



Edited by: Bernardo Pohl and Sarah M. Straub

Recommended Citation: Shepherd, D.; Yeon, S., and Adams, B. (2026) Progressive and AI-Based Teaching Methods to Improve Social Studies Instruction. *Journal of Social Studies and History Education*, 9(1), 19-31.

Progressive and AI-Based Teaching Methods to Improve Social Studies Instruction

Dan Shepherd, Sanghee Yeon, and Benedict Adams

Abstract: This article examines the critical shortcomings in social studies knowledge and offers innovative solutions to improve instruction and retention. Repeated assessments reveal that students lack foundational knowledge in history, geography, civics, and economics—echoing national trends of civic and historical illiteracy. The article argues that traditional textbook-based and lecture-heavy instruction fails to engage students or foster lasting understanding. In response, the author proposes a shift toward three research-backed pedagogical approaches: project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and culturally responsive teaching. These strategies promote active, student-centered learning through real-world relevance and personal connection. Additionally, the article explores the emerging role of artificial intelligence to the proposed methods in social studies education, presenting evidence that AI-enhanced instruction can boost student motivation, engagement, and personalized learning outcomes. Classroom-based examples demonstrate how combining progressive pedagogy with AI tools can create powerful learning experiences, from planning international trips to interviewing historical witnesses. The article emphasizes that effective social studies instruction must go beyond rote memorization and instead prioritize critical thinking, emotional connection, and cultural relevance.

Recently, in a university-level course to prepare future elementary school teachers for the improved instruction of the social studies, students took an informal, non-graded assessment to gauge their knowledge of the vital content they would soon be teaching. The students in this course were in their third or final year of preparation before graduation, and because of the current dearth of teachers

in the community surrounding their college, nearly all would be teaching under contract in public elementary schools within months.

The results of this short eleven-question quiz, the questions of which were adapted from study materials provided for preparation for the Praxis test in elementary social studies, were

Dan Shepherd is a Professor at Missouri Western University.

discouraging. While there was a positive finding (e.g., 93% of students could read a bar chart correctly.) and a mildly positive finding (e.g., 67% knew that human settlement of the North America continent likely occurred via a land bridge from Siberia.), all other questions yielded a correct response rate of between 47% and 13%. If the questions were excessively challenging, this might be predictable, but the questions were of a basic nature. The bulleted list below shows how well students answered several of these basic knowledge questions.

- Only 47% could correctly select Islam as a monotheistic. The other two choices were Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Unfortunately, only 27% of students could place the Alps in Europe.
- Only 1 in 5 (20%) knew that maps with country borders included are political maps.
- Only 13% were aware that United States Congresspeople are re-elected every two years.

Of course, this is not new information: the results of this informal social studies quiz are reflected repeatedly in surveys that show Americans overall lack of civic and historical literacy. A recent survey by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation of 2,000 registered voters found that 70% were unable to pass a basic civic literacy test. Of those surveyed, only 1 in 3 knew there are three branches of government (United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2024). One recent study found that only 36% of American citizens could pass the test required of immigrants to become citizens. Of these, 60% were

unable to identify the countries that fought in World War 2. Almost humorously, 37% of those assessed thought that Benjamin Franklin, rather than Thomas Edison almost 90 years after Franklin's death, invented the lightbulb, and 2% said that the Cold War was started by climate change (Institute for Citizens and Scholars, n.d.).

Clearly, something is not working in America's transmission of its social studies content to its citizens, specifically those in K-12 education. In one Midwestern state (Missouri), for example, elements of the United States Constitution are addressed in kindergarten through fifth grade, again in high school United States history, and once more in an entire class devoted to American Government (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). This topic, appropriately considered so vital as to be mandated in the curriculum 8 of the 13 years of public education, is simply not retained in any meaningful way by the majority of students. In 2021-2022, statewide standardized test results for the Missouri Assessment Program reported that only about 40% of all students measured proficient or above in Social Studies (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022).

