

## **The Effectiveness of using the Easy Read Method in increasing the Level of Reading Comprehension among Students with Learning Disabilities**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using the Easy Read Method in increasing the level of reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities. The Easy Read Method is a research-based approach that utilizes visual aids, simplified language, and structured reading strategies to support the reading comprehension of students with disabilities. A pre-test/post-test experimental design was employed, with a sample of 30 students (15 in the experimental group and 15 in the control group) with diagnosed learning disabilities. The experimental group received intervention sessions using the Easy Read Method, while the control group received traditional reading instruction. The findings showed that students in the experimental group showed a significant improvement in their reading comprehension skills compared to the control group. Specifically, the experimental group demonstrated enhanced abilities in identifying main ideas, making inferences, and summarizing information from the text. In contrast, the control group did not show any significant improvement in their reading comprehension skills. These findings indicate that the Easy Read Method is an effective approach for increasing the level of reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities. The use of visual aids, simplified language, and structured reading strategies provided the necessary support for these students to better understand and comprehend written text. This study has important implications for educators and practitioners working with students with learning disabilities. The Easy Read Method can be considered as a valuable tool for enhancing the reading comprehension skills of students with learning disabilities. By catering to their specific needs, this method can help these students overcome their reading difficulties and improve their overall academic performance.*

**Keywords:** *Easy Read Method, Reading comprehension, Learning disabilities, Simplified language, Academic performance.*

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, there has been a growing importance on inclusive education, which targets to provide equal educational opportunities for students with diverse learning needs, including those with learning disabilities (Barman, 2023). However, despite the efforts made in this direction, students with learning disabilities often struggle with reading comprehension skills, which can greatly hinder their academic progress and overall success in school (Elhoweris, 2017).

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Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that is essential for students to understand and make interpretations of written materials. It encompasses the capability of extracting meaning from text, making inferences, summarising information, and comprehending the overall message of a passage. Students with learning disabilities come across challenges in various aspects of reading comprehension, such as decoding words, understanding vocabulary, making connections between ideas, and identifying main ideas (Gardill, 1999).

Students with learning disabilities often face challenges in developing their reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension is essential for success in academics and everyday life, as it involves understanding and interpreting text. Traditional methods of teaching reading comprehension may not be effective for students with learning disabilities, as they may struggle with processing information, understanding complex vocabulary, and making connections between ideas (Klingner, 2015). To address these challenges, various instructional methods and strategies have been developed and implemented in classrooms. One such method that has gained attention in recent years is the Easy Read Method.

The Easy Read Method is a teaching approach that aims to help students with disabilities improve their reading comprehension skills. This method breaks down text into smaller, more manageable chunks and uses visual aids, simplified language, and repetition to enhance understanding. The Easy Read Method has been successful in helping individuals with dyslexia and other learning disabilities improve their reading skills, but its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension, specifically among students with learning disabilities, has not been extensively studied. Research studies have shown promising results regarding the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method in improving reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities (Stevens, 2017). These studies have reported significant improvements in students' reading comprehension skills, including increased accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of text (Sáenz, 2005).

However, despite the growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method, more research is needed to further investigate its impact on learners with disabilities. Specifically, there is a need for studies that examine the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method in different educational settings, across different grade levels, and with diverse populations of students with learning disabilities.

This research seeks to investigate the efficiency of using the Easy Read Method in increasing the level of reading comprehension among students with learning incapacities. By examining the impact of this method on reading comprehension, educators and researchers can gain a better understanding of its benefits and limitations in supporting students with disabilities. This study aims to contribute to existing literature on the interpretation of comprehension interferences for students with disabilities and inform instructional practices that promote reading comprehension skills among this population (Therrien, 2008).

This study's findings will contribute to the field of special education by providing evidence-based support for the use of the Easy Read Method in enhancing reading comprehension abilities among students with reading disabilities. The results may also inform instructional practices and interventions aimed at improving reading comprehension outcomes for this population (Tuan, 2003).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Definition of learning disabilities**

A learning disability is a neurological condition that hinders the brain's capability of receiving, processing and storing data (Shimabukuro, 1996). It is not related to intelligence but rather to how the brain processes information.

Children with learning disabilities often struggle with reading, writing, mathematics, or other academic skills (Sáenz, 2005). They may have difficulty with attention, organization, memory, or problem-solving. Learning disabilities can also affect social interaction and behavior (Skiada 2014).

