

# Storytelling Method in Learning Process – Thematic Analysis

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## Article Info

### Article history:

Received December, 2025  
Revised December, 2025  
Accepted December, 2025

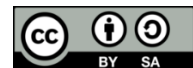
### Keywords:

Storytelling in Education,  
Student Engagement and  
Comprehension,  
Visualization and Knowledge  
Retention

## ABSTRACT

People development is a sustainable process that must be conduct at every opportunity. Learning is often perceived as an unpleasant and compulsory activity, limiting its true purpose to obtaining certifications rather than fostering understanding. This study explores storytelling as an effective pedagogical approach to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and critical thinking. Storytelling stimulates curiosity and allows learners to connect with the material on a personal level, making information more meaningful. Research suggests that storytelling improves cognitive processes by promoting visualization, structuring knowledge, and fostering cause-and-effect reasoning. The literature review highlights that storytelling is a powerful teaching method, offering structured content delivery, emotional engagement, and real-world application. By integrating storytelling with visualization, educators can create immersive learning experiences that cater to various learning styles. This method enhances memory retention, encourages inquiry-based learning, and supports knowledge construction. The study employs thematic analysis to identify key storytelling elements contributing to effective learning. Findings suggest that structured storytelling, engaging narrative delivery, and visualization techniques significantly enhance student learning outcomes. The integration of storytelling in pedagogy fosters deeper comprehension, analytical skills, and creativity. This study provides a framework for implementing storytelling in education, emphasizing its role in making learning an interactive and meaningful process.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning becomes an unpleasant activity and even becomes a debate about whether Learning is important or not in life. This makes the definition of Learning very narrow, that Learning is a formal process where individuals carry out activities to get a certificate. This learning activity is very unpopular and unpleasant, where learning

becomes a compulsion, not a need. Learning that is done because of necessity becomes lower in its importance to be understood, so students only learn as a requirement to fulfill obligations and do not try to understand because there is no need for it. Understanding becomes homework for instructors to explore various learning methods that are appropriate for students. Fun learning methods stimulate curiosity to attract the attention of students to

the next step, which is to make learning a need. Information that is said through a story makes other people more interested and curious about further information [1]. Curiosity is one of the drives for individuals to explore outside the class by themselves.

One of the things that makes an individual understand information is when they experience it themselves and are involved in it, in other words, it has a connection with them. Storytelling is a competitiveness that is suggested to do in the classroom, thus effectively can support student's learning process and engagement [2]. Visualization from story allow individuals to experienced it inside their mind.

A story can drive the improvement of imagination and creativity, mental, and offer various life experiences [3], [1]. Stories and fairy tales in the journey of civilization have a role in shaping the understanding of culture, morals, and history. Storytelling can stimulate the brain to create visual images that cause individuals to feel the experience in their visualization.

Visual perception and esthetic values can be developed through a story [4], in other word it can also give contribution in finding new words or meaningful information [5]. Information has meaning when someone can understand the relationship between what is happening, why it is happening, and how the process occurs, which is called a causal relationship or cause and effect. Storytelling trains individuals to make a sequence of caused effect and learn that an event happens because there's a flow of action, thus they can understand about causality relationship in every occurrence [6].

Storytelling as a learning method is interesting to study and deepen. Research on storytelling concludes that the method provides increased understanding and learning outcomes for students. What is important to study further is how this storytelling method can have an impact on learning outcomes, so it is necessary to study what aspects form good storytelling for learning. In addition, this study aims to find a framework for conducting storytelling in providing effective learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Learning Method

Teaching strategies can be categorized based on predominant instructional activities and operational objectives. According to Iucu [7], these strategies include cognitive, psychomotor, emotional, and mixed approaches. In modern pedagogy, there is a growing preference for less structured methods that encourage students to discover knowledge independently, fostering critical thinking and adaptability [8]. Teaching-learning methods serve multiple functions, including cognitive (providing access to knowledge), formative-learning (developing skills and scientific understanding), motivational (engaging learners actively), instrumental (acting as a bridge between objectives and outcomes), and normative (guiding learning through structured processes) [9].

One widely used instructional approach is the expository method, which includes lectures, storytelling, explanations, and direct instruction. Storytelling, in particular, is valuable in contexts where learners have limited life experience, as it presents information through a structured narrative that enhances comprehension [8]. Al-Faraji [10] outlines several criteria for evaluating instructional methods, such as their suitability for the available time, opportunities for student participation, ability to facilitate real-life applications, and potential for self-development. Effective methods should also promote cooperation, self-assessment, enthusiasm, and responsiveness while ensuring flexibility and integration with modern learning technologies, including online teaching.

