

## The Effect of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning Model on Students' Ability to Understand Fable Texts in Fourth Grade

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Article history: Received December 20, 2025; revised January 23, 2026; accepted February 22, 2026

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was motivated by the poor ability of fourth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 064956 Medan to understand fable texts. Preliminary observations indicated that most students struggled to analyze the intrinsic elements of fables, showed low levels of participation and enthusiasm in learning, and were subject to predominantly lecture-based instruction, which failed to capture their interests. These conditions revealed a gap between learning objectives and students' actual achievements, highlighting the need for innovation in the learning model. This study aimed to determine the effect of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model on students' ability to understand fable texts. This study employs a quantitative descriptive method using a two-phase approach. The population and sample comprised all 28 fourth-grade students of the UPT SD Negeri 064956 Medan. Data were collected through fable comprehension tests (pre-and post-test), observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The results showed a significant improvement in students' ability to understand fable texts after implementation of the Jigsaw model. In Phase 1 (before the jigsaw model was applied), the average comprehension score was 63. Of the 28 students, 18 (64.3%) had not yet met the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75, and only 10 students (35.7%) were in the "good" category (scores between 75 and 84). After applying the Jigsaw cooperative learning model in Phase 2, the average student score sharply increased to 88. All 28 students (100%) achieved scores within the "very good" category (85–100), successfully exceeding the KKM score. This increase, from an average of 63 to 88, strongly indicates that the Jigsaw cooperative learning model is effective in enhancing students' comprehension of fable text. This success is attributed to the characteristics of the Jigsaw model, which promotes active participation, collaboration within expert groups, and individual responsibility for sharing knowledge. The questionnaires and interview responses also reflected positive feedback from both students and teachers, indicating that the model made the learning process more enjoyable, easier to understand, and helped develop students' discussion skills and self-confidence.*

*Keywords: Jigsaw Model, Cooperative Learning, Reading Comprehension, Elementary Education*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four fundamental language skills that students must master during their academic journeys. Among these skills, reading comprehension holds particular significance, as it not only involves decoding words but also understanding, processing, and critically analyzing written content. Reading comprehension directly influences students' ability to extract information from various sources, broadens their knowledge base, and enhances intellectual development. However, reading proficiency extends beyond mere word recognition. It requires students to thoroughly understand the content of what they read, an ability that forms the foundation for effective learning across all subject areas (Dewi et al., 2025).

In the context of Indonesian language learning at the elementary level, students are regularly exposed to various types of literary work, including fable texts. Fable stories, characterized by animal protagonists exhibiting human-like behaviors and thought patterns, serve as powerful vehicles for conveying moral messages and educational values. These narratives are particularly well-suited for elementary school students because they engage in storylines, comprehensible structures, and rich moral lessons that align with students' developmental stages and everyday experiences. The intrinsic elements of fable texts, such as themes, characters, settings, plots, narrative perspectives, and moral messages collectively form the foundation for comprehensive text comprehension and literary appreciation (Lubbiya & Liansari, 2026).

Understanding and analyzing the intrinsic elements of fable texts constitute a crucial component of literary appreciation in Indonesian language instruction. Intrinsic elements refer to the structural and thematic

components that originate within the text itself, including the theme, characterization, setting, plot progression, point of view, and moral message. The mastery of these elements enables students to move beyond surface-level reading to develop deeper, more nuanced interpretations of literary works. This analytical skill is fundamental to fostering critical thinking, aesthetic appreciation, and the ability to extract meaningful lessons from literature that can be applied to real-life situations (Zamatul Amri & Mohamad Uri, 2025).

Observations conducted at UPT SD Negeri 064956 Medan during the 2025-2026 academic year revealed trends in fourth-grade students' ability to analyze and comprehend fable texts. Among the 28 fourth-grade students, the majority demonstrated significant difficulties in independently identifying and explaining the intrinsic elements of fables. Specifically, students exhibited challenges in recognizing themes, identifying settings and characters, tracing plot development, and articulating the moral messages conveyed through fable narratives. Many students appeared to possess only superficial knowledge of these concepts—understanding definitions without being able to meaningfully apply them to actual story analysis. Furthermore, classroom observations indicated low levels of student enthusiasm and passive engagement during Indonesian language lessons, primarily attributable to pedagogical approaches that relied heavily on teacher-centered, lecture-based instruction (Guseva, 2025).

