

# Learning Strategies in Extracurricular Theater to Develop Students' Acting Skills at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School

Moch Khoirul Anam<sup>1</sup>

Universitas Negeri Surabaya<sup>1,2,3</sup>

\*E-mail: [moch.khoirul.21059@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:moch.khoirul.21059@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

## Abstract

Education in the 21st century requires the development of holistic skills, including creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Extracurricular drama has great potential as a vehicle for developing these skills, but at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, its development is hampered by a lack of systematic and collaborative learning strategies. This qualitative case study aims to examine the performing arts extracurricular learning strategies implemented, analyze the obstacles encountered, and develop a cooperative learning-based strategy model. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The results show that the application of cooperative learning with elements such as group-based role-play, character interpretation discussions, and peer teaching has proven effective not only in improving students' acting skills but also in fostering self-confidence, creativity, solidarity, and communication skills. The success of this strategy is also demonstrated by the students' achievement in winning a regional theater competition. This study concludes that cooperative learning is a relevant and applicable strategy for optimizing the role of acting extracurricular activities in shaping students' 21st-century skills and character.

**Keywords:** Learning Strategies, Theater Extracurricular Activities, Acting



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## Introduction

Education in the 21st century demands a holistic approach that not only focuses on mastering academic content but also emphasizes the development of 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Within this framework, extracurricular activities serve as an essential medium for students to explore their potential beyond formal classroom settings. One such activity with significant potential for character formation and self-expression is the art of acting. Through role-playing, students learn not only vocal techniques, facial expressions, and body movements but also develop empathy, self-confidence, and social interaction skills.

However, in many junior high schools, including Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, the development of acting skills through extracurricular programs is still constrained by the lack of systematic, structured, and collaborative learning strategies. Acting, as one of the strategic extracurricular activities, not only offers aesthetic experiences through vocal, facial, and physical expression but also encourages students to cultivate social sensitivity, empathy, confidence, and teamwork. Therefore, acting functions as an educational medium oriented toward character formation and the enhancement of effective communication skills.

At the national level, similar challenges persist. Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) indicate that the allocation of time and resources for arts education in schools remains very limited. A national survey revealed that more than 60% of Indonesian junior high schools only offer arts education as a compulsory subject with minimal duration and without adequate extracurricular arts programs. This issue is compounded by schools prioritizing subjects related to national examinations, thereby marginalizing the arts. This finding aligns with Winner et al. (2013), who state that “the arts are often the first victims of education policies driven by standardization and testing.” Consequently, students’ artistic and expressive potential remains underdeveloped.

At Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School, the current theater extracurricular practices are dominated by centralized and instructional learning methods. Teachers still act as the sole source of knowledge, while students are positioned as passive recipients. Rehearsals tend to emphasize script memorization and imitation rather than creative exploration, improvisation, or collaboration. This approach limits the potential of acting as a medium for creativity and character development. Therefore, innovative, participatory, and collaborative learning strategies are needed so that extracurricular theater activities can truly function as a platform for developing 21st-century competencies and character education.

This study employs the Cooperative Learning theory developed by Johnson & Johnson (1999), which emphasizes five key elements: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, social skills, and group evaluation. These elements are highly relevant to acting activities, where students are required to collaborate, understand their individual roles, engage in intensive interaction, and appreciate each other’s contributions (Felder & Brent, 2007). Septiadi et al. (2022) further reinforce this by stating that “through observation, modeling, and group collaboration, students could better understand drama techniques while demonstrating improvements in communication, collaboration, and self-expression” (p. 5). This suggests that cooperative learning not only enhances technical acting skills but also develops affective and interpersonal competencies.

Recent studies also highlight that cooperative-based learning strategies strengthen students’ socio-emotional skills, essential competencies for navigating 21st-century challenges. Cavaletto & Miglietta (2024) found that “peer-to-peer education actively engages students and has a positive impact on lifelong learning skills and social competences” (p. 2). Applying cooperative learning in extracurricular theater is thus seen as a viable solution to bridge the current gap in educational practice. Similarly, Septiadi et al. (2022) demonstrated through their R&D-based Modeling the Way approach that cooperative learning effectively enhances not only acting performance but also fosters teamwork, communication, and creativity.

