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Volume 5, 2025 (534-552)

International Conference on Humanities,
Education, Language, and Culture

Improving Early Reading and Writing Skills (MMP) Through the Montessori Method with the Help of Word Cards

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Abstract

This study aims to improve the ability of Reading and Writing Beginning (MMP) in grade 1 students through the Montessori method assisted by word cards. The method used is Classroom Action Research (CAR) Arikunto model with four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the study were 25 grade 1 students of SD Negeri 014 Rambah Samo. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed an increase in MMP ability from 40% in cycle I meeting I, to 60% in meeting II, then increasing to 72% in cycle II meeting I, and reaching 80% in meeting II. Thus, the indicator of success was achieved because more than 75% of students had completed.

Keywords: Improvement; Beginning Reading Writing; Montessori; Word Cards;

INTRODUCTION

Early Reading and Writing Skills (EWC) are an important foundation in the learning process of early childhood and early elementary school students. Mastery of these basic skills is the key to understanding various sciences about subsequent educational crickets. (Blok, 1976). Therefore, learning EWC needs to be designed in an interesting, meaningful, and appropriate way to the child's developmental stage. However, the reality in the field shows that not a few students have difficulty in mastering reading and writing skills at an early stage. (Putri, 2025). This can be caused by the lack of an appropriate approach to the characteristics of early childhood learning, limited contextual learning media, and less than optimal sensorimotor involvement in the learning process. (Agustina et al., 2020). If this condition is left untreated, it will have an impact on children's low literacy achievement and affect overall academic development.

One approach that is believed to be able to overcome this problem is the Montessori Method. This method emphasizes individual, concrete, and manipulative learning, allowing children to learn through direct experience (Zia et al., 2020). Montessori also prioritizes freedom in learning, independence, and the use of specially designed boat tools to stimulate various aspects of child development, including language and literacy. In the context of MMP learning, the Montessori method can be enriched by the use of word cards as visual and kinesthetic aids that support the process of recognizing letters, syllables, and words gradually and enjoyably.

Word cards allow children to make associations between letter symbols and sounds directly, and strengthen understanding through fine motor activities such as arranging letters or matching words with pictures.

(Qorina, 2022). The Principles of Montessori Education in learning apply the principles of learning for children. The principles of Montessori learning are as follows: a. What is important is the forms of interaction between teachers and children b. Emphasize activities that lead to self-direction in children through the help of teachers. C. Focusing on children's adaptation to the surrounding environment as learning material that is appropriate to their level of development. D. Physical activities that play a role in helping children absorb academic concepts and practical skills. e. Utilizing self-taught equipment used as a tool to introduce concepts. f. Freedom to choose and provide self-control. g. Children's interest in learning, in this case children will be able to learn better if they are interested in what they are learning h. Avoiding extrinsic rewards. Collaborative learning between peers (Lestari, 2017).

Learning in context will be deeper and more enriching than abstract learning. Based on this explanation, it can be understood that child development goes through a series of changes in children that take place gradually and are permanent in terms of the physical and spiritual functions that each individual has when moving towards maturity through the growth and learning stages (Qorina, 2022). The development of grade 1 students enters the concrete operational development stage and is developed to sharpen their abilities. Therefore, concrete tools or materials are needed to provide stimulation so that they can help support the child's learning process. (Mutia Alista Muslih, Sa'odah, 2022).

The Montessori method has various forms of materials, which are contained in tools and various activities used to support the child's learning process with the child's development process formed through the tools provided (Study et al., 2019). Previously explaining how the

various activities and materials are, in this case we will first know some principles in the use of materials as follows: a. Each material has a purpose and is meaningful to the child b. Each material used must be in accordance with the child's development, for example from simple to complex in design and use. c. Every object or material that is designed to prepare children to learn unconsciously related to the things that the child will explain in the future. d. Every object given to children must be given starting from concrete things to leading to abstract things that are done gradually. e. Every material that is designed aims to get automatic education (Nevyanti & Respati, 2017). This means that error control is on the object, not on the teacher. This error control will guide the child in using the object and has the possibility that the child can realize his own mistakes and correct them by himself (Mirnawati).

