

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AS A MEANS OF BUILDING INTERACTION WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Education serves as the fundamental basis for cultivating the character and capabilities of individuals to engage effectively with their surroundings. A significant discipline that contributes to this developmental process is Social Studies, particularly at the elementary education stage. Social Studies encompasses not only the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to society and the environment but also the cultivation of a profound understanding and the active capacity to engage in the dynamics of social transformation. The research methodologies deemed appropriate for this inquiry are quantitative methods and library research. These approaches utilize data sourced from a variety of documented materials, including books, periodicals, and academic journals, which are pertinent to the subject matter of this investigation. The environment assumes a critical role in the sustenance of human beings and other life forms. Humans are in a continuous state of interaction with diverse environmental components, and these interactions mutually influence one another. The contribution of educators toward enhancing the quality of learning is of paramount importance. To fulfill their responsibilities effectively, educators must possess sufficient academic and professional competencies. Academic competencies encompass a comprehensive understanding of social studies educational content, while professional competencies include the ability to design and implement learning experiences utilizing a variety of methods and strategies.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Social Studies, which is often referred to as the field of Social Studies, encompasses a comprehensive examination of human beings in all facets of their social existence, delving into the myriad ways in which individuals interact with one another within diverse environments, whether these settings are local or distant. This academic discipline entails a thorough investigation into the myriad ways humans fulfill their needs and desires, thereby revealing the intricate tapestry of human activities that shape our societies. Essentially, Social Studies encompasses a broad spectrum of human endeavors and interactions. As students navigate the multifaceted complexities of life that they will inevitably encounter, it is critical to recognize that Social Studies is profoundly influenced not only by advancements in scientific and technological realms but also by the intricate sociocultural dynamics present within Indonesian society. Consequently, the primary objective of Social Studies is to cultivate a deep reservoir of knowledge and a skill set related to human interactions, alongside fostering empathetic behaviors that are congruent with that acquired knowledge.

The evolution of Social Studies as an academic subject within educational institutions

involves a continual expansion of its curriculum, incorporating increasingly extensive and diverse content. Given the multifarious complexities and nuances associated with contemporary social issues, it is essential to adopt an integrated methodology that draws from various disciplines, including the social sciences, natural sciences, technological advancements, the humanities, environmental studies, and diverse belief systems. It is anticipated that by employing such a comprehensive approach, the field of social studies education will successfully avert the pitfalls of obsolescence, ensuring that it remains pertinent and responsive to the dynamic nature of social developments. The significance of the immediate environment as a valuable resource for learning cannot be overstated, as it greatly enhances the educational experience by being readily accessible to students, thus facilitating a more profound understanding of the subject matter. This environment can offer a holistic and authentic perspective while simultaneously challenging educators to devise a variety of innovative teaching methods that leverage the surrounding context as a vital resource, particularly in the domain of social studies education.

Education serves as the fundamental cornerstone upon which the character and capabilities of individuals are established, particularly in relation to their capacity to engage with their environment effectively. One of the critical academic subjects that plays a significant role in this formative process is Social Studies, especially during the crucial developmental years of elementary education. The aim of Social Studies transcends mere knowledge transfer regarding societal structures and environmental contexts; it seeks to cultivate a profound understanding and an active engagement in the processes that drive social change. The curriculum for social studies at the elementary school level is specifically designed to equip students with the tools necessary to become proactive members of a modern and evolving society. The emphasis is placed on nurturing citizens who not only possess a deep-seated understanding of their societal landscapes but are also prepared to actively engage in initiatives that promote social transformation. The content covered in social studies encompasses a wide array of pertinent social issues, including the intricate relationships between humans and their environments. According to the developmental theories posited by Piaget, children at the elementary school age have typically progressed in their cognitive abilities, acquiring concrete and rational thinking skills; thus, it is imperative to implement a learning approach that is well-suited to their developmental stage. This learning strategy should prioritize student-centered methodologies, utilizing learning media and resources that are directly relevant to the students' immediate surroundings, which is deemed essential for fostering effective educational outcomes.