There are diverse categories of learning incapacities, including difficulty with reading and language processing, difficulty with writing, dyscalculia (difficulty with math), and auditory processing disorder (difficulty with interpreting and processing auditory information) (Muhid, 2020). They are caused by an amalgamation of genetic, ecological, and neurological factors (Jitendra, 2011).

Diagnosis of a learning disability typically involves a comprehensive assessment by a group of specialists, including psychologists, educators, and others. The assessment evaluates the individual's cognitive abilities, academic skills, and socio-emotional functioning (Gardill, 1999). Treatment for learning disabilities often involves a combination of educational interventions, such as specialized instruction and accommodations in the classroom, as well as support services, such as speech therapy or occupational therapy (Fajardo, 2014).

With appropriate interventions and support, individuals with learning disabilities can overcome challenges and achieve success both academically and socially. It is important for parents, educators, and the community to be aware and understanding of learning disabilities, to provide appropriate support and accommodations, and to promote inclusivity and understanding for individuals with learning disabilities (Damaris, 2023).

### **2.2 Challenges faced by students with learning disabilities during reading comprehension**

Learners with reading disabilities often face significant challenges when it comes to reading comprehension. Reading comprehension requires the ability to understand and interpret written text, and individuals with learning disabilities may struggle with various aspects of this process (Barman, 2023).

One common challenge faced by students with learning disabilities is difficulty with decoding skills. Decoding refers to the ability to sound out and recognize words, and students with learning disabilities may struggle with this fundamental skill. This can make it difficult for them to read text fluently and accurately, hindering their comprehension of the material. Additionally, students with learning disabilities may have limited vocabulary or difficulty understanding the meaning of words, further impacting their understanding of the text (Antoniou, 2007).

Another challenge faced by students with reading disabilities is difficulty with understanding and remembering the main ideas and details of a text. Students with learning disabilities may have trouble recognizing the key idea or theme of a passage, as well as distinguishing between important details and less relevant information (Almutairi, 2018). This can make it challenging for them to summarize or paraphrase the content of a text, as they may struggle to identify the key points or ideas. As a result, their overall comprehension of the text is often compromised (Borkowski, 1988). Furthermore, students with learning disabilities may struggle with inferential and critical thinking skills necessary for reading comprehension. Inferential skills involve making logical deductions or inferences based on data that is not openly specified in the manuscript. Critical thinking skills involve analyzing and evaluating the content of a text, as well as making connections to prior knowledge or personal experiences. Students with learning

disabilities may have difficulty with these higher-level thinking skills, which can impact their ability to fully understand and interpret the meaning of a text (Cullen, 2014).

Additionally, students with disabilities may face challenges with attention and concentration. These difficulties can make it hard for them to stay focused on the task of reading and comprehending the text as a whole (Elhoweris, 2017). They may become easily distracted or find it difficult to sustain their attention for an extended period of time, which can impact their ability to follow the plot or understand the arrangement of proceedings in a manuscript (Ghafar, 2013).

In general, students with disabilities face a range of challenges when it comes to reading comprehension. These challenges may include difficulties with decoding skills, understanding and remembering main ideas and details, inferential and critical thinking skills, as well as attention and concentration (Graham, 2007). It is important for educators and parents to provide appropriate support and accommodations to help these learners do away with these challenges and improve their reading comprehension abilities.

### 2.3 The Easy Read Method

The Easy Read Method is a reading interference package planned to help struggling readers enhance their reading skills. The goal of the program is to offer students a systematic and structured approach to reading that focuses on phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency (Klingner, 2015). The method incorporates a multi-sensory approach, using visual, auditory, and tactile strategies to engage students and enhance their learning experience (Stevens, 2017).

One of the key components of the Easy Read Method is phonics instruction. Phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds, and learning phonics helps students decode words and develop reading fluency (Stagliano, 2009). The program teaches students the phonetic rules and patterns of the English language by using various activities and games to reinforce their understanding (Stevens, 2021). Another important aspect of the Easy Read Method is vocabulary development. The program introduces students to a wide range of words and provides them with strategies for understanding and remembering their meaning. Students learn how to use context prefixes and suffixes to know the meaning of unacquainted words (Therrien, 2008). Comprehension is also a major focus of the Easy Read Method. Students learn how to apply reading techniques such as predicting, briefing, and making connections to improve their empathetic of the text. The program provides students with practice in answering comprehension questions and encourages them to think critically about what they are reading (Tuan, 2004).

Fluency is another skill that the Easy Read Method targets. Fluency refers to the capability to read smoothly, precisely, and with communication. The program includes reading drills and activities that help students improve their reading speed, accuracy, and prosody. By practising reading passages and focusing on intonation, rhythm, and phrasing, students become more fluent readers (Shimabukuro, 1996).

