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Cultivating Collaboration in Civics Education at SDN 1 Purbosuman

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A B S T R A C T

Collaboration is an important component of character education in elementary schools, yet teacher-centered instruction may limit students' opportunities to develop collaborative skills through authentic learning experiences. This study aimed to describe the cultivation of collaboration through active cooperation and concern for the common good in elementary school Civics Education (PPKn). A qualitative case study was conducted at SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo involving the school principal, one Grade V Civics Education teacher, and Grade V students. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and photographic documentation. The credibility of the findings was established through source and method triangulation by comparing and integrating evidence across participants and data collection methods before drawing conclusions using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings showed that active cooperation was cultivated through group discussions, shared responsibilities, peer assistance, and project-based activities facilitated by teachers. Concern for the common good was fostered through contextual learning, peer assistance, social activities, and a positive school culture emphasizing empathy and collective responsibility. These findings provide practical guidance for Civics Education teachers to design authentic collaborative learning experiences that simultaneously strengthen students' cooperation, empathy, social responsibility, and civic character in elementary schools.

1. Introduction

Collaboration at the elementary school level serves as the foundation for shaping students who are ethical, caring, and responsible. Instilling a spirit of collaboration in education is of the utmost importance, especially at the elementary school level, which is the initial stage in the development of a child's personality (Abdullayevna, 2025). The global challenges of the 21st century require the younger generation to

possess not only academic abilities but also strong social skills, such as the ability to collaborate, communicate, and respect differences. Collaboration is one of the key competencies in character education because it fosters mutual respect, empathy, and shared responsibility (Labuem & Gaite, 2024). In the context of civics education (PPKn), collaboration is an integral part of learning about national values, democracy, and harmonious social life. This makes fostering collaboration in elementary schools an urgent necessity so that students can adapt to and contribute to community life.

Real-world evidence indicates that elementary school students' collaborative skills are often still suboptimal; the learning process in Indonesia remains teacher-centered, that is teachers spend more time telling stories or lecturing (Umardianti et al., 2025; Zahra et al., 2024). This results in students becoming passive in the learning process, which in turn leads to a decline in their learning outcomes and affects their collaborative skills (Raditya et al., 2023). The root of the problem lies in the fact that classroom instruction is still dominated by lecture-based and individualistic methods that focus solely on academic achievement. This type of instructional model tends to neglect social interaction and cooperation among students, thereby preventing collaboration from developing to its full potential (Fatiati, 2023).

The low level of active student engagement in group discussions and project-based activities also hinders the formation of collaborative values, such as mutual support and concern for the collective interest (Mukarramah et al., 2025). Consequently, students become more accustomed to competing rather than cooperating, even though the spirit of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and togetherness is a defining characteristic of Indonesian national culture that should be instilled from an early age. Gotong royong represents a collective effort to meet needs and address challenges together. As a positive activity rooted in tradition, it offers numerous benefits for both individuals and their environments (Shandy et al., 2025). Therefore, it is crucial to teach the culture of gotong royong to elementary school students, as early introduction helps cultivate positive social attitudes, a sense of responsibility, and collaborative skills (Musyary & Utomo, 2026).

Another root cause of deficient collaborative skills stems from the inadequate integration of cooperative values and social awareness within Civics Education (PPKn) instructional planning (Muhibbin & Khoirunisa, 2023). Pedagogical practices predominantly emphasize cognitive domains and rote memorization over the cultivation of meaningful, collaborative learning experiences. Instruction that merely demands a theoretical comprehension of moral concepts and Pancasila values falls short of fostering actual collaborative behaviors in daily interactions. In the context of SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo, evaluating this phenomenon is imperative, given that the institution holds substantial potential to internalize collaborative values through contextual and participatory learning frameworks.

Research examining collaboration in educational settings has been widely conducted globally. Prior studies conducted in Malaysia, Germany, Norway, China, the United States, and the Netherlands have demonstrated several important

findings. First, learning collaboration necessitates systematic strategies, including explicit collaborative instruction (Abayomi et al., 2025). Second, the cornerstone of effective collaborative learning, whether co-located or remote, is social interaction, coupled with teacher and environmental support (Bratitsis & Demetriadis, 2012; Hidayah et al., 2026; Montag et al., 2025). Third, brief yet targeted cooperative exercises yield tangible pedagogical benefits, enhancing students' conviction and motivation as they experience firsthand progress (Cheng et al., 2024; Pontoh et al., 2025). Fourth, cultivating a conducive discussion environment that prioritizes critical cognitive engagement and appropriate scaffolding optimizes student learning experiences and outcomes (Liu et al., 2024; Saputri et al., 2025).

