# Exploring Effective Teaching Strategies Employed by Social Studies Teachers: A Comprehensive Study

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**ABSTRACT:** Teaching is a profession that plays a vital role in the learning, social, cultural, and economic development of children and young people. It is responsible for instilling fundamental social values, including democracy, equality, tolerance, cultural understanding, and respect for fundamental freedoms. This study aimed to determine the teaching strategies utilized by high school Social Studies teachers in Ozamiz City Division. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data from twelve (12) Social Studies teachers from four (4) different schools. The findings showed that most teachers employed collaborative strategies encouraging active participation, such as a community-based approach, cooperative learning activity, and inquiry approach. These strategies were employed to make Social Studies more engaging and interesting to students, maximizing their participation and involvement in class. In addition, using these strategies helped eliminate the perception that Social Studies is a boring subject

**KEYWORDS:** Social Studies, teaching strategy, community-based approach, inquiry approach

## INTRODUCTION

Social studies is a core subject in the education system as it gives students the tools to understand the world around them. This subject encompasses various disciplines, including history, geography, economics, political science, and sociology ( Sihole, B., 2023). In teaching this subject, effective teaching strategies are crucial to helping students develop their critical thinking skills, historical empathy, and global awareness which is necessary to succeed in today's complex world (Cheng et al,.2019). Social studies continue to be a critical subject in the education system, and recent research highlights the need for innovative teaching strategies that enhance students' learning outcomes. Inquiry-based learning in social studies classrooms and found that it promotes students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills ( Pacana et al., 2019). They also suggested that social studies teachers can enhance inquiry-based teaching by incorporating online resources, collaborative learning, and teacher scaffolding (Grant et al., 2022).

Social Studies offers a vision of the value of knowledge. As a subject, it emphasizes the need for reflective thinking skills and the need to advocate democratic ideals and social justice .Study also shows the effectiveness of project-based learning in social studies and it helps students develop interdisciplinary skills and fosters a deeper understanding of the content. They recommended that social studies teachers use project-based learning to promote students' autonomy, collaboration, and reflection (Duke et al., 2021).

Over the past few years, research has focused on the effectiveness of teaching strategies in the social studies classroom. However, according to a study conducted by the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) in 2016, social studies teachers across the United States rely heavily on lecture-based instruction and textbook readings, with limited use of active learning strategies ( Heafner, 2019). This suggests that there is a need for more innovative and engaging teaching strategies that can improve student learning outcomes.

Study also examined the impact of virtual field trips on students' learning outcomes and found that they can increase students' motivation and engagement in social studies. They suggested that social studies teachers use virtual field trips to create authentic learning experiences connecting students with real-world contexts (Cheng et al,.2019 ). Technology-enhanced social studies instruction is also significantly improve students' achievement in the subject. Study suggested that social studies teachers use digital tools such as multimedia presentations, simulations, and online discussions to facilitate students' learning and engagement (Shin et al,.2019).

Study showed on the role of social studies teachers in promoting democratic values and civic engagement among students. They found that teachers' modeling of democratic practices and active learning strategies can positively impact students'

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civic attitudes and behaviors. They suggested that social studies teachers should use pedagogical approaches that foster democratic values and engage students in civic problem-solving (Keegan,P.,2021).

Furthermore, recent research supports the need for innovative teaching strategies that promote active learning, interdisciplinary skills, and civic engagement in social studies classrooms. For example, incorporating inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, virtual field trips, and technology-enhanced instruction can enhance students' learning outcomes in social studies. Moreover, social studies teachers should model democratic practices and engage students in civic problem-solving to promote democratic values and civic engagement among students (Anggraeni et al.,2022).

The secondary school period is important for students to gain certain behaviors and internalize these behaviors. Thus, it is important that in addition to learning the course in this period, students should gain experiences that will give them opportunities to actualize what they

have learned with the activities (Olivier et al.,2020). Social Studies aims not only to transfer knowledge and raise individuals who are only equipped with knowledge. Hence, it becomes more important that while teaching this particular subject, the methods the teachers use to enable the students to adapt to social and physical life and actively engage students in the learning process must be used.

Several studies have explored different teaching strategies to enhance student's learning outcomes in social studies (Banks, 2013, Huang et al,.2020). However, research on teaching strategies utilized by social studies high school teachers in the Philippines still needs to be completed. Therefore, this paper will explore the most effective teaching strategies social studies teachers use in the classroom. By examining the different approaches and methods educators use in this field, we can gain insight into what works best and how we can improve the quality of education in social studies.

**MATERIAL, METHODOLOGY, AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Material of the Study**

In this particular study, the researcher opted to employ guide questions as a means of data collection. These guide questions were meticulously selected and classified into opening, probing, and terminating questions. This classification allowed for a structured approach to the data collection process and ensured that all pertinent areas of interest were explored.