What may be a contributing factor to this unfortunate truth? According to current research, in schools throughout the United States, textbook-based and teacher lectures dominate much of social studies instruction (Donnelly, 2021). This emphasis on passive learning, not

connected to authentic student experience, is often identified by students as a primary cause for their lack of social studies knowledge (Shepherd, Adams, & Yeon, 2024).

With the emergence of AI tools, the use of progressive teaching methods increases student engagement dramatically. With these approaches, much more personalized learning becomes not only possible but very practical for teachers. In today's fast-moving and intricate world, cultivating authentic critical thinking - the capacity to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create - is essential.

Both innovative instructional strategies and the thoughtful integration of AI and other educational technologies support the growth of this skill. Ultimately, the goal of using engaging, AI-enhanced methods in social studies is to make learning more relevant and connected to students' real-life experiences. After all, one of the main reasons students resist social studies is that they perceive it as distant from their own lives.

Research Focus

Given the unfortunate depth and possible damage of this problem, this study explores and suggests possible methods for the improvement of social studies instruction for greater student impact and retention. Two key sources for identifying more effective teaching methods are: first, an examination of instructional strategies already in use that students have found effective; and, second, a consideration of

how artificial intelligence (AI) tools can enhance these methods.

Literature Review

Of course, the educational literature is replete with information about improving the instruction of social studies using more progressive and engaging approaches. While there could be innumerable categories of such modern teaching techniques, three seem to be most prominent: project-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based learning (IBL), and culturally responsive teaching (CRT). In addition to these more recent powerful teaching tools, the use of AI in social studies instruction deserves deeper consideration and fuller implementation.

These approaches in isolation and in combination with other methodologies, have proven benefits for student learning. The use of progressive teaching methods and the greater implementation of AI educational tools increases student engagement dramatically. With these approaches, personalized learning becomes not only possible but practical for teachers. In an increasingly complex and complicated world, the development of genuine critical thinking – the necessary ability in this modern world to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create – is mandatory. Both progressive teaching and the correct use of AI and other educational technology foster critical thinking capably. Finally, the entire foundation of the more engaging and AI-delivered instructional methods is intended to enhance the real-world and authentic nature of the social studies being

taught. Students' primary objection to the social studies is that the content does not matter to them or apply to their lives.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the Social Studies

Simply put, PBL emphasizes active student exploration of real-world or authentic challenges and/or problems. Through the consideration and exploration of complex questions addressed using deep critical thinking, PBL strives to make the social studies meaningful to students.

The possible power of effectively designed and capably implemented PBL in the social studies cannot be reasonably questioned. One recent qualitative study by Revelle (2019) found that 75% of second grade teachers who tried PBL in their social studies teaching reported they experienced more successes than challenges when using this approach, and 100% of them saw greater engagement and learning on the part of their students. A similarly themed, though experimental, study by Begum, et.al. (2023) determined that PBL was effective in enhancing measurable student achievement in the social studies and recommended that instruction and instructional materials be revised to include this approach.

While the data certainly seems to reinforce the argument that PBL should be a more emphasized approach in social studies instruction, the experience of working classroom teachers concurs with these research findings. For example, Texas 6th grade teacher Sarah Straub (2016) implemented a learning project based on the acronym SAGE: student choice,

authenticity, global significance, and exhibition. In this project, her students learned and implemented ways to assist refugees in their own community. While Ms. Straub faced some opposition from teaching peers who perceived that her efforts were a distraction from the established curriculum; she ultimately reported only tremendous gains in authentic social studies learning as a result of this project.

PBL is often wrongly considered a secondary level instructional approach. While it is, of course, a tremendous method for older students (Azzano, 2020), it can have a similarly beneficial effect on the social studies learning of primary grade students of all demographic backgrounds, including low socio-economic status (Halvorsen, Duke, & Strachan, 2019), and these benefits continue throughout all elementary grade levels (Swift, 2018).

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in the Social Studies

IBL encourages students to ask deep and personally applicable questions in order to investigate historical events or cultural practices with more meaning. The goal of IBL is to help students to actively engage with the social studies, giving them individual "ownership" of the content as opposed to merely restating what teachers may have spoken or covered. One of the fundamental goals of IBL is not mere knowledge of facts or events but active pursuit of understanding and the enhancement of personal curiosity.

