

INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING PRACTICES

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Editors

Truly Almendo Pasaribu
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PREFACE

Classroom action research (CAR) has gained popularity among foreign language scholars and teachers. Teachers are attracted to do action research to improve the quality of learning as well as to acquire more understanding of themselves as teachers. This book presents some practices of action research in Indonesian context conducted collaboratively by students of PPG SM-3T, school teachers, and lecturers.

This book consists of action research implementing technical and non-technical media. Hopefully this book can encourage more students and teachers to do action research in living their professional life as educators.

Editors

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Mbato, and Laurentia Sumarni**

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the use of Flashcard Game to improve the students' engagement in SMPN 3 Yogyakarta in their learning speaking. Students engagement is the main problem encountered in the class 8C, especially in speaking skill. There were 34 students in the class but only few of them paid attention to the teacher when she was explaining the materials. They tended to talk among themselves, not doing the tasks given, were hesitate to ask questions or answer the teachers' questions, and were not actively participated in the class activities. Thus, I decided to use flashcards as the media combining with various games as the technique to enhance their engagement, especially behavioural and emotional engagement. The research design applied in this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). The data were obtained by using four instruments: observation checklists, questionnaire, journal log, and also the students' reflection. Those data were analyzed using triangulation technique, which combine the four correlate them altogether. After conducting the research, it can be concluded that Flashcard Game has successfully improved the students' behavioural and emotional engagement. By applying Flashcard Game, the students gain 81.4% in the behavioural engagement and 88.6% in the emotional engagement.

Keywords: Flashcard Game, students' engagement, learning speaking

Introduction

Background of the Study

Learning English in 21st century is different from the last decade. These days learning English requires students to master not only the four skills but also four Cs (critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration). In order to complete those required component in learning English is not only the students' responsibility. Teachers also have to contribute in it. There are a lot of factors that may help the students and the teachers achieving the goals of learning. One of them is the students' engagement. According to Chapman (2003, p 2), Student engagement as a construct to depict students' willingness to participate in routine school activity, such as attending classes, submitting required work, and following teacher directions in class. Based on that statement it can be concluded that the students will show their initiation in order to reach the goal of learning.

During the observation that had been conducted in SMPN 3 Yogyakarta, it was found that several problems existed in the eighth-grade students' English class. One problem that was encountered by the teacher and also the students was the students' engagement in the classroom. Based on my observation in the classroom, during the teaching and learning process, there were only few students who actively participated in the activities. There were 34 students in the class, and the students who got involved in the class activities were less than 50%.

The result of my observation and interview with the English teacher showed that the eighth-grade students of SMPN 3 Yogyakarta were not actively engaged in learning English. According to the English teacher, some of the students themselves do not have motivation to participate in the classroom activities, cannot focus on the teaching and learning process, and they also cannot motivate themselves to do the assignment. The teacher said that they have different

background of knowledge so they may respond differently to any activities given to them. Few students may be actively engaged and fully participate, but many of them do not.

One alternative that teachers could manage is the class activities. There are a lot of activities that teachers can give to the students in the teaching and learning process, depending on what the students need and what goals to be achieved. This research will explain one of it, the use of Flashcard game in improving the students' engagement.

Flashcards is a kind of game which requires students' communication, collaboration, and movement. It also gets all the students to involve answering the questions. Besides, as what Hadfield defines that game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun, Flashcards has those criteria. In conclusion, Flashcards will not only bring enjoyable atmosphere in the class, but also help the students reaching the learning goals.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to improve the students' engagement by using Flashcard game, thus this study is intended to be useful for English teachers. The English teacher can use this strategy as an alternative way to solve the similar problems occurred in their classroom. As for the future researcher, this study can be useful as an additional reference for the strategies development regarding to the engagement improvement in teaching and learning process.

Students Engagement

According to Chapman (2003, p.2), Student engagement is defined as a construct to show the students' intention to participate in routine school activity, such as attending classes, submitting required work, and following teacher directions in class. Natriello (1984) in Chapman (2003, p.2), defined student engagement as "participating in the activities offered as part of the school program. Negative indicators of engagement in this study included unexcused absences from classes, cheating on tests, and damaging school property. Chapman (2003, p.2) also

stated that children who are engaged indicate proper behavioral involvement in learning activities along with positive emotional tone. They choose their tasks at the border of their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and give much effort and concentration in the implementation of learning task. They also show regular positive emotion during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest.

