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## IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION USING DISCOVERY LEARNING AT ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMAN 1 BATUKLIANG

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ABSTRACTS	ARTICLE INFO
<p>Reading comprehension was identified as a crucial component of language acquisition, enabling students to derive meaning from written texts and apply this understanding to academic tasks. Despite its importance, observations conducted at SMAN 1 Batukliang revealed several persistent challenges. Students exhibited difficulties in pinpointing main ideas, understanding specific details, and comprehending overall text structures. These issues often led to reduced academic performance and lower engagement in learning activities. This study aimed to enhance students' reading comprehension through the implementation of the Discovery Learning method among eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Batukliang. Conducted using Classroom Action Research (CAR), the study included one cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data collection involved pre-test and post-test assessments alongside observation sheets. The findings showed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension skills. The pre-test average score of 62.34 rose to 82.03 in the post-test. These results demonstrated that Discovery Learning effectively fostered deeper understanding and engagement in reading activities.</p>	<p><b>Article History:</b> <i>Received: April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025</i> <i>Revised: April 13<sup>th</sup> 2025</i> <i>Published: April 2025</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Reading Comprehension, Discovery Learning, Classroom Action Research</i></p>

### INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension was identified as a crucial component of language acquisition, enabling students to derive meaning from written texts and apply this understanding to academic tasks. Despite its importance, observations conducted at SMAN 1 Batukliang revealed several persistent challenges. Students exhibited difficulties in pinpointing main ideas, understanding specific details, and comprehending overall text structures. These issues often led to reduced academic performance and lower engagement in learning activities.

To address these challenges, the study implemented the Discovery Learning method, a student-centered approach that emphasizes exploration, analysis, and independent knowledge construction (Mayer, 2003). This method allowed students to actively engage with the material, fostering a deeper understanding and critical thinking skills. For example, during the intervention, students were encouraged to work collaboratively in identifying text components, such as main ideas and supporting details, and to use contextual clues for vocabulary comprehension.

Discovery Learning aligns with modern pedagogical practices that prioritize active learning and problem-solving over rote memorization. By placing students at the center of the learning process, this method aims to transform reading comprehension into an interactive and reflective activity. This research, therefore, sought to evaluate the effectiveness of Discovery Learning in overcoming identified challenges and enhancing the reading comprehension skills and engagement of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Batukliang.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving 32 eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Batukliang during the 2023/2024 academic year. The CAR approach allowed for iterative cycles of intervention and evaluation to achieve the desired outcomes. The process was meticulously structured to ensure the method's alignment with research goals and the comprehensive development of students' reading skills.

### **Research Procedures**

#### **1. Planning**

Developed lesson plans integrating Discovery Learning principles, including activities such as text exploration, group discussions, and context-based vocabulary analysis. Created detailed observation sheets to capture qualitative data on classroom dynamics, student participation, and teacher-student interactions. Designed pre-test and post-test instruments to measure specific aspects of reading comprehension, such as identifying main ideas, inferring meaning, and summarizing. Conducted an initial briefing with participating teachers to ensure uniform understanding of the research objectives and procedures.

#### **2. Action**

Implemented Discovery Learning activities in a progressive manner across one cycles. In Cycle 1, the focus was on introducing Discovery Learning concepts and familiarizing students with active learning tasks. Activities included guided reading, identifying key text components, and collaborative problem-solving exercises. Emphasized independent application of skills acquired in the first cycle. Students worked on more complex texts, practiced critical analysis, and engaged in peer teaching sessions to reinforce their understanding. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes, comprising warm-up exercises, main activities, and reflective discussions.

#### **3. Observation**

Systematically observed and documented students' behaviors, levels of engagement,

and interactions during each session using the prepared observation sheets. Monitored group dynamics and individual participation, noting improvements or persistent challenges. Recorded qualitative feedback from students and teachers to assess their perceptions of the method's effectiveness.

#### **4. Reflection**

Conducted post-cycle analysis meetings to review findings from observations and test results. Identified key strengths of the approach, such as enhanced collaboration and improved critical thinking skills, as well as areas needing refinement, such as time management and support for slower learners. Adjusted instructional strategies for the subsequent cycle, incorporating additional scaffolding and targeted interventions for students facing difficulties.

