

# Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Storytelling Frame

**Andri Kurniawan**


Industrial Chemical Engineering,  
Politeknik Negeri Samarinda, 75242,  
Indonesia,  
andaikujadiawan717@gmail.com

**Puji Astuti Amalia \***

Technica, Politeknik Negeri  
Samarinda, 75242, Indonesia,  
pujiastutiamalia@polnes.ac.id  
\*Corresponding author

**Indrawati**

Management of Commercial  
Shipping and Ports, Politeknik  
Negeri Samarinda, 75242, Indonesia,  
Indrawati@polnes.ac.id

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**Abstract**— Reading is a basic skill that students must master and enjoy. Through reading, students can increase and improve their knowledge. However, reading is a challenging activity. Based on the observation, the author found that Elementary students in SDN 012 had low abilities in reading activities. This low reading ability has an impact on limited student participation in reading activities. Therefore, the author creates a story telling frame and stages of reading activities that can increase student participation in reading activities and improve students' reading skills. There were some stages done by the author. The first was designing a story telling frame, implementing reading activities with students, the second was using a story telling frame with students and teachers and the last was evaluating the story telling frame. The design of storytelling frame used square and round shape stainless in gold color. They were decorated with artificial flowers, dolls and cloth. The story telling frame was designed based on the theme of the story, which is "where is bear?". There were 20 students who joined the story telling activity using the story telling frame. The pre-test and post-test on students' reading comprehension revealed that students have better understanding on reading the text by using story telling frame.

**Keywords**— Reading Comprehension, Story Telling, Elementary School

## I. INTRODUCTION

For young students, reading comprehension is an essential skill because it allows them to comprehend and infer meaning from written material (Akhmetova et al., 2022; Amalia, 2023). Early acquisition of solid comprehension abilities establishes the groundwork for both lifetime learning and academic performance. There are methods and approaches to help young students improve their reading comprehension.

The first approach is decoding, it is the capacity to precisely identify and sound out words. It is vital for novices since comprehension is enhanced by decoding fluency (Sinha et al., 2024). The second approach is the development of vocabulary. It means gaining an understanding of word meanings is essential to

understand a text's overall meaning. Furthermore, to increase vocabulary, readers may concentrate on word usage and context hints (Moon & Grace Kim, 2024). The third approach of reading comprehension is background information (Valcárcel Jiménez et al., 2024). Learners can better integrate new information with what they already know when they have prior knowledge about a subject. Background information promotes more in-depth interaction with the content. The last approach is active participation. Students are better able to engage with the text in a meaningful way when they ask questions, make predictions, and visualize (Cockerill et al., 2023).

Young students frequently struggle with reading comprehension, which can make it difficult for them to comprehend and appreciate books. Numerous cognitive, linguistic, and instructional elements may contribute to these problems such as limited word knowledge, poor decoding capabilities, low fluency, insufficient prior experience, inferencing difficulties, and over-reliance on images

In terms of limited word knowledge, young learners who are unfamiliar with important terms and phrases may find it difficult to comprehend literature. This restriction makes it harder for them to understand the texts' overall meaning (Zhuang et al., 2023). In terms of poor decoding capabilities, slow reading speed and comprehension might result from having trouble automatically recognizing or sounding out words. This frequently happens to students who are still learning word recognition or phonics. In addition, low fluency makes it hard for young learners to concentrate on meaning because they are too busy decoding individual words (Cadime et al., 2024).

Moreover, insufficient prior experience makes students hard to draw connections or deduce meaning. This problem is most noticeable in writings that provide information. Inferring difficulties also trouble learners to deduce meaning from literature or draw logical conclusions from it (Valcárcel Jiménez et al., 2024). In addition, over-reliance on images may impede the growth of self-sufficient reading abilities in learners (Zhai et al., 2024). Although images can aid comprehension, some students may rely too much on them at the expense of the text.

Absence of interest or motivation is another big issue since learners who don't appreciate or find reading interesting may find it difficult to concentrate and comprehend what they read (Beek et al., 2019). Besides that, limited linguistic proficiency such as idiomatic phrases, grammar, and syntax can cause serious comprehension problems for learners in learning to read foreign language text (Wang et al., 2023). Inefficient methods of instruction also can make learners struggle to read (Yisihak Ukumo & Dantew Berlie, 2024).