Educators serve primarily as facilitators who guide and support students in their learning journeys rather than merely acting as traditional instructors who dispense information. The various environments that students inhabit—be they physical spaces, social contexts, or cultural backgrounds—are harnessed as invaluable and rich sources of learning experiences that enhance educational outcomes. In the realm of social studies, it is essential to explore concepts and themes that are rooted in the practical realities of everyday life, as any instruction that fails to align with the tangible experiences

of students is unlikely to fulfill its educational objectives or address the pressing needs of society effectively. The environment is leveraged not solely as a medium through which learning occurs but also regarded as a vital object of study that merits significant attention and analysis. The development of students' conceptual frameworks, their attitudes towards various subjects, and the skills they acquire are profoundly shaped by the interactions they have with their surrounding environment and the contexts in which they find themselves. A pedagogical approach that prioritizes environmental engagement is designed to foster a deeper connection between students and their surroundings, ultimately teaching them to appreciate, care for, and assume responsibility for the environment. Furthermore, this approach aims to equip students with the requisite skills they need to navigate life successfully and sustainably, ensuring they can thrive in harmony with the world around them. By integrating experiential learning opportunities that involve real-world contexts, educators can create more meaningful connections and facilitate a deeper understanding of the subjects being taught. Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate not only knowledgeable individuals but also conscientious citizens who are prepared to contribute positively to society and the environment in which they live.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the learning processes associated with social studies in elementary education, particularly with regard to how these processes facilitate the development of meaningful interactions with one's living environment, it becomes evident that the most suitable research methodologies to employ in this context are quantitative methods alongside rigorous library research techniques. These methodologies rely heavily on systematically gathered data derived from a plethora of written materials, including but not limited to scholarly books, academic journals, and reputable magazines, all of which are pertinent to the thematic exploration central to this particular study. In the course of this research endeavor, the investigator meticulously curated data from a diverse array of literature that directly aligns with the focal topic, subsequently engaging in a thorough process of filtering and synthesizing this information into a cohesive theoretical framework. It is noteworthy that the employed research method does not necessitate the physical exploration of the field to observe factual occurrences in their natural settings; instead, it is accomplished through an extensive process of reading, analyzing, and documenting various literary sources and educational materials that are relevant to the underlying subject matter. This approach allows for a profound understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of social studies education without the logistical challenges associated with field research. Ultimately, this combination of quantitative analysis and library-based inquiry enhances the robustness of the research findings, contributing significantly to the field of elementary education.

C. DISCUSSION

Ips as Social Transformation

Social transformation is a comprehensive term that encompasses the various modifications and alterations that take place within a societal framework, which can manifest in numerous ways, including but not limited to the fundamental nature,

distinctive characteristics, or the intricate social structure that defines the community. This multifaceted phenomenon also encapsulates significant shifts in interpersonal relationships and the dynamics that govern human interactions, which can lead to profound implications for social cohesion and collective identity.

1. William F. Ogburn articulated the concept that social change encompasses various components of culture, which includes both tangible elements, such as physical objects and technologies, as well as intangible aspects, such as beliefs, values, and norms that shape human interaction and societal structures over time.
2. Kingsley Davis elucidated the notion that social transformation represents a significant alteration in both the organization and the operational dynamics of society, suggesting that these changes can have profound implications for the relationships and interactions among individuals and groups within the community.
3. Mac Iver offered a comprehensive definition of social change by characterizing it as an evolution in cultural practices that subsequently influences social relationships or the equilibrium of social interactions, thereby underscoring the interconnectedness of cultural dynamics and social frameworks.
4. Gillin and Gillin conceptualized social transformation as the diverse alterations in lifestyles and everyday practices that arise as a direct consequence of shifts in geographical contexts, cultural paradigms, demographic compositions, prevailing ideologies, or groundbreaking discoveries that redefine societal norms and behaviors.

