs. Additionally, I participated in peer debriefing (Hendricks, 2013). Peer debriefing allowed me the opportunity to consult with my colleagues in a support group. I could discuss how my study was progressing along the way. Looking at my study from a different perspective, they could determine whether there were any biases. In addition, my peers gave me the support and assistance I needed as I completed the study.

## MY STORY

### My 4<sup>th</sup> year

As I walked through the school, I could smell the freshly painted walls. The floors were shiny and it was evident that the classroom had been empty all summer long. It was hard to believe that I was about to begin my fourth year as a teacher. I walked into the classroom ready to arrange the desks into a shape that would make it easy to interact with my new third grade students. I couldn't contain the excitement I felt knowing, that the start of the new school year, also meant the culmination of my journey.

Last spring I began thinking about the kind of research I wanted to pursue in my classroom. *What type of intervention would help me as a teacher, and benefit my students and colleagues?* I began by reflecting on my previous years as a third-grade teacher. *In what area did my students previously struggle? Could I find something that I was passionate about, and at the same time needed to get better at teaching?* The idea began to slowly build in my head, and as the days went by, I took a careful look at the subjects that I taught. Gradually, I decided that I wanted to improve my students' reading fluency in Spanish. I knew this would be one of my favorite research studies, because I felt passionate about it, and about the impact it would have on my students. I wanted to find an intervention that would help my students move forward and would help them grow as readers. It wasn't only about my students and me, it was also about sharing my research

with teachers, who like me, wanted to improve their student's reading abilities.

Therefore, I decided to use timed repeated readings to help my students read more fluently in Spanish.

Helen Keller once said, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing." I like to think, that as a teacher, every day is a daring adventure. Timed repeated reading was the adventure I decided I was going to pursue in my classroom. An adventure, which I embraced, and looked forward to each day.

Reflecting on this decision I can now say that it has been an impressive journey. I have learned more about my students and about myself as a teacher. Although I faced a few challenges and obstacles, I overcame them. In addition, I learned the true meaning of what it means to work as a team and how important it is to be flexible.

### **Hitting the ground running**

Right before I began my study, I learned that I was pregnant. I was surprised and excited, until I remembered that my research study would begin close to my delivery date. I decided then that I needed to "hit the ground running." I would use the summer to prepare as much as I could for the months ahead. I met with my principal, co-teacher, and teacher assistant and explained everything I wanted to accomplish. We discussed the incoming third graders and their reading levels in Spanish.

After explaining what I wanted to accomplish, I described how I would implement the research in my classroom. I shared my expectations, and the daily routines that would take place in the classroom. At the end of the meeting, I also pointed out that I needed to begin my study as soon as possible because my due date was set for November. Thankfully, my team was very supportive, and agreed to help me as much as possible.

Classes began the third week of August, one week before the Bethlehem's School District. Usually, I complain about having to go back so early. This time however, I was excited to begin working with my new third-graders and collecting the baseline data for my study.

The second week of school, my teacher assistant and I got together, and we began collecting data. The first evaluation I administered was the survey (Appendix G) combined with individual interviews (Appendix F). I gave the surveys to one class at a time and explained each statement. Then as I read each question, I allowed students to pick their answer. Additionally, I reminded them that the survey was anonymous. As students were answering the questions, they kept bringing up memories of their second-grade Spanish teacher, who was no longer at our school. I could see how they had built a strong relationship with her, and I knew that I wanted to build one with them as well.

For the individual interviews, I randomly picked six students from each class. The biggest thing that stood out was that many of these students lacked the resources they needed at home to practice their reading skills. They didn't have books in Spanish or English. Therefore, I would need to supply the students with books if I wanted them to practice their reading skills at home. Thankfully, our school uses Reading A to Z. On this website, we can find books in Spanish and English. There are many different levels and they also have fiction and nonfiction books. I found books that were appropriate for their reading level and of their interest. Below are interviews from two of the students who were selected at random. Each one is from a different class.

**Table 1: Alyssa’s Interview on Reading**

<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Alyssa’s Answers</b>
<i>1. Why do people read?</i>	“To learn more words.”
<i>2. How did you learn to read?</i>	“With books in schools. Also my friends help me.”
<i>3. Describe a time someone read to you. What do you remember?</i>	“I remember last year when Donna use to read to me. It was fun. I like how she reads!”
<i>4. Do you read for fun?</i>	“Yes I do. I read Captain Underpants. It’s funny.”
<i>5. Do you have reading materials available to you and do you know how to get them?</i>	“I don’t have any right now. Maybe I can order some from the school using the paper Mrs. Krock gives us.” (She is referring to the scholastic book orders we place monthly.)
<i>6. What are your strengths as a reader? What strategies help you when you read?</i>	“I don’t know. I don’t think I’m a good reader.”
<i>7. What frustrates you most about reading? How do you handle it?</i>	“I struggle when I read. I can’t read the word. When I get mad I put my head down and I don’t want to read anymore. Ms. Mohring helps me sound out the word but she’s not always with me.” (Ms. Mohring is the reading specialist.)
<i>8. How much are you reading in school and do you enjoy what you read?</i>	“I only read when I have too. Sometimes when we have free time I try to read.”
<i>9. If you could change anything about your reading/language arts/Spanish class to make it more interesting, what would you change?</i>	“I wish we could partner-read more. I rather do that then read alone especially in Spanish. I’m learning Spanish I only know English.”
<i>10. What do you think makes a good reading teacher?</i>	“She needs to practice to be a better reading teacher. The way I practice reading.”

**Table 2: Frankie’s Interview on Reading**

<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Frankie’s Answers</b>
<i>1. Why do people read?</i>	“To get smart.”
<i>2. How did you learn to read?</i>	“I learned to read when I came here in Kindergarten.”
<i>3. Describe a time someone read to you. What do you remember?</i>	“My mom reads to me in English but she can’t read in Spanish.”
<i>4. Do you read for fun?</i>	“Sometimes.”
<i>5. Do you have reading materials available to you and do you know how to get them?</i>	“I don’t have books at home. We only have magazines.”
<i>6. What are your strengths as a reader? What strategies help you when you read?</i>	“Nothing.”
<i>7. What frustrates you most about reading? How do you handle it?</i>	“I hate big words that I don’t know how to sound out.”
<i>8. How much are you reading in school and do you enjoy what you read?</i>	“I read a little. I don’t like to read.”
<i>9. If you could change anything about your reading/language arts/Spanish class to make it more interesting, what would you change?</i>	“I don’t know yet.”
<i>10. What do you think makes a good reading teacher?</i>	“The teacher should help kids if they don’t know what they are doing.”

Next I administered Aimsweb. This test allows teachers to measure each student’s reading fluency in Spanish or English, and enables teacher to see which tier students fall into. There are three tiers and each tier provides teachers with the type of intervention a student needs to succeed in reading at their appropriate level. A few new students had never taken this test and were nervous while they were reading.

While the students were completing their reading, I used an oral reading fluency rubric, shown in Figure 1, to measure the way they read. The rubric measures expression

and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. While it is important that a student reads fluently, the student should also have the appropriate rate, volume, phrasing, and reading expressions. By modeling each passage before the students read it on their own, I taught them how to read with the appropriate rate. Occasionally, I would read fast or slow to show students the difference in reading rates. The first time I read slow one student looked at me and said, “Ms. Why are you reading so slow? You’re the teacher, you

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**FLUENCY RUBRIC**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expression and Volume</b>	Reads in a quiet voice as if to get words out. The reading does not sound natural like talking to a friend.	Reads in a quiet voice. The reading sounds natural in part of the text, but the reader does not always sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with volume and expression. However, sometimes the reader slips into expressionless reading and does not sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with varied volume and expression. The reader sounds like they are talking to a friend with their voice matching the interpretation of the passage.
<b>Phrasing</b>	Reads word-by-word in a monotone voice.	Reads in two or three word phrases, not adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness. There is reasonable stress and intonation.	Reads with good phrasing; adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.
<b>Smoothness</b>	Frequently hesitates while reading, sounds out words, and repeats words or phrases. The reader makes multiple attempts to read the same passage.	Reads with extended pauses or hesitations. The reader has many “rough spots.”	Reads with occasional breaks in rhythm. The reader has difficulty with specific words and/or sentence structures.	Reads smoothly with some breaks, but self-corrects with difficult words and/ or sentence structures.
<b>Pace</b>	Reads slowly and laboriously.	Reads moderately slowly.	Reads fast and slow throughout reading.	Reads at a conversational pace throughout the reading.

Scores of 10 or more indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.      Score \_\_\_\_\_

Scores below 10 indicate that the student needs additional instruction in fluency.

Figure 1: Oral reading fluency rubric used to score students’ reading

should know how to read better than us!” I smiled at his comment and told him I was exaggerating so that the class could hear the difference compared to the way the passage should have been read. Then, I started reading fast. One girl stood up and yelled, “¡Sra. Olmeda, no te entiendo!” She couldn’t understand what I was reading because it was too fast. I clarified again that I did it on purpose. I wanted to illustrate how they sound when

they read too fast, or too slow. For the rest of this evaluation, each time I modelled the reading passage, I reminded them of the appropriate way to read using the components on the rubric.

The last evaluation that I used to collect my baseline data was a reading test with 100 third-grade high frequency words in Spanish (Appendix C). This test would allow me to determine how many high frequency words students knew. As the year progressed, I pointed out these words in our daily readings, highlighted them and added them to our word wall. Then I tested the students to see how many words they could read. Knowing these words would enable students to read fluently. Students in Class A knew an average of 77 of the words on the list. Students in Class B knew an average of 63 of the words on the list.

Once I collected the data, I asked students to come up with a goal for their reading fluency in Spanish. I met with each student individually to help them determine their desired goal in Spanish. First, I showed them how many words they read when I tested them. We discussed their goal for the end of the third grade and how much progress they needed to make throughout the course of the year. With this information, students determined their individual goals, and filled out their individual student goal sheet (Appendix A) that they could keep in their student portfolio. This would serve as a reminder as to where they wanted to be when I tested them again during the winter benchmark. This sheet also included goals for English reading fluency and Math. These goals enabled students to focus their work efforts in all content areas.