Several factors have contributed to this unsatisfactory learning situation. First, the prevailing teaching methodology emphasizes direct information transmission through lectures, which inherently limits opportunities for active student participation, critical engagement, and collaborative learning. Second, students are seldom provided with meaningful contexts or interactive activities that could facilitate a deeper understanding of complex literary concepts. Third, the lack of varied instructional strategies means that diverse learning styles and preferences among students remain largely unaddressed. These circumstances have created a significant gap between curriculum objectives and actual student achievement, thereby necessitating the implementation of innovative pedagogical approaches capable of fostering active engagement, collaborative learning, and meaningful comprehension of literary texts (Daar et al., 2025).

According to the Indonesian Language Learning Syllabus for Grade IV under the Merdeka Curriculum, students are expected to demonstrate competency in identifying the intrinsic elements of fable texts in both written and oral forms. This learning outcome requires students not only to read fable narratives but also to analyze constituent elements systematically, demonstrating understanding through explanation and interpretation. Teachers play a paramount role in facilitating this learning process by creating conducive, engaging, and intellectually stimulating classroom environments that translate abstract concepts into concrete learning experiences. Teachers must implement pedagogically sound instructional models that activate student agency, foster critical thinking capacities, and enable students to achieve mastery of targeted learning outcomes with confidence and competence (Sadiah et al., 2024).

The Jigsaw cooperative learning model represents a promising approach for addressing these pedagogical challenges. Developed by Elliot Aronson and colleagues at the University of Texas, and subsequently adapted by Robert Slavin and associates at Johns Hopkins University, Jigsaw is predicated on the principle that students learn most effectively through peer interaction, shared responsibility, and collaborative knowledge construction. The fundamental structure of the model initially involves assigning different topic sections to different students within a heterogeneous base group. These students then form "expert groups" with peers from other base groups who have studied identical sections, enabling them to discuss, clarify, and deepen their understanding of the assigned content. Upon returning to their base groups, each student assumes the role of content specialist, teaching their acquired knowledge to groupmates who are simultaneously learning from other experts about different topics (Mogashoa, 2025).

The effectiveness of the Jigsaw model is derived from several pedagogically sound principles embedded within its structure. First, it cultivates positive interdependence, a condition wherein each group member recognizes that their individual contribution is essential to collective success. Second, it ensures individual accountability by assigning each student the responsibility for mastering a specific content segment and communicating that knowledge to peers. Third, it promotes the development of interpersonal and small-group skills that are essential for functioning in collaborative environments. Fourth, the model facilitates meaningful interaction and information exchange, enabling students to encounter content from multiple perspectives and explanations. Fifth, it creates opportunities for repeated exposure to content through both peer instruction and group discussion, thereby reinforcing learning and deepening comprehension (Burdeina et al., 2025).

The rationale for selecting the Jigsaw model for instruction on the intrinsic elements of fable texts relies on several considerations. The model positions each student as a valuable contributor possessing specialized expertise on assigned content segments, thereby fostering a positive self-concept and promoting the view that all learners possess intellectual capacity for mastery. The systematic division of fable text analysis into distinct

expert areas, —such as character analysis, setting identification, plot structure, theme extraction, and moral message interpretation, —aligns naturally with the complexity of comprehensive literary analysis while making the task manageable through appropriately scaffolded activities. Furthermore, the model's emphasis on collaborative small-group work creates multiple opportunities for students to practice academic discussion, ask clarifying questions, receive immediate peer feedback, and refine their understanding through active dialogue, —all of which constitute essential components of effective literacy instruction (Sari, 2025).

Based on these considerations, the researcher conducted an empirical investigation examining the effect of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model on fourth-grade students' ability to understand fable story texts. This research aimed to provide empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of this instructional approach in improving both comprehension outcomes and student engagement while simultaneously contributing to a broader knowledge base regarding effective elementary literacy instruction in Indonesian language education.

## II. METHODS

### A. *Research Design and Approach*

This study employs a quantitative descriptive methodology with a two-phase research design. The two-phase approach enabled a systematic comparison of student performance prior to and following the implementation of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model, thereby permitting assessment of the intervention's effect on comprehension outcomes.

