



Randomized Trial: Students Achieved Significantly Larger Gains in Proficiency with Reading Plus

*Less efficient students experienced larger reading efficiency growth.
More efficient students experienced accelerated reading achievement gains.*

See full published [report](#).

Region

Northeastern U.S.

County Population

160,000

School District Size

3,700 pupils

Schools

Six elementary schools

Study Participants

426 students:
213 used Reading Plus
213 matched controls

Grade Level

210 students in grade 4
216 students in grade 5

Gender

50% male, 50% female

Race & Ethnicity

70.7% White, 11.5% Black,
9.4% Asian, 8.0% Multiracial
or Other; 2.1% Hispanic/
Latino

English Language Status

15.7% ELL

Special Needs

8.5% on IEPs

Free or Reduced Price Lunch

39% received free or
reduced price lunch

Study Inclusion Requirements

Students with fall 2015
and spring 2016 GRADE™
scores and comprehension-
based silent reading
efficiency measures.

Overview

This randomized controlled trial examined the impact of Reading Plus on the reading proficiency development of 426 fourth- and fifth-grade students in a northeastern U.S. urban school district.

Reading proficiency was evaluated in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 using the *Group Reading Assessment Diagnostic Evaluation™* (GRADE™; Williams, 2001) and an eye movement recording system (Visagraph; Spichtig et al., 2016). The students were paired based on their fall GRADE Assessment Standard Scores as well as school, class, and demographic factors. One member of each pair was then randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group; the other pair member was assigned to the alternate group.

Over the school year, during daily scheduled 25-minute supplemental literacy blocks, students in the *control group* received targeted reading instruction using the district's usual curricula. Those in the *treatment group* received Reading Plus, completing an average of 93 15-minute scaffolded silent reading lessons.

Reading Achievement Gains

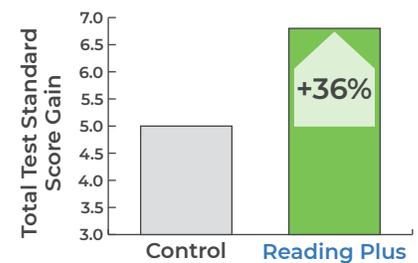


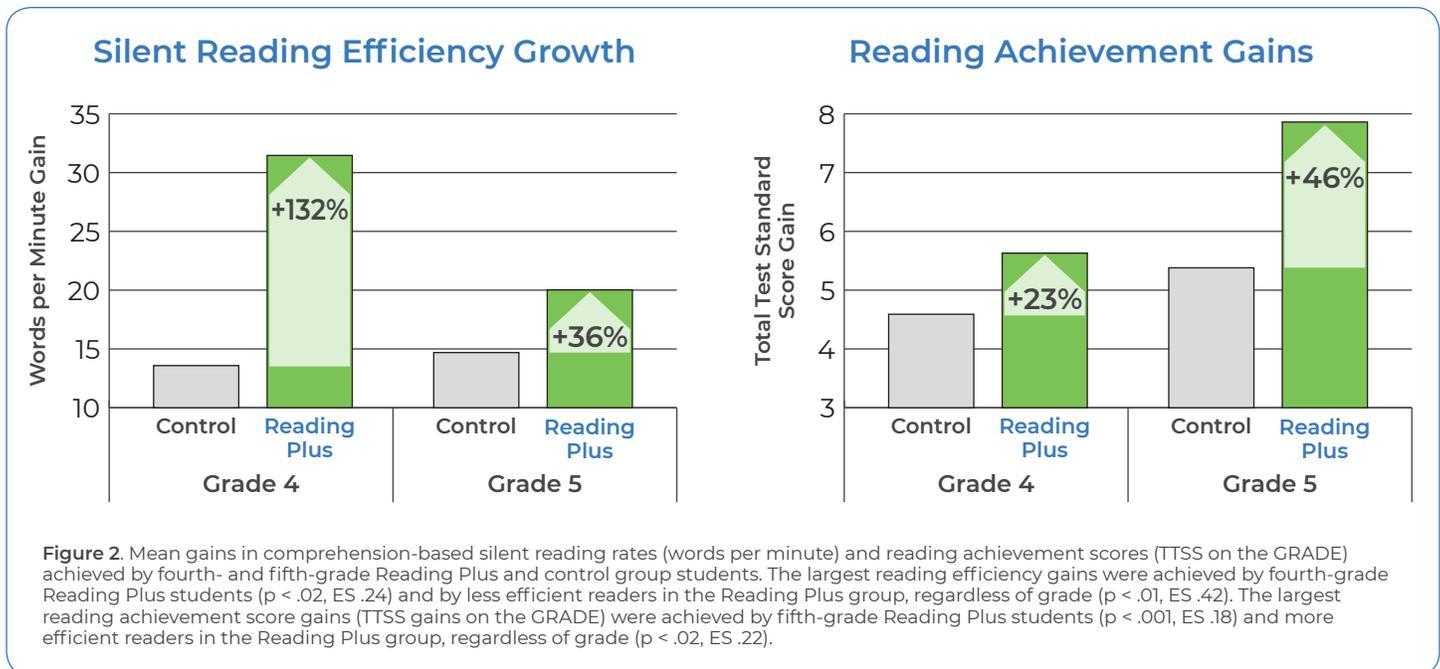
Figure 1. Reading achievement score gains as measured by the GRADE assessment.

