

UTILIZING FLASH CARDS AS A VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT LEARNING MEDIA FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: Flashcards, or picture cards, are a visual learning medium widely used in elementary schools. They are useful for helping students understand vocabulary and learning concepts in a medium for learning vocabulary and concepts for elementary school students based on a literature review. The method used is library research, analyzing various sources such as books, scientific journals, and relevant research findings. The results of the study indicate that the use of flashcards can improve memory, conceptual understanding, learning motivation, and active student participation in the learning process. Furthermore, flashcards are also effective for use in thematic learning because they are flexible and easily adapted to various materials. Thus, Flashcards can be an innovative and effective alternative learning medium to support the teaching and process in elementary schools.

Keywords: Flashcards, Picture Cards, Vocabulary, Concepts, Elementary School.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning for elementary school students is a crucial stage in improving communication skills, vocabulary mastery, and understanding basic concepts. Vocabulary is a key pillar in the learning process because it allows students to apply language, enabling them to express ideas and comprehend learning material. According to Harmer (2007), vocabulary mastery significantly determines students' reading, writing, and speaking abilities. Students with vocabulary limitations often experience difficulty understanding material, communicating effectively, and optimally developing cognitive thinking skills.

Therefore, educators need to use learning media that can help students remember and understand new vocabulary in a fun and interactive way. One proved effective medium is flashcard. Flashcard are cards containing images and specific words or concept, which can be used to facilitate students' recognition and recall of vocabulary (Arsyad, 2011). This with Paivo (1991) This aligns with Paivo (1991) Dual coding theory, which states that presenting information visually and verbally simultaneously can improve memory retention and conceptual understanding by processing both types of information simultaneously.

Beyond the visual aspect, flashcards also encourage active. Slavin(2018) suggests that learning that involves direct interaction that learning that involves direct interaction between students and media can increase motivation, engagement, and learning effectiveness. By using flashcards, students can directly engage in activities such as vocabulary games, matching picture to words , or they can learn actively, not just passively receive information. This aligns with Piaget (1972) opinion that learning for elementary school aged children should be concrete and based on real experiences so that the understanding gained is more meaningful.

Various studies support the effectiveness of using flashcard in developing students vocabulary mastery and conceptual understanding. Mayer (2009) suggests that visual can strengthen knowledge and memory because imagines help students make connection between concepts and words, furthermore, Nugroho(2015) found that implementing flashcards in Indonesian vocabulary students ability to recognize remember and use rods in everyday conversation . Therefore, flashcards are not only a memory strategy but also a fun, interactive learning medium.

More deeply, flashcards can support a game-based learning approach, which is crucial for children cognitive and social emotional development. Bruner (1966) stated that learning through engaging and contextual activities can stimulate students' creativity and critical thinking skills. Therefore, by using flashcards, teachers can design activities that combine visual, verbal, and interactive elements, enabling, students to understand vocabulary and concepts in greater detail and improve their critical thinking skills. From the explanation above, we can conclude that flashcards are an effective learning medium with the potential to improve vocabulary and conceptual understanding in elementary schools' students. That medium combines interactive, visual, and active elements, thus facilitating a highly enjoyable, meaningful, and sustainable learning process that contributes to students cognitive and language development.

UNDERSTANDING FLASHCARDS AS LEARNING MEDIA

Flashcards, or picture cards, are a form of learning media that combine visual and verbal elements to help students understand and remember vocabulary and concepts. According to Arsyad (2011), flashcards are an effective learning aid because they provide images that can stimulate students' visual memory and link them to the words or concepts written on the cards. This concept is supported by Paivio's (1991) Dual Coding theory, which states that information presented visually and verbally simultaneously is processed from two different perspectives, thus facilitating ongoing memory storage.

BENEFITS OF FLASHCARDS IN VOCABULARY MASTERY

Vocabulary comprehension is an important foundation in language learning. Harmer (2007) states that without an adequate vocabulary, students' ability to read, write, speak, and comprehend text will be hampered. Flashcards help students remember new vocabulary very quickly because this medium combines images and words, thus facilitating the integration process. According to Slavin (2018), active learning, including through yet use of interactive media such as flashcards can increase student motivation and engagement. Teachers can create a variety of learning activities using flashcards, such as matching pictures to words, charades, or quick quizzes. These activities help students learn actively, prevent boredom, and improve vocabulary retention. This aligns with Nation (2001) argument, which emphasizes the importance of repetition and visual association in strengthening vocabulary mastery in children.

