

ISSA Activity Brief

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



What is “child-centered learning” in social studies lessons?

Recently, in Japanese school education, in order to move away from teacher-led, explanatory-style lessons and towards true “child-centered learning”, a form of lesson called “free-paced learning” is being introduced in a variety of subjects. Children learn by asking their own questions and choosing which of the questions they have come up with to explore in class. They also choose how to research their questions,

whether to use a tablet, or to form groups within the class and teach and learn from each other. The teacher focuses on supporting the children's learning by overseeing their learning activities and intervening when necessary.

The most typical example of this type of class is a mathematics class. Even at the elementary school level, there are big differences in mathematics ability between individuals, and when teachers try to give a lesson to the whole class, it can be difficult to decide which level of ability to focus on. In many cases, teachers adjust the content of their instruction to a level that is understandable to the majority of children in the middle group, but in that case, the class becomes easy and unchallenging for the children in the upper group, and difficult for the children in the lower group. By adopting a form of free-paced learning, it is thought that learning can be developed that is suited to each child's academic ability.

So, is “free-paced learning” the best way to achieve child-centered learning in social studies? Even if we

leave it up to the children to take the initiative, I think most social studies teachers would agree that learning is not just about doing drills that test individual knowledge of history and geography at your own pace. The exercise of children's autonomy in social studies learning needs to be carefully discussed in terms of the relevance of learning, including the concept of citizenship that social studies seeks to foster, the connection between the content learned in the classroom and social issues, the use of academic methods and concepts to analyze issues in greater depth, and the relationship between the environment and social conditions surrounding children and schools. I hope that researchers and teachers will engage in lively discussions on how to realize authentic learning that is characteristic of social studies.

In my inaugural address, I mentioned that, in order to deepen the collaboration between member societies, we would be creating more opportunities for member societies to be involved in ISSA activities.

As a first step, from this year's annual conference, we have decided that member societies will take turns in being in charge of planning. This year, the Indonesian Social Studies Association (APRIPSI) will be in charge of the planning. In the future, I hope that we will be able to continue to take up issues and important themes that need to be discussed in social studies education research in each country, promote exchanges between researchers from member societies, and exchange information on research methods and results, deepening mutual understanding.

President of ISSA
Kazuhiro Mizoguchi

2024 ISSA ANNUAL MEETING

“USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES”

- Date: December 7 (Sat.)
- Place: Online meeting
- Language: English
- Fee: free

ISSA will hold its annual meeting from **11 am – 1 pm (Indonesia)** and **1 pm – 3 pm (Japan and South Korea)** on December 7 (Sat.). The theme of the meeting is “Using Artificial Intelligence in Social Studies: Problems and Challenges.”

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in education. One technology that is increasingly being applied in the learning process is artificial intelligence (AI). AI has great potential to change the way we teach and learn, offering various opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process.

In social studies learning, the application of AI can have a significant impact. Social studies is a field of study that examines various social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of society. With the

help of AI, social studies learning can become more interactive, personalized, and data-driven, which in turn can improve students' understanding of the material taught.

However, the application of AI in social studies learning is not free from various problems and challenges. Some of the problems that often arise include the lack of adequate technological infrastructure, limited knowledge and skills of teachers in using AI technology, and resistance to change from various related parties. In addition, ethical and privacy issues are also important concerns in the implementation of AI in education.

This conference aims to discuss various problems and challenges faced in the application of AI in social studies learning. Through in-depth discussions, it is hoped that effective solutions and strategies can be found to overcome these obstacles, as well as maximize the potential of AI in supporting more innovative and effective social studies learning.

Looking forward to seeing you all at
the 2024 ISSA Annual Meeting!

In addition, 57 paper presentations were made in four theme-specific sessions online sessions. The next congress will be held on February 15, 2025, at Hyogo University of Teacher Education. We look forward to seeing you all there.

2. THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (JASS)

The 74th annual conference of JASS will be held under the theme of “How can social studies education address modern challenges and what can it do?” on November 30 and December 1, 2024, at the University of the Ryukyus. Details are posted on the official website below in Japanese. (http://socialstudies.jp/pdf/jass74_02_ver2.pdf)

3. THE JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (JERASS)

1) The 73rd Annual Conference

The 73rd Annual Conference was held at Kagoshima University on October 12-13, 2024. On October 12, free research presentations and a symposium were held, whereas on October 13, issue-based research, free research presentations, and projects were organized by the Research Committee and the International Committee.

