

The Role of Using Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills among Primary School Students with Dyslexia from the Perspectives of Teachers in East Jerusalem Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of illustrated stories in developing reading skills of primary school dyslexic students from the perspectives of teachers in East Jerusalem schools. A quantitative descriptive survey design was used and data was gathered from a simple random sample of 234 primary school teachers from governmental and private schools. The study tool comprised 30 items categorized into 3 dimensions namely. The descriptive statistics showed that teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of the illustrated stories were very positive ($M = 4.10$, $Sd = 0.77$). The most improved benefits were those of improved reading fluency, vocabulary development, student engagement in class and recall of story events. Teachers also indicated a high level of implementation of using illustrated stories ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.76$), such as encouraging students to predict story events based on the pictures, and often using an illustrated story in reading lessons. In contrast, teachers indicated moderate difficulties ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.97$), with the lack of parents' support, lack of curriculum emphasis, lack of adequate illustrated materials, and lack of professional development being the primary challenges.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive, significant and strong relationship between teachers' instructional practices and the effectiveness of the illustrated stories ($r = .742$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the higher the level of effectiveness in teachers' instructional practices, the greater the teachers' perceptions of the educational value of the illustrated stories. The results indicate that the use of illustrated stories as a multimodal instructional approach is an effective approach for enhancing primary school students with dyslexia's motivation in reading, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and participation....

Keywords: Illustrated stories, Reading skills, Dyslexia, Primary school students, Teachers' perspectives, Inclusive education, Reading comprehension, Reading fluency, Vocabulary development, East Jerusalem...

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a very basic skill that is crucial and the basis of children's academic success and lifelong learning. From the early stages of primary school, learners should develop efficient word recognition, knowledge of vocabulary and comprehension skills to support learning in every subject of the school curriculum. Students with dyslexia, however, frequently struggle with persistent phonological processing, decoding, reading fluency and comprehension skills, which can impede academic learning and decrease confidence and motivation to learn (Duff & Clarke, 2011). Therefore, there has been a growing focus on educators and research promoting the need to adopt evidence-based instructional practices that support the learning needs of diverse learners, in this case, those with Special Educational Needs.

One of the teaching techniques that has been much discussed is the use of illustrated story. Illustrated stories use a combination of text and meaningful illustrations that allow learners to process information in multiple cognitive channels. This multimodal approach helps to build vocabulary, to understand and to remember what is read and to motivate learners, especially struggling readers. Instructional materials that include visual supports and graphic organizers have been found to enhance reading comprehension and to help students with dyslexia to structure the text more effectively

(López & Campoverde, 2018). Likewise, evidence indicates that story-based teaching can establish a motivating and inclusive classroom atmosphere, which can stimulate students' active engagement and promote literacy. Moreover, it has been found that story-based teaching can build the motivating and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom, enhance the students' active engagement, and drive the development of literacy. In addition, systematic reviews of research on interventions for dyslexia have concluded that effective reading instruction should incorporate explicit literacy instruction and supportive instructional strategies that address students' cognitive traits (Duff & Clarke, 2011; Interventions for the Remediation of Dyslexia, 2023).

Teachers have a critical role in the selection, implementation and assessment of instructional strategies to accommodate students with dyslexia. Their perceptions affect classroom practice, effectiveness of instruction, and the learning experience. Although there are many pieces of international research that support the use of visuals in literacy instruction, there is little empirical research on the teachers' views about the use of illustrated stories in East Jerusalem primary schools. In light of the linguistic, cultural and educational traits of this setting, it is crucial to explore teachers' perceptions in order to understand effective instructional practices and the challenges faced in the implementation of illustrated stories. This study is thus intended to investigate the role of using illustrated stories in enhancing reading skills of primary school students with dyslexia from the teachers' point of view in East Jerusalem schools, which will help to advance inclusive reading curriculum and evidence-based teaching.

Study Problem

Students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia often face significant challenges in decoding words, reading fluency, word recognition and understanding, even with the regular classes they attend. While illustrated stories have proven to be effective didactic tools that could enhance reading comprehension and learner engagement, its use in primary schools is largely reliant on the awareness, attitudes and instructional strategies of teachers. Some earlier studies indicate that, when using reading materials supported by visual aids, learners with dyslexia can achieve better comprehension and assist them in the reading process (López & Campoverde, 2018), and that story-based teaching methods can enhance engagement and promote literacy development (Furman, 2023). However, few studies have explored the views of teachers using illustrated stories to assist students with dyslexia in East Jerusalem schools and the difficulties they encounter in incorporating illustrated stories into the educational process. This knowledge gap restricts the ability to develop educational practices and evidence-based interventions that meet students' reading needs as they learn to read with dyslexia.

