





# Effectiveness and Impact of Short Film Media in Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning on the Development of Students' Social Skills and Characters

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## Abstract

**Background:** One of the media that can be used in project-based learning involving several fields of study or interdisciplinary is short films. Among such strategies, project-based learning (PBL) has gained prominence for its ability to integrate knowledge across disciplines while cultivating critical life skills. This study explores the effectiveness and impact of incorporating short film media into interdisciplinary PBL to enhance students' social skills and character development.

**Aims:** This study aims to explain the effectiveness of short film media as one of the means and infrastructure in learning. The existence of a project carried out by all class members with the theme of Indonesian culture gave birth to several extraordinary works.

**Methods:** This research is a qualitative phenomenological type. Data collection techniques used are observation and interviews. The data analysis technique used is narrative. The data of this study are sentences, paragraphs, and data sources are words poured out by students during the observation process.

**Result:** The results reveal that students engaged in short film-based PBL demonstrated significant improvement in teamwork, empathy, and moral reasoning, compared to those in conventional PBL settings. Furthermore, qualitative findings highlight increased student engagement and reflective thinking throughout the project.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that the integration of short films within interdisciplinary PBL serves as a powerful pedagogical tool to nurture socially responsible and emotionally intelligent learners.

## A. Introduction

The importance of a collaborative learning system to improve information literacy skills, the American Library Association for Higher Education emphasizes the learning process on information enrichment which is indicated to be able to provide student learning outcomes in a more positive direction (Darise, 2019). Collaborative learning is a learning model that will be a good model if done in an independent curriculum (Usman et al., 2022). It is true because the independent curriculum is the right place to develop a collaborative learning model. The independent curriculum has been made since 2020 by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia to adapt education for the current and next generations (Efendi & Suastra, 2023). An independent curriculum does not suddenly exist but exists through various processes (Aini & Adiyono, 2023; Minsih et al., 2023). Some educators have the viewpoint that students must be

intelligent, critical, and creative individuals and be able to work together to solve problems related to their daily lives because all of these things are important (Gumilang, 2019). The learning process that students have so far is more about “learning about” (learning about things) than “learning how” (learning how to be) (Gleason & Leandro, 2023). In the education system, for example, students learn about religious tolerance. They will get concepts and procedures regarding tolerant living. Still, they should not only learn about basic concepts but also how to change their behavior and mindset to achieve tolerance standards. Thus in real life, students know that there are many examples of intolerant behavior, from this knowledge students are finally able to take an attitude not to be the same as people who are intolerant, but they change and become a unique person who adheres to the principle of tolerance. The existence of knowledge possessed by students, which is the result of transmitting information alone, changes and develops into a concept in which implementation will automatically change their point of view and behavior in the direction that it should and is real (Graul et al., 2022).

Not only that, many students study only to seek good grades, appreciation and recognition from outsiders. Such characters will be carried into adulthood, so they will experience difficulties getting along and working with other people or the community (Galante, 2015). Learning should be more oriented towards high-level cognitive aspects (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), affective, and psychomotor aspects (Abbasi et al., 2023; Alafnan, 2025). Humans are essentially creatures who keep trying to improve their limitations, the limitations of their minds and the limitations of the traditions that bind them, by rejecting them as a fact and as a reality (Fauzi & Pratama, 2021). Such human nature is made possible because humans have a mind that can be developed and utilized for the benefit of their lives. Therefore, humans will always interact and cooperate with other people in achieving the goals they want. Especially in the current era of globalization, there is a tendency for human dependence in all things. Thus, the skills of working with others are needed, and it is a social aspect everyone must possess.

Collaboration skills are something that people really need in today’s life, because almost all behavior in society shows cooperation from all levels of society, regardless of differences in ethnicity, religion, race, men and women, and class (Hameed, 2016; Ichsan et al., 2023; Sirait & Amnie, 2023). Such as behavior in: demonstrations conveying an opinion, appreciating and respecting the ideas of other people/groups, attending meetings in the village, criticizing the government, managing and preventing social conflicts in the village, NGO activities in increasing community participation to prevent KKN (corruption, collusion and nepotism) and so on. The importance of having cooperation skills in human life is in line Herbein et al. (2018), which states that just as an educator must teach academic skills, cooperation skills must also be given to students, because this action will be beneficial for them to improve group work, and determine the success of social relations in society. González-Howard & McNeill (2019) also stated the importance of a student having cooperation skills, saying that students really have to learn to work together towards one goal, namely the understanding that no one person has all the right answers, except by working together.