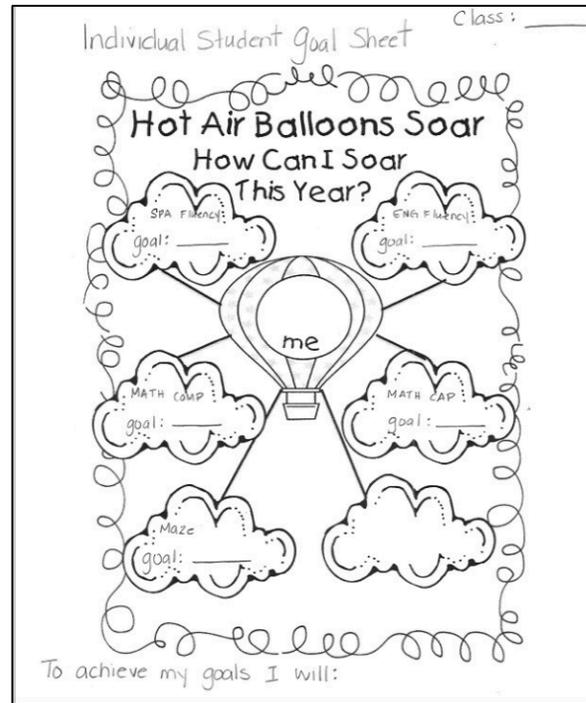


Figure 2: Individual student goal sheet

### Introducing the study

Since I teach two third-grade classes, I decided to share the news with my homeroom first. I was anxious to see their reactions, and see what kind of questions they had before I shared it with the other third grade class. I began explaining to them that I was in the last year of my Master's Degree, and that I needed to complete a project in which I would need their help. A few students could not believe that I was still in school. One student asked, "Why are you still in school?" I told her that I wanted to become a better teacher, and therefore, I had decided to go back to school. They seemed surprised to learn that I was their teacher and yet I was also a student. This small connection helped build a relationship with them.

During my study, I constantly reminded them that I was a student and that I was also learning with them. Anytime I felt that we encountered a challenge, I would go back to the reasoning behind my study. I made sure to always remind them that it wasn't only about my project, it was also because I wanted to help them become better readers. To this day, I provide examples of ways I struggle as a student, just like they struggle sometimes. Whenever I remind them that I am in college, I can connect with them as a student. This results in the students being more inclined and motivated to get the work done.

Next, I shared it with my second third-grade class. They were also excited and eager to help me with the study. Many of them went home that day and told their parents all about my project and how they would be helping me with it. In this class, my initial news also led a conversation about college. They asked me about attending college and the importance of a higher education. When one student mentioned that his parents had not been to college the discussion began to include topics and questions that I had not previously anticipated. I had not thought that from what I thought was a simple conversation, I would end up discussing college life, and the choices involving work and pursuing a higher education after high school. However, it was such a natural discussion that I just went with the flow. The students had all these great questions, and I knew that if I took the time to answer them, the students would be willing to work harder and perform better in reading.

### **Getting to know my students**

As I mentioned before, during the first week of school I asked students to complete a reading survey. The survey allowed me to learn more about their feelings

towards reading in Spanish. I learned that 65% of my students enjoyed reading in Spanish. However, 47% of this same group did not like to share what they read about in Spanish. Additionally, I learned that 85% of my students were confident that with continued practice they could become better readers in Spanish. 60% of students also expressed that they enjoyed partner reading and reading aloud. Having this information, I knew that this intervention would be beneficial for my class. A high percentage of the students were already confident that they would become better readers if they practiced. They already believed that they could be successful. This was the type of motivation that would allow them to do a great job in becoming better readers.

The interviews allowed me to get to know each student on an individual level. They helped me learn more about their reading habits and their ideas about reading. For instance, as I previously mentioned, I learned that many of my students did not have books at home to read in English or Spanish. Therefore, I knew that if I wanted them to read at home I had to provide them with the resources they needed, or help them be more accessible.

With this information, I decided to implement a reading log and developed a routine. Each week I chose a small Spanish book. On Mondays, we would cut the copied pages and put the book together. I would read the book, then they would echo read, and finally we would partner read. During the week, they would practice reading the same book at home. To help them build on their other subjects, I would pick books that had something to do with their current topics in Science or Social Studies. Parents became involved as well, by practicing the books with their children at home.

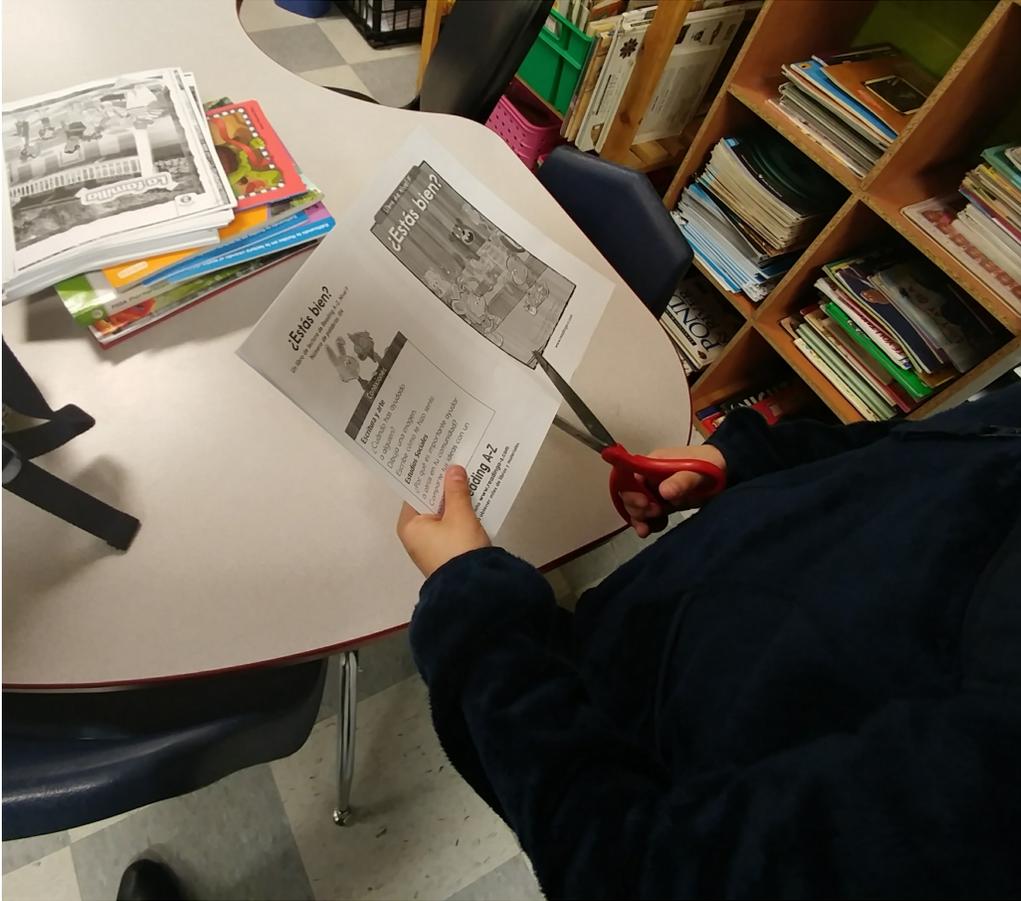


Figure 3: Student putting together her weekly reading book

### **Implementing the study**

Having explained the study to both classes and obtained their agreement to work with me, I began looking towards the implementation of my study. I wanted to have timed repeated readings become a part of our daily classroom routine activities as seamlessly as possible. I wanted them to have fun with it and ultimately enjoy working together to become better readers.

During my research, I learned that this intervention should be completed daily. I was apprehensive about it at first, because I did not want my students to get tired of reading each day for a minute. I wanted them to put forth the same amount of effort each day no matter what. From experience, I've noticed that sometimes, when you introduce

something new to students, they seem to enjoy it at first. Then, as time goes by, they begin to get bored. The same thing can happen to the teacher, and this is what I wanted to avoid. However, I was prepared for this type of obstacle, because I had done my research. Additionally, I had learned more about my students, and what types of learners they were. Not only did I complete the surveys and interviews, I also spoke to their second-grade Spanish teacher. With her insight, my observations, and data, I decided to implement my study in the following way. These were the measures I took before starting the timed repeated readings:

*Step 1:* Students were given passages close to their individual reading levels. This allowed the provided passage to be at a comfortable level for the student, so that it was not too easy, or too challenging.

*Step 2:* Students were paired up by the teacher according to their reading levels. As best as possible, students that had a high level were paired with students that had a similar level, but not the same. Therefore, the higher student could read first, and model the correct way to read the passage for the second student.

*Step 3:* Students were given an individual folder with a graph. The students were tasked with graphing the number of Spanish words they read each day. This allowed students to visually see their daily performance, and how close they were to reaching their individual reading goal.

*Step 4:* Students were taught the expectations of carrying out the intervention. They were shown the correct way to read a passage, graph the amount they read, and how to listen to their paired reading partner. Additionally, they were given specific instructions on how to

wait until the end of the reading, to point out a mistake that the reader may have committed.

*Step 5:* Students were also shown how to draw a line on their passage to show where they had stopped when the time was up.

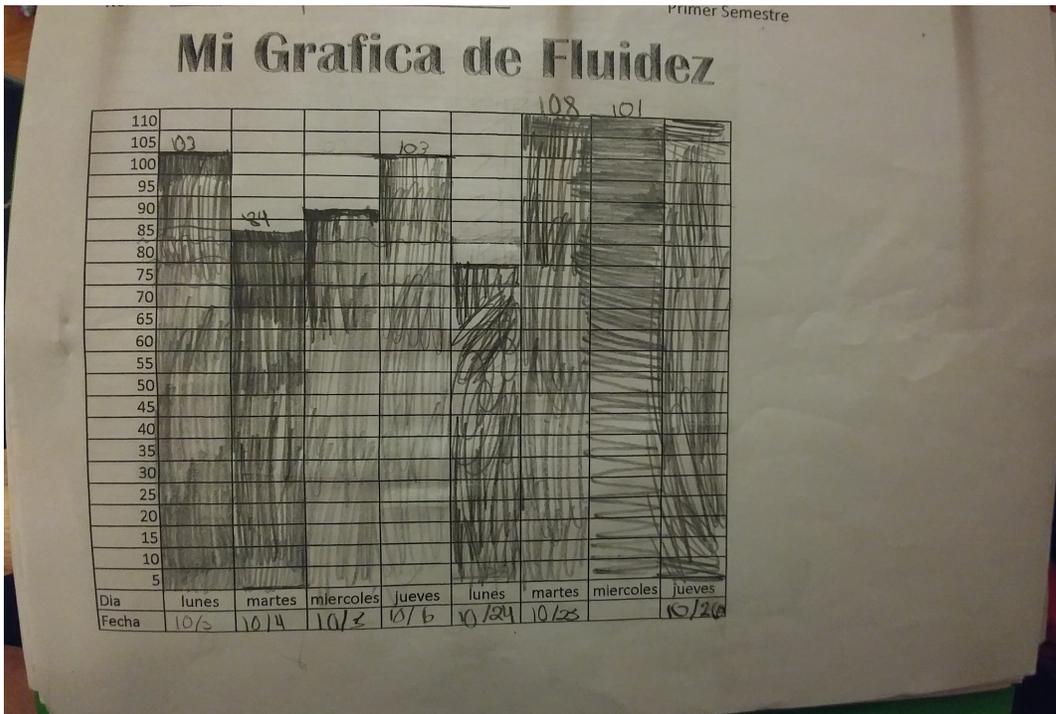


Figure 4: Filled-in student graph (Mi Grafica de Fluidez/My Fluency Graph)