Fifth, student self-regulated learning and team collaboration capacities exhibit statistically significant improvements following the implementation of evolving case studies, characterized by themes such as 'student-centered communication,' 'group inspiration,' and 'critical thinking and self-reflection' (Cheng et al., 2024). Lastly, policy-driven partnerships between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) foster technological learning outcomes (Raab et al., 2018). Distinct from these prior works, the current study specifically delineates the cultivation of collaborative dimensions, focusing on active cooperation and shared mutual interests within classroom instruction. Furthermore, this study contributes by examining the cultivation of collaboration through two specific dimensions, active cooperation and concern for the common good, within the contextual setting of elementary school Civics Education (PPKn).

Based on the prior discussion, the proposed alternative solution involves cultivating collaboration within elementary school Civics Education (PPKn), specifically focusing on two core dimensions: active cooperation and concern for the collective interest. Collaboration constitutes a unified effort among various stakeholders to attain a shared objective, requiring diverse actors, both individuals and organizations, to work synergistically to accomplish mutual goals (Efriyana & Marpaung, 2023). To foster sustainable student collaboration at SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo, implementable instructional alternatives are critical. One viable approach is integrating collaborative activities into PPKn lessons through group work, role-playing simulations, and social projects that explicitly reinforce active cooperation and mutual interdependence. Such collaboration-based frameworks transcend mere verbal moral instruction, providing concrete experiential learning that sharpens communication competencies, personal accountability, and social empathy in real-world contexts.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) describe the cultivation of collaboration through the aspect of active cooperation in elementary school Civics Education (PPKn), and (2) describe the cultivation of collaboration through the aspect of concern for the common good in elementary school Civics Education (PPKn). Through this study, the authors expect to provide a deeper understanding of how collaboration can be cultivated through authentic learning experiences to strengthen character education in SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how collaboration is cultivated through Civics Education (PPKn) learning (Yin, 2018). The research was conducted at SDN 1 Purbosuman, Ponorogo, Indonesia, during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year over a six-month period. Participants were selected purposively and consisted of the school principal, one Grade V classroom teacher responsible for teaching Civics Education, Grade V students as the subjects of classroom observation, and two students who were selected for interviews based on their active participation in collaborative learning activities and their ability to communicate their learning experiences effectively.

Instrument

The research employed two primary instruments: an observation sheet and a semi-structured interview guide. Photographic documentation was also collected to provide visual evidence of classroom activities. Classroom observations were conducted to identify students' collaborative behaviours during Civics Education learning. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the school principal, the Civics Education teacher, and two selected students to obtain in-depth information regarding the implementation of collaboration in learning activities. Photographic documentation was used to complement the observation and interview findings by illustrating the observed learning activities.

Data Collection

Primary data were obtained through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, while photographic documentation was used as supporting evidence of classroom activities. To ensure data credibility, source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the school principal, the Civics Education teacher, and the selected students. The observation findings were also compared with interview accounts and photographic documentation to identify consistency across the available evidence.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed inductively using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). Throughout the analysis, findings obtained from observations, interviews, and documents were continuously compared to identify consistent patterns before conclusions were formulated.

3. Results and Discussion

The implementation of collaboration in Civics Education (PPKn) at SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo was examined through classroom learning activities that required students to interact, communicate, work with peers, and participate in shared responsibilities. The analysis focused on two dimensions of collaboration, namely active cooperation and concern for the common good. Data were obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and photographic documentation. The collected data were analyzed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data reduction stage, information relevant to the two dimensions of collaboration was identified from the available observations, interview accounts, and photographic documentation. The reduced data were then organized and presented according to the two dimensions examined in this study. At the conclusion-drawing stage, findings from the three data sources were compared and integrated to identify consistent patterns before conclusions were formulated. The triangulation process resulted in two major findings concerning the cultivation of collaboration in Civics Education. Active cooperation was reflected in students' participation in shared learning activities, division of responsibilities, exchange of ideas, and peer assistance. Concern for the common good was reflected in students' willingness to assist peers, participate in activities involving mutual assistance, and consider the needs of others alongside their own learning responsibilities. A summary of the findings based on the three data sources is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Findings on the Cultivation of Collaboration in Civics Education

