



The Effect of Using Illustrated Crossword Media to Improve the English Reading Ability of Intellectually Disabled Students

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Abstract: The ability possessed by mentally retarded students in reading English is still in the low category compared to students in general. In their learning, mentally retarded students need help in the form of media to make it easier for students to understand the material explained by the teacher. One of the media that can be used in learning is a pictorial crossword puzzle. Besides being able to facilitate understanding, crossword puzzles can also make learning activities more fun. This study aims to determine the reading ability of mentally retarded students in learning English before and after the application of pictorial crossword puzzles. This study uses a research method in the form of a quantitative method using a Pre Experimental Design approach in the form of One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. For the data collection process using a test instrument in the form of questions. This research was conducted using the subject of students with mental retardation class VII SMPLB . The results showed that with the use of pictorial crossword puzzles, students' English reading skills increased based on the difference in scores obtained at the pretest and posttest. The value obtained during the posttest is greater than the value obtained at the pretest. The conclusion in this study is that the use of crossword puzzles has an influence in improving students' English reading skills. This can be seen through the results of the Wilcoxon test which shows that $Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05$.

Keywords: Mental retardation, Pictorial Crossword Puzzle Media, Reading Ability

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication used between individuals or groups. Language emerged as a result of the culture that developed in a particular society. As a result of the many languages in the world, it is necessary to decide on a language that is suitable for use on a global scale. Entering the 18th and 19th centuries and even until now, English is still used as an international language. English is included as one of the compulsory subjects taught in every school in Indonesia. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 43 of 2019 concerning the implementation of Examinations held by Education Units and National Examinations, it is stated that special schools with junior high and high school levels do not take the National Examinations but are replaced by the Education Unit Examinations (USP). English is one of the subjects tested in the USP. With this situation, every student needs to master English, including students with special needs. The curriculum in SLB places English in group A on par with Indonesian. For language learning for children with special needs, there are differences in terms of reading ability. In Indonesian language subjects, reading ability is relatively easier for students to master because it is always used in communication activities and also due to the mother tongue factor (native speech) which has long been familiar in children's memories. This is

clearly different from English subjects which are not used as children's everyday language and also the factor that children only get this lesson when the teaching and learning process is taking place. This condition causes reading ability in English learning to be lacking. According to Nuraidi in (Suparlan, 2021) reading skills are divided into two types. Reading aloud is a reading activity that is carried out by voicing sound symbols. Reading aloud requires certain skills or techniques, especially in tone, intonation, stress, pronunciation, stopping and so on. Silent reading is a reading activity that is carried out without voicing sounds. This type of reading gives students the opportunity to understand the reading they are reading more deeply.

The technique of reading aloud is one of the techniques that is suitable to be applied during early reading learning. Reading aloud or commonly known as reading aloud is a reading activity carried out together by both teachers and students so that it produces loud sounds. Through reading aloud, students can learn to pronounce the sounds of the language being studied correctly. In addition, students also indirectly learn to pronounce groups of letters, words, sentences, and readings correctly in their entirety through reading aloud (Patiung, 2016). Of course, this cannot be applied simply in the condition of students with special needs who have deficiencies in reading ability. In accordance with the opinion of Tarigan (in

Efendi, 2017) who argues that the level of intelligence possessed by children is closely related to the child's own language ability. This is also reinforced by the opinion of Kirk et.al. (in Efendi, 2017) which explains that the language that can be accepted by children with special needs is still limited so that their language skills can be said to be poor. The method that can be applied to students with special needs to facilitate students in their ability to read English with correct reading requires a suitable media. In addition, to improve students' reading ability in learning English, it is also necessary to choose the right learning methods and strategies when the teaching and learning process takes place. The term special needs students is intended for students who have limitations, whether intellectual, physical, social, or emotional, which have an influence on the development process compared to other students of the same age. Mental retardation is one example of a student with special needs. Mental retardation is a student who has a level of intelligence below average (Efendi, 2017).