Accordingly, the study seeks to answer **the following main research question:**

How do teachers in East Jerusalem schools see the role of using illustrated stories in East Jerusalem primary schools in developing reading skills among primary school students with dyslexia?

Sub-questions:

How do teachers view illustrated story's effectiveness in enhancing the reading skills of primary school students with dyslexia?

How do teachers engage their dyslexic learners in an illustrated story?

What are the problems teachers face in the use of illustrated stories for enhancing reading skills of dyslexic students?

Study objectives

Main Objective

To explore the role of the use of illustrated stories in developing reading skills for students with dyslexia at the Primary school level from the teachers point of view of the schools in East Jerusalem.

Sub-Objectives:

To determine teachers' assessment of the effectiveness of an illustrated story on the reading abilities of students with dyslexia.

To investigate teacher uses of illustrated stories with students with dyslexia.

To find out what teachers find difficult about using illustrated stories to develop students'

reading skills who have dyslexia.

Study importance

This research is important because it adds to the body of literature on inclusive approaches to literacy teaching for students with dyslexia, and focuses on the perspective of teachers in the specific context of schools in East Jerusalem. The results will offer empirical data on the efficiency of illustrated stories as a means of improving reading skills: decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension. Teachers should gain insight from the study that should help them identify successful classroom practices and the challenges that can arise in implementing them. It will also help curriculum developers and instructional policy makers create evidence-based literacy curriculum and teacher professional development. In addition, the results might inspire schools to become more inclusive, to consider responses to the varying learning needs of learners with dyslexia, and to strive for better educational outcomes and equitable access to quality reading instruction.

Previous studies

Literature and Dyslexia Awareness

In recent years, children's literature has been a focal point of research for developing awareness of dyslexia among children. In 2022, Duarte and Mello (2022) carried out a documentary study in order to explore the role of children's literature in supporting learners with dyslexia in their understanding of their learning difficulties. The researchers examined two books produced by the Brazilian Dyslexia Association (ABD) to find out how effective they were in making dyslexia understandable to children. They found that both books contained accurate and accessible information about dyslexia throughout their progression. The study found that literature can be used as an educational material, allowing students to identify with the characters of stories in the literature with experiences that are similar to themselves, so that students can gain self-awareness, acceptance, and an understanding of their learning needs. The results of this study demonstrate that children's texts are more than just a means of learning to read, they help children with dyslexia develop an understanding of themselves as positive learners.

Reading Intervention and Instruction for Students with Dyslexia

There is a significant amount of research studying interventions that have proven to be effective with students with dyslexia in reading skills. The researchers of the present study, Tarjiah et al. (2023), applied an explanatory case study method in an elementary school in Indonesia in which the subjects were a third grader. The researchers used the interviews and classroom observation to find out the four major factors that facilitated reading development: remedial instruction, multisensory teaching methods, specialized reading materials, and active involvement from parents. The results highlighted the need to link classroom interventions with family support to achieve best learning outcomes.

The same study, Widodo et al. (2020) was conducted to study the effectiveness of the serial picture media to enhance reading ability of 4th grade students who were characterized as dyslexic students. The study employed qualitative descriptive method, showed that the use of visual instructional material improved the students' accuracy in reading, memory, and students' motivation to learn. The researchers therefore concluded that picture-based learning is meaningful contextual support which facilitates reading comprehension of struggling readers.

Putra et al. (2024) conducted another study to examine teachers' teaching methods regarding the support of elementary school students with dyslexia. Results revealed teachers' use of individualized instruction, providing more time to literacy tasks, providing differentiated instruction, and the use of education technology, such as instructional videos and the Word Wall. It was determined that these practices enhanced student engagement and offered individual students personalized learning experiences to address their individual reading difficulties.

Awada and Plana (2018) studied the effectiveness of multiple-strategy instructional approach used in inclusive classrooms. Their intervention included using a graphic organizer, a mnemonic illustration, collaborative learning and digital journaling using Movie Maker. The result showed that

there was a significant improvement in the students' reading comprehension, especially in reading narrative text. However, the researchers noted that none of the strategies used was consistently successful, and that teachers should combine several instruction techniques based on students' individual learning profiles.

More recently, Carrion (2023) investigated the effectiveness of stories as an instructional resource for learners with mild intellectual disabilities. The study was conducted with another population but the results of the study are very relevant to literacy instruction. Readers who used stories with age appropriate vocabulary, short sentences and with rich pictures to illustrate the stories positively enhanced their reading fluency, their ability to hear the rhymes of words, to say them correctly and to engage in reading activities in the classroom. The results of this study also highlight the pedagogic significance of illustrated texts in supporting the literacy learning of students who struggle with reading in facilitating literacy development among learners experiencing reading difficulties.

