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## The Role of Storytelling and Bible Story Discussion Learning Methods in Enhancing Material Comprehension and Its Implementation in Modern Life

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## Abstract

In the world of education, it is necessary to study innovative learning methods to achieve better education. Without innovative and creative learning methods, the goals of Christian religious education cannot be achieved properly. Because the success of Christian religious education actually lies in the cooperation of teachers and students in maximizing the desired teaching. Learning to understand the contents of the Bible requires innovation and appropriate methods to produce good quality learning and be able to improve understanding of the material and its implementation in today's life. It is known that the author examines the role of storytelling and discussion learning in understanding the contents of the Bible for students and how to implement it in today's life. The objectives of studying the role of the storytelling learning method and discussion of Bible stories are (1) To see the significance of increasing students' understanding in understanding the contents of the Bible, (2) To evaluate the increase in students' ability to implement Bible stories in today's life. The results of direct observation research in class carried out in 2 research cycles can be concluded as follows: (1) Students' ability to understand Bible story material can be improved through storytelling and discussion learning models. In the pre-cycle, students' ability to understand the material was 15%, increasing in cycle I by 78%, while in cycle II it was 85%. Thus, the application of learning to understand Bible stories through storytelling and discussion learning methods is very effective in improving students' ability to understand the material presented by the teacher. (2) Students' learning achievements also increase after implementing learning through storytelling and discussion learning methods. This can be seen from the results of the percentage of learning completion, both during the mid-semester evaluation and the final semester evaluation.

**Keywords:** storytelling, discussion, Bible, innovation, learning methods

## INTRODUCTION

Storytelling is the activity of conveying stories from a storyteller to listeners with the aim of providing information that helps them recognize their own emotions and those of others, as well as develop problem-solving skills (Ayuni et al., 2013, pp. 121–130). Previous research by Ningsih (2014, pp. 243–256) highlighted that storytelling, as an innovative teaching method, benefits learners by improving their speaking skills. Nowadays, it is no longer a secret that storytelling has gradually been abandoned, as its role has been replaced by television shows, social media, and online games on smartphones. However, storytelling, when used as a teaching method, plays a significant role in fostering students' interest in writing, reading, and enhancing their emotional intelligence, regardless of age. Essentially, storytelling as a teaching method is beneficial for all age groups. Storytelling, or narrating, is a productive oral language skill, making it an integral part of the art of communication skills. It serves as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the use of narratives or stories as the primary medium in the learning process (Octaviani, 2024).

The discussion method, on the other hand, involves interaction among learners or between learners and educators to analyze, solve problems, explore, or debate specific topics

or issues ([Edison, 2017, p. 125](#)). Discussion is an activity in which a group of people exchange ideas, thoughts, information, or opinions to solve a problem together. This interactive exchange has been developed into a learning method.

While the discussion method is not new and may not always be considered superior to other teaching methods, it offers an engaging alternative to address learner fatigue and boredom with conventional teaching approaches ([Budianto, 2022](#)). The discussion method provides learners with new experiences, encouraging interaction and thought exchange among peers. For instance, in Christian religious education, many teachers still rely on lectures, which often lead to boredom and disengagement among students. By employing the discussion method, learners are encouraged to actively and dynamically participate, helping to eliminate feelings of boredom and fatigue.

The combination of storytelling and discussion is an innovative approach to Bible teaching, potentially enhancing students' understanding of the material and enabling them to apply biblical lessons in contemporary life. While storytelling is often equated with lecturing, the two methods are distinct. Storytelling focuses on narrating biblical content that illustrates Christ's truth through events or actions, conveyed orally to share new experiences and knowledge based on revelations received. This approach provides a "rhema" (spiritual revelation) that can be implemented in daily life. Jesus Himself frequently used storytelling in His teachings, allowing His learners to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. This involvement encouraged direct participation and engagement from His audience ([Legi, 2021, pp. 64–65](#)).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Nature of Bible Learning Methods

The traditional method of Bible teaching in classrooms typically begins with Bible study activities, followed by interpretation and then delivered through lectures. However, in the field of education, such teaching methods often yield suboptimal results, as students may struggle to fully comprehend the material. Hence, innovation in Bible teaching methods is essential to achieve the goals of education. Without the use of proper and innovative teaching methods, the objectives of Christian Religious Education cannot be effectively achieved. The success of Christian education is fundamentally a collaborative effort between educators and students, aimed at optimizing the teaching process to fulfill its intended purpose ([Arifianto et al., 2021](#)). Many people assume that studying the Bible is easy—as long as one is literate, one can read it. However, only a few genuinely grasp its meaning. There is a significant difference between reading and studying. Often, people read the Bible but fail to truly understand its content. Effective methods are essential for teaching the Bible, and explaining these methods comprehensively requires time ([Homrighausen & Enklaar, 2004, p. 70](#)).