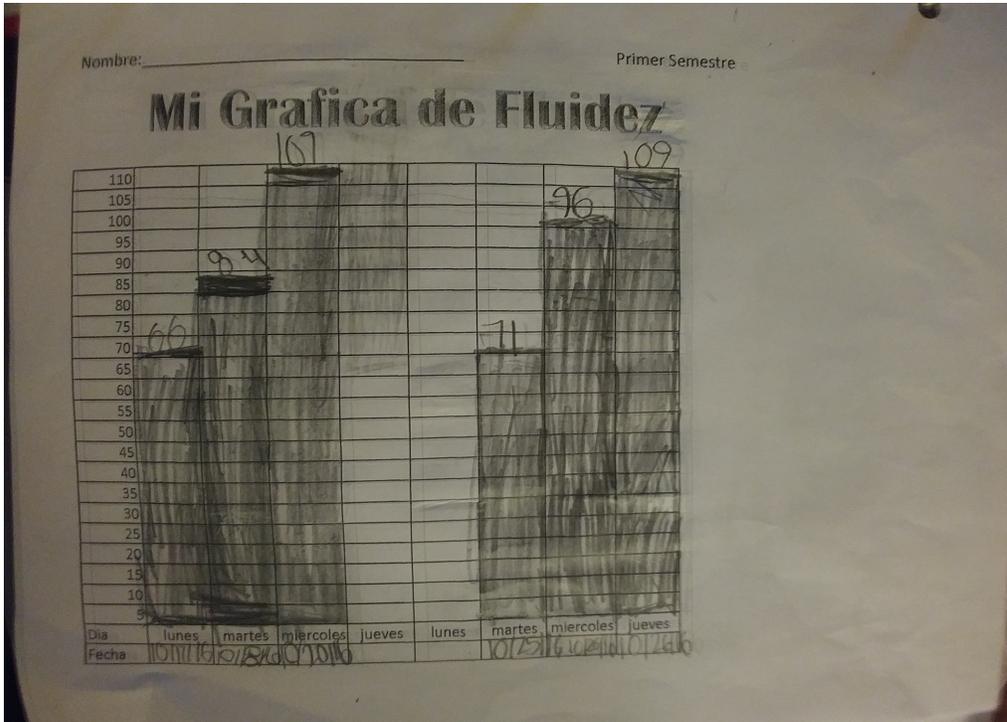


Figure 5: Filled-in student graph (Mi Grafica de Fluidez/My Fluency Graph)

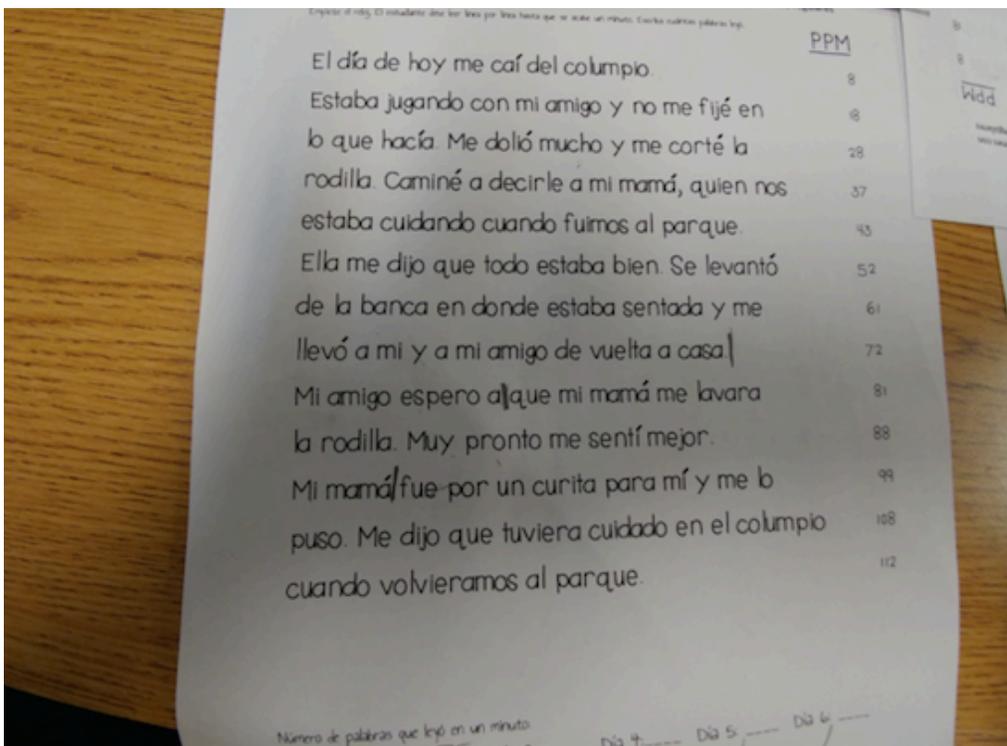


Figure 6: Student has drawn a line where they stopped reading on the first and second day of reading the passage

After going through these five steps, I explained our daily routine. We practiced for the first week, so that they could get used to it. Below is an outline of the way in which they completed the intervention. This would happen during our Spanish block.

1. Each Monday, a new passage was inserted into the student's folder that was specific to their reading level.
2. The helper of the day would grab the folders from a bin in my library.
3. Next, the helper would place the folders on the desks of each student.
4. I would read the passage to the students. I would model the correct way of reading the passage, pronouncing each word. If there were spelling words, or high frequency words in the passage, I would point them out to the students. The passages were only modeled on Mondays, since students would use the same passage for the rest of the week.
5. Afterwards, I would ask students to move next to their partners to begin reading.

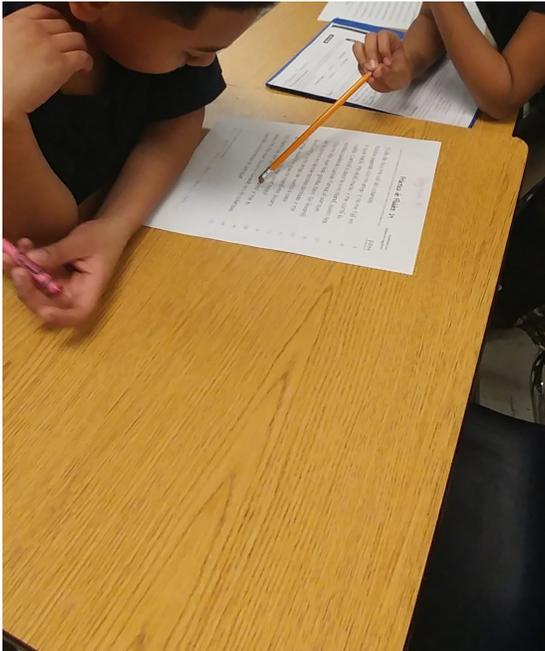


Figure 7: Student reading with their partner

6. Then, I would set the timer to one minute and would let the first reader begin.

7. Once the first reader finished reading, students were instructed to write how many words they read on the bottom of the passage.

8. Next, the second reader would read for one minute, and would write down how many words they read.
9. After the second reader read, all students graphed (Appendix D) the amount of words they read that day. In the beginning, until they got use to graphing, students struggled with the graphing part. However, my assistant and I would walk around the classroom to ensure that students were graphing correctly.
10. The helper would then collect the folders and place them into the bin.
11. Once the folders were collected, students knew that it was time to move onto the next item on the agenda of what we will be accomplishing in class that day.

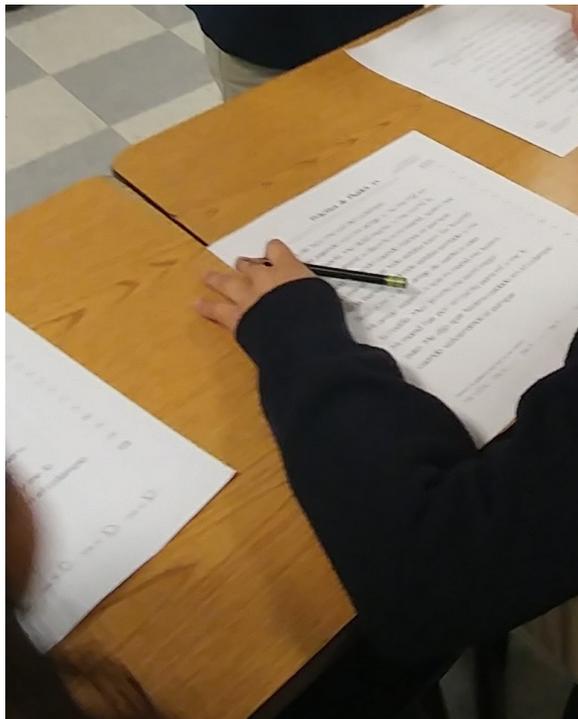


Figure 8: Student reading his passage

### **One week down, a few more to go.**

The first week of my study was an interesting one. One that helped me prepare for the weeks ahead. After explaining the study to my students, and practicing with them for a week, I was finally ready to begin collecting real data. The anticipation was building,

and I was nervous about what lay ahead. It wasn't the time to second guess my decisions, and the choices about my study. I had done the research, and my students and I were ready to get the work done.

That first Monday I began by reminding my students that we would begin our timed repeated readings. One student raised her hand and said, "Ms. I can't wait to start! I know I am gonna do good." I smiled at her, and told her that I had agreed with her, and knew she would do a good job as well. Then I proceeded to read the various passages that students would be reading throughout the week. I projected the passages on the smartboard so that they had another way of following along. They could look at the passage in front of them or they could look at the passage on the smartboard. Once I modeled the reading for the students, I asked them to find their partners. I put up a timer on the smartboard and then I asked the first reader to begin. Once they were done, I proceeded to instruct the second reader to get ready to begin. The timer went off and they began to read. Very quickly I picked up on the fact that they began to see the intervention as a competition between each other.