Learning by involving various fields of study in one activity positively impacts educators and students (Ansori, 2020; Truong, 2016). Collaboration in various things develops the ability to work together and the ability to coordinate with other parties. In addition, it also develops a sense of trust in oneself and others. One activity that can be done together is making a short film. A short film project is not just a project. There are many things to learn and create in a short film project (Gold et al., 2018; Lin & Chuang, 2019). This research is different from other research or previous research. This study focuses on explaining that there is positive character development in students when they carry out collaborative learning using the Project Based Learning (PBL). The projects that students undertake are projects that combine the two fields of study, namely Indonesian Language and Citizenship Education which carry the same theme in working on their big projects with their respective groups. This research wants to find out how big the impact of character development is on students when they work together with other parties to create a product or work that has high creative value. This study reviews that collaborative learning is very effective when used in an independent curriculum. Collaborative learning results in a character building process that produces a better individual.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: How is the effectiveness and impact of Short Film Media in Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning on the Development of Social Skills and Character of Students? The purpose of this study is to explain the effectiveness and impact of short film media in Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning on the Development of Social Skills and Character of Students. Research is expected to have a positive impact on the world of education. First, the impact on the learning process and students’ creativity, by providing a project that can provide several values at once, will help the learning process. Second, project-based learning can reduce the stress or pressure students face due to too much load

and demands from schools in Indonesia. Third, provide space for students who have talent and interest in the world of film in various positions or positions and even the roles played.

## B. Research Method

The research method utilized for enhancing student character through collaborative learning that integrates two disciplines, Indonesian Language and Citizenship Education, is qualitative in nature, highlighting the researcher as a primary tool. Alongside the qualitative approach, this investigation into character development leverages a narrative framework alongside a phenomenological angle. This phenomenological approach begins by focusing on and scrutinizing the phenomenon of interest, which involves observing various subjective dimensions of the subjects' behavior. Additionally, the researchers gathered data to interpret the meanings of the objects connected to the respective phenomena. The study's data source consists of the students' behaviors that evolve during collaborative project work within the learning framework. The information collected for this study includes student expressions represented through phrases or words, which are recorded using a rubric provided to evaluate potential changes in the students as they engage with their groups on the projects. The organization of groups for each class is presented in the subsequent table.

Data collection techniques are carried out through several stages, namely:

1. Initial Observation: observation of the entire class that will be suitable for use as a research space. From the initial observation result, it was found that grade 9 is more likely to be used as a pilot class for the collaborative project.
2. Making a questionnaire that will be distributed to students at the end of the project or when each class has completed the short film.
3. Structured interviews are conducted with students who serve as directors, producers, and scriptwriters.
4. Data is collected and analyzed according to the specified analysis techniques.

In addition to data collection techniques, this study uses data analysis techniques, such as narrative. The narrative analysis technique has several stages, namely:

1. Narrative Data Collection: Narrative data is obtained through interviews, documents, media, or other relevant sources.
2. Narrative Structure Analysis: Identifying narrative elements that are important in forming meaning.
3. Context Analysis: Examining how narratives are influenced by social, cultural, or historical contexts.
4. Interpretation of Meaning: Connecting the narrative with the research theme to reveal messages or insights.

**Tabel 1.** Number of Students and Distribution of Groups in Class

Class	The number of students	The number of groups
9A	22 students	2 groups
9B	20 students	2 groups
9C	21 students	2 groups
9D	20 students	2 groups
9E	21 students	2 groups
9F	23 students	2 groups