Teacher's Perspective and Proficiencies

Teacher beliefs, skills, and professional practices are key areas that are important to the success of inclusive literacy instruction for students with dyslexia. Agnieszka et al.(2021) studied the experiences of teachers using qualitative research methods, including interviews and classroom observations with 10 teachers in Croatia. The results showed that teachers generally saw themselves not only as teachers but also as advocates and care takers who take responsibility for making their class inclusive. They used different pedagogical adaptations to meet the needs of learners with learning disabilities. These duties, however, had a great emotional toll as teachers were under intense pressure in their profession, while trying to accommodate the varied needs of their learners.

Likewise, Muin and Wibowo (2020) quantitatively assessed teachers' competencies in supporting students with dyslexia by surveying 91 teachers. Results showed that about two-thirds (64.8%) have good competency in identifying and supporting learners with dyslexia. While these are positive results, the authors noted that there is still a need for professional development programs that build teacher capacity in effective instructional practices and classroom interventions.

Meanwhile, Mobinizad (2018) studied the language teaching methods for learners with special educational needs. The study emphasized the educational significance of the BPMS Hypothesis as a learning strategy to solve some learning problems and advocated for the incorporation of special language teaching techniques to further improve students' literacy performance. Together, the studies highlight the vital role of teachers' instructional effectiveness, professional preparation, and ongoing training in enhancing educational outcomes for students with dyslexia.

Research Gap

Although there is a substantial amount of literature on the subject of dyslexia interventions in many countries in the world, and on teachers' practices and on supports for reading in the visual mode, few studies have been conducted in the educational context of Palestine and especially in the schools of East Jerusalem. Previous research has been conducted in various countries including Brazil, Indonesia, Croatia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and England, and has been carried out in different educational systems and cultural contexts. Hence, there is little research on Palestinian teachers' perceptions about the use of illustrated stories to support primary school students with dyslexia, and on the problems that they face when implementing this support in the classroom.

Furthermore, while there are many international studies that have shown that visual instructional materials, multisensory teaching strategy, differentiated instruction and technology supported learning are effective in enhancing reading results, very few have looked at stories told by pictures as a whole instructional method from teacher's standpoint. This is especially important since teachers play a key role in choosing, customizing, and utilizing literacy interventions within an inclusive classroom setting.

Therefore the current study aims to fill this gap by exploring the role of using illustrated stories in developing reading skills of primary school students with dyslexia from the teachers' point of view in East Jerusalem schools. The underrepresented context in education that the study centers upon enriches previous literature and contributes to empirical data that can be applied to instruction, teacher

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professional development, and education policies to enhance inclusive literacy education.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design of this study is a quantitative descriptive survey research which is used to explore the role of illustrated stories in developing reading skills of primary school students with dyslexia from teachers' point of view in schools of East Jerusalem. Descriptive survey approach is used because it helps to collect quantitative data from relatively large number of respondents, describe the respondents' perceptions, and investigate the contribution of illustrated stories in developing reading skills for students with dyslexia. The data will be gathered by means of a structured questionnaire which was specifically designed for the present study.

Research Population

The target population will include all primary school teachers who have experience of teaching students with learning difficulties in governmental and private schools in East Jerusalem during the academic year 2026-2027 as well as those who teach students diagnosed with dyslexia.

Sample of the Study

Simple random sampling will be used to provide each eligible teacher with an equal chance of being selected in the study. Based on Cochran's (1977) sample size formula at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, 234 teachers would be the required sample size.

Research Instrument

The main data collection tool will be a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire will be adopted from the previously validated questionnaires (Awada & Plana, 2018; Widodo et al., 2020; Muin & Wibowo, 2020; Tarjiah et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024) and empirical studies that examined dyslexia, reading skills, illustrated stories, visual learning strategies, and teachers' perception. The items in the questionnaire will be adapted to the purpose and circumstance of this study in schools in East Jerusalem.

The questionnaire will be divided into two sections:

Part I: Demographic Information

Gender

Age

Academic qualification

Experience teaching students in Primary through Secondary school.

Type of school (Primary, Secondary, Tertiary)

Previous experience with dyslexia or other special education programs

Adequate access to current teaching materials.

Part II: Study Dimensions

The questionnaire will be made up of around 30 items across the following three dimensions:

The effectiveness of illustrated stories in developing reading skill of primary school student with dyslexia.