One student yelled to their partner, "Let's see if you can beat me!" His partner responded by saying, "Of course I can. I read fast!" Walking around, I could sense that the students were excited as they completed reading. However, I noticed that some students were also frustrated. "Sra. Olmeda, I didn't get to finish. You need to give me more time. I wasn't finished." I came over to the student and explained that it was okay that she wasn't done. She read again the next day and tried harder to beat the timer. She seemed okay with the answer until the next day, when the same thing happened. This was our conversation:

“Sra. Olmeda you said I would do better today.”

“Yes, I did Melanie, how many words did you read yesterday?”

“I read 45 words.”

“How many did you read today?” I was hoping it was more than the day before so that she could understand what I was trying to tell her.

“I read 56.”

“See Melanie you read better than yesterday.”

“Yes, I did, but I didn’t finish the passage.”

“You didn’t finish the passage, but you read more words today than yesterday. Maybe tomorrow you will finish the passage since, you only have a few more words to go.” The passage was 68 words long.

Thankfully the next day she read 60 words, and by the last day of the week she completed the passage.

“Melanie how did you do today?”

“Sra. Olmeda I read the whole passage and it was so easy! You were right I did finish it. I read faster today than the first time I tried it. When can we start another passage?”

“On Monday, you will get a new passage with more words.”

“I hope it has 100 words so I can read them in a minute.”

I never expected this type of comment from this student. Sometimes, when I am teaching Spanish, I could see that she was not paying attention, because Spanish was not her first language. Therefore, seeing her enthusiasm made me believe that I had made the right choice for my students.

## **The study**

For the next few weeks we continued with the timed repeated readings. Each Monday I introduced a new book and new reading passages. The students were so use to doing this that the helper of the day would automatically grab the folders and place them on the students' desks. Whenever we had to change the daily schedule around because of a school activity students were always sure to point out that we had to practice our reading.

One day I had not made any copies of books for the students to take home. After we did our timed repeated reading a student raised his hand and asked about the small books.

“Ms. Olmeda, are we going to put our books together this week?”

“No, James. I wasn't able to copy them this morning, but you will have them for you tomorrow.”

“That's not good Ms. Olmeda. My mom has me read each night and she will be looking for the book in my Ziploc bag.”

“Don't worry James I will send a message to parents so they know that today you will not have to read.”

“Okay, Ms. Because if you don't she will think I just don't want to read!”

Parents at home were also working to setup a daily routine so that their child could practice their reading. It was satisfying to know that parents were working with their children. Many times, as teachers we say that teaching a child takes more than just the teacher at school. I saw the benefit of working together with parents to ensure that students were practicing their reading at home as well as in school. All I had to do was

communicate my expectations with parents and explain my reasoning behind the reading at home and using a reading log. I did still have a few students whose parents hardly ever signed their log. However, I used my mornings in class to have them read to me or to my assistant so that they could still get the practice they needed.

We continued for a few more weeks until I hit an obstacle. Using the on-task and off-task behavior chart I began to observe when my students were doing what they were supposed to and when they were not. I noted the different things they were doing instead of listening to their partners read. For example, some students were drawing on their papers, others were trying to walk away to listen to someone else read. When I conferenced with a few of the students who were exhibiting these off-task behaviors I learned that a few of them wanted to change partners. So, I went ahead and switched their partners.

On one specific Monday morning I was about to pass out the new passages when a student stood up from his chair and announced, “Why are we doing this again? I don’t want to do this. It’s boring!” I quickly walked over to where he was standing. As I walked over I didn’t know how I would approach him. Would I tell him that he had to do it, or would I ask why he thought it was boring? As a teacher, I often worry about being boring because as a student myself I found myself bored this caused me to be unfocused. Did I really want to know why he was bored? I decided to ask him why he was bored.

“Eduardo why do you feel bored? We have been doing this for a few weeks now.”

“Sra. Olmeda, I don’t want to keep reading. The passages are getting harder and my partner always beats me. I can never win”

“Eduardo this is not about winning. We are just practicing our reading so that we can become better readers.”

“Yeah, but it’s not fair! He always reads the story faster than me.”

“So are you really bored with this, or are you upset because you never win.”

“I never win Ms. He never lets me beat him!”

I proceeded to ask the rest of the class if they were any other student who felt uncomfortable with their partner. A few students raised their hands so that day I took the time to speak with each of them.

Through these small meetings, a common theme was being talked about. Although they kept saying they were bored, the students were just having a hard time reading faster and felt their partner was a better reader so it made them tune out while their partner read. As a result, they became bored because they practically had nothing to do. So, I looked at the students who I spoke to and decided to change partners. This was the best thing I could have done. Since I was changing their partners I went on to do it with the whole class because I didn’t want to make those students feel a certain way. This made me realize that in the future I should consider how long students are with their partners so that they won’t get bored easily. However, after I switched the partners they were working with I was still seeing some off-task behaviors.

When I met with these students again I learned that they were finding the text too easy. Additionally, they were finding that the text was boring to them. These students were becoming comfortable reading in Spanish because they were practicing at home and in school. So, when we would read the timed repeated readings they found it easy to read.

Additionally, I had been working with high frequency words and so they were learning to read these words faster when they saw the words in the passages.

As a result, I found passages that were more challenging and were more interesting for them. Right away I could see the difference in their behavior. They were on-task listening to each other and were not drawing or trying to walk away from their partner. A few days after when I observed again using my behavior chart I saw a dramatic decrease in off-task behavior. Using the chart to document these behaviors allowed me to see that some students were struggling to follow the procedures because they found the text boring or too easy.

### **Teamwork**

Completing my study was so important to me. I could see the difference in some of my students as we continued practicing and reading our passages each week. Whenever we completed a read aloud, there were many more hands in the air volunteering to take a turn at reading. I could see that they felt more confident about reading in front of the rest of the class.

We had been conducting the study for five full weeks, when I received a little surprise. Although my daughter was supposed to be born six weeks later, she was going to arrive sooner than expected. I was very excited about her arrival, but in the back of my head, I was also nervous about leaving my students, and how my leave would affect the study.

As soon as I knew that she was coming early, I met with my third-grade team and informed them, and my principal about my earlier than expected maternity leave. Thankfully, they were very supportive and were willing to help me in any way possible.

My teacher assistant had been with me since the first day of my study, and knew all the steps and routines to continue with the study until the last day. She quickly offered to continue with the timed repeated readings, since she too had seen the difference in the students' reading abilities.

My teacher assistant, Ms. Betsy, had assisted me in collecting all the baseline data. Therefore, she was familiar with how fluently they could read in Spanish. She had been assisting me in the classroom and helping me complete the study by walking around, and observing students as they read the timed passages. Many times, we would discuss how individual students were performing, and how good students were working with their partners. Having Ms. Betsy's assistance allowed me to have someone supporting me daily throughout my study, from the beginning. We were both able to make observations and make comparisons.

Additionally, working closely with Ms. Betsy, allowed my principal to make the decision that she would be the perfect person to take over my Spanish classroom instruction during my maternity leave. She had the qualifications, and had the knowledge of all my classroom routines and expectations. She also had experience with my grading style. Therefore, my principal suggested that she could become my substitute for my Spanish class. This was a good thing in so many ways.

First, she had knowledge of my classroom, and my Spanish instructions. Second, she was familiar with all the students and they were familiar with her. Ms. Betsy was already in the process of building a relationship with them. This would help in a big way because my students didn't have to adjust to a new person, and they didn't have to try and learn new classroom routines, rules, or expectations. Everything would stay the same.

Lastly, Ms. Betsy knew the “ins and outs” of my study, because I was always keeping her informed. It was a great solution to what I thought was going to be a big problem.

As soon as we told Ms. Betsy, she was eager to help. She insisted in continuing the study and having weekly conferences with me, to provide updates, and share notes. I asked her to complete the study for one week following my leave to see how the students performed, and from there we would decide together if we should continue the study.

In the first week with Ms. Betsy, she had to go back and show students the expectations of the timed repeated readings. I don't think that they forgot how to complete the activity, since we had been doing it for five weeks. It may have been the fact that perhaps, since Ms. Betsy was substituting for me, students took it as a sign that they didn't have to put too much effort into the activity. Thankfully, Ms. Betsy redirected them by going over the steps and procedures that they needed to complete each day. Additionally, she reminded them that they were helping me with the study, and that they needed to put as much effort as they could.

During this time, Ms. Betsy shared some of the few things that she observed while they completed the passages. Some students were very competitive and did not pay too much attention as the second reader was reading. This was something that I had seen. With a few reminders, she made sure they didn't continue to commit this error. After a few days, the students were back into their routines and completed four more weeks of timed repeated readings. Altogether, we completed nine weeks of this intervention. I gave my students two weeks off before returning from maternity leave. When I returned, I decided to complete testing and interviews so that I could check in with my students and

see where they were. I wanted to see how much they had grown, so that I could make the decision of continuing my study for a little longer or finishing the study altogether.

### **Checking in**

When I returned from maternity leave I had to reacquaint myself with my students. I went over the classroom routines and rules. We played games and used ice breakers to develop our student-teacher relationship. Students were excited that I was back but had no idea what to expect.

I decided to meet with my principal and share with her the plans I had for my study. I wasn't sure if I should continue the study or if I had enough information to see a difference in their reading fluency. I decided to administer the evaluations I started with to see where my students were. I wanted to check in to find out whether there was significant growth or if I need a few more weeks of practice with them.

Thankfully, when I administered the Aimsweb benchmark I was very pleased. One of my students had doubled the amount of words she read in one minute. Although, she was nowhere near the goal for third grade she was reading better than she had in August. She started with sixteen words in a minute and now was reading thirty-five words in a minute. She was also reading with expression. Since I had not heard her read in the last six weeks it was an amazing experience. It was as if I was hearing her read for the first time. If it wasn't for my baseline data, I would have thought this is how she always read.

As I continued collecting my post-data it became more evident how much this intervention had helped my students. I was so proud of them and my assistant for

working so hard even when I wasn't there. No matter what, they did not give up and were able to pursue their individual goals.

The week following my check-ins we had parent-teacher conferences. Imagine my surprise when I began hearing comments from parents about their child's reading abilities in Spanish. One parent commented by saying, "I have never heard my child read so clearly in Spanish. He reads better in Spanish than me!" Another parent stated, "I can't believe that my son knows how to read in Spanish. I love reading with him each night and sometimes we compete to see who reads the book faster." Listening to these comments helped me feel relieved. Even though I had not been there a few weeks my team, my students, and their parents had worked hard to continue with the study.

## **Data Analysis**

Throughout my study, I collected various forms of data. This data included student artifacts, observational data and inquiry data. Compiling these three types of data ensured that I could present valid results and support any conclusions about my study. The data sources were pre- and post- Aimsweb reading fluency test, student individual goal sheets, student graphs, high frequency word test, my field log, photographs, an on-task behavior tally sheet, pre-study reading attitude survey, and pre-study student interviews.