**Tabel 2.** Student Character Development Rubric

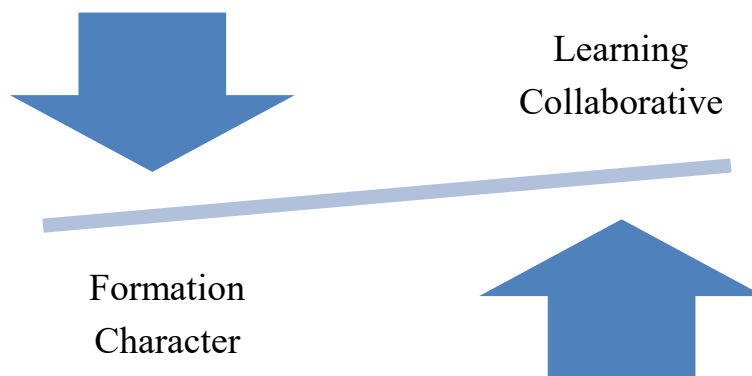
No.	Assessment Indicator	Value Range (1-5)	Notes
1.	Students experience a change in attitude towards a more positive.		
2.	Students experience a change in attitude for the worse.		
3.	Collaborative learning makes students' characters more independent.		
4.	Collaborative learning improves students' social skills.		

No.	Assessment Indicator	Value Range (1-5)	Notes
5.	Collaborative learning improves students' ability to work together.		
6.	Collaborative learning increases the attitude of responsibility in students.		
7.	Collaborative learning helps students to develop creativity and innovation within students.		
8.	Collaborative learning provides efficiency in several ways: time efficiency, appraisal efficiency (one time work gets several grades), and energy efficiency.		

## C. Results and Discussion

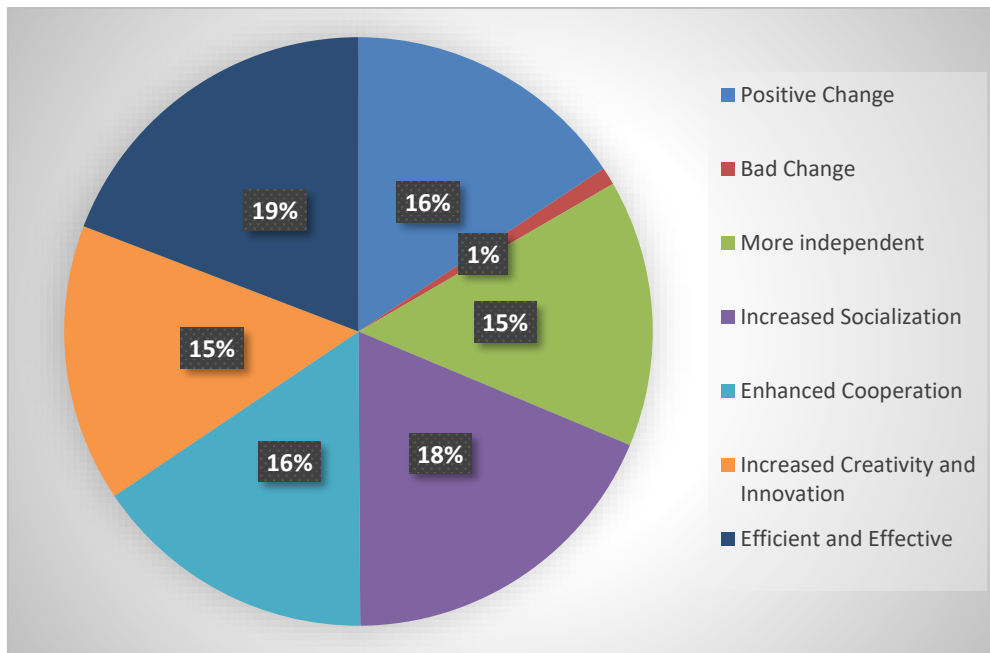
### 1. Results

This study found a strong correlation between collaborative learning and the formation of students' character in the learning process. The following chart shows this correlation.



**Figure 1.** Collaborative Learning Correlation with Character Building

The two components cannot stand alone, they are interrelated. The two components become a strong correlation because there is a supporting platform, namely the independent curriculum. During the process of making projects held by the two fields of study, namely Indonesian Language and Citizenship Education, students experienced many things. Various things students get while working on collaborative projects. The collaborative project they did was for each group to make a short film with the theme "Nationalism". Short films made are between 10-60 minutes long. Each student is free to determine the concept, film script, distribution of characters, distribution of performance, and the specified duration of time. The research data can be observed in the following graph details.



