

## **A Modified Extensive Reading and Repeated Reading Intervention with Adult ESL Students**

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### **Abstract**

Twenty adult ESL students at a community college participated in a semester reading intervention. Participants received a modified extensive reading treatment, and some participants received an additional repeated reading direct instruction reading intervention. The author examined the impact of the reading interventions on ESL students' reading fluency and reading comprehension. Within the two reading groups, students were selected randomly and placed into either the modified extensive reading group or the repeated reading intervention and modified extensive reading group. ESL students in the modified extensive reading group read graded readers; ESL students in the repeated reading and modified extensive reading group read graded readers and 12 non-fiction *Read Naturally* passages. Results of the quasi-experimental quantitative study indicated no significant difference between the intervention and comparison groups regarding reading fluency and reading comprehension; however, within group results were statistically significant regarding student reading rate and accuracy.

**Keywords:** ESL students, adult education, extensive reading, repeated reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension

### **Overview and Motivation: Reading Fluency**

Several research studies have investigated ways to increase English Second Language (ESL) student reading fluency. Fluency is described as the bridge between decoding words and reading comprehension. Arguably one of the most influential reading research reports in L1 reading in the USA in the last twenty years can be traced back to the findings of the National Reading Panel (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). This report served as the backbone for a government grant program called Reading First. The National Reading Panel Report (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) emphasized five components in their comprehensive review which were necessary for reading. These components were phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Today these reading components can be found in the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association Center, 2010), College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) and in the Comprehensive Adult Assessment Systems (CASAS) Reading Standards (2016). Reading

fluency was identified as an essential skill for successful reading for all learners. “According to the NRP, students who read fluently are those who are able to read with speed, accuracy, and prosody (reading expression)” (Morena, Binder, & Foster, 2013, p. 391). Numerous fluency studies have been conducted (e.g., Therrien, 2004); however, these studies have only focused on student reading speed and accuracy. Defining reading fluency with an additional component of prosody provides an element which helps explain variation in students’ reading comprehension, therefore, reading prosody should not be ignored when discussing reading fluency (Ardoin, Morena, Binder, & Foster, 2013; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, Meisinger, 2010; Washburn, 2022). As Kuhn and Schwanenflugel (2018) noted, “...readers may misread a sentence’s meaning if they do not understand where to place the stress in a word” (p. 2). Thus, the author of this study focused on student reading fluency as defined by the National Reading Panel (NRP) and student reading comprehension.

In the early 2000s, a major shift in reading instruction terminology appeared. Some of the terms that appeared and were emphasized during this time were “explicit instruction,” “direct instruction,” “fidelity,” “rigor,” “evidence based,” and “scientifically proven,” (Meyer, 2013). Direct instruction emphasized structured sequenced language lessons led by the teacher. This was a change from natural, interactional, and communicative approaches (Lightbown & Spada, 2017; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). It was a confusing time for language educators. To maintain one’s teaching position, receive acceptable teaching evaluations, positive ratings, and quality marks one had to be grant compliant which meant educators had to adjust their teaching methods. No longer could an educator perform “business as usual.” Strict accountability was now the norm. Today the same applies. If student scores do not rise according to standardized tests, then finger pointing begins; therefore, educators are under extreme pressure from internal and external sources to get results and help students. In many situations, this means following a linear prescriptive scope and sequence structured language curriculum.

One of the “scientifically-proven” methods to improve student reading fluency under Reading First was repeated reading. Repeated Reading was classified as a scientifically valid reading intervention. It was crucial that educators under the Reading First grant use only scientifically valid research with their reading interventions and only use curricula on the approved vendor shortlist. One of the approved Reading First curriculum tools was *Read Naturally*. *Read Naturally* was fortunate enough to be classified as a scientifically valid instrument. Using this tool, students used nine steps to improve their reading fluency. Recent *Read Naturally* studies have been positive for young adolescents (Erickson, Derby, McLaughlin, & Fuehrer, 2015; McCrory, 2018; Morgan, McLaughlin, Webe, & Bolich, 2016). This study approached the question of: Could this supplementary literacy curriculum program benefit adult ESL students to improve their reading fluency and comprehension?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study combined two primary theories. The first was Automaticity Theory (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974), and the second was the Comprehension Hypothesis (Krashen, 2009; Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2018). The idea behind Automaticity Theory is to have students practice reading the same text again and again until they have memorized and automatized the words which will free

the mind for reading comprehension. The premise behind the Comprehension Hypothesis is to let students read not focusing on form but rather focusing on functionality, comprehension, and enjoyment. Thus, Automaticity Theory is more attuned to the word level of language, and the Comprehension Hypothesis is more connected to language meaning. Automaticity follows a word recognition view of reading, and the Comprehension Hypothesis follows a socio-psycholinguistic view of reading (Freeman & Freeman, 2003). For a more detailed explanation regarding the two concepts, see Freeman and Freeman (2003).

## **Literature Review**

According to Papadima-Sophocleous (2015), there are two primary ways to increase student reading fluency (see also Nation & Macalister, 2021). The first way is through repeated reading, and the second way is through extensive reading. The researcher in this study incorporated both interventions. This research study fits with previous studies (See Table 1).

The repeated reading intervention is connected closely to Automaticity Theory, and the extensive reading intervention is related closely to the Comprehension Hypothesis. Repeated reading is a structured language process which can be implemented with fidelity and rigor by using a prescriptive script as part of a reading program. Repeated reading results can be measured easily using quantitative data, and it is teacher directed. Extensive reading is more communicative as students have opportunities to stop and discuss what they are reading. Extensive reading can be implemented with rigor as well; however, students have much more choice. Extensive reading can be more challenging to measure than repeated reading; nonetheless, researchers might examine the number of books read, headwords, tokens, lexile levels or the number of pages a student reads.

Repeated reading would be considered direct instruction or explicit instruction, and extensive reading would be considered implicit instruction. When students are participating in the repeated reading intervention, they are learning a language. When students are participating in an extensive reading treatment, they are acquiring the language. Krashen (2011) would classify the repeated reading intervention as skill building, and the extensive reading intervention would be comprehending. There are benefits to both methods of instruction.