The lecture method remains one of the most efficient teaching strategies, offering strengths such as time efficiency, logical content presentation, and structured material delivery. It is particularly useful for subjects that require detailed explanations, such as history and literature [11]. Additionally, lectures can inspire students, stimulate discussion, and allow instructors to manage

time and material effectively. However, they also present challenges, such as passive learner engagement, difficulty in assessing student comprehension, and a lack of differentiation among learners. To enhance effectiveness, lectures should include clear introductions, summaries, and relevant examples or anecdotes to maintain student interest and comprehension.

## 2.2 Storytelling

Storytelling in teaching serves multiple purposes, including creating interest, enhancing memory retention, sharing information in an accessible way, and fostering a stronger student-instructor connection [12]. By crafting engaging narratives, key topics become easier to remember [13]. Additionally, stories provide structure to learning by presenting information in a logical and meaningful sequence. According to Finkel [14], storytelling is effective due to its concreteness, specificity, and narrative organization, which help students grasp complex ideas more easily.

Owen and Riley [15] describe performative storytelling as a form of visual teaching that includes modelling reflective practice and learning by doing. Stories also play a crucial role in cultural learning and reflection by imposing structure on experiences [16]. Through storytelling, children develop an understanding of the world and construct their sense of self [13]. This method enhances comprehension by allowing learners to engage with material on a deeper level.

Beyond narrative structure, additional elements such as images and sound can further improve understanding and engagement in storytelling-based learning [17]. Visual and auditory stimuli enhance the storytelling experience, making it more immersive and memorable. As a structured teaching method, storytelling provides an effective way to convey information while keeping learners actively engaged.

## 2.3 Storytelling Method

Mutonyi [18] explored the effectiveness of stories, proverbs, and anecdotes in teaching science concepts to high school students.

Schank [19] identified five basic types of stories: official, invented or adapted, first-hand experiential, second-hand, and culturally common. Establishing a connection with students is the first step in effective storytelling ([20]. By presenting content as a mystery, instructors can naturally engage students in sensemaking [13]. Andrew Stanton [21] emphasized that storytelling should have a clear goal, embrace change, and reflect personal values to enhance engagement and meaning.

Storytelling takes various forms, including mysteries, parables, cultural myths, fairy tales, truth-seeking quests, and problem-solving scenarios [20]. Ruscher [22] introduced a three-part storytelling approach focused on meaningfulness, coherence, and memorability. When listening to or reading stories, our brains process them similarly to real-life experiences [23]. This engagement activates the limbic system, mirror neurons, and neurotransmitters, making storytelling a powerful learning tool. For maximum impact, stories should be personally relevant to students rather than instructors, as demonstrated by personalized psychology exercises like the "Barnum effect" [24].

Memorable and unusual stories enhance learning retention. Einstein, McDaniel, and Lackey (1989) described the "bizarreness effect," showing that incorporating strange or unexpected elements improves recall. Intriguing story outcomes make information more likely to stick with students. One long-standing method of storytelling in learning is the case study approach, which provides real-world scenarios to facilitate deeper understanding [25]. By integrating compelling narratives into teaching, educators can create meaningful and lasting learning experiences.

## 3. METHODS

The research approach utilizes thematic analysis, a method that identifies, analyzes, and interprets themes. The process begins by generating initial codes that are relevant to the research. Relevant literature is then gathered, with researchers

distinguishing between primary and secondary data before extracting information. Themes searched emphasize the codes grouping into broader themes and create a thematic matrix to visualize connections between themes. This method is chosen to analyze studies on storytelling in pedagogic learning. Through this approach, researchers aim to identify commonly used models and contribute to improving the use of storytelling for pedagogic learning. Additionally, this method helps recognize emerging patterns, differences, or aspects that may be missing from existing research.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Storytelling has long been recognized as a powerful learning tool, shaping how students engage with and understand complex concepts. In modern learning settings, structured storytelling, engaging narrative delivery, and the integration of visualization have been identified as key strategies to enhance learning and develop critical thinking. This paper explores how these elements contribute to deeper comprehension, active learning, and analytical skills.