Fredricks and McCloskey (2012, p.764) defined “student engagement as a meta-construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.” Behavioral engagement draws on the idea of participation and includes involvement in academic, social, or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out. Emotional engagement focuses on the students’ reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, or school, whether it is in the form of positive or negative ones. Others conceptualize emotional engagement as identification with the school, which includes belonging, or a feeling of being important to the school, and valuing, or an appreciation of success in school-related outcomes Fredricks and McCloskey (2012, p.764). Finally, cognitive engagement is defined as student’s level of investment in learning. It includes being thoughtful, strategic, and willing to exert the necessary effort for comprehension of complex ideas or mastery of difficult skills (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Fredricks et al.,2004; Meece, B lumenfeld, & Hoyle,1988).

Language Game

Cojocariu and Boghian (2014, p.641) divided games into two kinds; educational games and didactic games, based on the result and how the game was built. Educational games are games explicitly designed with an educational purpose, or which have an incidental or secondary educational value, meant to teach people about certain subjects, expand concepts, reinforce

development, understand a historical event or culture, or assist learners in acquiring a skill while playing; game types include board (for example, pure strategy and/or rolling dice), card (playing cards) and video games (involving human interaction with a user interface to generate visual feedback on a video device (Keese, 2012, as cited in Cojocariu and Boghian, 2014, p.641).

The most relevant advantages of GBL are: promoting a positive attitude towards learning and developing memory skills, along with its potential to connect learners and help them build self-constructed learning (Anderson et al. 2009, Whitton 2012, as cited in Cojocariu and Boghian, 2014, p.641); involving the entire class of students in the active learning process (Anderson et al. 2009, as cited in Cojocariu and Boghian, 2014, p.641); it may constitute an efficient and effective tool for motivating students and engaging them in active learning; besides active learning, GBL also supports experiential learning, thus complying with the demands of the student-centered approach to education; providing a transdisciplinary approach to education as students may work on multiple skills related to various disciplines: research, problem-solving, leadership, team-work, creativity, logics, taking decisions, adaptation, communicative and interaction skills.

Flashcard Game

Flashcards in teaching and learning are commonly used to help the students understand the materials more. Each picture is printed on a card and it has the word on it. Miles and Ehri (2017, p.103) advised that repeating reading the flashcards will help the students to strengthen their memory. In this case, the students are indirectly assisted to enhance their vocabulary by the repetition they do using flashcards. Therefore, it will also affect their speaking since they have had vocabularies to express their ideas.

Flashcard Game is defined as a game which gets the students motivated, engaged, move, with a competitive revision race. Since this game requires movement and provide the students with visual situation, it will create an active and alive atmosphere in the classroom. The movement game such Flashcard constitutes an important means through which the goals of learning can be achieved. They contribute to the creation of a good working disposition, to cheering up the group, both from a physical and a psychological point of view, as well as to the training of certain moral and physical qualities (Dobrescue, 2014, p.24)

Method

Research Design

Since this research was based on the real problem occurred in the classroom, the design used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR, according to Burns (2010, p.2) is related to the ideas of “reflective practice” and “the teacher as researcher.” CAR involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring our own teaching context. CAR in this research is used to solve problems occurring in the English classroom, because the teacher is responsible for students’ success in learning English.

The CAR process is picturized as follows.

