



# Cultivating Courage in Civics Learning in Elementary Schools

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**Abstract.** Character strengthening needs to be improved from an early age to instill a positive attitude in students with several methods that can be applied. The focus of strengthening the character of this article is courage. The purposes of this research are 1) to describe the cultivation of courage in concept development in Civics learning, 2) to describe the cultivation of courage in group exercises in Civics learning, and 3) to explain the cultivation of courage in independent exercises in Civics learning. The research method was qualitative with an ethnographic research design. The research was conducted at SDN 1 Jatimarto with the class teacher and three second-grade students as subjects. Data collection techniques applied were interviews, documentation, and observation. The data were validated using source and technique triangulation. Data analysis techniques used inductive methods. The process of data analysis is collecting data, reducing data, displaying data, verifying data, and drawing conclusions. The research results show that 1) Cultivating courage in concept development is carried out by guiding students to understand a concept by reading a text to train courage; 2) Cultivating courage through group exercises begins with forming students into several groups. Students can express their opinions and then convey their work with courage; 3) Cultivating courage in independent exercises is done by giving students assignments independently.

**Keywords:** Cultivating · Courage · Civics Learning

## 1 Introduction

Strengthening character education needs to be done due to the weakening of the morals and character of the younger generation. According to Nurohmah [1], students' moral decline is one of the conditions of society, which is currently in a phase of social change in the era of globalization. This is because education has only focused on intellectual or cognitive aspects. The moral decline can be corrected with character education [2]. Negative behavior in society includes not having opinions, bullying, stealing, using offensive language, and disrespecting parents and others. They are a sign of the destruction of a country [3].

The number of these actions requires character strengthening that can be carried out together with a learning process in schools. The relevant character can be interpreted

as innate in heart, soul, personality, behavior, and character, focusing on the value of kindness in action or behavior [4]. The expected student character is noble that can be developed for students. Character strengthening is needed to build the younger generation's attitude from an early age so that strengthening the instilled character can become a habit for an individual. Based on this description, the character that is the focus of research is the courageous attitude of students during the learning process.

Courage is a character over which a person is mentally or morally controlled. Courage comes from the heart. The heart is a figure of speech that shows the source of one's desires and feelings. Courage is a power that comes from within [5]. According to Frinaldi and Embi, courage is a bold attitude in taking risks when decisions are made quickly and on time [6]. According to Munawar, courage (*keberanian*) comes from the word "*berani*," which means the attitude of doing something without worrying too much about the worst possibility [7].

In this study, the focus of learning is Civics learning. Civics in elementary schools is essential in preparing students to become firm citizens who are committed to protecting the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, civics related to citizenship education educates citizens to understand and carry out their rights and obligations, recognized and formed based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Learning to be citizens will create a generation with intellectual intelligence, life skills, and good character. In this case, it follows the national education goals of the National Education System Law number 20 of 2003.

During Civics learning, this research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Jatimarto 1, Ngadirojo, Wonogiri. This research focused on cultivating or habituating a courageous attitude in developing concepts, group exercises, and independent exercises at the core of Civics learning. Cultivating a courageous attitude in developing the concept in question is how the teacher accustoms students to the courageous attitude of students so that they can find theories or understanding in the Civics learning material being taught. Cultivating a courageous attitude in group exercises is how the teacher cultivates a courageous attitude in students in group learning. Cultivating a courageous attitude in individual exercises can be interpreted as how the teacher habituates students to be courageous when studying independently or individually.

According to Yara, student behavior can be influenced by teacher behavior and the teacher's teaching methods [8]. Teachers must increase positive relationships with students' daily activities, for example, students' courage and interest. Students dare to ask questions, answer questions, express opinions, answer questions in front of the class, do group exercises, and practice independently using approaches or methods that promote teaching and learning and increase courage for improvement.

The results of interviews at SD N 1 Jatimarto Ngadirojo showed that students were not brave enough to show themselves to new people, such as when researchers conducted interviews with several students in the class. Students must adapt to new people first. After adopting, students dare to answer the questions posed by researchers. In this case, increasing students' courage includes complimenting and showing body movements that describe happy movements [9].