### **Aimsweb Fluency Test**

At Lehigh Valley Dual Language Charter School (LVDLCS) we currently use Aimsweb in our Language Arts classes to help us measure student reading fluency in English and Spanish. With this assessment, I can determine the rate and accuracy by which my students can read in Spanish. I usually administer this test three times a year. The first test is usually in September, the second test in January, and the last one in May. Since I wanted to begin my study quickly, I conducted the first test in August. Then I repeated the test at the end of November, so that I could compare the results to the benchmarks scores I obtained in August.

Our school has established that by the end of third grade students should be able to read 87 words in one minute in Spanish. My initial evaluation indicated my students were not even at the half way point of the standard set by our school. In fact, many of my students were below 40 words per minute. However, using timed repeated readings, the students were able to increase the amount of words they read in a minute. I calculated the average by class and by gender.

Class A had 22 students and Class B had 23 students. As you can see in Table 3 Class A increased their words per minute by an average of nine words. Class B increased their words per minute by an average of twelve words. When analyzing the results by gender the boys increased by ten words and the girls increased by ten words as shown in Table 4.

Aimsweb provides reports that can also indicate the tiers into which the students fall. These tiers allow teachers to use specific interventions to help students read more fluently. There are three tiers. The third tier represents students with low reading fluency while the first tier represents students with a higher reading fluency. Using this report, I can focus on specific students. The objective is to move students from the top tier, the third tier, into the second or first tier. Figure 9 on the next page shows how there was a decrease in the third tier and an increase in the second and first tier.

There were 56% of students in the third tier. This percentage decreased to 49%. In the second tier, there were 28% of students and this increased to 31%. The first tier began with 16% of students and this increased to 20% of students. Using timed repeated readings, I was able to increase the number of students who were more fluent in November than they were in August.

Table 3: Average Aimsweb reading fluency by class

Class	Average Words per Minute August 2016	Average Words per Minutes November 2016	Average Increase
Class A	39	48	9
Class B	38	50	12

Table 4: Average Aimsweb reading fluency by gender

Gender	Average Words per Minute August 2016	Average Words per Minutes November 2016	Average Increase
Boys	40	50	10
Girls	38	48	10

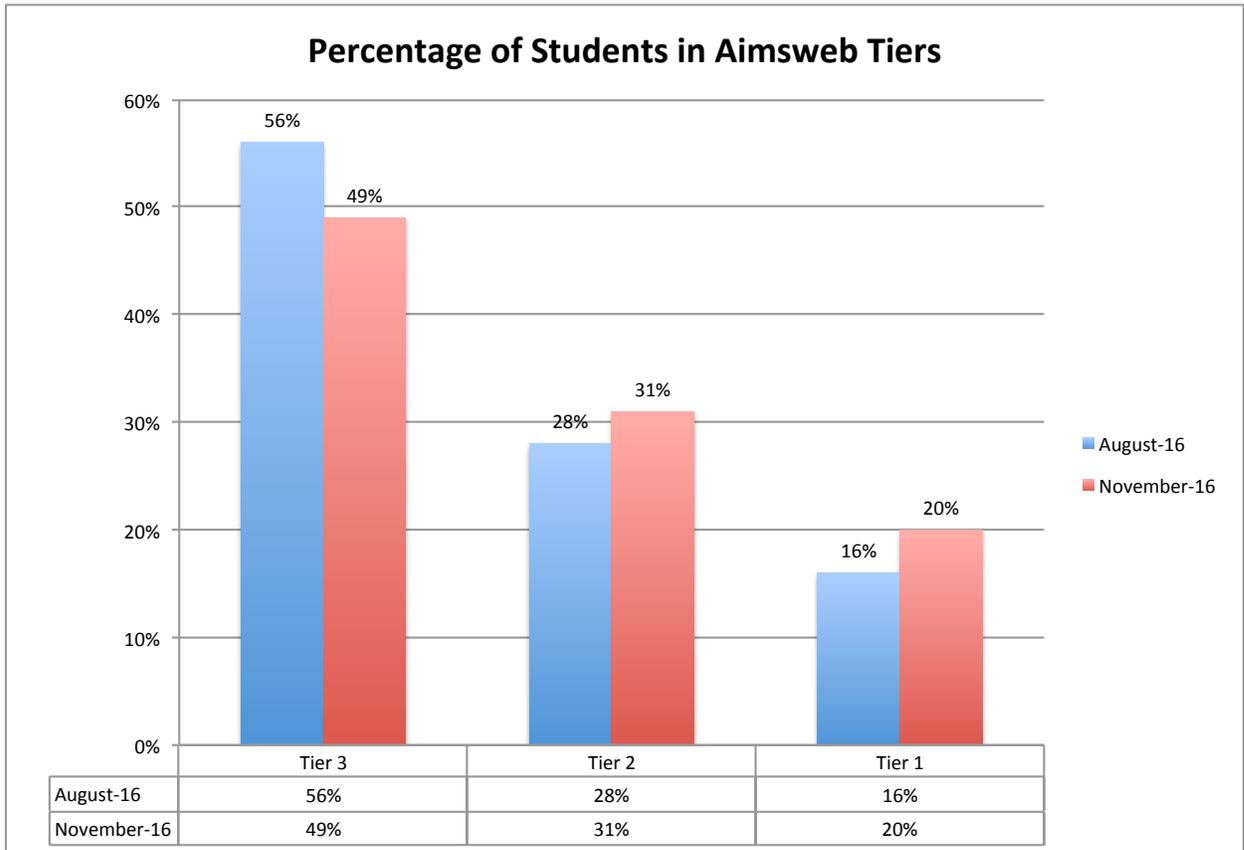


Figure 9: Percentage of students in the three Aimsweb tiers.

### Oral Reading Fluency Rubric

During the time that I was administering Aimsweb I used an Oral Reading Fluency Rubric (Appendix B) to give students a score. This rubric scored students on four different categories. These four categories were expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Once the student read for me for one minute I would take out the

rubric and give the student a score. When I administered the Aimsweb test in November I used the same rubric to give a score as well. Therefore, I was able to collect scores before and after the study.

Table 5 shows the scores for both classes. Class A increased their reading oral fluency grade by 25%. Class B increased their reading oral fluency grade by 19%. These increases demonstrate that students not only increased their wpm, but they also improved their expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace.

Table 5: Average Grade on the Reading Oral Fluency Rubric

<b>Class</b>	<b>Pre-Study Grade</b>	<b>Post-Study Grade</b>	<b>Average Grade Increase</b>
A	50%	75%	25%
B	56%	75%	19%

### **Individual Student Goal Sheet**

After I completed all baseline assessments, I met with each student individually and I presented each with an individual goal sheet (Appendix A). The goal sheet allowed each to see the amount of words they read during the first assessment of Aimsweb. With this information, I asked them to set a goal for the next assessment and note it on their goal sheet. Throughout the study, I reminded students about their individual goals. Many times I reminded them before they read, and sometimes I reminded them individually.

When the study was over I met with each student once again. During the meeting students saw their goal sheet, and could see if they met their desired goal. The outcome was that many of my students met their goals. Since each student had a personally set goal, seeing progression between assessments was a motivating factor for each student. Allowing them to choose their own goals increased their desire to improve. Personally, as

an educator, it was exciting to see their excitement when I informed them that they had reached their goals.

## **Graphs**

Throughout the study, I used student graphs. Each time students read the passage they would graph how many words they were able to read in a minute. By noting their progress on a weekly basis, students could see how they were progressing towards their goal.

The graphs were a motivational tool for students and they were kept in the student's folder. The graphs also helped to reinforce the concept of bar graphs in Math. According to their Math teacher, the students had a better understanding of this concept, since they were practicing during the research study.

## **High Frequency Word Test**

At Lehigh Valley Dual Language Charter School, each grade has a list of Spanish high frequency words that students should know how to read. At the beginning of my study I evaluated my students on high frequency words. When students learn these words they read better in Spanish. Like previous years, I used this list of words and incorporated them into my lessons and spelling lists. Additionally, I used the data obtained from this evaluation to pick books from Reading A to Z.

I begin each year by testing students on these words. I use the high frequency word list to assess students and determine how much of the list I need to review. Sometimes students know all the words on the third-grade list, therefore I give them the fourth-grade list of words. However, students entering third grade will only know a few

of the words on the list. If a student is not familiar with any of the words, I provide them with the second-grade list and start there.

Table 6 and 7 show how many high frequency Spanish words the students knew when they were tested in September. Since many of the passages I used included many of these words, I repeated the assessment in January to evaluate the students' progression from the fall. Class A increased their words by an average of 11 words. Class B increased their words by an average of 14 words. When I analyzed the data by gender the boys increased by an average of 16 words and the girls by an average of 11 words.

Table 6: Average Number of High Frequency Words Known by Class

Class	Pre-Assessment September 2016	Post-Assessment January 2017	Average increase in words
Class A	77	88	11
Class B	63	77	14

Table 7: Average Number of High Frequency Words Known by gender

Gender	Pre-Assessment September 2016	Post-Assessment January 2017	Average increase in words
Boys	76	92	16
Girls	67	78	11

### **Reading Attitude Surveys**

In a study by Roundy and Roundy (2009), reading surveys were used to measure students' attitudes and reactions to reading at the beginning of the study. The study allowed the researchers to select the fiction and nonfiction texts for the participants in the

study. As a result, I decided to implement a reading attitude survey that would allow me to implement by study more efficiently.

The information I gathered from the survey gave me more information about my students regarding reading in Spanish. I read each question to the students and then allowed them to shade in the box that they agreed with the most. My results were surprising. Table 6 shows that 58% of students knew that with practice they could be better readers. In the same group 56% of students enjoyed listening to a teacher read to them in Spanish. The results were encouraging because I love to read to my students every day. The survey also informed me how much the students enjoyed buddy reading. For instance, 42% of these students enjoyed reading in Spanish with a buddy. Interestingly, 40% of students were not afraid to read a passage with unknown words and 40% students said that they were good at sounding out words in Spanish. Since Spanish words tend to be phonetic, it made sense that they weren't intimidated by unknown words, because they knew that they could sound them out.