Students of SDN 012 Samarinda have weaknesses in vocabulary which lead to weak reading comprehension skills. The author solves this problem by developing flash cards. The results show that flash cards can increase students' vocabulary (Amalia et al., 2020). However, problems related to literacy of students in SDN 012 are not only vocabulary.

Based on the results of observations, the author also found that students do not have enough interest and motivation to read because the school does not provide students with interesting books. Students have only read stories from handbooks that have limited pictures and long texts so that reading activities tend to be boring. Therefore, the author developed a picture story book with the dialogic reading method, the results showed that students were enthusiastic about reading the book (Amalia, 2023).

Furthermore, through the observation method and focus group discussion (FGD), the author found that schools needed media to improve students' reading comprehension. This medium is expected to be applied in various book reading activities.

In focus group discussion, the teacher conveyed that the teacher and students start the day with a 15-minute reading activity. At the end of the reading activity, the teachers give questions to students to evaluate their understanding of the reading. However, students cannot express their ideas because of their lack of understanding about the text.

Regulation number 23 of 2015 implemented by the school is required students to read 15 minutes before learning begins (Sari, 2018). This regulation is supported by the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum which requires students to read at least 4 books in the form of literary or non-literary books in one year (Nugrahanto & Zuchdi, 2019). The regulations and curriculum that have been implemented in schools increase teacher attention to students' literacy skills.

Based on the observations, the author found that teachers carry out reading activities in the library without being accompanied by shadow teachers. In one class, the teacher has 25 students so that reading activities are less attractive and cause students to be less focused on reading activities. Not only that, some students also often play and talk with other students or even draw pictures.

The method applied in this activity is the use of information and knowledge about the theory of improving learning abilities through media, especially story telling frames. In making characters, technology is used in the form of computer hardware which is used to

create printed characters. A story telling frame is a frame used as a background for students to retell the text that has been read. This background has unique characters, colors and images. This background can motivate students to read carefully and understand the contents of the text.

This activity also creates detailed stages of reading activities so that they can be used as a guide by teachers in reading activities with students. The purpose of this stage is it can help the teachers and students to have interesting and enjoyable reading activities so that students have high motivation in reading and are able to improve their reading comprehension skills.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a multifaceted cognitive process that includes reading, interpreting, and integrating information from written texts. Various ideas have evolved to describe how readers perceive text, each stressing a particular component of the reading experience.

Several variables influence reading comprehension, including word identification, Background Knowledge, Reading Strategies, and motivation (Rohmawati, 2016). Word Identification is the capacity to detect words rapidly and accurately. Background Knowledge is previous knowledge that aids in forming connections with new information. Reading Strategies are techniques used to improve comprehension. Motivation is the reader's interest and purpose in reading that can considerably affect comprehension outcomes.

### B. Storytelling

Storytelling is a fundamental human activity that encompasses the skill of transmitting narratives in a variety of formats, including spoken words, written text, and visual media. It is an effective instrument for communication, education, and entertainment across cultures and ages (Ramamurthy et al., 2024).

Storytelling Network is "an interactive art that uses words and actions to reveal elements of a story while engaging the listener's imagination". This engagement is critical; audience responses may impact on how the tale evolves, making it a collaborative experience for both the storyteller and the listeners.

There are some components of storytelling such as narrative structure, characters, setting, conflict, and theme. In terms of Narrative Structure, every engaging tale has a distinct structure that often includes a beginning, middle, and conclusion. This framework aids with event organization and character development. In terms of characters, the protagonist is essential to every tale and acts as a relatable person for the audience. The connection between the viewer and the characters is critical to engagement. In terms of setting, the setting of the tale is important for providing context and atmosphere. It can have a considerable impact on the narrative's trajectory. In terms of conflict,

A tale is generally built around a conflict or difficulty that the characters must overcome, which propels the storyline ahead and keeps listeners interested. In terms of theme, the underlying message or moral of the tale adds depth and significance.

### C. Reading Comprehension and Storytelling

The effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching strategy for improving students' reading comprehension is becoming more widely acknowledged. According to research, storytelling not only keeps students interested but also helps them form stronger emotional and cognitive bonds with the subject matter, which enhances comprehension and memory.

