

Character Learning Model Based on Millennial Era Collaborative Learning

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Abstract

This research is intended to develop an innovative character learning model in Junior High School (SMP) by integrating a *collaborative learning* approach. The millennial era demands adaptive and relevant character education, not only through knowledge transfer, but also through collaborative learning experiences that foster values such as cooperation, empathy, responsibility, and critical thinking. This model will be designed through a Research and Development (R&D) approach which includes preliminary studies, model design, development, testing, and evaluation. The results of this study show that the character learning model based on the collaborative learning project model can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of student character in junior high school and can be a reference for the development of a more holistic curriculum, namely a curriculum that supports the development of students' character. The application of the character learning model based on the collaborative learning project has a positive impact on the formation and improvement of students' ethical values/character at the junior high school level including character responsibility and accountability, empathy & tolerance, social and communication skills, self-confidence and self-appreciation, mutual cooperation and cooperation, critical thinking and problem-solving, social and communication skills, and honesty. dan integrates.

Keywords: Character learning model, Collaborative learning project, Millennium era

1. Introduction

The millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996, operates in a highly connected, digital-first world. Because of this, traditional teacher-centered education is no longer enough to meet their unique needs. To prepare students for the demands of the 21st century, educators must shift toward collaborative, student-centered learning. A character learning model based on millennial collaborative learning bridges this gap by combining academic success with strong moral and ethical development (Sujarwo et al., 2023).

Millennials often thrive in interactive and collaborative learning environments rather than isolated study. They are accustomed to instant digital communication and highly value clear expectations and frequent, constructive feedback (Desyart & Handayani, 2021). Their learning style leans heavily toward cooperation, group activities, and the use of modern technology to solve problems. Educational frameworks must adapt to these unique traits to keep students engaged and motivated (Price, 2009; Sandars & Morrison, 2007).

Collaborative learning involves students working together in small groups to achieve a common goal. This approach is deeply rooted in 21st-century skills known as the "4Cs": Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity (Widodo & Sutrisno, 2024). When students collaborate, they learn to negotiate, respect diverse viewpoints, and take responsibility for both their own learning and the success of their peers.

Character education in Indonesia faces complex challenges in this millennial era. The millennial generation, who grew up with abundant access to information and intense digital interaction, exhibits unique characteristics that require a different pedagogical approach.

Instilling noble values such as honesty, discipline, tolerance, and mutual cooperation is crucial in the midst of the unstoppable flow of globalization and information disruption.

Conventional learning models that tend to be one-way are often less effective in shaping students' character comprehensively. An approach is needed that allows students to actively participate, interact, and experience firsthand the relevance of character values in their daily lives. *Collaborative learning*, with a focus on cooperation and interaction between students, offers great potential to address this gap.

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Building a character learning model based on millennial collaborative learning requires an active partnership among schools, families, and communities. Here is how the model works in practice:

Technology Integration: Teachers use digital platforms and social media tools as mediums to teach empathy, digital citizenship, and online respect (Hidayat & Rahmawati, 2022). Technology turns abstract values into relevant, engaging lessons.

Project-Based Group Work: Students tackle real-world problems in teams. This method develops critical skills like personal responsibility, leadership, and empathy (Mardianto & Siregar, 2025).

Holistic Assessment: Evaluation moves beyond standard test scores. Teachers assess students based on their argumentative skills, teamwork, and ability to reflect on their own moral choices (Prasetyo & Utami, 2023).

Through collaborative learning, students not only learn content, but also develop social, communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills, all of which are essential components of strong character building. In the global job market, technical skills alone are not enough. Companies are looking for individuals with adaptability, collaboration, effective communication, and integrity. These characters are the result of integrated character education, making graduates more competitive and relevant on the global scene. Global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, disinformation, and inequality require not only cognitive knowledge, but also strong moral and ethical character. Students need to develop empathy for humanitarian issues, responsibility for the environment, and integrity in the face of disinformation. Character integration allows learning about these issues not only from a data perspective, but also from a value perspective.

Beside that by participating in structured collaborative tasks, students naturally develop strong personal traits. The courage to ask questions, respect for others, and a deep sense of social responsibility emerge as students interact. Research shows that collaborative models contribute positively to building student attitudes and overall learning achievement (Ahmad

& Lestari, 2020). Rather than just memorizing facts, students internalize moral values through daily social interactions and practical application.

