



Identifying Learning Needs for Shot Writing Based on Story-Based Creative Learning to Develop Imagination of Junior High School Students

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Abstract. This study identifies the learning needs of short story writing oriented toward developing narrative imagination in junior high school students as an empirical basis for developing the Story-Based Creative Learning (SBCL) model. Using a descriptive qualitative approach within a research and development (R&D) framework, this needs analysis involved three Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong and 24 eighth-grade students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and analysis of lesson plan documentation and student work. Data were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model with triangulation of sources and techniques. The findings indicate that short story writing instruction is still dominated by conventional methods that do not optimally facilitate the development of students' narrative imagination. Teachers need a model with a clear syntactic structure, short story-based creative media, and standardized narrative imagination assessment instruments. Students need immersive learning experiences based on inspiring stories with imaginative freedom. The novelty of this study lies in the systematic integration of Story-Based Learning and Creative Learning into a single model specifically for developing narrative imagination—a gap unaddressed by previous research. These findings underlie the design of the SBCL model, which consists of five stages of syntax: story orientation, narrative exploration, imaginative construction, creative production, and narrative reflection.

Keywords: needs analysis; narrative imagination; shot stories; story based creative learning; junior high school students



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1. Introduction

The 21st-century educational paradigm places creativity, literacy, and imaginative thinking as core competencies that students must master (Beghetto, 2021). Indonesian language learning in junior high schools is no longer solely focused on mastering linguistic rules; it must also encourage students to convey ideas and experiences creatively through language. One concrete manifestation of this demand is the ability to write narrative texts, particularly short stories, which require students to construct vivid, complex, and meaningful imaginary worlds (Padilah, 2024). Short stories are not simply texts to be read; they are creative spaces where students learn to build characters, develop plots, and bring settings to life through the power of imagination.

Short story writing skills reflect the extent to which students are able to develop narrative imagination the cognitive and affective capacity to create, develop, and present stories in original and meaningful ways (Park, Kim, & Jung, 2024). Narrative imagination is not simply the ability to imagine, but rather an intellectual process involving an understanding of story structure,

emotional sensitivity, and the ability to synthesize experiences into a coherent narrative. However, the reality on the ground shows conditions that are far from ideal. Many junior high school students experience serious obstacles when writing independent short stories: they struggle to develop initial ideas into a coherent story, encounter dead ends in constructing a logical plot, and are unable to present characters and settings with strong character. The resulting work often feels flat, generic, and lacks depth of imagination.

This condition is not solely caused by students' limited abilities, but also by a mismatch between the learning approach implemented by teachers and the needs of developing narrative imagination (Fitriyani & Umam, 2025). This problem is exacerbated by the dominance of conventional methods in Indonesian language classes. A one-way lecture approach, assignments without adequate scaffolding, and minimal exploration of creative media make learning to write short stories a mechanical activity that does not stimulate creativity. Da (2024) emphasized that innovation in learning models and media is a critical factor in developing students' narrative creativity. When the learning process does not provide space for imaginative exploration, students lose the opportunity to develop their narrative potential optimally. Two approaches have proven promising in addressing this problem.

First, Story-Based Learning (SBL), which places stories as the center and primary medium of learning, is capable of creating a contextual, emotional, and imaginative learning ecosystem. Srisuk (2024) found that story-based learning significantly increased students' emotional engagement and literacy, while Rini (2025) demonstrated that storytelling activities encourage richer expression of ideas while strengthening language skills. Second, Creative Learning encourages students to generate new, meaningful ideas through active engagement in exploratory experiences (Beghetto, 2021). Runco and Jaeger (2016) added that true creativity is characterized by ideas that are both novel and useful two qualities that are at the heart of the narrative imagination being developed. While both approaches have proven effective separately, existing studies reveal a significant research gap.

Research on SBL generally focuses on improving general language skills, without specifically targeting the development of narrative imagination as a core competency. Short stories in these studies are often positioned as reading material (input) rather than as active vehicles for imaginative construction. Crucially, no research has explicitly integrated SBL and Creative Learning into a single, cohesive model specifically designed to develop narrative imagination in junior high school students (Fitriyani & Umam, 2025; Da, 2024; Park et al., 2024). This gap is both the novelty and justification for this research. Before an innovative model can be designed, the first and most fundamental step is to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis. A needs analysis serves as a bridge between actual conditions on the ground and the ideal conditions to be achieved.

