

Investigating the immediate effect of Lexend font on reading performance of 3rd grade students

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This report is the initial findings of a study of third grade students conducted in Spring of 2018 investigating the immediate effect of typographical changes on individual reading performance. The question that drives this study is can modifications of typographical factors improve reading performance? More specifically, can text speed be matched to individual visual processing speed to deliver immediate, measurable improvement in reading performance using Lexend fonts?

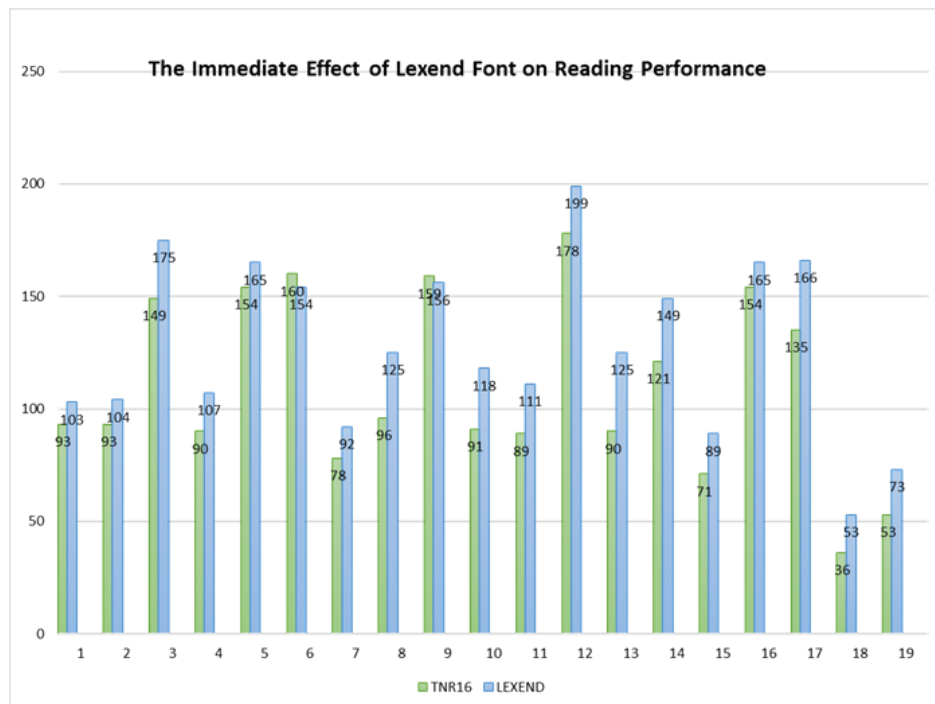
Research Design

The participants in this small-scale study were 20 third graders (M=8, F=12) from a kindergarten through fifth grade public, elementary school located in southern California. Of note, 99% of the student population were economically disadvantaged, 90% of the school population were English language learners. Lastly, the students, typically, perform below average in state testing for reading proficiency, which, potentially, is related to the high number of students that are English language learners.

The participants read for one minute each in five font styles. The font styles were Times New Roman size 16, Lexend size 14, Lexend size 16, Lexend size 18, and Lexend size 20. The reading materials were designed to be two grade levels above the participants current school grade to help ensure that the typography, or text, presentation was being measured, not reading competency. This test was conducted the last week of third grade; all participants were being promoted to fourth grade. Therefore, to ensure the story was leveled two years above student grade level, the materials were leveled at 6.2, meaning they were appropriate, for independent reading by a sixth grader at month two and met the criteria for this study. To reduce testing anxiety, the students final oral reading fluency* scoring was done offsite. Scoring followed traditional fluency testing measurements**.

Notable Results and Discussion

In this study comparing the effect of font style on reading performance, one student's reading performance could not be measured, and two students read best with Times New Roman 16 which is a large size font. Nine students read best with Lexend 18, five with Lexend 20, two with Lexend 14, and one with Lexend 16. Specifically, 17 students showed immediate gains in reading performance with a Lexend font, which is 89.5% of all students tested. These current results should be noted as significant. The researcher is unaware of any research on font style that have found gains of this magnitude.



- * Fluency is accurate reading of text at a conversational rate with appropriate expression.
- ** Total words read per minute, minus errors, equals total correct words read per minute.