Mental retardation is a term used to refer to children who have below average intellectual abilities. In foreign language literature, the terms mental retardation, mentally retarded, mental deficiency, mental defective, and others are used (Somantri, 2007). The definition of mental retardation according to PPDGJ III and DSM 5 in Yuliana (2017) is a state of mental development that is stopped or incomplete, which is mainly characterized by the occurrence of skill impairments during the development period, so that it affects the overall level of intelligence (cognitive, language, motor, and social abilities). The term actually has the same meaning which explains the condition of children whose intelligence is far below average and is characterized by limited intelligence and incompetence in social interaction. Children with mental retardation are also known as mentally retarded because their limited intelligence makes it difficult for them to follow the education program in regular schools in a classical manner, therefore children with mental retardation require special education services that are adjusted to the child's abilities.

In every learning process, teachers are required to be creative in order to create the right media according to the material to be delivered to students. With the use of the right media, students' reading ability is expected to increase. According to Masrurroh (2013), educational needs can help growth and development according to the potential of each individual. From this, mentally retarded students need things, including: a) many types of subjects in skills lessons, b) learning time here mentally retarded students need their own time because they need to repeat the material so that it can be remembered and the use of media so that it does not take a long time, and c) self-development skills are also needed so that mentally retarded students can live independently.

One of the media that can be used in learning English is picture crosswords. Picture crosswords are included in one of the educational game tools. Educational game tools themselves are something that can be used for student play activities that contain educational values and can also develop all the abilities that children have. By using picture crosswords, students get a new learning experience when learning English. Students do not just sit still, listen to the teacher's explanation, do assignments according to the textbook but also involve students in games that are certainly not only fun but can also make it easier for students to remember new vocabulary in English. The use of picture crosswords can also train students to improve their ability to read words in English.

The facts in the field, especially in SMPLB observed by researchers, show that in the English learning process, students have not been able to read and understand well each material that has been explained by the teacher. Then, during the English learning process, students have difficulty reading words about color names correctly. The results of interviews with class teachers further strengthen the perception that the English reading ability of grade VII students is still low. The application of picture crosswords has been carried out at Budi Mulia Kindergarten, Padang City. In a journal entitled "Effectiveness of Modified Crossword Puzzle Games on Reading Ability". Mulfiani (2020) in her research stated that the use of modified crossword puzzles is effective in improving children's reading ability at Budi Mulia Kindergarten. In addition, the use of picture crossword puzzle media was also applied in a research journal entitled "Improving Word Reading Ability Through Picture Crossword Puzzle Media for Children with Mild Mental Retardation". Mirzandani (2012) presented the results of his research where the ability to read words containing the letters [b, m, p] at the beginning, middle and end of the word in mildly mentally retarded children in class D V/C SLB Bina Nagari Solok Selatan can be improved through the media of illustrated crossword puzzles.

This study aims to determine the reading ability of mentally retarded students in grade VII in English learning at SMPLB before implementing the illustrated crossword puzzle media. In addition, this study also aims to determine the reading ability of mentally retarded students in grade VII in English learning at SMPLB after implementing the illustrated crossword puzzle media. Another objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of using illustrated crossword puzzle media on the reading ability of mentally retarded students in grade VII in English learning at SMPLB.

METHOD

The research method used is an experimental research method. In the experimental research method,

there needs to be something that is applied to determine the influence given by the thing used. In this study, the factor or condition that is tried on the subject is a picture crossword puzzle game that functions to determine whether there is an influence on the English reading ability of mentally retarded children in grade VII. The research design used in this study is Pre Experimental Design. In addition, this study also uses research in the form of “One Group Pretest-Posttest Design” where the experiment is given to only one group without a comparison group by giving a pretest before the treatment and a posttest given after the treatment. Based on the selected research design, the steps that can be applied are as follows: 1) Selecting and determining the research subjects conducted at SMPLB, 2) Conducting a pretest on the research subjects to obtain information on students’ ability to read color words in English before the subjects are given a treatment, 3) Providing treatment to mentally retarded students in grade VII using picture crossword puzzles, 4) Conducting a posttest on the research subjects to obtain information on students’ ability to read color words in English after the subjects are given a treatment, 5) Comparing O1 with O2 to determine how much difference appears if any as a result of the influence of the treatment given.

