# Building Inclusive Learning: Socratic Dialogue and Egalitarian Pedagogy Approaches to Collaborative Learning in Social Studies Education

Mochammad Ronaldy Aji Saputra<sup>1</sup>, Evi Resti Dianita<sup>2</sup>

{mochammadronaldy@gmail.com1, evirestidianita@uinkhas.ac.id2}

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Kota Malang, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia<sup>2</sup>

Abstract. Amid growing learner diversity, creating inclusive social studies classrooms is critical. This systematic literature review, aligned with PRISMA guidelines, explores how Socratic dialogue and egalitarian pedagogy jointly foster critical thinking, equity, and collaboration. A comprehensive search of Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar (2014–2024) yielded seven empirical studies on dialogic questioning and democratic classroom practices. Findings show Socratic techniques—open-ended questions, elenchus, peer discourse—strengthen analytical reasoning, conceptual grasp, and engagement. Egalitarian strategies—flattening hierarchies, validating every voice, and co-creating norms—amplify these gains by nurturing respect and shared agency. Together, they promote interdependence, collective problem-solving, and belonging. However, research is skewed toward well-resourced settings and short-term outcomes; long-term effects on civic engagement and under-resourced contexts require further study. Implications include embedding dialogic routines in curricula, equipping teachers with facilitation and equity skills, adopting reflective collaborative assessments, and using low-bandwidth technologies to ensure broad participation.

**Keywords:** Socratic dialogue; egalitarian pedagogy; inclusive learning; collaborative learning; democratic classroom practices.

## 1 Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a pivotal concern in contemporary educational discourse, emphasizing equal learning opportunities for all students irrespective of their backgrounds, abilities, or learning needs. Nevertheless, implementing inclusive education in Indonesia encounters multifaceted obstacles, including socio-cultural constraints, regulatory gaps, and insufficient support systems[1]. Despite these challenges, pursuing inclusive pedagogy remains imperative to ensure equitable access and participation for every learner[2]–[4].

Within this context, social studies education is critical in cultivating students' logical reasoning, critical thinking, and social awareness. Fundamental objectives of social studies include fostering curiosity, inquiry, and problem-solving skills[5], [6], enhancing communication and cooperative abilities, and nurturing civic commitment and social

responsibility[7]. Therefore, instructional strategies must transmit knowledge and empower learners through interactive and participatory approaches[8] that accommodate diverse student profiles.

Collaborative learning is one approach that inherently supports inclusivity by enabling students to share ideas, engage in dialogue, and construct knowledge collectively[9]. Research indicates that collaborative learning enriches social interaction and friendship formation[10], significantly enhances social skills [11], [12], and deepens conceptual understanding through both face-to-face and technology-mediated exchanges[13], [14]. Moreover, by shifting the emphasis from individual competition to group collaboration, collaborative learning has improved academic performance and fostered a supportive classroom climate[15], [16].

However, collaborative learning initiatives must be grounded in an inclusive pedagogical framework to maximize their benefits. Inclusive practices promote equity and academic outcomes and strengthen social and emotional competencies, preparing students to thrive in a diverse society[17]. By creating a respectful and engaging learning environment, inclusive pedagogy cultivates mutual respect and shared responsibility among all participants[18], [19].

To further advance inclusive collaborative learning in social studies, this study explores the integration of Socratic Dialogue and egalitarian pedagogy. Socratic Dialogue—characterized by open-ended questioning[20], reflective discussion[21], and critique[22]—encourages learners to challenge assumptions and co-construct knowledge, thereby liberating them from teacher-centered authority[23], [24]. Concurrently, egalitarian pedagogy emphasizes democratic interaction between teachers and students, recognizing learners as active agents with valuable perspectives and fostering a culture of partnership and mutual respect [25], [26].

This research aims to examine how Socratic Dialogue facilitates critical engagement within collaborative social studies learning and to analyze the contributions of egalitarian pedagogy to inclusive classroom practices. By synthesizing evidence from recent literature, this study offers actionable insights for educators seeking to implement dialogic and equitable approaches that enhance critical thinking, participation, and collaboration in social studies education.

# 2 Method

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and interpret existing research on Socratic Dialogue and egalitarian pedagogy within collaborative social studies education[27]. Reporting followed the PRISMA guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility[28].