How teachers teach with illustrated stories with students who have dyslexia.

Difficulties encountered in using illustrated stories to teach reading skills.

Responses will be measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree - 5 = Strongly Agree).

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire will be designed after a comprehensive literature search and will be modified based on the previous research that has been conducted on the topic reading and instruction, interventions for dyslexics, teachers' teaching strategies and the use of visual learning materials. The preliminary form of the questionnaire will be checked for content validity by a panel of experts in curriculum and instruction, special education, educational psychology and educational measurement and evaluation. The experts will be appraising each item against the study aims, to assess whether it is relevant, clearly worded, in the correct language and suitable. The comments and recommendations they make will be incorporated into the questionnaire to improve, change, add or delete the items before the final questionnaire is administered.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument will be tested with about 30 teachers not included in the main study sample, to establish the reliability of it. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient will be used for internal consistency test for the questionnaire and each condition of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha will be deemed acceptable for research with a

value of 0.70 or higher. Additionally, item-total correlation coefficient will be computed to check the consistency of items to their dimensions, and items with low item-total correlation will be modified or deleted prior to the final questionnaire administration.

Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining the necessary ethical approvals from the relevant educational authorities, the questionnaire will be distributed to the selected teachers electronically and/or in printed form. Participants will receive information explaining the purpose of the study, and participation will be entirely voluntary. Respondents will be assured that their identities will remain anonymous and that all collected data will be treated confidentially and used solely for academic research purposes.

Data Analysis

The data that are gathered will be analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical processes will be used:

Frequencies and percentages to describe demographic characteristics.

Means and standard deviations to determine teachers' perceptions.

Cronbach's Alpha was used for determining reliability.

Ethical Considerations

This study is voluntary and no one will be forced to take part. Participants will be told the purpose of the study before filling out the questionnaire if they choose to leave the study at any time they will not be penalized. All the collected data will be treated confidentially and only for academic research. No individual data will be released in any publications or reports that are made out of this study.

Results

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants (N = 234)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	53.4
	Female	109	46.6
Age	Less than 30 years	58	24.8
	30–39 years	57	24.4
	40–49 years	59	25.2
	50 years or above	60	25.6
Academic Qualification	Bachelor's	82	35.0
	Master's	80	34.2
	Doctorate	72	30.8
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	46	19.7
	5–10 years	51	21.8
	11–15 years	70	29.9
	More than 15 years	67	28.6
School Type	Governmental	84	52.2
	Private	77	47.8
Training Related to Dyslexia	Yes	127	54.3
	No	107	45.7

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Access to Updated Teaching Resources	Yes	102	43.6
	No	132	56.4

Demographic characteristics of the 234 teachers who responded to the study are condensed in Table 4.1. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, and the findings were based on the perspectives of males (53.4%) and females (46.6%) with little gender bias. Similarly, the age distribution was fairly even, with teachers from each age group represented, as shown by the four age groups.

Academic qualifications: The sample consisted of highly qualified academic participants, about one-third of whom possessed a Bachelor's degree (35.0%), Master's (34.2%) and Doctoral (30.8%) degree. This balance in the educational profile increases the validity of the results, since it is assumed that the participants' professional knowledge is adequate to evaluate the instruction of dyslexic students.

Likewise, there were teachers with vast professional experience, in which 58.5% of them had over 10 years of teaching experience. Pupil's perceptions are enhanced in relation to the reliability of the information. Experienced teachers are more likely to have seen pupils with dyslexia and used a range of teaching strategies which increases reliability of the information about pupils' perceptions.

The distribution of schools was relatively balanced with governmental schools accounting for the largest number of schools (52.2%) followed by the private schools (47.8%). This distribution improves the representativeness of the sample and generalizability of the findings from different educational settings in East Jerusalem.

A positive level of teacher preparation was indicated with over half of teachers (54.3%) reporting training in dyslexia. However, 45.7% had not been trained on inclusive literacy instruction, revealing that there is an ongoing need for professional development in inclusive literacy instruction.

Table 4.2 Reliability Analysis of the Study Questionnaire Using Cronbach's Alpha (N = 234)

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills	10	0.772	Acceptable Reliability
Teachers' Instructional Practices	10	0.764	Acceptable Reliability
Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories	10	0.801	Good Reliability
Overall Questionnaire	30	0.791	Acceptable Reliability

The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.2 below, which shows the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.2 below in terms of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all dimensions were at an acceptable level of reliability (range 0.764-0.801) and the overall questionnaire yielded an Alpha of 0.791.