It guides development, ensuring the resulting model is truly relevant and responsive to the needs of teachers and students. Without a solid needs analysis, model development risks producing a product that is theoretically elegant but practically sterile. This article presents a specific objective: to describe in depth the learning needs of short story writing to develop narrative imagination of junior high school students as an empirical basis for the development of the Story-Based Creative Learning (SBCL) model. By exploring the needs from the perspective of three Indonesian language teachers and 24 eighth-grade students, this article produces a comprehensive and scientifically accountable needs map.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in mapping the integration of SBL and Creative Learning in the context of Indonesian language learning, a study area that is still rarely explored. Practically, these findings provide concrete provisions for junior high school Indonesian language teachers to understand the challenges and opportunities in learning short story writing oriented towards the development of narrative imagination.

2. Methodology

This research is part of a research and development (R&D) program focused on the needs analysis stage as an empirical basis for developing the Story-Based Creative Learning (SBCL)

model. The approach used was descriptive qualitative with an exploratory field study design (Creswell, 2014). The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong, Sragen Regency, Central Java, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling based on the criteria of relevance and depth of information provided. Participants consisted of three Indonesian language teachers with at least three years of experience teaching short story writing and 24 eighth-grade students currently studying imaginative narrative texts.

The three teachers were selected to obtain a more diverse perspective on classroom learning conditions and needs, while the 24 students were selected from two eighth-grade classes, considering variations in writing ability (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were collected using three complementary techniques. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews with three teachers were conducted to explore the actual learning conditions, challenges encountered, and the need for a learning model. Second, focused interviews with 24 students were conducted to understand their learning experiences, difficulties encountered, and expectations regarding the short story writing process. Third, participant observation of the classroom learning process and documentation analysis, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and students' short stories, were conducted.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (teachers, students, and documents) and technical triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation), as well as member checking with participants to validate the researcher's interpretations (Moleong, 2017). This process produced an accurate needs map that served as a basis for developing the SBCL model in subsequent research stages.

3. Results and Discussions

This section presents the learning needs analysis obtained from interviews with three teachers and 24 students, supported by classroom observations and documentation analysis. The findings are presented in six interrelated sub-topics: (1) the actual conditions of short story writing instruction, (2) the profile of students' narrative imagination abilities, (3) needs from the teacher's perspective, (4) needs from the student's perspective, (5) factors inhibiting the development of narrative imagination, and (6) a needs synthesis as a basis for designing the SBCL model.

3.1 Current Conditions of Short Story Writing Learning

The analysis shows that short story writing instruction at SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong is still dominated by conventional methods that fail to optimize students' imaginative potential. The three teachers consistently use the lecture method to convey the intrinsic elements of short stories, followed immediately by writing assignments without adequate scaffolding. Students are positioned as passive recipients of information, and short story writing feels more like a burden than a meaningful creative experience. This pattern was confirmed in interviews with the three teachers. The first teacher stated: "I usually explain the elements of a short story first on the board, then ask students to write. But the results are always so-so; the stories are simple, and none of them are truly creative." The second teacher added: "We don't have a specific guide to developing students' imagination; we only have textbooks with theoretical explanations."

Meanwhile, the third teacher revealed: "Without good short story examples and step-by-step exercises, students are immediately confused when asked to write." These three statements demonstrate the lack of a pedagogical bridge between theoretical understanding of short stories and the imaginative process of creation. This finding aligns with Da (2024), who asserted that the lack of innovation in learning models and media is a major obstacle to the development of students' narrative creativity. Observations of 24 students' short stories reinforce this finding. Most of the short stories had linear and predictable plots, characters lacking strong characterization, and settings that lacked vivid depictions. Students appeared to write what they formally believed was "true," rather than what they truly imagined.