Social studies serves a crucial function in steering social transformation within the context of society, acting as a foundational pillar that supports the evolution and advancement of communal structures and relationships. The fundamental objectives of this discipline encompass not only assisting students in adapting to the ever-evolving landscape of social change but also equipping them with the necessary tools to devise effective solutions to prevalent social issues, fostering an environment where students are motivated to initiate and implement positive transformations, while simultaneously ensuring the preservation of their nation's rich cultural heritage and the enduring values that contribute to its identity. The methodologies employed in social studies education, which are instrumental in facilitating social transformation, include a diverse array of pedagogical strategies designed to engage students actively and critically in the process of understanding and addressing complex societal dynamics.

1. Problem solving: In an academic environment, learners are tasked with addressing various social issues that are subsequently analyzed and deliberated upon during class discussions, fostering an atmosphere of critical thinking and collaborative engagement among peers and instructors alike.
2. Discovery learning: In this instructional approach, students engage in a process of exploration and inquiry, where they are encouraged to identify and develop innovative solutions or gain a deeper understanding of established social problems, thereby enhancing their cognitive abilities and promoting independent thought.
3. Project-based learning: Within this educational framework, students immerse

themselves in hands-on, practical experiences by participating in community-focused social development initiatives, which not only contribute to their personal growth but also positively impact the societal landscape surrounding them, facilitating a sense of responsibility and civic engagement.

The Role of the Environment as a Source of Social Studies Learning

The environment holds an exceptionally significant position when it comes to the ongoing existence and survival of not only human beings but also a myriad of other living organisms that inhabit our planet. It is an undeniable fact that humans engage in a continuous and dynamic interaction with various facets of the environment, and the nature of these relationships has profound effects on both parties involved. Within this intricate context, it is crucial to recognize that humans represent the most potent and dominant element, primarily due to their unique cognitive abilities and intellectual capacities that allow for both development and advancement in various fields. The degree to which humans exert influence over the natural environment is profoundly shaped by the extent of their mastery over scientific knowledge and technological innovations, which are ultimately products of human endeavor. Moreover, this influence is far from uniform; rather, it is significantly affected by the ability of individuals and communities to cultivate and foster a culture that prioritizes the utilization of science and technology in a responsible manner. This cultural capability is inextricably linked to the values and practices of different human groups as they strive to transform environmental resources into tangible wealth that secures their overall welfare and quality of life.

Communities that have successfully cultivated a robust culture alongside a comprehensive mastery of science and technology are not merely capable of harnessing their own environmental resources effectively; they also possess the unique capability to exert control over environmental resources located in other geographical regions. In stark contrast, communities that have struggled to adequately develop a culture centered around science and technology often face significant challenges in harnessing the potential of their natural resources, which ultimately hampers their ability to improve their own welfare and economic conditions. The incorporation of various learning resources that are closely linked to the surrounding environment can facilitate a more profound understanding for students, especially in relation to social studies curricula. The environment itself serves as a rich repository of diverse potential learning resources, which encompass a broad spectrum of aspects including social, cultural, economic, and geographical environments that collectively contribute to educational enrichment. The social environment, for instance, comprises a variety of factors such as community interaction patterns, the collective awareness of the benefits associated with education, opportunities for social mobility, and overall community health dynamics.

In addition to the social environment, the economic environment plays a critical role and includes aspects such as local livelihoods, the potential for tourism development, and the various economic activities that are undertaken by local communities. Meanwhile, the cultural environment is characterized by a rich tapestry of customs, lifestyle choices, and the diversity of religious beliefs or practices that exist within a community. Furthermore, the geographical environment encompasses essential