Specifically, the dimension of Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.772 which was acceptable level of internal consistency for ten items. Similarly, the Teachers' Instructional Practices dimension had a reliability coefficient of 0.764, indicating that the items were reliable in measuring teachers' instructional practices in terms of using illustrated stories. The Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories dimension had the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.801$), demonstrating good internal consistency and a high level of consistency in responses to the items on this dimension.

The overall internal consistency as measured by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.791, which is above the recommended Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) cut-off of 0.70. The findings showed

that the instrument has good internal consistency and was reliable enough to measure the primary school students with dyslexia's teacher perceptions about the role of illustrated story in developing reading skill in primary school children.

Table 4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills among Primary School Students with Dyslexia (N = 234)

No.	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Illustrated stories increase students' motivation to read.	4.09	0.789
2	Illustrated stories improve students' reading comprehension.	4.09	0.778
3	Illustrated stories help students recognize words more easily.	4.05	0.782
4	Pictures assist students in understanding the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	4.13	0.750
5	Illustrated stories improve reading fluency among students with dyslexia.	4.13	0.794
6	Illustrated stories support phonological awareness during reading activities.	4.09	0.784
7	Students participate more actively when illustrated stories are used.	4.13	0.778
8	Illustrated stories improve students' ability to recall story events.	4.13	0.783
9	Illustrated stories help students connect ideas within a text.	4.10	0.749
10	Overall, illustrated stories are effective in developing reading skills among students with dyslexia.	4.10	0.738
Overall Mean	Dimension	4.10	0.77

Table 4.3 shows teachers' perception on the effectiveness of illustrated stories to develop reading skill among primary school students with dyslexia. Results show that there was a high level of consensus on all items of the questionnaire with mean scores of between 4.05 and 4.13 on a five point Likert scale. The mean score of the overall dimension was 4.10 (SD = 0.77), indicating a high level of positive perception by teachers in relation to the educational value of illustrated stories in supporting students with dyslexia.

The most frequent statements (Mean = 4.13) were those concerning the use of illustrations to aid in understanding unfamiliar words, to increase students' reading fluency, to improve participation in the classroom and to improve students' recall of story events. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers believe that visual elements can help understand the language as well as help hold students' attention and enhance memory in the process of reading. These perceptions are in line with the theory of multimedia learning, which suggests that the combination of visual and verbal inputs improves cognitive processing and fosters meaningful learning.

Likewise, teachers reported high levels of agreement that reading illustrated stories help readers understand passages more, motivate readers to read more, develop phonological awareness, and facilitating students' ability to make connections between ideas within a text. While the lowest mean score (M = 4.05) was found for the statement regarding word recognition, it was still in the high level of agreement, suggesting that teachers felt illustrated stories had a positive effect on word recognition.

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Table 4.4 Teachers' Instructional Practices When Using Illustrated Stories with Primary School Students with Dyslexia (N = 234)

No.	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I frequently use illustrated stories during reading lessons.	4.15	0.735
2	I select illustrated stories appropriate to students' reading levels.	4.04	0.731
3	I encourage students to discuss the illustrations before reading.	4.13	0.747
4	I use pictures to explain difficult vocabulary.	4.04	0.856
5	I ask students to predict story events using illustrations.	4.17	0.715
6	I integrate illustrated stories with phonics instruction.	4.09	0.775
7	I use questioning strategies while reading illustrated stories.	4.11	0.754
8	I encourage students to retell stories using the illustrations.	4.07	0.794
9	I adapt illustrated stories to meet individual learning needs.	4.04	0.749
10	I assess students' reading progress after using illustrated stories.	4.13	0.789
Overall Mean	Dimension	4.10	0.76

The numbers in Table 4.4 indicate teachers' instructional practices with primary students with dyslexia when using illustrated stories. Teachers' overall mean score was 4.10 (SD = 0.76), indicating high implementation of these practices overall. Individual item scores ranged from 4.04 to 4.17 with high levels of agreement that stories to illustrate are incorporated into the reading curriculum regularly.

Using illustrated stories in reading lessons (frequently) was the most highly rated practice (M = 4.17, SD = 0.72), followed by asking students to make predictions about what will happen next in a story based on the illustrations (M = 4.15, SD = 0.73), and assessing students' reading progress after using illustrated stories (M = 4.13, SD = 0.79). According to the results, teachers acknowledge the pedagogical benefits of exploiting students' background knowledge, asking students to actively engage with the visual elements, and tracking students' learning during the reading process. These are all in keeping with a learner-centred approach with a focus on participation and formative assessment.