A structured search was conducted across Scopus, WoS, and Google Scholar databases to capture peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and book chapters published in the last ten years (2014–2024). Search terms combined three thematic clusters: (1) "Socratic Dialogue" OR "Socratic seminar", (2) "egalitarian pedagogy" OR "egalitarian dialogue", and (3) "collaborative learning" OR "inclusive education" within the context of social studies or social science education.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria articles were screened against predefined criteria. Inclusion criteria required studies to (i) involve Socratic Dialogue or egalitarian pedagogical strategies in collaborative social science settings, (ii) report empirical findings on student outcomes (e.g., critical thinking, participation, social skills), and (iii) be available in English or Bahasa Indonesia. Exclusion criteria eliminated (i) theoretical papers without empirical data, (ii) studies outside the social science domain, and (iii) publications not accessible in full text.

The initial search yielded 234 records for the study selection process. After duplicate removal, 192 unique titles and abstracts were screened, resulting in 58 articles for full-text review. Applying inclusion and exclusion criteria led to a final selection of 7 studies (Fig. 1)[28], [29]. Screening and selection were independently conducted by two researchers, with discrepancies resolved through discussion to enhance reliability.

Data extraction and thematic synthesis, a standardized extraction form, captured key information: author(s), year, context, participant demographics, intervention characteristics, and main findings. Thematic synthesis followed a three-stage process: (i) coding of findings, (ii) development of descriptive themes (e.g., critical engagement, social inclusion), and (iii) generation of analytical themes addressing research questions[29].

Quality appraisal: each study's methodological rigor was appraised using criteria adapted from Kitchenham [27], assessing the clarity of research aims, transparency of methods, and validity of outcomes. Studies were rated as high, medium, or low quality, and sensitivity analyses examined the impact of study quality on synthesized conclusions.

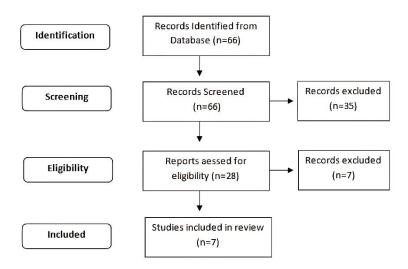


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process (adapted from Moher[30] and Popay[28]).

Data Presentation Findings were synthesized narratively, organized by research question: (1) application of Socratic Dialogue in collaborative social studies, and (2) contributions of egalitarian pedagogy to inclusive learning. A flow diagram (Fig. 1) illustrates the PRISMA-based protocol. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the included studies.

# 3 Result

The study results have shown that 66 scientific works discuss the study, namely Socratic dialogue, egalitarian pedagogy, collaborative learning, and inclusive education. The works were then selected into seven categories, namely (1) egalitarian pedagogy and (2) Socratic dialogue used in learning. The relevant scientific works are as in Table 1.

Table 1. Relevant Scientific Papers for Systematic Review

| No | Key Theme            | Author                                      | Title   | Publisher   |  |  |
|----|----------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1  | Egalitarian pedagogy | Stojanov (2016)<br>[31]                     | Educational Justice as<br>Respect Egalitarianism  | Critique and Humanism Journal   |  |  |
| 2  |                      | Roca et al. (2022)[32]                      | Egalitarian Dialogue Enriches Both Social Impact and Research Methodologies   | International Journal of<br>Qualitative Methods                       |  |  |
| 3  |                      | Lusila Andriani<br>Purwastuti<br>(2018)[33] | Critical Pedagogy in<br>Egalitarian School Culture  | The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention |  |  |
| 4  | Socratic<br>dialogue | Pilar Taylor (2023)[34]                     | Balancing the Equation: Using Socratic Dialogue to Increase Student Engagement and Achievement in a Middle School Mathematics Classroom | Florida Journal of<br>Educational Research                            |  |  |
| 5  |                      | Mark Brooke (2020)[35]                      | Seeking to Reduce<br>Physical Distancing Using<br>Socratic Dialogue in<br>Teacher Feedback  | International Journal of TESOL Studies                                |  |  |
| 6  |                      | Nouri & Pihlgren (2018) [36]                | Socratic Seminars for<br>Students with Autism<br>Spectrum Disorders   | Dialogic Pedagogy: An<br>International Online<br>Journal              |  |  |
| 7  |                      | Mahoney et al. (2023) [37]                  | Learning to think critically through Socratic dialogue: Evaluating a series of lessons designed for secondary vocational education      | Thinking Skills and Creativity  |  |  |

