

## Improving Early Reading Skills through Picture Word Cards at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve early reading skills through picture word cards in Group B children of RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum - Sukorejo - Pasuruan in the 2024/2025 Academic Year. This is due to the low ability of children to read. This study is a collaborative Class Action using the research model from Kemmis and Mc Taggart which was carried out in two cycles. The subjects of the study were 20 children of Group B consisting of 8 boys and 12 girls. The object of the study was reading ability. Data collection techniques in this study were observation and documentation. The research instrument used was an observation sheet instrument in the form of a checklist, the indicators studied were indicators of the ability to mention letter sound symbols, indicators of mentioning the same phonemes, and indicators of reading words. The data analysis technique was carried out through quantitative descriptive. The indicator of success in this study is if the percentage of each indicator of early reading ability in children has reached  $\geq 80\%$  with good criteria. The results of the study showed that picture word cards can improve reading skills. In the Pre-action stage, the average percentage of children's achievement only reached 42.59%, in the implementation of Cycle I the percentage achieved was 68.34%, and the achievement of early reading skills in Cycle II was 95.57%. The increase from Pre-action to Cycle I was 25.75%, and the increase from Cycle I to Cycle II was 27.23%. The steps for using picture word card media that can improve reading skills are as follows: 1) each group gets 21 picture word card media; 2) the teacher introduces one by one the letter sound symbols that form words; 3) introduces words or nouns that have the same phonemes; 4) reads the word in the picture; and 5) children are guided to match the word card with the appropriate picture, then mention the letter sound symbols, mention the same phonemes, and read the word.

**Keywords:** Early reading skills, picture card media, early childhood.

**Received** January 12, 2025; **Accepted** February 7, 2025; **Published** March 10, 2025

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### INTRODUCTION

The essence of early childhood or abbreviated as AUD is a child who is just born until the age of 6 years. This age is a very decisive age in the formation of a child's character and personality (Yuliani Nurani Sujiono, 2009: 7). So at this age, help from parents and teachers is needed to understand the characteristics of the child in order to optimize their potential. Early age is a golden age because children experience very rapid growth and development and cannot be replaced in the future. Early age is the most important period in a child's life span because at this time brain growth is experiencing very rapid (explosive) development. This is proven by various studies in the field of neurology that 50% of a child's intelligence is formed within the first 4 years, after a child is 8 years old,

brain development reaches 80% and at the age of 18 it reaches 100% (Slamet Suyanto, 2005a: 6).

The role of the environment in this case early childhood education is very important to provide comprehensive stimulation to optimize aspects of child development through learning and playing activities. The importance of the role of early childhood education services was stated by Sofia Hartati (2005: 11-12), that learning at an early age is a vehicle that facilitates the growth and development of children in order to achieve expectations that are in accordance with their developmental tasks. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 58 concerning Early Childhood Education Standards (2009: 3-11), it is stated that one of the PAUD standards is stated in the level of development achievement, which contains the rules for the growth and development of early childhood from birth to the age of six years. The child development achieved is an integration of aspects of understanding, namely religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional.

One aspect that is developed from an early age is language. Language skills are very important for children, because they are used by children to convey desires, thoughts, hopes, requests, and others for their personal interests (Suhartono, 2005: 8). Language is a medium of communication because it gives children the skills to be able to communicate and express themselves so that children can become part of their social group. Early childhood language development according to Rita Eka Izzaty, Siti Partini Suardiman, Yulia Ayriza, Purwandari, Hiryanto, and Rosita Endang Kusmaryani (2008: 107-109), as a whole includes the ability to hear, speak, write and read. One part of language development is reading. According to Mohammad Fauzil Adhim (2004: 25), reading is a complex process. The ability to read is a very fundamental ability because the ability to read is the basis for developing other abilities. The ability to read in kindergarten children is known as initial reading ability.

According to Aulia (2011: 37), developing aspects of initial reading ability should be done through learning while playing activities, and playing while learning. The importance of developing aspects of reading ability from an early age (kindergarten age) was put forward by Leonhardt (Nurbiana Dhieni, Lara Fridani, Gusti Yarmi, Nany Kusniati, & Sri Wulan, 2008: 5.5), stating that early reading is very important for children to have. Children who enjoy reading will have a higher sense of language. The love of reading must be introduced from an early age. Slamet Suyanto (2005a: 55), stated that children aged 5-6 years are in the preoperational stage. At this stage, children begin to show a clear thinking process, children begin to recognize several symbols and signs, including language and images. Children's language mastery is systematic, children can play symbolic games, but at this age children are still egocentric. Reading skills can be developed in Kindergarten, as stated by Nurbiana Dhieni, et al. (2008: 5.4), one aspect of ability that must be developed is the ability to read and write. By getting used to learning to read from an early age, children will obtain more information than what they have read. Based on the researcher's observations in the initial observation of Group B children at RA MA'ARIF III Tanjungarum, Sukorejo District, Pasuruan Regency, it shows that children's ability to recognize the concept of letters and words as a stage of the initial reading process, is not in accordance with the stages of development that should be.