In line with this, Güleç & Macan (2014) examined drama-supported cooperative learning among early childhood students in Turkey. Their experimental study showed that students in the cooperative drama group exhibited significant improvements in verbal communication and the ability to avoid communication barriers compared to the control group. These findings confirm that integrating drama with cooperative learning can effectively strengthen socio-emotional skills from an early age.

These prior studies provide both theoretical and practical foundations for the current research. Cooperative learning in theater education is not merely performance-oriented but focuses on the process of character building, communication, and collaboration. Adapting these findings, the extracurricular theater program at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School has the potential to become an interactive, participatory, and meaningful learning environment that fosters both artistic growth and essential social skills for 21st-century life.

This study is particularly significant as it integrates three key educational aspects: extracurricular activities as non-academic development spaces, acting as a medium of expression and character formation, and cooperative learning as a proven strategy to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. The unique context of Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School, which integrates Islamic values into its curriculum, adds further relevance, as acting activities here are not only aimed at developing

technical skills but also serve as a means for moral and spiritual internalization. For instance, short dramas based on prophetic stories or moral values allow students to experience honesty, patience, and tolerance through direct role-play. However, without effective learning strategies that encourage collaboration and active participation, such potential remains underutilized.

Field observations reveal that despite teachers' strong commitment, they face structural challenges such as limited time (only 90 minutes per week), insufficient pedagogical training in cooperative methods, and lack of supporting resources such as contextual scripts and adequate rehearsal spaces. Santa et al. (2025) found that 71% of arts teachers in East Java junior high schools had never received training on cooperative learning approaches, resulting in continued reliance on traditional teaching methods that are less effective in fostering student creativity. This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive study to design cooperative-based learning strategies tailored to students' contextual needs.

The research problems formulated in this study aim to explore in depth the current practices of extracurricular theater learning at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School. The first question investigates existing acting learning strategies in terms of methods, approaches, and learning outcomes. The second question focuses on the challenges faced, including resource limitations, teacher readiness, and student participation. The third question seeks to examine how a cooperative learning-based strategy can optimize students' acting skills so that extracurricular theater activities contribute not only to performance outcomes but also to meaningful character formation, communication, and collaboration skills.