The seven scientific works were then analyzed systematically. Then, the results of the analysis were general conclusions. The results of the analysis of 8 scientific works are in Table 2:

Table 2. Results of the analysis of 8 selected scientific works

| No | Author          | Outline Paper                |    | Result Study |    |                |
|----|-----------------|------------------------------|----|--------------|----|----------------|
| 1  | Stojanov (2016) | This article delves into the | 1. | Impact       | of | Socio-Economic |

| No | Author     | Outline Paper   | Result Study   |
|----|------------|---|--|
|    | [31]       | critical concept of educational justice,                    | Background: The study highlights that students from underprivileged                        |
|    |            | highlighting its significance                               | backgrounds, like Mary in the  |
|    |            | in contemporary political                                   | example, face significant  |
|    |            | discourse, particularly in                                  | educational disadvantages, which   |
|    |            | light of studies like PISA                                  | affect their ability to compete in   |
|    |            | and reforms such as No                                      | social and political spheres.  |
|    |            | Child Left Behind. Stojanov 2                               |  |
|    |            | emphasizes the troubling link between students'             | Resources: It emphasizes that educational inequalities are not                             |
|    |            | educational outcomes and                                    | solely due to funding disparities  |
|    |            | their family backgrounds,                                   | but also stem from differences in  |
|    |            | advocating for a more                                       | children's preschool socialization   |
|    |            | equitable educational system                                | and upbringing. That suggests a  |
|    |            | that breaks the cycle of                                    | need for comprehensive strategies  |
|    |            | socio-economic  | to address these inequalities.   |
|    |            | disadvantage.   | 3. Cultural Dominance in Education:  |
|    |            |   | The research points out that educational authorities often                                 |
|    |            |   | categorize students from minority  |
|    |            |   | backgrounds into narrow cultural   |
|    |            |   | boxes, undermining their unique  |
|    |            |   | identities and contributions. This   |
|    |            |   | cultural dominance leads to a lack   |
|    |            |   | of empathy and cognitive respect   |
|    | D .        | 1 771' ' 1'11'1' 1 1  | for these students.  |
| 2  |            | al. This piece highlights the 1 importance of incorporating | <ul> <li>Egalitarian Dialogue and Social<br/>Impact: The analysis revealed that</li> </ul> |
|    | (2022)[32] | egalitarian dialogue into                                   | egalitarian dialogue is increasingly   |
|    |            | qualitative research to                                     | recognized as a vital  |
|    |            | enhance social impact and                                   | methodological approach that can   |
|    |            | methodological richness.                                    | lead to significant social impact.   |
|    |            |   | The dialogue allows for the  |
|    |            |   | interpretation of reality by   |
|    |            |   | participants, fostering a  |
|    |            |   | participatory perspective in research that can address                                     |
|    |            |   | inequalities and promote social  |
|    |            |   | transformation.  |
|    |            | 2   | 2. Characteristics of Egalitarian  |
|    |            |   | Dialogue: The study identified key   |
|    |            |   | characteristics of egalitarian   |
|    |            |   | dialogue, emphasizing its role in  |
|    |            |   | creating a space for equal   |
|    |            |   | participation among researchers  |
|    |            |   | and participants. This approach  |
|    |            |   | enhances the quality of data   |