### ***Repeated Reading***

Repeated reading is the act of students rereading a text or passage again and again to improve literacy. Educators have students read a passage perhaps three times or more until they have progressed to a higher level. There have been several international adult EFL repeated reading studies. See Table 1. The results of these studies have indicated that repeated reading can make an impact on student fluency.

Table 1  
*Selected Repeated Reading Studies in EFL Context and Impact on Student Fluency*

Studies	Participants	Treatment/ Materials	Fluency Measure	Fluency Results
Taguchi (1997)	16 Japanese University Students	28 sections from graded readers 10 weeks	Rate	+21 wpm
Taguchi & Gorsuch (2002)	18 Japanese University Students	28 sections from a graded reader (level 5) and a book 10 weeks	Rate	+40 wpm
Taguchi Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch (2004)	20 Japanese University Students	42 sections from graded readers 17 weeks	Rate	-3 wpm
Gorsuch & Taguchi (2008)	50 Vietnamese University Students	16 sections from graded readers 11 weeks	Reading Speed	+18 wpm
Gorsuch & Taguchi (2010)	30 Vietnamese Young Adult College Students	three short stories from graded readers 11 weeks	Rate	+54 wpm
Chang (2012)	35 Taiwanese University Students	52 timed readings with 300 word passages designed for timed reading 13 weeks	Reading Speed	+50 wpm
Chang & Millett (2013)	26 teenage Taiwanese College Students	26 passages from graded readers 13 weeks	Rate	+47 wpm
Papadima-Sophocleous (2015)	16 first-year University Cyprus Students	three texts (one text for two weeks) six weeks	Rate Accuracy	+12 wpm +14 wcpm

*Note:* English Foreign Language (EFL), words per minute (wpm), words correct per minute (wcpm), Rate and Reading Speed are synonymous and refer to the number of words read, and Accuracy refers to the number of words read correctly in one minute.

The results of these studies have indicated that repeated reading can make an impact on student fluency. All studies listed here have been positive except for Taguchi Takayasu-Maass and Gorsuch (2004). La Berge and Samuels (1974) are the most cited reference for repeated reading.

### ***Extensive Reading***

The second strategy to improve student fluency is extensive reading. The central premise behind extensive reading is to increase student reading volume. Using this intervention, educators allow students to read various print items. This may include but is not limited to different genres, items of interest, fiction and nonfiction, and even comic books or graphic novels. The focus is on reading comprehension and student enjoyment. Extensive reading is framed by 10 Principles (Day & Bamford, 1998), namely: The reading material is easy, a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available, learners choose what they want, learners read as much as possible, the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding, reading is its own reward, reading speed is usually faster rather than slower, reading is individual and silent, teachers orient and guide their students, and the teacher is a model of a reader.

Recently, Macalister (2015) has noted the idea of reducing the 10 principles to seven principles as learner choice and having a wide range of topics may not be available, and it could be possible that reading is not done for its own sake but as a precursor to another linguistic activity. For a more detailed explanation, see Macalister, 2015. Day (2015) has classified extensive reading studies into four categories: pure, modified, light, and fringe. Studies that have utilized all 10 principles are pure. Studies that have utilized many of the principles are modified. Studies that have utilized some extensive reading principles are light, and studies that do not use any of the 10 principles are considered fringe. Because many of the 10 Principles were incorporated into this study, this study was classified as modified, and the study incorporated the top three core principles of extensive reading as identified by Day (2015).

Learners are asked to read as much as possible, they choose what they would like to read, and a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available. Many extensive reading studies have been conducted in EFL environments with the exceptions of Rodrigo, et al (2006) and Malakowsky (2018). Perhaps the main reason for this can be connected to Chapter 3 of the National Reading Report (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) findings:

Despite widespread acceptance of the idea that schools can successfully encourage students to read more and that these increases in reading practice will be translated into better fluency and higher reading achievement, there is not adequate evidence to sustain this claim. (p. 28)

These findings have impacted teachers' schedules, use of materials, reading interventions (Cummins, 2007; Healy, 2007; Orosco, 2010) knowledge of teaching reading using extensive reading, and general use of a variety of conceptual reading frameworks. Much controversy surrounds the findings of the National Reading Panel (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000); see Yatvin, Weaver, & Garan (2003); Krashen, Lee, & Lao (2018). Despite the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000), numerous extensive reading studies have been conducted examining different impacts on student literacy performance (Nakanishi, 2015). Many extensive reading studies have been conducted at

secondary levels (Nakanishi, 2015). Juan and Chang (2008), Iqbal (2017), and Malakowsky (2018) have conducted extensive reading studies at the elementary level.

Lastly, there have been many research studies examining extensive reading and its impact on another variable such as reading fluency, vocabulary, grammar, or reading pronunciation. Most extensive reading studies have focused on students reading paper books. “[R]esearch on the effects of ER [Extensive Reading] using technology is still in its infancy” (Bui & Macalister, 2021, p. 5). Thus, this research study implements traditional paper books and online extensive reading and its impact on student reading fluency, prosody, and comprehension. Many extensive reading fluency studies have been conducted (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Cha, 2009; Fujita & Nora, 2009; Iwahori, 2009). Day and Bamford (1998) are the most cited reference for extensive reading.

### ***EL Student Pronunciation***

A major challenge in teaching reading fluency lies in English Learner (EL) student pronunciation. Many of the adult EL students have just begun studying English; therefore, they are past the critical period of language acquisition, and as a result they have difficulty with English pronunciation. Importantly, what constitutes an error? What is right? What is wrong? Who is the gatekeeper? Perhaps the student pronunciation errors are connected to their identity, group affiliation, or club membership (Smith, 2010). Ultimately, what constitutes an error depends on the teaching pedagogy or andragogy of the teacher or the guidelines of the school institution. Educators must check with their individual education institution for more information, so they are grant compliant.

In recent years, there has been a shift from language form to functionality regarding beginning EL students’ pronunciation. This can be seen in the WIDA Standards (WIDA, 2020) and in the Adult English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). For example, in the WIDA Standards (WIDA, 2020), one of the Big Ideas is a focus on the functional approach to language development, and in the Proficiency Standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), an emphasis is placed on social language.

