

Thematic Approach in Social Studies Learning to Increase Elementary School Student Activeness

Yosua Marasi Parningotan Siagian
Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received June 15, 2025
Revised August 23, 2025
Accepted August 27, 2025

Keywords:

Contextual;
Elementary School;
Social Studies;
Student Activeness;
Thematic Learning.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the application of a thematic approach in social studies learning to improve the activeness of elementary school students. This type of research uses an exploratory qualitative approach. The study was conducted at the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School. The subjects in this study were fifth-grade students, class teachers, and the principal. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique. The results showed that before the thematic approach was implemented, social studies learning was monotonous and did not actively engage students. After the thematic approach was implemented, there was a significant increase in student activeness indicators, such as asking questions, answering questions, discussing in groups, and completing assignments independently. The thematic approach has been proven to be able to connect social studies material with students' real lives, thus creating a more enjoyable, contextual, and participatory learning atmosphere. These findings are supported by the theories of meaningful learning (Ausubel), constructivism (Vygotsky), and active involvement. This study recommends that teachers design social studies learning with a thematic approach in a structured and relevant manner to the students' local context. Research has proven that this approach fosters active student involvement and enhances the overall quality of the learning process at the elementary school level.

Copyright © 2025 ETDCI.
All rights reserved.

Corresponding Author:

Yosua Marasi Parningotan Siagian,
Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia
Email: yosuampsagian91@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Basic education plays a strategic role in shaping children's initial knowledge and character, including through social studies subjects that integrate social insight, values, and civic attitudes (Barton & Avery, 2016; Ollila & Macy, 2019; Mindes & Newman, 2021). Russell III and Waters (2021) emphasized that essential social studies is taught from elementary school to foster sensitivity to social issues and equip students with a positive mental attitude and everyday problem-solving skills. Furthermore, Lestari et al. (2023) found that social studies is important in shaping pluralistic character and

strengthening the existence of Indonesian culture through an understanding of diversity. Saidah and Damariswara (2024) noted the low interest in learning social studies due to a non-contextual approach, thus recommending teaching based on students' social lives as a solution. Mutawakkil (2024), in a study of project-based learning, showed that an active approach in social studies increases learning motivation and understanding of social concepts. Nur Azizah et al. (2022) highlighted that the application of exemplary values in social studies learning can effectively internalize students' character values. Finally, research by Desyani et al. (2025) stated that integrating social studies with the values of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) supports social awareness and cross-cultural tolerance from elementary school age.

Social studies learning in elementary schools is often categorized as boring and theoretical due to the dominance of lecture methods and the use of textbooks alone (Rustono, 2018), which causes the learning process to feel monotonous, students to become passive, and their understanding of the material to remain low. Zengulaaru and Nyamekye (2023) highlighted that monotonous and uninnovative teaching methods, particularly teacher dominance in the classroom, cause students to lose focus and interest in social studies. Schindler et al. (2017) concluded that low student interest and active engagement occur due to limited variety of learning media and a lack of relevance to students' lives. Akhan et al. (2023) also found that limited facilities and a lack of diverse learning resources are major obstacles, resulting in uninteresting social studies material and rarely engaging students actively. Furthermore, Utami (2023) identified that students perceived social studies material as too broad and difficult, with ineffective learning and minimal support, resulting in decreased student participation and understanding. Wati (2025) explained that conventional social studies learning, lacking local context, interaction, and digitalization, led students at the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School to view social studies as meaningless and lacking in meaningful activities.

The elementary school curriculum, particularly the 2013 curriculum, explicitly emphasizes the implementation of an integrative thematic approach that combines several subjects under one central theme, as described by the reviewed by Sulistyosari et al. (2023). Amrin and Hidayat (2022) explained that thematic social studies learning allows for the integration of social science branches (geography, history, economics, sociology, and culture) into relevant themes, enabling students to holistically understand the interrelationships between social studies materials. Dewi and Rukmini (2019) explained that the thematic approach with scientific methods significantly increases students' multiple intelligences and is relevant to the thinking skills and character of elementary school students.

