



HOLISTIC
LEARNING
INNOVATIONS

THE VOCABULARY BOX

Country: Pakistan

Target Age: 10 Years

Learning Areas: Building Confidence | Communication
| Creativity | Critical Thinking | Literacy

THE CONTEXT

Tucked away in the remote Rech Valley of Upper Chitral, Pakistan, Government Primary School Parech Rech serves just 35 students. With limited resources and a modest learning environment, teachers face the challenge of making education meaningful and engaging despite scarce materials. For Syed Iftikhar Shah, a dedicated teacher at the school, these constraints became an opportunity to innovate and reimagine how English literacy could be taught.



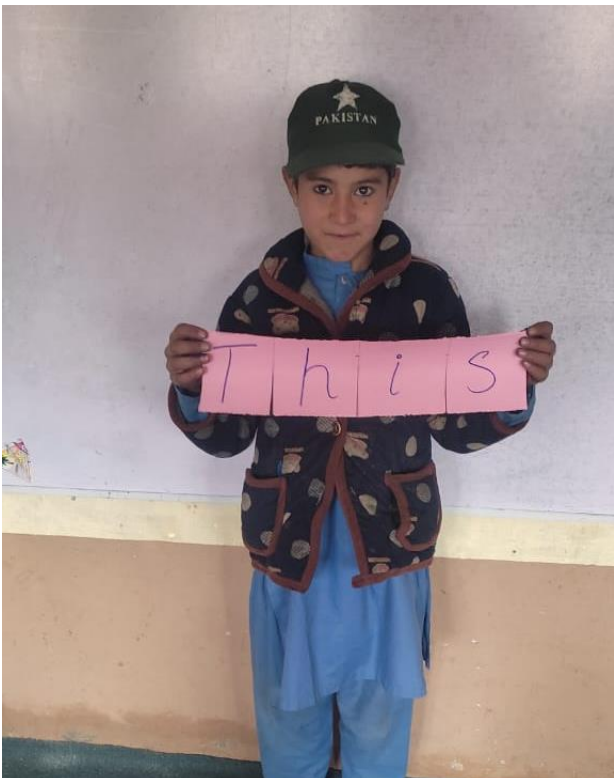


THE CHALLENGE

How might we improve English vocabulary and increase student confidence?

An initial assessment revealed that many students struggled severely with English. Even recognizing simple words was difficult, leaving their reading and writing performance far below expected levels.

Classroom observations and conversations confirmed the core issue: a large gap in English vocabulary. Without a solid foundation in word recognition, progress in reading, writing, and speaking would remain out of reach. Students also lacked motivation and confidence, which contributed to low engagement during lessons.



"Most of my students were not even able to recognise simple words. Their performance in reading and writing was falling below the expected level."
Syed Iftikhar Shah

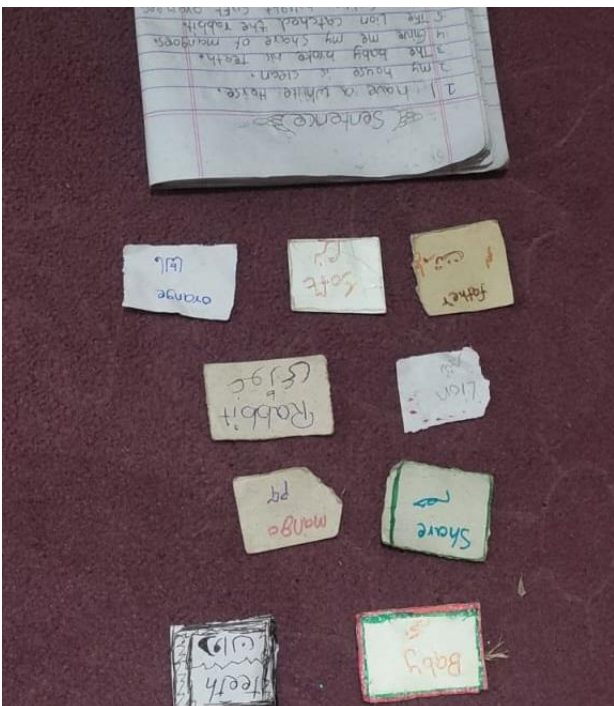
THE SOLUTION

THE VOCABULARY BOX

To address these challenges, Syed designed a simple yet powerful innovation: the **Vocabulary Box**. Each student created their own small box from reused packaging, which became their personal collection point for new words. Whenever they encountered an unfamiliar word, whether in textbooks, storybooks, or newspapers, they wrote it on a slip of paper, shared it with classmates, and placed it in their box.

At the end of each week, the boxes were opened and the words became tools for fun, interactive activities. Students engaged in spelling correction, sentence creation, unscrambling jumbled words, and even forming new words from old ones. This game-based approach was low-cost, sustainable, and easy to replicate, making it perfectly suited for the school's limited resources.

I designed a simple game-based solution that would not only improve reading and writing skills, but also make lessons fun and engaging.” – Syed Iftikhar Shah



THE IMPACT

Students built stronger vocabulary, improved reading, and grew confidence.

The Vocabulary Box transformed the classroom from a quiet, hesitant environment into one alive with activity and excitement. Students are now eager to read aloud, construct creative sentences, and support one another in correcting spelling. Engagement, confidence, and independence have all grown as learners proactively collect and use new words daily.

Where students once avoided English, they now approach it with curiosity and joy. Progress is evident not only in literacy skills but also in attitudes toward learning, children are more motivated, more consistent, and more collaborative in class. What began as a simple, low-cost idea has created a lasting shift in how students experience English learning.



"In the beginning, students lacked interest and they weren't consistent... But I didn't give up. I motivated them constantly and monitored their progress every week. Slowly, they showed more interest as their confidence grew."
Syed Iftikhar Shah



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