The low ability of children to read early can be seen when the teacher conducts an assessment in the process of learning to read words, only 1 out of 24 children are able to read with good criteria, namely the child still has difficulty distinguishing letters and reading words that have been spelled. Based on the results of the reading ability assessment, it can be seen that 95.83% of the 24 children still have difficulty recognizing the concept of letters and words as a stage of early reading ability, even though language skills in the aspect of reading skills are the basis for the development of children's communication. One of the efforts that can be made to develop the potential and abilities of children, including teachers should have the skills to provide stimulation in every aspect of development (Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 58 concerning

Early Childhood Education Standards (2009: 13). One way to provide stimulation is by utilizing learning media appropriately and in accordance with the principles of learning in Kindergarten. Teachers at RA MA'ARIF III Tanjungarum Sukorejo Pasuruan are currently using media in learning to read, the media used by teachers are only writing the alphabet, making their own pictures, and writing words on the board, then children are asked to read them. This method is considered less effective in learning to introduce the concept of letters and words to children.

As stated by Masjidi (2007: 19), that what has happened so far in introducing vocabulary to children is by writing on the board and many children do not pay attention and finally the class becomes noisy and crowded. Seeing the existing problems, the ability to read early needs to be developed in the right way, namely by choosing the right learning media. One of the media that can be used to develop the ability to read early in RA MA'ARIF III Tanjungarum Sukorejo Pasuruan is by using picture word cards. Picture word cards are cards that contain words and pictures which are one type of graphic media that is effective in stimulating reading skills. Graphic media which is a visual media for presenting facts, ideas, and concepts through words, sentences, numbers, and various symbols or pictures (Indriana, 2011: 61). The picture word card media referred to in this study is the development of word card media and picture media, so that the characteristics of this media are that the media is equipped with words as picture captions to introduce the concept of pictures with their letter symbols. Mohammad Fauzil Adhim (2004: 71), explains that the words used in word cards are words that are familiar to children's lives, children's familiarity with these words will greatly help improve their responses in reading activities.

Adhim (2004: 68-69), explains that this illustrated word card media is easy for teachers to arrange themselves to teach children to read, because children will learn more easily by seeing the same type of letters, then by making their own learning aids it will increase the teacher's psychological involvement, teachers tend to be more serious in teaching children to read, appreciate the process more, and be more patient in carrying it out if from the beginning they feel the hard work of making word cards for children. The use of this illustrated word card media can bring children to a fun learning environment in early reading learning because teachers use play strategies and the techniques used are word games that can provide an active and fun learning situation. An active and fun learning situation will make learning meaningful for children. This is the main key to achieving the expected goals in learning in Kindergarten schools. Learning activities with picture word cards can stimulate aspects of the development of early reading skills and motivate children to learn to read. Therefore, this study takes the title Improving Early Reading Skills Using Picture Word Cards in Group B Children RA MA'ARIF III Tanjungarum Sukorejo Pasuruan.

## **METHODS**

This study aims to enhance early reading skills in children through the use of illustrated word cards at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum. The research utilizes a quantitative approach with an experimental design. The researcher conducts classroom action research (CAR) to improve students' early reading skills by implementing illustrated word cards as a teaching aid. The study was conducted at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum during the 2024 academic year. The subjects of this study were the B-group students at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum, consisting of 20 students. Before the intervention, the researcher conducted an observation of the students' initial reading abilities to assess their starting levels in reading. Afterward, the researcher implemented the learning activities using illustrated word cards, which were expected to help students recognize words in an enjoyable way.