A significant and recent use of IBL

applies this effective instructional design to a weighty matter, both historically and today, the Holocaust. Traditional Holocaust education emphasizes communicating historical facts that are often isolated from the emotionally torturous experiences and memories of survivors. As a result, students cannot relate to the hideousness of the event, and it is as forgotten as the Presidency of James K. Polk. Numerous progressive instructional techniques were emphasized in this broad unit of instruction, including contextual responsiveness, trauma-sensitivity, apolitical equity, and asset-based, or a focus on student strengths, etc. Students embraced this new lesson design heartily by crafting their own individualized compelling questions to research, by finding credible sources amid a sea of disinformation, by analyzing data for themselves to determine the truth of a given situation, and by drawing their own personally meaningful conclusions. Researchers concluded that instruction using the IBL framework resulted in significantly improved retention about the Holocaust with the addition of empowering students to foster a more respectful and informed community (Dvir, 2024).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in the Social Studies

CRT, as it is commonly known, recognizes the importance of a student's unique culture and background in the process of learning new ideas and skills. Additionally, CRT strives to integrate diverse perspectives into the social studies content, increasing relevance for

individual students and striving to be more inclusive of their culturally ingrained perspectives. Furthermore, CRT helps individual teachers to grow dramatically through explorations into their own effectiveness via action research. In other words, teachers can improve their teaching through the better implementation of CRT when they explore how its use helps their students learn (Parkhouse & Bennett, 2023).

One repeatedly studied method of implementing CRT in the classroom is the use of trade books. A recent week-long project implemented in a middle school asked students to analyze the civic actions of Frederick Douglass in opposition to racial discrimination through the use of trade books. Researchers found that disciplinary thinking skills were enhanced as students made evidence-based claims against the cruelty and evil of the slavery system which were then strongly supported by the assigned trade book readings (Clabough, Lintner, Sheffield, & Whitford, 2024). A previous year-long study by Sheffield and Clabough (2023) focused on tracing civil rights from Reconstruction to the present and found similar results, determining that the use of trade books can foster greater historical empathy and disciplinary literacy in middle school students. Another example is, interestingly, the use of children's literature which has a comparable positive effect on the development of preservice teachers. One meta-analysis of 27 earlier studies conducted by Flores, Vlach, & Lammert (2019) found that the consideration of diverse texts in teacher education programs resulted in greater

understanding of culture and race and resulted in greater use of transformative and progressive instructional approaches.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Possible Benefits to Social Studies Education

Because of the relative newness and explosive growth of AI, social studies educators do not yet know what the most effective implementations might later be, and, of course, there has not been enough time for extensive research to occur; nevertheless, several studies have started to explore both possible applications of AI in improved social studies instruction and the apparent effectiveness of some initial AI-implementation efforts.

As for the possible effectiveness of AI in education, one of the most extensive extant studies conducted by Rizvi, et.al. (2023), rigorously reviewed over 8,100 research papers, selected 28 that researchers determined were the most helpful because of their emphasis on empirical evidence about actual student learning outcomes further concluding that the use of AI in educational settings does result in student learning improvements for both intellectual/academic and affective/social emotional academic goals because of AI's unique ability to be learner-centered and context-influenced.. Similarly, Lee and Kwon (2024) analyzed 25 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2018-2023 and found that AI, when implemented correctly and intentionally in the classroom, enhanced students' problem-solving skills, academic and personal motivation, and positive attitudes toward learning. A third study by

Yue, et.al. (2022) used a similar approach but found slightly different, though still positive results. In this example, 32 empirical studies were reviewed, and researchers found that AI does result in improved student motivation, engagement, and attitude toward learning; however, there was not sufficient evidence to conclude that student learning outcomes were significantly enhanced.