### ***EL Student Reading Prosody***

Reading prosody should not be confused with pronunciation. The two variables are connected, but they are different. Prosody refers to the components beyond sounds, such as appropriate stress, phrasing, pause, expressiveness, and rise and fall of patterns. Of course, one cannot have prosody without pronunciation, and semantics can be impacted by prosody. For example, if an individual claims they like running, but the stress is on the word like, one might question their statement. Thus, prosody adds to meaning.

### **Research Questions**

This study compared two groups. One was an intervention group, which experienced both extensive reading and repeated reading treatments, and a comparison group, which experienced only extensive reading treatments. The study answered the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on EL students' reading fluency rate growth as measured by the *Read Naturally Assessment*?
- RQ2: What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on EL students' reading accuracy growth as measured by the *Read Naturally Assessment*?
- RQ3: What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on EL students' reading prosody as measured by the *Fluency Rubric*?
- RQ4: What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on EL students' reading comprehension as measured by *CASAS Test*?

## Methodology and Design

The study design was a quantitative quasi-experimental control group pretest-posttest design. This study design was chosen as the researcher was interested in the impact, if any of a repeated reading intervention combined with extensive reading. The researcher used a convenience sample; therefore, the study was not a pure experimental study. Hereafter, the experimental group will be referred to as the intervention group and the control group will be referred to as the comparison group. Each group had ten participants.

### *Participants and Setting*

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the institutional review board. The study was conducted in the spring semester which was a twelve-week period. Twenty adult education ESL students at a community college in Michigan participated in this study. The participants were Spanish speaking. Their ages ranged from 33 to 55. The average age was 45. The participants were from: Columbia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, EL Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, United States, and Venezuela. See Figure 1.

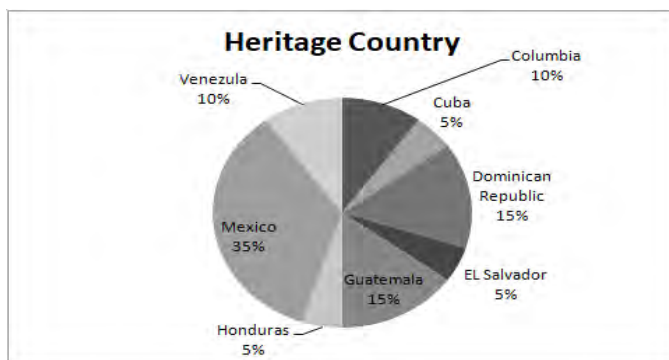


Figure 1  
*Participant Country of Origin*

The levels of education varied among the students. One predictor of how fast a student will acquire English is the L1 (Thomas & Collier, 2002). That said, students in the intervention group and comparison group had similar educational backgrounds. See Figures 2 and 3.

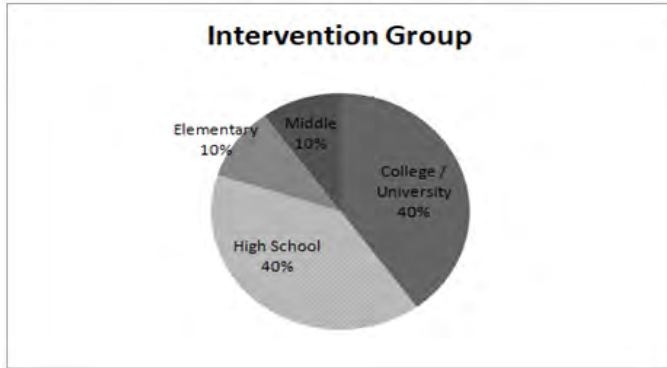


Figure 2  
*Intervention Group Participant Level of Education by L1*

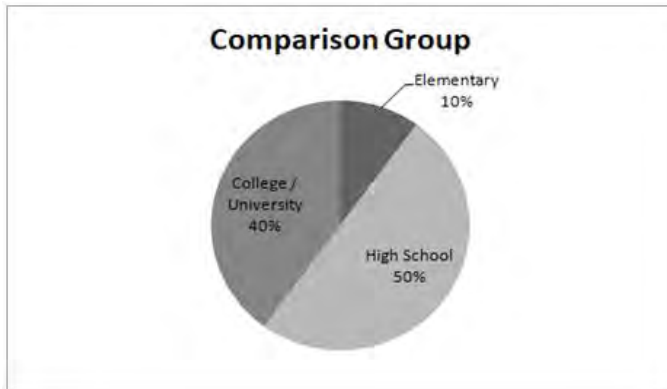


Figure 3  
*Comparison Group Participant Level of Education by L1*

The English proficiency levels of the students varied, and student English pronunciation levels were not the same within groups. The participants were classified as intermediate English language students.

Time spent in the U.S. varied among the intervention and comparison groups. One student had been in the U.S. for 26 years (longest). Another student had just arrived and had only been in the U.S. for .5 year (shortest). Time spent in the U.S. could be a factor for English Language acquisition. See Table 2.

Table 2  
*Average Time Spent in the U.S. Intervention and Comparison Groups*

	Number of Years
Intervention Group	7.15 years
Comparison Group	6.75 years



Homogeneity of variance between the groups was confirmed by examining student *CASAS* reading pretest scores. That is, there was no statistical difference between the two groups regarding student *CASAS* pretest scores. Therefore, the two groups reasonably could be compared.

### ***Participants' Rights***

The students were given a consent form prior to the study. The consent form was translated into Spanish. It contained: the title of the study, the principal investigator, the purpose of the study, the study procedures, the risks, the benefits, confidentiality disclosure, a section on compensation, contact information, and it was stressed that participation was voluntary. Students had the right to leave the study at any time without providing a reason. The students signed consent forms, and the forms were stored in a locked drawer.

### ***Materials***

Students for both intervention and comparison groups had access to 32 graded readers from the Oxford University Press and 33 graded readers from the Burlington English Digital Library platform for a total of 65 graded readers. The graded readers were written at various Common European Framework of Reference for language (CEFR) levels. The Oxford University Press graded readers were written at an A1 level (the lowest on the CEFR scale). The *Burlington English Digital Library* graded readers were written at the A1, A2, B1, B1+, and B2 levels.