Based on this description, the research objectives of this study are 1) to describe the culture of courage in developing concepts in Civics learning; 2) to describe the

cultivation of courage in group exercises in Civics learning; 3) to explain the cultivation of courage in independent exercises in Civics learning.

## 2 Method

Following the research objectives, the research method was a qualitative approach associated with an ethnographic design. The core of this ethnographic understanding is culture. To understand the developing culture, ethnographers spend mainly time interviewing and collecting documents about the group being studied [10]. This research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Jatimarto, located in Brecek Lor Hamlet, Jatimarto Village, Ngadirojo District, Wonogiri Regency, Central Java. This research was conducted one day in thematic learning, especially the content of Civics lessons. The subjects in this study were class teachers and second-grade students at SDN 1 Jatimarto, consisting of 11 male students and eight female students. The researchers only took three second-grade students.

Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is an important research method for understanding the phenomenon under study and enriching knowledge [11]. Observations in qualitative research are carried out directly in the field to observe the behavior and activities of the subject. Researchers can participate directly in data collection or be non-participants who observe. According to Mardawani [12], the technique used in qualitative research is in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are gathering information or knowledge for research purposes through face-to-face interviews between interviewers and informants, with or without guidance. Documentation is obtaining knowledge and information through archives, books, documents, writing, numbers, and pictures in the form of reports and information supporting research [13].

In this study, checking the validity of the data used a triangulation technique, which Denzin popularizes. Triangulation techniques are fact-checking techniques that use the information for something other than verification or comparison of data. According to Denzin, the three triangulation methods that researchers use in this study are research methods that use data sources, methods, and theories [14]. In this study, the data analysis technique used was the inductive method. This inductive method is used to analyze the data obtained, namely qualitative data, that is not in the form of numbers.

## 3 Results and Discussion

Cultivating a character requires a suitable method in Civics learning by positively contributing to student behavior in everyday learning. The focus of the discussion in this article consists of 1) cultivating courage in concept development at the core of Civics learning in second-grade elementary schools; 2) cultivating courage in group exercises at the core of Civics learning in second grade; 3) cultivating courage in independent exercises at the core of Civics learning. The three focuses of discussion are briefly described.



**Fig. 1.** Reading in front of the class

### 3.1 Cultivating Courage in Concept Development at the Core of Civics Learning in Second Grade

Cultivating courage, the teacher applies in concept development can be seen when the teacher introduces a new term to students, for example, *gotong royong*. *Gotong royong* begins by asking a student to read about *gotong royong* in the book, and the other students imitate it together. Afterward, each student is asked to come to the front of the class individually to read the text about cooperation. All students come to the front of the class boldly and confidently, as shown in Fig. 1.

Teachers often ask students to read a passage in front of the class. It aims to prepare students to come forward in front of the class. Excerpts of interviews with students when students have finished advancing to the front of the class are presented as follows (A = researcher, B = student).

A: Are you often asked to read in front of the class?

B: Yes, the teacher often asks us to read in front of the class.

A: How do you feel in front of the class? Are you scared?

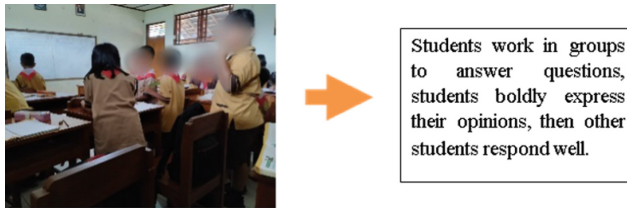
B: Not afraid, because we are used to coming to the front of the class.

Based on Fig. 1 and the interview, the students showed courage when they came to the front of the class. Based on observations, students understand the concept or theory that is read. Then with the teacher's explanation, students can also mention examples of the word "gotong royong" in everyday life that they can do. This is supported by Lestari [15], who states that if the teacher uses skills by following the correct steps, courage will be built onward, and learning interactions in the classroom will increase.

The results of interviews with the SD N 1 Jatimarto Ngadirojo teacher state that the teacher often asked students to come forward in front of the class, especially when reading a reading text. The teacher states that this method is part of the learning that is applied every day. By asking students to come to the front of the class, they will get used to what they are doing so that a sense of courage will emerge. In addition, the teacher can check student progress in reading fluency and ensure students understand the concept or theory being studied during the Civics lesson.

