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Innovations in Social Studies Learning Based on Deep Learning in Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills

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Abstract

This article aims to examine innovations in Social Studies learning based on deep learning in developing students' critical thinking skills. This study employs a library research method by collecting and analyzing various relevant scientific sources, including journal articles, books, and educational policy documents. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to identify key themes related to the concept of deep learning, the characteristics of Social Studies learning, and its role in fostering critical thinking. The findings indicate that the deep learning approach emphasizes meaningful learning, active student engagement, and reflection on learning experiences, which aligns with the contextual and socially grounded nature of Social Studies education. The integration of deep learning in Social Studies can be implemented through instructional models such as project-based learning and inquiry learning, which promote analysis, exploration, and problem-solving of social issues. This approach has been shown to contribute to the enhancement of critical thinking skills through strengthening conceptual understanding, information analysis, and reflective processes. However, its implementation still faces several challenges, including limited teachers' digital literacy, pedagogical readiness, technological infrastructure, and a learning culture that remains oriented toward rote memorization. Therefore, comprehensive support from multiple aspects is required to optimize the implementation of deep learning in Social Studies learning in the digital era.

Keyword: Critical Thinking, Deep Learning; Learning Innovation; Social Studies Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital era has brought significant changes in the field of education, including in Social Studies learning. Digital transformation requires Social Studies education not only to deliver factual knowledge but also to develop students' analytical, reflective, and contextual understanding of increasingly complex social realities. Jayatri et al. (2025) state that "the implementation of Deep Learning in Social Studies (IPS) learning faces structural, technical, and cultural challenges, including limited digital infrastructure, low AI literacy among teachers, as well as privacy risks and algorithmic bias that affect learning effectiveness." This condition indicates that Social Studies learning in the digital era requires innovative approaches that are not only adaptive to technological advancements but also capable of addressing emerging pedagogical challenges.

On the other hand, these changes also create opportunities to renew Social Studies teaching practices to better align with students' needs. Jayatri et al. (2025) emphasize that "despite significant barriers, the integration of Deep Learning offers opportunities for personalized learning, the strengthening of 21st-century skills, and innovation in adaptive learning methods." This opportunity is particularly important in Social Studies learning, which demands the development of critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills through a deep understanding of social phenomena. Therefore, learning approaches are needed that can facilitate active student engagement, encourage deep conceptual understanding, and connect learning with real-life contexts.

In line with these demands, the *deep learning* approach has emerged as a relevant instructional innovation in the field of education. According to Sari & Arta (2025), *deep learning* in a pedagogical context can serve as an alternative learning approach as it emphasizes meaningful learning, active student engagement, and reflection on learning experiences. Through this approach, students are positioned as active subjects in the learning process, enabling them to develop a deeper conceptual understanding.

In a more specific context of Social Studies learning, Mardatillah et al. (2025) explain that project-based Social Studies learning provides opportunities for students to comprehensively understand social phenomena while instilling values reflected in the *Pancasila Student Profile*, such as global diversity, mutual cooperation, and environmental awareness. These findings indicate that the characteristics of Social Studies learning are aligned with the principles of *deep learning*, particularly in supporting the development of students' critical thinking skills and social competencies. Furthermore, the *deep learning* approach in education is not solely understood as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, but also as a pedagogical approach that

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emphasizes meaningful, reflective, and student-centered learning. In this approach, students act as active agents who not only receive information but also process, reflect upon, and connect knowledge with their learning experiences. Thus, *deep learning* fosters the development of deeper conceptual understanding, enabling students to construct meaning and continuously develop higher-order thinking skills.

In line with this perspective, Sari & Arta (2025) emphasize that "*deep learning* in education does not only refer to algorithmic AI technology, but also to a pedagogical approach that emphasizes meaningful, reflective, and student-centered learning." This understanding broadens the scope of *deep learning* as an instructional approach that can be applied across disciplines, including in Social Studies education. In the context of Social Studies, the *deep learning* approach is relevant because it encourages students to comprehensively understand social phenomena, develop analytical skills, and reflect on social realities through contextual and meaningful learning processes.

Mardatillah et al. (2025) explain that the *deep learning* approach can foster adaptive learning, in which Social Studies materials are tailored to students' needs and characteristics, making the learning process more personalized. This indicates that the *deep learning* approach strongly aligns with the characteristics of Social Studies learning, which emphasize flexibility, contextuality, and meaningfulness in the learning process. Adaptive learning enables students to actively engage according to their individual backgrounds, interests, and abilities, thereby preventing a uniform learning experience. In this context, *deep learning*-based Social Studies learning is considered capable of increasing student engagement while providing broader opportunities for the development of critical thinking skills through contextual and collaborative learning activities.