##### *4.1 Structured Storytelling for Deeper Learning*

A well-structured story provides a logical flow that helps students organize information meaningfully. The traditional storytelling framework—introduction, conflict, resolution—mirrors cognitive structures that aid memory retention and comprehension. In a learning context, structured storytelling can be applied to subjects like history, science, and literature, where students can follow a clear progression of events or ideas. Research has shown that students are more likely to retain information when it is presented in a narrative format rather than isolated facts. This method not only improves recall but also enables learners to see connections between concepts, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Furthermore, structured storytelling aids in scaffolding complex information,

making it easier for students to grasp difficult topics. In mathematics, for example, presenting problems within a narrative context can help students understand abstract concepts through real-life applications. Similarly, in language learning, structured storytelling assists students in contextualizing vocabulary and grammar, enhancing both their comprehension and retention abilities. The incorporation of storytelling in lesson design also provides a sense of coherence and continuity, making learning experiences more meaningful and engaging.

##### *4.2 Engaging Narrative Delivery to Enhance Comprehension*

The effectiveness of storytelling in learning is largely dependent on how narratives are delivered. Engaging delivery techniques such as voice modulation, interactive storytelling, and multimedia integration can significantly enhance student comprehension. When educators use dynamic storytelling approaches, such as role-playing, digital animations, or student-led storytelling, they create a more immersive learning environment. Studies suggest that students exposed to engaging storytelling are more attentive and motivated to participate in discussions. Furthermore, storytelling fosters empathy and emotional engagement, allowing learners to connect with the material on a personal level, thereby improving their overall understanding and retention.

Additionally, engaging narrative delivery allows for greater adaptability to different learning styles. Auditory learners benefit from expressive verbal storytelling, while visual learners engage more effectively with digital storytelling tools. Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, can participate in hands-on storytelling activities, such as dramatization or interactive simulations. These methods cater to diverse student needs, ensuring that comprehension is maximized through personalized learning experiences.

##### *4.3 Integrating Storytelling and Visualization to Foster Active Learning and Develop Critical Thinking*

Combining storytelling with visualization techniques enhances students' ability to analyze and interpret information

critically. Visual storytelling elements, such as concept maps, infographics, and digital storytelling tools, help students process abstract ideas in a concrete manner. This integration encourages active learning, where students are not just passive recipients of information but active participants in constructing knowledge. By creating their own stories using visual aids, students develop analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and creative thinking. Research supports the idea that visualization, when combined with narrative techniques, leads to better engagement and deeper learning outcomes. For instance, storytelling through visualization can help students grasp complex processes by contextualizing them in relatable narratives.

Moreover, integrating storytelling and visualization allows students to engage in experiential learning, where they can create their own narratives to explore and interpret subjects. For example, students studying environmental science can create visual storytelling projects that illustrate climate change's impact on different ecosystems. This approach encourages critical thinking by requiring students to analyze data, synthesize information, and present it in a compelling narrative format. Additionally, storytelling and visualization stimulate curiosity and inquiry-based learning, motivating students to ask deeper questions and seek innovative solutions to real-world problems.

Table 1. Analytical themes of storytelling approach

Description	Code	Category	Analytical themes
Creating interest, providing structure, and fostering connection	Purposes of pedagogical storytelling	Storytelling structure	Structured storytelling for deeper learning; Engaging narrative delivery to enhance comprehension; Integrating storytelling and visualization to foster active learning and develop critical thinking
Immersive experience of the story world, leading to enhanced learning and engagement	Narrative transportation	Narrative delivery	
Crafting the narrative to make the story interesting, the topic and highlights of the story are easy to remember	Narrative meaning		
Method used by instructors were finger puppet, story card, computer, hand puppet, plain expression, sock puppet, club puppet, demonstration, flannel board card, digital story, ring puppet, overhead	Narrative tone		

projection, shadow puppet			
Reading activities that is not supported with visual and auditory elements attract attention for a short period time	Narrative subjectively		
The story should be personally relevant to the student, providing “personalized” element to each student	Narrative persona		
Detailed descriptions of specific pedagogical approaches	Performative storytelling and other visual teaching methods		
Interpreting and predicting events in the world through the lens of stories	Fictional stories as flight simulators	Critical thinking through visualization	

*Source: Processed primary data (2025)*

## 5. CONCLUSION

Storytelling in learning is more than just a method of delivering content—it is a pedagogical approach that enhances comprehension, engagement, and critical thinking. Structured storytelling helps in organizing knowledge, engaging delivery techniques maintain student interest, and the integration of visualization fosters deeper

analytical skills. As learning continues to evolve, leveraging storytelling as a teaching strategy can significantly improve learning outcomes and equip students with the skills needed to navigate complex information in the real world. Future research should explore innovative ways to integrate storytelling with emerging technologies to further enhance learning experiences.

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