#### **Instruments**

The study utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments to gather comprehensive data:

1. Tests: Pre-test: Administered prior to the intervention to establish baseline data on students' reading comprehension abilities. The test included multiple-choice and open-ended questions designed to assess skills such as identifying main ideas, understanding supporting details, and vocabulary usage. Post-test: Conducted at the end of each cycle to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning method. Results from the post-tests were compared with pre-test scores to determine improvements.
2. Observation Sheets: Detailed observation sheets were used to document classroom activities, focusing on student participation, interaction patterns, and the overall learning environment. These sheets included structured prompts for recording specific behaviors, such as instances of collaboration, critical questioning, and independent problem-solving.

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Pre-Test Results** The pre-test was conducted to establish a baseline for students' reading comprehension skills. The average score was 62.34, with only 15.62% of students meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75. These results indicated significant challenges in the students' ability to comprehend text, particularly in identifying main ideas, understanding contextual vocabulary, and extracting detailed information from passages. The pre-test highlighted the urgent need for effective instructional strategies to improve these skills. Observational data from the pre-test session also revealed that many students exhibited low engagement and lacked confidence when addressing comprehension tasks. This baseline assessment underscored the necessity of targeted interventions, such as the Discovery Learning method, to address these shortcomings.

**Post-Test Results** Following the implementation of the Discovery Learning method, the post-test results indicated a remarkable improvement in students' reading comprehension abilities. The average score increased to 82.03, with 87.5% of students achieving or exceeding the KKM. The gains observed across various comprehension metrics, such as identifying the main ideas and analyzing vocabulary within context, confirmed the

effectiveness of this method. Additionally, qualitative observations during the post- test revealed heightened levels of student confidence and active participation in completing the tasks. Students demonstrated improved critical thinking skills and were better equipped to independently analyze and interpret text.

The results demonstrated that Discovery Learning effectively enhanced students' reading comprehension by fostering active engagement and critical thinking. Students became increasingly adept at pinpointing key ideas, differentiating between relevant and irrelevant details, and using contextual clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. The structured activities, such as collaborative group discussions and guided explorations, contributed to a more interactive and supportive learning environment.

These findings are consistent with prior research by Maristia et al. (2020), which emphasized the success of Discovery Learning in improving comprehension across various text types. The flexibility of the approach allowed for its adaptation to the unique needs of the class, making it particularly effective in addressing the specific challenges identified during the pre-test phase.

The implementation process, however, was not without its challenges. While most students showed notable improvement, a minority encountered difficulties in adapting to the method's demands for active participation and independent problem-solving. These challenges were mitigated through scaffolding techniques, such as providing step-by-step guidance and peer support during group activities. Furthermore, time constraints posed an obstacle during the initial cycle, necessitating adjustments to the pacing of lesson delivery in subsequent sessions.

In addition to its impact on academic outcomes, the Discovery Learning method positively influenced classroom dynamics. Students developed stronger collaborative skills and a sense of shared responsibility for their learning. This shift towards a more student-centered classroom environment not only improved academic performance but also promoted a more inclusive and engaging atmosphere for learning.

The study's findings have several implications for educators. Firstly, integrating Discovery Learning into the curriculum can be a powerful tool for addressing comprehension deficiencies and fostering deeper understanding. Secondly, the method's emphasis on active engagement aligns with broader educational goals of developing critical thinking and lifelong learning skills. Lastly, the challenges encountered during the study highlight the importance of flexibility in lesson planning and the provision of adequate support for students at different skill levels.

## CONCLUSION

By having the explanation of The implementation of the Discovery Learning method significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Batukliang. It can be stated that the approach's emphasis on active participation, independent exploration, and collaborative learning fostered deeper engagement with texts and enhanced critical thinking abilities. The method proved particularly effective in addressing the initial challenges identified during the pre-test phase, resulting in substantial gains in both academic performance and classroom dynamics.

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