| No | Author                                      | Outline Paper   | Result Study   |
|----|---|---|--|
|    |   |   | collected and the relevance of research outcomes to the communities involved.  3. Practical Applications: The review highlighted various case studies where egalitarian dialogue was effectively implemented, demonstrating its potential to yield high social impact. For instance, the ChiPE project exemplified how this dialogue led to meaningful improvements in social outcomes |
| 3  | Lusila Andriani<br>Purwastuti<br>(2018)[33] | This research empirically examines the background of the egalitarian culture of SMA 3 Yogyakarta and, reflecting it conceptualizes the democratization of education.  | An egalitarian culture embryo is built with a critical paradigm that fulfills democratic requirements (openness, kinship, and partnership). The critical pedagogical practice in Yogyakarta 3 State Senior High School can be used as a model to actualize democratic citizens and educational practices that humanize humans.   |
| 4  | Pilar Taylor<br>(2023)[34]                  | This study explores Socratic dialogue in secondary school mathematics and its influence on students' engagement and achievement in inquiry-based learning.  | Socratic dialogue has a positive impact on student engagement and achievement. On average, learning activities with Socratic dialogue have the highest average score of 95.9%. There is a strong correlation between Socratic dialogue and achievement scores in inquiry-based learning activities.  |
| 5  | Mark Brooke (2020) [35]                     | This article discusses feedback strategies during emergency distance learning using Socratic dialogue and the level of interaction between students and teachers. This method provides students with responses that increase engagement and dialogic communication. | Socratic dialogue helps build good relationships between teachers and students during distance learning. Students engage in dialogic communication. The feedback structure correlates with a supportive and caring approach. The presence of emotional movements is welcomed, which can increase student expression.   |
| 6  | Nouri & Pihlgren (2018) [36]                | This article discusses Socratic dialogue to teach autistic children. The study aimed to improve social and emotional skills in autistic children with Socratic  | The results of this study describe how Socratic dialogue can improve social and emotional skills. This model targets children with social communication difficulties, and dialogue learning is important for   |

| No | Author Outline Paper |                                | Result Study                             |  |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
|    |                      | dialogue learning. This        | children with ASD.                       |  |
|    |                      | learning is proposed as an     |  |  |
|    |                      | effective intervention         |  |  |
|    |                      | strategy focusing on children  |  |  |
|    |                      | with social communication      |  |  |
|    |                      | difficulties.                  |  |  |
| 7  | Mahoney et al.       | This study evaluated the       | Teachers felt that Socratic dialogue     |  |
|    | (2023) [37]          | Socratic dialogue learning     | was appropriate for students' learning   |  |
|    |                      | activity on critical thinking  | activities. Students showed motivation   |  |
|    |                      | skills involving five teachers | to participate in lessons using Socratic |  |
|    |                      | and 85 participating           | dialogue.                                |  |
|    |                      | students.                      |  |  |

#### 4 Discussion

This discussion answers the research questions: (1) how is Socratic Dialogue applied in the context of collaborative learning in social science education? (2) how does the egalitarian pedagogical approach contribute to inclusive learning in social science classrooms? (3) How the effectiveness of using Socratic Dialogue in building a critical and inclusive classroom, (4) how egalitarian pedagogy enhances collaboration and reduces hierarchy between teachers and students, and (5) how the Challenges of implementing this method in social science education, especially in the Indonesian context. The details of the discussion are as follows:

## 4.1 Socratic Dialogue in Collaborative Social Studies Learning

Applying Socratic dialogue in collaborative Social Studies learning can effectively build critical thinking, deepen understanding, and develop discussion and collaboration skills among students. Some steps taken are (1) asking provocative questions to help students reflect on significant concepts and invite them to seek deeper answers, not just simple factual answers, (2) dialogue-based small group discussions to help students work together to analyze questions and explore answers from various perspectives, (3) testing students' assumptions, beliefs, and thoughts about social studies topics by asking more profound questions, connecting their arguments to historical facts or social theories, and evaluating their ideas based on evidence, (4) elenchus, which is the process of clarifying concepts by asking increasingly more profound questions, (5) Stimulating Self-Reflection and Social Criticism which helps students to develop critical awareness of existing social structures, so that they not only understand, but are also able to assess social phenomena more broadly, and (6) building conclusions together.

Across diverse settings, Socratic Dialogue was operationalized through structured, open-ended questioning and small-group exchanges. Educators prompted students to probe core concepts—e.g., "What assumptions underlie this historical event?"—and employed elenchus (sequential questioning) to test and refine emerging ideas [34], [38]. Rotating group roles (facilitator, scribe, presenter) fostered shared ownership, ensuring that quieter learners still contributed meaningfully [36], [37]. This dialectical process deepened conceptual

understanding[38] and cultivated social interdependence, a key affordance for inclusive, collaborative learning.

# 4.2 Egalitarian Pedagogy's Role in Inclusion

Egalitarianism in education contributes to inclusive learning. These contributions are reviewed in research conducted by Stojanov (2016), including (1) students get equal opportunities, (2) student diversity is recognized, (3) inequality can be recognized systemically, (4) empowerment of students' potential, (5) collaborative learning environment, (6) culturally relevant education, and (7) prioritizing the principle of social justice[31]. With these principles, egalitarianism is important in creating inclusive learning, where every student is valued, treated fairly, and encouraged to achieve their potential in an environment that supports collaboration and social justice.