The subjects in this study were mentally retarded students in grade VII at SMPLB with a total of 5 students consisting of 4 female students and 1 male student. This study consists of two variables, namely the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable in this study is the use of illustrated crossword puzzle media. The dependent variable in this study is the improvement of the reading ability of mentally retarded students in grade VII in learning English at SMPLB. This study used instruments in the form of written and oral tests to test their reading ability. The steps taken in compiling the instrument are making a grid, compiling a program plan, and conducting a validation test. In this study, the type of validity test used is construct validity testing where the validity test is carried out by experts (judgment experts). The existing research instruments will be used in measurements with the aim of producing accurate quantitative data, so each instrument used must have a scale. The scale used in this study is an attitude measurement scale of the Likert scale type.

To find out the initial reading ability possessed by the subject, it is necessary to have a reading test instrument that contains 3 sub-items, including: 1) Pronunciation is something related to the clarity of pronunciation of the color name read by the student. This sub-item is made with a minimum score of 10 to a maximum score of 100. Scoring can be seen from each number that can be read by the student with the correct pronunciation. Each question that can be read with the correct pronunciation will get a score of 10. 2) Fluency

can be seen from whether or not the student is fluent in reading the existing color names. This sub-item is made with a minimum score of 10 to a maximum score of 100. Scoring can be seen from each number that can be read fluently by the student. Each question that can be read fluently will get a score of 10. 3) The correctness of the arrangement of letters is seen from the letters written in composing the color name. This sub-item is made with a minimum score of 10 to a maximum score of 100. Scoring can be seen from each number whose arrangement of letters is correct. Each question that can be arranged with the correct letters will get a score of 10.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data shown below is the result of the description of the data obtained during the research conducted through three stages, namely pretest, treatment, and posttest. This pretest stage is conducted to measure students’ initial abilities. Pretest is the initial stage carried out from a research including in experimental research. The pretest activity was carried out for 30 minutes in an empty classroom consisting of only the researcher and five students. The five students sat separately so that they would not cheat on each other and were prohibited from asking the researcher about the work on the questions. This was done to find out the extent of the child’s ability before being given treatment. When working on the questions, students found it a little difficult because the questions were in the form of filling in letters that corresponded to the name of the color. Then when reading each color, students also found it difficult. The question instrument for reading was as difficult as completing the missing letters from the name of the color. Therefore, students made many mistakes in reading the name of the color and completing the missing letters in the name of the color. In terms of answering the questions, students wrote the letters backwards and many did not remember so that they wrote the letters randomly which then made the writing unreadable.

Students with intellectual disabilities have problems remembering the letters that make up a word, including the names of colors in English. Students often forget the order of the letters that should make up the vocabulary. This can happen because the pronunciation in English is different from the actual writing. In addition, this can happen because English is not the language of everyday communication so it is rarely used by children except during school learning which is only done once a week on every Thursday. Basically, children with intellectual disabilities have a low ability to remember something, so if they are not given repeated learning they will tend to forget easily.

For students with intellectual disabilities, something that is taught must be repeated several times so that it is remembered. At this stage, students often feel confused in working on the questions given and often ask about the letters to be written. If students feel confused, they will make many movements such as scratching their heads or looking right or left. When showing the results of the work and reading the names of colors, many of the letters are arranged incorrectly so that the word cannot be read. The following are the results of the pretest of the English language skills of students with intellectual disabilities before being given treatment with picture crossword puzzles.

Table 1. Pretest Results

No.	Nama Siswa	Sub Penilaian			Total Skor	Rata-Rata
		Lafal (10-100)	Kelancaran (10-100)	Kebenaran Huruf (10-100)		
1.	JL	20	50	80	150	50
2.	SN	10	20	60	90	30
3.	ZM	10	10	40	60	20
4.	DA	40	60	80	180	60
5.	MF	10	20	60	90	30
JUMLAH		90	160	320	570	190
RATA-RATA		18	32	64	114	38

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the pretest results of the five students before the treatment using the picture crossword puzzle media obtained an average of 38. The next stage carried out was the provision of treatment using the picture crossword puzzle media for three meetings. On the first day, students were invited to mention the names of colors in Indonesian. This was done to make it easier for students to remember the names of colors in English because the concept of color had been obtained so that they only had to remember the names of colors with other versions. After that, students were invited to listen to the teacher's explanation of the names of colors in English. Here the teacher wrote the name of the color on the board then showed the original color with a colored pencil and then was given a real object that matched the color written. After that, students began to be introduced to the picture crossword puzzle media on how to use it. Then after students knew how to use the media, students were invited to try the media from questions 1 to 6. At the end of the meeting, students were given practice questions to match the name of the color with the picture to measure the level of understanding of each student.