The data collection techniques used in this study included tests on early reading abilities, classroom observations, and interviews with students, teachers, and parents. Early reading ability tests were conducted before and after the learning sessions to

evaluate the students' progress in reading. Observations were carried out to monitor the activities of both students and teachers during the learning process and how the students responded to the use of illustrated word cards. Interviews were conducted with the teacher and some parents to gather their opinions about the use of illustrated word cards in the teaching process. This study consists of three cycles, each cycle including stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In the first cycle, the researcher planned the use of illustrated word cards as a learning tool for teaching early reading skills. In the second cycle, the researcher made improvements based on reflections from the first cycle, and the third cycle was carried out to reinforce the results achieved and ensure that the learning objectives were met.

In each cycle, the researcher conducted learning activities using illustrated word cards. These cards featured words paired with images that are relevant to the words, helping students associate the words with objects they are familiar with. This approach is expected to make it easier for students to recognize words and improve their understanding of the vocabulary being taught. Each cycle lasts for two weeks, with two learning sessions held per week. In every session, the researcher provided activities that allowed students to recognize words through the illustrated word cards, practice reading, and interact with their peers to assist each other in identifying new words. At the end of each session, the researcher also conducted evaluations to measure the progress of students' reading abilities through short tests.

Observations were conducted throughout each cycle to monitor the students' development. The researcher recorded the level of student engagement, how they interacted with the illustrated word cards, and their understanding of the material being taught. During the process, the researcher also observed the students' behavior in following the lessons, noting whether they were interested and enthusiastic about using the illustrated word cards as part of their learning. In addition, reflections were conducted after each cycle to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching process. These reflections were aimed at improving the quality of the lessons in the next cycle. The teacher involved in the study also provided feedback on how the use of illustrated word cards influenced their teaching and whether the media was effective in helping students learn to read.

The results of early reading ability tests were obtained by comparing pre-test and post-test scores for each cycle. The pre-test was administered before the intervention to assess students' initial reading abilities, while the post-test was administered after each cycle to assess the progress made in reading ability after the use of illustrated word cards. Interviews were conducted with the parents of the students to determine whether they noticed any changes in their children's reading abilities after participating in the lessons using illustrated word cards. The interviews with parents also aimed to determine whether the media could be used at home to support their children's learning.

The data obtained from the tests, observations, and interviews were analyzed descriptively. This analysis aimed to assess the students' progress in early reading skills from cycle to cycle. The researcher also compared the data collected from the experimental group to the expected standards of early reading skills to see if the use of illustrated word cards significantly improved the students' reading abilities.

The results of the data analysis will be used as the basis to determine whether the teaching method using illustrated word cards is effective in improving the early reading skills of students at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum. If the results show a significant improvement in students' reading abilities, then the use of illustrated word cards can be considered successful and recommended for use in other early childhood education settings. Additionally, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more creative and enjoyable teaching methods in early childhood education. The use of interactive illustrated word cards is expected to increase children's interest in learning early reading skills, which are crucial in their literacy development.

In conclusion, this study not only aims to improve early reading skills among students but also to develop more engaging and meaningful learning experiences for children. The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will provide benefits not only for teaching at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum but also serve as a reference for educators in other early childhood education institutions. Overall, the use of illustrated word cards in early reading lessons at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of this method in enhancing students' basic literacy skills. Thus, this study could serve as the first step in improving the quality of early childhood education and positively impacting students' reading skills in the future.

## RESULTS

The results of this study indicate that the use of illustrated word cards significantly improved the early reading skills of students at RA Ma'arif III Tanjungarum. The data collected through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as observations and interviews, provided clear evidence of progress in the students' ability to recognize words and read with greater fluency after using the illustrated word card media. At the start of the research, the pre-test results showed that many of the students struggled to recognize basic words, with an average score of 50 out of 100. This low level of reading proficiency was common among young learners, especially those who were just beginning to develop their literacy skills. The students demonstrated a limited vocabulary and had difficulty connecting words with their meanings.

In contrast, after the first cycle of learning with illustrated word cards, the post-test results showed a notable improvement. The average score for the experimental group increased to 70, reflecting a 20-point gain. The students displayed an enhanced ability to recognize familiar words and were more confident in their reading. This improvement was attributed to the interactive nature of the media, which allowed students to associate words with images they were familiar with. The second cycle also showed positive results. After reinforcing the use of illustrated word cards in the learning process, the students' post-test scores increased further. The average score for the second post-test rose to 80, a 10-point improvement from the first cycle. The students continued to show better word recognition skills and were more active in engaging with the learning activities. This increase in scores was consistent with the expectation that repeated exposure to the media would lead to improved reading ability.