However, various studies indicate that the implementation of *deep learning*-based instruction still faces several challenges. Sari & Arta (2025) argue that its implementation is influenced by a number of constraints, such as limited teachers' digital literacy, uneven infrastructure, and the need for supportive training and policies. These conditions suggest that the success of instructional innovation depends not only on the concepts or approaches employed, but also on the readiness of human resources and the supporting educational system. Although numerous studies have examined the concept of *deep learning* in education and its potential application in Social Studies learning, most have focused on technological aspects or general implementation. Consequently, studies that specifically link the *deep learning* approach with the development of critical thinking skills in Social Studies remain relatively limited. This indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation, particularly in understanding how

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the principles of *deep learning* can contribute to strengthening students' critical thinking skills within the context of Social Studies learning.

Based on these conditions, a comprehensive literature review is needed to analyze innovations in *deep learning*-based Social Studies learning in developing students' critical thinking skills. Through a literature study, this article aims to examine the concept of *deep learning*, the characteristics of Social Studies learning, and their relevance to the development of students' critical thinking skills based on findings from previous research. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution in clarifying the relationship between the *deep learning* approach and Social Studies learning, as well as to serve as a foundation for developing more contextual, adaptive, and critically oriented instructional innovations in the digital education era.

METHOD

This study employs a literature review method (*library research*). Library research is a systematic research activity conducted by collecting, organizing, and analyzing various sources of literature such as books, journal articles, and scientific documents to address research problems (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022; Danandjaja, 2014; Fitria, 2023; R. K. Sari, 2021; T. & Purwoko, 2017). This method was chosen to systematically examine various scientific sources relevant to innovations in *deep learning*-based Social Studies instruction in developing students' critical thinking skills. The data were obtained from national and international journal articles, books, and educational policy documents published in recent years that are directly related to the concept of *deep learning*, Social Studies learning, and the development of critical thinking skills. The data analysis process was conducted using content analysis techniques, involving the identification, categorization, and interpretation of key themes emerging from the reviewed literature. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to obtain a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the potential, characteristics, and challenges of implementing *deep learning*-based Social Studies instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of Deep Learning in Education

The concept of *deep learning* in education refers to an instructional approach that emphasizes deep conceptual understanding, active student engagement, and the ability to connect knowledge with various real-life contexts. This approach not only focuses on cognitive mastery of content but also on the development of competencies that enable students to think

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critically, creatively, and reflectively in addressing real-world problems. Fullan et al. (2017) explain that *deep learning* is a learning process oriented toward the development of six global competencies, namely character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. These six competencies serve as a crucial foundation in shaping students who not only possess academic abilities but are also capable of actively participating in social life and responding to increasingly complex global challenges.

In pedagogical studies, the concept of *deep learning* is often contrasted with *surface learning*. The *deep learning* approach is characterized by students' efforts to understand the meaning of learning materials in depth, connect various concepts, and integrate new knowledge with their prior understanding. In contrast, *surface learning* emphasizes memorization of information without deep conceptual understanding. Research on students' learning approaches indicates that *deep learning* involves active learning strategies such as conceptual analysis, identifying relationships between ideas, and reflecting on the learning process, whereas *surface learning* tends to rely on reproductive strategies focused on repeating information to meet academic task requirements (Hua et al., 2023). This distinction highlights that the quality of learning is strongly influenced by the learning approaches adopted by students.

The *deep learning* approach is closely related to the principle of meaningful learning. Meaningful learning occurs when students are able to connect new knowledge with their prior knowledge or experiences, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding. In this context, the learning process is not merely about receiving information from the teacher, but involves activities such as exploration, discussion, reflection, and problem-solving that enable students to construct meaning from their learning experiences. Thus, meaningful learning can encourage students to understand concepts more deeply while also enhancing higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Hasanah et al., 2025; Nafi'ah & Faruq, 2025).

The characteristics of deep learning are generally marked by several key aspects, including active student engagement in the learning process, the use of learning activities that require critical thinking, and the connection between learning materials and real-life contexts (Iriawan et al., 2025). In this approach, students are not positioned as passive recipients of information, but as active participants who construct knowledge through exploration, discussion, and inquiry. Learning activities are designed to stimulate higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, enabling students to understand concepts more comprehensively. Furthermore, the relevance of learning materials to real-life situations allows students to see the practical value of knowledge, making learning more meaningful and

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applicable in their daily lives.