Then, pedagogical egalitarianism is important in encouraging inclusive learning by promoting equal participation, fostering empathy and critical thinking, supporting collaboration, addressing inequality, and increasing engagement among learners[32]. These elements are important for creating an inclusive environment where students feel recognized and can optimally develop their potential.

Then, egalitarianism in education is a step towards democratic education. Democratic education prioritizes openness, kinship, and partnership[33]. This principle is regardless of background, ability, or social status. In inclusive education, of course, it has a very close relationship because inclusive education aims to create a learning environment where all students can develop optimally, regardless of the existing differences. Through an egalitarian approach, teachers and students build an inclusive environment where no one feels left behind or discriminated against in classroom learning.

Egalitarian approaches dismantle traditional hierarchies by valuing every student's voice[39]. Stojanov [31] and Roca et al. [32] showed that allocating equal speaking time and using consensus-based decisions nurtured collective responsibility. Purwastuti's case study at SMA 3 Yogyakarta [33] further demonstrated how democratic classroom norms—grounded in openness, kinship, and partnership—empower students from varied backgrounds to coconstruct knowledge. Such norms mitigate power imbalances, creating a culturally responsive environment where all learners feel respected.

#### 4.3 Effectiveness of Socratic Dialogue for Critical and Inclusive Outcomes

The Socratic dialogue method allows students to investigate concepts taught by the teacher. There is a strong correlation between Socratic dialogue and achievement scores in inquiry-based learning activities, with the highest average score of 95%[34]. Moreover, when employed with students with significant intellectual disabilities, inquiry-based Socratic questioning led to a marked increase in correct responses during concept assessments[40]. Because learners are encouraged to speak freely and treat one another as intellectual peers, this method also bolsters motivation to communicate—revealing and strengthening emotional expression and critical-thinking skills across the classroom community[37].

Quantitative data reveal that Socratic Dialogue significantly enhances critical-thinking metrics. Taylor's middle-school cohort averaged 95.9 % on inquiry-based tasks—12 % higher

than controls—when explicitly scaffolded dialogic routines [34]. Qualitative findings indicate that students, including those with intellectual or communication disabilities, gained the confidence to challenge peer assertions when classroom agreements around respectful questioning were established [36]. Thus, Socratic methods are robust for marrying cognitive rigor with inclusive participation.

#### 4.4 Reducing Hierarchy and Enhancing Collaboration through Egalitarian Pedagogy

Egalitarianism creates a more collaborative and less hierarchical educational environment where teachers and students can thrive as co-learners and contributors to the learning process[31]. It replaces top-down authority with dialogue, active participation, and mutual respect, viewing every individual as a co-learner whose perspectives and contributions matter [32]. Through open, reciprocal exchanges, this approach nurtures critical thinking, shared responsibility, and student empowerment[41], making the learning environment more dynamic, participatory, and inclusive for all.

Egalitarian strategies—co-creating group charters, rotating leadership, and peer assessment—diminished perceived teacher authority and fostered horizontal collaboration[32], [42]. In emergency remote learning, Brooke [35] found that egalitarian feedback loops preserved students' sense of belonging despite physical separation. Mahoney et al. [37] also reported that shared agenda-setting empowered vocational students to negotiate discussion topics, effectively bridging social and status divides. Collectively, these studies affirm that egalitarian pedagogy embeds reciprocity and shared responsibility within collaborative norms.

#### 4.5 Implementation Challenges in the Indonesian Context

In Indonesia, there are challenges in inclusive learning. According to Efendi [43], the challenges in inclusive learning are (1) lack of understanding and awareness of inclusive education in schools, (2) limited human resources and difficulties in modifying the curriculum and academic assessment, (3) controversy and diverse public opinion regarding appropriate education for children with special needs, and (4) inadequate facilities and infrastructure to support inclusive education. According to Rahmi et al., these include (1) difficulties in assessing and evaluating diverse students, (2) lack of training opportunities for teachers, (3) inadequate funding, and (4) challenges in accommodating the diverse needs of students[44]. According to Salim and Disman, these include (1) teacher competence, (2) policy and system support, (3) infrastructure and resources, and (4) public awareness. So, the challenges in inclusive learning in Indonesia are very complex [45].