elements like landforms, prevailing weather conditions, and the specific geographical location of a community, all of which contribute to the unique identity of that area. In this modern era of globalization, which is marked by rapid advancements in both science and technology, there is an urgent need for multidimensional approaches to effectively confront the increasingly complex challenges that characterize contemporary life. Consequently, the field of social studies education must evolve to foster social sensitivity and encourage active social participation among students, thereby equipping them with the necessary tools to navigate the various challenges that they will inevitably face in their lives. Developing social sensitivity not only enhances students' awareness but also empowers them to respond more effectively to pertinent social issues and community needs. Therefore, it is imperative that the pedagogical strategies employed by social studies educators are designed to stimulate and nurture students' awareness of the pressing issues surrounding them. Such social sensitivity can be cultivated through experiential learning opportunities and training that afford students individual experiences, enriching their understanding and fostering a more profound connection to their communities.

The educational experience of studying social studies should serve as a powerful catalyst for students, enabling them to unleash and cultivate their full range of potential and inherent abilities, which encompass not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of positive attitudes and practical skills that are essential for their growth and success in society. In reference to the insightful observations made by Jaromelik and Parker, as cited in the comprehensive work of Sapriya (2011), it becomes evident that the true measure of effective learning in social studies manifests itself when students find themselves outside the traditional classroom environment, engaging with the world around them. Consequently, it is imperative for educators specializing in social studies to adopt the crucial objective of equipping students with the necessary tools to investigate, comprehend, and effectively navigate the myriad of complex issues that arise within their immediate surroundings and beyond. To facilitate a profound understanding of their environment, social studies educators ought to strategically harness and leverage the diverse potential that exists within their communities, which includes, but is not limited to, the geographical, social, economic, and cultural resources that can serve as invaluable sources and mediums for enriching the learning experience. The various forms of media and resources available in their vicinity hold significant promise for fostering an inquiry-based approach to learning, which in turn cultivates critical thinking skills among students and empowers them to analyze and interpret information thoughtfully and independently.

The synergistic relationship between the classroom setting and the broader community creates numerous opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, allowing them to participate actively in real-world actions and initiatives that have a direct impact on their communities. Through their involvement in a wide array of socio-political activities, community-focused projects, and social initiatives such as volunteering, conducting community studies, participating in internships, or engaging in model programs, students can gain invaluable insights and hands-on experiences that

enrich their educational journey. It is essential for social studies teachers to tap into the wealth of educational potential that the surrounding environment offers, utilizing it as a vital source of learning and as a dynamic medium through which students can acquire the diverse skills necessary for their future endeavors. Nonetheless, it is concerning to note that a significant number of social studies educators have yet to fully capitalize on the abundant potential of their immediate environments in the context of educational instruction. As a result, the development of learning resources that are grounded in the potential of the surrounding environment has not reached its optimal level, indicating a pressing need for continuous encouragement directed towards social studies teachers to foster greater creativity and innovation in their approach to utilizing local resources as effective and meaningful tools for student learning and development.

Utilization of the Learning Environment and Its Obstacles

The outcomes derived from the comprehensive learning observations that were meticulously conducted and presented indicate a remarkable level of creativity, as well as an unwavering dedication, exhibited by social studies educators in their efforts to implement instructional methodologies that are strategically oriented towards harnessing the surrounding environment as a vital source of educational enrichment. In light of this, it is pertinent to highlight several significant findings that emerged from these insightful observations, which provide a deeper understanding of the innovative practices being utilized in the field of social studies education.

1. **Apperception and Learning Objectives:** At the commencement of each lesson, educators meticulously engage in the process of apperception, which entails assessing students' prior knowledge and experiences, while simultaneously articulating the specific learning objectives that will guide the lesson's trajectory. This deliberate approach serves to sharpen students' focus and enhances their comprehension of the overarching purpose behind the lesson, thereby fostering a more conducive learning environment where students are acutely aware of what they are expected to achieve during the instructional period.
2. **Field Trips and Field Observations:** In an effort to provide students with immersive educational experiences, teachers meticulously plan and organize field trips to various local sites, such as picturesque beaches and bustling markets, where students can directly observe and interact with their surrounding environment; these excursions also provide invaluable opportunities for students to engage in interviews with community members, which significantly enriches their learning experience. By stepping outside the traditional classroom setting, students gain a deeper understanding of the practical applications of their learning material, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world context.
3. **Utilization of the Environment as a Learning Resource:** Educators strategically leverage the surrounding community and environment as dynamic learning resources, thereby enabling students to engage in experiential learning that is grounded in real-life situations and direct experiences. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of the subject matter but also encourages them

to appreciate the relevance of their academic pursuits within the broader context of their community, ultimately fostering a sense of connection and responsibility towards their environment.