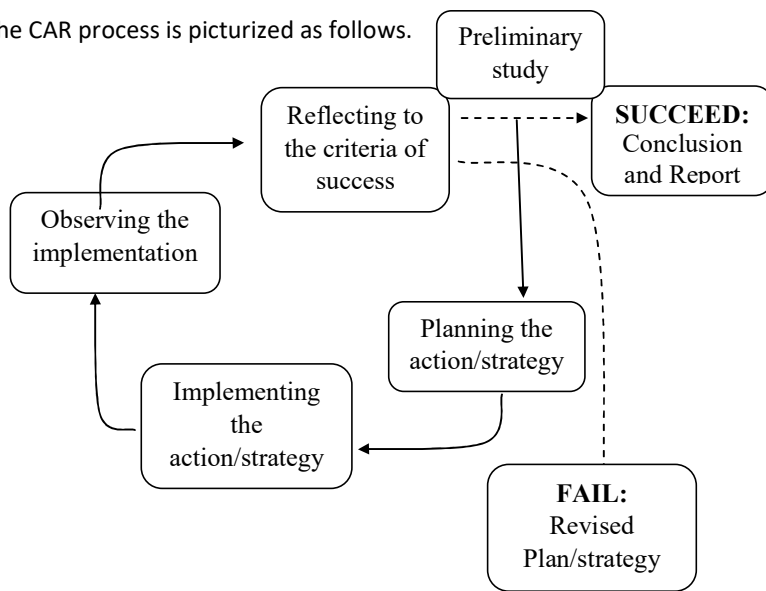


Figure 1.1 The Flowchart of Classroom Action Research
(Adapted from Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. as cited in Latief, 2009:4)

Participant of the Study

The participants of this research were first grade students of SMPN 3 Yogyakarta in school year of 2018/2019. The research involved class 8C, which consisted of 34 students with different level of English.

Collecting the Data

There will be four instruments used in this study. They are observation sheet for the observer(s), field notes, questionnaire, and reflection guideline for the students. The data are going to be gathered during the CAR cycles. During the process, the observers observe the students, and in the end of the cycles, the students are given the questionnaire and reflection guideline

Criteria of success indicator

The criteria of success indicators are created based on the preliminary study and the expected result of the students' engagement. Here I decided to set the standard of the students' engagement to 70%. This percentage can be seen from the students' mean score on the questionnaire that they had fulfilled before.

Findings and Discussion

Preliminary Study

In this section I tried to find the problems occurred in the class 8C. I entered the class on August 13th when the teacher was teaching Chapter 1 that was about expressing attention, appreciating others, checking understanding, and also asking and giving opinion. At that time, the teacher did not use any media but textbook. There were no PowerPoint slides nor videos, only textbook. The activity was only set individually from the beginning till the end of the lesson.

Based on my observation in the class when the teaching and learning process was occurring, I found several problems that I could highlight here. First of all, the students did not want to actively participate in the activities. The teacher had to point the students first, and then they were willing to answer the questions given. Second, I found that some of the students did not finish the tasks given by the teacher. They tended to do it in a very slow pace, or did not want to do at all and chose to talk among themselves. The last but not least, when the teacher was explaining the materials through textbook, the students seemed not to give attention. To sum up, the students of 8C did not engage in learning English.

What happened in the classroom were also strengthened by my interview with the teacher. She said that the students came with different level of English competency. As the result, they responded differently to the teaching and learning process. Some of them might like English, or had higher average of

English mastery so they got engaged in every activity given in the class. But most of them, as the teacher stated, could not motivate themselves to do the assignment. They seemed not interested in learning English, proven by talking among themselves in the class, not paying attention to the teacher, and did not want to finish the tasks.

Looking back at the observation and interview which I had done, I could conclude that the students of 8C were lack of engagement in learning English. Therefore, I tried to apply a different media and method to teach them to improve their engagement significantly. I chose to use flashcards as the media to teach and combining it with various games in the classroom. The processes were explained below.

Cycle 1

This first cycle was conducted on September 10th. There were four stages in this cycle: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

Planning

In this stage I focused on arranging what I was going to do in implementing the Flashcard game. Before that, I had a consultation with the lecturers and the teacher about the activities that I would give to the students and also the instruments that I were going to use to measure the students' engagement. After the discussion with the teacher and the lecturers I started to construct the lesson plan. In this teaching I applied Genre Based Approach and combining it with some games (See Appendix). The materials were *Can and Will* and I used PowerPoint, flashcards, and video. The first cycle consisted of one meeting only, and if it was failed, I would continue to the second cycle. Beside the lesson plan, I decided to use questionnaire, observation checklist, and also journal log as the instruments to measure the students' engagement.

Implementing

1. Pre-activity

In this opening section, the teacher gave apperception to the students about what they were going to learn at the meeting. Here the teacher asked them some questions related to the materials and also their daily life. For example, *“who can play guitar in this class?”* and *“how many of you can cook?”* After activating their background knowledge, the teacher led them to guess what they were going to learn.

2. Whilst activity

In the main activity, the students were at first asked to match the pictures with the right vocabularies. The pictures were about the verbs that will be learned using the word *can* to express the ability. The students were grouped into two big groups. Each group had to race to match the pictures and the vocabularies provided. In this section, most the students paid a good attention to the game and discussed to get the right answer. They tended to do the efforts to win the game.

