

ISSA Activity Brief

Issue_13 April 2025

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



In Japan, discussions have begun on the revision of the next set of Course of Study guidelines. The current Course of Study is based on international definitions and indicators of academic ability, as set out in the OECD 2030 report, and aim to shift from a content-based to a competency-based approach. In all subjects from elementary school to high school, the qualities and abilities to be nurtured are organized around three pillars: “basic and fundamental knowledge and skills,” “ability to think, make

judgements, and express themselves,” and “dispositions to learn and humanity.” In social studies, the goals of the subject, the goals for each grade, and each field were also presented in line with the three pillars, clarifying the structure of the subject's goals.

On the other hand, there have been issues raised, such as the difficulty of imagining the learning activities that connect “knowledge and skills” with “thinking, judgment, expression,” as well as other issues, and foster them as a whole. In the curriculum standard reforms currently being carried out in some countries, there is a move to further improve the indicators of academic ability based on competencies, and to establish core concepts and strategies in the curriculum that link competencies to be nurtured with the content of the subjects, such as the Big Ideas in Canada and the Core Ideas in South Korea. In Japan, regarding these trends, proposals have been made to further structure the goals and content, envisaging learning that systematically links individual

knowledge and skills with the high-level, general concepts that encompass them, learning that enhances thinking, judgment and expression skills by making use of individual knowledge and skills, and learning that tackles complex problem-solving that makes use of not only individual knowledge and skills but also general concepts. It is necessary to pay close attention to how and to what extent this kind of structuring can contribute to the development of citizenship, which is the goal of social studies.

On December 7th last year, the 2024 ISSA Annual Conference was held online. From this year, the theme and planning of the Annual Conference will be rotated among the home countries of the ISSA member societies, and the first Annual Conference was held under the theme of “Using Artificial Intelligence in Social Studies: Problems and Challenges.” at the proposal of the Indonesian Social Studies Association (APRIPSI). I would like to thank the APRIPS members who worked to organize the conference, as well as the

members of the member societies from Korea, Japan, and Indonesia who gave presentations and participated in the designated discussions. This year, we are planning to propose a joint project with the Korean Social Studies Association and the Korean Association for the Social Studies Education.

In addition, the ISSA Board of Directors is currently in the process of consulting with member societies in order to review the financial basis for the sustainable management of various activities, including the annual conference and the publication of JESSA. We will keep members of each member society informed of the progress of these discussions.

President of ISSA
Kazuhiro Mizoguchi

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM OUR MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

1. THE SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (ESSDRA)

Report

1) 2024 ESSDRA Annual Conference

The 36th annual ESSDRA congress was held under the theme: “Questioning the Qualities and Abilities Fostered Through Social Studies Education” at Hyogo University of Teacher Education on February 15, 2025. Much discussion has focused on the qualities and abilities we aim to cultivate in students in social studies education research. Recently, concepts such as agency and social-emotional skills have gained attention as essential goals. However, from the perspectives of educators and researchers, have we sometimes placed excessive expectations on emerging trends under the banner of reform? Have we prioritized content and methods that teachers wish to implement rather than focusing on the actual qualities and abilities nurtured in students? Have research findings been selectively

framed to fit convenient narratives? These issues likely stem from a lack of careful consideration about whether the qualities and abilities being taught are truly necessary for the students before us—and why they are important. This symposium aimed to re-examine and discuss the qualities and abilities that can be fostered through social studies education by exploring the following questions: What qualities and abilities can social studies effectively develop? How have lessons been designed and tested to cultivate these qualities and abilities? What results and challenges have emerged? What qualities and abilities should social studies focus on in the future? Speakers addressed these questions, and through discussions with participants, we explored practical ways to foster meaningful learning in social studies. We also held a research project as well as a symposium on that day. In addition, paper presentations by the members of the ESSDRA were conducted online until March 14.

Upcoming Event

2) 2025 ESSDRA Annual Conference

The next annual conference will also take place at Hyogo University of Teacher Education. We encourage you to join us, and please contact us if you have any questions.

2. THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (JASS)

Report

1) 2024 JASS Annual Conference

On November 30 and December 1, 2024, the 74th annual academic conference was held by the University of the Ryukyus. Its theme was "How can social studies education address modern challenges and what can it do?" More than 100 presenters presented for the free research presentations. More than 20 sessions were held. Many participants gathered, and such active discussions were held at each session.

