



The Pedagogy of Transformation: Educating through Kingdom Parables - A Study at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage

Lisna Sitanggang

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: lisnastg@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the pedagogy of transformation through the teaching of Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun. The research focuses on how the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers contributes to students' transformative learning, particularly in internalizing Kingdom values. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed involving 116 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers. Data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires measuring teachers' pedagogical competence and students' transformative learning, as well as a cognitive test on Kingdom parables. The instruments were validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple regression. The findings reveal that the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers is in the high category, indicating strong performance in understanding learners, planning instruction, and facilitating classroom learning. Students' cognitive understanding of Kingdom parables is also relatively high; however, their reflective internalization of Kingdom values is only moderate. Inferential analysis shows a significant positive relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and students' transformative learning outcomes ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$), with pedagogical competence contributing substantially to learning variance. The results suggest that while narrative transmission is effective, deeper transformative formation requires more participatory and reflective pedagogical strategies. The study concludes that strengthening pedagogical content knowledge, multimodal media use, and dialogical learning approaches is essential for enhancing transformative Christian education. Future research is recommended to explore ecological factors influencing faith formation through mixed-method and longitudinal designs.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Christian Religious Education, Transformation

INTRODUCTION

Transformative pedagogy has increasingly become a central concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in faith-based education where learning is expected to

shape not only cognition but also character and spiritual identity. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), the teaching of biblical materials carries a formative mandate that extends beyond knowledge transmission toward the holistic transformation of learners. Teachers of Christian Religious Education (*Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen/PAK*) are therefore called to employ pedagogical approaches that enable students to internalize biblical truths meaningfully within their daily lives. One of the most powerful biblical teaching models that supports transformative learning is the use of Kingdom parables. According to Shulman (1987), effective teaching requires the integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge into pedagogical content knowledge, a framework highly relevant for teachers who interpret and communicate parabolic teachings to young learners. The parables of the Kingdom of God occupy a central place in the teaching ministry of Jesus. These narratives are pedagogically rich because they translate profound theological truths into concrete, relatable stories. Scholars note that parables function not merely as illustrations but as transformative invitations that challenge listeners to reframe their worldview and behavior (Snodgrass, 2008). In the context of elementary education, this narrative form is particularly effective because children tend to engage more deeply with story-based learning than with abstract doctrinal explanations. The pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in utilizing Kingdom parables becomes a strategic factor in fostering transformative Christian learning.

Educational theory also supports the transformative potential of narrative pedagogy. Mezirow (2000) emphasizes that transformative learning occurs when learners critically reflect on meaning perspectives and experience shifts in understanding that influence behavior. When Kingdom parables are taught effectively, they can function as catalysts for such reflection by connecting biblical messages with students' lived experiences. However, the effectiveness of this process depends heavily on the teacher's ability to facilitate dialogical, reflective, and contextually meaningful learning environments. Without adequate pedagogical competence, parable teaching risks becoming merely moral storytelling without deeper spiritual impact. The implementation of Christian Religious Education in public schools is guided by national competency standards that require teachers to understand learner characteristics, design meaningful instruction, implement interactive learning, and conduct authentic assessment (Mulyasa, 2013). Despite these standards, empirical observations in many primary schools indicate that CRE instruction often remains teacher-centered and text-focused. Previous studies have shown that when biblical teaching relies heavily on lecture methods, students may demonstrate cognitive recall but show limited evidence of value internalization (Groome, 2011). This gap is particularly relevant in the teaching of Kingdom parables, which require interpretive engagement rather than rote memorization. SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun, provides a meaningful context for examining this issue. The school serves 116 Christian students and is supported by 8 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This demographic composition offers a conducive environment for Christian instruction while also presenting an opportunity to evaluate the actual pedagogical practices used in parable-based teaching. Preliminary informal observations suggest that while students are generally familiar with biblical stories, the depth of reflective understanding and personal application varies considerably among learners. This situation raises important questions about how transformative the current pedagogy of