After that the students were actually asked to watch a video to continue to the next tasks. But unfortunately, the LCD projector did not work so the video could not be played. Finally, the teacher still continued the lesson by using only the flashcards. The flashcards consisted a series of verb pictures. There were 18 verbs used to do the activities in this chapter. The students were asked to make a simple dialogue using the flashcards that they picked. To get the opportunity to perform, they should have raced to say *“Bingo”*. The students mostly participated in all the activities and did the tasks well, even though the first plan did not run well. They also had willingness to ask when they faced some problems. But still, there were few students who talked among themselves. When the teacher came to their seats, it turned out that they did not understand what to did, and some vocabularies were still difficult for them. While the teaching and learning process was running

3. Post activity

In this part, the students reviewed what they had learned, how their feelings were, whether they liked the activities or not. Most of them thought that learning by doing games was fun and easier to understand.

Observing

In this stage, I gathered the data using three kinds of instruments; observation checklist, journal log, and the students' reflection. The observation checklist was used as a direct observation to measure the students' engagement during the teaching and learning process. There were two teachers who helped me observing the students' engagement using the observation checklist. While I myself used journal log to record how the students behaved in the class.

During the teaching and learning process, most of the students paid attention, focused, enthusiastic, especially when playing the game. They also wanted to ask when facing some problems and accomplished all the tasks given. But few students were still talking and playing at the back of the class. When I came to their seats and asked them why, they said that they did not understand what to do and they also did not know the meaning of some vocabularies. Some also said that the pictures were not really clear.

Reflecting

Reflection is one important point in this research to reflect what had been done, the improvement, the problems appeared, and the difficulties faced during the planning, implementing, and the observing stage.

Here in this research there were some problems which I wanted to highlight. They were:

1. The media that I was going to use could not work because I had not checked it before starting the lesson.
2. There were some students talking and playing at the back of the class.
3. Some vocabularies were difficult.

4. Some of the pictures were not clear enough.
5. The structure of “*can*” and “*cannot*” were not too exposed.

Cycle 2

The second cycle was conducted on September 12th. The same as Cycle 1, it also had four stages: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

Planning

In this stage, the teacher made a lesson plan for KD 3.2 (*can and will*) but focused more on the use of *will* as the expression of willingness. The same as the previous meeting, the teacher used Genre-based Approach. The teaching and learning still used the flashcards as the media and games as the teaching method.

As the reflection that had been done in the first cycle, the teacher checked the LCD projector first before starting the lesson. In fact, the LCD projector in the class 8C was broken and could not be used. Therefore, the teacher did not put any PowerPoint slides or video anymore in planning the lesson. Instead, the students were given a brief summary of the use of “*will*”.

The pictures used were also more various and they were clear enough for the students to guess even without looking at the words.

Implementing

1. Pre-activity

The pre-activity was where the students activated their background of knowledge and knowing what they were going to learn in that meeting. Here, the students were asked to review the previous materials, and gave them apperception such as asking “*tomorrow is holiday, what will you do?*” After that the teacher related it to the materials which were going to be discussed, which was the use of “*will*”.

2. Whilst activity

As the warming up activity, the students were asked to match the pictures and the vocabularies in group. It was a race game so the first group answered correctly was the winner. Looking back

at the first cycle, here they were asked to observe the example of “will” in the form of simple dialogues to expose them with the structure. After that the students were asked the differences between the three expressions. To understand more how to use “will”, the students were asked to rearrange jumbled words in group. They had to stick the words on the whiteboard to create a good sentence. Since it was a race game, the first correct group was the winner. The students were enthusiastic to do this activity, and at the same time, they understood the structure how to use “will”. After understanding how to use “will”, the students were asked to create a simple dialogue using the card that they picked and performed it in front of the class.

3. Post activity

In this activity the students reviewed the materials and the activities that they had learned in this meeting. From this activity it can be concluded that the students understood the concept of using “will” and they were interested to the activities they had done.

