

# Improving Understanding of Intrinsic Elements of Short Stories Through the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) Model in Grade VI Elementary School Students

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This study aims to improve sixth-grade students' understanding of intrinsic elements in short stories through the use of the STAD cooperative learning model. The participants consisted of 21 students from SD Katolik 1 St. Yohanes Tomohon. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis & McTaggart model, consisting of two cycles involving planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through short story comprehension tests, observations, and documentation. The findings show an increase in students' comprehension after applying the STAD model. Initially, students scored an average of 9 out of 10 questions. After the intervention, the average scores increased, and more students answered all questions correctly. These results indicate that the STAD model is effective in enhancing students' understanding of intrinsic elements in short stories.

**Keywords:** comprehension, short story, STAD

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## 1. Introduction

Indonesian language learning in elementary schools plays a crucial role in developing literacy skills, particularly reading skills, which form the foundation for understanding various texts. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes the importance of understanding narrative texts as part of strengthening the Pancasila student profile, particularly in critical and creative reasoning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). In sixth grade, one of the essential materials is short stories, which contain intrinsic elements such as characters, plot, setting, theme, and moral. Mastery of these elements is necessary for students to conduct comprehensive text analysis.

However, in practice, many students still struggle to identify the intrinsic elements of short stories. They can read stories but are unable to accurately map their structure. Research by Sari and Rahmawati (2023) explains that this difficulty often arises because learning is still teacher-centered, resulting in students only listening to explanations without opportunities for critical thinking and discussion. Kusumawati and Nurhadi (2024) also found that short story learning in a number of elementary schools still involves minimal group work.

One-way learning makes it difficult for students to understand the story's message, distinguish between main and secondary characters, and follow the plot. Furthermore, students are rarely given space to work together and share their understanding, even though collaboration is crucial for better organizing and conveying information.

The Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) learning model is a modern form of cooperative learning that is effective in improving students' literacy and comprehension skills. In this model, students work in heterogeneous groups to study the material together, followed by individual assessments that contribute to the group score (Slavin, 2020). This approach provides opportunities for each student to actively participate, discuss, and help each other understand the material, including the intrinsic elements of the short story. Thus, STAD encourages individual responsibility while strengthening collaboration within the study group.

The STAD model has been proven effective in improving reading comprehension at various levels of education. Research by Putra and Lestari (2024) showed that using audio media before group discussions facilitates students' understanding of the storyline, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of the intrinsic elements. These findings are relevant to teaching short stories in elementary schools, which utilize audio media as an initial catalyst for understanding.

Furthermore, cooperative learning in groups helps create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Kusumawati and Nurhadi (2024) found that small group discussions encourage students to be more active in asking questions, collaborating, and expressing opinions, thereby significantly improving their understanding of the material. In STAD, individual assessments that contribute to group grades also motivate students to study more seriously.

At St. Yohanes 1 Catholic Elementary School in Tomohon, teachers have implemented cooperative learning through structured steps in the lesson plan, starting with introductory activities using audio media to forming discussion groups. Initial test results indicated that although student grades were quite good, some students still lacked a proper understanding of intrinsic elements, such as characters and the message. Therefore, classroom action research is needed to apply the STAD model in a more systematic and measurable manner.

The research gap lies in the limited number of classroom action studies that specifically examine the effectiveness of STAD in improving understanding of intrinsic elements of short stories using audio media. Most existing research focuses solely on general reading comprehension without addressing more specific elements of literary literacy.

Based on this situation, this study was conducted to improve sixth-grade students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories through the STAD learning model. This research is expected to assist teachers in selecting appropriate learning strategies to improve reading literacy skills and enrich scientific research related to the use of cooperative learning in Indonesian language instruction.

## 1. Method

This study used the Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, which includes four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The action was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle designed to improve the learning process based on the evaluation results of the previous cycle.

The subjects were 21 sixth-grade students of St. Yohanes Tomohon Catholic Elementary School 1 in the 2025 academic year. All students were selected because the classroom action research aimed to improve learning in a particular class. The learning model used was the STAD cooperative learning model. In the initial stage, students were placed in their original groups, then moved to expert groups to study one of the intrinsic elements of the short story in depth, such as character, plot, setting, theme, or moral. Afterward, they returned to their original groups to share their understanding with their group members.

The research instruments included a short story comprehension test, observation sheets, field notes, and analysis of documents such as lesson plans and student worksheets. The comprehension test consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions that assessed students' ability to understand the elements of the short story. Each correct answer was given a score of 1.

Data collection was conducted through learning achievement tests, observations of student activities, and documentation. Data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive techniques to observe student grade development in each cycle, as well as qualitative descriptive analysis to describe student activity and learning processes.