The *Oxford Dominoes Starter Series* was utilized in this study. This graded reader series was written for beginning (CEFR) English proficiency students. The books resemble graphic novels as defined by Huh and Suh (2015) and Öz and Efecioglu (2015). The fictional series includes a variety of genres such as mystery, medieval times, Greek mythology, music, and science fiction. The books were written for adolescents (Claridge, 2012), and have a controlled vocabulary, page glossaries, and phonetic transcriptions to help with difficult English word pronunciations. See Appendices A and B for a list.

The *Read Naturally* Master's Edition was used along with audio files which allowed students access to the stories in audio form. Nine steps frame the *Read Naturally* process: Select a story, practice key words, write a prediction, do a cold reading, read along, practice the story, take a quiz, write a story retelling or practice word lists, and pass the story with three or fewer errors. The validity of the *Read Naturally* instrument was found to be .93 for the level five benchmark and progress monitoring passages. See <https://www.readnaturally.com/> See also Appendix C for a list of passages and Appendix D for a *Read Naturally* Assessment example.

The Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Rasinski, 2004) was adapted for this study. The scale was put into a table format for quick reference and student friendly language was incorporated. See Table 3.

Table 3  
*Multidimensional Fluency Scale*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency Scale

	1	2	3	4
Expression and Volume	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.
Phrasing	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.
Smoothness	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 sentence structures.	Reads smoothly with some breaks but self-corrects with difficult words and/or sentence structures.
Pace	Reads slowly and laboriously.	Reads moderately slowly.	Reads fast and slow throughout reading.	Reads at a conversational pace throughout the reading.

*Note.* Modified from Rasinski (2004). Scores range from 4-16. Students who score 8 or above are making adequate progress in their fluency, and students who score below 8 need work on reading fluency.

**CASAS Standardized Test.** *The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)* standardized test has a long history. It began in the 1980s in California, and it was designed to improve basic skills for success in the family, community, and workplace. The test has spread to many states: Maryland, Connecticut, Oregon, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Washington, Iowa, New York, Minnesota, Hawaii, and more. It has been used internationally in Australia, Singapore, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. The test creators claim that it is reliable and valid. In a

research brief, published by CASAS (“Comprehensive Adult Assessment Systems,” 2003), the *CASAS* reading scores were found to be correlated with GED reading results. The CASAS organization has held multimillion dollar partnerships with the U.S. Department of Education, specifically with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Workforce Investment Program (Title I) and Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs (Title II). In addition, it has been used with ESL Adult Education Programs to show accountability. The CASAS tests measure reading, writing, listening, and speaking from beginning literacy through advanced adult secondary levels. The tests are based on the CASAS Competencies and CASAS Content Standards. For more information, please reference <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/software/casas-etests>

### ***Procedure***

Students in the intervention group were encouraged to read as much as possible using the graded readers and were asked to participate in the repeated reading intervention which consisted of reading 12 nonfiction passages from the level 5 *Read Naturally* Curriculum. The repeated reading intervention took place once a week for 12 weeks. Students in the comparison group were encouraged to use the extensive reading intervention as much as possible, but did not experience the repeated reading intervention. This means that while they read the Story 1 passage of *Read Naturally* at the beginning of the experiment as a pre-test and the Story 12 passage at the end of the experiment as a post-test, they did not read any other *Read Naturally* texts, as the intervention group did.

### ***Reading Variables***

To answer RQ #1 on fluency rate, the number of words students read per minute was measured and averaged in a pre- (Reading 1) and a post-test (Reading 12) on a *Read Naturally* assessment. To answer RQ #2 on fluency accuracy, the number of words students read correctly per minute was measured and averaged in a pre- and a post-test on the *Read Naturally* assessment. To answer RQ #3 on reading prosody, students’ scores on the Fluency Scale shown in Table 3 were calculated, averaged, and compared on a pre- and post-test as they read aloud Story 1 (pre-test) and Story 12 (post-test) of *Read Naturally*. To answer RQ #4 on reading comprehension, students took the *CASAS* Reading Test as a pre- and post-test and their group averaged scores were compared.

### **Results**

Data were collected over the course of the 12-week semester. Student reading rate, reading accuracy, reading prosody, and reading comprehension scores were recorded. In addition, the number of books read by the students was noted. Even though the reading intervention group had both the extensive reading and repeated reading intervention and the comparison group had only the extensive reading intervention, the repeated reading intervention did not seem to matter. In other words, the reading intervention group did not read more fluently than the comparison group. However, both groups read more fluently by the end of the semester.

**Research Question 1.** What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on English learner students' reading rate growth as measured by the Read Naturally Assessment?

The reading intervention was not statistically significant across groups. However, the reading intervention was statistically significant within groups. That is, the repeated reading and extensive reading intervention were statistically significant as was the extensive reading intervention on student reading rate fluency. See Table 4.

Table 4  
*Reading Fluency Rate Growth*

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>SEM</i>	<i>Effect Size</i>
Intervention Group	Pretest	121.8	10	29.67	9.38	
	Post-test	155.4	10	28.41	8.98	0.97*
Comparison Group	Pretest	139.4	10	21.24	6.72	
	Post-test	166.4	10	13.89	4.39	0.94*

Pearson  $r^*$

*Note.* Effect sizes of 0.94 and 0.97 are considered large (Cohen, 1988).

At the beginning of the intervention, the intervention group had a mean score of 121.8, and at the end of the intervention, the intervention group had a mean score of 155.4. This was an increase of 33.7 words. The comparison group had a mean score of 139.4 at the pre-test a mean score of 166.4 at the post-test. This was an increase of 27 words.

T-tests were done. The intervention was not statistically significant between groups  $t(18) = 0.14$ ,  $p > .05$ . Looking at within group differences, Type I errors needed to be controlled, therefore a Bonferroni Adjustment was made at .05 divided by 2. This resulted in a .025 critical value. Within the intervention group the difference between the pre- and post-test was statistically significant:  $t(9) = -11.32$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = 0.95$ , and the  $p$  value for the intervention group was .000. The comparison group was also statistically significant within itself from pre- to post-test at  $t(9) = -8.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .90$ ,  $p = .003$ .