METHOD

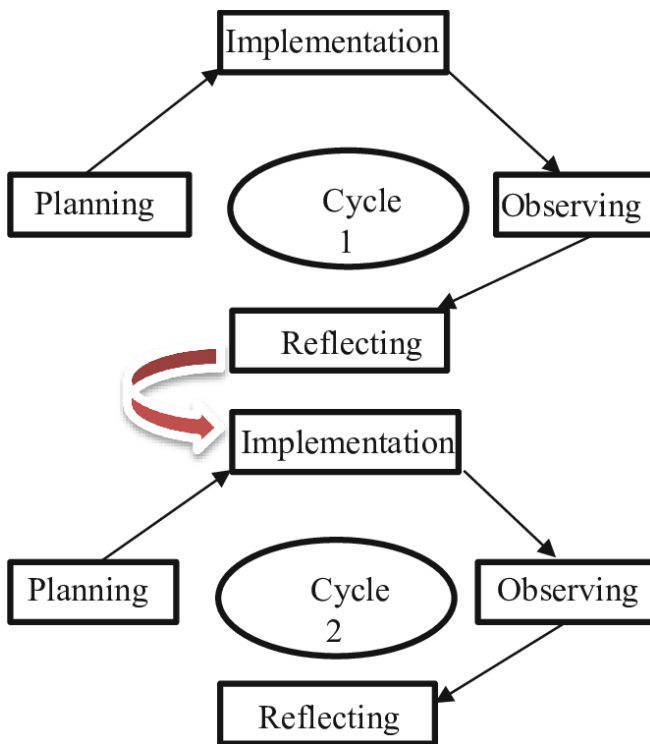
Research Approach and Type

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of Classroom Action Research (CAR). The CAR model used refers to Suharsimi Arikunto's opinion which states that CAR is a form of reflective study by the perpetrator of the action carried out to improve the rationality and fairness of educational practices in the classroom. The goal is to improve the learning process and outcomes in a sustainable manner. CAR was chosen because it is very suitable for learning interventions such as the use of the Montessori method assisted by word cards, considering its cyclical characteristics. The cyclical nature of CAR allows teachers to directly apply, observe, and reflect on each learning action, then make revisions for the next cycle based on field findings. Thus, interventions can be adjusted and refined gradually to be more effective in

improving students' early reading and writing skills (MMP). This approach not only improves learning outcomes, but also empowers teachers as researchers in their own classes.

B. Research Model

This research follows Arikunto's spiral model which consists of four main components in each cycle, namely: Planning, Planning, Implementation of Action (Acting), Observation (Observing), Reflection (Reflecting).



Gambar 1. Alur PTK Arikunto

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) cycle is a series of systematic activities aimed at improving classroom learning practices. The first stage in this cycle is planning, which is designing actions to be taken to overcome learning problems. At this stage, the teacher prepares a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), prepares evaluation tools, and the necessary learning aids or media. Furthermore, the action implementation stage (acting) is carried out by implementing learning activities in accordance with the planning that has been made. The teacher as a researcher carries out the action scenario in the classroom with full awareness of the purpose of the improvement. After that, enter the observation stage (observing), where the teacher or collaborator observes and records the action implementation process. Student activities, the role of the teacher, and the classroom situation are observed systematically through instruments such as observation sheets, field notes, and documentation. The last stage is reflection (reflecting), which functions to analyze the results of observations in order to assess the effectiveness of the actions that have been implemented. This reflection is the basis for determining improvements and preparing plans for the next cycle. If the problem has not been resolved optimally, then the research is continued to the next cycle until the expected improvement is achieved.

C. Subjects and Research Location The subjects in this study were 25 students of grade 1 of SD Negeri 014 Rambah Bahasa Samo in the 2024-2025 academic year, 18 female students and 7 male students. The location of the research was at SD Negeri 014 Rambah Samo, which is located in Karya Mulya Village, Rambah Samo District, Rokan Hulu Regency.

Research Time

This research was conducted for 3 months, starting from October to December 2024.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this study consisted of several complementary methods to obtain accurate and comprehensive data. First, observation was conducted to observe the activities of teachers and students during the learning process. In this case, the researcher used an observation sheet specifically designed to record teacher and student activities in relation to Beginning Reading and Writing (MMP) skills. Second, test was used as a tool to determine the improvement in student learning outcomes, especially in MMP skills. The test was given to each individual in the form of questions that measure basic reading and writing skills. Third, interviews were conducted with teachers and students to obtain their responses to the action process that had been carried out. This interview aims to dig up more in-depth information about students' abilities in MMP and their perceptions of the learning that was applied. Finally, documentation techniques were used to collect supporting data, such as photos of learning activities, open modules used in the action process, and student work results. These four techniques complement each other in providing a comprehensive picture of the process and results of the classroom action research carried out.

Instrumen Penelitian

The instruments used in this study were designed to support systematic and in-depth data collection. The first instrument was a teacher and student activity observation sheet, which was used to record interactions between teachers and students during the learning process. This

sheet helps identify successes and obstacles that arise in learning, and becomes the basis for designing improvements in the next cycle. The second instrument was a formative test given to students after each cycle to measure the level of understanding and achievement of learning objectives. The results of this test were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the action and determine whether revisions were needed in the next action. Furthermore, an interview guide was used as an instrument to obtain qualitative information from teachers and students regarding their experiences during the learning process. These interviews provided insight into the effectiveness of the methods used and aspects that needed to be improved. Finally, a field note format was used to record various direct observations that occurred during the implementation of the action in the classroom. These notes are important documentation that is very useful for reflecting and designing further actions if necessary. These four instruments complement each other in providing accurate and in-depth data for analysis purposes in classroom action research.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted descriptively qualitatively and quantitatively simply. Data from observations and interviews were analyzed qualitatively, while student test results were analyzed quantitatively to see the improvement in learning outcomes between cycles. H. Indikator Keberhasilan

The indicators for the success of improving the ability to read and write for beginners (M MP) based on the Montessori Method with the help of word cards, classically, are 80% and the individual success indicator for learning Indonesian is 75%.