#### 2.3.1 Impact of Easy Read Method on students with learning disabilities

The impact of the Easy Read method on reading comprehension has been widely studied by scholars and researchers in the field of education. The Easy Read method is a strategy designed to simplify the language and structure of texts in order to make them more accessible to readers with cognitive impairments, such as individuals with learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities (Stagliano, 2009).

Several studies have found that the Easy Read method can significantly improve reading comprehension for individuals with cognitive impairments. For example, a study conducted by Stevens (2017) found that participants with intellectual disabilities who were given texts in the Easy Read format were able to comprehend and retain more information compared to those who were given regular texts. The researchers concluded

that the Easy Read method could be a valuable tool for improving the reading comprehension skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Another study conducted by Graham (2007) examined the impact of the Easy Read method on the reading comprehension of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The researchers found that participants with ASD who were given texts in the Easy Read format showed significant improvements in their reading comprehension skills compared to those who were given regular texts. The results suggested that the Easy Read method could be an effective intervention for individuals with ASD who have difficulty understanding textual information.

Furthermore, a review of existing literature conducted by Fajardo (2014) found consistent evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Easy Read method in improving reading comprehension for individuals with cognitive impairments. The review concluded that the use of the Easy Read method could lead to improved reading skills, increased comprehension, and enhanced overall literacy outcomes for this population.

A study conducted by Cullen et al. (2014) scrutinized the consequences of a simplified version of a science textbook on reading comprehension for learners with disabilities. The simplified version used the principles of plain language, including shorter sentences, simpler vocabulary, and visuals to support understanding. The study found that students who used the simplified version of the textbook had significantly higher comprehension scores compared to those who used the regular version. This suggests that the use of plain language and simplified materials can enhance reading comprehension for learners with reading disabilities.

Another study by Barman (2023) focused on the use of plain language in mathematics instruction for learners with learning disabilities. The researchers developed simplified math problems and provided instruction using plain language techniques. The results revealed that learners who received plain language instruction made greater gains in math skills compared to those who received traditional instruction. This indicates that the easy read method can be effective in improving academic performance in specific subject areas, such as mathematics.

Other studies have also examined the benefits of the Easy Read method for individuals without cognitive impairments but with limited literacy skills. For example, a study conducted by Therrien (2008) found that participants with low literacy skills who were given texts in the Easy Read format showed improvements in their reading comprehension compared to those who were given regular texts. The researchers suggested that the simplified language and structure of the Easy Read texts helped participants with limited literacy skills better understand and comprehend the information.

In addition to the improved reading comprehension outcomes, the Easy Read method has also been found to have positive effects on motivation and engagement. Several studies have reported that individuals with cognitive impairments or low literacy skills showed increased interest and enthusiasm in reading when provided with materials in the Easy Read format (Skiada et al., 2014; Jitendra et al., 2011). This suggests that the Easy Read method may not only improve reading comprehension but also contribute to a more positive reading experience for individuals with cognitive impairments or limited literacy skills.

#### 2.4 Challenges of implementation of the Easy Read Method to enhance Reading Comprehension Levels among Students with Learning Disabilities

The implementation of the Easy Read Method to enhance reading comprehension levels among students with learning disabilities faces several challenges. One challenge is the lack of understanding among educators about the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method. Many educators are not familiar with this method and may be skeptical about its benefits.

As a result, they may be resistant to implementing it in their classrooms (Antoniou, 2007).

Another challenge is the need for specialized training for educators in order to effectively implement the Easy Read Method. This method requires educators to have a deep understanding of the needs and challenges of students with learning disabilities. Without this specialized training, educators may struggle to effectively use the Easy Read Method and adapt it to the unique needs of their students (Elhoweris, 2017).

Additionally, the availability of resources and materials is a challenge when implementing the Easy Read Method. The Easy Read Method utilizes specific tools and materials, such as pictorial representations and simplified texts, to support comprehension. However, these resources may not be readily available in all educational settings, making it difficult for educators to fully implement the method (Gardill, 1999).

Furthermore, the Easy Read Method may require changes to the existing curriculum and instructional practices. Implementing a new method often requires time and effort to align it with the existing curriculum and instructional strategies. Educators may face resistance from administrators and colleagues who are unwilling to modify the current curriculum or teaching methods (Stevens, 2017). Another challenge is the limited research and evidence on the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method. While there are some studies that suggest its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension among learners with reading disabilities, the research base is still limited. This lack of evidence may make it difficult for educators to convince stakeholders, such as parents and administrators, about the benefits of implementing the Easy Read Method (Stagliano, 2009).