4. Various Learning Methods: To cater to the diverse needs of learners and the specific requirements inherent in the subject matter being taught, teachers employ a multifaceted array of instructional strategies, which may include assignments, field trips, and collaborative group discussions. This varied approach ensures that all students are provided with multiple avenues to engage with the content, thereby accommodating different learning styles and preferences while simultaneously promoting a comprehensive understanding of the material to be delivered.
5. Discussion and Presentation: In order to cultivate an interactive learning atmosphere, educators intentionally create opportunities for discussion that allow students to delve into the findings and insights they have gathered during their field experiences, while also guiding them in the process of presenting their discoveries to their peers in a classroom setting. This method not only aids in the development of students' democratic attitudes and mutual respect for their classmates but also significantly enhances their confidence in communication, thereby equipping them with essential skills that are valuable both academically and socially.

The meticulously crafted Lesson Plan (RPP) developed by educators not only exemplifies adherence to the stipulated Competency Standards (SK), Basic Competencies (KD), specific indicators, and the overarching learning objectives, but also serves as a comprehensive framework that ensures a structured approach to education. In this context, the RPP is seamlessly incorporated with an emphasis on utilizing the surrounding environment as a vital learning resource, thus fostering a more engaging and practical educational experience. Furthermore, educators possess the capability to tailor their instructional methods in alignment with the content of the subject matter being presented; for instance, they may employ diverse strategies such as field trips, interactive question and answer sessions, and in-depth discussions pertaining to various types of businesses that are integral to economic activities within the Indonesian context. Moreover, the RPP that is formulated by teachers is imbued with distinctive features that reflect the principles of character education, with a notable emphasis on nurturing a sense of environmental stewardship, thereby creating a harmonious synergy between a character-driven RPP and the effective utilization of the environment as an educational tool. This holistic approach not only enhances the learning experience but also instills in students a deep-seated appreciation for both their immediate surroundings and the broader societal context in which they operate. Ultimately, such an educational framework not only equips students with essential academic knowledge but also cultivates their personal values and social responsibilities, thus preparing them for active and conscientious participation in their communities.

Employing the surrounding environment as a valuable and enriching resource for the purpose of facilitating and enhancing the educational experience within the realm of social studies education encounters a multitude of challenges and complications, which

encompass a wide array of factors that can impede effective learning, including:

1. **Time Constraints:** Within the realm of elementary education, it becomes increasingly evident that the duration allocated for the instruction of social studies is frequently constrained to a significant degree, which subsequently poses substantial challenges for educators striving to implement enriching activities such as field trips that necessitate a considerable amount of additional time outside the conventional classroom setting. This limitation often results in a scenario where teachers find themselves unable to fully engage their students in experiential learning opportunities that extend beyond the confines of the standard curriculum, thereby hindering the overall educational experience.
2. **Cost and Effort:** The organization and execution of field trips inherently demand a substantial investment of both financial resources and human effort, encompassing various aspects such as transportation logistics and the meticulous management of the associated activities during the trip. These requirements can present formidable barriers for educators and educational institutions that operate under strict budgetary constraints, making it increasingly challenging to facilitate these valuable learning experiences for their students.
3. **Community Support:** The essential backing from the local community for educational initiatives that seek to leverage the surrounding environment as a vital learning resource is markedly insufficient at this time. In numerous instances, community members exhibit a sense of indifference or lack of engagement when students attempt to conduct meaningful activities, such as interviews or observational studies, within their immediate surroundings, which ultimately impedes the potential for a richer and more interactive learning experience.