Report

2) 2024 JASS Diversity Committee "Diversity Square" 3rd meeting

On February 22, 2025, the Diversity Committee held "Diversity Square's" third meeting of 2024 in Tokyo and online via Zoom. The symposium was held on "Gender and Diversity in Social Studies." The speakers were Ms. Megumi Tanaka (ST. Viator Rakusei Junior and Senior High School), Ms. Nobuko Masuno (Showa Women's University), and Mr. Koju Kamada (Tokoha University).

Report

3) 2024 JASS Research Promotion Committee Lecture

On March 16, 2025, the Research Promotion Committee held an online Zoom lecture by Kazuyo Hanai (The University of Tokyo) entitled "Understanding International Issues through Connections - The Congo's Conflict Minerals Issue and Us."

Upcoming Event

4) 2025 JASS Annual Conference

The 75th Annual Academic Conference will be held at Ibaraki University from November 15 to 16, 2025. The first announcement will be posted on the official website in May.

(<http://socialstudies.jp/ja/index.html>)

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

Report

1) 2024 JERASS 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 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 from the perspective of creating better social studies education, and there was a lively discussion about the theory and practice required today. This was further deepened in three subcommittees that discussed the collaboration between practitioners and researchers, the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education, and theory and practice in social studies education history research.

A book-talk café and lunch meeting for young researchers were also held, where the participants deepened their exchanges with each other. This Annual Conference was a fruitful event, with approximately 340 participants.

Report

2) 2024 JERASS Research Committee Project: “Opening the Black Box of Lesson

Development II: Visualizing the Process of Developing Good Lessons”

This project was organized by the Research Committee at the 73rd Annual Conference. In this project, presenters who provided topics reported on the “process” of developing lessons. The difficulties and stumbling blocks in lesson development, as well as methods for overcoming challenges, among others, that were disclosed by the presenters were shared with the participants, and active discussions were held on “Developing Good Lessons” for the future.

Report

3) 2024 JERASS International Committee Roundtable: “Jumping out from Japan to the World! Supporting the First Steps of Social Studies in Transmission, Exchange, and Collaboration.”

The International Committee organized this roundtable at the 73rd Annual Conference. At this roundtable, those who had presented at international

conferences such as the International Social Studies Association and written papers for international academic journals such as the Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia talked about methods of presentation and writing papers, the significance of conducting international research, future prospects, as well as other methods, leading to a lively discussion about what kind of research transmission and exchange will be required in the future.

Upcoming Event

4) The 12th JERASS-KASSE Academic Exchange Conference

The 12th JERASS-KASSE Academic Exchange Conference will be held on Jeju Island, Korea, in August 2025. This time, under the theme of “East Asia and Democratic Education: Thinking at the Intersection of the State and the Region,” social studies education researchers from Japan and South Korea will gather to discuss democracy. We look forward to the

active participation of all members of JERASS and KASSE.

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

Report

1) 2024 KASSE International Virtual Academic Exchange

KASSE hosted an international academic conference on the theme of History Education for Justice on November 15, featuring Professor Christopher Martel from the University of Massachusetts Boston as the invited speaker. In his keynote address, Professor Martel advocated for an activist-oriented approach to history education—one grounded in critical consciousness and an understanding that historical narratives have traditionally been constructed by, and centered on, dominant groups and victors. His approach resonated deeply within the Korean context, where grassroots activism and various social movements have historically driven social

transformation. The conference offered a meaningful opportunity for Korean educators to engage in critical dialogue about reimagining history education as a tool for justice, equity, and democratic participation. It also served as a valuable space for exchange and collaboration among Korean teachers committed to more inclusive and justice-oriented pedagogies.

Report

2) 2025 KASSE Annual Conference

KASSE's annual conference was held at Korea National University of Education on January 11, under the theme "Democracy, Democratic Citizenship, and Social Studies Education.". This conference served as a critical forum for reexamining the role of democracy and social studies education amid South Korea's current political turbulence and the broader global phenomenon of a "crisis of democracy." The event brought together scholars, educators, and practitioners to engage in

interdisciplinary dialogue on how social studies education can respond to democratic backsliding, foster critical citizenship, and promote democratic values in schools and society. Through keynote lectures, panel discussions, and case study presentations, the conference highlighted both the challenges and possibilities of democratic education in times of political uncertainty. A key outcome was reaffirming the importance of critical and participatory civic education to empower students to engage with complex political realities. Participants also called for strengthened collaboration between academic communities and frontline educators to support more contextually grounded and transformative approaches to social studies education.