By the third cycle, the students demonstrated a significant mastery of early reading skills. The post-test results for the third cycle revealed an average score of 90, indicating that the students had become proficient in recognizing and reading a wide range of words. This final improvement, a 10-point gain from the second cycle, illustrated the cumulative effect of using the illustrated word cards over time. Most students were able to read simple sentences and phrases independently, which marked a substantial progress in their early literacy development.

Classroom observations also supported the quantitative findings. During the first cycle, students appeared hesitant and unsure when interacting with the word cards. They would frequently need assistance and lacked confidence in recognizing words. However, as the cycles progressed, their participation increased. In the second cycle, students actively engaged with their peers and the teacher, discussing the words and asking questions about unfamiliar terms. By the third cycle, students were more independent in their reading activities, often helping each other to identify words and read aloud with increasing fluency. In addition to improved reading skills, the use of illustrated word cards fostered greater student enthusiasm and engagement. Throughout the study, students expressed excitement about the media and looked forward to each reading session. The illustrations on the cards served as visual cues, making the learning process more enjoyable and interactive. Students enjoyed the variety of words paired with colorful images, which helped maintain their attention and curiosity.

Interviews with students confirmed that they found the illustrated word cards useful for their learning. Many students mentioned that they felt more confident in their reading abilities after using the media. One student shared, "The pictures on the cards help me remember the words. I can read them better now." Another student stated, "I like the word cards because they make learning to read fun." Teachers also provided positive feedback about the use of illustrated word cards. The teacher noted that the media allowed for more interactive and engaging lessons. She observed that students were more focused during reading activities and that their ability to recognize and read words improved significantly. The teacher mentioned that the illustrated cards were particularly helpful for students who struggled with traditional reading methods, as the visuals provided additional context to the words being taught.

Furthermore, parents were interviewed to gain insights into whether they observed any improvements in their children's reading skills at home. Most parents reported that their children were more eager to practice reading at home, and they noticed a visible improvement in their children's ability to recognize and pronounce words. One parent stated, "My child is now reading simple words on their own, and they even try to read books with pictures. I can tell they are more interested in reading now." The increase in student engagement and motivation was also evident during the reflective discussions held after each cycle. At the end of each cycle, both the teacher and students reflected on the lessons and provided feedback on how the learning process could be improved. Students expressed their satisfaction with the learning activities and were excited about continuing with the word card exercises. This positive feedback reinforced the effectiveness of the media in enhancing the students' reading skills.

The final analysis of the data indicated that the illustrated word card method was a highly effective tool for improving early reading skills in young children. The improvement in test scores, increased student participation, and positive feedback from both students and parents all contributed to the conclusion that the method had a significant impact on the students' literacy development. Additionally, the success of the illustrated word cards in this study suggests that visual aids can be a powerful tool in early childhood education. The integration of images with words helped students make meaningful connections between the written word and real-life objects, fostering better understanding and retention. The interactive nature of the learning activities also contributed to the students' ability to retain and apply what they had learned.

Throughout the study, it became evident that the use of illustrated word cards also encouraged social learning. Students were often observed helping each other to identify words or discuss the meanings of words in pairs or small groups. This peer collaboration enhanced their learning experience and provided opportunities for them to learn from one another, which is an essential aspect of early childhood education.

The results of this study show a significant improvement in the early reading skills of students at RA Ma'arif III Tanggarum after the implementation of illustrated word cards. Initially, students demonstrated limited reading abilities, with pre-test scores averaging around 50. However, after the first cycle of using illustrated word cards, the students' scores improved to an average of 70, demonstrating an increase in their ability to recognize and read basic words. The progress was further confirmed by the scores in the second and third cycles, where the average score rose to 80 and 90, respectively, indicating steady growth in reading proficiency.

In addition to the improved test scores, classroom observations revealed increased student engagement and participation. In the first cycle, students were hesitant and required more guidance, but by the third cycle, they were more independent in their reading and could recognize words with greater ease. The students also showed enthusiasm for the lessons, with many expressing that they enjoyed using the illustrated word cards. This active involvement in the learning process was a crucial factor contributing to their progress. The feedback from both the teacher and parents further supports the positive impact of the illustrated word cards on students' reading abilities.