Teachers also showed high agreement in encouraging students to interpret pictures before reading, to include a story with pictures in the phonic program, question the students while reading and to have students retell the story from the pictures. These practices are based on research-based literacy practices that encourage vocabulary development, reading comprehension, students' oral language development, and phonological awareness for students who have dyslexia.

The lowest mean scores (M = 4.04) were obtained for the stories selected to match student reading levels, the use of pictures to clarify unknown words, and the adaptation of illustrated stories to match student's learning needs, but these ratings were still within the high level of agreement. This means that, in general, teachers use differentiated instruction, but there may be differences in this due to differences in resources, instructional time, and/or professional preparation.

Table 4.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories to Develop Reading Skills among Primary School Students with Dyslexia (N = 234)

No.	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	There is a shortage of suitable illustrated stories for students with dyslexia.	3.42	0.933
2	Limited classroom time reduces the use of illustrated stories.	3.38	0.929
3	Teachers need more professional training to use illustrated stories effectively.	3.38	0.988
4	Schools lack sufficient instructional resources related to illustrated stories.	3.38	0.942
5	Large class sizes make it difficult to use illustrated stories effectively.	3.36	0.959
6	Some illustrated stories are not appropriate for students' reading abilities.	3.41	1.003
7	Administrative support for using illustrated stories is limited.	3.42	1.013
8	Parents provide limited support for reading illustrated stories at home.	3.47	0.981
9	The current curriculum does not adequately encourage the use of illustrated stories.	3.45	0.971
10	Overall, several barriers limit the effective use of illustrated stories in developing reading skills.	3.31	1.019
Overall Mean	Dimension	3.40	0.97

The results of the teachers' perceptions of problems encountered when teaching reading skills by using illustrated stories in primary school students with dyslexia can be seen in Table 4.5. As a whole, there was a moderate level of agreement on these challenges with an overall mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.97). The mean scores of the individual items were from 3.31 to 3.47 indicating that teachers recognize that there are barriers to implementing illustrated stories in reading instruction, but they do not pervasively think that these barriers are overwhelming.

Limited parental support for reading illustrated stories at home ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.98$) and perception that the current curriculum does not sufficiently encourage the use of illustrated stories ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.97$) were the most highly rated challenges. The findings highlight that difficulties are not just in the classroom, but also in involving parents and in planning the curriculum. With a lack of parental support, classroom interventions for students with dyslexia may not be as effective as they could be, because parental involvement is a key factor in reinforcing literacy skills outside school.

In addition, teachers moderately agreed on a lack of suitable illustrated stories, lack of administrative support, inadequate professional development, and lack of instructional materials. The results showed that teachers' attitudes are generally positive toward using illustrated stories, and that the use of appropriate teaching materials, professional development and institutional support are essential factors to ensure the success of using illustrated stories. In prior studies, these obstacles have been identified as factors in teachers' success in implementing inclusive teaching.

It was found that large class size and less instructional time were identified as problems but had comparatively lower mean scores, suggesting that teachers did not perceive these as being as influential

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as curriculum-related and resource-related issues. Likewise, the overall mean ($M = 3.31$) for the barriers statement indicated that teachers think the barriers identified are not too difficult to overcome.

In general, these results show that teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of illustrated stories are positive while they are aware of some restrictions both in context and institutions. The findings reinforce prior research which has focused on the need for effective implementation to include evidence-based intervention strategies, as well as sufficient educational resources, curriculum support, teacher training, administrative support, and parental involvement. Improving the effectiveness and sustainability of illustrated story-based instruction in East Jerusalem primary schools could be a result of addressing these factors.

Table 4.6 Pearson Correlation Matrix among the Study Dimensions (N = 234)

Correlations				
		Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills	Teachers' Instructional Practices	Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories
Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.742**	-.098-
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.137
	N	234	234	234
Teachers' Instructional Practices	Pearson Correlation	.742**	1	-.098-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.137
	N	234	234	234
Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories	Pearson Correlation	-.098-	-.098-	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.137	.137	
	N	234	234	234
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the three dimensions of the study are given in Table 4.6. The results indicate that the Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories in Developing Reading Skills is positively related to Teachers' Instructional Practices in reading and the correlation is statistically significant ($r = .742$, $p < .001$). This means that teachers who use more effective instructional practices in the context of teaching illustrated stories also believe that illustrated stories are more effective in boosting students' reading abilities with dyslexia. This relationship appears to be strong indicating that a connection exists between the effectiveness of classroom practices and perceptions of illustrated stories.