Upcoming Event

3) 2025 KASS Spring Academic Conference

The 2025 KASS Spring Academic Conference will be held on June 21. This international academic exchange will bring together social

studies educators from Korea and the United States to explore the theme, “How Do Korean and American Teachers Teach Difficult History?” This conference aims to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and pedagogical reflection on the challenges and possibilities of teaching contested and painful historical narratives in diverse educational contexts.

Upcoming Event

4) 2025 KASSE Summer Academic Conference

The 2025 KASSE Summer Academic Conference will be held on August 23. As an extension of the Annual Conference, the Summer Conference aims to serve as a platform for critically re-examining the meaning of democracy and democratic citizenship. Held under the theme “Democracy and Social Studies Education,” the conference seeks to deepen educational discourse by fostering dialogue on the role of social studies education in cultivating democratic values, practices, and civic engagement.

Upcoming Event

5) 2025 KASSE International Academic Exchange with JERASS

The 2025 KASSE International Academic Exchange with JERASS will be held on August 24. The conference will be held at Jeju National University under the theme “East Asia and Democracy Education: At the Intersection of Nation and Region.” Situated within the historical and memorial landscape of Jeju Island, the conference offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the possibilities of democracy education in East Asia beyond the confines of the nation-state. By engaging with Jeju’s complex history and collective memory, participants will critically examine the regional dimensions of democratic practice and education. A field trip to significant historical sites on Jeju Island is also planned in conjunction with the conference, providing participants with a deeper contextual understanding of the island’s role in shaping democratic discourse in the region.

Upcoming Event

6) 2025 KASSE International Virtual Academic Exchange

The 2025 KASSE International Virtual Academic Exchange will be held on November 16. The upcoming online international academic exchange will feature a keynote lecture by Professor Margaret Crocco on the theme of “Social Studies Education and Gender.” In light of the growing importance of education on gender and sexuality, this exchange seeks to engage critically with Professor Crocco’s extensive body of work on gender, feminism, and social studies education. As part of this initiative, participants will read and discuss selected papers and books by Professor Crocco throughout the year, forming a study group to explore how social studies education can lead in advancing gender-responsive pedagogy. The year-long study will culminate in an international academic conference where the findings and insights gained will be shared and further developed through scholarly dialogue.

For more information and conference resources, please visit the website below. (<https://www.kasse.or.kr/bbs/reference/757>)

*We look forward to hearing from the **Korean Social Studies Association (KSSA)** and **Indonesian Social Studies Association (APRISI)** next time!

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN ASIA (JSSEA)

The Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia (JSSEA) is pleased to share updates on its upcoming issues.

JSSEA Volume 14 is currently in editing. This issue features a Special Issue on “Teacher Education and Social Studies”, edited by Dr. Hiromi Kawaguchi and Dr. Hiroaki Sakaue. The volume is shaping into a highly topical and insightful collection, addressing key issues in teacher education and its connection to social studies. Additionally, Volume 14 is compiling conference papers

based on discussions from the 2024 ISSA Annual Meeting, where scholars examined “Using Artificial Intelligence in Social Studies: Problems and Challenges.” These contributions highlight the potential and limitations of AI in social studies education, offering diverse perspectives from different educational contexts. Beyond these, independent articles and book reviews are also being prepared, making Volume 14 a well-rounded and timely contribution to the field.

As we finalize Volume 14, we are also excited to announce the theme for JSSEA Volume 15, which will focus on “Promoting Well-being in Social Studies Education.”

The concept of well-being has gained increasing attention in global education policy, as seen in SDG #3 (Good Health and Well-being) and the OECD Education 2030 framework, emphasizing the need for education to support students’ holistic development. Traditionally, education has been viewed through human capital theory, focusing on preparing students for economic productivity.

However, there is a growing recognition that education should also equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to live well and contribute to a sustainable and inclusive society. Social studies education could play a key role in this shift. It fosters critical thinking and civic engagement necessary for students to understand contemporary global issues and take action toward building a just and sustainable world.

Proposal Submission Deadline: August 31, 2025

We look forward to your contributions and continued engagement with JSSEA. For further details, please visit the JSSEA website: <http://jerass.com/jssea/>