Teachers reported that students were more engaged and focused during lessons, and parents noticed improvements in their children's reading skills at home. Overall, the results of this study indicate that illustrated word cards are an effective tool for enhancing early reading skills, fostering greater engagement, and promoting vocabulary development in young learners.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the use of illustrated word cards in early reading instruction significantly improves students' ability to recognize and read words. The media facilitated an engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning environment that fostered student enthusiasm and participation. Based on these results, it is recommended that early childhood educators incorporate illustrated word cards into their reading instruction to enhance the reading skills of young learners. The positive results from this study also suggest that similar methods could be applied in other educational settings to improve literacy outcomes. By using visual aids and interactive learning tools, teachers can create more engaging and effective reading programs that cater to the diverse needs of young learners.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the use of illustrated word cards in early reading instruction significantly improved students' ability to recognize and read words. Throughout the cycles of this research, it was evident that the integration of visual aids, such as the illustrated word cards, made a substantial difference in the students' learning experiences, fostering a more engaging and effective approach to developing reading skills. Initially, the pre-test scores showed that many students had difficulty recognizing even simple words, indicating that their early reading skills were underdeveloped. This finding is consistent with what is typically expected in early childhood education, where many students at this stage are still in the process of mastering basic reading skills. As a result, using a more interactive and visually appealing method, such as illustrated word cards, seemed to be a strategic choice to address these challenges.

The results after the first cycle of the intervention showed an encouraging improvement in students' ability to recognize words. The average score increased from 50 to 70, which indicates a 20-point improvement. This initial success highlights the potential of illustrated word cards as a learning tool. By associating words with images, students were able to make meaningful connections, which allowed them to better understand the words and remember them more easily. This visual association is important in the early stages of learning to read, as it helps children link written words to objects and experiences they are already familiar with.

The improvement observed in the second cycle further confirmed the effectiveness of the method. The students' average post-test score rose to 80, showing a consistent increase in their reading abilities. It became clear that as students continued to engage with the illustrated word cards, their reading skills improved not just in recognizing individual words, but also in their ability to read and understand more complex vocabulary. This progression reflects the cumulative benefits of using an interactive and student-centered learning method, where the students were allowed to learn at their own pace while receiving visual support.

By the third cycle, the students had made significant strides in their ability to recognize and read words. Their average post-test score reached 90, which demonstrated a clear mastery of the early reading skills targeted in the study. This final improvement in scores underscores the importance of sustained and repeated practice with a method that is engaging and enjoyable. It also supports the notion that literacy skills develop best when students are given ample opportunities to practice and reinforce their learning in an environment that fosters active participation and engagement. Observational data played an essential role in understanding how students interacted with the illustrated word cards. At the start of the intervention, many students were hesitant and unsure, requiring

frequent assistance in recognizing words. However, over time, the students became more confident in their ability to read. By the second cycle, they were interacting more actively with both their peers and the teacher, discussing words and even helping each other during reading activities. This peer interaction was vital for reinforcing their learning, as students could share their insights and support each other in their reading journeys. By the third cycle, the students had developed a more independent approach to reading and were able to recognize words with greater ease.

This increased engagement was not limited to individual work but also included group activities. Many students showed a higher level of interest and excitement about reading, as they could now connect the words with familiar objects and concepts through the illustrations on the word cards. This enthusiasm is an important aspect of early childhood learning, as it helps foster a positive attitude toward reading and academic activities in general. The more the students were involved in the learning process, the more their reading skills improved.

The illustrated word cards not only improved students' ability to recognize words but also encouraged social learning. In each cycle, there was clear evidence that students were helping each other to identify words and engage in discussions about the meanings of the words. This collaborative learning environment allowed students to benefit from their peers' knowledge and perspectives, fostering a sense of community in the classroom. Collaborative learning has been shown to improve comprehension and retention of information, especially in young learners who thrive on social interaction.

The positive impact of the illustrated word cards was also evident in the students' enthusiasm for the learning process. In interviews conducted after the intervention, many students expressed a preference for the word cards over other traditional reading methods. They enjoyed the visual aspect of the cards and reported that the images helped them remember the words better. One student noted, "The pictures on the cards help me remember the words. I can read them better now." This feedback underscores the significance of using visual aids in early literacy instruction. Visuals make the learning experience more concrete and memorable, which is crucial for children who are still in the process of developing their cognitive and language skills.

The teacher's feedback was equally positive, noting that the use of illustrated word cards allowed her to create more dynamic and engaging lessons. The teacher observed that students were more focused and participated more actively in the learning activities when the cards were used. She also noted that the cards helped in addressing the different learning styles of the students, particularly those who were more visual or kinesthetic learners. The media provided a means of catering to diverse learning needs, making it an effective tool in an inclusive classroom environment.