Collaboration Aspect	Documentation	Interview Findings	Observation Findings
Active Cooperation	Students were documented participating in group learning activities and interacting with group members.	The teacher described group work through task distribution and role assignment. The principal emphasized active cooperation, while students described sharing tasks and helping peers.	Students participated in group discussions, shared responsibilities, exchanged ideas, and completed learning tasks together.
Concern for the Common Good	Students were documented interacting and working together during Civics Education learning activities.	The teacher described encouraging students to consider classmates' difficulties. The principal described activities involving mutual care, while students reported helping peers who needed assistance.	Students were observed helping classmates, organizing learning materials together, and participating in activities involving shared responsibility.

Cultivating Collaboration through the Aspect of Active Cooperation in Civics Education

Photographic documentation was used to provide visual evidence of students' participation in collaborative learning activities. Figure 1 shows students working together in a group during Civics Education learning. The students were positioned

together and engaged in the same learning activity, providing visual evidence of direct interaction and joint participation among group members. This documentation supports the finding that active cooperation was practiced through students' involvement in shared classroom activities rather than being limited to verbal instruction concerning cooperation.

Figure 1. Students' collaborative group discussion during PPKn learning

The photographic evidence showed students actively participating in shared learning activities and interacting with their group members, reflecting forms of cooperation and shared responsibility. These findings were further explored through semi-structured interviews with the Civics Education teacher, the school principal, and two Grade V students, focusing on group cooperation, division of responsibilities, peer assistance, teacher facilitation, and students' experiences in completing collaborative tasks.

The Civics Education teacher explained:

> *"I always involve students in group work, for example discussions on citizens' rights and obligations or making a togetherness poster project. I give every child a role some write, some draw, some present the results in front of the class, so that they become accustomed to sharing tasks and helping one another."*

The school principal similarly stated:

> *"We encourage teachers not only to lecture in front of the class, but to make the children actively work together, because this ability to cooperate is what they will carry with them into adulthood."*

The students also described their experiences in collaborative activities. One student stated:

> *"When we have a group assignment, my friends and I divide the tasks someone writes, someone looks for pictures, so it gets finished quickly and no one carries the burden alone."*

Another student explained:

> *"I like group learning because I can ask my friends when there is something I do not understand."*

The interview findings indicate several forms of active cooperation. The teacher's explanation shows that group activities were intentionally organized through task distribution and the assignment of different roles. The principal's statement indicates that active cooperation was also supported by the school's expectation that learning should provide students with opportunities to work together rather than rely exclusively on teacher-centered instruction. Meanwhile, the students' statements demonstrate that cooperation was experienced directly through task sharing and peer assistance. Thus, the interview data indicate that active cooperation involved shared responsibilities, interaction among peers, and mutual assistance in completing learning activities.

The interview findings were examined against classroom observation data to determine whether the reported forms of cooperation were reflected in students' actual classroom behaviour. Classroom observations showed that active cooperation was demonstrated through students' participation in group discussions, collaborative assignments, classroom activities, and group projects during Civics Education learning. Students discussed learning tasks, divided responsibilities, exchanged ideas, helped one another, and worked together to achieve shared learning goals, indicating that cooperation involved not only completing academic tasks but also practicing responsibility, mutual assistance, and respect for peers' contributions. These observations correspond with the teacher's account of assigning different roles to students and the students' descriptions of dividing tasks and helping one another. The photographic documentation further supports these findings by illustrating group interaction during the learning process. The convergence of observation, interview, and documentation data indicates that active cooperation was manifested through students' direct participation in collective learning activities.