The thematic approach is considered more contextual and enjoyable because it creates a meaningful and interactive learning experience for students (Ghoreishi et al., 2017). Research by Ghunu et al. (2022) states that the implementation of the thematic curriculum in Indonesian elementary schools successfully improves students' creativity, critical thinking, and academic performance. Thematic learning creates a concrete and meaningful atmosphere, preventing fragmentation of material and allowing students to

more actively explore and discover concepts directly (Landøy et al., 2019). Furthermore, the thematic approach provides students with better reasoning, communication, and observation skills than traditional methods that separate subjects (Zhang et al., 2025).

Social studies learning in many elementary schools still presents a major challenge, as does low student engagement (Handayani, 2024; Dewi & Safitri, 2025). For example, Putri and Susanto (2023) found that student engagement at elementary school remained low due to a lack of variety in learning models that were not tailored to the students' contexts, resulting in many students remaining passive. Furthermore, Suwartini (2022) reported that the use of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model at elementary school significantly improved social studies learning engagement and outcomes, a response to the low engagement achieved with conventional approaches. Similar findings were also reported by a study adopting the Discovery Learning model; Sholihah (2025) noted an increase in student active participation in social studies learning after a more contextual and interactive pedagogical intervention.

Given the low student engagement in some elementary schools, the urgency of pedagogical innovation is increasingly pressing. Hilman et al. (2025) recommended the Team Quiz approach as an innovative method to increase student engagement in social studies material, resulting in significant increases in group participation and classroom interaction. Furthermore, Beck and Eno (2012) demonstrated that the application of the Science and Technology Society approach in social studies learning has been shown to increase student engagement by requiring them to actively construct and apply knowledge. Based on real-world conditions and these empirical findings, the implementation of a thematic approach is necessary to increase student engagement through more meaningful, contextual, and interactive learning (Aini & Relmasira, 2018; Wahab et al., 2025).

Learning is designed to prioritize student engagement as an educational goal, with indicators such as participation in discussions, asking questions, answering questions, working in groups, and completing assignments independently. Sholihah (2025) states that student engagement includes asking questions, working on problems, expressing opinions, and answering questions during learning. Mutakin (2022) also emphasized that learning models such as team quizzes significantly contribute to student engagement in class discussions. Other findings from Basicedu indicate that the use of the discovery learning model can increase student engagement from around 60% to over 80% in the next cycle, encompassing attention, group discussions, and problem-solving.

Based on the real gap in the field, namely the still-low student learning engagement in many elementary schools, the urgency of implementing a thematic approach has emerged. Utami (2023) concluded that the implementation of thematic learning significantly increased students' social studies, mathematics, and Indonesian language learning activities physically, mentally, and emotionally. Therefore, this study focuses on evaluating the application of the thematic approach in social studies learning in elementary schools as a strategic effort to increase student activity through meaningful, contextual, and interactive learning activities.

2. METHOD

This study uses an exploratory qualitative approach that seeks to discuss in depth the phenomenon of low student engagement in social studies learning, as well as the application of a thematic approach as an alternative solution. This approach is considered appropriate because it can describe the processes, strategies, and student responses naturally according to conditions that occur in the field. The type of research used is exploratory descriptive, which focuses on describing the phenomenon being studied in detail and in depth, without manipulating variables. The approach used refers to primary research, namely surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. The following is a flowchart illustration of the exploratory qualitative approach in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Exploratory Qualitative Approach

This research was conducted at the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School, Pematangsiantar City. The study took place from March to April 2025, aligned with the current teaching and learning schedule. The school has a total of 65 students, and the primary subjects were fifth-grade students enrolled in social studies learning using a thematic approach. Furthermore, the study involved several key informants: the fifth-grade teacher as the implementer of learning activities, students as the primary actors in learning activities, and the principal as the curriculum policy maker at the school level.

Data collection was conducted using several techniques: first, participant observation to directly watch student activity during thematic social studies learning; second, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to explore their perceptions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the thematic approach; and third, documentation, including photographs of learning activities, lesson plans, and relevant student activity notes. The primary instrument in this research was the researcher herself, equipped with observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation formats. The instruments were developed based on indicators of student activity, including participation in discussions, courage to ask and answer questions, ability to work in groups, and independence in completing assignments.