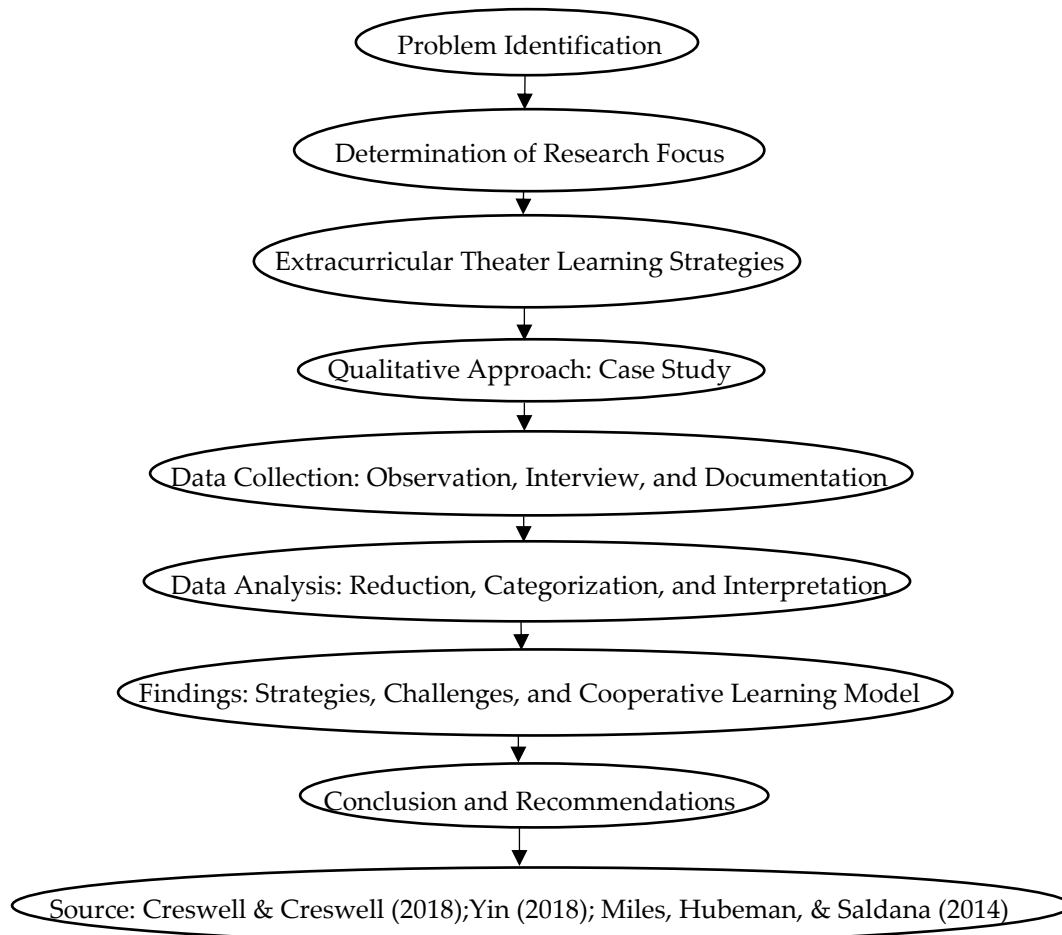
The cooperative learning approach is theoretically grounded in educational psychology. In addition to Johnson & Johnson (1999), it aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which posits that students learn more effectively through peer interaction with varying skill levels (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in McLeod, 2024). In the context of acting, less confident students can learn from more experienced peers through social scaffolding in small groups. Moreover, Cavaletto & Miglietta (2024) demonstrated that "students who engaged in cooperative learning in arts education showed significantly higher levels of creative expression and social cohesion compared to those in traditional instruction," further affirming the relevance of this approach.

Based on the discussion above, an in-depth investigation of "Extracurricular Theater Learning Strategies in Developing Students' Acting Skills at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School" is urgently needed. This study aims to identify, describe, and analyze the applied learning strategies, assess their impact on students' acting skill development, and formulate contextually appropriate cooperative-based approaches. The findings are expected to contribute not only to improving extracurricular management quality at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School but also to serve as an empirical reference for other schools with similar characteristics—ultimately maximizing the role of extracurricular programs in shaping intelligent, creative, and innovative future generations.

## **Methods**

This research employs a qualitative method, with a case study approach chosen because it enables the researcher to explore in depth the real-life context of extracurricular theater learning at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School. The case study approach emphasizes a detailed and comprehensive understanding of a specific phenomenon within a particular setting, making it suitable for analyzing acting learning strategies that involve not only cognitive aspects but also affective, social, and emotional dimensions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of this study is to thoroughly investigate extracurricular learning strategies in developing students' acting skills at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School, using the cooperative learning approach proposed by Johnson & Johnson (1999). The qualitative approach was selected because it provides a holistic and contextual understanding of real-world phenomena, particularly in examining the dynamics of interaction, learning processes, and the subjective experiences of educational participants. As emphasized by Creswell & Creswell (2018), "qualitative research is an ideal approach when the researcher wants to understand the meaning individuals or

groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). In this context, the researcher seeks to understand how extracurricular strategies are implemented and how they impact the development of students’ acting skills. This process can be illustrated in the following diagram:



Data were collected using three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The observation was conducted over a period of three months, from June to August 2025, during which the researcher directly participated in the school’s extracurricular acting activities. The observation aimed to record interactions between the supervising teacher and students, the teaching methods employed, as well as students’ responses and participation throughout the learning process. In-depth interviews were conducted with three key informants: the extracurricular coordinator, the acting instructor, and the students. The interview questions were open-ended and flexible, allowing participants to freely express their experiences and perceptions. Documentation involved analyzing various materials such as the extracurricular program plan, activity journals, photos, and videos of student performances recorded over the past year. These secondary data were used to strengthen findings from the observation and interview processes. The validity of the data was ensured through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from teachers, students, and official school documents, while method triangulation was achieved by integrating data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Data reduction was carried out by classifying interview transcripts and field notes into major themes such as learning strategies, student engagement, and the development of acting skills.