Deep learning also encourages students to reflect on their learning experiences and to develop the ability to integrate various concepts across disciplines. Reflection plays a crucial role in helping students evaluate their understanding, identify gaps in their knowledge, and improve their learning strategies. In practice, this approach is often implemented through collaborative, contextual, and problem-based learning strategies that promote interaction, communication, and shared knowledge construction among students. Through these processes, students are not only able to deepen their conceptual understanding but also to develop essential 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Therefore, deep learning is considered a relevant instructional approach for enhancing the quality of learning and preparing students to face complex challenges in the modern era.

Table: Core Summary of Deep Learning in Education

Aspect	Key Points	Explanation
Concept & Purpose	Deep understanding and competency development	Emphasizes meaningful learning, connecting knowledge with real-life contexts, and developing global competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.
Learning Approach	Deep vs surface learning	Deep learning focuses on conceptual understanding, analysis, and reflection, while surface learning relies on memorization without deep comprehension.
Key Characteristics	Active and meaningful learning	Involves student engagement, higher-order thinking (analysis, evaluation, synthesis), and contextual learning related to real-life situations.
Implementation & Outcomes	Collaborative and reflective learning	Applied through problem-based and collaborative strategies, encouraging reflection and resulting in 21st-century skills development.

2. Characteristics of Social Studies Learning in Developing Critical Thinking

Social Studies learning has distinctive characteristics as it focuses on the study of human life in society. Social Studies is an integration of various social science disciplines such as history,

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geography, economics, sociology, and political science, simplified for educational purposes. The primary objective of Social Studies learning is to help students understand various social phenomena and to foster critical thinking skills in addressing societal issues. According to Salamah et al. (2023), Social Studies learning not only emphasizes mastery of content but also develops thinking abilities, attitudes, and social skills needed by students as members of society.

One of the main characteristics of Social Studies learning is its direct connection to social phenomena occurring within society. Social Studies materials often relate to real-world issues such as social interaction, social change, economic activities, and the dynamics of community life. Therefore, Social Studies learning encourages students to understand social realities through processes of analysis, interpretation, and reflection on various social events around them. Through this process, students can develop critical thinking skills in evaluating information and social phenomena objectively and rationally (Dewantara & Nasution, 2024; Syafruddin et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Social Studies learning emphasizes a contextual approach that connects instructional content with students' real-life experiences. This approach enables students to understand social concepts through direct experiences and situations relevant to their lives. Salamah et al. (2023) explain that contextual learning promotes active student engagement in the learning process and links knowledge acquired in school with real-life social conditions. Thus, learning is not merely theoretical but also provides more meaningful understanding for students.

Another characteristic of Social Studies learning is its emphasis on the analysis of social problems. In the learning process, students are encouraged to identify social issues, analyze their causes, and propose logical and rational solutions. This process is highly relevant to the development of critical thinking skills, as students are trained to ask questions, gather information, evaluate evidence, and draw conclusions based on available data. Therefore, Social Studies learning has significant potential for implementing a *deep learning* approach, as both emphasize conceptual understanding, problem analysis, and reflection on social realities.

In line with this, Burgos-Videla et al. (2025) explain that social science education plays an important role in shaping students who are critical, reflective, and capable of understanding various social realities in depth. Social Studies learning can no longer rely solely on rote memorization methods, but must be developed through approaches that encourage critical analysis of information sources, interpretation of multiple historical perspectives, and understanding of the social, political, and cultural contexts underlying events. Thus, Social Studies learning possesses characteristics that are highly aligned with the principles of *deep*

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learning, as both emphasize conceptual understanding, analysis of social phenomena, and the development of students' critical thinking skills.

Table: Characteristics of Social Studies Learning in Developing Critical Thinking

Aspect	Key Points	Explanation
Nature & Purpose	Integrated social sciences and critical thinking development	Social Studies combines disciplines (history, geography, economics, sociology, political science) to help students understand social phenomena and develop critical thinking, attitudes, and social skills.
Connection to Social Reality	Real-world social phenomena	Learning is closely linked to real-life issues such as social interaction, change, and economic activities, encouraging analysis, interpretation, and reflection.
Contextual Learning Approach	Learning based on real-life experiences	Connects instructional content with students' daily lives, promoting active engagement and meaningful understanding beyond theoretical knowledge.
Problem Analysis & Critical Thinking	Analysis of social issues and solution-building	Students identify problems, evaluate evidence, and propose logical solutions, fostering critical, reflective, and analytical thinking aligned with deep learning principles.