Observing

In the observing stage, I still used observation checklist, journal log, and the students’ reflection. Based on those three instruments, it was found that there was significant difference between the preliminary study, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2. At the first time, almost 90% students did not pay attention and tended to talk among themselves. Based on the observation checklist, after conducting Cycle 1, there were 71% students who got engaged in learning English, and in Cycle, the number of the students got engaged was increased to 88%. Beside that, the data were also obtained from the students themselves. In the reflection, most of them said that they liked to learn English using picture. They felt it was helpful to memorize the vocabularies when they had the visualization of the verbs. Therefore, they could speak better.

Reflecting

The second cycle showed that the students gained some improvement in their engagement. From the observation checklist, the number of students who engaged in learning English were improved. The number of students who were talking and playing were on the other hands, decreased. It was in line with the journal log that I wrote during the teaching and learning. In addition, the students wrote on their reflection that they liked learning English using flashcards. They were more interested and motivated to involve in the class activities when they learned using pictures. They also accomplished all the tasks given.

Discussion

This chapter is going to discuss the research findings that had been obtained from the instruments used in the data collection. There are four instruments going to be discussed: observation checklists, questionnaire, journal log, and the students' reflection. All those data sources support and are related each other in showing the condition of the students' engagement.

The first instrument which is going to be discussed is the observation checklist. The observation checklist was taken from Charles Darwin University Student Engagement Observation. This observation aims to know when a student is on task, and discuss other student behaviours they may choose to code observe, e.g. A = at task AT = at task with teacher TK = talking P = playing O = out of seat OR = out of room OT = off task. There were 34 students who were observed at the meeting. The activities were in pairs and group work. The result of the observation is written in the following table.

No.	Students' behavior	Percentage
1	At task (A)	24%
2	At task with the teacher (AT)	47%
3	Talking (T)	9%

4	Playing (P)	9%
5	Out of seat (O)	3%
6	Out of room (OR)	3%
7	Off task (OT)	6%

Table of the students' engagement (Cycle 1)

No.	Students' behavior	Percentage
1	At task (A)	62%
2	At task with the teacher (AT)	26%
3	Talking (T)	6%
4	Playing (P)	3%
5	Out of seat (O)	0%
6	Out of room (OR)	3%
7	Off task (OT)	0%

Table of the students' engagement (Cycle 2)

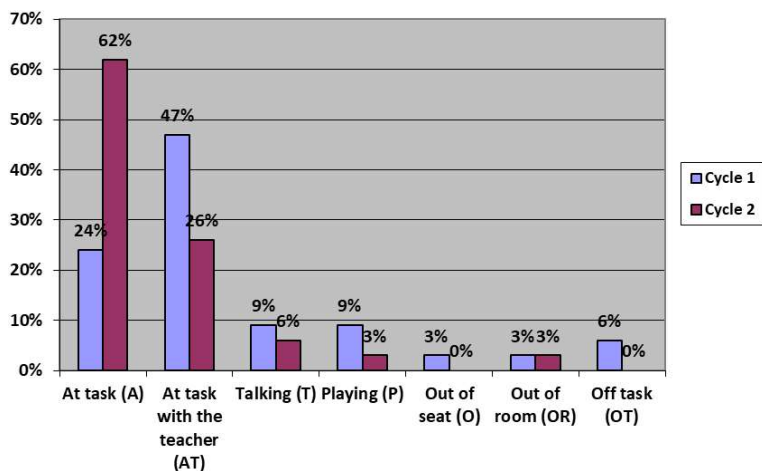


Figure 1. The Result of The Observation Checklist

The tables and the chart above show the students behavior during the teaching and learning process. The data were obtained every fifteen minutes by the observers. The percentage

written were the average of the number of the students who do the behavior on the left column.

The result of the study briefly indicated that using Flashcard games had been successful to assist the target students to get engaged in the teaching and learning process. It was proven from the result of the data that had been collected, through the observation, questionnaire, and the students' reflection. Based on the tables of the observation and the questionnaire, it can be stated that the students' engagement in learning English was improved.

It can be seen that in Cycle 1, there was only 24% students who were at task, and 47% students who were at task with the teacher. There were also two students who were still had off task behaviour. But when Cycle 2 had been conducted, there were improvement can be seen from the table. The students were more at task, which were 62%, while 26% of them were at task with teacher. Another important point was in Cycle 2 there was no students got off task.

The data from the observation checklists are supported by the questionnaire that the students had answered after Cycle 2. There were 15 points written in the questionnaire. 10 of them were behavioural engagement, and 5 of them were emotional engagement. Both behavioural and emotional engagement scored more than 70%, which passed the criteria of success. Compared to the preliminary study, after applying the Flashcard game, the students got more engaged to the teaching and learning process, both in behavioural and emotional part.