Kingdom parables truly is within the classroom context. Kingdom parables are intended to reveal the nature of God's reign and to invite listeners into transformed living. From a pedagogical perspective, they require interpretive scaffolding, dialogical engagement, and contextual application. The intersection of these two dimensions places significant responsibility on the CRE teacher's pedagogical competence. When teachers successfully integrate narrative explanation, guided reflection, and life application, parables can function as powerful instruments of character formation. Conversely, when pedagogical mediation is weak, the transformative intent of the parables may not be fully realized. This study aims to analyze the pedagogy of transformation through the teaching of Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun. Specifically, the research seeks to (1) examine the level of pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in parable-based instruction, (2) describe students' understanding and internalization of Kingdom values, and (3) analyze the relationship between teacher pedagogy and students' transformative learning outcomes. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of pedagogical content knowledge in Christian education and practically to the improvement of CRE instructional quality in Indonesian primary schools.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used to examine the pedagogy of transformation through the teaching of Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows objective measurement of teachers' pedagogical competence and students' transformative learning outcomes using numerical data and statistical analysis. The descriptive component was intended to portray the existing condition of parable-based instruction, while the correlational component was used to determine the strength of the relationship between pedagogical competence and students' internalization of Kingdom values. This design is appropriate for educational settings where variables are observed in their natural context without experimental manipulation. The research site, SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, was chosen purposively due to its significant Christian student population and the active implementation of Christian Religious Education (CRE). The population consisted of 116 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. Because the student population was manageable, the study applied total sampling for students, meaning all 116 students were included as respondents. For the teacher group, saturated sampling was used, involving all eight Christian teachers to obtain a comprehensive picture of pedagogical competence within the school context. This sampling strategy ensured adequate representation and minimized sampling bias. The primary independent variable in this study was the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in teaching Kingdom parables. This construct was operationalized based on national teacher competency standards and relevant pedagogical literature (Mulyasa, 2013; Shulman, 1987). The indicators included: understanding student characteristics, planning parable-based instruction, implementing interactive and reflective learning, utilizing learning media and narrative strategies, conducting assessment of value internalization, and providing feedback and follow-up learning. The dependent variable was students' transformative learning outcomes, operationalized as students'

understanding and internalization of Kingdom values reflected in cognitive comprehension, reflective awareness, and behavioral intention. Data were collected using three structured instruments. The Teacher Pedagogical Competence Questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = very low to 5 = very high) to measure teachers' self-reported competence in parable pedagogy. Second, the Student Transformative Learning Questionnaire measured students' perceptions of classroom experiences and their internalization of Kingdom values. Third, a Student Learning Test consisting of multiple-choice and short-answer items assessed students' cognitive understanding of selected Kingdom parables. All instruments underwent content validation by experts in Christian Religious Education and educational measurement to ensure construct relevance and clarity. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.70 indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Data collection was carried out during the second semester of the academic year with permission from the school leadership. Respondents completed the questionnaires under researcher supervision to ensure standard administration procedures. Ethical considerations were observed, including voluntary participation, anonymity of respondents, and the use of data solely for research purposes. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) to determine the level of pedagogical competence and student transformative outcomes. Prior to inferential testing, assumption tests for normality and linearity were conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and ANOVA linearity test. Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was then applied to examine the relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and students' transformative learning. To determine the predictive contribution of pedagogical competence, simple linear regression analysis was also performed. The level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Through this analytical procedure, the study sought to provide an empirically grounded understanding of how the pedagogy of Kingdom parables contributes to transformative Christian learning in the primary school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study set out to examine the pedagogy of transformation through the teaching of Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun, with particular attention to the relationship between the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' transformative learning outcomes. The quantitative analysis involved responses from 116 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers. Prior to conducting the main statistical procedures, the dataset was subjected to prerequisite testing to ensure the validity of subsequent inferential analysis. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test indicated that both the pedagogical competence variable and the student transformative learning variable were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). The linearity test further confirmed that the relationship between the two variables met the assumptions required for Pearson correlation and regression analysis. These preliminary findings established that the dataset was statistically appropriate for parametric analysis and that the results could be interpreted with confidence. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the overall pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in teaching Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage was in the high category,