Using the Socratic dialogue method with an egalitarian approach to collaborative learning can effectively address the challenges of inclusive learning in Indonesia. Indonesia, which is known for its diversity and complexity of social, economic, cultural, and geographical contexts, has the potential for teachers to address learning challenges. There are several reasons why this method and approach can address these challenges:

#### Reasoning

A With an egalitarian approach, the Socratic dialogue method addresses this challenge by creating a dialogue space that values equality of voice. Every student is invited to contribute through questions and dialogue, and each

|   | individual's view is valued. That helps reduce barriers to participation for students who come from different backgrounds or are less confident.  |
|---|---|
| В | The egalitarian pedagogy approach to Socratic dialogue values this diversity by allowing each student to share their perspective without fear or hierarchical pressure. In an inclusive discussion setting, students can learn from various perspectives and value differences as assets, not barriers.   |
| С | Socratic dialogue focuses on critical thinking through asking questions that challenge assumptions and encourage deep reflection. This method invites students to understand various social phenomena more critically in collaborative learning. In Indonesia, with complex social challenges such as economic inequality, educational disparities, and issues of pluralism, this approach allows students to understand the facts and develop social empathy for different groups. |
| D | In Indonesia, educational disparities are still a significant problem, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas. The egalitarian approach in Socratic dialogue offers a solution by creating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment where students learn from the teacher and each other. This method strengthens the empowerment of students to become active subjects in learning, not just recipients of information.   |
| Е | In social studies, Socratic dialogue can be used to discuss social issues relevant to students' everyday lives, such as pluralism, democracy, human rights, or social justice. By encouraging students to discuss these issues critically and collaboratively, they learn theory and understand and respect differences in society. It is imperative in inclusive learning, where students' cultural diversity and life experiences are recognized and valued.                      |

However, key barriers include limited teacher expertise in dialogic facilitation, rigid contentdriven curricula, infrastructural gaps in remote regions, and prevailing cultural norms that valorize teacher authority [39]-[41]. Despite the promise of Socratic Dialogue and egalitarian pedagogy, implementing these approaches in Indonesian social studies classrooms presents several interrelated challenges. First, many teachers lack specialized training in dialogic facilitation and inclusive methodologies, limiting their ability to design and guide studentcentered discussions that balance rigor with support. Second, the prevailing curriculum remains content-driven and assessment-oriented, leaving minimal room for open-ended inquiry or collaborative decision-making. Third, infrastructural disparities—particularly in remote and under-resourced regions-hinder consistent access to the technological tools and digital platforms that can scaffold dialogue and peer interaction. Finally, deeply rooted cultural norms that venerate teacher authority may discourage students from voicing dissenting viewpoints or questioning established narratives[46]. Addressing these challenges will require a multifaceted strategy: embedding dialogic and universal design for learning (UDL) competencies in national teacher standards and professional development programs[47], [48]; adapting curriculum frameworks to prioritize critical inquiry and cooperative learning; investing in low-cost, low-bandwidth technologies to enable equitable participation[49]; and leveraging local deliberative traditions to bridge between global pedagogical models and community practices[50].

## **5** Conclusion

This review shows that blending Socratic dialogue with egalitarian pedagogy powerfully promotes critical thinking, deep understanding, and democratic participation in social studies classrooms. By replacing hierarchical lectures with open-ended questioning and shared decision-making, all students—regardless of background or ability—are invited to voice diverse perspectives, co-construct knowledge, and engage meaningfully. Therefore, curricula should embed dialogic routines and democratic structures; teacher training must develop facilitation skills and equity-focused practices; and assessment should shift toward collaborative, reflective formats. Low-bandwidth digital tools can further scaffold equitable participation while culturally responsive topics deepen relevance and belonging. Although most studies focus on well-resourced settings and short-term gains in critical thinking, the long-term effects on civic engagement and application in under-resourced contexts remain underexplored. Future research should, therefore, test implementation across diverse environments, track outcomes over time, and examine interactions with other inclusive approaches. Ultimately, when questioning is encouraged, hierarchies are flattened, and every voice matters, students become more thoughtful learners and empathetic, active citizens.

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