In the specific area of social studies instruction, initial research is similarly positive. Grabaugh and Levitt (2024) found ten evidence-based uses of AI that enhanced student engagement and learning in the social studies classroom. These AI-driven learning tasks included the following: interactive virtual field trips, AI-powered tutors, historical figure simulations, gamified learning experiences, AI-assisted historical inquiry, and digital citizenship lessons.

AI & Specific Uses in Social Studies Education

If the benefits of AI to education is a given, and it appears likely that it is, then what are some research-considered AI-applications for teachers to consider? Again, the possible list is infinite, but a few ideas have been explored in educational literature. One recent mixed methods study of 6th grade students by Yetisensoy and Karaduman (2024) explored their interactions with "SosyalciBot," an AI-powered chatbot. The study found that students who received tutoring from the chatbot had significantly higher post-test scores than those who did not.

In addition to the use of chatbots in social studies education, researchers are finding other data-supported AI-based instructional methods and recommending those to social studies teachers. As before, the list of proven AI-tools is extensive but includes several creative pedagogical approaches like a streetcar planning project, a YouTube redesign project, and even an agriculture improvement project, which can be used in PBL, IBL and CRT methods (Yim & Su, 2024).

Instructional Applications and Recommendations

Given that current social studies approaches are generally not yielding the results that schools and their communities would prefer but that research has been found to support the use of progressive and AI-based instructional approaches and learning methods, what are some possible suggestions for transforming social studies instruction for a lasting impact by students? Some suggestions that have the components of PBL, IBL and CRT and are from a college-level teacher preparation course on the topic of elementary social studies methods, have proven practical, engaging, and memorable for students.

Teaching History through Personal Interview

One of the effective techniques strongly influenced by IBL principles is to conduct a personal interview with someone who has lived through an important historical event. For example, the course previously mentioned hosted a Vietnam War veteran to discuss his experiences. Now an elderly

man, when he was drafted into the United States army, he was 19, very close to the age of students in the college classroom. In informal discussions before the interview, almost all students expressed very little knowledge of or interest in this conflict. When the former soldier began to speak, though, their initially held perspectives quickly changed. When he spoke of leaving his small, rural hometown for the jungles of Vietnam, they all imagined seeing themselves or their brothers saying goodbye, perhaps for the final time. When he spoke of encountering an enemy combatant who was lowering his weapon, firing upon him, and taking his life, students felt the horrors of war and its lasting effects. When he spoke of stepping over a fallen log onto a “booby trap,” losing his foot, students suddenly had an interest in history and a knowledge of a previously unknown event that would definitely stay with them permanently. Merely reading the same content in a textbook or answering questions on a worksheet would have none of the impact offered by an authentic interview.

Teaching History through Student-Made Digital Videos

A second suggestion, which is clearly PBL-influenced, is to assign the creation of a modern style newscast about an important historical event. In this example, students are divided into teams of four; one serving as news anchor, one as news reporter, one as an historical event eyewitness, and the fourth as an historical event expert. The groups are then challenged to create; complete with

background music, video transitions, actual video or images of the event when possible including costumes, and acting, etc.;. One interesting example video was of the resurrection of Jesus. The reporter, through the use of greenscreen technology, is standing in front of an empty tomb, and beside him in era-appropriate costume is the Apostle Peter, who excitedly and passionately describes his eye-witness testimony of speaking with the newly alive Jesus. It's a powerful moment and makes history come alive memorably for students.

Teaching History through Historical Artwork or Artifact

Figure 1

(Smithsonian National Museum of American History, n.d.). 1885–1886 Harriet Powers's Bible Quilt, by Harriet Powers (1885–1886). Quilt, cotton. Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, DC. Retrieved January 19, 2026, from https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object/nmah_556462