There are some roles of storytelling in reading comprehension including cognitive engagement, emotional connection, interactive learning. Readers can improve Cognitive Engagement by promoting active engagement, storytelling helps pupils deduce meaning from stories. The development of comprehension techniques and critical thinking abilities depends on this involvement. Research indicates that pupils who are exposed to stories are better able to categorize, organize, and remember information, all of which are critical skills for successful reading comprehension (Hatam et al., 2018; Hazliana et al., 2023).

In addition, Storytelling can greatly improve comprehension by fostering emotional engagement. Students are more likely to retain details and comprehend underlying concepts when they feel an emotional connection to the characters and storylines. Reading becomes an immersive experience because of this relationship (Santoso et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Interactive components like role-playing, conversations, and visual aids are frequently used into storytelling. In addition to making studying fun, these techniques support students' comprehension of difficult texts by assisting them in visualizing stories.

Techniques for Using Storytelling in the Classroom. Teachers can use several tactics to optimize the advantages of storytelling in reading comprehension. The first is Interactive read aloud. It encourages student participation by stopping at strategic points to pose queries and lead conversations about the narrative. The second is visual aids. Visual aid assists students in visualizing the connections between characters and plot components, use story maps and graphics. The third is role playing. Role playing helps students better grasp narrative dynamics, encourage them to act out stories or character exchanges. The fourth is diverse narratives. It helps students engage with the content more deeply, including a range of anecdotes that speak to their experiences.

Since the invention of technology, storytelling has changed dramatically, giving rise to several technologies that improve the storytelling experience. From interactive experiences to visual narratives, these tools address various facets of storytelling, facilitating effective audience engagement for producers.

### III. METHODS

This activity involved a team, namely Andri Kurniawan, M.A as the leader with expertise in English literature. Puji Astuti Amalia, M.Pd with expertise in English Language Education and Indrawati, MH. The activity began by explaining and telling a story entitled "Where is bear?". The purpose of this activity is to convey the story and motivate students to retell it. This activity was carried out with 20 students of SDN 012 as can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Participation of students in using story telling frame

The procedure for creating storytelling frame involving author identifies strength and problem, author conducts literature review, author creates story telling frame, author makes story telling frame, author makes reading stages handout, author does try out, author trains students and teacher to use story telling frame in reading activities as:

1. Identify Strength and Problem
  - a. The author conducted FGD with teachers and principals to find problems and find solutions.
  - b. The author conducted observations and distributed questionnaires to students to determine the level of student motivation in reading activities.
2. Conduct Literature Review
 

The author conducted a literature review on the appropriate methods and forms of storytelling frames to improve students' reading comprehension.
3. Create Story Telling Frame
 

The author designs a unique and appropriate story telling frame to be able to increase students' motivation to understand the text and retell the text that is read. The author also designs the right stages for reading activities.
4. Make Story Telling Frame, Reading Stages Handout and Do Try Out
  - a. The author created a Story Telling Frame and stages in reading activities according to the design draft.
  - b. The author conducted a trial of the Story Telling Frame and stages in reading activities with 5 students
5. Train Students and Teacher Using Story Telling Frame and Stages In Reading Activities

The author provides guidance on the use of Story Telling Frames and stages in reading activities for teachers and students.

This activity involves the principal and teachers of SDN 008 and SDN 012 through focus group discussions. More specifically, this activity greatly involves teachers and students of SDN 008 and SDN 012 Samarinda using story-telling frames and stages of reading activities. Story telling frame is used as a background for the author to tell the story that will be used by students for storytelling. The purpose of using this story telling frame is to motivate students to listen and understand the story conveyed by the author.

Through this activity, the author creates a story telling frame. Story telling frame is a background used as a background for students to retell the text that has been read. This background has characters, colors and images that can motivate students to read carefully and understand the contents of the text so that they share the story. The author also creates detailed stages of reading activities so that they can be used as a guide by teachers in reading activities with students. The purpose of this stage is so that teachers and students can have interesting and enjoyable reading activities so that students have high motivation in reading and are able to improve their reading comprehension.