3. Integration of Deep Learning in Social Studies Learning

The integration of the *deep learning* approach in Social Studies (IPS) learning can be carried out through the implementation of instructional models that emphasize active student engagement in the process of discovering and constructing knowledge. In modern learning, students are no longer positioned as passive recipients of information, but as individuals who actively construct understanding through learning experiences. One instructional model that supports this approach is *project-based learning*, which enables students to learn social concepts through project activities related to real-world problems in society. Research conducted by Rahman & Maulana (2024) shows that the implementation of *project-based learning* in Social Studies can increase student engagement and help them understand the material more deeply

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through exploration and social problem-solving processes.

In addition to project-based learning, the *inquiry learning* model is also a relevant approach for integrating *deep learning* into Social Studies instruction. This model encourages students to investigate social phenomena through processes of questioning, seeking information, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions independently. Through this process, students not only acquire knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills in understanding various social issues. Research by Salamah et al. (2023) indicates that the implementation of the *inquiry learning* model in Social Studies can enhance students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes, as they are actively involved in the investigation and analysis of social problems.

From a *deep learning* perspective, Social Studies instructional strategies need to be designed to encourage students to analyze various social phenomena more deeply. Learning activities such as critical discussions, analysis of historical or social documents, case studies, and simulations of social problem-solving can help students understand the relationships between social concepts and real-life conditions in society. This approach is aligned with the view of Burgos-Videla et al. (2025), who argue that learning that promotes critical historical and social analysis can strengthen students' ability to evaluate information, construct arguments, and understand the complexity of social phenomena more comprehensively.

Furthermore, the integration of *deep learning* in Social Studies learning also requires learning activities that enable students to reflect on their learning processes. This reflection is essential for helping students connect acquired knowledge with their experiences and the social contexts they encounter. In learning environments that promote *deep learning*, students do not merely memorize facts or concepts, but also understand the meaning behind the information and are able to apply it in real-life situations. Research on *deep learning* approaches in modern learning environments also indicates that active student engagement in processes of exploration, reflection, and analysis can enhance learning satisfaction and the quality of their understanding of the material (Hua et al., 2023).

Table: Integration of Deep Learning in Social Studies Learning

Aspect	Key Points	Explanation
Student-Centered Learning	Active knowledge construction	Deep learning integration positions students as active learners who construct understanding through experiences, not passive recipients of information.
Instructional	Project-based and	Project-based learning connects concepts with

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Models	inquiry learning	real-world problems, while inquiry learning develops critical thinking through investigation, analysis, and conclusion-making.
Learning Activities	Critical and analytical engagement	Activities such as discussions, case studies, document analysis, and simulations encourage deeper analysis of social phenomena and concept relationships.
Reflection & Learning Outcomes	Meaningful understanding and application	Reflection helps students connect knowledge with real-life contexts, improving critical thinking, learning satisfaction, and depth of understanding.

4. The Role of Deep Learning in Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The *deep learning* approach plays an important role in developing students' critical thinking skills, as it emphasizes learning processes oriented toward deep conceptual understanding. In this approach, students are not only required to memorize information but also to understand relationships between concepts, connect knowledge with learning experiences, and apply these concepts in various situations. Learning approaches that emphasize deep understanding enable students to build stronger knowledge structures, allowing them to interpret information more comprehensively. Research shows that *deep learning* in education encourages students to develop better conceptual understanding through processes of exploration, reflection, and active engagement in learning (Kintoko & Siswanto, 2025).

Deep conceptual understanding serves as the primary foundation for developing information analysis skills. When students understand concepts comprehensively, they not only know facts or definitions but are also able to explain relationships between concepts and understand their implications in various contexts. The *deep learning* approach encourages students to explore learning materials more thoroughly through activities such as discussion, inquiry, and problem-solving. Through these processes, students are trained to interpret data, identify cause-and-effect relationships, and evaluate various pieces of information obtained during the learning process. Thus, learning not only produces declarative knowledge but also fosters stronger analytical skills (Alim et al., 2025).

In addition to enhancing conceptual understanding, the *deep learning* approach also encourages students to critically analyze various forms of information. Learning processes that emphasize concept exploration, reflection, and the connection between learning materials and

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real-life contexts enable students to develop the ability to assess the validity of information, compare different perspectives, and construct logical arguments. In this context, students do not passively receive information but are actively engaged in interpreting and evaluating various sources of information. Research indicates that learning approaches emphasizing deep information processing can improve students' analytical and synthesis skills, enabling them to better understand complex problems (Kintoko & Siswanto, 2025).