In the further presentation of data, the learning of acting was analyzed through the lens of a creative-productive strategy, in which students are positioned not merely as recipients but as active

participants in the process of character creation, dialogue development, and performance. Accordingly, the proposed learning strategy design places students at the center of creative experience. Through this systematic, triangulated, and reflective research approach, the study is expected not only to describe existing practices but also to provide an applicable and contextually relevant strategic framework for developing students' acting skills, both at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School and in similar educational contexts.

## Results and Discussions

### 1. Results

In the context of arts education, particularly the development of acting skills through extracurricular theater activities at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School, the learning strategies implemented do not merely emphasize the mastery of acting or performance techniques, but more profoundly prioritize a collaborative process that fosters collective awareness, shared responsibility, and creative synergy among students. The most relevant and effective approach within this context is cooperative learning, a social learning theory that positions group interaction as the core of knowledge and skill construction. In the theater extracurricular program, each student does not learn in isolation; they learn through group dynamics, discussing characters, giving feedback during rehearsals, sharing ideas about stage blocking, and supporting one another when nervousness arises on stage.

This process, both philosophically and practically, aligns with the principles of positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing, as formulated by Johnson & Johnson (1999) and further developed in artistic contexts by contemporary scholars. As emphasized by Wulandari & Rosdiana (2024), "Theater learning based on cooperative learning not only enhances acting competence but also cultivates an inclusive classroom climate in which each student feels an essential role in the collective success of the performance" (p. 134). The strategies applied are consistent with Yulianto et al. (2019), who state that developing students' acting skills through this approach involves a structured yet flexible process, providing space for creativity and initiative. The theater coach serves as a facilitator, guiding rehearsals, assigning roles according to each student's potential, and fostering an atmosphere of openness to both critique and appreciation. Each stage of rehearsal, from script reading, character exploration, and scene improvisation to final performance, emphasizes teamwork and collaboration. Students are encouraged to support one another, value each other's ideas, and collectively seek solutions when facing creative challenges. The strategies can be described as follows:

#### a. The Process of Theater Design

The design of theater learning strategies at SMP Islam Al-Amal is not carried out instantly but rather through a deep micro-curricular process. The theater teacher or coach does not merely organize a technical rehearsal agenda but first establishes specific, measurable, and contextual learning objectives aligned with students' needs. These objectives are designed to address both the psychological and artistic development of adolescents, who are in a phase of identity exploration. Consequently, acting serves not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a vehicle for character formation, courage building, and the enhancement of social communication skills. Within the cooperative learning framework, the formulation of learning objectives is directed toward enabling students to acquire broader competencies that go beyond mere script mastery. In other words, students are expected to develop self-confidence, creativity, and collaborative attitudes that can be applied in their daily lives. As stated by Dawson & Lee (2023), "the goal of cooperative learning is not only academic achievement but also the development of positive social relationships and psychological adjustment" (p. 12). Guided by this orientation, the acting learning objectives set by the instructor become the primary foundation for structuring the entire sequence of theatrical activities.

The selection of the performance script constitutes a crucial step in the strategy design. Teachers do not simply choose popular or easy dramatic texts but instead consider the technical difficulty level, educational value, and relevance to students' life contexts. At SMP Islam Al-Amal, the dimension of religiosity also serves as a key consideration, ensuring that the chosen script not only hones artistic skills but also reinforces students' moral and spiritual values. As Rivera-Pérez et al. (2021) assert, "the careful selection of dramatic material is the first pedagogical act; it sets the stage for the kinds of social, emotional, and artistic inquiries that students will undertake" (p. 56). Thus, in the context of cooperative learning, script selection is not merely an artistic decision but also a pedagogical and ethical one.