In essence, studying the Bible requires specific learning strategies, where methods developed and employed should enable students to easily understand, apply, and relate to the material. Unfortunately, Christian Religious Education is often perceived as something to be memorized, which is not accurate. Teachers should consider using various learning

approaches, such as conceptual, procedural, inductive, deductive, contextual, and constructivist approaches.

### **The Concept of the Storytelling Method and Its Implementation in Modern Life**

The storytelling concept is an adaptation and integration of seven contextual approaches to understanding the Bible. Storytelling relies heavily on the teacher's ability to use gestures to narrate a story, particularly those from the Bible within a Christian perspective (Leiwakabessy & Purwonugroho, 2024, pp. 83–94). This method also invites students to engage interactively, especially in speaking activities. Storytelling is essentially an enhancement of lecture and contextual methods, designed to prevent students from becoming bored, distracted, or disengaged during lessons. It makes learning more enjoyable and ensures focus is maintained. This approach not only facilitates a deeper understanding of bible content but also helps students develop speaking skills. Research has shown that students using the storytelling method achieve better academic performance compared to before its implementation (Rahmawati, 2017).

Additionally, storytelling has been shown to positively impact reading skills. It fosters connections between meaning and emotion through spoken words, helping students develop their vocal skills and enabling learning at any time and place through specific words and phrases (Mokhtar et al., 2011). According to Al-Mansour & others, (2011) studies on storytelling methods reveal that experimental groups consistently outperform control groups in terms of improved learning evaluation scores..

### **The Concept of the Discussion Method and Its Implementation in Modern Life**

Budianto (2022, pp. 1–14) recommends that Christian Religious Education teachers use discussion methods to enhance the quality of religious education. In implementing discussion-based learning methods, Christian Religious Education teachers must uphold the principles of God's Word and clearly convey that Christianity is not merely about knowledge of faith in God but about applying it in daily life. This application influences the development of one's character and nature. The role of Christian Religious Education teachers is crucial in this regard. The essence of learning and understanding God's Word lies in fostering a personal relationship with Him and becoming more Christ-like in character.

Through alternative methods like discussions, students are indirectly guided to respect others' opinions. Additionally, the discussion method encourages greater interactivity in classroom learning. Students exchange thoughts, play together, share stories, and collaboratively solve problems when faced with challenges. The discussion method was also frequently employed by Jesus in teaching truth, fostering active participation and engagement among His followers.

## **METHOD**

The method employed in this research is a quasi-experimental design using a one-group pretest-posttest design. This involves a single group serving as the control group. Preconditioning is conducted before the application of the storytelling and discussion methods on the selected group. Subsequently, an experimental group is determined to serve

as a comparison to the control group. Evaluation is carried out after implementing the storytelling and discussion methods. The simplified structure of the intended research design is as follows :

O1----- X ----- O2

Explanation:

O1 : Pre-test (initial test)

O2 : Post-test (final test)

X : Treatment (learning using storytelling and discussion methods).

The data collected is then used as an observation instrument in this research, structured in the form of observation sheets containing the criteria to be assessed or data to be gathered, recorded both at the beginning and the end of the tests.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

This study employs several data collection techniques, including observation and written tests. Documentation techniques are also utilized as they serve as records or archives of the research process. The documentation includes photos of activities, the profile of STAK Diaspora Wamena, student attendance lists, students' learning outcomes sheets, and other documents related to classroom learning evaluation. The observation technique is conducted directly, focused, and selectively, supported by an observation format or checklist. The written test technique is used to collect data from students and consists of questions designed to measure students' level of understanding of the material.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

To simplify this research, the researcher collects data from selected samples. The data gathered from respondents, based on pre-test and post-test results, is analyzed using theoretical frameworks. The collected data is measured using a rubric for assessing speaking and reading skills, with numerical scores as follows :

Peneliti menyimpulkan hasil awal dari data statistik sebagai berikut:

1. The evaluation data is based on criteria for speaking and reading skills, adapted from Harries and Hughes.
2. The data is analyzed using tables for speaking and reading skill assessments, converting each aspect into a score with the following formula:

Student Score = Student's Score x 100 Maximum Score.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Description of Pre-Cycle**

Before conducting classroom learning evaluations, the researcher first carried out observations and gathered data on the initial conditions of the class. The respondents' prior knowledge was essential to determine the appropriate steps aligned with the researcher's expectations. This initial data provided insight into whether actions were needed to apply storytelling and discussion methods to enhance understanding and learning outcomes in comprehending the contents of the Bible. The collected data served as a reference for the

researcher to evaluate the suitability of implementing storytelling and discussion strategies to improve students' skills in understanding Bible-related material.