Table 8: Reading Attitude Survey Results

		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1.	I like to read in Spanish	11%	24%	36%	29%
2.	I like to talk about what I read in Spanish.	11%	36%	33%	20%
3.	I am not afraid to read passages with many words that I do not know.	16%	11%	33%	40%
4.	I enjoy reading aloud to others in Spanish.	22%	38%	22%	18%
5.	I am a good reader.	9%	16%	33%	42%
6.	I like to buddy read in Spanish.	22%	18%	18%	42%
7.	I like listening to my teacher read chapter books to the class in Spanish.	11%	18%	16%	56%
8.	I am good at sounding out words that I do not know in Spanish.	8%	16%	36%	40%
9.	With practice I believe that I can become a better reader in Spanish.	4%	11%	27%	58%

### **On-task Behavior Tally Chart**

During the first 6 weeks of my study I used an on-task behavior tally sheet (Appendix E). This tally sheet allowed me to monitor the number of students who were on-task during the timed repeated readings. I used this tally sheet twice a week. While students were reading, I would count the number of students who were on-task versus the number of students who were off-task and I would calculate a weekly percentage. In addition, I wrote down comments that indicated the off-task behaviors that I was seeing.

This was very beneficial when I saw a great decrease in the number of students who were off-task.

Figure 10 on the next page indicates that more than 97% of students were on-task during the first three weeks of the study. However, as we can see in week four this percentage dropped to 84%. Reading the comments on the chart I determined that I needed to change partners. Once I did this we can see how the on-task behavior increased to 90%. However, it was still not as high as it had been the first three weeks.

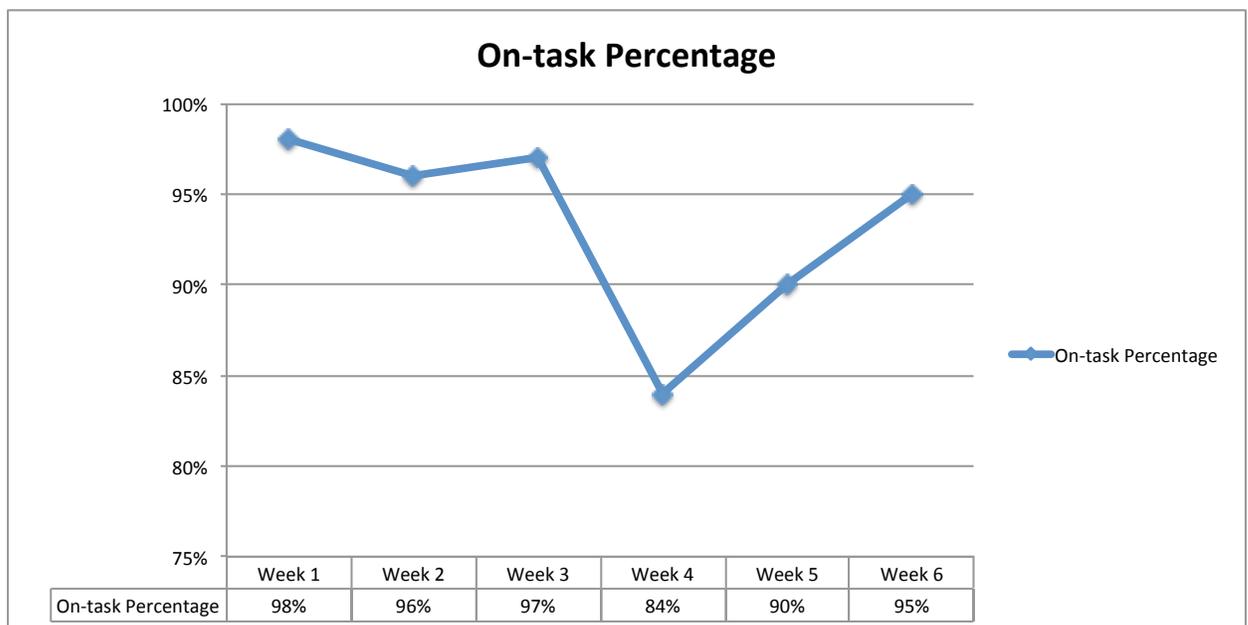


Figure 10: Percentage of Students on Task

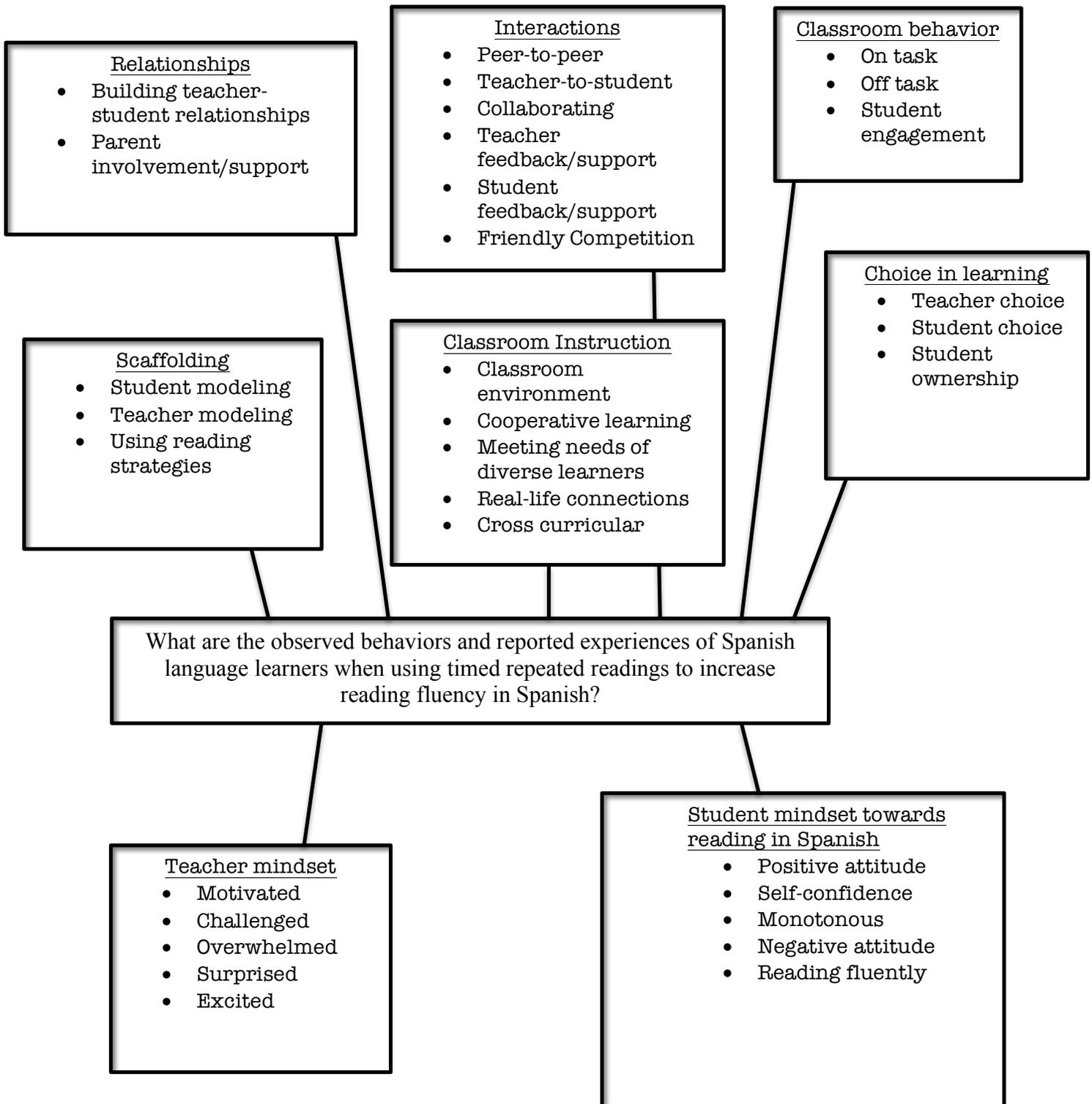
I decided to meet with my students and learned that not only did I need to change their partners I also need to change some of the passages I was using. Some students were practicing so much at home that the passages I was giving them were too easy. Once I addressed this small obstacle I began to see an increase in the number of student who were on-task. However, I was unable to continue monitoring how many students were

on-task since I had to take a maternity leave. I would have loved to see if students would have increased back to 97%.

### **Bins**

After collecting student artifacts, observational data, and inquiry data I coded the data to look for possible themes throughout my study. Although it took me awhile to go through my data it was intriguing to look at my study from a different perspective. I was looking through my students' eyes when I looked at their artifacts. Additionally, this process became a moment in which I could reflect and see the many additional things I learned from my students, my study, and myself.

## Bins and Themes Statements



## Research Findings

### Introduction

When I began conducting research for my study I knew that it would have something to do with reading. Being a third-grade teacher has allowed me to become more passionate about helping students read. I decided to incorporate timed repeated readings as a way in which my students could increase their reading fluency. When students increase their reading fluency they gain comprehension of what they read because they don't have to spend extra time decoding or breaking down words. The question I was looking to answer was *What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of Spanish language learners when using timed repeated readings to increase reading fluency in Spanish?* As a strategy, using timed repeated readings has successfully helped students increase their Spanish reading fluency. I was interested in knowing how this strategy could help my students increase their reading fluency. Although, my goal was to see their Spanish reading fluency increase, along the way I began to see other themes emerge throughout my study. There are four statements that represent themes that I observed and learned about.

- Reading fluency in Spanish increases through the practice of timed repeated readings.
- Student engagement increases when students take ownership of their learning and are reading text that is on their level and of their interest. This engagement leads to an increase in reading fluency.

- Building interpersonal skills in the classroom through friendly competition and intentional partnering of students, allowed students to meet their goals in increasing their reading fluency.
- Immediate feedback and positive reinforcement from the teacher can build up student confidence and deter negative feelings or attitudes towards learning to read in Spanish.

**Reading fluency in Spanish increases through the practice of timed repeated readings.**

As I stated before in my literature review, reading fluency is very important because of the connection between reading fluency and comprehension. The more fluently a student can read, the better they can comprehend what they read. Hudson, Lane & Pullen made a it point to explain that a fluent reader is not easily distracted and reads in an effortless, flowing manner (2005). Similarly, I was able to see firsthand how timed repeated readings helped my students increase the amount of words they read per minute in Spanish.

During my study students worked together and practiced reading in one minute. They worked with a partner Monday through Thursday. As soon as they walked into class each day, the helper of the day would get the folders and give each student their passage. I would then set a timer and allow the students to take turns reading to each other. Once they were finished they graphed the amount of words they read each day.

My first class began reading an average of 39 words per minute (wpm). Through timed repeated readings they increased to 48 wpm. This class increased an average of 8 wpm. My second class also increased the average amount of words they read in one

minute. They began reading an average of 38 wpm and finished reading 50 wpm. There average increase was 12 wpm. Both classes increased their wpm by practicing their reading fluency daily for one minute.