Fitriyani and Umam (2025) found a similar phenomenon: students struggled to develop storylines independently because they were not accustomed to being given space for imaginative exploration in the learning process. An analysis of the lesson plans used by the three teachers revealed that learning objectives were oriented more toward knowledge of short stories than toward creative writing skills. Competency achievement indicators were dominated by low-level verbs such as "mention," "explain," and "identify," with no indicators explicitly targeting imaginative abilities. This suggests that the problem lies not only in teaching practice but also in lesson planning, which does not yet support the development of narrative imagination.

3.2 Students' Narrative Imagination Skills Profile

An analysis of 24 students' short stories revealed four consistently recurring patterns of weakness. First, weaknesses in originality: most students produced stories with very generic themes like school friendships, sports matches, or family vacations, without any point of view or imaginative touches that differentiate one work from another. Second, weaknesses in character development: the characters presented tend to be flat and lack psychological depth; motivation, inner conflict, and character development are almost never present. Third, weaknesses in plot construction: the plot is constructed in a very linear manner with a simple beginning middle-end structure, without narrative surprises or satisfying conflict resolutions. Fourth, weaknesses in setting description: place, time, and atmosphere are mentioned functionally without vivid sensory details.

These patterns of weakness are highly consistent with the findings of Park, Kim, and Jung (2024) that low narrative imagination skills are characterized by students' inability to construct complex, original, and meaningful story worlds. Nurgiyantoro (2018) added that the quality of a short story is largely determined by the integrity and depth of its intrinsic elements, a clear benchmark not yet achieved in the works analyzed. This situation further reinforces the urgency of the presence of a learning model specifically designed to develop students' narrative imagination systematically and progressively.

3.3 Learning Needs from a Teacher's Prespective

In-depth interviews with three Indonesian language teachers revealed three pressing needs that are not yet met by existing learning models. First, the need for a model with clear syntax and structured operational steps. The first teacher stated: "I want to teach short story writing in a way that stimulates students' imaginations more, but I don't know where to start. There's no real step-by-step guide for that." The second teacher added: "The existing models are too general; none are specifically designed to develop imagination in the context of short stories." This statement reflects the absence of a learning model specifically oriented toward developing narrative imagination. Second, the need for creative short story-based learning media that can stimulate students' imaginations.

The third teacher stated: "The existing teaching materials contain theories about the meaning of short stories, their elements, and example questions. None of them truly invite students to enter the world of the story." This statement indicates that the available teaching materials are informative, not imaginative: they explain short stories, rather than inviting students to experience and create them. Puspitasari et al. (2024) emphasized that creative, narrative-based learning media has been proven to significantly increase student engagement and motivation in writing lessons. Third, there is the need for standardized narrative imagination assessment instruments. The first teacher stated: "I have difficulty assessing which short stories have good imagination and which are mediocre. The existing rubrics only assess spelling and structure, not creativity."

The absence of assessment instruments that explicitly measure the imaginative dimension leaves efforts to develop narrative imagination without measurable targets. These three needs reflect a serious irony: teachers understand the importance of narrative imagination, but lack the tools to realize it. Padilah (2024) emphasized that the power of a story-based approach can only be optimally utilized if it is packaged within a systematic and applicable learning model.

3.4 Learning Needs from a Student Perspective

Exploring the perspectives of 24 students revealed a consistent picture: students possess great imaginative potential but lack the appropriate space to express it. Several students revealed that they actually have many story ideas but are confused about how to put them into writing. One student stated: "I have a lot of story ideas in my head, but when I'm asked to write, I often don't know where to start. If there were examples of exciting short stories first, it might be easier." This statement indicates that students need an imaginative entry point in the form of inspiring model short stories before they are asked to produce. Several other students described the experience of learning to write short stories as feeling rushed and not preparing them imaginatively.

One student aptly put it: "Usually, when I write a short story, I'm immediately given a theme and then told to write it myself. It feels like I'm being told to run without warming up." This metaphor reveals something fundamental: short story writing instruction doesn't provide an adequate imaginative warm-up phase before students are asked to produce. This is not simply a preference, but a real pedagogical need. Most of the 24 students interviewed also expressed a longing for the freedom to explore without being overly constrained by rigid technical rules. They were more enthusiastic about writing when given the freedom to choose a theme and develop a story based on their interests, compared to when the theme was determined by the teacher.