Furthermore, before the actual data collection process, the guide questions were tested on a selected teacher to gauge their understanding and effectiveness. This preliminary step refined the guide questions and ensured the final interview yielded the most relevant and accurate information.

**Methodology**

This study utilized a qualitative research design that involved thematic analysis in investigating the teaching strategies utilized by Social Studies high school teachers and in reporting data in themes. Thematic analysis, as a flexible analytical technique, has gained popularity among qualitative researchers due to its ease of use and efficiency (Braun & Clarke, 2019), making it a suitable methodological choice for novice researchers.

**Literature Review**

Social studies plays a crucial role in the secondary education curriculum as it equips students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand and engage with the complex world around them ( Russell & Waters, 2022). Effective teaching strategies in social studies are essential for fostering critical thinking, citizenship, and cultural awareness among students. Effective social studies teaching in secondary education requires a thoughtful blend of teaching strategies that engage students, promote critical thinking, and foster cultural awareness (Mestiola et al., 2018).

One prominent teaching strategy in social studies education is inquiry-based learning. This approach encourages students to ask questions, investigate issues, and construct their own knowledge (Byker & Thomas, 2018). Research suggests that inquiry-based instruction promotes deeper understanding of social studies concepts and encourages critical thinking skills. Teachers who implement inquiry-based learning often provide students with primary sources, engaging discussions, and real-world problem-solving scenarios to stimulate curiosity and independent research (Khalaf & Mohammed, 2018). Inquiry-based learning and project-based learning empower students to take an active role in their education, while multicultural education strategies ensure inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives (Grant et al,.2022).

Another notable strategy is the use of technology in social studies classrooms. The integration of digital tools, such as multimedia presentations, online research resources, and interactive simulations, has gained momentum( Shatunova et al., 2019). Studies have shown that technology-enhanced learning can make social studies content more accessible and engaging for today's tech-savvy students. Additionally, it offers opportunities for virtual field trips, connecting students with diverse perspectives and global issues, thereby expanding their worldview.

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In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on culturally responsive teaching strategies in social studies education (Moobola & Mulenga, 2020). Recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion, educators are incorporating students' diverse backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum (Mathe, 2019). Culturally relevant teaching helps students connect with the content, promotes empathy, and fosters a more inclusive learning environment. By acknowledging and valuing different cultures, social studies educators aim to prepare students to engage in a multicultural world ( Jancic & Hus, 2019).

Experiential learning strategies, such as service-learning and community-based projects, have also gained recognition in social studies education (Uge et al.,2019). These approaches provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, making the subject matter more meaningful and relevant. Such engagement can lead to increased civic awareness and activism among secondary students, preparing them to become active and responsible citizens (Kong, 2021).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The analysis yielded the following themes of high school teacher about the strategies they used in teaching Social Studies:

*Cooperative Learning*

Cooperative learning was significantly more effective than traditional instruction in improving academic achievement, promoting social skills, and enhancing students' attitudes toward learning (Korkmaz & Ozturk 2020). The study also found that cooperative learning was associated with improved academic performance and greater student engagement (Qureshi et al,.2023) Moreover, some studies have explored the benefits of cooperative learning in specific contexts. For instance, cooperative learning effectively improved the speaking skills of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners (Alrayah, 2018). Cooperative learning was also effective in enhancing the creativity of elementary school students (Marcos et al., 2020).

In summary, cooperative learning is a teaching strategy emphasizing student interaction and collaboration to promote learning. It involves group processing, social and leadership skill development, and collective problem-solving. Several studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in improving academic achievement, promoting social skills, enhancing students' attitudes towards learning, and in specific contexts such as EFL learning and creativity enhancement*.*

To Social Studies teachers, they used cooperative learning in such a way that...

Teachers used this strategy in a way that...

*"It helps maximize student's participation"*

*"It encourages student's active involvement in the class"*

*"It eliminate the concept that Social Studies is a boring subject"*

*"Students could really interact, could really share their ideas based on the topic or lesson and they would also express their ideas together with their group mates and they have the chance to work together with their peers".*

*"Students could have the chance to work with their classmates to come-up with a good output".*

*"It engages students and it give opportunities to students to express themselves, their thoughts and their ideas, opinions and even their observations from their own homes, from their own communities and from the outside world".*

*Community-based Instruction*

Community-based instruction (CBI) is an approach that provides students with opportunities to apply what they have learned in school to real-world tasks, such as in their local community or workplace. This approach enables students to connect academic content with practical skills, enhancing their motivation, engagement, and achievement.

CBI can take different forms, such as internships, service learning, or field trips. Among these, field trips are one of the most popular and accessible approaches to CBI. They are designed to provide students with hands-on experiences that support their learning objectives and allow them to explore their environment, observe phenomena, collect data, and interact with experts in the field (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2023).