**Student engagement increases when students take ownership of their learning and are reading text that is on their level and of their interest. This engagement leads to an increase in reading fluency.**

Hudson, Lane, & Pullen mentioned in their study that during repeated readings it was imperative to involve students in monitoring their own progress. One way they suggested was using student graphs (2005). In their study they allowed students to graph the amount of words per minute they read each time they completed the timed repeated reading intervention. Therefore, in my study I used student graphs so that students could monitor their progress in my study as well.

As a result, I saw an increase in student engagement. They were focusing on their graphs and were looking forward to seeing their graphs go up each day. I knew students were not exhibiting as many off-task behaviors as they had at one point during the study, since, at various times during the study, I used a chart to track on-task behavior and off-task behavior. I kept telling them that I wanted to see staircases in their graphs. Many students were excited even when they jumped up five more words because they knew that it would create an image of a staircase on their graph paper.

These graphs were also important because students had chosen their own goals. They knew how many more words they wanted to read by the time I evaluated them again using Aimsweb. So, being able to see these graphs allowed them to keep their goal and they knew exactly how they were progressing towards the goal they had set. The

graphs became a motivational tool for them since they wanted to keep seeing progress. This motivation led to greater engagement, which in turn, helped my students increase their wpm.

Another component that was essential to student engagement was providing passages at the students' individual levels. Therrien and Kubina made it a point to express that it was important to select the appropriate material for students if teachers wanted repeated readings to become a great intervention for reading fluency (2006). However, not only does this passage have to be at the correct reading level, it must also meet the student's interest. Implementing these two important factors will allow students to become engaged with the text.

Taking this advice from these authors I looked for passages that were appropriate for each of my students. It took time to find passages for groups of students that were on the same level. However, it was worth it in the end because it helped to increase their reading fluency. At one point, when I hit an obstacle in my study, it was because some students began to read better and passages had become too easy for them. As a result, I made changes and provided these students with more challenging passages. Once I overcame this obstacle I noticed that my students were once again engaged and not bored as one student mentioned to me one day.

**Building interpersonal skills in the classroom through friendly competition and intentional partnering of students, allowed students to meet their goals in increasing their reading fluency.**

Vygotsky made an important point regarding the zone of proximal development

and the internal process that occurs when a child interacts with his environment. He stated, “We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers.” (1978, p. 89) What Vygotsky was trying to point out was that learning allows children/students to create a zone of proximal development. This development will only occur when students are able to interact with their environment in cooperation with their peers.

As teachers, we understand the importance of teaching in a child’s zone of proximal development. This is where we meet the child at his or her level and we provide scaffolding until the child is able to do something independently, or is able to apply a concept on his or her own. However, before reading Vygotsky, I had never realized how important the environment is for the student as well. While in the zone of proximal development, students should also be able to interact with their peers so that they are able to awaken internal processes that help them learn.

I witnessed this when I began seeing my students compete in a friendly manner during the study. They wanted to read more words per minute than their friends. They became motivated to increase their words per minute each time they read. I remember instances where the students would even motivate one another to do better and beat their score from the day before.

There were times where some students would get upset, but this easily became a teachable moment about sportsmanship. I spoke to them about working together and motivating each other each day. I would remind them that they were all there for the

same reason. They all wanted to learn a second language. Each time we read a new passage the first thing the students would do was to look at the amount of words the passage had. They would also look back at their graphs and see how many words they had read the week before.

This competitive spirit was not only from one student to another, they were also competitive against themselves. Students who at times seemed bored were now also in the friendly competitive spirit. It was contagious. I wouldn't say 100% of the class felt this way, but most of them did. Others were being respectful and following the classroom routine because they knew that this was what I wanted and this is what they had to do in my class.

This friendly competition was an interaction between students that helped them work harder and improve their Spanish reading fluency. Even when they competed against themselves it was a direct result of having competed with their peers first. This was an internal process that was awakened as soon as they began competing with one another. They felt comfortable with this competition because they were in their zone of proximal development.

Working with partners also allowed students to interact and work harder to make improvements. In the past, when I have paired students, I did so based on their academic level. With my study, I paired the students according to their reading abilities in Spanish. I tried not to pair them with students of extreme differences so that participants would not get bored, or feel extremely challenged by their partners. However, during a few of my observations I noticed that some students were off task. I learned that, although these students were around the same reading level, one partner had moved on much more

quickly than I expected, leaving the other partner feeling that they could not perform as well. As a result, one student would become bored because they were not motivated, and the other lost confidence in their ability to improve.

As soon as I discovered this, I knew I had to do something. I decided to take a closer look at my students and their partners. By this time, I was half way through the study and I knew my students much better than at the beginning of my study. I already knew which students liked to work with each other, and with this information, and their reading abilities, I decided to rearrange their partners for the timed repeated readings.

I began to pair them up based on who they worked well with during other class activities. In Science, students worked in groups and with partners, so I was familiar with which students I could pair up during the timed repeated readings. I am glad that I saw this before the study was over because I enjoyed what I saw next after changing their partners. Students were now encouraging one another. “Come on, you can do it!” I know you can do better than you did yesterday.” “Take your time like I do and you will get more words correct.” “I know you can beat me.” These were the comments I was hearing from students who were working with their new partners.

I know sometimes we can hesitate because we don't want students fooling around, and we want them to do the work correctly. However, before I paired the students, I made it clear that I would change their pairs during the study. As long as they did their work and read, I would ensure they had a partner they had enjoyed working with, that could help them. I still tried my best to find a partner who was close to their level and who they also enjoyed working with, but they knew that if they fooled around I would change their partners again.

My students were enjoying their new partners and stayed with them until the end of the study. It was a risk that paid off. My students were benefiting more from the timed repeated readings because they were paired up with a student with whom they got along and who was willing to help them succeed. The classroom environment improved and I did not observe as many off task behaviors as in previous weeks.

The friendly competition and my intentional partnering of students allowed students the opportunity to interact with their peers, and build interpersonal relationships. These interactions resulted in the activation of internal processes that granted my students the opportunity to meet their personal goals and increase their fluency in reading in Spanish.

**Immediate feedback and positive reinforcement from the teacher can build up student confidence and deter negative feelings or attitudes towards learning to read in Spanish.**

Alber-Morgan explained that giving correct feedback during repeated readings is important to increase reading fluency (2006). They stated in their study that greater gains in reading fluency have been achieved when feedback is given correctly, and after the student reads a passage for the first time. Stenger explains that providing feedback can enhance and improve student achievement (2014). As a result of this research I decided to implement feedback during time repeated readings.

At first, I intended to provide feedback directly related to the words they read in the passages. My intentions were to correct students when they read words incorrectly. I taught each of my students to do the same thing when they read in pairs. Any word that was incorrectly read was subtracted from the total number of words read in a minute.

This allowed students to read the words correctly the next three times they read the passage because they had received feedback from their partner or from me.

Receiving this instant feedback allowed students to improve their reading fluency over time. They were learning to read more words because if they read it incorrectly they received immediate feedback on the correct way to read the word. In the beginning, a few students would get mad whenever they were told they read a word incorrectly. However, with time, and brief explanations from me, they began to understand the reasoning behind the feedback. Once they knew that they were being corrected to improve their reading, they stopped getting upset. This wasn't something that happened right away, it took a few days for them to get use to receiving feedback.

Students learned to receive feedback and they also learned to give feedback in the best way possible. I modeled different ways in which students could provide feedback. I explained that it was important to always include something positive as well. This interaction allowed students to increase their fluency because they were learning new words by reading the passages, and receiving feedback on words they got incorrectly.

Immediate feedback after reading is the type of feedback that I intended to use from the beginning. However, during the study I began to provide positive feedback to the class and to individual students praising their performance each time they read. This type of positive reinforcement was an important factor during my study. At times students doubted themselves and thought they could not increase their fluency. Providing positive feedback allowed students to increase their confidence and deter any negative feelings that they were feeling about reading in Spanish. As I narrated in my study, I remember a moment with a student who was upset because she wanted to complete the

entire passage in one day. The passage had 68 words. I encouraged her to continue working hard and the next day she showed me that she read more words than the day before. After she read the passage on the second day I remember going up to her and asking her how many words she had read that day. On the first day, she had read 45 words and the next day she read 56. By the fourth day she had completed the passage and had read 68 words in a minute. Throughout the four days I made sure that I continued to provide the feedback she needed to continue working hard and increase her reading fluency in this specific passage.

After this interaction with this student I decided to practice this same feedback with other students in both classes. I enjoyed when I began to see students improving their reading. I learned this type of feedback can also help students increase their reading fluency because it deterred any negative feelings, and in turn increased their confidence to perform better.

## Next Steps

This study has given me the opportunity to value timed repeating readings at a deeper level. I have seen how this intervention can help students increase their reading in a second language. Reading was important to me and has become important for my students as well. They knew that if they worked hard they would become better readers in Spanish. The students never gave up on themselves and this drove me to work hard as well.

This last year has given me the opportunity to grow as a teacher and to understand the important role I play in the lives of my students as a third-grade teacher. I more aware that I can get to know my students so well that I can help them become better readers in a language that is not their first language. My goal was to increase the number of words they read in a minute. Through this intervention, I was able to do that and much more.

I was also able to develop interpersonal relationships between the students and their peers, and their relationship with me. Additionally, I became aware of the importance of giving feedback at the right time to allow my students to learn more and meet their personal goals. In addition, I discovered that timed repeated readings can be used to engage students in reading, as long as the reading levels are appropriate and I find texts that are of my students' interest.

Reflecting on my study I also learned to really look at how I pair my students together. I've made it a note to change their partners after a few weeks to avoid boredom and disengagement. I would also like to continue with my surveys and face-to-face interviews. For this study, I did the surveys and conducted the face-to-face interviews

immediately. However, going forward, I will analyze the results of the surveys first, before conducting the face-to-face interviews. In doing this, I will be able to look at the results and follow-up on specific themes and feelings about reading with students during the interviews. Looking back, it would have been beneficial to have the results in front of me in case I wanted to ask students about the results from the survey.

I will continue to use timed repeated readings in the classroom because I have seen how valuable they can be with second language learners. However, in the future, I would like to incorporate some technology because of how important it has become over the last several years.

Digital literacy is important for all 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Students should be able to use technology to evaluate and share what they learn in the classroom especially when they are learning a language such as Spanish which is spoken in so many countries. It would be interesting to see how incorporating technology into timed repeated readings would also help increase students' reading fluency.

Hopefully, I will be able to have students record themselves when they read. This would give them the opportunity to share their recording with people outside their classroom who would also be able to give them feedback on how they read in the beginning and how they read at the end of the intervention. Additionally, they would be able to listen to themselves read so that they could also hear the progress in their reading as they become better.

