

add*Ed Research

What role can pictures, discussion,
and peer support play in
increasing comprehension of read
alouds for elementary students
with intellectual disability?



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Summary

Students with disabilities often do not have access to age-appropriate literature that is suited to their learning needs. Previous research has shown that shared stories and the picture plus discussion intervention can increase text comprehension. This research explored how the picture plus discussion (PPD) intervention effects the text comprehension of elementary students, with and without peer support.



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Method

- **Participants= two elementary-aged male participants with intellectual disability**
- **The researchers organized read aloud story sessions using the picture plus discussion intervention with or without the presence of a peer.**
- **Participants were shown a set of photos relating to the story (a representative photo set) and discussed the main components of the photos with the researcher. The story was then read aloud by the researcher.**
- **Participants were measured on overall engagement (i.e., interaction with instructor and material) and text comprehension.**
- **These measurements were compared to a baseline condition in which the participants were read a story aloud without the associated pictures or structured discussion, with or without the presence of a peer.**



Findings

- **There was an increase in comprehension from baseline when texts are presented using PPD.**
- **There was no significant difference in comprehension between PPD sessions with and without peer support.**
- **Comprehension gradually increased over the course of the sessions that included peer support. This suggests that repeated peer support sessions may be beneficial in gradually increasing comprehension.**
- **There was a significant relationship between peer support and student engagement. The amount of time spent engaged increased by 205% when a peer was present. This suggests that peer support is very beneficial for maintaining student engagement.**



Educator Take-Aways

- Using PPD along with shared stories can be an important class tool for literacy comprehension access.
- Engagement in text material can be increased by using peer support in the classroom. Students with disabilities can be partnered with classmates who do not have disabilities. Repeated peer support sessions are likely beneficial for academic and social skills development for all students.



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Picture plus discussion with partners: peer centered literacy supports for students with significant disabilities

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Access to age-appropriate literature is often difficult for students with significant disabilities without sufficient support. The picture plus discussion (PPD) intervention is an emerging research-based strategy used to increase comprehension of age-appropriate unadapted texts read aloud. While peer supports have been successfully used to increase gains in both academics and social engagement, their use to support literacy comprehension is minimal. This study examines the PPD intervention with unadapted age-appropriate texts read to elementary students with significant disabilities alongside their general education peers. Results of two withdrawal single case designs indicated increases in comprehension from baseline with the intervention as well as changes in engagement when presented with peer partners. Implications of the findings in addition to future research topics were discussed.

Keywords: literacy, comprehension, intellectual disability, autism, severe disabilities, read aloud

Shurr, J. & Kromer, G. (2017). Picture plus discussion with partners: Peer centered literacy supports for students with significant disabilities. International Journal of Developmental Disabilities, 64, 262-270.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2017.1312060>



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