Summary of Results

- ▶ **36% Larger Overall Reading Achievement Gains vs. Control** -- Overall, students in the Reading Plus (RP) treatment group achieved 36% larger reading achievement score gains than their peers in the control group.
- ▶ **132% Larger Reading Efficiency Gains vs. Control in Grade 4** -- The largest reading rate gains were achieved by fourth-grade RP students and by less efficient readers in the RP group, regardless of grade.
- ▶ **46% Larger Reading Achievement Gains vs. Control in Grade 5** -- The largest reading achievement score gains were achieved by fifth-grade RP students and more efficient readers in the RP group, regardless of grade.

Key Results

Students who used the Reading Plus program made significantly larger gains in reading efficiency and reading achievement. The largest reading efficiency gains (reading rate, fixations, and regressions) were achieved by the fourth-grade RP group and less efficient RP students regardless of grade. The largest reading achievement score (TTSS) gains were achieved by the fifth-grade RP group and more efficient RP students regardless of grade. Expressed as grade equivalents, fourth-grade RP students accelerated their reading achievement by 2.5 grade levels, or 5 months (23%) more than their control peers. The fifth-grade RP students improved their reading achievement by 2.4 grade levels, or 8 months (46%) more than their control peers. RP students in fourth grade improved their reading efficiency by 31 wpm, or 18 wpm (132%) more than their control peers. RP students in fifth grade improved their reading efficiency by 20 wpm, or more than 5 wpm (36%) more than their control peers.



Summary

This experiment provides strong evidence that engaging students in Reading Plus instruction significantly accelerates growth in both reading efficiency and reading achievement in comparison to the standard supplementary literacy block instruction. Given the evidence, the Reading Plus program can be used with confidence to engage students in effective, independent silent reading instruction.

References

- Spichtig, A. N., Gehsmann, K. M., Pascoe, J. P., & Ferrara, J. D. (2019). The Impact of Adaptive, Web-Based, Scaffolded Silent Reading Instruction on the Reading Achievement of Students in Grades 4 and 5. *The Elementary School Journal*, 119(3), 443-467.
- Spichtig, A. N., Hiebert, E. H., Vorstius, C., Pascoe, J. P., Pearson, P. D., & Radach, R. (2016). The Decline of Comprehension-Based Silent Reading Efficiency in the United States: A Comparison of Current Data with Performance in 1960. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 51(2), 239-259.
- Williams, K. T. (2001). The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE). *Technical Manual*. San Antonio, TX: Pearson Education, Inc.

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