Anggraini (2016) Further adds that flashcards can be used for travel, repetitive vocabulary practice. This allows students not only to memorize the context in which they are used. This medium helps students expand their language skills functionally and conceptually, for example, by recognizing nouns, verbs, or simple concepts in everyday life.

FLASHCARDS FOR CONCEPT LEARNING

Flashcards are not only effective for vocabulary development, but also for improving students understanding of abstract concepts through visual representation. Piaget (1972) stated that elementary school aged children understand concepts more easily and better through concrete experiences and the manipulation of real objects. Flashcards also provide concrete, for example, animals, plants, shape, or everyday activities

According to Bruner (1966), learning that involves direct, real-life experiences, interactive activities, and visualizations can foster students' critical thinking and creativity. Flashcards provide teachers with the opportunity to present concepts in a highly engaging and interactive format, allowing students to learn through play, associate words with images, and understand the characteristics of concepts more clearly and in detail. This issue is reinforced by research by Hidayat (2017), which shows that the use of flashcard in elementary school science lessons develops conceptual understanding because students can directly see and visually compare objects.

STRATEGIES FOR USING FLASHCARDS IN THE CLASSROOM

Flashcards can be used through various strategies that strengthen students' interaction, motivation, and understanding. Slavin (2018) stated that active learning with interactive media can effectively increase student engagement. Some commonly used strategies include:

1. Memory Games: Students match a picture and a word in pairs.

2. Guess the word or picture: The teacher displays a card, and students guess the vocabulary or concept displayed.
3. Group Discussions: Students discuss vocabulary or concept based on the cards to build deeper understanding.
4. Digital Flashcards: Digital media or flashcard apps can add variety and adapt to the learning styles of modern students.
5. Gradual Repetition: Students periodically review flashcards to store vocabulary or concepts in long-term memory (Nation, 2001).

These strategies enhance cooperative learning comprehension, build social skills, and practice critical thinking. This allows students to not only memorize words but also understand their meaning and context.

RESEARCH FINDINGS RELATED TO THE USE OF FLASHCARDS

Several empirical studies support the effectiveness of flashcards. Nugroho(2015) stated that using flashcard in Indonesian vocabulary learning in elementary grades improves students ability to recognize, remember, and use new words in sentences. Prasetya (2018) research and active when using flashcards compared to lectures or reading a traditional textbook. Hidayat(2017) also stated that using flashcard to teach science concept more efficiently, quickly, and enjoyably. In general, these studies demonstrate that flashcards are effective as an interactive, fun learning medium, and can improve vocabulary mastery and conceptual understanding in elementary school students.

F. Advantages and Limitations of Flashcards

Flashcards as a learning medium have various advantages and limitations that make them effective and popular in elementary schools. Here are some of the advantages of flashcards:

1. Facilitates vocabulary and concept mastery

Flashcards help students remember new words or concepts more quickly because they combine visual and verbal elements. Arsyad (2011) explains that visual media can strengthen students memory because images serve as additional stimuli, facilitating the association process between words and their meanings. Paivio (1991) also emphasized through the Dual Coding theory that information presented in the form of images and words is simultaneously processed by two different brain channels, thus facilitating memory storage and retrieval.

2. Increases Learning Motivation

According to Slavin (2018), interactive and fun learning can increase students' motivation. Flashcards allow teacher to present material through games, quizzes or fun group activities , so

students feel challenged and more enthusiastic about learning. This is important because learning motivation is a key factor in successful learning especially for elementary school aged children who tend to get bored quickly traditional learning methods.

3. Encourages active learning

The use of flashcards encourages students to learn actively. In addition to reading words, students engage in activities such as matching pictures to words, guessing words based on pictures, or discussing them with peers. Bruner (1966) emphasized that active and contextual learning experiences can stimulate children's creativity and critical thinking skills. With flashcards, students learn through direct interaction with the media, rather than simply passively receiving information.