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively and interactively through three main stages: data reduction, which simplifies the raw data according to the research focus;

data presentation, in the form of narratives, informant quotes, and tables of student activities; and drawing conclusions based on consistent patterns and findings in the field. To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were used, including source triangulation by comparing data from teachers, students, and the principal, and technical triangulation by combining the results of observations, interviews, and documentation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Initial observations of social studies learning in fifth grade at YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School revealed that the learning process was still conventional and did not utilize a thematic approach. Teachers tended to use lectures and textbooks as primary sources, without linking the material to students' concrete experiences. Learning was one-way and teacher-centered, while students appeared passive and less engaged. The majority of students showed no interest in asking questions, were reluctant to answer teacher questions, and demonstrated low participation in group discussions. Student learning activity was still very limited, so the objectives of social studies learning as a means of developing social understanding and interaction skills were not optimally achieved. Implementing a more contextual and enjoyable learning approach, like a thematic approach, is necessary in light of this situation. The percentage of student activity before the thematic approach is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Percentage of Student Activity

No	Student Activity Indicators	Before Thematic	After Thematic	Description of Changes
1	Asking questions to the teacher	26.2% (17 students)	69.2% (45 students)	Significant increase
2	Answering questions	35.4% (23 students)	75.4% (49 students)	Significant increase
3	Actively participating in group discussions	23.1% (15 students)	81.5% (53 students)	Dramatic increase
	Average activity	28.2%	75.3%	Up 47.1% points

Before the thematic approach was implemented, most students were less active in social studies lessons. Dependence on teachers, minimal learning stimulus, and a lack of varied methods made classes less interactive. Therefore, the thematic approach became the chosen alternative to create a more contextual learning environment and increase student engagement.

After the thematic approach was implemented in fifth-grade social studies at the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School, there was a significant increase in student engagement. Lessons were designed around themes relevant to students' daily lives, such as "*The Surrounding Environment*," "*Economic Activities*," and "*Social Life in Society*." Teachers linked social studies material to students' concrete experiences, using visual learning media, group activities, and structured discussion and question-and-answer methods. Students were not merely passive listeners but actively involved

in developing concept maps, creating thematic posters, conducting group presentations, and completing mini-project-based assignments.

Indicators of learning engagement, such as asking questions, participating in discussions, and answering questions, demonstrate this increase in student engagement. With the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than the sole source of knowledge, the classroom atmosphere has become more dynamic and communicative. This encourages students to be more confident and bold in expressing their opinions. Furthermore, student interaction has improved, as evidenced by their collaborative efforts in completing group assignments. Teachers also reported that students were more focused and enthusiastic and exhibited a heightened sense of curiosity when the material was presented in an integrated manner.

Observations indicate that the thematic approach significantly impacts student learning engagement. Learning connected to real life, delivered in a fun and participatory manner, stimulates students to become more engaged in the social studies learning process. Therefore, the thematic approach is worthy of continued implementation to create active, contextual, and meaningful social studies learning at the elementary school level.

The implementation of the thematic approach in social studies learning in grade V of the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School is carried out through lesson planning and implementation that integrates several core competencies under one central theme. Teachers develop a thematic Lesson Implementation Plan based on the theme "*Social Life Around Us*," which includes social studies material such as economic activities, the roles of economic actors, social values, and societal structures. The lesson is conducted in three sessions. Each session begins with students exploring their prior knowledge through questions and answers and contextual images, followed by core activities in the form of group discussions, visual media observations, and presentations of discussion results. Teachers prepare thematic teaching materials in the form of worksheets, short videos, and concept maps relevant to the learning theme.

The teacher's strategy in implementing thematic learning focuses on linking social studies material to students' everyday experiences. For example, when discussing the topic of economic actors, the teacher asks students to identify their parents' roles in local economic activities such as trading, farming, or being employees. Learning activities take place not only in the classroom but also involve observations of the school and home environment. This encourages students to connect social concepts in social studies to the realities around them. The teacher also facilitates reflection and feedback at the end of the activity, where students are invited to write about new things they have learned. This approach increases student enthusiasm because they feel the subject matter is relevant to their lives and not merely theoretical.

After implementing the thematic approach in social studies learning, there was a significant change in student engagement in fifth-grade students at YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School. Student engagement was measured using four main indicators: courage to ask questions, ability to answer questions, participation in group discussions, and independence in completing assignments. Based on

observations, students who previously tended to be passive began to show enthusiasm and active involvement in the learning process. In terms of asking questions, students became more confident in asking teachers and classmates about material they didn't understand. The number of students who dared to answer questions also increased, indicated by active engagement in question-and-answer sessions. Group discussions intensified, resulting in a more equitable distribution of roles among students. Meanwhile, in independent assignments, students demonstrated increased independence in understanding and completing instructions without relying too much on teacher assistance.