A visual representation of increases in reading fluency for both groups on the pre- and post-tests show these substantial increases for all learners. See Figures 4 and 5.

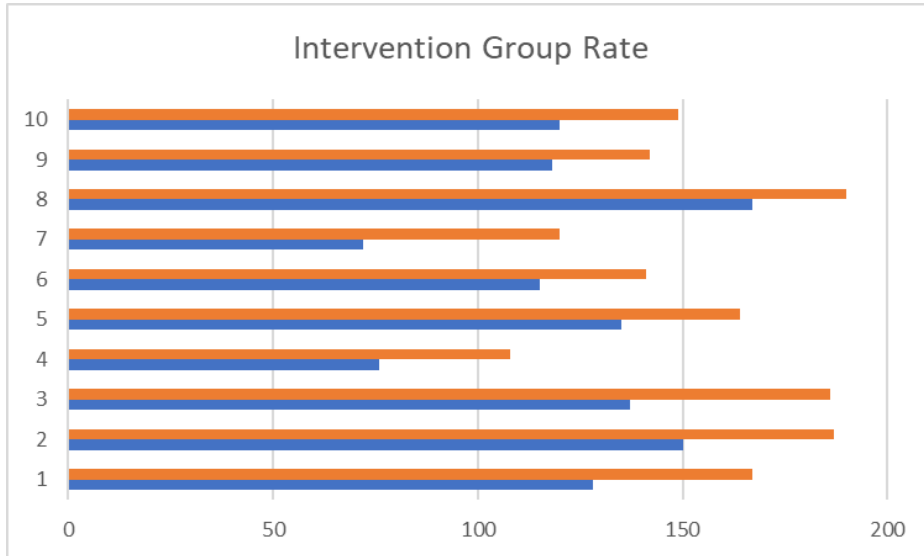


Figure 4  
*Intervention Group Reading Fluency Rate Increases from Pre- to Post-test*

For the intervention group (extensive reading plus repeated reading), the blue bar represents the pre-test reading rate, and the orange bar represents the post-test reading rate. The x axis represents the number of words read, and the y axis represents each student, such as student #1, student #2, and so on.

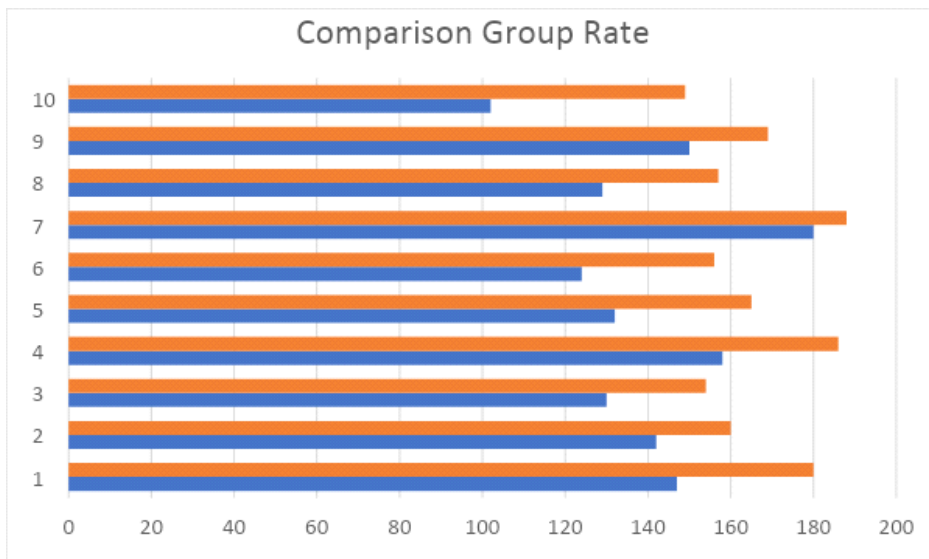


Figure 5  
*Comparison Group Reading Fluency Rate Increases from Pre- to Post-test*

For the comparison group (extensive reading only), the blue bar represents the pre-test reading rate, and the orange bar represents the post-test reading rate. The x axis represents the number of words read, and the y axis represents each student, such as student #1, student #2, and so on.

**Research Question 2.** What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on English learner students' reading accuracy growth as measured by the Read Naturally Assessment?

The reading intervention was not statistically significant between groups but once again was statistically significant within groups for both the intervention and comparison groups. That is, both groups read aloud more fluently and accurately from the pre- to the post-test. See Table 5.

Table 5  
*Reading Fluency Accuracy Growth Intervention and Comparison Groups*

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>SEM</i>	<i>Effect Size</i>
Intervention Group	Pretest	119	10	30.47	9.64	
	Post-test	152.7	10	27.62	8.73	0.97*
Comparison Group	Pretest	136	10	20.90	6.61	
	Post-test	163.3	10	14.06	4.45	0.94*

Pearson  $r^*$

*Note.* Effect sizes of 0.94 and 0.97 are considered large (Cohen, 1988).

At the beginning of the intervention, the intervention group had a mean score of words read accurately of 119, and at the end of the intervention, the intervention group had a mean score of 152.7. This was an increase of 33.7 words. The comparison group had a mean score of 136 for the pre-test, and a mean score of 163.3 at the post-test. This was an increase of 27.3 words read aloud accurately.

T-tests were done. The intervention was not statistically significant between groups  $t(18) = 0.14$ ,  $p > .05$ . The intervention was statistically significant within groups. To control for Type I errors, a Bonferroni Adjustment was made at .05 divided by 2 for two comparisons to arrive at a critical value of  $p = .025$ . For the intervention group the  $t$  stat was -11.96, and the  $t$  critical two tail result was 2.26 with a  $p$  value of .000. For the comparison group the  $t$  stat was -8.41, and the  $t$  critical two tail result was 2.26 with a  $p$  value of .003.

A visual representation of increases in reading accuracy for both groups on the pre- and post-tests show impressive increases for all learners. See Figures 6 and 7.