4. Flexibility of Use

Flashcards can be used individually, in groups, or digitally. Students can study independently to review vocabulary, play with friends to enhance social interaction, or use digital flashcards via a tablet or projector. Mayer (2009) adds that the flexibility of learning media makes it easier for teachers to adapt methods to student needs and classroom contexts, making learning more effective and varied.

5. Improves Long-Term Memory

Flashcards facilitate gradual repetition of vocabulary and concepts, which is essential for building long-term memory. Nation (2001) states that regular repetition through engaging media can improve vocabulary retention in students. With flashcards, students not only memorize words mechanically but also understand their context and usage, making the acquired knowledge more ingrained and easier to apply.

6. Helps develop thinking skills and creativity

In addition to vocabulary, flashcards can be used to introduce concepts, categories, and classify objects. Hidayati (2017) emphasizes that visual media such as flashcards can help students analyze, classify, and understand the relationships between concepts more easily. Thus, the use of flashcards not only aids language learning but also supports cognitive development and higher-order thinking skills.

7. Enhances social interaction and collaboration

Flashcards allow students to work together in groups, discuss, and guess words or concepts. This activity improves social skills, cooperation, and communication among students. Slavin (2018) emphasized that cooperative learning using interactive media can improve learning outcomes while simultaneously developing students' social skills.

Although flashcards have many advantages, they also have limitations that must be considered to ensure their effective use. The following are limitations of using flashcards:

1. Requires teacher creativity in creation

One of the main limitations of flashcards is that teachers need to create cards that are relevant, engaging, and appropriate to the learning material. Bruner (1966) emphasized that learning media must be designed to suit students' cognitive abilities and interests. If cards are too simple or unattractive, students tend to lose interest, resulting in learning objectives not being achieved.

2. Less effective for highly abstract concepts

Flashcards are more suitable for introducing vocabulary, concrete objects or simple concepts that can be visualized. Piaget (1972) stated that elementary school aged children understand concrete concepts more easily than abstract ones. Therefore, flashcards have limitations when used to teach overly complex or abstract concepts such as scientific theories that require detailed explanations or processes that cannot be directly visualized.

3. Requires additional time for preparation and classroom management

Creating quality flashcards requires time, effort, and adequate materials. In addition, teachers must develop strategies for using flashcards to ensure learning remains organized and effective. According to Arsyad (2011), poorly planned media can cause disruption in the classroom, such as students losing focus or making learning time inefficient.

4. Limited exposure to the context in which words or concepts are used

Flashcards typically display a single word or image. So students may simply memorize vocabulary without understanding the context in which they vocabulary mastery is not just about recognizing words, but also the ability to use them in sentences and real life situations. Therefore, Flashcards, need to be combined with other methods, such as speaking or writing exercises, to ensure students fully understand vocabulary usage.

5. Potential for Boring if Used Continuously

If flashcards are used monotonously without variation, students can become bored and lose motivation to learn. Mayer (2009) emphasizes the importance of varying media and activities to keep students engaged. Teachers should combine flashcards with games, discussions, or digital flashcards to maintain interactive classroom dynamics.

6. Limitations of physical media

Physical flashcards are limited in quantity, so if there's a lot of material to teach, teachers must prepare many cards. This can be a challenge in terms of cost, storage, and classroom management. Digital alternatives can address this issue, but require devices and technological readiness in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The use of flashcards is an effective learning medium for improving vocabulary mastery medium and conceptual understanding in elementary school students. This medium can elicit responses through engaging visuals, thereby increasing motivation and active participation in the learning process.

Flashcards can help students remember vocabulary and understand concepts more concretely, especially in the concrete operational cognitive development stage, which still requires visual stimulation. Furthermore, the use of flashcard encourages two way interaction between teachers and students and can be applied in various learning method such as educational games , group discussions, and individual practice.

Overall, the use of flashcards as a learning medium not only improves learning outcomes but also creates a more enjoyable and meaningful learning environment. Therefore, this medium is recommended as an alternative innovative learning strategy in elementary schools.

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