Then on the second day of treatment, students were asked to take turns to work on the next questions starting from questions number 7 to number 11 contained in the illustrated crossword puzzle media starting from arranging letters and attaching the appropriate colors

and reading the color names correctly. At the end of the activity, the teacher gave questions again in the form of coloring according to the written color names to check students' understanding of color names in English. In the third treatment, students already understood how to use the illustrated crossword puzzle media so that it was easier for them to remember the names of colors in English. At this stage, students were asked to practice remembering the names of colors in English through the media. Students were asked to try again to work on the questions contained in the media alternately from the beginning starting from questions number 1 to number 11. The results of the treatment given 3 times in this study were that students had begun to memorize the names of colors in English and students were able to use the illustrated crossword puzzle media well and students could remember how to read the names of colors in English.

The last stage is to conduct a posttest. At the time of the posttest, it was seen that many answers given by students were correct in completing the color names in English and reading the color names. Whether or not there is an influence given by the picture crossword puzzle media can be seen from the scores obtained at the time of the posttest where the questions given are exactly the same as the questions given at the time of the pretest. There was a difference in English reading ability after being given treatment in the form of using picture crossword puzzle media in the learning process which took place with a total of three treatments. The following are the results of the scores obtained at the time of the posttest.

Table 2. Posttest Results

No.	Nama Siswa	Sub Penilaian			Total Skor	Rata-Rata
		Lafal (10-100)	Kelancaran (10-100)	Kebenaran Huruf (10-100)		
1.	JL	90	90	90	270	90
2.	SN	80	80	80	240	80
3.	ZM	60	70	80	210	70
4.	DA	80	90	100	270	90
5.	MF	70	80	90	240	80
JUMLAH		380	410	440	1230	410
RATA-RATA		76	82	88	246	82

Based on the data from the table above, it can be concluded that the average obtained in the posttest is 82, where this average is included in the very good category. The average value obtained in the posttest is greater than that obtained in the pretest. This can happen because there is a picture crossword puzzle media so that students are more interested in reading the names of colors in English and in the learning that takes place, students do not get bored quickly. The purpose of the data recapitulation is to find out the

comparison between the level of students' English reading ability before being given treatment and after being given treatment. So that from this it can be seen whether or not there is an influence of the provision of treatment in the form of the influence of picture crossword puzzle media on English reading ability in class VII students at SMPLB. The recapitulation data for pretest and posttest scores will be displayed in the form of a graph below.

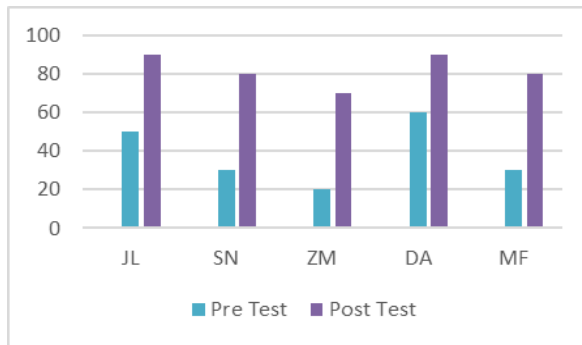


Figure 1. Data Recapitulation Value Graph

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that the results of the pretest and posttest scores obtained by the five students who were the subjects of the study showed different average scores. The average score obtained during the pretest was lower when compared to the score during the posttest. With this difference, it can be seen that there was an increase in scores during the posttest.

Table 4. Wilcoxon Test Results

Test Statistics ^a	
	Post Test – Pre Test
Z	-2.060 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.039

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

The results of the Wilcoxon The Signed Rank Test show that Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is worth 0.042 < 0.05. This indicates that the hypothesis is accepted. So it can be concluded that there is an influence of the use of illustrated crossword puzzle media on the English reading ability of mentally retarded students in grade VII at SMPLB.

Discussion

Learning is a process in which an organization changes its behavior as a result of experience (Dahar in Sariyani, et al., 2021). In learning English, there are three language elements that play an important role in supporting communication skills, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (language structure). However, a student must have experienced an obstacle in learning. These obstacles can result in less than optimal learning outcomes for the student.