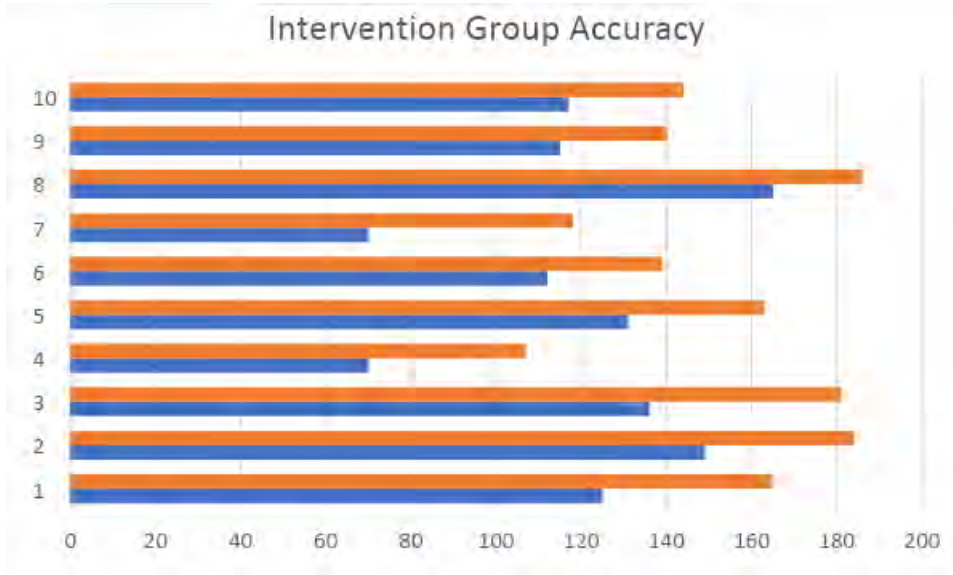


Figure 6  
*Intervention Group Reading Fluency Accuracy Increases from Pre- to Post-test*

For the intervention group (extensive reading plus repeated reading), the blue bar represents how accurately students could read aloud on the pre-test, and the orange bar represents how accurately they could read aloud on the post-test. The x axis represents the number of words read accurately, and the y axis represents each student, such as student #1, student #2, and so on.

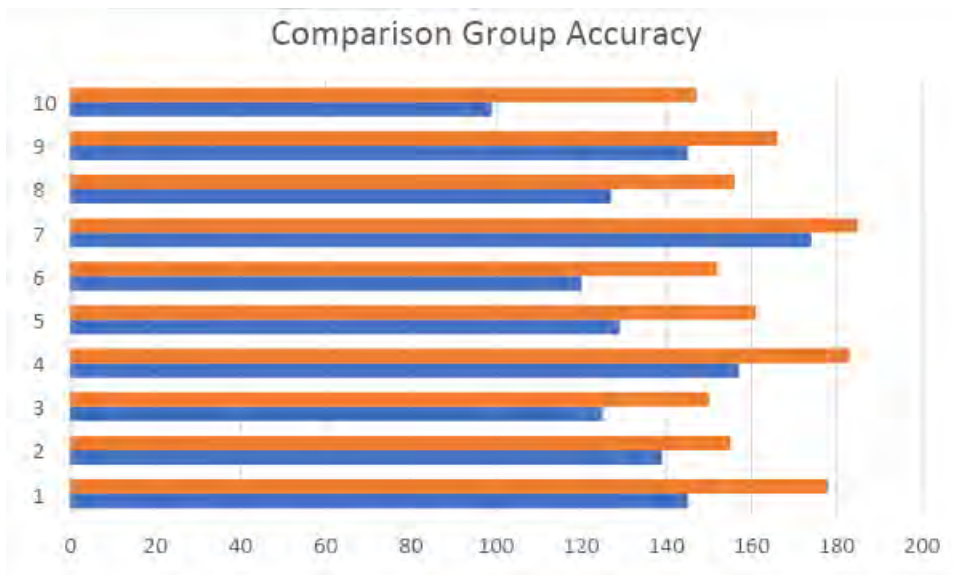


Figure 7  
*Comparison Group Reading Fluency Accuracy Increases from Pre- to Post-test*

For the comparison group (repeated reading only), the blue bar represents how accurately students could read aloud on the pre-test, and the orange bar represents how accurately they could read aloud on the post-test. The x axis represents the number of words read accurately, and the y axis represents each student, such as student #1, student #2, up to student #10 in the group.

**Research Question 3.** What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on English learner students' reading prosody as measured by the Fluency Rubric?

Pre- and post-test means scores on prosody were almost identical between the intervention and comparison groups, suggesting no change for either group over time. See Table 6.

Table 6

*Reading Fluency Prosody for Intervention and Comparison Groups*

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Standard error mean</i>
Intervention Group	Pretest	4.8	10	0.79	0.25
	Post-test	5.1	10	0.74	0.23
Comparison Group	Pretest	4.8	10	0.79	0.25
	Post-test	5.2	10	1.03	0.33

*Note.* Effect sizes between and within groups were not calculated because the results were not statistically significant.

Both the intervention and comparison groups had a pre-test mean score of 4.8. The intervention group had a post-test mean score of 5.1, and the comparison group had a post-test mean score of 5.2. The intervention was not statistically significant between groups, nor within groups.

**Research Question 4.** What is the impact, if any, of a modified extensive reading and repeated reading intervention on English learner students' reading comprehension as measured by CASAS Test?

There was little change in either group's mean comprehension scores from the pre- to the post-test. See Table 7.



Table 7  
*Reading Comprehension Scores for the Intervention and Comparison Groups*

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Standard error mean</i>
Intervention Group	Pretest	217.1	10	7.96	2.52
	Post-test	218.8	10	6.76	2.14
Comparison Group	Pretest	216.5	10	4.74	1.50
	Post-test	218.7	10	6.86	2.17

*Note.* Effect sizes within and across groups were not calculated because the results were not statistically significant.

The intervention group had a pre-test comprehension mean score of 217.1 and post-test mean score of 218.8, with a small increase over time. The comparison group had a pre-test mean score of 216.5 and a post-test mean score of 218.7, again with a small increase over time. The intervention was not statistically significant between groups, nor within groups.