### 3.2 Cultivating Courage in Group Exercises at the Core of Civics Learning

The cultivation carried out by the teacher to develop group exercises in learning is conducted thoroughly. The teacher gives group exercises by giving assignments to students



**Fig. 2.** Group Exercises

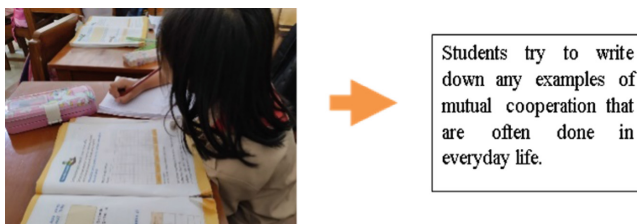
to form groups to answer questions. Students in groups work on assignments by giving their opinions regarding the answers that are considered appropriate. In the research, students boldly conveyed personal opinions to their group mates, and other students gave good responses.

Figure 2 shows group exercise activities carried out by students in class. Through interviews with class teachers, it can be concluded that students are often asked to carry out activities in groups, such as answering questions or practicing. Group activities can be a good teaching technique because groups can provide good participation for individuals (students) [16]. Group activities certainly have several advantages, for example, the opportunity to express opinions, an objective, accurate, and quite broad understanding of what is being discussed, and creating a positive attitude towards oneself and the environment.

The results of interviews with elementary school teachers where the research was conducted stated that when group activities, students could argue according to what they thought, then the results of group activities would later be read out by group representatives so that by reading the results, the sense of courage students had would undoubtedly increase. Cooperation between students also would be stronger. It is hoped that students can develop other good behaviors by getting used to group exercises.

### 3.3 Cultivating Courage in Independent Exercises at the Core of Civics Learning

Cultivating a courageous attitude in independent exercises is carried out concerning how students can analyze problems and can solve these problems independently according to students' abilities. Independent exercise actively involves students composing questions and answering solutions [17]. Independent exercise activities begin by giving questions and examples of answers.



**Fig. 3.** Independent Exercises



**Fig. 4.** Reading the Answer Results

Figure 3 shows the implementation of civics learning in independent exercise classes with cooperation material. The teacher gives questions to students to write down any examples of cooperation. First, the teacher gives examples of cooperation often done in everyday life. Next, students are asked to write down examples of cooperation that they know. The teacher checks the students' writing several times, and then students are randomly asked to read the answers that have been written. Students boldly convey their writing results. However, some students do not dare to convey the results of their writing, so the teacher gives students an understanding that whatever they think is not wrong, students do not need to be afraid if the answer will be given later is wrong.

Based on Fig. 4, students were randomly asked to read their answers. The method used by the teacher to practice courage in independent exercises certainly requires various ways to persuade students, give understanding, and invite other students to set an example that it does not matter if they answer a question wrong. Other students also encouraged their friends to keep learning to avoid getting discouraged. Thus, independent exercise is one way to help students learn, namely by creating a learning environment, motivating students, controlling discipline, and creating a learning atmosphere [17].

The teacher states that to cultivate students' courage, the teacher tries to enrich appropriate learning strategies to increase students' sense of courage and needs several experiments to train students' courage in independent exercise so that more profound cultivation is needed for independent exercises. The task of the teacher in independent exercises is to be a helper. That is, the teacher becomes a person who is willing to help students if needed, both in setting learning goals and in solving difficulties that students cannot solve alone.

Based on some of the expert opinions, courage is an attitude full of confidence in making decisions without worrying about future bad possibilities. The indicators of courage are 1) willing to try new things, 2) expressing opinions, 3) controlling fear, and 4) facing challenges [18, 19].

**Acknowledgments.** The authors would like to express their gratitude to various parties on this occasion. The authors thank our supervising lecturers, who encouraged us to conduct research. We also express our gratitude to the head and teachers of SD Negeri Jatimarto 1, who have assisted in the research process so that it went according to plan. The authors also would like to thank Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta for providing funds and assisting in publication.

**Author Contributions.** The first author contributed to finding data and writing a draft of the article. The second author contributed to reviewing and revising the draft research article.

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