In addition, students and teachers are also given questionnaires to measure the success of the program being run. The program is evaluated through the distribution of pre-tests and post-tests to measure the increase in student understanding before and after the use of the story telling frame. Furthermore, the activity is also continued through monitoring of partners after 3 months of application or use. This aims to monitor whether the story telling frame requires innovation

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This activity produces story telling frames and mentoring in the use of storytelling frames. The activity was carried out by the author on July 26 and 27, 2024 together with 20 students and 7 teachers of SDN 012 Palaran in the reading room. The author, teachers and students use story telling frames in reading activity using some stages. First, the teacher introduces a story to students. Second, the teacher reads the story to students. Third, the teacher invites students to retell the text that was read using the story telling frame. Furthermore, the use of storytelling frame involving some steps as:

1. Students know the main idea of the story
  - a. Students know the goal of story whether the story inform, entertain, inspire or persuade the audience
  - b. Students know the theme of story and decorate the storytelling frame based on the story theme
2. Students establish the scene
 

Students select a scene including time, background components to engage the audience in storytelling frame

3. Students present the characters
 

Students describe the roles of the characters using the properties in the storytelling frame
4. Students create conflict
  - a. students draw attention to characters difficulties and raise the stake by demonstrating the problems involved.
  - b. students create curiosity to build audience's anticipation
5. Students highlight important occurrences
 

Students use gesture and visual pictures as well as properties in the storytelling frame to highlight important occurrences
6. Students create conflict
  - a. students draw attention to characters difficulties and raise the stake by demonstrating the problems involved.
  - b. students create curiosity to build audience's anticipation
7. Students construct a climax of story
 

Students use the setting or background design in storytelling frame to intensify the climax such as stormy night to draw an effect with the scene and story
8. Students conclude the story
  - a. students draw a meaningful conclusion
  - b. students use the storytelling frame background to tell the moral or message to the audience
  - c. students leave a great impression in the end of the story

This activity received a good response from students and teachers. Based on the questions and answers conducted by the author to students, students said that this activity produced a story telling frame that was very motivating for students in reading activities. Students really enjoyed the activity and were able to understand the story conveyed as can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Reading Activity

Students learn the structure or grammar of using "where is ...?" through stories. Students can use the structure in sentences and create their own sentences when looking for their teacher. One of the students asked his friend "where is miss hanifah?" In addition, students also have the desire to retell the story they

heard using the story telling frame. During the activity, students were not able to retell the story, but students told the characters in the story. So that the next activity is expected to be able to combine the methods of telling stories so that students can tell stories with the right flow. After the author carried out the activity, the author measured the effectiveness of the activity on students' reading skills through the reading pre-test and post-test. The values can be seen in table 1

Tabel 1. Reading pre-test dan post-test

#	Student	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
1	Student 1	10	70
2	Student 2	50	80
3	Student 3	40	70
4	Student 4	50	70
5	Student 5	70	90
6	Student 6	50	70
7	Student 7	40	80
8	Student 8	60	90
9	Student 9	60	90
10	Student 10	70	90
11	Student 11	30	70
12	Student 12	50	80
13	Student 13	60	90
14	Student 14	60	80
15	Student 15	60	90
16	Student 16	55	70
17	Student 17	60	80
18	Student 18	65	70
19	Student 19	60	70
20	Student 20	70	90
Average score		54	80

The average score of pre-tests is 54, while the average score of post-tests is 80. In general, it can be concluded that there is an increase in reading ability in students before and after the reading activity using storytelling frame. The storytelling frame has a great design based on the theme of the story. It has elements that make students understand the characters, story line and the moral value of the story. It helps students engage with the story. Thus, it helps students get better scores in post-test.

## V. CONCLUSION

This activity was carried out by the author on September 26 and 27, 2024 at SDN 012 Palaran. This activity was attended by 20 students and 7 teachers of SDN 012 Palaran. This activity resulted in a story framework, mentoring in the use of story frameworks and improving the reading skills of SDN 012 students. This study focuses on developing and stages of using the storytelling media in improving students' reading comprehension. However, it does not find out the correlation of the storytelling frame in student's reading comprehension score. Therefore, the next researchers are expected to be able to see the correlation between the storytelling frame and the students score in reading comprehension.

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