Research has shown that well-designed CBI programs, including field trips, can enhance students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes. For example, a study found that field trips helped students to develop critical thinking skills, improve their motivation and engagement, and foster their appreciation of cultural diversity. Similarly, a study found that a service-learning program based on CBI improved students' problem-solving, communication, and civic engagement (Manning-Quellette & Hemer, 2019) skills.Some factors also need to be considered to ensure CBI's success, including field trips. For instance, CBI programs should have clear educational goals, high expectations for student performance, and be well-integrated with the school curriculum. In addition, they should be properly planned, structured, and supervised, to ensure students' safety and meaningful learning experiences.Community-based instruction, including field trips, can provide students with authentic experiences that allow them to experience in the real world what they have learned in school to real-world tasks while developing their practical skills,

motivation, and engagement. Educators can enhance their student's academic, social, and emotional outcomes by incorporating CBI programs into the curriculum.The majority of the teachers used this strategy in such a way that...

*"Students would not just really learn about Social Studies in the four walls of our classroom but they could also learn outside".*

*"Whatever the resources that are available in our locality, in our community, I will used those as an example so that my students could really visualize what is our discussion relating that one to our resources found in the community. For example we discuss about "produksyon" at negosyo" about cooperative, so I will let them to room around the city, so that would be their tasks. Then they will discover what are the cooperatives found in our city at the same time, it could also widen their experiences".*

*"To awaken student's interest because they were the one to find solutions out from the problem they encountered in their community".*

### *Inquiry Approach*

Inquiry teaching, a student-centered learning process emphasizing questioning and investigation, has gained popularity in recent years. One approach in teaching involves a student-centered process where students generate their own questions, gather and analyze data, and draw conclusions based on their findings .It is often described as applying the scientific method to social studies and mirrors the methods real social scientists use in their research (Chu et al., 2021).The National Research Council has defined inquiry as a set of interconnected processes that enable scientists and students to pose questions about the natural world and investigate phenomena, leading to a rich understanding of concepts, principles, models, and theories. This approach allows students to actively produce knowledge and expands the teacher's role beyond simply conveying information (Belen % Caballes, 2020).Inquiry-based teaching involves creating challenging situations in which students are asked to observe and question phenomena, devise and conduct experiments, analyze data, and draw conclusions . This approach welcomes uncertainty and invitation and can take the form of personal, collaborative, or guided inquiry. Personal inquiry allows students to engage in authentic, unstructured, and experiential learning experiences (Onyema et al., 2019).Research suggests that when children learn by interacting with their environment, they engage in inquiry-based learning. They ask questions, obtain and process information, compare and analyze data, and formulate their conclusions based on the weight and relevance of the evidence ( Mamun, 2022).*Inquiry teaching* is a student-centered approach that encourages active engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. It effectively enhances student learning outcomes in various subject areas ( Onyema et al,. 2019). Study suggest that when children engage with their environment and interact with it to obtain and process information, they are engaging in the process of inquiry. Through this process, they analyze and evaluate their collected observations and use the evidence to formulate their own conclusions, which may vary in weight and relevance (Al Mamun et al., 2020).

Social Studies teachers employed this strategy in such a way that...

*"Students could acquire their own understanding through observation from the tasks given to them".*

*"Students could formulate questions out from the concept and they can hypothesize through discovery".*

*"It could enhance student's critical thinking ability and problem solving ability because they were the one to find answers and solutions out from the concept".*

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sheds light on the various teaching strategies employed by Social Studies high school teachers to maximize student participation and active involvement in the class. It is widely accepted that student participation and engagement in class activities are crucial for meaningful learning to occur. Therefore, this study contributes significantly to the field of education by presenting various strategies that teachers can adopt to enhance student involvement in the learning process. The findings of this study indicate that cooperative learning activities, community-based approaches, and inquiry approaches are effective strategies that can be used to promote student participation and interaction in the Social Studies classroom. These strategies encourage students to work collaboratively, share their ideas and perspectives, and explore different viewpoints. Moreover, they foster critical thinking skills, enhance communication abilities, and promote problem-solving capabilities. As a result, students tend to have a more meaningful learning experience, which is essential for academic success. The importance of Social Studies as a subject cannot be overstated, as it plays a critical role in shaping students' understanding of the world around them. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to continuously explore new and innovative teaching strategies to make the subject more interesting and engaging to students. By adopting creative and diverse teaching methods, teachers can create a more dynamic learning environment, which is more likely to foster students' interest and engagement in the subject matter. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of employing various teaching strategies to maximize student participation and engagement in Social Studies classrooms. It provides evidence-based recommendations that can assist teachers in creating a more conducive learning environment and

ensuring meaningful learning experiences for their students. It is imperative for educators to embrace these findings and continuously strive to improve their teaching practices to achieve better learning outcomes for their students.

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