Hasan in (Fika, 2016) stated that the difficulty faced by many students in English is a lack of understanding of English pronunciation spoken at normal speed through listening material. In reading skills, Rahmawati in (Fika, 2016) argues that the problem faced in understanding reading texts lies in the lack of knowledge about reading materials and ignorance of how to connect ideas between one sentence and another. Writing skills are very difficult because these activities require a complex and systematic thought process. According to Rukmini in (Fika, 2016), in communication, writing skills are also important to master. The benefits will be felt when the written language is published and read by many people. So the quality of writing must always be improved.

Regarding speaking skills, Megawati and Mandarani in (Fika, 2016) stated that the difficulty often faced by students when speaking English lies in the lack of English vocabulary mastered by the students. When learning English, the difficulty and obstacle for most people is learning to read the writing. This is because the way to read writing in English is very different from writing in Indonesian. The difference in English is that the spelling that must be pronounced is different from the writing. Rifiyanti (2021) explains that English is one of the foreign languages that must be learned in Indonesia, so learning about language must be able to include mastery of vocabulary that must develop, how to read writing in English correctly and properly, and special effective methods are needed to learn it.

Teaching English to children with special needs is a challenge that requires cooperation and participation from all parties in the school. Although the idea of teaching English to students with special needs may sound strange or even impossible, it is part of the responsibility in education to remain accepted as part of the challenges of the world of education. English at the secondary school level is taught as local content, which allows schools to develop and choose their own English teaching curriculum according to the needs of students. Based on student development, according to Piaget in Tarigan, et al. (2021), the results of students' cognitive development can be obtained from the actions of individual children through their social and physical contacts which then develop through assimilation (the process of combining new information into existing schemes) and accommodation (the process of changing existing forms based on the information they get).

Sanusi, et al (2020) said that mentally retarded children have learning disabilities in the process of remembering and analyzing lessons. This can cause the mastery of vocabulary in other languages that are not the language used daily such as English to be difficult for mentally retarded students to remember. According to Masruroh (2013) stated that the memory ability of mentally retarded children is indeed not very good, but basically they are still able to store and recall messages that have been known. In this initial stage of

research, students were unable to solve the questions given by the teacher correctly. According to Maduwu (2016) it should be explained that in learning a foreign language, the practice of the language being learned is the most important. In this study, the practice of English regarding color names was not good because the results obtained by 5 students during the pretest activity had an average score of 38 which was included in the very poor category.

According to Sandra in (Ramawati, et al., 2012) stated that the characteristics of mentally retarded children have three limitations, namely intellectual limitations, namely the child's learning ability is very lacking, especially abstract ones, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mentally retarded children often do not understand what is being learned or tend to learn by imitating or parroting. Social limitations, namely Mentally retarded children have difficulty in carrying out self-care and in living in society. Mentally retarded children tend to be friends with younger children, have a very large dependence on their parents, and are unable to shoulder social responsibilities wisely, so they need guidance and assistance. They also tend to be easily influenced and do things without thinking about the consequences of their actions. Other limitations of social function, namely Mentally retarded children need more time to react to new situations. However, they show their best reactions when doing routine things and consistently. Mentally retarded children cannot face an activity or task for a long period of time. Mentally retarded children also have limitations in language acquisition, but not articulation damage. This is caused by the lack of functioning of the sensory processing center for concrete words that are often heard. Simple exercises such as spelling words or concepts require a more intensive and concrete approach using simpler and easier to understand words, such as long and short.

This can be facilitated by playing games. According to Bragg in Tarigan, et al. (2021), game-based learning is in line with motivation theory and can act as a mediator to facilitate learning that has the potential to make students more motivated, actively participate in learning, build on previous knowledge, understand a rule, predict and test conditions. This is in line with Crookall in Tarigan, et al. (2021), who stated that games can contribute to learning achievement with the following components: player involvement seen from the affective and cognitive aspects, attitudes and experiences during game training, specific game objectives, and cooperation structures and game interaction patterns.