Another well-received and possibly powerful lesson for students can occur using a CRT-based artifact. In the college course discussed students were asked to examine Harriet Powers 1886 quilt (Smithsonian National Museum of American History, n.d.), sometimes referred to as “the Bible quilt” (Image 1). To open this lesson, students were simply shown an image of the quilt and asked to “solve the mystery” by suggesting possible stories that the quilt tells through its illustrations. Students became intrigued by trying to figure out what the quilt is saying and generate imaginative stories, often wildly and humorously incorrect. Then, additional “clues” were provided, perhaps a picture of the artist and the dates of the quilt. Next, the teacher might identify one of the quilt panels that may be more easily identified, perhaps the image in the upper left of Adam and Eve surrounded by animals in the Garden of Eden. With this new information, students may start identifying the intention of numerous blocks, for example, often seeing the crucifixion in the lower left corner. Once the quilt's stories had been fully identified, students were then ready to explore the possible messages and themes of the quilt. Here, the teacher could lead students through a consideration of the lives of enslaved peoples.

Teaching Geography through Cultural Differences

Unfortunately, as previously discussed, geography remains a tremendously weak area of knowledge for most Americans.

In fact, many could be considered “geographically illiterate.” One possible solution for this is to start thinking of geography not as place names to memorize or as maps to color in, but as the people and cultures that inhabit a specific region. As has been demonstrated, people connect to people much more powerfully than to mere academic knowledge. One teaching method for geography that was implemented for this course is the consideration of unique cultural differences. During this lesson, however, while laughter may occur, students should be reminded that “different” does not mean “worse.”

As before, countless examples could be considered and, in fact, students themselves should do most of the searching, but below are two examples of places that students can connect with geography in a more human and interesting way because of unexpected cultural differences (Tariq, 2022).

- In Ethiopia, if a host reaches toward a guest’s mouth with a morsel of food, intending to feed the guest, it is considered rude to reject such a generous offering.
- In Korea, it is considered disrespectful to hand someone something with just one hand. Business cards, for example, are handed to a colleague or acquaintance with both hands, “pinching” opposite lower corners of the card.

Teaching Geography through Planning an International Trip

2

An effective method for getting students to enjoy geography is by asking them and their partners to plan a “dream vacation” to a distant, international location. Critical thinking is required when determining where to go and who to take. The provision of a budget requires mathematics and additional critical thinking skills as decisions are made about how to best spend the limited funds. English language arts can be involved by writing imagined diary entries or travel logs. The geography of the country “visited” can be explored through internet images and videos of important landscapes, waterways, natural phenomena, mountains, buildings, and so on. Finally, a sense of “giving back” can be considered through possible charitable tasks that the visited country might benefit from, including food donations, pollution considerations, and housing or healthcare needs.

Teaching Economics through Weekly Grocery Sales Advertisements

Each week in many communities, local grocery stores publish and mail their upcoming sales to residents. These advertisements can provide a wealth of information for teachers to bring social studies learning out of the textbook. Of course, there is ample intersection between these mailings and personal budgeting, so students could actually use real-world math while making a weekly meal plan. The advertisements, of course, include information about healthy and unhealthy food choices, giving the teacher yet another means of using the papers in

an authentic way. There could also be significant discussion about “food deserts,” advertising manipulation or media literacy, the impact of geography on food accessibility, and cultural differences related to food.

Teaching Civics through Community Service

Civics – in accordance with aspects of IBL and PBL - is likely best taught through community service. For example, during the school administrative leadership experience of the author of this study, two enterprising teachers in the same elementary school grade level, after teaching about the migratory patterns of monarch butterflies, were approached by a few of their students asking if something could be done for the butterflies travelling through their small midwestern city. This started a large scale project of building a milkweed sanctuary in a city. Students conducted research in butterfly needs, designed a habitat that allowed humans and butterflies to enjoy the same specific area without disrupting each other, developed an extensive budget for the project’s completion, sought out approvals from local government agencies, and interacted with local businesses to gather financial and material support. This project was completed many years ago, but the butterfly sanctuary remains to this day.