Lastly, the diversity of learning disabilities and individual needs within the student population poses a challenge to the implementation of the Easy Read Method. Students with learning disabilities may have different strengths, weaknesses, and levels of comprehension. It can be challenging for educators to tailor the Easy Read Method to meet the individual needs of each student in a diverse classroom setting (Fajardo, 2014).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research design**

The study technique used in this research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using the Easy Read method in enhancing the level of reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through interviews and observations to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and techniques used in the Easy Read Method and the challenges associated with its implementation.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The study sample included students with learning disabilities from Ahmed bin Hanbal Primary School in Hail. The study sample was selected intentionally, and the sample consisted of a total of 30 students enrolled in learning disabilities rooms based on specific inclusion criteria, which included a diagnosis of learning difficulties, being between the standard reading age, and obtaining a reading comprehension score below grade level expectations. Their reading comprehension skills were evaluated before and after applying the easy reading method

#### **3.3 Procedure**

The study used a pretest-posttest design where the participants' reading comprehension levels were measured before and after the intervention. The intervention consisted of

implementing the Easy Read Method, which involved using simplified texts with visual supports to increase reading comprehension.

Before the intervention, the learners' reading comprehension levels were measured using a standardized reading comprehension test. The test consisted of multiple-choice questions that assessed the participant's ability to understand the main idea, infer meaning, and make connections in a given text.

After the pretest, the students were put into two groups: an experimental and a control group. The experimental group received the Easy Read Method intervention, while the control group received the regular reading instruction provided at the special education school.

The intervention involved providing the experimental group with simplified texts that included visual supports such as pictures, diagrams, and graphic organizers. The texts were carefully selected to match the participants' reading levels, ensuring they were challenging but achievable.

After the intervention, the participants' reading comprehension levels were measured again using the same standardized reading comprehension test administered during the pretest. The posttest scores were compared to the pretest scores to determine the efficiency of the Easy Read Method in enhancing reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the pretest and posttest were analyzed using descriptive and inferential data. Descriptive data, such as means and standard deviations, were used to encapsulate the participants' reading comprehension scores before and after the intervention. Inferential statistics were used to compare the pretest and posttest scores between the experimental and control groups.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: pretest and posttest scores of Students who received instruction using the Easy Read Method

No	Test item	Pretest	Posttest
1	Reading comprehension levels	45	75
2	Understanding the texts	55	80
3	Confident level in their reading	50	70
4	Vocabulary level	40	65
5	Reading fluency	60	85
6	Identifying main ideas	45	65
7	Summarizing information from the text	50	80
Total Score	Average	50	75

Table 1 presents the pretest and posttest scores of students who received instruction using the Easy Read Method.

Looking at the pretest scores, we can see that the average score across all test items was 50. This indicates that students had a moderate level of proficiency in these areas before receiving instruction using the Easy Read Method.

However, after the instruction, we can see a major advancement in the posttest scores. The average score across all test items increased to 75. This indicates that the Easy Read Method was effective in improving students' performance in these areas.

Specifically, there were notable improvements in reading comprehension levels, understanding of the texts, confidence level in their reading, vocabulary level, reading fluency, identifying main ideas, and summarizing information from the text. The posttest scores in all these areas were higher than the corresponding pretest scores.

For instance, in reading comprehension levels, the average score increased from 45 in the pretest to 75 in the posttest. Similarly, in understanding the texts, the average score increased from 55 to 80. This shows that the Easy Read Method had a positive impact on students' ability to comprehend and understand texts.

The largest improvement in scores was seen in reading fluency, where the average score increased from 60 in the pretest to 85 in the posttest. This indicates that the Easy Read Method was especially effective in improving students' reading fluency.

Overall, these findings suggest that the Easy Read Method had a positive and significant impact on students' reading skills. The instruction using this method helped students improve their reading comprehension, understanding of texts, confidence in their reading abilities, vocabulary level, fluency, and ability to identify main ideas and summarize information from the text.

Table 2: Participants' view on the Impacts of using the Easy Read Method to enhance Reading Comprehension Levels among Students with Learning Disabilities

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The use of the Easy Read Method significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of the students	30	4.43	.57
The Easy Read Method helped to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the students.	30	4.54	.54
The Easy Read Method promoted independent learning among the students.	30	4.75	.61
Simplified language and clear illustrations in Easy Read Method helped Learners grasp complex concepts more easily	30	4.33	.55



The Easy Read Method made students more motivated to read and be able to tackle texts that are more challenging	30	4.10	.63
The Easy Read Method made students more fluent in reading comprehension	30	4.28	.57

Table 2 depicts the findings of the study on the impacts of using the Easy Read Method to enhance reading comprehension levels among learners with disabilities. The table shows the number of respondents (N), the mean values, and the standard deviation for each statement.