This finding aligns with the Story-Based Learning principle proposed by Srisuk (2024), which states that story-based learning increases emotional engagement because it creates a bridge between personal experience and narrative construction. Rini (2025) added that storytelling activities that provide freedom of exploration have been shown to encourage richer expression of ideas while building student confidence. Beghetto (2021) reinforces this finding by emphasizing that effective creative learning provides space for students to generate meaningful new ideas through active and exploratory engagement.

3.5 Factors Inhibiting the Development of Narrative Imagination

Data analysis identified three systemic inhibiting factors that hinder the development of students' narrative imagination. First, a narrow assessment orientation. Because assessments only measure formal aspects such as spelling, punctuation, and the completeness of short story elements, students unconsciously learn to meet these formal demands rather than explore their imaginative potential. As a result, what can be called "imaginative impoverishment" occurs—students write to get grades, not to tell stories. Second, the lack of a culture of reading short stories in the school environment. Of the 24 students interviewed, most admitted to almost never reading short stories outside the context of school assignments. Yet, the richness of narrative references from reading is a key fuel for the imagination; the more stories absorbed, the richer the imaginative reservoir available when students are asked to write.

Cahyono et al. (2024) emphasized that consistent exposure to quality narrative texts is a crucial prerequisite for the development of imaginative narrative writing skills. Third, disproportionate time pressure. Short story writing lessons, which are compressed into just a few sessions, do not provide sufficient space for the imaginative process, which actually requires time to develop ideas, explore story possibilities, revise, and refine. Nukha, Hasanudin, and Sutrimah (2025) found that limited learning time is one of the main inhibiting factors in the development of students' creative writing skills.

3.6 Needs Synthesis and Implications for SBCL Design

Bringing together all the findings from the five previous sub-topics resulted in a comprehensive needs map as the basis for designing the Story-Based Creative Learning (SBCL) model. From the teacher perspective (n=3), a model with structured syntax, short story-based creative media, and a standardized narrative imagination assessment instrument was needed. From the student perspective (n=24), an immersive learning experience based on inspiring stories and providing imaginative freedom was needed. From the context perspective, a model

was needed that could address the systemic inhibiting factors of narrow assessment orientation, minimal exposure to narrative texts, and disproportionate time pressure.

This needs synthesis led to one clear conclusion: a learning model was needed that placed short stories as the primary medium, integrated story exploration with creative production, had stages that guided students progressively from readers to story creators, and was equipped with assessment instruments that explicitly measured the imaginative dimension. This is the novelty of this research compared to previous research: the systematic integration of SBL and Creative Learning into one model with a specific syntax oriented towards the development of narrative imagination, a design that has never been explicitly proposed in previous literature (Fitriyani & Umam, 2025; Da, 2024; Park et al., 2024).

Table 1. Five Stages of the SBCL Model Syntax and Their Design Rationale

No	Stages	Activity Description	Needs Addressed
1.	Story Orientation	The teacher presents an inspiring model short story as a gateway to imagination and builds students' narrative schemas.	Students' need for narrative stimulation before production; minimal exposure to quality short story texts
2.	Narative Exploration	Students analyze the intrinsic elements and narrative techniques of the model short story under guidance, building structural understanding as a creative scaffold.	Teachers' need for structured operational steps; absence of pedagogical scaffolding
3.	Imagination Contruction	Students freely and with guidance develop their own ideas, characters, plot, and setting through various exploration activities.	Students' need for a safe space for imaginative exploration; freedom to explore without pressure
4.	Creative Production	Students write a draft of an original short story based on their constructed imagination, with adequate time allocated for the creative process.	Need for meaningful writing experiences; disproportionate time pressure
5.	Narative Reflection	Students share their work, give and receive feedback; the teacher evaluates using a standardized narrative imagination assessment instrument.	Teachers' need for standardized narrative imagination assessment instruments; narrow assessment orientation

This five-stage design directly and comprehensively addressed the identified needs of all participants (three teachers and 24 students). Beghetto (2021) emphasized that effective creative learning does not abandon structure, but rather uses it as a scaffold that liberates, not limits. Park, Kim, and Jung (2024) added that the ability to construct original and meaningful stories is at the heart of narrative imagination, which can only thrive in a learning ecosystem that simultaneously provides rich narrative models and a safe space for exploration. Runco and Jaeger (2016) further emphasized that true creativity ideas that are both novel and meaningful can only be fostered in a learning environment that provides both freedom and appropriate direction, two elements simultaneously present in the design of this SBCL model.