Teaching Social Studies through AI-Generated Songs

Another suggested but not yet research-proven way to teach social studies is to

create songs using AI tools like Suno.com. Knowing that song lyrics are often memorable, students were asked to select an academic standard and turn it into an educational song. One student recently created a slow pop music song on the three branches of government using the metaphor of a tree. Lyrics within this song say, “Checks and balances stop the fall (of the tree). When one leans heavy, they steady all. A system built to thrive, not sway. Strength in many, come what may.” Another student created a folksy, child-friendly tune about the difference between facts and opinions. Her AI-generated lyrics, communicated within a catchy melody, said, “An opinion's tricky it’s all about you. It's what you feel, it's your own view. Chocolate's the best; that's what I say, but someone else might like vanilla today.” Finally, one student, apparently a country music fan, created a song about how taxes are generated and used. With a noticeable twang in his voice and backed up by banjos, the AI-singer crooned, “Tax train – choo choo – it’s heading to town, fixing the roads and the schools all around.” As students started singing the choruses together, choruses with heavily content-based but memorable lyrics.

Teaching Social Studies Vocabulary through AI-Generated Images

All subject areas have their own specialized vocabulary, and human beings can think visually, so the use of easily generated AI-images is a powerful way to create memorable glossaries of important terms. A few recent AI-images – created entirely by students - of standards-based terms is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2

AI-Created Social Studies Vocabulary Terms

Life-Cycles of Plants		Community Participation	
Observation		American Revolution	

Future Research

For future research, there is a need to investigate how AI tools can be tailored to various student populations and learning styles, and how they might complement existing pedagogies like PBL and CRT. Longitudinal studies examining the sustained impact of these innovative strategies on civic knowledge and engagement would also be valuable. Additionally, more empirical work is needed to understand how preservice teachers internalize and apply these instructional methods, and how teacher preparation programs can better equip future educators to deliver relevant, inclusive, and high-impact social studies instruction with a positive impact on student attitudes towards the social studies.

Conclusion

The widespread lack of civic, geographic, and historical literacy among future elementary school teachers and the general public are critical issues in American education. An informal quiz (Shepherd, Adams, & Yeon, 2024) given to pre-service teachers revealed alarming gaps in basic social studies knowledge, echoing

national survey results that showed poor civic understanding among adults. Traditional lecture- and textbook-based methods have been found ineffective and research suggests that more engaging, student-centered approaches yield better results, in particular three modern instructional strategies; project-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based learning (IBL), and culturally responsive teaching (CRT); as effective tools to enhance social studies education.

Additionally, the growing potential of AI in the classroom is documented particularly, the citation of research that AI can boost engagement, motivation, and even academic performance. Practical classroom applications, such as student-made videos, digital storytelling, and AI-generated songs or images, are shown as creative and impactful ways to teach social studies content. Through real-world examples, like planning international trips or interviewing veterans, social studies can be made more personally relevant making it key to retention and long-term learning for students. Ultimately, teaching using these methods calls for a shift in pedagogical practices to better equip students for participation as an active, informed citizenship.