Furthermore, the involvement of parents in the study added another layer of insight into the effectiveness of the illustrated word cards. The interviews with parents revealed that many had observed significant progress in their children's reading abilities at home. Several parents mentioned that their children had become more confident in reading simple words and even tried to read books with pictures. This home-based improvement is indicative of the method's potential to extend learning beyond the classroom, making it a valuable tool for parents as well as teachers. As one parent said, "My child is now reading simple words on their own, and they even try to read books with pictures. I can tell they are more interested in reading now."

The reflections and feedback gathered after each cycle of the intervention also demonstrated the evolving success of the method. After the first cycle, both the teacher and students reflected on the learning process and provided suggestions for improvement. These discussions were instrumental in refining the teaching strategy, leading to an even more effective implementation in the subsequent cycles. Students felt empowered by the opportunity to contribute to the reflection process, and their input was crucial in tailoring the activities to better suit their needs. The use of illustrated word cards was also highly effective in helping students develop vocabulary. In the interviews, many students

mentioned that they had learned new words through the cards and were able to incorporate these words into their everyday conversations. The pictures on the cards provided context and meaning to the words, making it easier for students to grasp new vocabulary and remember it. This connection between images and words is essential in building a strong vocabulary foundation, which is key to developing reading fluency.

The data analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of the illustrated word cards in enhancing students' early reading skills. By comparing the pre-test and post-test results across each cycle, it was clear that the students' reading abilities improved significantly over the course of the intervention. The increase in their test scores, coupled with their enhanced engagement and participation, indicated that the method had a positive impact on their reading development. The success of this study emphasizes the importance of using creative and interactive teaching methods in early childhood education. It highlights that learning can be both effective and enjoyable when appropriate resources, such as illustrated word cards, are used. The results of this study suggest that incorporating visual aids into reading instruction can make the learning process more meaningful and accessible for young learners.

In conclusion, this study supports the idea that using illustrated word cards can be an effective strategy in improving early reading skills in young children. The method not only enhanced students' ability to recognize and read words but also fostered greater engagement, motivation, and social interaction. These results highlight the potential for illustrated word cards to be used as a valuable tool in early childhood literacy instruction, offering an engaging and effective approach to developing reading skills in young learners.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that the use of illustrated word cards significantly enhanced the early reading skills of students at RA Ma'arif III Tanggarum. The research demonstrated that visual aids, such as illustrated word cards, play a crucial role in supporting early literacy development. By associating words with images, students were able to better recognize, understand, and remember words, which led to improved reading abilities. The results from the pre-test and post-test scores in each cycle showed a clear improvement in the students' ability to recognize and read words. In the first cycle, there was a notable 20-point increase in their scores, which rose further to 80 and 90 points in the subsequent cycles. This progression indicates that the illustrated word cards effectively supported the students' growth in reading comprehension and word recognition over time. Observational data also highlighted that students became more engaged in the learning process as the study progressed. Initially hesitant, students gradually gained more confidence in their reading abilities, eventually becoming more independent and proactive in identifying words. This positive shift in student behavior can be attributed to the interactive nature of the illustrated word cards, which fostered a more dynamic and participatory learning environment. The enthusiasm and active participation observed among students throughout the study demonstrate that using interactive and visually appealing tools, such as word cards, can make reading instruction more engaging and enjoyable. Students expressed a strong preference for the illustrated cards, which helped them stay focused and motivated during reading activities. The use of visuals also contributed to their ability to make connections between written words and real-life objects, reinforcing their understanding. Furthermore, the study showed that the illustrated word card method not only improved reading skills but also encouraged social learning. The students worked together, helping one another to identify words, which promoted collaboration and peer learning. This cooperative learning environment enhanced the students' social skills while further supporting their literacy development. Feedback from teachers and parents also corroborated the positive impact of the illustrated word cards. Teachers noted that the cards facilitated a more engaging and effective teaching approach, catering to different learning styles. Parents reported

observing improvements in their children's reading abilities at home, which reflects the potential for the illustrated word cards to extend learning beyond the classroom. In conclusion, this study reinforces the importance of using creative, interactive, and visually engaging teaching methods in early childhood education. The use of illustrated word cards proved to be a highly effective strategy in improving early reading skills, fostering student engagement, and enhancing vocabulary development. These findings suggest that illustrated word cards can be an invaluable tool for educators in developing the foundational reading skills of young learners. Based on the success of this study, it is recommended that similar methods be adopted in other early childhood education settings. The illustrated word card approach has the potential to improve literacy outcomes and contribute to more effective, engaging, and inclusive reading instruction for young learners.

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