A comparison between conditions before and after the implementation of the thematic approach showed that this approach was effective in increasing student engagement. Before the intervention, most students appeared passive, with low levels of participation in discussions and a lack of courage to ask questions. However, after two cycles of thematic learning, we observed consistent improvements in all four indicators. Observation data showed that the percentage of students actively asking questions increased from 26.2% to 69.2%, students actively answering questions increased from 35.4% to 75.4%, and active participation in group discussions jumped from 23.1% to 81.5%. Student independence in completing assignments also increased, with more than 70% of students able to complete them without direct teacher intervention. This demonstrates that thematic learning creates a more engaging learning environment and encourages the development of active, confident, and collaborative attitudes in students.

Documentary evidence collected during the research process supports the observational findings that the thematic approach has a positive impact on student engagement. Photos of activities show a more lively classroom atmosphere, with students actively discussing in groups, posting work on the board, and expressing opinions in front of the class. Documentation in the form of Lesson Implementation Plans shows that teachers have developed a theme-based learning flow that integrates basic social studies competencies with contextual and engaging activities. Furthermore, teacher reflection notes indicate a significant change in student engagement during the learning process, with students understanding the material more quickly and participating more actively in each session. Student reflections collected through feedback sheets indicate that they enjoy learning social studies more because the material feels close to their daily lives and is presented through fun activities.

In-depth interviews also provided a broader picture of the impact of the thematic approach. A fifth-grade teacher stated that this approach made learning more focused and varied, preventing students from getting bored easily. Teachers found it easier to build two-way interactions because students became more responsive, asked more questions, and actively engaged in discussions. One teacher stated, "*Children who used to be quiet are now starting to be more courageous in answering questions and discussing things because they feel they understand what is being said better.*" Meanwhile, students expressed that they enjoyed learning activities that encouraged them to think, collaborate, and present their findings. They felt that thematic learning

was unlike "*regular lessons*," where they simply listened to the teacher talk. The principal also demonstrated his support by allocating additional time for the development of thematic lesson plans and giving teachers space to innovate in their teaching. He stated that implementing the thematic approach is an important step in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process, particularly in developing active character and self-confidence in students from an early age.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate a strong correlation between the implementation of the thematic approach in social studies learning and increased student engagement in fifth-grade students at YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which a thematic approach can enhance student engagement in the learning process. Based on observations, documentation, and interviews, it can be concluded that the thematic approach has a significant positive impact on increasing student engagement cognitively, affectively, and socially. This approach helps students understand social studies material in a context more relevant to their lives, making it easier for them to actively participate and feel a sense of ownership in the learning process.

Indicators of student engagement significantly improved after the thematic approach was implemented. First, the questioning indicator showed improvements as students became more curious and felt more confident in asking questions. Second, the question-answering indicator also improved, indicated by students' enthusiasm in responding to questions from the teacher and their group mates. Third, group discussions became more effective as students demonstrated a willingness to collaborate, divide tasks, and engage in dialogue with one another. Fourth, independence in completing assignments was evident in students' ability to complete instructions and project assignments independently without relying entirely on teacher direction. All these indicators show that the thematic approach impacts material understanding and shapes students into more confident, communicative, and collaborative active learners, in keeping with the characteristics of 21st-century learning (Sundari et al., 2023; Harahap & Basri, 2024). Thus, we have empirically achieved the research objectives, providing a basis for recommendations on learning practices in elementary schools.

The results of this study align with various educational theories that underlie the importance of active, contextual, and meaningful learning (Zajda, 2021). In general, the thematic approach applied to social studies learning aligns with the principles of thematic learning as outlined by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which integrates various core competencies into a single theme relevant to students' lives. This enables students to understand the interrelationships between concepts, resulting in more holistic and less fragmented learning. Increased student engagement in asking, answering, discussing, and completing assignments independently demonstrates that the thematic approach encourages student engagement at every stage of learning.