The triangulation of photographic documentation, interview findings, and classroom observations indicates a consistent pattern regarding the cultivation of active cooperation. The photographic documentation visually demonstrates students' joint participation in group learning activities. The interviews provide participants' explanations of how cooperation was organized and experienced, particularly through task distribution, role assignment, and peer assistance. The classroom observations provide behavioural evidence that students participated in discussions, shared assignments, exchanged ideas, and worked toward common learning goals. When these three sources are considered together, the findings indicate that active cooperation was cultivated through repeated opportunities for

students to contribute to shared tasks, communicate with peers, and assume responsibilities within their groups.

The findings are consistent with Salgado et al. (2022), who emphasized that cooperation requires positive interpersonal relationships that enable students to work together and support one another in overcoming learning-related challenges. The findings are also consistent with Daiyah et al. (2024), who emphasized the contribution of cooperative learning to students' collaborative skills. Furthermore, Cheng et al. (2024) reported that collaborative learning activities can enhance students' motivation, teamwork, and active engagement through meaningful cooperative experiences. The present findings extend these perspectives by showing that active cooperation in Civics Education was expressed through several concrete classroom practices, including group discussions, shared assignments, peer assistance, and project activities. These activities allowed students to experience cooperation directly through the distribution of responsibilities and collective completion of tasks.

The interview findings further indicate that teachers played a central role in sustaining collaborative learning by guiding group interactions and establishing a classroom environment characterized by participation, equality, and mutual respect. The teacher described assigning different roles to students during group activities, while the school principal emphasized the importance of encouraging students to work together. These practices suggest that teachers emphasized task distribution, peer interaction, and shared responsibility as part of collaborative learning. Students' communication skills were also supported through teachers' continuous encouragement and facilitation of collaborative activities Pratiwi et al. (2022). Beyond classroom instruction, extracurricular activities such as kerja bakti provided authentic contexts for students to internalize the values of gotong royong, solidarity, and mutual assistance Hayati & Utomo (2022). These experiences demonstrate that active cooperation contributes not only to students' cognitive development but also to the formation of democratic attitudes, empathy, and social responsibility. Therefore, integrating collaborative learning with school culture represents an effective approach to strengthening character education and preparing students to become socially responsible citizens Handayani et al. (2021).

Cultivating Collaboration through the Aspect of Concern for the Common Good

Photographic documentation was used to visually support the findings concerning students' concern for the common good. Figure 2 shows students interacting and working together during Civics Education learning, including direct interaction between students while participating in the learning activity.

Figure 2. Students helping one another during PPKn learning.

The photos provide visual evidence of the students' interactions and joint participation during the learning process, reflecting their engagement in collaborative activities and mutual support. This evidence was corroborated and further examined through semi-structured interviews with the Civics teacher, the principal, and two fifth-grade students, focusing on students' responses to peers experiencing difficulties, the teacher's strategies for encouraging caring behavior, school activities that involve mutual assistance, and students' experiences in helping others.

The Civics Education teacher explained:

> *"I often give small case examples for instance, when a classmate has not yet understood the material, I ask the other students what should be done. From this, the children learn to think not only of themselves, but also of their friends."*

The school principal added:

> *"We regularly hold joint clean-up activities and occasionally a lunch-sharing movement, so that the children become accustomed to paying attention to their environment and their friends, not only focusing on themselves."*

The students expressed similar attitudes. One student stated:

> *"When a friend is sad or having difficulty with an assignment, I try to help, because it feels wrong to leave them alone."*

Another student explained:

> *"Our teacher always says we must care about our friends, so when someone needs help I try to help as much as I can."*

The interview findings indicate that concern for the common good was cultivated through teacher guidance, peer assistance, and school activities emphasizing mutual care. The teacher's statement indicates that contextual cases were used to encourage students to consider the needs of their classmates. The principal's statement shows that the value was also reinforced through school activities involving shared responsibility and attention to others. The students' statements further indicate that helping peers was understood as a responsibility toward classmates experiencing difficulties.

The interview findings were supported by classroom observations, which showed that students demonstrated concern for the common good by helping peers who experienced difficulties, organizing learning materials together, and participating in activities involving mutual assistance and shared responsibility. These observed interactions corresponded with students' reported willingness to help their classmates and the teacher's explanation of using cases to encourage students to consider the needs of their peers. Photographic documentation further supported the occurrence of direct interaction and mutual assistance among students. Taken together, the interview, observation, and documentation findings indicate that concern for the common good was expressed through students' attention to peers, willingness to provide assistance, and active participation in shared classroom activities.