**Modin Karok dan Labu  
Keberuntungan**  
Ditulis kembali oleh : Laksana AP  
(Adaptasi dari cerita Modin Karok penulis Abdul Hadi WM  
dalam buku "Modin Karok dan cerita Rakyat Madura Lain")

**Babak 1**  
**Musik pelan**  
*Masuk seseorang berpenampilan seperti tokoh agama atau tokoh masyarakat. Dia bernama Modin Karok.*

**Modin Karok :**  
Tan-taretan sudeje, saudara-saudaraku semua. Patul kalian ketahui bahwa keberuntungan tak akan pernah datang sering-sering. Bagi kalian mungkin saja cuma kadang-kadang, tapi bagiku keberuntungan selalu saja hadir. Karena itu apakah lewat labu ini keberuntungan akan hadir untuk sekali lagi, atau hanya ada apes yang akan menjadikanku berbalik arah. Dan labu ini akan menjadi jawabannya, tebaklah tan taretan ! tebaklah !!!

**Musik menggebrak**

**Babak 2**  
**Musik menurun**  
*Seorang dalang menyampaikan salam.*

**Dalang :**  
*Niat insun, depakagih uluk salam kepada Yang Suci, dari kawulo, padhe tantretan, saudara-saudaraku yang dirahmati Allah. Kami hadir untuk menyampaikan hikayat cerita, nasehat yang faysa Allah menjadi pengingat sepanjang masa. Bila lidah teresap salah, mohon diamanatkan...*

Diceritakan, disebuah tempat nun jauh di pedalaman Pulau Madura, hiduplah seorang tokoh masyarakat bernama Modin Karok. Hidupnya sangat sederhana. Tapi sayang kesederhanaan tidak membuatnya menjadi bijak. Dia ingin hidupnya meningkat. Akhirnya diputuskan sebuah siasat bagaimana caranya agar menjadi kaya raya, dengan jalan **Mencuri!**

**Para Pemusik :**  
Hah !! mencuri !!

Figure 1. Drama Script

## b. Implementation of Theater Extracurricular Learning at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School

The theater learning strategy based on cooperative learning at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School is actualized through structured and continuous collaborative activities. The training process is not directed toward individual performance alone but rather emphasizes group work as the core of acting education. Group-based role-play activities form the heart of this learning approach, where students collectively strive to bring a scene to life. Positive interdependence is highly evident in this practice, as the success of a scene cannot be achieved if only one or two students perform well; it requires the engagement, focus, and harmony of every group member. This principle aligns with the idea of Aka (2016), who states that "success is only achievable when all group members learn the objective, creating a dynamic where students are motivated to ensure their peers' understanding alongside their own" (p. 3). Thus, each student feels responsible not only for their own success but also for the collective achievement of the group.



Figure 2. Theatrical role-play in the theater extracurricular program at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School.

## 2. Discussions

In addition to role-play, group discussions play a central role in fostering a deep understanding of the characters and scripts performed. These discussions serve as interactive spaces where students negotiate meaning, share interpretations, and construct a collective understanding of the characters' motivations and backgrounds. Rather than merely memorizing dialogues, students strive to comprehend the social, emotional, and psychological contexts underlying each character. This reflects the view of Johnson and Johnson (1999), who assert that cooperative learning creates a dialogic space in which students learn to “engage in promotive interaction, where they explain, argue, elaborate, and link new knowledge with prior learning” (p. 24). Through this approach, theater learning extends beyond the technical aspects of acting, it becomes a medium for cultivating critical, reflective, and communicative thinking skills.



Figure 3. Group Discussion in the Theater Extracurricular Program at Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School

Furthermore, the distribution of roles within groups is not merely understood as an effort to provide equal performance opportunities but also as a pedagogical strategy to promote students' personal development. Students who are shy or have low self-confidence are intentionally assigned characters with more dialogue so that they can learn to express themselves more openly. Conversely, students who are already skilled are given roles with greater psychological complexity to deepen their character interpretation abilities. This approach aligns with the view of Gillies (2016), who emphasizes that “effective cooperative learning involves structuring tasks that encourage students to challenge their assumptions, articulate their thinking, and take risks in learning” (p. 45). The strategy goes beyond distributing roles evenly, it is about designing learning experiences that challenge each student to step outside their comfort zone while still respecting individual readiness levels. Through role-play, discussion, and reflectively designed role distribution, students develop not only artistic skills but also social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. This strategy transforms theater into more than just a performance space, it becomes a social laboratory where students learn to manage themselves, collaborate with others, and face the developmental challenges of adolescence in a constructive manner (Gillies & Boyle, 2005).



