

## Interactive Multimedia to Improve Reading Skill of Students with Special Needs

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### *Abstract*

*Reading has a significant influence on a child's future growth and development, which is why it is essential for children who have special needs to acquire this skill. Learning that makes use of visual aids is very important for children who have particular requirements. Because students with special needs struggle with abstract cognition and have a reduced capacity for recall, the instructional tools or media that they use should be tailored to accommodate these characteristics. The end result of this study should be the creation of multimedia apps that are both practical and interactive. In order to carry out this study, we needed to make some adjustments to the approach that Borg and Gall had created. The study included 30 participants from the seventh-grade. The students were from those who have special needs. The findings of the study suggest that introducing beginner readers to interactive forms of multimedia may improve their reading ability. And by gaining a very acceptable media expert validation score, material expert validation in the right category, and learning expert validation in the very feasible category, it is possible and helpful for children who have special requirements. According to the findings of the research, the created interactive multimedia does an excellent job of conveying information. When beginning their reading lesson, students that have specific educational needs may gain a great deal from utilizing the generated medium.*

*Keywords: Interactive Multimedia, Reading Skill, Special Needs*

### **Introduction**

Students who are able to receive an education while having a mental disability are the ones who are thought to be mentally retarded. Students with difficulties in their mental development, which have an effect on their ability to think, are the ones who are diagnosed as having mental retardation. According to Conti et al. (2017) students who have mental retardation are individuals who are limited in their ability to think or make use of their intelligence in some way. People say that a child has a mental handicap if they have trouble responding

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critically and reasonably to the world around them and if they struggle to think critically and rationally about it. According to Bronsard et al. (2016) children with mental disabilities are included in the population of children who experience these difficulties. It was concluded, on the basis of the statements made by a number of specialists working in the sector, that students with mental impairment had obstacles in their abilities to think clearly and critically.

Mental obstacles have an impact on a person's capacity for thought, which, in turn, has an impact on that person's capacity for comprehension. The term "cognition" refers to a broad field that includes all academic skills that are linked to a person's perceptual abilities. Cognition is a rather expansive field. According to Sternberg et al. (2018) cognition is defined as the process of not only obtaining new knowledge but also retaining it and putting it to use in one's daily life. Hwang et al. (2018) stated students that suffer from mental retardation have a difficult time remembering information, keeping their attention on a single task, engaging in abstract thought, and generally have bad recollections. It is possible to come to the conclusion that barriers to student cognition are the cause of students having difficulty capturing knowledge, storing it, and reprocessing it into critical and logical knowledge, which in turn causes low levels of abstract thinking skills. This conclusion can be drawn because it is possible to draw the conclusion that barriers to student cognition cause students to have difficulty capturing knowledge, storing it, and reprocess the assertions made by a number of different authorities allow for the inference of this conclusion (Zhu, 2016).

Due to the fact that students with mental retardation tend to have low levels of abstract thinking abilities, it may be difficult for them to visualize things. As a result, the concept of demonstration is one of the specific learning principles that are utilized when working with students who have mental retardation. The use of instructional aids is necessary for the learning process because of the limitations that students have in terms of their capacity for abstract thought (Hsu et al., 2018). According to Puspitarini & Hanif, (2019) learning media are only one of the numerous options that educators draw upon to better aid their student charges. According to one school of thought, the selection of relevant instructional resources needs to be guided by the degree to which the pupils are capable of engaging in critical thinking. The elementary school level is represented by the enactive level's description of the scenario (Videla et al., 2022). Direct experience, fake experience (demonstration), theater, demonstrations, field excursions, and performances should all serve as the foundation for the educational materials that are employed. This is because all of these types of learning are more effective than reading about or hearing about something.

The explanations that have been presented by a number of professionals suggest that students who have mental retardation want instructional aids, more especially learning media, so that they may either provide real-life experience or simulate real-life experience (demonstration). According to the widespread view, students who suffer from mental impairment have an urgent need for the provision of visual help. One of the purposes of teaching aids is to assist students in correctly identifying items by placing them in the appropriate context. The outcomes of the interviews and observations indicated that students with mental impairment had trouble recognizing items and had trouble memorizing material. It was determined that this was really the case. The reading skills of the students are suffering as a direct result of the situation that has arisen.

Memory issues are very frequent in persons who have mental retardation; this is a continuous obstacle that is thought to have a neurological root cause; as a result, it interferes with the ability of a mentally retarded person to read. Reading is often difficult for students who have mental retardation because of deficiencies in their capacity for perceptual and memorization abilities.