The triangulation of the three data sources reveals a consistent pattern in the cultivation of concern for the common good. The photographic documentation provides visual evidence of students' interaction during shared learning activities. The interviews explain how teachers and the school encouraged students to consider others' needs and how students themselves experienced helping peers. The classroom observations demonstrate that these values were reflected in students' actual participation through peer assistance, shared responsibilities, and attention to classmates' difficulties. The convergence of these sources indicates that concern for the common good was not limited to students' understanding of moral concepts but was practiced through everyday interactions during learning activities.

This finding is consistent with Frestiana et al. (2025), who emphasized the role of Civics Education in developing students' moral and ethical values, and with Sofyan et al. (2025), who highlighted the importance of social awareness in elementary education. The finding also corresponds with Labuem & Gaite (2024), who emphasized that collaboration can foster empathy, mutual respect, and shared responsibility among elementary school students. However, the present findings indicate that concern for the common good was cultivated not only through explicit discussion of moral values but also through students' direct experiences of helping peers and participating in shared activities. This concern was further cultivated through Project-Based Learning (PjBL), in which students collaborated to complete projects requiring collective planning, shared responsibility, and active

participation from every group member. Teachers guided students through information gathering, idea development, and collaborative decision-making processes before implementing projects such as school cleanliness campaigns and poster design activities promoting national unity. The implementation of Project-Based Learning begins by collecting students' ideas and questions, which subsequently become the basis for collaborative exploration and learning activities (Junita et al., 2023). These findings indicate that project-based activities strengthened students' understanding that collaboration involves balancing individual contributions with collective interests, thereby reinforcing responsibility, cooperation, and social concern simultaneously. Thus, the cultivation of concern for the common good becomes more meaningful when students are provided with opportunities to practice caring, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility through authentic collaborative experiences rather than merely receiving moral instruction.

The cultivation of concern for the common good was further reinforced by teachers and the broader school environment. Teachers played an important role by providing examples, encouraging students to help their peers, and creating opportunities for mutual assistance during learning activities, allowing students to connect the values discussed in Civics Education with their everyday interactions. This finding is consistent with Bratitsis & Demetriadis (2012), who emphasized the importance of teacher support in establishing effective collaborative learning environments. At the school level, a positive culture characterized by togetherness, mutual respect, and active participation also provided opportunities for students to translate caring values into everyday practice through initiatives such as Friday Clean-Up programmes and food-sharing activities. Consistent with Muhibbin & Khoirunisa (2023), these findings highlight that collaborative values are cultivated more effectively when integrated into meaningful learning experiences and supported by a positive school environment. As a result, students became more responsive to their peers' needs, collaborated more effectively, and developed stronger interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect (Han & Son, 2020). Therefore, cultivating concern for the common good requires more than delivering moral messages; it requires consistent teacher support and a school environment that enables students to repeatedly practice empathy, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility. These conditions contribute not only to harmonious classroom interactions but also to the development of empathetic, socially responsible, and democratic citizens capable of prioritizing collective welfare over individual interests.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that collaboration in Civics Education (PPKn) at SDN 1 Purbosuman Ponorogo is cultivated through two complementary dimensions, namely active cooperation and concern for the common good. The findings demonstrate that active cooperation is developed through collaborative learning activities, including group discussions, simulations, classroom responsibilities, project-based learning, and teachers’ facilitation, enabling students to participate

actively, share responsibilities, communicate effectively, and achieve common learning goals. In addition, concern for the common good is fostered through contextual learning experiences, moral discussions, social projects, and a positive school culture that encourages empathy, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility. These findings indicate that Civics Education functions not only as a medium for developing civics knowledge but also as an effective vehicle for cultivating collaborative character through authentic and value-based learning experiences.

This study contributes to the understanding that collaboration should be viewed as a multidimensional construct integrating both active cooperation and concern for the common good, rather than merely encouraging students to work together. The findings also provide practical guidance for elementary school teachers in designing learning activities that strengthen collaborative competencies and character development simultaneously. Future research is recommended to involve a broader range of schools and educational contexts, employ mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches, and examine the long-term impact of collaboration-based Civics Education on students' civic character and social competencies.

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