

Title: Easy Read texts and people with intellectual disabilities: the social and interactional contexts of development and use

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Abstract

This presentation departs from the usual focus in scholarship on Easy Read (ER) on linguistic features of texts that make them more or less 'easy' to read. I also suggest an alternative model of literacy to unspoken assumptions underpinning much ER research, that implicitly characterizes literacy as individual level cognitive skills that individuals have or lack, proposing instead an understanding of literacy as a set of socially conditioned practices. Using findings from my own and others' research on UK Easy Read health texts for people with intellectual disabilities, I reference sociologically informed approaches drawn from the sociology of technology, New Literacy Studies and ethnomethodology to understand the social and interactional forces that shape actions at the three key sites where we can examine these East Read texts: the site of text production and design, the site of the text itself and the site of text reception.