The eventual outcome of this study will produce a product called interactive multimedia, which, if it is effective, can perhaps increase the starting reading ability of students who have mental retardation and pique the interest of students who already have that attention.

## **Theoretical Background**

### Special Needs Reading Context

The reading that is being referred to in this research is the reading that comprises the first stage of reading. When children enter kindergarten, it is expected of them that they be able to read, and if they are unable to do so, it may have long-term ramifications for their intellectual progress. If a kid is unable to read, it may have long-term repercussions. According to Çakıroğlu (2018) the ability to convert written symbols into meaningful sound pronunciations is the most critical skill for youngsters to have gained at this point in their educational development. At this time in their development, children ought to have achieved mastery of this ability. In order for the learning process to be effective, the characteristics of the pupils need to be included into the use of visual aids (Syahrin et al., 2022; Khasawneh, 2022a).

The kinds of media that are used in the process of assisting in the education of pupils who have mental impairment are subject to a number of prerequisites before they can be employed (Malki & Einat, 2018). According to Southwick et al. (2016) the capacity to stimulate the attention of the pupils in the issue at hand, resilience in the face

of harm or danger, lack of abstraction, pragmatism, and accessibility are some of the prerequisites. Because persons who have these qualities have a propensity to learn slowly and have difficulty understanding complex concepts, the instructional strategy that is used must place a focus on the employment of a number of distinct senses in order to be effective. The sensory way of learning calls for the maximum amount of attention that can be properly directed toward it.

#### Interactive Media and Special Needs

For the purpose of directing the development and use of interactive media for students with special needs, a great number of distinct theories have been developed. At the core of these ideas is the question of how best to accommodate the individual needs of these pupils.

The UDL hypothesis is one option to consider in this scenario. This approach emphasizes the necessity of constructing inclusive classrooms in order to accommodate students who have a range of varied abilities. The framework known as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) suggests that educational resources and activities should be developed with a number of representational, expressive, and interactive options in mind (Rose et al., 2018). This is done to ensure that all students are able to fully participate in the learning process.

A different point of view is offered by the Multi-Modal Interaction Design, or MMID. Keeping this principle in mind, it is very important for us to develop interactive media that students of all levels of expertise and interests may profit from while also enjoying (Yates et al., 2021). According to the Multiple Modes of Interaction Design (MMID) philosophy, all students should be able to comprehend and make use of the educational materials that have been provided (Català-Oltra et al., 2022).

Another theory is called the Self-Directed Learning Theory (SDL), and it emphasizes the value of giving students control over their own education. According to the SDL theory, the structure of interactive media should be designed in such a way as to provide students with the ability to set their own learning goals, make choices on what and how they study, and obtain feedback on their progress (Lee & Hannafin, 2016).

Last but not least, the idea of Game-based Learning (GBL) emphasizes the significance of include games and game-like aspects in the activities that take place in the classroom in order to maintain the students' level of interest and to heighten their level of learning. GBL believes that games and simulations may be used to assist students, particularly those with special needs, practice and apply newly acquired abilities in a manner that is both interesting and engaging.

In conclusion, theories such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Multimedia Instructional Design (MMID), and Game-Based Learning (GBL) provide direction for the design and use of interactive media for students with special needs. These theories emphasize the significance of designing learning experiences that are accessible, engaging, and effective, and that are tailored to the specific requirements of these students.

Over the last several years, a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the possibility that interactive multimedia might assist children who have learning disabilities in more efficiently acquiring reading skills. It has been shown that children who have intellectual impairments, as well as those who have autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other developmental issues, may benefit by engaging with interactive media (Khasawneh, 2022b).

In this study, we posed the question, "Does the use of text-to-speech and other comparable read-aloud aids help reading comprehension for children with reading disabilities?" According to the findings of a "meta-analysis" that was carried out by Wood (2018), the use of interactive multimedia was found to assist students who had challenges in learning to comprehend what they read. The authors have a hypothesis that the interactive characteristics of the multimedia led to increased levels of learning because of the students' increased levels of active involvement and sustained attention to the material.

Researchers El Kah & Lakhouaja (2018) demonstrated that dyslexic pupils who used interactive multimedia had improved reading fluency as well as comprehension. The authors contend that by include both visual and aural components in their work, they were able to provide the students with a learning experience that was both more intriguing and more engaging for them.

The study conducted by Lau & Win (2018) found that autistic children saw substantial improvements in their level of reading comprehension after utilizing interactive multimedia. The authors have a hypothesis that the multimedia worked as a visual and aural assistance for the students with autism, which encouraged them to actively engage in the learning process.