2. Method

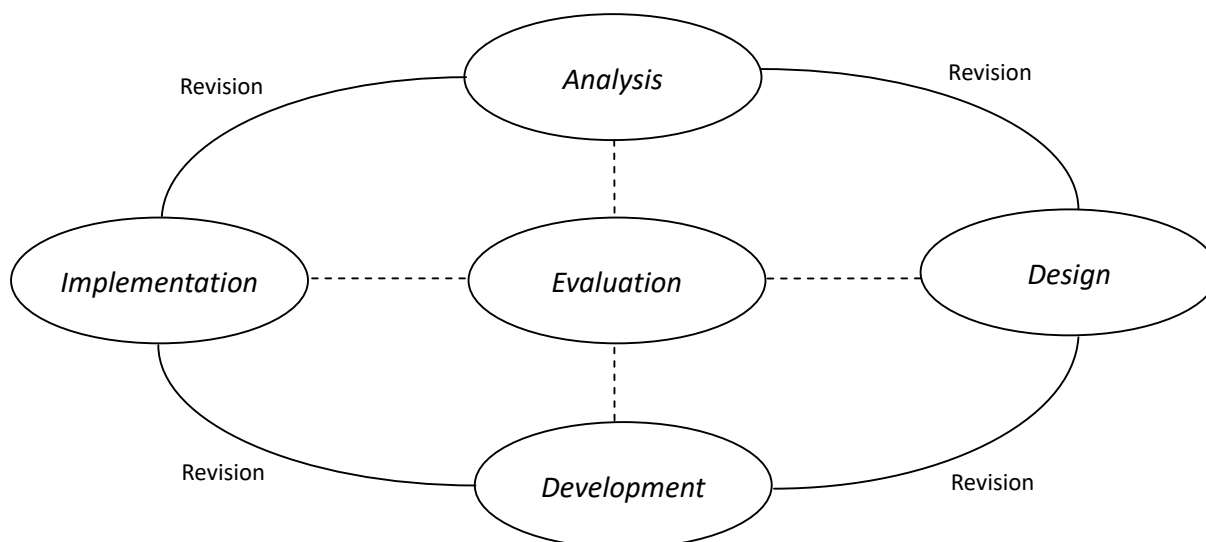


Figure 1. ADDIE model research flow diagram

2.1 Implementation of Research with ADDIE Approach

2.1.1 Stages of Analysis

(1) Literature Studies

Examines the theory of character education, collaborative learning, characteristics of millennial students, and previous relevant research.

(2) Needs Analysis

(a) Survey: Distribute questionnaires to teachers and junior high school students regarding their perceptions of character education and the need for innovative learning models.

(b) Interviews: Conducted in-depth interviews with several BK teachers, subject teachers, principals, and student representatives to get more detailed information about the challenges and expectations of character education.

(c) Document Study: Analyze the 2013 curriculum and existing learning tools related to character education.

2.1.2 Design Stage

(1) Model Concept Design: Develop a conceptual framework for a Collaborative learning-based character learning model, including objectives, materials, syntax, character assessment strategies, and teacher-student roles.

(2) Material Selection: Determine the core character values to focus on and how those values are integrated in collaborative activities.

(3) Device Design: Creating an initial draft of teacher guides, student worksheets, and character assessment instruments (attitude scales, observations).

2.1.3 Development Stage

(1) Product Development: Prototype the learning model and its supporting devices.

(2) Expert Validation: Validating the prototype model by:

(a) Character Education Expert: To assess the suitability of the content and character values.

(b) Learning Expert/Educational Technology: To assess the feasibility of learning methodologies and designs.

(c) Linguist: To assess the clarity and accuracy of the language.

(3) Revision I: Revise the product based on feedback from validators.

2.1.4 Implementation/Trial Stage

(1) Limited Trial (Pilot Study): Carry out a model trial in one class/small group of students in one junior high school. The purpose of this trial is to identify the initial weaknesses of the model and device.

(2) Revision II: Revise the product based on the results of a limited trial.

(3) Field Trial (Main Study): Carry out a trial on a larger sample (minimum 2-3 classes in 1-2 different junior high schools). Data collection using validated instruments.

2.1.5 Evaluation Stage

(1) Data Analysis: Analyze quantitative (*e.g.*, character assessment instrument scores) and qualitative (*e.g.*, observations, interviews, field notes) data from the trial.

(2) Model Evaluation: Assess the effectiveness, practicality, and attractiveness of the character learning model developed.

2.2 Population and Sample

2.2.1 Population

All junior high school students and teachers in Bengkulu City.

2.2.2 Sample

It will be selected by purposive sampling, namely teachers and students in junior high school who have a commitment to character development and are willing to participate in research. The limited trial will involve 1 class, while the field trial will involve 2-3 classes from 1-2 different schools.

2.3 Research Instruments

- (1) Questionnaire (for teachers and students)
- (2) Interview guidelines
- (3) Observation sheet (collaborative activities and character manifestations)
- (4) Attitude assessment scale (to measure changes in students' character)
- (5) Journal of student reflection
- (6) Trial guide

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

2.4.1 Qualitative Data

Descriptive-qualitative analysis of the results of interviews, observations, and field notes to identify patterns, themes, and descriptions of model characteristics.