The use of media in learning has the benefit of determining students' success in understanding the material. The word media comes from the Latin "medōē" which means an intermediary or messenger from the sender to the recipient of the message. Media is the plural form of medium which can literally

be interpreted as an intermediary or messenger. The Association of Education and Communication Technology in America defines media as all forms and channels used by people to convey a message or information. Media is any physical tool that can show messages and can trigger students to learn (Sadiman, et al., 2008). Media has a function to overcome the diversity of backgrounds possessed by students so that the media is able to provide stimulation, experience, and give rise to the same perception (Arief Sadiman in Kustiawan, 2016). Learning media are all sources of both hardware and software needed to communicate with learners (Martin and Briggs in Sumiharsono & Hisbiyatul, 2017).

According to Wulandari (2016), a teacher can package learning according to the abilities and needs of children by choosing the right method and using media that is interesting for children, and most importantly in learning is by actively involving children in every activity. With this, it allows students to form their knowledge through the experiences they have gained. In this study, learning to read the names of colors in English correctly using picture crossword puzzles makes it easier for students and makes learning more enjoyable. In addition, the existence of this media also makes students actively involved in learning because they ask children one by one to use the media. One of the learning media that can be used to improve students' reading skills is picture crossword puzzles. In addition to this media being widely known by the public and easy to do, this media can stimulate interest and eliminate boredom so that students are more enthusiastic about participating in learning. Students are asked to be more careful in filling in the letters in each box provided, if there is one wrong letter, it will affect the correct or incorrect answers in the other boxes (Fauziqurahman, 2017). This can help mentally retarded students improve their reading skills because it starts with arranging the letters one by one first.

Davis (2009) stated that crosswords are included in educational games that are quite effective in delivering learning materials. Educational games help motivate students in learning, one of which is with the variation of questions applied using crossword puzzles. In line with Davis, Rani in Agustiyani (2016) argued that the use of crossword puzzles and cards as game media was equally able to reduce boredom in the teaching and learning process because of the pleasant learning atmosphere. In addition, both can make students more motivated in learning and can also arouse interest in learning. From these two definitions, it can be concluded that crosswords are a brain teaser game in producing words by filling in the letters in the boxes provided according to the instructions given to form vertical and horizontal patterns.

Visual media or image media can facilitate understanding and strengthen students' memory of an object. Images can also foster students' interest in

learning and can provide a relationship between the content of the lesson material and the real world. In order to be more effective, images should be placed in a meaningful context and students must interact with the visual (image) to ensure the information process occurs. Learning using illustrated crossword puzzle media is expected to attract students' interest and motivate students to think critically about a learning material, in this case of course learning English. Learning media using illustrated crossword puzzles is an educational game that can stimulate children's thinking power in a relaxed and free way. In addition, it can motivate the power of competition between students, so they will optimize their knowledge abilities and compete fairly with a pleasant atmosphere. The illustrated crossword puzzle game media is actually a development of crossword puzzles in general which is combined with visual media or images. The illustration images used in the media have been adjusted to the level of development of students with special needs.

Pictorial crossword puzzle media can facilitate the delivery of material by teachers because students find it easier to remember. This is in accordance with the opinion of Agustiyani (2016) that learning using pictorial crossword puzzle media can attract students' interest and motivate students to think critically about learning material because this media is an educational game that can stimulate children's thinking power in a relaxed and free way so that it is easy to remember the material. Pictorial crossword puzzle media can improve students' understanding. This is in line with the opinion of Syofiani, et al. (2019) that educational media can clarify the learning provided which is expected to broaden understanding. This is in line with the opinion of Ginayah, et al. (2018) that learning with crossword puzzle media makes students more active in learning and have more interest in following lessons. The influence of using pictorial crossword puzzle media can be used as good and enjoyable learning without losing the essence of ongoing learning, even learning with this can involve active student participation from the start (Zaini in Nurfitri, et al., 2021).