Table 1. Indicators for Beginning Reading Skills

Percentage	Category Achievement	Description
0% – 25%	Very Low	Very Low Has not shown basic skills, needs intensive guidance.
26% – 50%	Low / Needs	Has started to develop, but still needs guidance and regular practice.
51% – 75%	Sufficient / Towards Mastery	Has shown mastery, but is not consistent and needs practice.
76% – 100%	High / Mastery	Telah menguasai kemampuan secara baik dan konsisten dalam penerapannya.

RESULT

This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles with the aim of improving the Reading and Writing skills of Beginner Students (MMP) of grade 1 of SD Negeri 014 Rambah Bahasa Samoa through the application of the Montessori Method with the help of word cards. The following are the results of the research based on

observation data, student learning outcomes, and documentation during the learning process. At the pre action stage, most students showed difficulty in pronouncing letter sounds, combining sounds into syllables or simple words, and copying or writing words correctly. The results of the observation found that 20% of the 25 students were still unable to read and write the beginning (MMP). Observations also showed that students were less active and did not focus passively during reading and writing learning activities.

Cycle 1

In cycle I, the researcher designed the Early Reading and Writing (MMP) learning using the Montessori method approach, focusing on sensory and phonetic activities, and utilizing picture word cards as media. These word cards were prepared to help students recognize letters, syllables, and simple words. Learning was carried out in two meetings, where the teacher used word cards as media for activities, such as recognizing letters and their sounds through sound games, composing words from movable letters (movable alphabets), and reading words through picture word cards.

The results of observations showed that students began to show interest in MMP activities, with around 60% of students being able to arrange letters into simple words such as "book" and "house". Student learning activities also increased compared to before the action was taken. However, at the reflection stage, several students were found to still have difficulty pronouncing the initial letter sounds and composing words correctly. The teacher realized that strengthening phonetic sounds and understanding through games needed to be strengthened

and varied. Therefore, this action will be continued to cycle II with adjustments and development of more varied methods to support student success.

Table 2. Results of MMP Ability Cycle I Meetings 1 and 2

Indicators	Pertemuan I	Pertemuan II
Ability to pronounce letter sounds	25%	70%
Ability to read simple words	40%	50%
Ability to write simple words	55%	60%
Ability to write simple sentences	40%	60%
Total	40%	60%

Cycle 2

In cycle I, the researcher designed the Early Reading and Writing (MMP) learning with the Montessori method approach, especially through sensory and phonetic activities, using picture word cards. This media is prepared to help students recognize letters, syllables, and simple words. Learning is carried out for two meetings, where the teacher directs the activities through three main stages, namely recognizing letters and their sounds through sound games, composing words with movable letters, and reading words using picture word cards. The results of the observation showed that students began to show interest in the MMP activities, and around 60% of them were able to arrange letters into simple words such as "book" and "house". Students' learning activities also showed an increase compared to before the action was taken. However, reflection on the learning process revealed that there were still a number of students who had difficulty in

mentioning the initial sounds of letters and composing words correctly. The teacher realizes the need for phonetic reinforcement and conceptual understanding through more varied and interesting games. Therefore, the learning action will be continued to cycle II with a more enhanced strategy.

Table 3. Results of MMP Ability Cycle II Meetings 1 and 2

Indikator	Pertemuan I	Pertemuan II
Ability to pronounce letter sounds	74%	80%
Ability to read simple words	74%	80%
Ability to write simple words	70%	80%
Ability to write simple sentences	78%	80%
Total	74%	80%

DISCUSSION

The results of this classroom action research show a significant increase in the Reading and Writing skills of Beginner Students (MMP) after the implementation of the Montessori Method with the help of word cards. Learning that was initially passive and textual changed to active and contextual, thanks to the use of visual media and the typical Montessori multisensory approach (Suparya, 2021).

Montessori Method and MMP Development

The main principle of Montessori in developing early reading and writing skills is the use of concrete teaching

aids and a phonetic approach. In this study, the word cards used not only function as visual media, but also support the phonemic process, namely the gradual introduction of letter sounds and syllables. (Adityaningrum et al., 2021). Activities such as arranging letters, coincidences of words and pictures, and reading word cards gradually train students in recognizing language patterns. (Nurhamsih &, Firman, Mirnawati, 2019).