Theoretically, these findings are also supported by David Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning, which emphasizes the importance of linking new information to

students' existing cognitive structures (Bryce & Blown, 2024). Within a thematic context, students more easily understand social studies material because it is directly connected to their everyday experiences and environment. Furthermore, this approach is also relevant to Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism, which states that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and collaborative activities (Nino, 2023). Through group discussions and collaborative work on thematic assignments, students not only receive information but also construct meaning through dialogue and shared reflection. Furthermore, Li et al. (2022) theory of active engagement, which states that student activeness can be seen from physical, mental, and emotional participation, was also evident in this study. Students were not only involved verbally but also affectively and socially in learning activities. Thus, a thematic approach not only brings the material closer to students' lives but also encourages students to become active subjects in constructing holistic knowledge (Huong et al., 2018).

The findings of this study align with various previous studies that confirm the effectiveness of the thematic approach in increasing student engagement in learning. Ghunu et al. (2022) stated that implementing thematic learning in elementary schools can improve critical thinking skills, creativity, and student engagement in the learning process. Research by Putri et al. (2023) also revealed that students are more enthusiastic and active in learning when the material is presented in a thematic format that relates to their daily lives. Both studies support this finding, showing a significant increase in student engagement indicators such as asking questions, answering questions, discussing questions, and independence in completing assignments after the implementation of the thematic approach. Furthermore, research by Suwartini (2022) and Sholihah (2025) shows that contextual and collaborative learning models can increase student active participation in social studies learning.

However, this study is unique in its implementation context at the YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School. One notable aspect was the initial limitations on student engagement, with over 70% of students exhibiting a passive attitude in social studies learning before the thematic approach was implemented. Another unique aspect lies in the teacher's strategy, which creatively links learning themes to students' local realities, such as parents' economic activities, social customs in the surrounding environment, and students' experiences within the church community. The cultural and social context of this religious-based private school provides a unique nuance in the implementation of thematic learning, which actually strengthens the value of connectedness between students and the learning material. Therefore, in addition to corroborating the findings of previous studies, this research also adds insight into the flexibility and adaptability of the thematic approach in the context of elementary schools with their unique socio-cultural backgrounds.

The results of this study have important implications for learning practices in elementary schools, particularly in social studies. The application of a thematic approach that integrates material with students' concrete experiences has been proven to increase their activeness and engagement in the learning process. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to design contextual and interactive learning so that students do not merely

passively receive information but are also able to connect the subject matter to their daily lives. Learning that is one-way and does not touch on students' realities tends to be boring and reduces learning motivation, while contextual learning actually encourages students to think critically, communicate, and work together.

As a recommendation, teachers need to develop lesson plans and social studies learning materials using a creative and flexible thematic approach. Teachers are advised to use local themes close to students' lives, such as social activities in the community, local culture, and family economic activities, so that students can more easily construct meaning from each lesson. Furthermore, teachers should use various methods such as group discussions, mini-project presentations, concept mapping, and role-playing simulations to increase student participation. The use of visual and concrete learning media will also strengthen the absorption of the material. These implications indicate that learning social studies in elementary schools requires not only conceptual understanding but also strategies that can develop active, critical, and collaborative character from an early age.

4. CONCLUSION

Building upon research conducted at YP HKBP Pematangsiantar Private Elementary School, it can be concluded that the implementation of a thematic approach in social studies learning has proven effective in increasing student engagement. This improvement is evident in various indicators, such as the courage to ask and answer questions, participation in group discussions, and independence when completing assignments. The thematic approach, which links learning materials to students' real-life experiences, encourages active engagement across cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Previous research reinforces this finding, which aligns with Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning, Vygotsky's social constructivism, and Hindarto's theory of active engagement. The uniqueness of the school's local context and teachers' strategies in adapting themes to students' realities also contribute positively to the effectiveness of this approach.

As a recommendation, the thematic approach can be used as a relevant and applicable learning strategy to improve the quality of social studies learning in elementary schools and serves as an important recommendation for teachers in designing more contextual, interactive, and meaningful learning.