Figure 4 & 5. Role Distribution within Groups

### **a. Peer Teaching Mechanism**

Peer teaching plays a vital role in refining the technical aspects of acting, ranging from facial expressions and vocal intonation to body language. In this mechanism, each student assumes a dual role as both a mirror and a coach for their peers. For the feedback giver, this process trains artistic sensitivity and analytical ability; for the receiver, the feedback is immediate and relatable, coming from a perspective that feels closer to their own experience (Ghufron et al., 2023). Structured exercises, such as stage blocking, gesture mastery, and facial control, are conducted in small groups. This small-group format provides more personalized attention, freedom for exploration, and space for experimentation before performing in front of a larger audience. Within these “safe laboratory” environments, students are encouraged to take artistic risks and receive constructive peer support before the final performance.

The evaluation phase concludes the cooperative learning cycle with a dual focus: group performance assessment and individual contribution evaluation. Group assessment emphasizes the quality of production, team cohesion, and synchronization among actors, acknowledging that theater is, by nature, a collective art. Meanwhile, individual assessment focuses on role interpretation, consistency of expression, and courage to perform. This combination aligns with Johnson and Johnson’s (1999) principle that “group goals and individual accountability” are central to ensuring that all members learn and grow together. The post-performance reflection session marks the culmination of this process, as students collectively reconstruct their creative journey, identifying both their strengths and areas for improvement. Reflection extends beyond the technical realm, touching on teamwork, conflict management, and group dynamics, turning acting into a medium for life-skill training.

The implementation of cooperative learning-based theater strategies has shown significant impacts on students. One of the most visible outcomes is the increase in confidence and stage courage. Collective rehearsals, role discussions, and peer support foster a safe environment for self-expression. As Cavaletto and Miglietta (2024) observed, “students in cooperative groups are more willing to take risks and express their ideas in public contexts” (p. 41), indicating that previously hesitant students became more assured performers. This method also enhances both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Acting dialogues require precise pronunciation, appropriate intonation, and expressive gestures aligned with the character’s intent. Group discussions and role rehearsals allow for mutual correction and constructive input. According to Hu and Shu (2025), “the interaction between collaboration and communication significantly amplifies critical thinking outcomes” (p. 7), suggesting that teamwork in theater nurtures students’ communicative sensitivity. Another key effect is the development of creativity, particularly in role improvisation. Encouraged by discussions and collective reflection, students move beyond rigid script adherence, adding personal interpretations that enrich performance authenticity. Thus, theater learning fosters not only artistic competence but also broad-based creativity transferable to real-life contexts.

Through cooperative learning, solidarity and teamwork are strengthened. Because theater is a collective art, success depends on mutual support among all members. A meta-analysis by Chan et al. (2023) revealed that “cooperative learning interventions, compared to traditional instruction, significantly improve students’ engagement and performance” (p. 3). In the theater context, this means cultivating a sense of belonging, shared responsibility, and close collaboration. At Al-Amal Islamic Junior High School, weekly rehearsal structures reflect this cooperative design: students are divided into small groups with specific responsibilities such as scriptwriting, costume design, stage blocking, and performance evaluation. While each group manages its own tasks, the final success depends on overall synchronization. This process exemplifies social interdependence theory, where learning motivation arises not solely from individual needs but from commitment to collective success. According to Chan et al. (2023), students engaged in cooperative theater learning show marked improvements in empathy, nonverbal communication, and interpersonal conflict resolution (p. 78), all essential foundations for authentic and moving acting. What is most

remarkable is that Al-Amal students not only internalize values of teamwork, discipline, and courage during practice but also demonstrate tangible achievements externally. Through cooperative learning, several student theater groups from this school have won first place at the city level and second place at the East Java provincial Student Arts Festival competition. These achievements confirm that the approach is effective not only pedagogically but also in producing real artistic excellence. Ultimately, this success serves as evidence that collaboration-based learning does more than create good performances, it builds strong character, creativity, and competitiveness among students.