This approach is in line with Montessori's view that early childhood learning must accommodate children's sensory and motor needs. Activities that use manipulative tools (hands-on) facilitate the process of internalizing the concept of reading and writing, especially for lower grade students who are still in the pre-operational stage according to Piaget. (Anika & Cinda, 2024).

Increasing Student Enthusiasm and Learning Activities

The increase in learning motivation is very visible from changes in student behavior between before and after the action. When the action is carried out, students show higher enthusiasm in participating in learning, especially when interacting with word cards (Qorina, 2022). This shows that learning media that are interesting and in accordance with the child's cognitive development stage can increase overall learning activity and participation.

Increasing MMP Learning Outcomes

The test result data shows a significant increase from cycle I to cycle II. For example, the ability to pronounce letter sounds increased from 74% to 80%, while the ability to read simple words increased from 74% to 80%, the ability to write simple words 70% to 80%, while the ability to write simple sentences 78% to 80%. This shows that the application of the right method, according to the needs of students, greatly influences the language of capitan

learning outcomes, especially in the aspect of basic literacy (Anggelina et al., 2022).

Reflection and Implications

Reflection carried out at the end of each cycle allows teachers to discuss and improve learning strategies. This proves that PTK as a learning improvement model is very effective in developing the quality of the learning process and outcomes in the classroom. (Tiamar Situmorang, 2019). In addition, the use of concrete media such as word cards should be a routine part of language learning in early grades to overcome obstacles in MMP (Rahmi et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of classroom action research for two cycles, the results of the study after the application of the Montessori Method with the help of word cards in cycle I meeting I increased by 40%, while cycle I meeting II increased by 60%, while the results of the study in cycle II meeting I were 72% and continued in meeting II by 80%, or around 20 students who graduated from the total number of 25 students. Thus, in cycle II meeting II it has shown success of 80% with a success indicator of 75% that has been set, it can be continued that the application of the Montessori Method with the help of word card media can improve the Reading Writing skills of Beginners (MMP) in grade I of elementary school.

The increase is evident from the students' ability to recognize letter sounds, read simple words, and write words which are experiencing a gradual increase from the pre-action stage to cycle II. Word card media has proven to be effective in supporting students' phonemic and motor processes because of its concrete, visual, and attractive form, making it easier for students to associate images,

sounds, and writing. In addition, students' enthusiasm and participation in learning also increased significantly, as seen from their active involvement in various activities such as phonetic games, letter arrangement, and reading good word cards independently or in groups. Furthermore, the Classroom Action Research (CAR) model provides opportunities for teachers to continue to improve the learning process through reflection in each cycle, which allows teachers to Think, redesign strategies, and implement more effective approaches in the classroom.

The limitations in this classroom action research can be explained as follows:

The first subjects Limited to One Class. This classroom action research has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the research subjects are only limited to one class, namely grade I students in one elementary school, so that the findings obtained cannot be generalized widely to other classes or schools that have different conditions. Second, the implementation of the research was carried out in two cycles with a relatively short time, which limits the opportunity to see the long-term impact of the application of the Montessori method assisted by word cards on the development of students' Beginning Reading and Writing (MMP) skills. Third, in the context of classroom learning, there are many variables that cannot be strictly controlled, such as students' emotional conditions, support from parents at home, and differences in each student's initial abilities that also affect learning outcomes. Fourth, this study focuses more on the cognitive and motor aspects in improving MMP abilities, but has not explored in depth the affective and socio-emotional aspects of students during the learning process. Finally, because teachers also act as researchers in carrying out actions and making observations, there is potential for subjectivity in

the assessment and interpretation of student learning outcomes. Based on the results and limitations found in this study, there are several recommendations that can be used as references for further research.

First, it is recommended that future research involve more than one class or school in order to expand the subjects and context of the research, so that the results obtained have higher external validity and can be generalized to a wider context. Second, research should be designed with a longer duration in order to observe the long-term impact of implementing the Montessori method on the development of students' Beginning Reading and Writing (MMP) abilities more comprehensively. Third, the future research approach is suggested to be multidimensional, not only limited to cognitive and motor aspects, but also includes affective aspects, such as learning motivation, self-confidence, and the ability to work together between students. Fourth, the application of the method should be carried out collaboratively by involving more than one teacher in the implementation of actions or observations to reduce assessment bias and obtain more diverse perspectives. Fifth, exploration of additional media and methods also needs to be considered, for example the use of three-dimensional teaching aids or interactive technology that is in accordance with the Montessori approach, to determine its effect on improving students' early literacy. Finally, it is important for future research to analyze differences in student characteristics, such as level of learning readiness and social background, so that learning strategies can be designed more individually and responsively to student needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the lecturer Prof. Dr. Haryanto, M.Pd who has guided the researcher so that he can complete the learning

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