The study was conducted at UPT SD Negeri 064956 Medan, a public elementary school in the Medan municipality. This location was selected based on several practical considerations: accessibility for the researcher, cooperative partnership with the school administration, and availability of fourth-grade students meeting the study inclusion criteria. The research was conducted during the 2025-2026 academic year, specifically during the July through October 2025 timeframe, thereby minimizing disruption to regular academic programming while providing sufficient duration for comprehensive data collection (Sugiyono, 2019).

### B. *Participants*

The research population comprised all students in fourth-grade classrooms at UPT SD Negeri 064956 Medan during the 2025-2026 academic year. The study sample consisted of 28 fourth-grade students from a single classroom section. Sample selection was based on practical considerations, including temporal constraints on research implementation, observations of student disengagement during Indonesian language instruction, difficulties with fable text comprehension, and previous low levels of student participation in classroom discussions. These characteristics make the fourth-grade cohort an appropriate population for investigating the effects of the Jigsaw model, as the intervention addressed documented learning difficulties while simultaneously introducing students to more engaging pedagogical approaches (Arikunto, 2017).

### C. *Data Collection Procedures*

Multiple data collection methods were employed to triangulate the findings and develop a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects. These included:

**Pre-test and post-test assessments:** Students completed identical comprehension assessments during Phase 1 (baseline, before intervention) and Phase 2 (after Jigsaw model implementation). The tests consisted of essay-format questions requiring students to identify and explain the intrinsic elements of fable texts, specifically addressing themes, character identification and motivation, setting characteristics, plot structure, narrative perspective, and moral message extraction. The test items were designed to assess comprehension depth rather than superficial recall of factual information.

**Classroom Observation:** Systematic observation was conducted across multiple instructional sessions, with the researcher documenting student engagement levels, interaction patterns during groupwork, participation during teaching-and-learning phases, discussion quality, and teacher management strategies. Observation employed a participatory approach, wherein the researcher was present in the classroom environment while maintaining sufficient distance to minimize reactive effects on student behavior.

**Teacher Interview:** A semi-structured interview with a classroom Indonesian language teacher elicited information regarding typical instructional practices, model implementation strategies, perceived challenges in cooperative learning contexts, and teacher perceptions of student responses to the Jigsaw model. Five standardized questions guided the interview, while allowing flexibility for follow-up inquiries and elaboration.

**Student Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six purposefully selected students from the 28-student cohort, providing qualitative perspectives on student experiences during Jigsaw

implementation, perceived effectiveness, challenges encountered, and changes in student attitudes toward Indonesian language learning and fable-text comprehension.

Questionnaires: Students completed Likert-scale questionnaires assessing their perceptions of learning enjoyment, comprehension achievement, collaborative functioning, and self-confidence during the Jigsaw-based instruction. This quantitative data complemented the qualitative interview data.

Documentary Evidence: Photographs and written artifacts from instructional activities serve as supplementary documentation of the implementation process and student engagement (Creswell, 2021).

#### D. Instructional Intervention

The Jigsaw cooperative learning model was implemented according to the following procedural framework: Phase 1: Baseline Assessment and Preparation. Students completed the initial comprehension assessments to establish baseline performance. Classroom observations document the existing instructional practices and learning dynamics. Interviews with teachers and students provided a contextual understanding of prior experience with fable texts and cooperative learning.

Phase 2: Jigsaw Model Implementation. The classroom was reorganized into heterogeneous base groups of four to five students each, with a deliberate composition ensuring the inclusion of students with varied achievement levels, gender representation, and peer compatibility. Five fable texts were selected and divided into five distinct analytical components: character identification and motivation, setting analysis, plot structure, theme extraction, and moral message interpretation. Each base group member was assigned a responsibility for one component. Students engaged in independent reading and analysis of assigned segments, consulting reference materials, and guiding worksheets to identify relevant evidence within the text.

Subsequently, "expert groups" were formed by collecting students responsible for identical components from the different base groups. Expert groups met for approximately 30 min, during which students compared observations, discussed textual evidence, clarified interpretations, and collaboratively developed comprehensive explanations of their assigned elements. This phase emphasized accuracy, depth of analysis, and the development of clear teaching strategies for communicating their expertise to base group members.