## 2. Results and Discussion

This classroom action research was conducted to improve students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories through the application of the STAD learning model. Based on the pre-action results, it was discovered that students' understanding was actually quite good, but not evenly distributed across all students. Some students still made errors in identifying characters, plot, and story messages, necessitating more structured corrective actions. Therefore, the STAD model was chosen because it provides students with the opportunity to learn collaboratively in heterogeneous groups, while still emphasizing individual responsibility through individual quizzes. During the research, teachers and researchers followed the principles of Classroom Action Research (CAR), which consist of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. These four stages were carried out systematically to ensure that the actions were effective and resulted in tangible improvements in student understanding. The following is a description of each stage implemented in this research:

### Planning Stage

In the planning stage, teachers and researchers prepared learning materials before the actions were administered. Activities carried out included:

- a. Analyzing the pre-action results, which revealed that although some students received high scores, their understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories was not evenly distributed.
- b. Determine the objectives of the action, namely to improve students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories through the STAD model.
- c. Develop a lesson plan that includes the STAD learning steps, including:
  1. forming heterogeneous groups,
  2. providing short story material,
  3. group discussion activities,
  4. administering individual quizzes.
- d. Develop a student worksheet (LKS) for analyzing intrinsic elements, which contains guidelines for analyzing characters, plot, setting, theme, and moral.
- e. Prepare learning media, including short story audio that will be played at the beginning of the lesson.
- f. Develop research instruments, including:
  1. student activity observation sheet,
  2. group collaboration observation sheet,
  3. learning outcome test to measure short story comprehension,
  4. field notes.

This planning aims to ensure that the actions taken are directed and align with the learning objectives.

### Implementation Phase (Acting)

The implementation phase is the implementation of the learning plan using the STAD model. The activities include:

1. Initial Activities
  1. The teacher plays an audio recording of the short story as an initial trigger.
  2. Students listen to the story and identify parts they understand.
  3. The teacher explains the learning objectives.
2. Core Activities (STAD Implementation)
  1. Form heterogeneous groups of 4–5 students.
  2. Each group receives a worksheet analyzing the intrinsic elements of the short story.
  3. Students reread the short story and begin discussing the characters, plot, setting, theme, and moral.
  4. The teacher acts as a facilitator, assisting groups experiencing difficulties.
  5. After the group discussion, each student must still understand the material because quizzes are given individually, in accordance with the STAD principle.

### Closing Activities

1. The teacher administers an individual quiz in the form of a short story analysis test.
2. Students collect the test results.
3. The teacher provides brief feedback.

This implementation encourages students to actively work together while remaining individually responsible for understanding the material.

### Observation Stage

In this stage, the researcher records everything that occurs during the action. Observations focus on the student learning process and outcomes. The observation results include:

**Table 1.** Summary of Learning Outcomes Pre-Action, Cycle

Stage	Number of Students Grades 10	Number of Students Grades 9	Number of Students Grades 8	General Information
Pre-Action	11	9	1	Good understanding but not yet evenly distributed
Cycle	17	4	0	Significant and evenly distributed improvement

**Table 2.** Average Improvement in Student Learning Outcomes

Stage	Number of Students Grades	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Dominant Score	General Information
Pre-Action	21	10	8	9-10	Basic understanding is good but not yet evenly distributed
Cycle	21	10	9	10	All students are complete and stable

**Table 3.** Presentation of Learning Completion in Each Cycle

Stage	Total Completed	Percentage	Description
Pre-Action	20 of 21	95%	Almost all completed, but not evenly distributed
Cycle	21 of 21	100%	All students completed and achieved stable understanding

**Table 4.** Summary Of Student Activities And Activeness In Each Cycle

Observation Aspect	Pre-Action	Cycle	Development Description
Discussion Activeness	Low	High	Students are more confident and active.
Explanation Skills	Low	High	Students are able to explain material independently.
Group Collaboration	Currently	Very good	Collaboration has increased significantly.
Accuracy of Short Story Analysis	Currently	Very good	Intrinsic element analysis is more precise and stable.

The results of the study showed that students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories improved after the implementation of the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) learning model. In the pre-action phase, most students demonstrated a fairly good basic understanding, but this understanding was not evenly distributed. Of the 21 students, 11 earned a score of 10, 9 earned a score of 9, and 1 earned a score of 8. Although the average scores were relatively high, these findings indicate that some students still struggled to identify elements such as characters, plot, and moral.

After the implementation of the STAD model in a combined cycle, significant and more evenly distributed improvements were observed. In this model, students work in heterogeneous groups, discuss, and help each other understand the material before individual evaluations contribute to the group's grade. This process encourages responsibility and active participation by each member.

During the cycle, students demonstrated greater engagement in group discussions. They were more confident when explaining the results of their analysis of intrinsic elements, and collaboration among students was significantly improved compared to the pre-action phase. The teacher also provided a more structured analysis guide to help students understand the steps for analyzing short stories more easily.