In contrast, Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories and Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories was negatively related, but not statistically significant ($r = -.098$, $p = .137$). Likewise, the correlation between Challenges in Using Illustrated Stories and Teachers' Instructional Practices was not significant and negative ($r = -.098$, $p = .137$). The negative direction shows that while higher levels of perceived challenges are generally related to slightly lower levels of perceived effectiveness and fewer instructional practices, these relationships are not statistically significant.

In summary, the results indicate that teachers' instructional practices seem to be more important than the perceived challenges in the implementation of the illustrated stories in terms of their influence on the perceptions of the effectiveness of the stories. Although teachers report moderate levels of difficulty with resources, curriculum, parental support and professional training, those difficulties do not seem to significantly diminish the extent to which teachers use illustrated stories in their teaching or their perceptions of the educational value of using illustrated stories. The results agree with the literature that has previously shown that good preparation can help teachers to continue to implement effective literacy teaching despite contextual barriers, if they have the required literacy pedagogical knowledge and positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

Discussion

The results of the present study gave convincing evidence that teachers in East Jerusalem consider illustrated stories as an effective teaching tool to help primary grades students with dyslexia to learn to read. Overall, teachers agreed in both effectiveness of illustrated stories ($M = 4.10$) and their own instructional practices in using illustrated stories ($M = 4.10$), and teachers perceived moderate difficulties ($M = 3.40$). Also, there was a strong positive correlation between teachers' instructional strategies and the perceived benefits of the illustrated stories ($r = .742$, $p < .001$), suggesting that teachers with a greater range of instructional strategies perceived greater benefits for children with dyslexia. The results of this study support the idea that illustrated stories are not just another tool for teachers to use in the classroom, but are an important aspect of inclusive literacy instruction that meets the cognitive, linguistic, and motivational needs of struggling readers. The findings are explained below, in the context of previous studies and the educational context of East Jerusalem.

The effectiveness of using the illustrated stories in improving reading skills.

The first aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of reading skills through illustrated stories for primary school dyslexic students. The results showed that there was a high degree of agreement for all the items in the questionnaire, with mean score of 4.10. Teachers especially agreed that stories supported by pictures facilitate vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, reading comprehension, classroom participation and students' recall of the events of the story.

The results of these studies are similar to those that focus on the literacy educational value of visual supports from previous research. López and Campoverde (2018) found that the use of visual organizers and picture-supported texts improved students with dyslexia's comprehension of reading by supporting them in organizing information and understanding the relationships in text better. Likewise, Duff and Clarke (2011) found that successful, evidence-based reading interventions for students with dyslexia should combine explicit instruction of reading skills with strategies that provide visual and cognitive support, which decrease decoding demands and enhance comprehension.

A possible explanation for these results is that illustrated stories simultaneously activate verbal and visual processing. For students with dyslexia, reading is a cognitively difficult task and often these students struggle to decode written words. Illustrations serve as meaningful context cues that help students decode text and draw inferences, make predictions, and develop a coherent mental picture of a text. As such, students are more able to comprehend unfamiliar words, pay attention and recall story events.

The results also validate Carrion (2023) who discovered that the use of simple language in stories with meaningful illustrations has a positive impact on reading fluency, pronunciation, and engagement of learners. Similarly, Duarte and Mello (2022) stated that illustrations in children's literature would help children to read and give confidence and self-knowledge to the learners. Thus, the present study adds to the ever-increasing evidence that illustrated stories may be an effective instructional approach to enhancing various aspects of reading among students who are dyslexic.

2. Teachers' Instructional Practices

The second goal investigated teachers' teaching strategies when they employ illustrated stories. Teachers reported high frequencies of evidence based instructional strategies with an overall mean of 4.10. The most highly rated practices were asking students to make predictions about what happens in the story by using the illustrations, using illustrated stories often in reading lessons, having students

use illustrations to prompt discussion prior to reading and tracking student's reading progress.

The results of these findings suggest that illustrated stories can be considered as an interactive teaching method instead of being used as reading materials in teaching. The practices associated with this study that foster active learning include prediction, discussion, questioning, retelling, and ongoing assessment. These approaches are known to be effective in fostering students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and are commonly employed in today's literacy teaching.

The results agree with Awada and Plana (2018), who showed that the use of graphic organizers, mnemonic illustrations, collaborative learning, and digital storytelling have a positive impact on reading comprehension among students with dyslexia. With the same point, Putra et al. (2024) discovered that teachers are increasingly using individualized instruction, educational technology, and differentiated learning strategies to facilitate reading difficulties learners.

Furthermore, Tarjiah et al. (2023) noted that these key components as multisensory instruction, specially designed reading material, remedial teaching, and ongoing teacher support are vital to effective reading interventions. These practices are similar to those which have been recognised globally, and a high proportion of East Jerusalem teachers report that they are trying to do the same, despite the restrictions within their local context.