Following expert group meetings, students reconvened base groups to present their findings to their peers. Each student, functioning as a content specialist for their assigned element, explained their analysis, while other group members listened attentively, asked clarifying questions, and collectively reconstructed a comprehensive understanding of the complete fable from the specialized contributions of all team members. The teacher circulated among the groups, monitoring progress, providing scaffolding when necessary, and ensuring equitable participation.

The final phase involved individual written assessment, wherein each student responded to comprehension questions covering all five analytic components. Individual scores were aggregated to generate group scores, with high-performing groups receiving recognition and certification.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Phase 1 Results: Baseline Performance

Prior to the implementation of the Jigsaw model, comprehensive baseline assessments were conducted to establish students' initial comprehension capabilities regarding fable texts. The results from the Phase 1 assessments revealed substantial deficits in fable comprehension across the fourth-grade cohort.

Table 1. Phase 1 Results: Baseline Performance

| Performance Metric                  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Students below KKM (score < 75)     | 18        | 64.3%      |
| Students meeting KKM (score 75-84)  | 10        | 35.7%      |
| Students exceeding KKM (score ≥ 85) | 0         | 0%         |
| Class Average Score                 | 63        | —          |

The baseline data demonstrated that two-thirds of the students had not yet achieved the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75 established for this learning outcome. An analysis of specific comprehension deficits

revealed that students particularly struggled with identifying thematic content and its relationship to character actions, distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings, tracing causal relationships within plot sequences, articulating moral messages in sophisticated language, and synthesizing multiple text elements into coherent interpretations.

Classroom observations during Phase 1 documented predominantly passive student engagement, with most instruction delivered through teacher-centered lectures, wherein students assumed receptive rather than active roles. Students infrequently volunteered questions or comments, and many appeared to be distracted or disengaged. Small-group discussions, when initiated, often proved unproductive, with off-task behavior and unequal participation prevailing.

### B. Phase 2 Results: Jigsaw Model Implementation

Following the implementation of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model over several instructional sessions, comprehensive post-implementation assessments were administered to measure the changes in student comprehension.

Table 2. Phase 2 Results: Jigsaw Model Implementation

| Performance Metric                  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Students below KKM (score < 75)     | 0         | 0%         |
| Students meeting KKM (score 75-84)  | 0         | 0%         |
| Students exceeding KKM (score ≥ 85) | 28        | 100%       |
| Class Average Score                 | 88        | —          |

The post-intervention results demonstrated remarkable improvement across the entire student cohort. All 28 students achieved scores within the "very good" category (85-100), with every student exceeding the Minimum Mastery Criteria. The class average increased substantially from 63 to 88—a 25-point improvement representing a 39.7% increase in average performance.

### C. Qualitative Findings: Teacher and Student Perspectives

#### Teacher Interview Results:

The classroom Indonesian language teacher, Ibu Nurul Hidayah, provided positive feedback regarding Jigsaw model implementation. When asked about the students' comprehension improvements, she noted: "The students showed much more active participation than usual. Many students, who typically remained silent during discussions, became engaged contributors to their expert groups. The quality of their explanations indicated genuine comprehension rather than mere memorization."

Regarding instructional management, the teacher observed: "The Jigsaw structure created natural accountability—students knew they had to master their section to successfully teach their peers. This responsibility motivated engagement even for students who typically showed little interest in academic tasks." When queried about recommendations for future implementation, the teacher suggested, "I would definitely use this model again, but I would prepare more detailed guidance materials for students and allow additional time for expert group discussions. Some groups worked efficiently, while others needed more support to reach consensus."

#### Student Interview Results:

Semi-structured interviews with six purposefully selected students revealed consistent positive perceptions: Syiva Qaila Natasya Sugama (Post-intervention score: 85) stated: "The Jigsaw way was more fun and easier to understand than just listening to the teacher explain everything. Working in groups, we could discuss and ask each other questions until everyone understood'."

Intan Nur'aeni (Post-intervention score: 90) observed: "I liked being the 'expert' on my part of the story. It felt important to teach my group members what I learned, and when they explained their parts to me, I understood the whole story better."