The test results after the combined cycle showed a clear improvement. 17 students scored 10, while four students scored 9, and no students scored below the completion criteria. The highest score was 10, the lowest score increased from 8 to 9, and the dominant score was 10. These findings indicate that student understanding became more equitable and stable after the implementation of STAD.

Overall, the implementation of the STAD model not only improved student achievement but also strengthened student collaboration, active discussion, and confidence in understanding the intrinsic elements of short stories. This cooperative learning model has been proven to create a more effective, collaborative, and student-centered learning environment.

### Reflection Stage

The reflection stage is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken during the cycle. The reflection results from the combined cycle indicate that:

- a. The implementation of STAD significantly and equitably improved understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories.
- b. A more structured analysis guide helps students organize their understanding of the material.
- c. Group discussions have proven effective in helping students clarify poorly understood sections of the material.
- d. No further action or subsequent cycle is required because:
  1. all students have achieved learning completion,
  2. the lowest score has increased from 8 to 9,
  3. the majority of students are at a dominant score of 10,
  4. the CAR success indicators have been achieved.

## Discussion

The improvement in scores from the pre-action to the combined cycle indicates that the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) learning model is effective in helping students understand the intrinsic elements of short stories. This model emphasizes cooperation in heterogeneous groups, while simultaneously demanding individual responsibility through individual tests or quizzes. With an assessment system based on individual improvement, each student is motivated to study more seriously because their learning outcomes will contribute to the group's grade. This sense of responsibility directly impacts students' understanding of analyzing characters, plot, setting, theme, and moral of the short story.

The results showed that in the pre-action stage, students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of the short story was uneven, although most students achieved good scores. Many students still made mistakes in identifying main and secondary characters, were unable to accurately distinguish between plot lines, and lacked a grasp of the moral of the story. After implementing STAD in one learning cycle, significant and stable improvement occurred. The dominant student score was 10, and no student scored below the completion standard. This demonstrates that heterogeneous group-based cooperative learning provides students with the opportunity to help each other, clarify their understanding, and gradually strengthen their literary analysis skills.

These research findings align with the findings of Sari and Rahmawati (2023), who stated that cooperative learning models can improve understanding of narrative structure through interaction between students. Through group discussions, students share their understanding and correct any misconceptions they may have. Similarly, the use of audio media in learning helps students understand the storyline more clearly before conducting analysis, as confirmed by Putra and Lestari (2024), who found that the use of audio can enhance student readiness for text-based learning.

The STAD model has also been shown to increase student confidence and engagement in the learning process. During group discussions, students appeared more confident in expressing opinions, asking questions, and providing input to their groupmates. This increased engagement aligns with the research findings of Kusumawati and Nurhadi (2024), who stated that cooperative learning can create a more interactive learning environment and encourage students to actively participate in the process of understanding the material.

The STAD learning model used in this study not only improved students' final grades but also improved the classroom learning process and atmosphere. Providing more structured analytical guidance and opportunities for group discussions helped students better understand the intrinsic elements of short stories. Furthermore, this model encouraged individual participation, as group success depended on the efforts of each member.

Overall, the implementation of STAD in this study had a positive impact on both learning outcomes and the quality of the learning process. Students became more active and collaborative, and were able to analyze the intrinsic elements of short stories more accurately. This confirms that STAD is a relevant and effective cooperative learning model for Indonesian language learning in elementary schools, particularly in literary materials such as short stories.

## 3. Conclusion

The implementation of the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) cooperative learning model has proven effective in improving sixth-grade elementary school students' understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories. The study found a significant improvement from the pre-action phase to the

combined cycle, with the highest and most dominant score reaching 10, and no students scoring below the completion standard. This improvement demonstrates that the STAD model is capable of helping students understand intrinsic elements such as characters, plot, setting, theme, and moral in a more in-depth and structured manner. This success is due to the characteristics of STAD learning, which emphasizes cooperation in heterogeneous groups while simultaneously demanding individual responsibility through individual evaluation. The combination of group work and individual assessment encourages students to actively discuss, support each other, and ensure they understand the material before facing the final test. Furthermore, the use of audio media as learning catalysts strengthens students' readiness to understand the story content before conducting analysis. The STAD learning process also positively impacts classroom dynamics. Students become more confident, more engaged in discussions, and demonstrate improved ability to explain their analysis results to their peers. This collaborative learning environment makes the learning process more interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful for students. Based on research findings, teachers are advised to use the STAD model in lessons that require in-depth text analysis, such as short stories or other literary materials. This model not only improves learning outcomes but also fosters students' collaboration, communication, and individual responsibility skills. The application of STAD can be a relevant alternative learning strategy for improving reading literacy and literary text comprehension in elementary schools.

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