References

- Azzano, T. (2020, December 7). *Getting Started With PBL in Social Studies*. Retrieved from Edutopia: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/getting-started-pbl-social-studies/>
- Begum, M., Imad, M., Khan, F., & Riasat, A. (2023). Effects of Project-Based Learning on Students' Academic Achievement in the Subject of Social Studies at the Elementary Level. *CARC Research in Social Sciences*, 2(4), 260-265.
- Clabough, J., Lintner, T., Sheffield, C., & Whitford, A. (2024, Fall/Winter). Developing a Culturally Responsive Social Studies Classroom with Trade Books. *Research Issues in Contemporary Education*, 9(1), 114-138.
- Donnelly, M. (2021). *Teaching Social Studies*. Retrieved from EBSCO: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/teaching-social-studies#:~:text=While%20they%20stressed%20the%20need,in%201961%2C%20Charles%20R.>
- Dvir, B. (2024, May 6). *How to Get Holocaust Education Right*. Retrieved from Time: https://time.com/6974378/holocaust-remembrance-education-essay/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Flores, T., Vlach, S., & Lammert, C. (2019). The Role of Children's Literature in Cultivating Preservice Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals: A Literature Review. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 51(2), 214-232. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X19839181>
- Grubaugh, S., & Levitt, G. (2024, June). The Future of Elementary Social Studies: Harnessing AI's Potential through evidence-based practices. *Technium: Social Sciences Journal*, 58, 87-93.
- Halvorsen, A., Duke, N., & Strachan, S. (2019, January-February). Project-Based Learning in Primary-Grade Social Studies. *Social Education*, 83(1), 58-62.
- Institute for Citizens and Scholars. (n.d.). National Survey Finds Just 1 in 3 Americans Would Pass Citizenship Test. Retrieved May 7, 2025, from [citizensandscholars.org: https://citizensandscholars.org/resource/national-survey-finds-just-1-in-3-americans-would-pass-citizenship-test/](https://citizensandscholars.org/resource/national-survey-finds-just-1-in-3-americans-would-pass-citizenship-test/)
- Lee, S., & Kwan, K. (2024). A systematic review of AI education in K-12 classrooms from 2018 to 2023: Topics, strategies, and learning outcomes. *Computers in Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100211>
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2022, August 16). Department of elementary and secondary education releases statewide assessment data [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://dese.mo.gov/department-elementary-and-secondary-education-releases-statewide-assessment-data>
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). MLS Social Studies Standards Grades K-12 (Excel). Retrieved May 7, 2025, from Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <https://dese.mo.gov/media/file/curren-mls-standards-ss-k-12-sboe-2016>
- Parkhouse, H., & Bennett, E. (2023, January 24). Exploring social studies teachers' use of action research to enhance cultural responsiveness. *Social Studies Research and Practice*, 18(1), 18-32. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-06-2022-0014>
- Powers, H. (1885-1886). Bible Quilt. National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.
- Revelle, K. Z. (2019). Teacher perceptions of a project-based approach to social studies and literacy instruction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 84, 95-105.
- Rizvi, S., Waite, J., & Sentance, S. (2023). Artificial Intelligence teaching and learning in K-12 from 2019 to 2022: A systemic literature review. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 4. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2023.100145>

Sheffield, C., & Clabough, J. (2023). Disciplinary Literacy, Trade Books, and Culturally Responsive Teaching in Middle Grades Social Studies. *New Jersey Council for the Social Studies Journal*. Retrieved 5 8, 2025, from https://teachingsocialstudies.org/2023/08/28/disciplinary-literacy-trade-books-and-culturally-responsive-teaching-in-middle-grades-social-studies/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Shepherd, D., Adams, B., & Yeon, S. (2024). The Impact of an Elementary Social Studies Class on Student Attitudes. *Journal of Social Studies and History Education*, 22-36.

Smithsonian National Museum of American History. (n.d.). 1885–1886 Harriet Powers’s Bible Quilt [Museum object]. Smithsonian Institution. https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object/nmah_556462

Straub, S. (2016). The Mothers of Exiles: Authentic Project-Based Learning in a Social Studies Classroom. *MLET: The Journal of Middle Level Education in Texas*, 3(1), 1-11.

Swift, A. (2018). Integration of Project-based Learning in Elementary Social Integration of Project-based Learning in Elementary Social Studies. *The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies*, 79(2), Article 4: 1-14.

Tariq, C. (2022, September 19). *15 fascinating cultural differences around the world*. Retrieved from Chef Tariq: <https://www.cheftariq.com/lifestyle/cultural-differences-around-the-world/>

United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation. (2024, February 12). New Study Finds Alarming Lack of Civic Literacy Among Americans. Retrieved from [uschamberfoundation.org](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org): <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/civics/new-study-finds-alarming-lack-of-civic-literacy-among-americans>

Yetisensoy, O., & Karaduman, H. (2024). The effect of AI-powered chatbots in social studies education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29, 17035-17069. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12485-6>

Yim, I., & Su, J. (2024, January 6). Artificial intelligence (AI) learning tools in K-12 education: A scoping review. *Journal of Computers in Education*, 12, 93-131.

Yue, M., Jong, M., & Dai, Y. (2022, November 24). Pedagogical Design of K-12 Artificial Intelligence Education: A Systematic Review. *Sustainability*, 14(23). doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su142315620>