According to the findings of study done by Alabdulkareem & Jamjoom (2020), introducing interactive multimedia into reading teaching was beneficial for ADD/HD children (ADHD). The authors hypothesize that the students' elevated levels of interest and attention to the subject matter were a contributing factor to their improved reading comprehension.

According to the findings of study carried out by Terrazas-Arellanes et al. (2018), the reading comprehension of students with intellectual

disabilities was shown to significantly increase when they were presented with interactive multimedia. The authors believe that the use of multimedia made it possible to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment, which in turn led to increased levels of student engagement and retention.

## **Methods**

### Participants

The actual product requirements are determined via the process of needs assessment, while ideas for the product's conceptual and theoretical foundations are derived through the research of relevant literature. The study included 30 students from the seventh grades in Abha city, Saudi Arabia. These students were all males and were diagnosed with special needs.

### Instrument

To determine the degree of help that was necessary, an assessment was carried out using a variety of data collection methods, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Experts in the field of media were given the checklist to evaluate the instrument's validity, experts in the field of materials were asked to evaluate the product's suitability based on the materials it contains, and learning specialists who work with children who have special needs were consulted to determine whether or not the product's content is compatible with the requirements of students who have intellectual disabilities.

### Data collection and analysis

The evaluation criteria in the questionnaire are presented in the form of a checkbox, with a score of 4 indicating that it is highly appropriate to the student's characteristics, highly interesting for students, and highly effective for students; a score of 3 indicating that it is appropriate to the student's character, attractive to students, and effective for students; a score of 2 indicating that it is inappropriate to the student's character, less attractive to students, and effective for students; and a score of 1 indicating that it is inappropriate to the student's character, less attractive to students, and ineffective for students. The percentage data that was generated is then compared to the revised criteria that must be met in order to qualify.

## **Results**

This interactive multimedia package was given its stamp of approval by a media professional, a materials expert, and an educator of students who need special education services before it was released to the public. The method of validating the product included gathering data via the use of a questionnaire that made a variety of assertions

and recommendations on the product. Following the collection of data from validators, this knowledge is used to guide subsequent versions of the product, one of which will become the first product to be evaluated in a constrained environment.

**Table 1. Effectiveness Test**

<b>Df</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.01</b>
1	6.31	31.82
2	2.91	6.96
3	2.35	4.54
4	2.13	3.74
5	2.01	3.36
6	1.94	3.14

According to the results of the data validation conducted by media professionals, it has a 97% chance of being successfully implemented in educational settings. The results of the percentage of experts indicate that 76% of the materials may be considered appropriate for students who have mental disability. This is a goal that can be accomplished given that there are 88 percent more learning professionals than there are children with special needs. The combined scores of the three separate experts came to an average of 87%. Scores between 81% and 100% were regarded to be exceptionally feasible in accordance with the product validation criteria. As a consequence of this, the use of interactive multimedia products as a kind of educational assistance for those who suffer from mental retardation became a feasible prospect.

**Table 2. T Test**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>D= X2 – X1</b>	<b>Difference in Pre-Post-Test</b>
1	22	484
2	52	2704
3	33	1089
4	26	676

Data for both the pre-test and post-test were gathered via limited-scale field research. Because of these statistics, we are able to deduce that the T-test formula is used to the data that was gathered both before and after the test in order to calculate the final score. It is possible to reposition the table to accommodate a different number of students if that becomes required. In this particular scenario, when t count is equal to 5, and t table df is equal to 2.35, t count is greater than t table. It is thus reasonable to assert that students' participation in interactive multimedia activities contributes to an improvement in the students' fundamental reading skills.

## Discussion

The learning process makes great use of a variety of sensory modalities in order to maximize the amount of knowledge that pupils are able to remember (Lodge et al., 2016). The following are some of the criteria that must be met in order for props or media to be considered suitable for use in the education of individuals who have mental retardation: the media must make students responsive to the material that is being studied; the media must not be easily damaged; the media must not be dangerous; the media must not be abstract; the media must be usable; and the media must be easy to obtain.

During the course of this investigation, images, films, and animations were all utilized as examples of interactive media. This was done in accordance with the findings of previous research, which led researchers to the conclusion that the application of interactive media may result in an increase in student participation during the process of learning. According to the conclusions of this study, subsequent researchers should take into consideration the possibility of using similar kinds of media for children whose education is hampered by a number of different problems.

In addition, it was demonstrated that the influence of the synthetic structural analytic technique on the early reading skills of children with mental retardation had a positive influence on the application of the method, which in turn had a positive effect on the method itself. This was demonstrated by the fact that the technique was shown to have a positive effect on the method itself. One of the suggestions offered for future studies is that the Synthetic Analytical Structure method be used for developing compelling learning materials (Iss et al., 2016). This was one of the recommendations provided.