Several factors causing an increase in the ability to use pictorial crossword puzzle media according to Djamarah & Zain in Nurfitri, et al (2021) because during the learning process students feel interested in the media used so that students have high enthusiasm in participating in learning so that they are active in the learning process in the classroom that is taking place. Pictorial crossword puzzle media makes it easier to present material so that the material can be received well by students. The advantage of pictorial crossword puzzles is that by using pictorial crossword puzzles as reading learning, in addition to motivating students to learn, it also provides an understanding of a word more easily and deeply. In the use of pictorial crossword puzzles, there is an element of play that can generate enthusiasm and a sense of joy in learning without

having to face boring situations. The most interesting thing about pictorial crossword puzzles is that they can develop students' intuition to try to understand more vocabulary because there is an element of challenge that arouses curiosity. According to Hisyam, et al. in (Wana, 2021) revealed that the advantages of illustrated crossword puzzle media include: (1) it can stimulate students to be more active, (2) it can develop the independence of each student, (3) it can deepen students' understanding of the material being taught, (4) it trains students' attitudes of responsibility and discipline, (5) it creates healthy competition between students, and (6) the learning outcomes obtained will last longer.

The disadvantage of pictorial crossword puzzle media is that it cannot be used in all subjects such as mathematics, which may have many difficulties in making it because it is related to numbers. Then making pictorial crossword puzzle media takes a lot of time because it is complicated to make and must be adjusted to the questions and answer columns needed. Not all lesson materials can be applied using this pictorial crossword puzzle media because for materials that require presentation and explanation, while in crosswords only learn short words so that they are unable to explain or describe the material in detail. This is in line with the opinion of Hisyam, et al. in Wana (2021) who said that the disadvantages of pictorial crossword puzzle media include: (1) the words used in filling tend to be short, (2) exciting games will usually make the classroom atmosphere not conducive, this can be a trigger for disruption to other classes, and (3) filling in interconnected boxes requires more vocabulary.

Based on the results of the posttest value analysis, it can be seen that 4 students with a percentage of 80% are in the very good category and 1 other student with a percentage of 20% is in the good category. From these data, it can be explained that the value at the time of the posttest is better than the value at the time of the pretest. This can indicate that there is a difference in value between before and after the use of illustrated crossword puzzle media. So it can be concluded that the use of illustrated crossword puzzle media has an effect on students' vocabulary mastery in English regarding the colors of mentally retarded students in class VII at SMPLB. Based on the results of the hypothesis test that has been carried out, it shows Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.042 < 0.05, this indicates that the hypothesis is accepted. So it can be concluded that the use of illustrated crossword puzzle media has an effect on the ability to read English regarding the colors of mentally retarded students in class VII at SMPLB. Illustrated crossword puzzle media can facilitate the delivery of material by teachers because students find it easier to remember. This is in accordance with the opinion of Agustiyani (2016) that learning using illustrated crossword puzzle media can attract students' interest

and motivate students to think critically about learning material because this media is an educational game that can stimulate children's thinking power in a relaxed and free way so that it is easy to remember the material.

The influence of using pictorial crossword puzzle media can be used as good and enjoyable learning without losing the essence of ongoing learning, even learning with this can involve active student participation from the start (Nurfitri, et al., 2021). Several factors causing an increase in the ability to use pictorial crossword puzzle media according to Nurfitri, et al. (2021) because during the learning process students feel interested in the media used so that students have high enthusiasm in participating in learning so that they are active in the learning process in the classroom that is taking place. Pictorial crossword puzzle media makes it easier to present material so that the material can be well received by students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The use of illustrated crossword puzzle media can improve the English reading skills of mentally retarded students in grade VII at SMPLB. The results of the study showed that the posttest scores of mentally retarded students regarding the names of colors in English were higher after being given treatment in the form of using illustrated crossword puzzle media compared to the pretest scores that had been obtained. The average posttest score obtained by mentally retarded students was 82 while the average pretest score obtained by mentally retarded students was 38. The use of illustrated crossword puzzle media will make learning more interesting and make students enthusiastic in participating in the ongoing learning. The use of illustrated crossword puzzle media has an effect on improving the English reading skills of mentally retarded students in grade VII at SMPLB. This can be seen through the results of the Wilcoxon test which shows that $Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05$.

Suggestion

Students are expected to be able to increase their insight and knowledge of reading English about colors. Teachers are expected to be able to apply illustrated crossword puzzle media to students in learning activities. The use of this media can make students more enthusiastic in participating in learning because it is included in educational games and makes it easier to deliver material. Further researchers are expected to be able to develop research using illustrated crossword puzzle media on different subjects and research subjects with different obstacles so that the knowledge gained is broader.

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