with a mean score of 4.09 on a five-point Likert scale. The relatively low standard deviation indicated that competence levels among the eight teachers were fairly consistent. This finding suggests that, procedurally, the teachers have demonstrated adequate mastery of the core pedagogical functions expected in Indonesian educational standards. Teachers reported strong capabilities in understanding learner characteristics, planning instruction, and maintaining a supportive classroom climate. These results align with the national teacher competency framework, which emphasizes the importance of pedagogical professionalism in facilitating meaningful learning (Mulyasa, 2013).

Among the measured dimensions, the strongest performance was observed in the teachers' understanding of student characteristics. Most teachers indicated that they intentionally adjusted their teaching of Kingdom parables using age-appropriate language, concrete examples, and narrative scaffolding. Classroom observations and student perception data supported this claim, showing that learners generally found the parable stories understandable and engaging. This finding is consistent with Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which stresses that effective teaching requires transforming subject matter into forms accessible to specific learners. In the context of elementary CRE, sensitivity to developmental readiness is particularly crucial because Kingdom parables often contain layered symbolic meanings that can easily exceed students' cognitive levels if not properly mediated. The planning dimension of pedagogical competence also demonstrated strong performance. Review of lesson plans indicated that most CRE instructional documents contained clearly articulated learning objectives, structured learning steps, relevant biblical references, and assessment procedures. Teachers appeared to align their instructional planning with national curriculum expectations and school-based CRE guidelines. However, closer qualitative inspection of the lesson plans revealed an important nuance. While the plans were administratively complete, the depth of transformative intent varied across teachers. Several lesson plans emphasized narrative retelling and moral extraction but provided limited space for guided reflection, dialogical interpretation, or contextual life application. This pattern suggests that structural pedagogical competence does not automatically translate into fully transformative pedagogy. As Groome (2011) argues, Christian education becomes truly formative when learners are invited into reflective appropriation of faith narratives rather than merely receiving moral conclusions.

The implementation of Kingdom parable teaching in the classroom generally reflected a teacher-guided interactive model. Storytelling emerged as the dominant instructional strategy, followed by question-and-answer sessions and brief whole-class discussions. Students reported that teachers often used familiar daily-life analogies to explain parables such as the mustard seed and the hidden treasure. This narrative-based approach is developmentally appropriate and likely contributed to the relatively high levels of student engagement observed during the study. From the perspective of transformative pedagogy, storytelling serves as an important entry point because it creates imaginative access to theological meaning. However, the data also revealed that more dialogical and student-centered strategies, such as small-group interpretation, role-play, reflective journaling, and problem-based biblical application, were used less frequently. This pedagogical pattern helps explain one of the most significant findings of the study:

students demonstrated strong narrative comprehension but more moderate levels of deeper value internalization. The student cognitive test produced a mean score of 80.3 (on a 0–100 scale), categorized as high. Most students were able to correctly identify key elements of the Kingdom parables, including characters, plot sequences, and explicit moral messages. This indicates that the information-transmission function of CRE instruction at the school is functioning effectively. However, when questionnaire items probed students' reflective awareness, such as their ability to explain how Kingdom values relate to their personal behavior or decision-making, the mean score declined to the moderate-high range. This pattern confirms Mezirow's (2000) assertion that transformative learning requires more than exposure to content; it requires structured opportunities for critical reflection and meaning reconstruction. The utilization of learning media emerged as the comparatively weakest dimension of teacher pedagogical competence, with a mean score of 3.74. Although still within the high category, both teacher self-reports and student perceptions indicated that classroom instruction relied primarily on textbooks, verbal narration, and whiteboard explanations. Visual media, digital storytelling, and experiential learning tools were used only occasionally. For elementary learners, this limitation is pedagogically significant because multimodal input often enhances both comprehension and retention. Darling-Hammond (2006) emphasizes that effective teachers employ varied instructional resources to support deeper engagement and differentiated learning pathways. The relatively modest performance of students in the reflective dimension of transformative learning may therefore be partially attributed to the limited integration of rich learning media.