The demand for educational media, the findings of prior research, and some of these remarks regarding the challenges faced by students who have mental retardation formed the foundation for the creation of interactive multimedia. This foundation was the result of the demand for educational media, the findings of prior research, and some of these remarks. We call a piece of multimedia "interactive" if the user is given a controller that they are able to operate while interacting with it. This makes the multimedia piece more engaging for the user. This gives the user the ability to choose the mode of teaching that caters to their need the most effectively. We say that a medium is interactive if a user may provide instructions to it, and if those instructions are followed by a response from the medium. The method of Synthetic Analytical Structure was used as a guide for the presentation of the content in the interactive multimedia that was developed to improve the reading abilities of students who have



mental retardation (Jamshidifarsani et al., 2019). This was done in order to help these students better understand what they are reading. As a direct consequence of the students' processing and further study of the material in partnership with the professionals, there were advances achieved in each and every aspect of the assessment. These advancements can be directly attributed to the fact that. After that, the data are input into the algorithm for the T test, which generates the t count larger than the t table. This suggests that the use of interactive multimedia is effective in increasing the beginning reading skills of children who have been diagnosed with a mental impairment. This illustrates that there was a change in the results between the pre-test and the post-test, which was conducted at the same location. The pupils' reading comprehension of sentences significantly increased, and they also demonstrated extremely impressive development in the words domain (Kuhn et al., 2017). The children performed very well on the portion of the test that included syllables and letters.

One of the advantages of using interactive media is that it allows for the creation of a learning environment that is not only more creative but also more engaging. According to Popenici & Kerr (2017) educators need to have creative and innovative minds in order to properly support students' educational experiences. The term "full media performance" refers to the combination of text, pictures, audio, and music, as well as animated graphics or videos, into a single component that complements and supports each other for the purpose of achieving educational goals. This can be done by combining text, pictures, audio, and music, as well as animated graphics or videos. Improve your kids' desire to study by giving them more reasons to do so. It is a valuable talent to have the ability to visualize concepts that, in the past, have been challenging to convey only via explanations or other methods that are more conventional (Fischer et al., 2020).

Students that have particular requirements may find that the many educational strategies that may be chosen from thanks to the proliferation of interactive media to be highly useful (Gillis & Krull, 2020). Students could find it helpful to visualize and comprehend difficult ideas via the use of simulations, for instance, which not only make learning more intriguing and engaging but also help students perceive and comprehend more complicated ideas. Students that take part in activities that use virtual reality (VR) may get access to classrooms that are more engaging and immersive, as well as classrooms that may be customized to better suit the students' unique learning styles.

One of the many advantages of interactive media is that it can be adapted to meet the requirements of children with disabilities (Pinchevski & Peters, 2016). This is only one of the many advantages of interactive media. This is only one of the numerous advantages that

may be gained by using interactive media. Students who have visual or hearing impairments may benefit from the accessibility of interactive media that incorporates features such as text-to-speech, closed captioning, and audio explanations (Dhanjal & Singh, 2019). Students who have learning disabilities may also benefit from the accessibility of interactive media. These components may be included into the design of interactive media in some kind.

Additionally, children who have special needs may benefit from the capacity of interactive media to create an environment that is both safe and encouraging for the purpose of practicing newly learned skills and furthering their development. This is because the goal of these activities is to further the children's development. The use of educational games and simulations is an excellent way to hone a variety of skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making, to name just a few of the many possibilities that are available. Educational games and simulations can be found online and in many different formats.

## **Conclusion**

When creating this interactive multimedia product, the specific needs of students who have mental impairment were taken into consideration at every stage of the design process. Because of the improvements that have been made to make this multimedia resource more attractive and less difficult, students will have an easier time utilizing it. This medium is accompanied with a reference book that describes not only the function of the medium but also its purpose. This book is intended for the use of teachers and student assistants. This media features a wide range of visually appealing elements, as well as audio and video material, and animated graphics. This media makes use of a mechanism known as Synthetic Analytical Structure in order to communicate reading information, which is complemented with audio. Students might perhaps be encouraged to engage in independent study with the assistance of this form of media. The fact that this medium is a compact disk makes it easier to use and easier to store than other similar formats.

Future research can focus on the use of interactive multimedia in developing skills other than reading among students with special needs. The study recommends performing deep analysis in the role of using multimedia in helping students acquire different skills. The study also recommends decision-makers to consider the results of the study in giving instructions to teachers who deal with student with special needs.

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