**Figure 2.** Results of Research on Students Character Development

## 2. Discussion

The diagram above is obtained from filling out a questionnaire or questionnaire given by educators to students to observe and analyze themselves during the process of working on projects carried out through collaborative learning. Students are asked to reflect and look back at each other before filling out the questionnaire. From the diagram above, it can be said that collaborative learning has a positive impact on students. Students learn and get many things in the learning process. The existence of Project Based Learning (PBL) which is carried out by students' trains students' abilities in several aspects, such as: the ability to work together, social skills, the ability to accept other people's opinions, the ability to present personal ideas and ideas, the ability to blend with other parties, the ability to accept existence others, the ability to accept joint decisions. This research resulted in the finding that students who successfully carry out collaborative learning through PBL will become individuals who are superior, persistent, and have a strong and healthy mentality.

In the digital and modern era, sooner or later, someone's thinking will develop in a more modern and practical direction. Developing a person's thoughts and point of view will influence the person to behave, think, and make decisions in various aspects of their life. All of these things will also happen to students. Students who experience self-development due to the development of the times need direction and education that is able to accommodate and teach students to grow and develop into individuals with high integrity, good character, and virtuous character. One of the containers prepared by the government is the independent curriculum. An independent curriculum needs to be developed and adapted to each school culture. An independent curriculum that should have freed students and educators to create their full potential is often considered by some to be a complex and complicated burden. The concept that should be simple but felt complicated has made some parties think again about implementing an independent curriculum in the learning system. Even though many benefits can be explored in the independent curriculum. The need for guidance and space for each school to adjust or adapt the independent curriculum to the vision and mission of each school is needed so that each school does not experience confusion but gets enlightenment. If schools are confused or have questions about the system and implementation of an independent curriculum, you can imagine what confusion will hit educators and students.

### 2.1 Implications

The findings of this study highlight the transformative potential of short film media when integrated into interdisciplinary project-based learning (PBL). Educators can adopt short filmmaking as a pedagogical approach to foster not only academic understanding but also essential social competencies such as empathy, collaboration, and communication. This method encourages active participation, critical reflection, and

meaningful interactions among learners, making it particularly relevant in 21st-century classrooms emphasizing holistic education. Additionally, the use of film promotes creative expression, allowing students to engage with real-world issues through visual storytelling.

## **2.2 Research Contribution**

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on innovative teaching strategies by examining how short film media serves as an interdisciplinary tool for character and social development. It bridges a gap between media-based learning and affective outcomes, offering empirical insights into how audiovisual narratives can shape students' moral reasoning and interpersonal skills. The study also provides a practical framework for educators seeking to integrate PBL with media literacy and values education, thereby enriching the learning experience beyond traditional academic boundaries.

## **2.3 Limitations**

Despite the promising results, the study encountered several limitations. The scope was limited to a specific educational context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The duration of the project implementation was relatively short, which might have influenced the depth of students' long-term character development. Furthermore, variations in students' prior media exposure and technological skills may have influenced their engagement levels and learning outcomes. The reliance on self-report measures also introduces potential bias in assessing social and emotional growth.

## **2.4 Suggestions**

Future research should consider applying the short film-based interdisciplinary PBL model in diverse educational settings and with a larger sample to increase the validity and transferability of results. Longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustained impact of this approach on students' social and character development. Educators are also encouraged to receive training in digital storytelling and media literacy to effectively facilitate the process. Integrating student feedback and peer assessment can further enhance engagement and provide richer insights into collaborative learning dynamics.

## **D. Conclusion**

The independent curriculum has a strong correlation with collaborative learning. Collaborative learning also has a strong correlation with character development in educators as well as students. Three essential components in the education system must be maintained. Not only is it maintained, but efforts are often made to preserve it through implementing collaborative learning activities at every level of education and every field of study. Collaborative learning teaches educators and students to develop in a better and more advanced direction. Collaborative learning makes educators understand that efficiency and effectiveness in the learning process should be maintained and carried out. Students who previously only got grades one by one in each field of study, many assignments because there were demands from each field of study, and other things, turned into an effective and efficient learning process in collaborative learning. Collaborative learning saves many things while developing many things in students. Collaborative learning must be implemented in various fields of study in every educational institution in Indonesia.

## **E. Acknowledgment**

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## **F. Author Contribution Statement**

The sole author was responsible for the study's conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The author also drafted, reviewed, and finalized the manuscript. The author conducted all stages of the research process—including project implementation in classrooms, observation, and evaluation—independently, ensuring the study's integrity and originality.



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