## **Discussion**

The results indicated that the interventions of repeated reading and extensive reading had a stronger impact on student reading fluency rate and accuracy than on student reading prosody and reading comprehension. This seemed to be true whether learners engaged in repeated reading plus extensive reading, or in extensive reading alone. If a language educator would incorporate either repeated reading or extensive reading, student scores on reading fluency variables could be impacted. Effect sizes for both the intervention and comparison groups were high. Thus, both interventions may be considered worthwhile. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher to decide which intervention is best for their students.

If time is an issue, extensive reading would be the logical decision as the repeated reading intervention takes more class time to implement. Extensive reading can be implemented either in class or out of class, and extensive reading is student directed which is an advantage over the repeated reading strategy. *Read Naturally* can be implemented with adult language learners. The students in this study were receptive to both extensive reading and the repeated reading strategy. The Burlington English digital readers were more popular than the Oxford Dominoes Starter Series because the Burlington English digital readers had a read to student option. That is, some of the students enjoyed listening to the stories, and they were reading while listening to stories. This could be investigated further.

The students in this study did make some gains with their reading prosody; however, it was limited. These results were like Malmeer and Araghi (2013), who implemented an extensive reading study in Iran with university students and found no gains with the experimental group regarding English pronunciation. Instead, the comparison group using a structural direct

instruction approach outperformed the experimental group with English pronunciation. Students in the Malmeeer and Araghi (2013) study were at the Basic English proficiency level. This is one of the few published studies where extensive reading did not have a positive impact on English literacy.

The intervention and comparison groups read about the same number of books. The intervention group read an average of 14.6 books, and the comparison group read an average of 14.9 books. These numbers were lower than expected for a 12-week semester. In Bui and Macalister (2021), students read an average of 21 books in 10 weeks, and the lowest performing student only read 14 books. In sum, students could read many more books.

The same is true for the students in the current study. Note the data presented below which links books read by students linked to their pre- and post-test scores on *CASAS*.

Table 8

*Number of Books and Student Reading Comprehension Growth (Intervention Group)*

Students	No. of Texts Read	Pre-Test	Post-Test	CASAS Growth
1	12	228	226	-2
2	16	208	215	7
3	14	209	210	1
4	12	215	215	0
5	18	226	231	5
6	12	222	222	0
7	12	218	215	-3
8	12	224	223	-1
9	15	205	211	6
10	23	216	220	4
Average	14.6	217.1	218.8	1.7

Table 8 (continued)  
*Number of Books and Student Reading Comprehension Growth (Comparison Group)*

Students	No. of Texts Read	Pre-Test	Post-Test	CASAS Growth
11	14	213	215	2
12	12	220	218	-2
13	15	217	220	3
14	14	220	223	3
15	16	227	235	8
16	12	212	209	-3
17	29	212	216	4
18	12	215	215	0
19	17	213	216	3
20	18	216	220	4
Average	14.9	216.5	218.7	2.2

### Study Limitations

This study had several limitations. Some of the limitations were: convenience sampling, L1 differences, educational backgrounds, time spent in the U.S., small sample size and statistical power, and virtual limitations. In addition, student attendance varied among the students. Students in the intervention group were given a repeated reading intervention at a level 5 Read Naturally level. Ideally, the Read Naturally level would have been tailored according to the students' individual reading level; however, this was not possible due to time and COVID pandemic fear of gathering.

This study was conducted over the course of one semester which was 12 weeks. This was one major weakness which must be emphasized. Extensive reading studies conducted longer than one semester have a stronger impact on student literacy (Krashen, 2011; Nakanishi, 2015). Also, strictly speaking, there was no control group. Rather, both groups experienced some treatment (extensive reading). This was a normal educational setting.

### Conclusion

This study was unique. The only variable that changed in the study was repeated reading. The intervention group had an added repeated reading task (see Appendix C for a list of stories). The study could have been set up differently. The control or comparison group could have no

extensive reading, just the repeated reading intervention; however, to deprive a group of no free voluntary reading would be unethical. Most of the extensive reading studies reviewed and included in this paper had statistical significance or a strong impact on student literacy apart from one study conducted in Iran (Malmeer & Araghi, 2013) regarding extensive reading and student pronunciation.

The virtual reading room with Burlington English digital readers was impressive. The books were available online at various levels, there was an adequate selection for the students, and students could listen to books if they desired. In addition, the book narrators had different linguistic registers. This was a positive for students' listening skills.

*Read Naturally* cannot be dismissed. It is a prescriptive curriculum; however, it was comprehensible, and the students made gains. The reading passages used expository text. It has been hypothesized that fictional reading is more beneficial than nonfiction reading (Krashen, 2011). Perhaps more educators at the community college level could use this intervention.

Three pillars are essential for English learner student success (Krashen, 2021). These are reading in a second language, continuing to work on literacy in the first language, and providing comprehensible input for the students. Could these three pillars replace the five pillars found in the National Reading Panel Report (2000)? More research is needed.

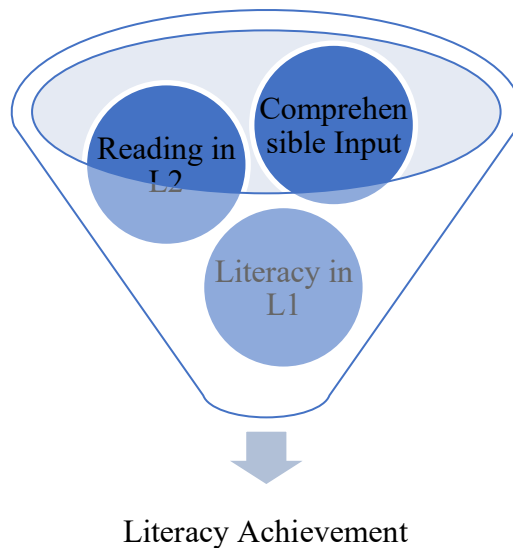


Figure 8

*Three Pillars Essential for English Learner Success (Krashen, 2021)*

A student's first language (L1) helps facilitate second language competence if the message is comprehensible. Educators must encourage students to read in their L1 and second language (L2). This will support additive bilingualism.

