

# From Disinterest to Engagement: Innovative Approaches to Teaching English in the Kampus Mengajar 7 Program

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## ABSTRACT

*In the context of the Kampus Mengajar 7 program, the author teaches a first-grade class that demonstrates a notable lack of interest in learning English, a subject that is relatively unfamiliar to them. This disinterest presents a challenge for educators, necessitating the selection of teaching methods that are both engaging and effective. To enhance students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning English, the author has opted to use visual media and interactive tools, specifically images and Wordwall games, as part of the instructional approach. Students who initially demonstrated reluctance to participate began to show increased enthusiasm for learning English, indicating a shift in their attitudes towards the subject. By emphasizing engaging teaching strategies, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective language instruction in primary education, highlighting the importance of adapting teaching methods to meet the needs and interests of young learners. Ultimately, the findings suggest that innovative approaches can significantly enhance student learning experiences and outcomes in English language acquisition.*

**KEYWORDS:** Visual Media, Wordwall Games, Teaching English for Young Learner.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners can often be challenging, especially in settings where students have little prior exposure to the language. In the Kampus Mengajar 7 program, the author encountered this issue while teaching a first-grade class. The students displayed a lack of interest in English, viewing it as a daunting and unfamiliar subject. This disinterest is concerning, as early engagement is crucial for developing a positive attitude towards language learning. It is in line with Avezona (2022), Teaching English to children presents unique challenges due to their energetic nature, shorter attention spans, and specific developmental stages. Understanding these factors is essential for effective teaching

To address this challenge, it is essential for teachers to adopt methods that are not only effective but also captivating for young learners. Aly et.al (2024) highlights that incorporating diverse online resources, such as Wordwall, British Council and Duolingo, proved effective in maintaining student interest through gamification and multimedia elements. Avezona (2022) also highlights the necessity for teachers to adapt their strategies based on students' attention spans. Traditional teaching methods often fail to inspire students, leading to disengagement and a lack of motivation. Recognizing this, the author sought innovative approaches to make English learning more enjoyable and relatable for the students. According to Yue (2024), modern teaching methods enhance student engagement and motivation by emphasizing personalized teaching and feedback, addressing the limitations of traditional approaches in English learning.

One effective strategy identified was the use of visual media, specifically images, which



can help bridge the gap between students' prior knowledge and new vocabulary. Visual aids can create a more interactive and stimulating learning environment, allowing students to connect words with images and contexts. Additionally, the incorporation of games, such as those offered by Wordwall, provides an opportunity for interactive learning, where students can engage with the language in a fun and dynamic way.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Teaching English for Young Learner**

Teaching English to young learners (ages 6-14) is a growing field that presents both challenges and opportunities. Research emphasizes the importance of age-appropriate materials, including visual aids, storybooks, songs, and games (Islahuddin, 2023; Avezova, 2022). Effective teaching methods involve interactive approaches, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), and the use of technology to engage students (Avezova, 2022). Creating a supportive learning environment is crucial, with a focus on positive teacher-student relationships and differentiated instruction (Islahuddin, 2023). While the "younger-the-better" belief remains prevalent, recent studies suggest that starting age alone does not guarantee better outcomes (Nikolov & Djigunović, 2019). Factors such as individual differences, parental involvement, and extracurricular exposure to English also impact language development (Nikolov & Djigunović, 2019). Assessment should be age-appropriate and focus on promoting successful learning rather than just measuring achievement (Nikolov & Djigunović, 2019).