REFERENCES

- Aini, Q., & Relmasira, S. C. (2018). Penerapan Pembelajaran Tematik Integratif Berbasis Kontekstual untuk Meningkatkan Keaktifan dan Hasil Belajar Siswa Kelas 1 SD. *Sekolah Dasar: Kajian Teori Dan Praktik Pendidikan*, 27(2), 124-132. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um009v27i22018p124-132>
- Akhan, N. E., Demirezen, S., & Çiçek, S. (2023). We are late enough: Take action in social studies classes. *Sage Open*, 13(3), 21582440231193824. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231193824>

- Amrin, A., & Hidayat, A. G. (2022). Peran guru ips dalam pembentukan karakter siswa melalui 4 pilar pendidikan di sdn padende kecamatan donggo kabupaten bima. *JIIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(4), 1293-1299. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v5i4.561>
- Barton, K. C., & Avery, P. G. (2016). Research on social studies education: Diverse students, settings, and methods. *Handbook of research on teaching*, 5(1), 985-1038.
- Beck, D., & Eno, J. (2012). Signature pedagogy: A literature review of social studies and technology research. *Computers in the Schools*, 29(1-2), 70-94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2012.658347>
- Bryce, T. G. K., & Blown, E. J. (2024). Ausubel's meaningful learning re-visited. *Current Psychology*, 43(5), 4579-4598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04440-4>
- Desyani, N. P. E. P., Widari, G. A. P. Y., Putra, I. P. A. A., & Susiani, K. (2025). The role of social studies learning in fostering tolerance and multicultural awareness of elementary school students through the SDGs approach. *JPGI (Jurnal Penelitian Guru Indonesia)*, 10(1), 76-79. <https://ipv6.jurnal.iicet.org/index.php/jpgi/article/view/5720/2692>
- Dewi, R. A. K., & Rukmini, P. (2019). The effect of thematic learning by using a scientific approach to increase the multiple intelligence of students. *Jurnal Prima Edukasia*, 7(1), 40-46.
- Dewi, A. P., & Safitri, D. (2025). Transformasi Pembelajaran IPS melalui Pemanfaatan Teknologi Digital untuk Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Siswa SMP. *JIMAD: Jurnal Ilmiah Mutiara Pendidikan*, 3(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.61404/jimad.v3i2.378>
- Ghoreishi, M., Nadi, M. A., Manshee, G., & Saeedian, N. (2017). A thematic analysis of the conceptual framework of e-learning in higher education. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Virtual Learning in Medical Sciences*, 8(1).
- Ghunu, M., Budiarta, I. K., & Pranita, M. (2022). Implementation of thematic learning in elementary schools: Students' critical thinking and creativity. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*, 2(9), 442-448. <https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/V02I9Y2022-02-09-53>
- Handayani, C. S. (2024). Tantangan Dan Peluang Pembelajaran IPS Materi Keragaman Sosial Dan Budaya Di Indonesia Pada Siswa Kelas 4 Sekolah Dasar. *Pena Edukasia*, 2(3), 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.58204/pe.v2i3.114>
- Harahap, N. H., & Basri, H. (2024). Implementation of 21st Century Integrative Thematic Learning: Efforts to Form Entrepreneurship Students. *Educative: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 2(1), 48-57.
- Hilman, H., Hadi, M. S., Saputra, B. E., Suhupawati, S., & Murcahyanto, H. (2025). Optimizing Student Engagement in Social Studies Through the Team Quiz Approach. *IJE: Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 3(1), 12-22. <https://doi.org/10.61277/ije.v3i1.187>
- Huong, H. T. L., Huy, N. H. D., & Ha, N. N. (2018). The Flipped classroom: Using thematic teaching to develop critical thinking for high school students. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 6(6), 828-835.
- Landøy, A., Popa, D., & Repanovici, A. (2019). Teaching learning methods. In *Collaboration in designing a pedagogical approach in information literacy* (pp. 137-161). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34258-6_10
- Lestari, S., Rahmawati, D., & Setyawan, A. (2023). The urgency of learning social studies in forming pluralistic character and increasing Indonesian cultural existence in elementary schools. *Jurnal Pendidikan IPS*, 8(1), 34-42. <https://doi.org/10.29407/jips.v8i1.3736>