In addition, the other data source is the students' questionnaire. The data were taken in the second cycle after the students finished all the materials of *can and will* using flashcards. There were 15 questions in the questionnaire, divided into two major parts: behavioural engagement and emotional engagement. Ten questions included into behavioural engagement, and the rest were the emotional engagement. Each question in the questionnaire had five options; strongly agree,

agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly agree. In this discussion the data from the questionnaire will be divided into two, the behavioural engagement and the emotional engagement. There were 34 students who had fulfilled the questionnaire and the data will be written by showing the score of each aspect that the students ticked and also the percentage. The data are summed up in the following table.

No.	Type of Engagement	Aspect	Total score	Percentage
1.	Behavioural engagement	Being on time	148	90%
		Paying attention	136	82%
		Doing instruction	145	88%
		Asking questions	136	82%
		Answering questions voluntarily	123	74%
		Working in group	138	84%
		Helping other friends	141	85%
		Not feeling bored	122	74%
		Not talking or playing	120	73%
		Not daydreaming	135	82%
Average of behavioural engagement			134.4	81.4%
2.	Emotional engagement	Liking English lesson	148	90%
		Being conscious of the learning value	149	90%
		Having good relationship with the teacher	143	87%
		Learning new things	146	89%
		Being proud to be part of the school	145	88%
Average of emotional engagement			146.2	88.6%

Table 4.1. The Result of Students' Questionnaire

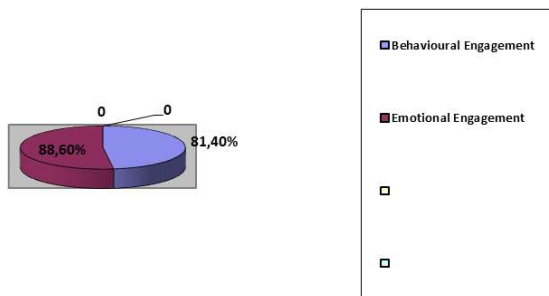


Figure 2. The Result of The Questionnaire

From the table and the chart above, it can be seen that the students passed the criteria of success that had been set before, which was 70%. Here the students got 81.4% in the behavioural engagement and 88.6% in the emotional engagement. Compared to the first observation which was conducted in the preliminary study, this questionnaire result indicates that the use of flashcards game improves the students' engagement significantly. There are some points to highlight in the behavioural engagement. Behavioral engagement measures the students' participation in school using indicators such as extracurricular involvement, attendance, and participation in school-based activities such as the students' willingness to ask questions, answer the questions voluntarily, work in group, not talk and play (Markowitz, 2017, p.1) Those are the students' behaviour that I never seen in the previous observations.

Another result shows that the students also have high emotional engagement. Appleton, et.al (2006, p. 428) wrote that emotional engagement has some components, such as school identification, belonging, valuing learning, and the relationship with the peers and teachers. Related to Markowitz, 2017, who declared that behavioural engagement and the emotional

engagement are associated with the school engagement, it is important to understand what components affecting the school engagement. One of them is designing the classroom activities to promote student bonding (e.g., group work, experiential learning). In addition, teacher can create interesting media to make the students interested in learning. Here I have applied teaching with flashcard as the media and various games as the technique. Therefore, it is in line with the statement of Markowitz, 2017.

Additionally, features of the school context, including available extracurricular activities, class and school size, tracking policies, and culture building initiatives, may play a role in creating contexts that promote emotional engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Osterman, 2000).

This result is also supported by the students' reflection. Most of them said that they liked learning English using pictures or flashcards. They could understand the materials better with the help of the pictures in the flashcards. They also enjoyed the games very much and wanted to do it in every meeting.

Conclusion

The use of Flashcard game both theoretically and practically can improve the students' engagement in learning English. It can be compared from the preliminary study, when there were only few students participated in the teaching and learning process, to the recent studies, when Flashcard game was applied. The students previously did not want to answer the teacher's question, ask question to the teacher, voluntarily do something, express their opinion, do the teacher's instruction, and do the tasks. But after applying the Flashcard game, those things that the students did not have intention to do, became the interesting things to do in the class.

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