Overall, the resulting needs map confirmed that the gap between the actual and ideal conditions for short story writing learning at SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong is systemic and multilevel, encompassing the planning (lesson plan), implementation (methods and media), and assessment (instruments). Only a learning model that comprehensively addresses these three levels can

optimally foster the development of students' narrative imagination. The SBCL model with its five stages of syntax is designed to be the answer to this systemic gap.

Discussions

The finding that short story writing instruction at SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong remains dominated by one-way lectures and decontextualized assignments aligns with a pattern widely documented in Indonesian language education research. Da (2024) emphasized that the absence of innovation in learning models and media constitutes a fundamental structural obstacle to the development of students' narrative creativity. The present study extends this observation by demonstrating that the problem is not merely methodological but also embedded in lesson plan design: learning objectives in the analyzed lesson plans were skewed toward low-order cognitive verbs "mention," "identify," and "explain" with no explicit indicators targeting imaginative or creative competencies.

This suggests that the conventional orientation is systemic, operating at the planning layer before instruction even begins. From a curriculum theory standpoint, this finding resonates with the distinction Beghetto (2021) draws between curricula that transmit knowledge about creativity and those that actively cultivate it. When lesson plans do not encode imaginative outcomes as measurable targets, teachers are structurally deprived of both pedagogical direction and accountability anchors. The working hypothesis of this study that a purpose-built model is necessary precisely because no existing framework addresses narrative imagination as a core, assessable competency is thus empirically validated from two directions: the absence is not incidental, but designed-in.

The four-dimensional weakness profile emerging from the analysis of 24 students' short stories deficits in originality, character depth, plot construction, and setting description provides a fine-grained diagnostic picture that moves beyond aggregate writing quality scores. Park, Kim, and Jung (2024) established that low narrative imagination is specifically characterized by students' inability to construct story worlds that are complex, original, and emotionally coherent. The current findings operationalize that theoretical construct into observable, teachable dimensions, each mapping onto a distinct pedagogical need. Nurgiyantoro's (2018) criterion that literary quality is determined by the integrity and depth of a short story's intrinsic elements offers a critical benchmark here.

The analyzed student works fell consistently short of this benchmark not because of low intellectual capacity, but because instruction had never provided a structured pathway from reading stories to internalizing their architecture and then deploying that architecture creatively. This gap between exposure and internalized schema is precisely what Cahyono, Hadi, and Lovenia (2024) identified as a prerequisite problem: without consistent, meaningful engagement with quality narrative texts, students arrive at the writing task with an impoverished imaginative reservoir. The present study confirms this mechanism and adds a pedagogical layer the impoverishment is sustained and reproduced by a learning environment that offers neither model texts nor scaffolded exploration.

The three unmet needs articulated by teachers a model with clear operational syntax, creative short story-based media, and standardized narrative imagination assessment instruments collectively delineate the infrastructure gap separating intent from practice. Teachers in this study were not unaware of the importance of imagination; they articulated this awareness explicitly. What they lacked were the tools to translate that awareness into structured, replicable pedagogy. Padilah (2024) has argued that the transformative potential of story-based approaches can only be realized when they are embedded within a systematic and practically applicable model. This study provides direct field evidence for that argument: teachers who understand the value of narrative-based learning but lack a syntactic roadmap default to familiar but ineffective conventional formats.

The absence of assessment instruments designed to capture imaginative dimensions represents a particularly consequential gap. When rubrics measure only formal correctness spelling, punctuation, and structural completeness students receive an implicit signal about what

is valued, and the signal is that imagination is invisible. Evaluative instruments thus function not merely as measurement tools but as normative signals that shape what students attempt to do. Puspitasari and colleagues (2024) demonstrated that creative, narrative-based media significantly enhances student engagement and motivation in writing lessons, corroborating the present finding that teachers identify media as a critical missing component. Taken together, these three needs converge on a single architectural conclusion: an effective intervention must simultaneously address planning, delivery, and evaluation not any one dimension in isolation.