Students' perceptions of the CRE learning environment were generally positive, with an overall mean of 4.05. Most students reported that teachers explained parables clearly, treated students respectfully, and created a spiritually supportive classroom atmosphere. This affective dimension is important because emotional safety and relational trust often function as prerequisites for transformative learning in faith education contexts. Nevertheless, students gave comparatively lower ratings to opportunities for small-group discussion, creative expression, and participatory exploration of parable meanings. This perception data triangulates with the teacher competence findings and strengthens the internal validity of the study. It indicates that both teachers and students recognize similar areas for pedagogical enrichment. Inferential analysis produced one of the most important findings of the study. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence in teaching Kingdom parables and students' transformative learning outcomes ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$). In educational research, this coefficient represents a strong relationship, providing empirical support for the theoretical framework of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). The finding indicates that classrooms led by teachers with higher pedagogical competence tend to produce students with deeper understanding and internalization of Kingdom values. This relationship is particularly meaningful in CRE because the teacher's role extends beyond information delivery to the mediation of spiritual meaning. Regression analysis further clarified the predictive contribution of pedagogical competence. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.42$) indicates that approximately 42 percent of the variance in students' transformative learning outcomes can be explained by the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers. In the context of educational studies,

this represents a substantial and practically meaningful effect size. At the same time, the remaining 58 percent of unexplained variance suggests the influence of additional ecological factors beyond classroom pedagogy. These likely include family religious practices, church involvement, peer influence, prior biblical exposure, and individual student motivation. This finding supports an ecological view of Christian formation, which understands faith development as occurring across interconnected environments rather than solely within the classroom.

The demographic context of SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage provides an instructive backdrop for interpreting these results. With 116 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, the school environment is structurally supportive of Christian Religious Education. One might assume that such a context would naturally produce high levels of Kingdom-value internalization. However, the data clearly demonstrate that favorable religious demographics alone do not guarantee transformative learning. Pedagogical intentionality remains the decisive factor. This insight is important for school leaders and policymakers who may otherwise overestimate the formative impact of religious homogeneity without attending to instructional quality. The findings highlight an important pedagogical tension. On the one hand, teachers at the research site have successfully ensured that students know the stories of the Kingdom. On the other hand, the movement from “knowing the parable” to “living the Kingdom” remains only partially realized. Groome (2011) emphasizes that faith education must intentionally guide learners through a process of critical reflection, personal appropriation, and communal practice. The current instructional pattern at the school appears to be positioned between informational and transformational pedagogy. While the foundation is strong, further pedagogical enrichment is needed to fully realize the transformative potential of Kingdom parables. The results also underscore the importance of strengthening specific dimensions of pedagogical practice. CRE teachers would benefit from deeper professional development in dialogical and inquiry-based biblical pedagogy. Kingdom parables are inherently interpretive texts that invite multiple layers of meaning-making. Instructional strategies such as guided small-group interpretation, role-play dramatization, reflective journaling, and project-based Kingdom application could help move students beyond surface comprehension. Greater integration of multimodal learning media, particularly visual storytelling, digital presentations, and contextual simulations, could enhance both engagement and conceptual depth. Assessment practices should gradually expand beyond recall-based testing toward instruments that capture reflective understanding and behavioral intention. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on transformative pedagogy in Christian education in several significant ways. Empirically, the study confirms that pedagogical competence is a strong predictor of students’ transformative learning in the context of Kingdom parable instruction. Conceptually, it extends the application of pedagogical content knowledge into the domain of narrative theology teaching in Indonesian primary schools. Practically, it identifies concrete areas for professional development that could enhance the formative impact of CRE instruction. The results and discussion demonstrate that the pedagogy of transformation through Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage is functioning at a generally strong but not yet optimal level. Teachers exhibit high procedural competence and create