### **Cycle I Data Description**

In conducting the learning evaluation during Cycle I, it was important to observe previous studies, followed by planning based on the pre-cycle test results. Subsequently, the researcher conducted follow-up tests using the data obtained, which became part of Cycle I. Learning innovations through storytelling and discussion methods were implemented at this stage. Based on observations, the students' learning evaluation percentage in Cycle I reached 75% on average. This indicated a significant improvement compared to the initial data, where only 15% of the material was understood, forcing students to retake the test or undergo remediation. Without storytelling and discussion methods, 25 students would have failed to meet the standard individual score criteria.

### **Cycle II Data Description**

Based on the study findings, the pre-test scores (from the class that had not been taught using storytelling and discussion methods) revealed an unsatisfactory average. However, after implementing these methods, there was a significant improvement in speaking skills, reading skills, and interactivity during classroom activities. The average post-test scores for speaking and reading skills showed a marked increase compared to the pre-test scores. A significant difference was observed between the average pre-test scores (before treatment) and post-test scores (after treatment). The teaching and learning process using storytelling and discussion methods was deemed successful based on the score improvement, from 15% of the material being understood initially to 85% by the end of Cycle II.

The findings indicate that storytelling and discussion methods significantly improved speaking, reading, and interactive skills during classroom activities related to understanding the Bible among STAK Diaspora students. Often, students struggled to fully comprehend and retain the material taught. With the storytelling method, students became more active in speaking, as the engaging approach motivated them to pay attention in class and participate enthusiastically in the learning process.

Students expressed joy with the storytelling and discussion methods used by the researcher. These methods also boosted their mental resilience and confidence, as seen in their willingness to speak in front of the class and actively participate in discussions. Students gained confidence in expressing their opinions and developed logical thinking skills based on their abilities. This demonstrates that students who adhered to the storytelling and discussion methods became more active in voicing their thoughts in class and achieved better scores during several learning sessions.

Based on the results obtained in this study, the pre-test scores (in classes that did not utilize the storytelling and discussion methods) showed unsatisfactory average scores. After implementing the storytelling and discussion methods, there was a significant improvement in speaking skills, reading skills, and interaction during discussions with other students in the class. The findings revealed that the average post-test scores for students' speaking and reading skills improved compared to their pre-test scores.



The research demonstrated that the storytelling and discussion methods significantly impacted speaking, reading, and interactive discussion skills. The storytelling method encouraged students to become more active in speaking. Additionally, these methods boosted students' mental confidence and self-esteem, as evidenced by their increasing willingness to speak in front of the class and their improved fluency in reading. Students also gained confidence in expressing their opinions and developing their own logical thinking and reasoning. This indicates that students who followed the rules of the storytelling and discussion methods effectively became more active in class and achieved higher scores after several steps were implemented.

This study was analyzed by referencing previous research. Studies used as references include the following: The effect of the storytelling method on students' speaking skills, where students scored higher after the implementation of the storytelling method compared to before its implementation (Rahmawati, 2017). According to Morgan (2011), storytelling is essential for learning and proposes several approaches to its use in the classroom. The impact of storytelling and discussion methods on reading skills, which showed beneficial effects on reading proficiency (Mokhtar et al., 2011). Storytelling enables students to connect meanings and emotions with words, develop vocabulary, and learn the appropriate use of words and phrases in various contexts. Research by Al-Mansour & others, (2011), found that the experimental group outperformed the control group in improved scores following the storytelling method implementation. It can be concluded that the application of storytelling and discussion methods in reading skills positively and significantly impacts students' reading comprehension.

### RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This research highlights the need for follow-up actions to improve the quality of education, making the learning environment engaging, active, creative, and innovative. The recommendations include: First, To enhance academic abilities, self-confidence, and enjoyment of learning, storytelling and discussion methods should be applied in Christian religious education. These methods allow for a creative, calm, and enjoyable learning process, fostering improved speaking, reading, and interaction skills in expressing opinions. Second, Increased concentration is needed among students when listening to materials delivered through storytelling and discussion methods. This requires more supervision and guidance for students during reflection activities related to these methods, ensuring they fully understand the stories shared during storytelling sessions.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the evaluation of using the storytelling and discussion learning methods among students at STAK Diaspora, the following conclusions were drawn: *First*, Students' speaking, reading, and interactive skills during learning evaluations showed a significant improvement. The post-test results revealed that the average student scores increased significantly compared to their pre-test scores before implementing the storytelling and discussion methods. *Second*, Beyond improving speaking, reading, and interactive skills in class

evaluations, students also enhanced their understanding of the Bible. This was evident from their ability to explain their comprehension through examples of contemporary life applications.

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