The student perspective adds a phenomenological dimension to the structural analysis above. The metaphor spontaneously offered by one student that writing a short story immediately after being given a topic felt like "being told to run without warming up" captures a pedagogically important reality. Students possess latent imaginative capacity, but that capacity requires activation through an adequate preparatory phase: exposure to inspiring model texts, guided analysis of narrative techniques, and a safe environment for exploratory idea generation before the demand for polished production. This finding aligns with Srisuk's (2024) demonstration that story-based learning increases emotional engagement by creating a bridge between personal experience and narrative construction.

When the learning sequence begins with an inspiring short story that students can enter emotionally, the imaginative distance between reader and author narrows. Rini (2025) further corroborated that storytelling-oriented activities providing freedom of exploration produce richer idea expression and stronger student confidence two qualities that were conspicuously absent in the student samples analyzed in this study. Beghetto's (2021) theoretical framework situates these empirical observations within a broader conception of creative learning: effective creativity-oriented pedagogy does not dissolve structure but uses structure as a liberating scaffold.

Runco and Jaeger's (2016) standard definition of creativity ideas that are simultaneously novel and useful clarifies the pedagogical goal: students should not simply be given freedom to imagine randomly, but should be guided toward imagination that is both generative and narratively coherent. This dual criterion is precisely what the five-stage SBCL syntax attempts to operationalize. Three systemic inhibiting factors narrow assessment orientation, a weak culture of reading short stories, and disproportionate time pressure point to constraints that individual teacher practices alone cannot overcome. Nukha, Hasanudin, and Sutrimah (2025) confirmed that limited learning time ranks among the primary structural barriers to creative writing development.

When short story instruction is compressed into a small number of sessions, the imaginative process which requires incubation, iterative revision, and reflective evaluation is truncated before it can develop organically. The finding that most students rarely read short stories outside of class assignments identifies a related structural deficit: the imaginative reservoir cannot be filled if narrative input is limited to infrequent, assignment-driven encounters with texts. Cahyono and colleagues (2024) established that consistent exposure to quality narrative texts is a crucial prerequisite for imaginative narrative writing ability, a finding this study reinforces at the institutional level.

These systemic factors collectively suggest that the SBCL model, while designed to operate within individual lessons, must also be understood as a counter-structural intervention: it deliberately compensates for reading poverty through the Story Orientation stage, addresses time pressure by distributing the creative process across five structured stages rather than condensing it into a single assignment, and reorients assessment through standardized narrative imagination rubrics that make the imaginative dimension visible and valued. The central novelty of this study the systematic integration of Story-Based Learning and Creative Learning into a single model with a specific syntax oriented toward narrative imagination addresses a research gap documented consistently in prior literature.

Fitriyani and Umam (2025), Da (2024), and Park, Kim, and Jung (2024) each noted that no existing model had explicitly combined these two frameworks into a cohesive, purposefully sequenced design for narrative imagination development. The five-stage SBCL syntax Story

Orientation, Narrative Exploration, Imagination Construction, Creative Production, and Narrative Reflection is not a simple concatenation of two approaches, but a purposefully sequenced design in which each stage addresses specific, empirically identified needs while simultaneously building the scaffolding for the next. This integrative architecture represents a theoretical contribution to the discourse on creativity-oriented language pedagogy.

It proposes that narrative imagination is not a pre-existing student trait that instruction can only enable or suppress, but a teachable, scaffoldable, and assessable competency that develops progressively when learning environments provide the right sequence of narrative models, structural analysis, free exploration, supported production, and reflective feedback. This reframing has implications for how language educators conceptualize both learning objectives and instructional design in the Indonesian K-12 context. The implications of these findings extend beyond junior high school short story writing.