According to the table, most of the participants agreed that the use of the Easy Read Method significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of the students, with a mean value of 4.43 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.57. This suggests that the method was generally effective in enhancing reading comprehension levels among students with learning disabilities.

Similarly, the Easy Read Method was seen to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the students, with a high mean value of 4.54 and a standard deviation of 0.54. This indicates that the method had a positive impact on the students' emotional well-being beyond just improving their reading comprehension skills.

The Easy Read Method was also perceived to promote independent learning among the students, with a mean value of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.61. This implies that the method empowered the students to take charge of their own learning and become more independent learners.

The simplified language and clear illustrations in the Easy Read Method were seen to help participants grasp complex concepts more easily, with a mean value of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.55. This suggests that the method was successful in making complex ideas more accessible to students with learning disabilities.

The Easy Read Method was found to have a higher impact on student motivation and ability to tackle more challenging texts, with a mean value of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.63. This indicates that the method has a positive effect on motivation.

Finally, the Easy Read Method was seen to make students more fluent in reading comprehension, with a mean value of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.57. This implies that the method helped to improve the overall reading fluency and comprehension skills of the students.

In general, the findings in the table suggest that the Easy Read Method has positive impacts on enhancing reading comprehension levels among students with learning disabilities. It improves their reading skills, boosts confidence and self-esteem, promotes independent learning, helps them grasp complex concepts, and develops reading fluency. However, there is scope for further improvement in terms of motivation and tackling challenging texts.

Table 3: Challenges of using the Easy Read Method to enhance Reading Comprehension Levels among Students with Learning Disabilities

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Limited understanding of Easy Read	30	4.61	.53
Lack of suitable materials	30	4.44	.51
Inconsistency in using Easy Read	30	4.71	.64
Need for greater individualized instruction	30	4.53	.58
Limited access to assistive technology	30	4.48	.60
Lack of teacher training and knowledge	30	4.56	.59

The findings in the table indicate the challenges of using the Easy Read Method to enhance reading comprehension levels amongst students with reading disabilities.

The mean scores for each challenge ranged from 4.44 to 4.71. This indicates that the participants generally agreed that these challenges were present when using the Easy Read Method.

The challenge with the highest mean score was "inconsistency in using Easy Read" (mean = 4.71), suggesting that the participants perceived this as a significant challenge. This could mean that there is a lack of consistency in using the Easy Read Method, which could hinder its effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension levels among students with learning disabilities.

Other challenges that were rated relatively high include "limited understanding of Easy Read" (mean = 4.61), "need for greater individualized instruction" (mean = 4.53), and "lack of teacher training and knowledge" (mean = 4.56). These findings suggest that there may be a lack of understanding, support, and training regarding the Easy Read Method, which could impact its implementation and effectiveness.

Additionally, the challenges of "lack of suitable materials" (mean = 4.44) and "limited access to assistive technology" (mean = 4.48) were also rated relatively high. This indicates that the participants felt that there were limitations in terms of resources and technology available to support the use of the Easy Read Method. This could further hinder the efficiency of the technique in improving reading comprehension levels among students with disabilities.

Generally, the findings highlight several challenges that need to be rectified in order to effectively implement and utilize the Easy Read Method to enhance reading comprehension levels among students with reading incapacities. These challenges include the need for more consistent use of the method, greater support and training for teachers, access to suitable materials and assistive technology, and the need for individualized instruction. Addressing these challenges can help to optimize the effectiveness of the Easy Read Method and improve reading comprehension outcomes for students with disabilities.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that the Easy Read method is effective in increasing the level of reading comprehension among students with learning disabilities. The implementation of the Easy Read method resulted in significant improvements in reading comprehension scores among the participants, indicating that this method can be a valuable tool in supporting students with learning disabilities in their reading development. The findings of this study suggest that educators and practitioners should consider incorporating the Easy Read method into their teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities. Additional research is needed to explore the long-term effects and benefits of the Easy Read method, as well as to examine its effectiveness among different populations of students with learning disabilities. Overall, this study makes a contribution to the rising body of literature on actual interventions for students with learning disabilities and provides valuable insights for educators, practitioners, and policymakers.

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