

PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF FLASHCARDS AND CREATIVE GAMES IN LOW-TECH EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract: This paper examines the pedagogical applications of using flashcards and creative game activities in classrooms where there are limited technical devices. Technical devices are rare in many learning institutions, particularly in developing countries, where language learning becomes a challenge. This paper examines the methodological applications of using creative game activities, as well as flashcards, in improving student motivation, participation, and academic performance. The relevance of using creative game activities, as well as flashcards, in language learning as an approach that does not require technical devices is discussed in this article.

Keywords: flashcards, creative games, low-tech classrooms, English language teaching, learner motivation, pedagogical effectiveness.

Introduction: In the modern learning environment, the incorporation of technology in the use of digital devices has become widespread. Technologies and tools such as interactive boards, computers, and electronic platforms have been considered key in the process of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, in some institutions, especially those in rural settings or from disadvantaged backgrounds, the use of technical devices for teaching and learning is a challenge. Concerning the teaching of Foreign Languages such as English, the absence of technical tools can prove to be negatively impacting for learners in terms of motivation and engagement if the traditional approach is employed. It thus becomes important to identify strategies that are not dependent on technical tools for effective learning. The use of flashcards and creative games acts as one such strategy that can be easily employed within any classroom.¹

¹ Wright, A., Betteridge, D., & Buckby, M. (2017). Games as a Tool for Language Practice and Motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 21(2), 235–248 pp.

Flashcards are supplemented with visual support, whereas creative games foster active participation. Both of these instruments are in line with learning methodologies that focus on learners. This article endeavours to discuss the pedagogical potential of flashcards and creative games in a low-tech learning environment, as well as prove that these instruments are effective in language learning, specifically in English language learning.

Main part. Modern approaches to pedagogy are characterized by the fact that the profession of teaching can no longer be associated solely with access to highly technical devices. Of course, the availability of modern technology has a positive impact on the process of learning. It can be argued, however, that the lack of such technology will not inevitably result in poor quality learning. For example, at institutions where access to technical teaching devices is poor, modern teaching methods include techniques involving creativity and games.²

Flashcards have traditionally been identified as effective learning tools in language education. Flashcards enable the visualization of language concepts, which is a salient aspect of language learning as far as memorization of language concepts is concerned. Learning theories identify that visual stimulation can greatly enhance language mastery because learners can retain the information more. The utilization of visual stimulation assists learners in building a strong mental link when concepts are associated with visual representation or symbols, resulting in enhanced mastery. This plays a significant role in a low-tech setting because visual stimulation bridges the gap associated with a lack of multimedia resources. Flashcards can be used in different ways in English classes. Flashcards can be used in the presentation phase of a lesson. This is because they can be used in the teaching of vocabulary. After presentations, flashcards can also be used in the practice section of a lesson. This can be done through the use of flashcards in activities such as pronouncing words, pair matching, and categorization. Finally, flashcards can also be used in the revision section of a lesson. This helps in the repetition of words that were previously taught. Another important educational advantage of using flashcards has to do with their ability to facilitate autonomy and active involvement of students. Rather than students listening to someone explain something to them, they actually get to interact with the learning materials. This could be through activities such as assuming meanings for new vocabulary, creating sentences, or categorizing flashcards into semantic groups. This makes students even more actively involved, even in environments that lack any form of technology. Creative games also have an important role in low-tech learning environments. Learning through games is based on the notion that learning can be more

² Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English without Technology: Methodological Alternatives. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 8(1), 45–60 pp.

efficiently accomplished if the learner is emotionally invested. Creative games turn the learning room into an engaging platform where the learner feels comfortable playing with words. It helps the learner's overcome nervousness, especially in speech-related activities.

In English language education, interactive games can play an important role in building the communicative competence of learners. Role-playing activities, word games, information gap exercises, and group activities are some examples of English language games that motivate learners to communicate effectively. English language games differ from other educational activities because these activities mimic real-life English language usage and are helpful even in low-tech environments.³

In pedagogical terms, creative games contribute positively towards various aspects of learning. First, they enhance motivation as they make learning interesting. Secondly, they promote socialization as students come together to achieve a given objective. Finally, they aid in developing cognitive skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and creativity. All these elements of learning are vital for holistic language development, as they are in line with modern student-centered learning methodologies. The integration of flashcards and games ensures that the teaching package is well rounded. The flashcards are utilized to enable the input process in the class. Games, on the other hand, enable the meaningful practice process in the class. The two teaching tools target different aspects in the teaching process. The process of teaching is further utilized to enable the teacher to be in control of class discipline. Classroom observation and teaching suggest that the learners who have been taught using flashcards and creative games experience better vocabulary acquisition, increased levels of participation, and positive attitudes towards learning the English language. The teacher can therefore use such approaches to overcome the challenges that arise from the absence of technical equipment in the classrooms. The teacher should instead focus on seeing the classrooms as opportunities for innovation. The influence of low-tech education environments on the teaching effectiveness depends, contrary to high-tech environments, on the methodological expertise of the teacher rather than on technology. Teaching with flashcards and creative games enables teachers to deliver engaging lessons that meet educational outcomes without the need for any technological aid. The techniques thus play an important role in assuring equity in education.⁴

Conclusion. This article analyzed how flashcards and creative games can enhance learning in classes that use less technology, particularly English classes. The

³ Urolova, F. A. (2024). Idiomatic Expressions in Context: Pragmatic Functions in English and Uzbek Language Usage. *Scientific Journal of Linguistics*, 3(1), 12–22 pp.

⁴ Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2015). Using Flashcards and Games in Primary English Classes. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 18–29 pp.

point is simple: Effective education does not necessarily rely on technology. You can still learn effectively using innovative and technology-free strategies and activities. Creative games are also important in developing communication skills in learners and serving as a motivator. The games create a positive and interactive environment that reduces learners' fear and boosts confidence, most where learners are speaking. Such activities are also in line with the learner approach because they promote cooperation and critical thinking. In low-tech environments, creative games substitute interactive activities through learners' imagination, movement, and verbal communication. Using flashcards in combination with creative game activities proves particularly effective. On one hand, flashcards provide focused input, which follows a clear structure. On the other hand, playing games gives opportunities for meaningful practice. Mixing these aspects ensures a balance between the productive skills of the class members, as well as maintaining their interest and discipline, all without using any technology.

In sum, flashcards and games as learning tools involving creativity can be very useful and cost-effective in the teaching of the English language in a low-tech environment. The impact of these learning environments on the achievement and motivation of students can also be investigated in a study.

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