2.4.2 Quantitative Data

Descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (*e.g.*, t-test or ANACOVA, if required, to test for differences before and after model implementation) to test the effectiveness of the model.

3. Results and Discussion

The following is a statistical summary table of the total data score before the study was conducted:

Table 1. The total data score before the study was conducted

Statistics	Value
Amount of data	11
Mean (track-track)	96,64
Median	110
Minimum	0
Maximum	116
Standard deviation	33,96

From the table above, it can be seen that the average score of the respondents was quite high (96.64), and the median score of 110 showed that most of the respondents gave a good assessment of character and attitude after the intervention. The minimum score of 0 comes

from empty/unfilled rows.

For the analysis of each category of answers, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. The total data score after the study was conducted

Category	Mean	Interprets
Very Good (Unnamed:2)	6.18	Respondents pretty much chose the very good category.
Good (Unnamed:3)	9.50	Dominating respondents' answers.
Pretty Good (Unnamed:4)	10.73	Many still consider it enough, it needs to strengthen certain characters.
Not Enough (Unnamed:5)	2.22	Low→positive signs after the intervention.
Need Improvement (Unnamed:6)	1.0	It hardly appears →the effects of the intervention are quite good.

Based on the results of data analysis after treatment, it can be seen that most students give self-assessments in the Good and Very Good categories for almost all indicators of character development. The average total score reached 96.64 with a median of 110, indicating that the majority of respondents had a relatively positive and stable character level after the intervention. The number of responses to negative categories such as Not Good and Needs Improvement is very minimal, which shows a significant improvement in behavior and attitude. This pattern indicates that the interventions or learning activities provided are able to improve students' honesty, responsibility, cooperative ability, and self-reflection skills. The dominance of scores in the positive category reflects that students have shown more mature character changes in communicating and completing group tasks. Overall, post-treatment data illustrate the strong influence of improvement on students' positive behavior, both in terms of discipline, activeness, and collaboration, so that it can be concluded that the program or activity implemented has succeeded in having a real impact on character development.

For the following data, it can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Real impact on character development

Answer Categories	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD	Interpretation
Very Good (Unnamed:2)	10.43	5	15	2.38	This category dominates peer-to-peer assessments. Students were rated very positively by their peers, showing a strong improvement in character after the intervention.
Good (Unnamed:3)	11.10	4	15	2.88	Become the category with the highest score. Indicates consistency of good attitude in group work and social interaction.
Pretty Good (Unnamed:4)	6.09	1	11	2.49	It still appears but decreases compared to previous data. It indicates that some students still show a positive attitude that is not stable.
Not Enough (Unnamed:5)	1.68	1	3	0.67	Very low and slightly popping. This shows the success of the intervention in reducing negative behaviors.
Need Improvement (Unnamed:6)	0	0	0	0	This shows the success of the intervention in reducing negative behaviors is very successful

Qualitatively, the after-data pattern shows that the dominance of positive categories such as “Good” and “Excellent” is strengthening, while negative categories are almost no longer emerging. This shows that the learning interventions provided—whether in the form of the use of collaborative methods, project-based learning, or character building—are able to significantly improve the quality of social interactions, confidence, reflective skills, and student responsibility. In addition, the high score on the assessment between friends shows that the character changes that occur are not only internal (self-perception), but also socially recognized by peers. Thus, the relationship between the two data shows that interventions not only improve the quality of individual students, but also improve overall group dynamics, strengthen cooperation, and build a more positive learning culture.

Overall, the correlation between the improvement in self-assessment and peer-assessment scores suggests that learning interventions have a strong, consistent, and confirmed improvement effect from two different perspectives. This emphasizes that the program or learning strategy applied is effective in comprehensively shaping students’ positive character and behavior. In addition, the cooperative learning model is effective in improving students’ social skills (ability to interact) and character (such as cooperation and mutual respect) through peer discussion and interaction (Widodo & Handayani, 2019).

4. Conclusion

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the application of the character learning model based on collaborative learning project has a positive impact on the formation and improvement of students' ethical values/character at the junior high school level including the character of responsibility and accountability, empathy & tolerance, social and communication skills, self-confidence and self-appreciation, mutual cooperation and cooperation, critical thinking and problem-solving, social and communication skills, and honesty and integrity. A character learning model based on millennial collaborative learning provides a practical way to shape the leaders of tomorrow. By embracing the collaborative and tech-savvy nature of millennial learners, educators can effectively blend academic goals with character building. Through teamwork, technology, and community support, students learn to become both intellectually smart and morally upright.

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Authors Contributions

Prof. Dr. Badeni, M.A. designed the study, collected the data helped by Helen, M. Pd. and Desi Haryani, and wrote and revised the manuscript. Dr. Rendy Wikamawardana was responsible for conducting and drafting the literature review. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

Data Sharing Statement

No additional data are available.

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