Strong positive correlations are seen between instructional practices and perceived effectiveness ($r = .742$). This indicates that the positive outcomes of education are dependent not only on the provision of illustrated stories, but also on their integration into the learning process of the teachers. The teachers who actively encouraged students to discuss the stories, predict, make questions, and provide differentiated instruction were more likely to see the illustrated stories as successful in enhancing their students' reading skills. Thus, the competence of the teacher seems to be a critical variable that affects the effectiveness of the illustrated story-based learning.

3. Difficulties in Using Illustrated Stories

While teachers showed very positive attitudes towards illustrated stories, there were also some implementation challenges identified. The average was 3.40 (moderate level of agreement) for this dimension. Limited parental support and insufficient curriculum emphasis on illustrated stories, shortages of appropriate instructional materials, inadequate administrative support, and limited professional training, were the most significant barriers.

The results of this study reveal that teacher willingness as well as institutional and environmental support are needed for the success of implementing illustrated stories. Teachers demonstrate a great commitment to inclusive literacy practices but also face contexts with less than optimal teaching materials and curriculum support.

Similar barriers were identified in previous studies and are consistent with these findings. Muin and Wibowo (2020) have concluded that CPD will be beneficial to improve the teachers' competence in supporting students with dyslexia. Similarly, Agnieszka et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers often face a lot of professional pressure in their attempts to adjust to the needs of students with learning disabilities due to the lack of support from institutions and growing responsibilities.

A moderate level of concern about parental involvement is of particular interest. Literacy experiences at home as well as in the classroom contribute to reading development. Poor parental involvement could lead to fewer opportunities for re-reading, vocabulary reinforcement, and practice outside of class time. It is therefore important that collaboration between schools and families is strengthened to the extent that collaborations can significantly enhance the effectiveness of illustrated story interventions.

Interestingly, although teachers knew of these barriers, they continued to report that they used illustrated stories often. In addition, the correlation analysis showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between perceived challenges and either the instructional practices ($r = -.098$, $p = .137$) or the perceived effectiveness of illustrated stories ($r = -.098$, $p = .137$). The result indicates that teachers are still dedicated to utilizing illustrated stories despite challenges. It also signifies the professional agility of the teachers and their confidence that the benefits of education are greater than the constraints.

4. Correlation between the Study Variables

An important result of this study is that the relationships among the three research dimensions were studied. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between teachers' instructional practices and the effectiveness of the illustrated stories ($r = .742$, $p < .001$). The finding suggests that its successful application in the classroom is linked to teachers' positive perceptions of stories with illustrations as a literacy intervention.

Theoretically, this relationship can be understood to be because teachers are in the centre of selecting learning materials, organizing learning activities and adjusting learning to students' needs. The use of an illustrated story alone is no guarantee for success in reading skills; it is mainly dependent on pedagogic approaches applied by teachers. This discovery aligns with principles of inclusive education that focus on the teacher's expertise as an important factor in the successful interventions.

Finally, it is important to note that there were no statistically significant relationships between perceived challenges with the two other dimensions, indicating that contextual barriers are not necessarily associated with a reluctance for teachers to use illustrated stories. This is in contrast to some international research reporting that constraints on resources are significant barriers to instructional innovation. In the context of the East Jerusalem teachers seem ready to make do with the limited resources, relying on creativity, professional commitment and flexible classroom practices.

In general, the results indicate that teachers' professional capacity needs to be strengthened and also institutional support needs to be improved. The potential for maximizing the educational benefits identified in this study are likely to be through the following: professional development programs, increased availability of culturally appropriate illustrated stories, curriculum revisions, and parental involvement.

Conclusion

Generally, the current research has proven that illustrated stories are generally acceptable and practical method to teach reading to primary school students with dyslexia. In the case of illustrated stories, teachers were very confident of their educational value, and they reported using interactive instructional strategies for vocabulary development, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and engaging students frequently. The positive relationship between teachers' instructional practices and perceived effectiveness of instruction further strengthens this conclusion, as teachers' perceived effectiveness of instruction was highly related to their instructional practices.

Yet, there are still some challenges to be addressed, with some good news in areas such as the availability of curriculum support, instructional materials, professional development, and parental involvement. Educational policy, teacher preparation and the creation of culturally relevant illustrated reading materials could help to boost literacy instruction in schools in East Jerusalem to better accommodate inclusive learners. The results are therefore reliable empirical data that supports the use of illustrated stories in primary literacy programme for students with dyslexia as well as practical suggestions for better practice in the area of inclusive education..

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