positive learning environments, but the depth of student transformation indicates the need for more intentionally reflective, participatory, and media-rich pedagogy. Strengthening these dimensions represents a strategic pathway for enhancing both the academic quality and the spiritual formation outcomes of Christian Religious Education in Indonesian primary schools.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the pedagogy of transformation through the teaching of Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage, Simalungun, with particular attention to the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers and its relationship to students' transformative learning outcomes. Based on quantitative analysis involving 116 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, several important conclusions can be drawn. The overall pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in teaching Kingdom parables falls within the high category. Teachers demonstrated strong abilities in understanding student characteristics, planning instruction, implementing classroom learning, and maintaining a supportive spiritual atmosphere. These findings indicate that, procedurally, the teachers have met the expected professional standards for pedagogical practice in Indonesian primary education. The relatively consistent competence scores among teachers also suggest a stable instructional culture within the school. Students' learning outcomes show a positive but differentiated pattern. At the cognitive level, most students were able to recall and explain the narrative elements of Kingdom parables accurately. However, their deeper reflective understanding and personal internalization of Kingdom values were comparatively moderate. This indicates that while the transmission of biblical knowledge is functioning effectively, the transformative dimension of learning, namely the movement from knowing the parable to embodying its values, has not yet been fully optimized. This gap highlights the continuing need for CRE pedagogy that intentionally facilitates reflection, meaning-making, and life application. The study found a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and students' transformative learning outcomes ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$). Regression analysis further revealed that pedagogical competence accounts for approximately 42 percent of the variance in students' transformative learning. This represents a substantial educational effect and empirically reinforces the theoretical framework of pedagogical content knowledge. At the same time, the remaining unexplained variance indicates that students' spiritual formation is also influenced by broader ecological factors such as family religious practices, church involvement, peer environment, and individual motivation. The findings highlight specific areas for pedagogical strengthening. Although teachers demonstrate high overall competence, the utilization of multimodal learning media and the implementation of more participatory, dialogical learning strategies remain comparatively less developed. Instruction continues to rely heavily on teacher-guided storytelling, which effectively supports narrative comprehension but is less optimal for fostering deep transformative reflection. Enhancing inquiry-based discussion, collaborative interpretation, and contextual application activities would likely increase the formative impact of Kingdom parable instruction. The demographic context of the school, characterized by a fully Christian student cohort and supportive teaching staff,

provides a conducive environment for Christian Religious Education. However, the study clearly demonstrates that favorable religious composition alone does not guarantee transformative learning. Instructional quality, particularly the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers, remains the decisive factor in shaping meaningful faith-based education. In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed. CRE teachers are encouraged to deepen their pedagogical content knowledge specifically related to parable interpretation and transformative learning strategies. Schools should support continuous professional development focused on reflective and participatory pedagogy, as well as the integration of digital and visual learning media. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional variables, such as family, church, and motivational factors, using mixed-method or longitudinal designs to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of students' spiritual transformation. This study confirms that the pedagogy of transformation through Kingdom parables at SD Negeri 095167 Simpang Bage is functioning well at the procedural level but still holds significant potential for deeper formative impact. Strengthening reflective pedagogy, participatory learning, and media integration represents a strategic pathway for advancing the quality and spiritual effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in Indonesian primary schools.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Jossey-Bass.
- Groome, T. H. (2011). *Will there be faith? A new vision for educating and growing disciples*. HarperOne.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mulyasa, E. (2013). *Uji kompetensi dan penilaian kinerja guru*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Richards, L., & Lockhart, C. (2007). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schunk, D. H. (2012). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411>
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- Wright, N. T. (2012). *How God became king: The forgotten story of the Gospels*. HarperOne.

Yount, W. R. (2010). *Created to learn: A Christian teacher's introduction to educational psychology* (2nd ed.). B&H Academic.