



## **Eclectic Method for Improving Reading and Spelling Abilities of Elementary School Children.**

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### **Abstract**

*Reading literacy is not only a foundation for basic learning, but also a prerequisite for successful participation in most areas of youth or adult life. The future success of children lies in the ability to read fluently and understand what is read. Studies showed that at least one out of five students has significant difficulty in reading acquisition. As a result of poor reading ability they commit more spelling mistakes. This study examined the effectiveness of Eclectic Method on Word reading, reading comprehension and Spellings ability among elementary school students. 120 class fourth students were selected to participate in one month programme. ANCOVA was employed for analyzing the data. Results indicated that Word reading, reading comprehension and spellings scores of the experimental group students improved significantly.*

**Key Words:** *Eclectic Method, Reading Ability and Spelling Ability*

### **Back Ground**

The elementary school years are when a child's thinking becomes more complex and sophisticated. Children at this age begin to engage in logical reasoning, and they are able to focus on more than one aspect of a concept or situation at the same time. Over the course of elementary school, children typically become fluent readers; they get transited

from "learning to read" into "reading to learn.". Reading is defined as "understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society"(Therrien,2004).The future success of children lies in the ability to read fluently and understand what is read. Studies show that at least one out of five students has significant difficulty in reading acquisition (Therrien, 2004). As a result of poor reading ability they commit more spelling mistakes. The plight of English language especially in reading and spellings is deplorable in our schools. The standard of reading and spelling is declining day by day. The reason behind this is that these are not taught in a way they should be taught. We teach them simply to provide knowledge but not as a skill. As a result, even after learning English for so many years students are not able to read and spell it properly. They don't find themselves confident enough to use it in day to day life. They are not able to pronounce words correctly. Our teachers have no knowledge of phonetics. As a result they are not able to give the true description of sounds and detect mistakes of student's pronunciation while reading. Moreover lack of practice in reading on the part of the students is also major factor contributing towards the deterioration of standard of English reading in India. Even the students of public schools who get familiar with this language at the preprimary stage are no exception. Reading literacy is not only a foundation for basic learning, but also a prerequisite for successful participation in most areas of youth or adult life (Linnakyla et al., 2004). According to a recent study, 40% of fourth graders do not have skills and knowledge to adequately perform the necessary grade level work (Bursuck et al., 2004). Similarly, Calhoon (2005) found 59% of fourth grade students are performing below a basic literacy level on standardized reading tests. Providing remedial program is imperative to improve reading fluency, reading comprehension and spelling ability particularly to elementary school students because fluency, comprehension and spellings are particularly important at this stage of development and early intervention can impact the progression of reading and spelling difficulties. Eclectic Method is one such remedial program which involves best elements of different programs/methods that improves reading and spelling ability of students.

**Eclectic Method (Combined Method):**

Eclectic means not following any one system, but selecting and using what are considered the best elements of all systems. Remedial students are taught by whatever means seem most suitable to their individual needs.

An Eclectic method need not be composed of all possible approaches, methods, techniques and variations. A teacher may choose two or three approaches that provide broad-range remedial instruction- a instruction that can afford a basis for teaching almost any aspect of reading such as sight words recognition, word analysis skills, use of context clues, comprehension, fluency and so on. With these broad -range approaches as a base, the teacher may add two or three variations that are essentially supplementary methods to be used compatibility with one or more of the broad range approaches than if an approach seem to fail with a student, the teacher can delete that portion and use a compatible supplementary method to teach the skills needed. In Eclectic method, teachers select and use what in their judgment is best in a given situation rather than follow a prescribed course of action. In the present study the investigator used Alphabetic Phonic Method, Behavioral Modification Method as well as Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method as broad range approaches to provide remedial instructions. In the alphabetic phonic method the children first learn the sounds of the letters, then how to substitute initial consonants in known words in order to figure out new ones, and finally how to blend separate sounds together in words. Behaviour Modification Method is that method in which appropriate behaviour is strengthened by giving positive reinforcements and different techniques are designed to eliminate undesirable behaviours . Where as in Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method is that method in which multiple senses are used to teach linguistic structures. This method is totally teacher directed and all the activities used for teaching language are presented in a certain order.

**Review of Literature:** Kohli (2001) applied Eclectic method on dyslexic children and found that this method improved their reading and spelling abilities . Camilli et. al. (2003). In their reanalysis of National Reading Panel Study concluded that a balance of systematic phonics, tutoring, and language activities is best for teaching children to read. Hausheer et.al. (2011) examined the effectiveness of a remedial reading program on improving reading fluency and comprehension among elementary school students.

Twenty-four students were selected to participate in an eight-month program. Results indicated reading fluency and reading comprehension scores improved significantly across the academic year for both male and female students.