The symposium titled

“Reconsidering the Relationship between Theory and Practice in Social Studies Education Research” re-examined the relationship between theory and practice surrounding social studies education and discussed the nature of the theory required. The following day, issue-based research related to the theme of the symposium was conducted by three subcommittees to deepen discussions on the relationship between theory and practice.

2) JERASS Research Committee Planning Project

“Opening the Black Box of Lesson Development II: Visualizing the Process of Developing Good Lessons”

This project, organized by the Research Committee, was conducted at the 73rd Annual Conference. This was held on March 23, 2024, and was the second in the series; the practitioners who provided the topics reported on the “process” of developing lessons.

3) JERASS International Committee

Planning Roundtable

“Jumping out from Japan to the World! Supporting the First Steps of Social Studies in Transmission, Exchange, and Collaboration.”

This roundtable, organized by the International Committee, took place at the 73rd Annual Conference. During this session, speakers who have presented at ISSA (International Social Studies Association) conferences, contributed to the Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia (JSSEA), and participated in other international conferences talked about their presentations, methods for writing, and the significance, and prospects for international research.

4. KOREAN SOCIAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (KSSA)

The Korean Social Studies Education Association (KSSEA) held its 2024 Annual Conference on August 24, 2024, at the Seoul National University of Education. With the theme “The Direction of Social Studies Education in the Era of Digital Transformation,” the conference focused on how

education can address the challenges posed by technological advancements, including AI, digitalization, and demographic shifts such as low birth rates and aging populations.

The conference opened with a keynote speech by Hyunku Cho, CEO of Classting, titled "AI and the Future of Education." In his speech, Cho emphasized how AI-driven transformation is reshaping the educational landscape, bringing both challenges and opportunities.

Following the keynote, the event was divided into seven thematic sessions, with over 30 research papers presented by scholars and educators. The sessions were organized around the following themes:

- 1.Citizenship and the Future Society
- 2.Teaching and Learning Methods in the Digital Era
- 3.Social Studies Teachers in the Digital Age
- 4.Classroom Instruction in the Digital Age
- 5.General Session
- 6.Special Education Curriculum for

Universal Personalized Learning (1)
7.Special Education Curriculum for Universal Personalized Learning (2)

Key presentations included:

- "The Disruption of Democracy by Neoliberalism and Alternative Civic Education" by Wonsun Jang from Gongju National University of Education
- "Developing Problem-Solving Lessons Using Generative AI" by Hongseop Hwang from Busan National University of Education
- "The Future of Convergent Education through the Integration of Drones and Cultural Heritage" by Bongseok Kim from Korea National University of Education

The discussions covered various topics, such as the impact of AI on civic education, innovative teaching strategies, the role of social studies teachers, and inclusive education for students with special needs. Scholars explored how technology can be used to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students, emphasizing the importance of preparing future citizens for the rapidly changing digital environment.

The conference concluded with reflections from the session chairs and closing remarks by Yongkyo Chung, the association's president. A networking dinner followed, providing participants an



opportunity to exchange ideas and strengthen professional connections.

This year's annual conference successfully provided a platform for educators and researchers to share insights and discuss practical strategies for advancing social studies education in the digital era. The KSSEA reaffirmed its commitment to fostering innovative, inclusive, and forward-looking education for future generations.

Also, as of September 1, 2024, Professor Bongseok Kim from Korea National University of Education has assumed the role of the 32nd president of the Korean Social Studies Education Association. He will serve a two-year term



leading the association. He serves as the director of the Comprehensive Teacher Training Center at Korea National University of Education.

5. THE KOREAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION (KASSE)

The Korean Association for the Social Studies Education (KASSE)'s academic activities are as follows:

1) 2024 KASSE Summer Conference

The Korean Association for the Social Studies Education (KASSE) held its Summer Academic Conference at Gyeongsang National University on August 3. The conference's theme, "Transforming School Landscapes and Social Studies Education II," continued the discourse initiated at the previous Annual Conference. Recognizing that the complex narrative of Korea's educational transformation in the post-COVID-19 era, including the 'Seoi incident', could not be thoroughly addressed in a single event, KASSE sought to extend the conversation. This conference

provided an opportunity to deepen both practical and theoretical discussions on citizenship education in the context of the emerging 'new normal.' For more information and conference resources, please visit the website below.