Nonetheless, in order to effectively surmount and navigate through these various challenges and impediments that may arise, educators within the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) system have the opportunity to implement and adopt the following strategic measures and actionable steps designed to enhance their teaching practices and improve student outcomes:

1. **Visits Around the School:** It is imperative to organize educational excursions to various locations in close proximity to the school that have direct relevance to the curriculum being studied, such as local marketplaces or the serene shores of Pagatan beach, as these experiences provide an invaluable opportunity for students to engage with their learning material in a tangible way.
2. **This allows students to observe natural phenomena directly without having to travel far, thereby enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the subjects at hand through real-world experiences that are both enriching and accessible.**
- Discussions and Presentations:** It is essential to facilitate structured discussions and presentations that serve as a formal avenue for students to report on their findings derived from firsthand observations and interviews conducted during these excursions. This approach not only empowers students to articulate their experiences but also enriches the educational process, rendering learning significantly more meaningful and engaging.

3. **Formulating Conclusions:** It is crucial to grant students the autonomy to draw their own conclusions based on the discussions they have engaged in and the observations they have made during their explorations. This practice fosters critical thinking skills and encourages learners to cultivate their own interpretations and insights, which are vital components of a comprehensive education.
4. **Providing Motivation:** It is of utmost importance to inspire and motivate students to articulate their thoughts and perspectives regarding the environment that surrounds them, as this can significantly enhance their learning experience. This motivation can be effectively achieved through expressions of appreciation and support, which not only validate students' contributions but also encourage them to take an active role in their educational journey, thereby fostering a deeper connection to the material they are studying.

Efforts to Utilize the Environment as a Learning Resource

The role of teachers in developing the quality of learning is very important. To perform their role well, teachers must have adequate academic and professional abilities. Academic abilities include a deep understanding of social studies education materials, while professional abilities include skills in organizing learning using various methods and strategies. As stated by Suradisastra (1993:56), a teacher should be able to stimulate students' attention. In this case, the role of teachers in providing motivation is very important in creating a meaningful learning process. Teachers can give students the freedom to formulate conclusions from the results of discussions, which is one way of motivating students to be active in learning. In addition, teachers also motivate students to overcome obstacles or difficulties they face in expressing their ideas.

When conducting discussions, the role of the teacher as a facilitator and motivator is very important. This allows students to be more active in learning and contribute to the learning process. Through class discussions and presentations, students feel interested and brave enough to express their opinions and findings. However, there are still some students who face difficulties in conducting discussions properly. As mentioned by Moedjiono and Dimyati (1993), the group discussion method can increase student activity and interaction between teachers and students. With a good understanding of the purpose of discussion, a teacher can more easily manage teaching and learning activities and involve students in interactive processes in the classroom. Therefore, teachers must continue to improve their professional skills and understand their roles and responsibilities in creating effective and meaningful learning for students.

In the social studies learning process, teachers have the opportunity to utilize the surrounding environment as a potential learning resource. This environment is highly diverse, covering social, economic, cultural, and geographical aspects. The social environment, for example, includes patterns of community interaction, awareness of the importance of education, social mobility, as well as health and hygiene. The economic environment includes community livelihoods, tourism potential, local economic activities, and community enterprises. Meanwhile, the cultural environment includes customs, lifestyles, and religious or belief diversity. The geographical environment includes

landforms, weather, and geographical location. The selection of appropriate learning media and resources is very important so that the learning process can be well received by students.

Social studies teachers need to choose methods that are appropriate for the four dimensions of learning, namely knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and actions. In facing the challenges of globalization with rapid changes in science and technology and socio-cultural diversity, it is important for social studies teachers to develop social sensitivity and social participation in students. Social sensitivity is needed so that students can respond well to social and community issues. Students' past individual experiences can also help in developing this social sensitivity through the learning and training process. Thus, teachers need to develop learning strategies that encourage students to be sensitive to issues in their surrounding environment.