**Objectives of Study:**

1. To compare the adjusted mean scores of word reading of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-word reading as covariant.
2. To compare the adjusted mean scores of reading comprehension of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-reading comprehension as covariant.
3. To compare the adjusted mean scores of spellings of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional by considering Methods pre-spelling scores as covariant.

**Hypotheses of Study:**

1. There is no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of word reading of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-word reading as covariant.
2. There is no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of reading comprehension of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-reading comprehension as covariant.
3. There is no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of spellings of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-spelling scores as covariant.

**Sample:** Purposive Sampling technique was used in this study. The sample for the study comprised of 120 class fourth students. Out of these 63 students were from experimental group and 61 students were from the control group. There were two sections of 4<sup>th</sup> class in Red Rose Public school and K.C Public School situated in Nawanshahr. One section from each school was randomly assigned to experimental group and another section from each school constituted control group. K.C Public School was affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi where as Red Rose Public school was affiliated to PSEB, Mohali. The Medium of Instruction in both these schools was English.

**Tools:**

The following tools were used for the study

1. Reading test (RRT) by Gupta ( 2008)
2. Diagnostic spelling test ( DST) (2005)by Gupta and Narang,

**Methodology:**

To test the effectiveness of Eclectic Method, students of Experimental group were taught with the help of this method for 30 sessions. The rapport was established with the students. To begin with, Reading and Spelling tests were administered on the students of both groups. After this, students of experimental group were taught with the help of Eclectic Method. Various strategies such as assisted reading, reading while listening and paired reading were used in this method. Beside these strategies appropriate grouping practices, instructional strategy, extended practice opportunities with feedback, and breaking down tasks into smaller components were also included in this method. Each session consisted of 35 minutes duration. On the other hand students of control group were carried out with routine activities of the classroom. At the end Reading and spelling test were re administered on the students of both groups to test the relative effectiveness of Eclectic Method.

**Analysis:** Objective wise Analysis is as under

1) For comparing the adjusted mean scores of word reading of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-word reading as covariant, ANCOVA was employed for analyzing the data. It was found that adjusted F value was 41.37., which was significant at 0.01. Which showed that adjusted mean difference exist among the students belonging to Eclectic and Traditional Methods. Further, the adjusted mean score of students belonging to group taught by Eclectic Method (21.17) was significantly higher than those belonging to group taught by Traditional Method (13.52). It may, therefore, be said that Eclectic Method was significantly superior than Traditional Method in respect to Word Reading.

2) For comparing the adjusted mean scores of reading comprehension of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-reading comprehension as covariant, ANCOVA was employed for analyzing the data. It was found that adjusted F value was 10.47, which was significant at 0.01. Which showed that adjusted mean difference exist among the students belonging to Eclectic and Traditional Methods. Further, the adjusted mean score of students belonging to group taught by

Eclectic Method (2.0) was significantly higher than those belonging to group taught by Traditional Method (0.69). It may, therefore, be said that Eclectic Method was significantly superior than Traditional Method in respect to reading comprehension.

3) For comparing the adjusted mean scores of Spellings of the students taught with Eclectic and Traditional Methods by considering pre-spelling scores as covariant, ANCOVA was employed for analyzing the data. It was found that adjusted F value was 46.06., which was significant at 0.01. Which showed that adjusted mean difference exist among the students belonging to Eclectic and Traditional Methods. Further, the adjusted mean score of students belonging to group taught by Eclectic Method (7.86) was significantly higher than those belonging to group taught by Traditional Method (4.14). It may, therefore, be said that Eclectic Method was significantly superior than Traditional Method in respect to Spellings.

**Findings:**

1. Eclectic Method was found to be superior to traditional approach in improving word reading of the students when groups were matched with respect to pre- word reading.
2. Eclectic Method was found to be superior to traditional approach in improving reading comprehension of the students when groups were matched with respect to pre- reading comprehension.
3. Eclectic Method was found to be superior to Traditional Approach in improving spellings of the students when groups were matched with respect to pre-spelling scores.

**Discussion:** The results of study showed that word reading, reading comprehension and spelling scores increased among the students who were taught with the help of Eclectic Method. These results are consistent with the previous findings of **Kohli (2001)** , **Camilli et. al. (2003)** and **Hausheer et.al. (2011)**. The better performance of the students of experimental group can be attributed to the Eclectic Method involving various strategies such as assisted reading, reading while listening , paired reading etc. used for teaching reading to students of experimental group.

**Implications:** The present study revealed that Eclectic Method improve word reading , reading comprehension and spellings ability of elementary school students. This method

uses all three types of learning styles of students: auditory, visual and kinesthetic stimulation. It allows students the opportunity to visually experience the reading material by having student's practice correct reading to retrain the brain's neurological pathways. They are able to hear excellent reading, gaining an understanding of what excellent reading feels like. Finally, students are kinesthetically stimulated because they are either following along with the instructor as he or she reads aloud or students manipulate the recorded audio device on their own. Thus the study has implications for students, teachers, teacher educators and administrators.

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