An informal analysis indicated conditions of flow during the repeated reading strategy did not occur. Conditions of flow are considered crucial for language acquisition. Kirchoff (2013) found

conditions of flow in an extensive reading second language environment. In conclusion, a “scientifically proven” intervention designed for elementary students can make an impact on adult ESL students' reading abilities. That is, a pedagogical approach was successful in an andragogy environment. In the same regard, extensive reading was just as powerful as the prescribed curriculum intervention. Again, educators must choose what intervention is best for their students.

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## Appendix A

### *Burlington English Digital Library Graded Readers (N=33)*

Title	Author / Editor	CEFR Level
British Myths and Legends	Julie Hart	A1 to A2
Gulliver's Travels	Jonathan Swift	A1 to A2
Hercules	Anne Stanmore	A1 to A2
Pocahontas	Irene Kay	A1 to A2
Tales from Greek Mythology	Phillipa Tracy	A1 to A2
Tales of Arabian Nights	Alison Phillips	A1 to A2
The Canterville Ghost	Oscar Wilde	A1 to A2
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow	Washington Irving	A1 to A2
The Prince and the Pauper	Mark Twain	A1 to A2
The Railway Children	E. Nesbit	A1 to A2
The Three Musketeers	Alexandre Dumas	A1 to A2
Tutankhamun	Julie Hart	A1 to A2
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	Robert Louis Stevenson	B1 to B1+
Dracula	Bram Stoker	B1 to B1+
Gandhi	Sue Kendall	B1 to B1+
Great Expectations	Charles Dickens	B1 to B1+
Two Explorers	Arthur Taylor	B1 to B1+
Villains!	Sue Kendall	B1 to B1+
A Ghost Collection	Anne Stanmore	B1 to B1+
Moby Dick	Herman Melville	B1 to B1+
Tales of Alhambra	Washington Irving	B1 to B1+
A Foreigner in Australia	Fiona Smith	B2
A Foreigner in New York	Ramón Ybarra Rubio	B2

Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen	B2
Two Shakespearean Tragedies	William Shakespeare	B2
Washington Square	Henry James	B2
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	B2
Mansfield Park	Jane Austen	B2
Oscar Wilde Short Stories	Oscar Wilde	B2
Tales of D'Urbervilles	Thomas Hardy	B2
The Murders in the Rue Morgue	Edgar Allan Poe	B2
Wuthering Heights	Emily Brontë	B2
The Last of the Mohicans	James Fenimore Cooper	B2

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## Appendix B

Oxford University Press *Dominoes 250* Headword Book List ( $N=32$ )

Title*	Author / Editor	Lexile Level
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	Hardy-Gould, Janet	430L
Crying Wolf and Other Tales	Aesop	440L
The First Flying Man	Rawstron, Elspeth	400L
Lisa's Song	Thompson, Lesley	310L
The Little Match Girl	Andersen, Hans Christian	470L
Merlin	Hardy-Gould, Janet	440L
Pebbles on the Beach	Raynham, Alex	380L
Perseus	Bowler, Bill	390L
The Selfish Giant	Bowler, Bill	520L
The Skateboarder	Lindop, Christine	320L
The Sorcerer's Apprentice	Bowler, Bill	410L
Troy	Bowler, Bill	480L
Zombie Attack!	Thompson, Lesley	410L
Around the World in 80 Days	Jules Verne / Bill Bowler	500L

The Big Story	Escott, John	390L
Blackbeard	Retold by John Escott	580L
Changing Places	Hines, Alan	370L
The Great Fire of London	Hardy-Gould, Janet	430L
The Happy Prince	Oscar Wilde / Bill Bowler	650L
Heidi	Spryi, Johanna	500L
Journey to the Centre of the Earth	Jules Verne / Merinda Wilson	450L
Kidnap!	Escott, John	310L
Moby-Dick	Melville, Herman	420L
Mulan	Retold by Janet Hardy-Gould	410L
A Pretty Face	Escott, John	460L
Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow	Washington Irving / Alan Hines	650L
Sheherazade	Bowler, Bill	610L
Sinbad	Retold by Janet Hardy-Gould	450L
The Tempest	William Shakespeare / Bill Bowler	430L
Tristan and Isolde	Retold by Bill Bowler	480L
William Tell and Other Stories	Retold by John Escott	460L
Hercules	Retold by Janet Hardy-Gould	600L

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\*Suitable for young readers according to Oxford University Press

## Appendix C

### *Read Naturally* Nonfiction Passages 5.0

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<u>Title</u>	<u>Number of Words</u>	<u>Story Number</u>
Piranha Fish	184	One
Black Widow Spider	150	Two
Okapi	190	Three
Python	193	Four

Hammerhead Shark	190	Five
Tyrannosaurus	154	Six
Sawfish	169	Seven
Emperor Penguin	208	Eight
Giant Squid	218	Nine
Scorpion	180	10
Narwhal	205	11
Hellbender	175	12

Appendix D

*Read Naturally Assessment and Goal Record Sheet (Example)\**

Baseline Data and Goal Record Sheet									
Student Name: _____					Monitoring Level: _____				
Teacher: _____					Room: _____		Date: _____		
BASELINE DATA					WCPM GOAL				
Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 3	Sum	Baseline Data (mean score)	Expected Growth (WCPM per week)	Number of Weeks in Monitoring Period	Product	Baseline Data	Goal
*	*	□	□	Divide Sum by 3 □	X	□	*	□	□
WCPM									
Errors									
Divide Sum by 3									
Student Name: _____					Monitoring Level: _____				
Teacher: _____					Room: _____		Date: _____		
BASELINE DATA					WCPM GOAL				
Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 3	Sum	Baseline Data (mean score)	Expected Growth (WCPM per week)	Number of Weeks in Monitoring Period	Product	Baseline Data	Goal
*	*	□	□	Divide Sum by 3 □	X	□	*	□	□
WCPM									
Errors									
Divide Sum by 3									
Student Name: _____					Monitoring Level: _____				
Teacher: _____					Room: _____		Date: _____		

\*For more information, please refer to <http://www.readnaturally.com>

**About the Author**

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