It would be nice to reach out to students in classrooms across the United States and make connections with them. There are so many schools around the U.S. that have bilingual programs like ours. Communicating and sharing with them, would give my

students the opportunity to see other students like themselves that are also working hard to learn another language.

My students and I both learned a lot about ourselves during this research study. I look forward to implementing more technology with this intervention and seeing where it will take my students and me. I also look forward to sharing my findings with other teachers who are looking for ways to increase the reading fluency of students who are learning a second language. Since I am bilingual, I am especially looking forward to translating my study into Spanish. This will allow opportunity more educators to read and learn from my work.

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Appendix A

Individual Student Goal Sheet

Individual Student Goal Sheet Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Hot Air Balloons Soar**  
**How Can I Soar**  
**This Year?**

SPA Fluency: goal: \_\_\_\_\_

ENG Fluency: goal: \_\_\_\_\_

me

MATH COMP: goal: \_\_\_\_\_

MATH CAP: goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Maze: goal: \_\_\_\_\_

To achieve my goals I will:

## Appendix B

### Fluency Rubric

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

#### FLUENCY RUBRIC

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expression and Volume</b>	Reads in a quiet voice as if to get words out. The reading does not sound natural like talking to a friend.	Reads in a quiet voice. The reading sounds natural in part of the text, but the reader does not always sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with volume and expression. However, sometimes the reader slips into expressionless reading and does not sound like they are talking to a friend.	Reads with varied volume and expression. The reader sounds like they are talking to a friend with their voice matching the interpretation of the passage.
<b>Phrasing</b>	Reads word-by-word in a monotone voice.	Reads in two or three word phrases, not adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness. There is reasonable stress and intonation.	Reads with good phrasing; adhering to punctuation, stress and intonation.
<b>Smoothness</b>	Frequently hesitates while reading, sounds out words, and repeats words or phrases. The reader makes multiple attempts to read the same passage.	Reads with extended pauses or hesitations. The reader has many "rough spots."	Reads with occasional breaks in rhythm. The reader has difficulty with specific words and/or sentence structures.	Reads smoothly with some breaks, but self-corrects with difficult words and/ or sentence structures.
<b>Pace</b>	Reads slowly and laboriously.	Reads moderately slowly.	Reads fast and slow throughout reading.	Reads at a conversational pace throughout the reading.

Scores of 10 or more indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

Scores below 10 indicate that the student needs additional instruction in fluency.

## Appendix C

### List of 100 High Frequency Words for Third Grade

Amar	Desayuno	Desaparecer	Jóvenes
Debajo	Amistoso	Autor	Manera
Fiesta	Generoso	Personajes	Especial
Mayoría	Cabeza	Cuidado	Sábado
Lápiz	Encontrar	Dice	Alumno
Contento	Entretener	Estado	Juguete
Once	Gemelo	Famoso	Listo
Guardar	Suficiente	Finalmente	Ningún
Semana	Esperar	Dichoso	Observar
Traigo	Diferencia	Gracioso	Invierno
Enseña	Dólar	Hacia	Parece
Vivir	Alegre	Durante	Mostrar
Zapato	Mantener	Favorito	Rehacer
Tarde	Admirar	Hacía	Saber
Traje	Derecho	Impaciente	Idea
Además	Agradable	Lentamente	Sabroso
Descalzo	Ciudad	Hilo	Tuyo
Azúcar	Aunque	Imposible	Usado
Antiguo	Cansado	Jugoso	Verdad
Algún	Excelente	Llamar	Numero
Importante	Demasiado	Siete	Tenemos
Aula	Contento	Señor	Verano
Bilingüe	Cinco	Temprano	Quince
Alguien	Enseguida	Opcional	Español
Cualquier	Conocer	Ingles	Recordar

## Appendix D

### Student Graph

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mi Grafica de Fluidez

110								
105								
100								
95								
90								
85								
80								
75								
70								
65								
60								
55								
50								
45								
40								
35								
30								
25								
20								
15								
10								
5								
<b>Dia</b>	<b>lunes</b>	<b>martes</b>	<b>miercoles</b>	<b>jueves</b>	<b>lunes</b>	<b>martes</b>	<b>miercoles</b>	<b>jueves</b>
<b>Fecha</b>								

## Appendix E

### On-task Student Tally Chart

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Day</b>	<b>On-task</b>	<b>Off-task</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Monday Class A</b>			
<b>Monday Class B</b>			
<b>Tuesday Class A</b>			
<b>Tuesday Class B</b>			
<b>Wednesday Class A</b>			
<b>Wednesday Class B</b>			
<b>Thursday Class A</b>			
<b>Thursday Class B</b>			

## Appendix F

### Student Reading Interview

1. Why do people read?
2. How did you learn to read?
3. Describe a time someone read to you. What do you remember?
4. Do you read for fun?
5. Do you have reading materials available to you and do you know how to get them?
6. What are your strengths as a reader? What strategies help you when you read?
7. What frustrates you most about reading? How do you handle it?
8. How much are you reading in school and do you enjoy what you read?
9. If you could change anything about your reading/language arts/Spanish class to make it more interesting, what would you change?
10. What do you think makes a good reading teacher?

Appendix G

*Reading Attitude Survey*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the statements below and mark the response that best applies to you.**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I like to read in Spanish				
2.	I like to talk about what I read in Spanish.				
3.	I am not afraid to read passages with many words that I do not know.				
4.	I enjoy reading aloud to others in Spanish.				
5.	I am a good reader.				
6.	I like to buddy read in Spanish.				
7.	I like listening to my teacher read chapter books to the class in Spanish.				
8.	I am good at sounding out words that I do not know in Spanish.				
9.	With practice I believe that I can become a better reader in Spanish.				

## Appendix H

8/29/16

Dear Ms. Keila Olmeda,

Thank you for submitting your revisions. You have addressed all of the concerns listed in your conditional approval. The HSIRB has completed its final review of your proposal, "Using Timed Repeated Readings to Increase Spanish Reading Fluency and Comprehension," and is granting approval of this proposal.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into topics other than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be. Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this email notification, you will need to file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB and receive approval of the changes before implementation. If you need a hard copy letter indicating your approval status for record keeping purposes, please let me know.

One last step. We need to collect your electronic signature and that of your research advisor. If each of you could respond to this email with your own name and the project title in the subject line, that will serve as your electronic signatures. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Good luck with your research!

Dr. Sarah K. Johnson  
Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board  
Moravian College  
[hsirb@moravian.edu](mailto:hsirb@moravian.edu)  
[skjohnson@moravian.edu](mailto:skjohnson@moravian.edu)  
[610-625-7013](tel:610-625-7013)

## Appendix I

Dear Ms. Pluchinsky,

I am currently completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. One of the requirements of the program is to conduct an action research assignment. This semester, I am focusing my research on repeated readings and the impact they can have on reading fluency and reading comprehension in Spanish. I plan to use this teaching strategy to optimize the word per minute student read in Spanish and to ultimately increase their reading comprehension of the Spanish language. Overall my students will benefit from this study by improving how many words they read in one minute and their comprehension of what they read.

As part of the study students will complete an online survey before and after the study to express their attitudes towards reading in Spanish. Students will practice reading the same passage or story during the week. This will take place at school as well as at home. In addition, I will conduct interviews with students regarding the activities that take place during the study and I will also keep a journal with anecdotal notes so that I can make observations as students are working together and completing activities. My study will take place between August 22, 2016 and December 23, 2016 approximately. The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My action research results will be presented using pseudonyms -no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in my locked file cabinet. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed. A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities, which include writing, listening, reading and speaking in Spanish. In no way, will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on any aspect of the class. I welcome questions about this research at any time. A child's participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Keila Olmeda, or my advisor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-861-1482, [jshosh@moravian.edu](mailto:jshosh@moravian.edu).

Sincerely,

Keila Olmeda

I agree to allow Keila Olmeda to conduct this action research project in her classroom.

---

Signature

Date

## Appendix J

Dear Ms. Betsy Velazquez,

I am currently completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. One of the requirements of the program is to conduct an action research assignment. This semester, I am focusing my research on repeated readings and the impact they can have on reading fluency and reading comprehension in Spanish. I plan to use this teaching strategy to optimize the word per minute student read in Spanish and to ultimately increase their reading comprehension of the Spanish language. Overall my students will benefit from this study by improving how many words they read in one minute and their comprehension of what they read.

As part of the study I will ask you to help me in teaching the routines in the timed repeated reading routines. I will share with you my expectations and how I will carry out each step of the research process since you are working as my teacher assistant. The data and observations I collect may include interactions that you may have with the students. My signing below, you are agreeing to participate in my study. You may choose to stop participating in my study at any time. In no way, will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on any aspect your job. I welcome questions about this research at any time. Participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Keila Olmeda, or my advisor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-861-1482, [jshosh@moravian.edu](mailto:jshosh@moravian.edu).

Sincerely,

Keila Olmeda

I agree to participate in your research study.

---

Signature

Date

## Appendix K

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am currently completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. One of the requirements of the program is to conduct an action research assignment. This semester, I am focusing my research on repeated readings and the impact they can have on reading fluency and reading comprehension in Spanish. I plan to use this teaching strategy to optimize the word per minute student read in Spanish and to ultimately increase their reading comprehension of the Spanish language. Overall my students will benefit from this study by improving how many words they read in one minute and their comprehension of what they read.

As part of the study students will complete an online survey before and after the study to express their attitudes towards reading in Spanish. Students will practice reading the same passage or story during the week. This will take place at school as well as at home. In addition, I will conduct interviews with students regarding the activities that take place during the study and I will also keep a journal with anecdotal notes so that I can make observations as students are working together and completing activities. My study will take place between August 29, 2016 and December 1, 2016 approximately.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My action research results will be presented using pseudonyms -no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in my locked file cabinet. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed. A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities, which include writing, listening, reading and speaking in Spanish. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on any aspect of the class. I welcome questions about this research at any time. A child's participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Mrs. Keila Olmeda, or my advisor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-861-1482, [jshosh@moravian.edu](mailto:jshosh@moravian.edu).

Sincerely,

Mrs. Keila Olmeda

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study with Mrs. Olmeda.

---

Signature

Date:

## Appendix L

Name/Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to take part in Mrs. Olmeda's research study on Spanish reading fluency. I understand that I can stop at any time during the study and refuse to participate. I will let Mrs. Olmeda know when I don't want to participate anymore.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Estoy de acuerdo en participar en el estudio de investigación de la señora Olmeda en la fluidez de la lectura en español. Entiendo que puedo parar en cualquier momento durante el estudio y negarme a participar. Le dejare saber a la Sra. Olmeda cuando no quisiera participar más.

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Firma del estudiante

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Fecha