Learning social studies should empower students so that their potential and abilities in knowledge, attitudes, and skills can develop. According to Jaromelik and Parker in Sapriya (2011), the true test in social studies learning occurs when students are outside of school. Therefore, social studies teachers need to direct their teaching to prepare students to be able to find, understand, and deal with various problems in their environment. To understand their environment well, social studies teachers should use the potential that exists around them as a source of learning and learning media. The media available in the surrounding area, such as geographical, social, economic, and cultural potential, actually has great potential to help students in their inquiry approach and to train their critical thinking skills.

Artistic activities such as singing, music, and painting, which can be done in school, are unfortunately often not utilized in social studies learning, even though they have the potential to enrich students' experiences. Connecting the classroom with the community provides opportunities for students to learn through action in the community, such as through socio-political activities, community projects, or volunteer activities. Social studies teachers need to utilize the potential of the environment as a learning resource and medium in order to provide students with the various skills they need. However, many social studies teachers have not maximized the potential of their surroundings in learning, so that learning resources based on local potential have not been optimally developed.

Conceptual integrated learning is the development of learning that integrates, understands, analyzes, and evaluates social studies subjects. The learning program is compiled from various related fields of study such as history, geography, economics, and sociology. This is done by taking a topic or theme from a particular field of study, then expanding and deepening that topic by utilizing other fields of study. The topics or themes developed can be issues, events, or problems that are currently developing, such as floods, labor migration, developments in science and technology, social mobility, and so on.

Integrated learning models can be based on the main potential of a region, specific issues, or specific topics, but must take into account the relationship between the Basic Competencies in a subject cluster that has been mapped out. Unfortunately, topics or

themes are often determined based solely on teacher handbooks, so teachers' creativity in choosing topics must continue to be improved. In delivering the material, teachers sometimes get stuck with the guidebook as a reference.

The implementation of integrated learning has several benefits, including:

1. Time savings because related fields of study can be taught simultaneously.
2. Overlap in material can be minimized.
3. Students can see meaningful relationships between concepts in different fields of study.
4. It improves students' thinking skills because they are exposed to broader and deeper ideas or thoughts.
5. It presents real-world applications that can be seen in everyday life.

The application of integrated learning concepts can be one way to improve the effectiveness of social studies learning and provide a more meaningful learning experience for students.

D. CONCLUSION

Leveraging the surrounding environment as a valuable resource for education is undeniably advantageous in enhancing the overall learning experience for students. When learning resources are conveniently located within proximity to the students, it significantly facilitates their comprehension of the educational content being presented to them. Moreover, the surrounding environment can offer a comprehensive and genuine perspective on various subjects, as its inherent diversity necessitates a harmonious integration of the educational materials being taught. Nevertheless, this situation simultaneously poses a challenge to educators who must devise a plethora of innovative teaching methods that effectively incorporate the environment as an educational tool, particularly in the realm of social studies instruction. Establishing a connection between the classroom setting and the broader community environment opens up numerous avenues for students to cultivate essential skills that are crucial for active participation in their communities. This aligns perfectly with the overarching objectives of social studies education, which aim to foster critical thinking skills among students, making the teaching of social studies a notably complex endeavor.

Conversely, there exists a misconception among some individuals who believe that social studies can solely be imparted through the rote memorization or simple recall of factual information and material. If educational practitioners effectively harness these latent potentials within the framework of social studies instruction, it would undoubtedly become more manageable for students to recognize and grasp the various challenges present in their immediate surroundings, thereby motivating them to seek out viable solutions to these issues. This particular situation arises not only from a deficiency in teachers' capacities to identify and leverage the potential of the surrounding environment as an educational resource but also stems from a notable lack of creativity among educators when it comes to selecting and implementing diverse teaching methodologies.

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