Figure 5 & 6. Student Art Performance Festival

For students who were initially shy or lacked self-confidence, small-group settings created a safe space for gradual personal growth. Psychological pressure was reduced because they were supported by their peers. Within such interactions, students learned to provide positive reinforcement, offer polite corrections, and celebrate small achievements together. Ghufuron et al. (2023) found that “students learning theater through a cooperative learning approach experienced a 42% decrease in performance anxiety compared to the control group” (p. 215), indicating that this method also strengthens essential affective dimensions. The implementation of cooperative learning in theater extends beyond the stage itself, it bridges the academic sphere and real-life experiences. Students learn that in theater (and in life), there is no single leading actor without the support of the crew, writers, music arrangers, or even the audience’s applause. They learn when to lead, when to follow, and how to adapt when plans change. This aligns with Karmina et al. (2024), who state that “theater based on cooperative learning represents a miniature simulation of complex social life, in which students develop negotiation, conflict management, and situational leadership, key competencies for the 21st century” (p. 167).

In the final evaluation, the distinctiveness lies in the collaborative assessment process: in addition to teacher evaluation, students also assess their peers (peer assessment) and engage in a group reflection journal together. Each rehearsal session concludes with a brief discussion, what went well, what needs improvement, and who made an outstanding contribution in terms of creativity, discipline, or moral support. This reflective process strengthens social metacognition, enabling students not only to recognize their personal progress but also to understand group dynamics and individual roles. Salamah et al. (2024) explain that “group reflection in cooperative learning-based theater enhances students’ awareness of collective responsibility and strengthens emotional bonds among members” (p. 92). From an Islamic educational perspective, this process resonates with the values of *muhasabah* (self-reflection) and mutual advice (*nasehat-menasehati*), as part of holistic and community-oriented character formation. Thus, the cooperative learning-based theater program at SMP Islam Al-Amal can be considered successful, as evidenced by the increased acting competence, strengthened solidarity, greater self-confidence, and broader creativity among students. Their success in winning district and city-level theater competitions serves as concrete

proof that the strategies used in performing arts education are not only effective within the school context but also relevant in equipping students with competitiveness, independence, and strong character to face challenges beyond the academic environment.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the extracurricular theater program serves as an effective medium to accommodate the demands of 21st-century education, particularly in fostering holistic skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. However, its implementation often faces challenges due to the use of one-way instructional approaches that are less structured and not yet systematic, as was previously observed at SMP Islam Al-Amal Surabaya.

This study demonstrates that Cooperative Learning can serve as an effective solution to improve the quality of extracurricular theater programs. The approach successfully transforms learning methods that were once centered on memorization and teacher instruction into a more participatory and collaborative process. Activities such as group role-play, character discussions, peer teaching, and collaborative evaluation effectively embody the core principles of cooperative learning, including positive interdependence and individual accountability. The impact of this strategy can be observed in the following aspects:

1. **Technical and Artistic Aspects:** Improved students' acting skills, including mastery of vocal expression, facial expression, and body movement.
2. **Character and Emotional Aspects:** Growth in students' self-confidence, courage, creativity, and empathy. For less confident students, small groups function as a "safe space" for exploration.
3. **Social and Interpersonal Skills:** Development of solidarity, teamwork, verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as problem-solving and conflict management abilities. In this sense, theater serves as a **miniature of dynamic social life**.

This success is evident not only during the learning process but also through tangible achievements, such as winning theater competitions at the district and city levels. This demonstrates that cooperative learning is not only pedagogically relevant but also effective in enhancing students' competitiveness.

In conclusion, the cooperative learning strategy in extracurricular performing arts successfully addresses the challenges of 21st-century education. This approach not only hones students' artistic abilities but also serves as a medium for character development and the cultivation of essential life skills. The findings of this study are expected to provide an empirical reference for other schools with similar characteristics to optimize the role of extracurricular programs in nurturing intelligent, creative, and collaborative learners.

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