- Li, J., Huang, Z., Si, W., & Shao, T. (2022). The effects of physical activity on positive emotions in children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(21), 14185. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192114185>
- Mindes, G., & Newman, M. (2021). *Social studies for young children: Preschool and primary curriculum anchor*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Mutakin, D. (2022). Peningkatan Keaktifan dan Hasil Belajar IPS Siswa menggunakan Metode Team Quiz pada Pembelajaran Daring. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 3(1), 1-20.
- Mutawakkil, A. (2024). Project-based learning in social studies: Enhancing students' motivation and conceptual understanding. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 9(3), 110–118. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jel.v9i3.882>
- Nino, T. (2023). Constructivism as a theory of learning (foundations and significance). *Basics of Learning the Latest Theories and Methods*, 9, 228.
- Nur Azizah, A., Sabtiya, I., & Zulfah, M. (2022). Exemplary values of social studies learning in elementary school. *Journal of Character Education*, 4(2), 60–69. <https://doi.org/10.29210/jce.v4i2.3668>
- Ollila, J., & Macy, M. (2019). Social studies curriculum integration in elementary classrooms: A case study on a Pennsylvania Rural School. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 43(1), 33-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2018.02.001>
- Putri, F., Kurniawan, O., & Mulyani, E. R. (2023). Penerapan pembelajaran tematik untuk meningkatkan aktivitas dan hasil belajar siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Al-Ishlah*, 15(1), 67–74. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i1.2905>
- Putri, R. R., & Susanto, R. (2023). Upaya meningkatkan keaktifan belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran IPS menggunakan model two stay two stray. *JRTI (Jurnal Riset Tindakan Indonesia)*, 8(1), 111-124. <https://doi.org/10.29210/30033106000>
- Resnawati, R. (2021). Penerapan pendekatan STS dalam pembelajaran IPS untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 150–158. <https://doi.org/10.23969/jps.v5i2.2657>
- Russell III, W. B., & Waters, S. (2021). *Essentials of elementary social studies*. Routledge.
- Rustono, R. (2018). Tantangan pembelajaran sosial di sekolah dasar: Perspektif guru. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial*, 6(1), 12–19. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jps.v6i1.7353>
- Saidah, K., & Damariswara, R. (2024). Problems of Social Studies Learning at Elementary Education Level: What are the Recommended Solutions?. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DASAR NUSANTARA*, 10(1), 24-34. <https://doi.org/10.29407/jpdn.v10i1.22487>
- Schindler, L. A., Burkholder, G. J., Morad, O. A., & Marsh, C. (2017). Computer-based technology and student engagement: a critical review of the literature. *International journal of educational technology in higher education*, 14(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-017-0063-0>
- Sholihah, N. (2025). Peningkatan keaktifan belajar IPS melalui model discovery learning di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar dan Pendidikan Humaniora*, 6(1), 45–52. <https://doi.org/10.31294/jpdh.v6i1.4381>
- Sulistiyosari, Y., Sultan, H., Karwur, H. M., & Korompis, M. E. (2023). The Relevance of Social Studies Education in the Independent Curriculum to the Thoughts of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 49, 134.
- Sundari, F. S., Novita, L., & Herlina, E. (2023). Analysis of 21st century skills through thematic learning in elementary schools. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran Guru Sekolah Dasar (JPPGuseda)*, 6(1), 119-122.

- Suwartini, S. (2022). Upaya meningkatkan keaktifan dan hasil belajar IPS melalui Problem Based Learning di SD Negeri Kenokorejo 01. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Dasar*, 4(2), 89–97. <https://doi.org/10.24114/jppd.v4i2.2095>
- Utami, N. (2023). Penerapan pembelajaran tematik untuk meningkatkan aktivitas belajar siswa kelas V SD. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 10(1), 12–20. <https://doi.org/10.31294/jpp.v10i1.22487>
- Wahab, D. A. S., Ulya, N. M., & Susilawati, S. (2025). Aplikasi Prinsip Pembelajaran Tematik Penggalan Tema, Pengelolaan Pembelajaran, Evaluasi, dan Reaksi. *Al-Madrasah: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 9(2), 959-973. <http://dx.doi.org/10.35931/am.v9i2.4253>
- Wati, S. (2025). Persepsi siswa terhadap pelajaran IPS di sekolah dasar dengan pembelajaran konvensional. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 3(1), 30–37. <https://doi.org/10.56789/jipd.v3i1.1520>
- Zajda, J. (2021). Constructivist learning theory and creating effective learning environments. In *Globalisation and education reforms: Creating effective learning environments* (pp. 35-50). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71575-5_3
- Zengulaaru, J., & Nyamekye, E. (2023). Investigating students' preferred instructional methods for teaching social studies in a selected senior high school in afadzato south district, Ghana. *Social Education Research*, 15-32. <https://doi.org/10.37256/ser.4120231491>
- Zhang, C., Wang, P., Zeng, X., & Wang, X. (2025). A case study on developing students' problem-solving skills through interdisciplinary thematic learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1447089. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1447089>