At the level of Indonesian language education policy, the findings underscore the importance of explicitly encoding imaginative and creative outcomes not only productive language skills into curriculum documents, lesson plan templates, and assessment frameworks aligned with the Kurikulum Merdeka vision of student agency. At the level of teacher professional development, the findings highlight the need for systematic training not only in content knowledge but in pedagogical model literacy: the capacity to select, adapt, and implement purpose-built learning models in response to diagnosed student needs. More broadly, the study contributes to a growing international body of evidence on the role of narrative in cognitive and creative development.

Across educational systems, research increasingly positions narrative imagination as foundational to creative thinking, empathy, and communication capacities central to 21st-century competency frameworks (Beghetto, 2021; Park et al., 2024). This study provides empirical grounding for that position in a specific underrepresented context: Indonesian-medium language education in regional public schools, where resource constraints, large class sizes, and entrenched conventional practices present distinct implementation challenges. Several productive directions for future research emerge from this study.

First, and most immediately, the SBCL model derived from this needs analysis requires empirical validation through a full research and development cycle: expert review by Indonesian language education specialists and literary scholars, small-scale field trials, and a more extensive quasi-experimental study examining the model's effectiveness in improving students' narrative imagination scores relative to conventional instruction. Without this validation chain, the model remains a theoretically grounded design rather than an empirically demonstrated intervention.

Second, the narrative imagination assessment instrument one of the three critical teacher needs identified in this study requires dedicated instrument development research, including construct validation, inter-rater reliability testing, and calibration against established narrative quality benchmarks such as those proposed by Nurgiyantoro (2018). A psychometrically sound rubric would not only serve SBCL implementation but could be adopted more broadly as a standardized tool for narrative writing assessment in Indonesian junior high schools. Third, the role of digital and multimodal media in the Story Orientation stage warrants dedicated investigation.

Da (2024) and Puspitasari and colleagues (2024) have demonstrated the potential of digital storytelling and narrative-based media to amplify student engagement; future studies could examine whether digital short story formats, audio narratives, or interactive story platforms produce differential effects on students' imaginative activation compared to print-based model texts. Fourth, given that this study was conducted at a single school in one regency of Central Java, replication across more diverse school contexts urban versus rural, varying school resource levels, different regional linguistic and cultural backgrounds would strengthen the generalizability of both the needs profile and the SBCL model's design rationale.

The cultural embeddedness of narrative imagination in local literary traditions also opens a rich avenue for culturally responsive adaptations of the SBCL framework. Finally, longitudinal research tracking the development of individual students' narrative imagination across an extended period of SBCL implementation would provide crucial evidence about the model's

sustained effects, the optimal duration and frequency of intervention, and the specific stages that contribute most to growth questions that cross-sectional or short-term experimental designs cannot adequately address.

4. Conclusions

A needs analysis involving three Indonesian language teachers and 24 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Gemolong yielded comprehensive and consistent findings from two main perspectives. From the teachers' perspective, three pressing needs remain unmet: a learning model with clear and operational syntax, creative media based on short stories that stimulate the imagination, and a standardized narrative imagination assessment instrument. From the perspective of the 24 students interviewed, the most prominent need was for immersive learning experiences based on inspiring stories, accompanied by the freedom to explore imaginatively.

These two perspectives together describe a conventional, passive learning environment for short story writing that fails to optimally facilitate the development of students' narrative imagination. These findings highlight a significant gap between the actual and ideal learning conditions and confirm a previously identified research gap: the lack of a model that specifically integrates Story-Based Learning and Creative Learning into a single, systematic design oriented toward developing narrative imagination. The novelty of this research lies precisely in this integration, a conceptual contribution that has not been addressed by previous studies (Fitriyani & Umam, 2025; Da, 2024; Park et al., 2024).

The SBCL model, designed with five stages: story-oriented syntax, narrative exploration, imagination construction, creative production, and narrative reflection, is a direct response to the overall identified needs map. Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse on the integration of story-based learning and creative learning in Indonesian language learning. Practically, these findings provide concrete provisions for junior high school teachers to understand the challenges and opportunities in teaching short story writing oriented toward developing narrative imagination. Further research in the form of development, expert validation, and effectiveness testing of the SBCL model is highly recommended to demonstrate the model's real impact on improving students' narrative imagination in the field.

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