Ridho Pratama (post-intervention score: 82) commented, "This model helped because I could talk about what I did not understand with other students who studied the same part. The teacher did not have to explain everything—we helped each other figure it out."

These qualitative data indicate that the students recognized and appreciated the cognitive and social benefits of the Jigsaw model, particularly in terms of improving comprehension clarity, engagement motivation, peer collaboration, and discussion skill development.

#### *D. Discussion*

The substantial improvement in student comprehension of fable texts following the implementation of the Jigsaw model aligns with extensive research demonstrating the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing academic achievement and fostering positive educational experiences (Pase et al., 2025). These results empirically support several theoretical propositions.

First, Individual Accountability Enhanced Engagement: By assigning each student responsibility for a specific text analysis component and establishing clear expectations that students would teach this content to peers, the Jigsaw structure created individual accountability that motivated careful learning and conscientious engagement (Andi Nurhasanah & Ibni Azka, 2025). Students recognized that incomplete or superficial understanding would compromise their ability to fulfill their teaching responsibilities to base group members, thereby providing extrinsic motivation for mastery learning.

Second, Specialized Expertise Fostered Investment: Positioning students as "content experts" within their assigned domains enhanced their self-concept and created psychological investment in their success. After the intervention, students frequently referenced the pride and satisfaction associated with successfully teaching their peers, indicating that this psychological dimension contributed meaningfully to engagement and learning persistence (Neumeier et al., 2026).

Third, Peer Teaching Enhanced Comprehension: Research on peer teaching consistently documents that students often explain concepts more effectively to classmates than teachers explain to students, as peers intuitively recognize common misconceptions and employ vocabulary that is accessible to same-age learners. The interview data supported this proposition, with students reporting increased comprehension clarity when peers explained content in a student-friendly language compared to teacher explanations. Fourth, Reduced Anxiety through Peer Support: Smaller-group peer interactions create a psychologically safer environment for expressing confusion, asking questions, and working through misunderstandings compared to whole-class contexts where students may fear public embarrassment. Qualitative data indicated that students were more likely to ask clarification questions and admit confusion within peer expert groups than in teacher-directed instruction. Fifth, Multiple Exposure Opportunities: The Jigsaw structure ensured multiple exposures to the same content across different contexts: —individual reading, expert group discussion, peer teaching to base group, and whole-class discussion. This repeated exposure facilitates the encoding of information into long-term memory and allows students to consolidate their understanding through varied explanatory frameworks and perspectives.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

This study examined the effect of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model on fourth-grade students' ability to understand and analyze the intrinsic elements of fable texts. The results provide compelling empirical evidence that the jigsaw model significantly enhances comprehension outcomes. The dramatic improvement from an average baseline score of 63 (64.3% of students below the mastery criteria) to an average post-intervention score of 88 (with 100% of students exceeding the mastery criteria) demonstrates the substantial impact of this instructional approach. Qualitative data from interviews and observations revealed that students and teachers perceived the jigsaw model as engaging, effective, and conducive to meaningful learning experiences. Students reported enhanced clarity of comprehension, increased motivation, improved peer collaboration skills, and greater self-confidence in their ability to analyze literary texts. These findings suggest that the Jigsaw cooperative learning model represents an effective, evidence-based approach for developing elementary students' reading comprehension and analytical capabilities, while simultaneously fostering collaborative skills and positive academic dispositions. Educational practitioners considering the implementation of innovative instructional strategies should seriously consider the Jigsaw model application to develop students' literary analysis capabilities and promote more engaged collaborative learning communities within their classrooms.

### **Funding Statement**

"No external funding was received for this study."

### Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

### Data Access Statement

A Data Access Statement is a section in a scientific publication or research report that explains how the data used or generated in a study can be accessed by readers or other researchers. This statement aims to promote transparency, support research reproducibility, and comply with open-access policies, where applicable.

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  - "The data supporting this study are openly available in Zenodo at [DOI:10.xxxx/zenodo.xxxx]."
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Purpose of a Data Access Statement:

- Reproducibility: Enables other researchers to replicate or verify the findings.
- Collaboration: Encourages further collaboration by sharing data.
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### Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks all people and institutions in most cases and the sponsor and financial support acknowledgments.

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