(<https://www.kasse.or.kr/bbs/reference/757>)

2) 2024 KASSE Future Events

2024 Autumn Academic Conference will be held on October 26th.

*We look forward to hearing from the **Indonesian Social Studies Association (APRIPSI)** next time!

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN ASIA (JSSEA)

The Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia (JSSEA) aims to connect with the international fields of social studies education in Asia.

The 13th issue of JSSEA presents an unprecedented volume. This special issue, themed "Teaching Difficult Topics in Social Studies

Classrooms,” includes seven papers from diverse countries, offering insights and strategies for addressing sensitive or complex topics with students. Additionally, it includes two conference papers reflecting themes from last year’s ISSA annual conference, precisely the question, “What topics or issues are being discussed in ISSA member associations?”

Notably, contributions from JASS and JERASS enrich this dialogue, providing perspectives on pressing educational themes within the region. Also featured is a compelling study on elementary geography education by Oya, which explores innovative approaches to early geography instruction. This volume could be a critical resource for educators navigating challenging subjects, fostering an international exchange of ideas that can enhance curriculum development and classroom practice.

The special issue of JSSEA 14 is titled “Teacher Education and Social Studies Education.” Despite the increasing global interest in teacher education in social studies, there is

limited information about teacher education in Asia. We warmly invite ISSA members to contribute to this topical issue. For more information about the special issue, please visit the ISSA website. (jerass.com/jssea/)

We look forward to receiving many submissions!

OUR MEMBERS’ NEW PUBLICATION (WRITTEN IN ENGLISH)

● Dr. Katsuhisa Shirai

Shirai, K. (2024). Archaeology and Hometown Education in Japan: The Efforts of Teachers in Non-governmental Educational Association in the 1950s, *History of Education Researcher*, 113,13-22.

[Abstract]

This research aims to clarify the connection between ‘archaeology and hometown education’ in Japan, focusing on hometown education by teachers of non-governmental educational associations in the 1950s. This

research clarifies the relationship between archaeology and school education based on the practice records ‘Archaeology and Hometown education’ written by teachers of the Hometown Education National Liaison Council (Kyodo Zenkyo), a non-governmental educational association in the 1950s and discusses its characteristics. It clarifies the following three points. First, the teachers in Kyodo Zenkyo promoted Social Studies classes and local club activities by positioning local fieldwork as archaeological site surveys. Second, through excavation surveys and archaeological research activities, teachers in Kyodo Zenkyo could consider contemporary problems in the region. Third, through teaching about local ruins and relics, teachers in Kyodo Zenkyo aimed to develop students’ ‘logical thinking abilities’ and inculcate an ‘attitude’ of cherishing the ruins and relics. Through the connection between fieldwork,

excavation, and lifestyle writing, elementary school children and junior high school hometown club students deepened their specific understanding of hometown history.

● **Drs. Jongsung Kim, Hiromi Kawaguchi, and Kazuhiro Kusahara**

Kim, J., Kawaguchi, H., & Kusahara, K. (2024). "No More Wars": Peace education in Japan, In J. C-K. Lee & K. Kennedy (Eds.). *The Routledge international handbook of life and values education in Asia* (pp. 353-360). Routledge.

[Abstract]

Peace education based on bitter repentance of totalitarianism and militarism has played a crucial role in promoting anti-war sentiment in Japan. Peace education that focuses on damages to ordinary people and the brutality of war, however, leads to blaming the nation-state and sympathizing with the blameless citizens. The image of a "bad state and innocent people"

creates ambiguity surrounding Japan's responsibility in war. Problematizing the tradition, the authors argue in this chapter the importance of student agency and communication in peace education. The purpose is to conceive and create peace with others instead of inheriting a given understanding of peace.

*** Do you want to share your research written in English with ISSA colleagues? Send necessary information (abstract, reference, URL, etc.) to your association's ISSA board member or jongsung@hiroshima-u.ac.jp directly.**