### **2.2 Visual Media for Teaching English**

Visual media play a significant role in enhancing English language instruction, particularly for young learners. Teachers employ various visual aids such as flash cards, charts, pictures, and real objects to attract students' attention, motivate learning, and explain materials more effectively (Iosr & Gusmaizal, 2015). The use of LCD projectors and PowerPoint presentations has become common, helping to introduce technological tools and improve student engagement (Purwanti, 2022; Sofian & Anggraeni, 2021). Visual media-based teaching has been found to create an active, creative, and effective learning atmosphere, leading to increased student enthusiasm and confidence in language production (Basuni, 2020). Teachers typically prepare by setting up equipment, understanding the material, and creating visual content (Sofian & Anggraeni, 2021). While visual media usage generally results in positive student attitudes and improved comprehension, teachers may face challenges in providing and creating appropriate materials (Iosr & Gusmaizal, 2015). Overall, visual media are valuable tools for enhancing English language instruction across various educational settings.

### **2.3 Wordwall Games for Teaching English**

Wordwall is an online platform that offers interactive educational games for English language teaching, particularly for vocabulary development (Fitria, 2023; Bilova, 2023). It provides various templates for creating quizzes and activities, which can be easily shared with students (Fitria, 2023). Research indicates that Wordwall games effectively enhance students' pronunciation, memorization, and sentence construction skills (Ilahiyati et al., 2023). The platform's diverse game types, including crosswords, true/false tasks, and anagrams, contribute to engaging and enjoyable learning experiences (Ilahiyati et al., 2023; Bilova, 2023). Implementation of Wordwall-based educational games has shown significant improvements in students' vocabulary skills and overall learning outcomes (Rohmatin, 2023). Teachers can track

students' progress through the platform, making it a valuable tool for both in-class activities and homework assignments (Bilova, 2023). The use of Wordwall games in English language teaching has been found to increase student motivation and engagement while diversifying the educational process (Bilova, 2023; Rohmatin, 2023).

### **3.0 METHOD**

This study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative study is defined as a study which investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Since it focuses on the quality of certain activity, the data of qualitative study are commonly in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. These include interview transcripts, filed notes, photographs, audio recordings, videotapes, diaries, personal comments, memos, official records, textbook passages, etc.(Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). In order to achieve the purposes of the study, a case study was employed as its research design. A case study is used to investigate the phenomenon to answer specific research questions that seeks different kinds of evidence in order to get the best possible answer of the research questions (Gillham, 2000). The reason of using this method is to get an in-depth understanding of how visual media and wordwall games are utilized in teaching English to young learners and also to reveal their responses towards the use of visual media and wordwall games in the process of teaching and learning English.

### **4.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Implementation of Teaching Methods**

The teaching methods employed by the author focus on creating an engaging classroom atmosphere. During lessons, images are used to introduce new vocabulary and concepts. Pictures of fruits are presented to the students, prompting them to identify and describe what they see. This not only helps students learn new words but also encourages them to express their thoughts in English.

In addition to visual aids, the author incorporated Wordwall games into the lessons. Wordwall is an interactive platform that allows teachers to create various educational games and activities tailored to specific learning objectives. By integrating games, students are more likely to participate actively in their learning. The games are designed to be fun and competitive, fostering a sense of excitement and motivation among the students. For instance, word puzzles, matching games, and quizzes provide opportunities for students to practice vocabulary in a playful context.

#### **4.2 Impact on Student Engagement**

The implementation of these teaching methods has shown promising results. Students who initially displayed reluctance to participate began to show increased interest and enthusiasm for learning English. The use of images helped to contextualize vocabulary, making it more relatable and easier to understand. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the Wordwall games encouraged collaboration among students, promoting a positive classroom dynamic.

Feedback from students indicated that they enjoyed the lessons more when visual media and games were incorporated. Many expressed excitement about coming to class and participating in activities, which is a significant shift from their previous attitudes toward English learning.



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by first-grade students in the Kampus Mengajar 7 program regarding their lack of interest in learning English can be effectively addressed through the use of engaging teaching methods. By employing visual media and interactive games like those on Wordwall, educators can create a stimulating learning environment that fosters curiosity and enthusiasm among young learners. As students become more engaged, they are likely to develop a positive attitude towards language learning, paving the way for their future success in English.

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