Furthermore, *deep learning*-based instructional activities such as *project-based learning* and *inquiry learning* provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills through authentic learning experiences. In project-based learning, students are involved in investigating real-world problems that require data collection, information analysis, and the formulation of rational solutions. This process allows students to practice higher-order thinking skills such as problem analysis, evidence evaluation, and drawing conclusions based on available data. Several studies show that the integration of *deep learning* approaches in project-based learning can enhance critical thinking skills, as students are actively engaged in processes of inquiry, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving (Taufik et al., 2025).

The development of critical thinking skills in the *deep learning* approach is also supported by reflection and metacognitive processes that occur during learning. Reflection enables students to evaluate their thinking processes, identify strengths and weaknesses in their understanding, and improve the learning strategies they use. This metacognitive process is crucial because it helps students become aware of how they acquire knowledge and how they can use that knowledge to solve more complex problems. Through continuous reflection, students not only achieve deeper conceptual understanding but also develop the ability to think systematically and rationally (Nhat & Le, 2023; Rivas et al., 2022).

Thus, it can be concluded that the *deep learning* approach makes a significant contribution to the development of students' critical thinking skills. Through learning processes that emphasize conceptual understanding, information analysis, and reflection on learning experiences, students are trained to think more deeply and systematically. The relationship between conceptual understanding, analytical ability, and information evaluation indicates that *deep learning* can serve as an effective approach in supporting the development of critical thinking skills. Therefore, the integration of *deep learning* principles in instruction, particularly in Social Studies learning, represents a relevant strategy for improving the quality of education while preparing students to face social and intellectual challenges in the 21st century (Anggrayni et al., 2025; Yuniar et al., 2025).

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Table: The Role of Deep Learning in Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills

Aspect	Key Points	Explanation
Conceptual Understanding	Foundation of critical thinking	Deep learning emphasizes deep conceptual understanding, enabling students to connect concepts, interpret information, and apply knowledge in various contexts.
Analytical Skills Development	Information analysis and reasoning	Students develop the ability to analyze data, identify relationships, evaluate evidence, and solve problems through exploration, discussion, and inquiry.
Critical Evaluation	Interpretation and argument construction	Encourages students to assess information validity, compare perspectives, and construct logical arguments through active engagement with learning materials.
Reflection & Metacognition	Self-awareness and thinking improvement	Reflection and metacognitive processes help students evaluate their thinking, improve learning strategies, and develop systematic and rational thinking skills.

5. Challenges in Implementing Deep Learning in Social Studies Learning

Although the *deep learning* approach has great potential to improve the quality of Social Studies (IPS) learning and to develop students' critical thinking skills, its implementation in educational settings still faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the limited digital literacy of teachers in utilizing technology and innovative learning strategies. In the context of digital education, teachers are required not only to understand the concept of *deep learning*, but also to be able to use various technological tools that support the learning process. However, several studies indicate that many educators still face difficulties in effectively integrating digital technology into their teaching practices, resulting in suboptimal implementation of the *deep learning* approach (Kintoko & Siswanto, 2025).

In addition to digital literacy, teachers' pedagogical readiness is also a crucial factor in the successful implementation of *deep learning*. This approach requires a shift in the learning paradigm from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. Teachers are no longer merely transmitters of information, but also facilitators who guide students in the processes of knowledge exploration, critical discussion, and problem-solving. However, in

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practice, many teachers are still accustomed to using conventional teaching methods such as lectures and reproductive assignments. This condition leads to a predominantly one-way learning process and provides limited opportunities for students to develop deep conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills (Haroud & Saqri, 2025).

Another challenge that often arises in the implementation of *deep learning* is the limitation of technological infrastructure in various educational institutions. The application of technology-based learning requires adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as stable internet access, digital devices, and learning platforms that support interactive learning activities. However, in many educational contexts, especially in certain regions, the availability of such infrastructure remains uneven. This inequality in access to technology can hinder the integration of learning innovations, including the implementation of *deep learning* in Social Studies. Therefore, educational policy support and investment in the development of digital infrastructure are important factors in supporting the successful implementation of technology-based learning (Prihantini et al., 2025).

In addition to technological factors and teacher readiness, a dense curriculum structure also poses a challenge to the implementation of the *deep learning* approach. Curriculum that require the completion of extensive material within a limited timeframe often lead teachers to choose faster and more efficient teaching methods, such as lectures or memorization-based assignments. In contrast, the *deep learning* approach requires sufficient time for concept exploration, discussion, reflection, and investigative activities that enable students to build deep understanding. The imbalance between curriculum demands and the needs of deep learning can make it difficult to implement this approach consistently in daily teaching practices (Kempa et al., 2026; Putra, 2026).

Moreover, a learning culture that still emphasizes memorization also becomes an obstacle to the implementation of *deep learning*. In many educational practices, learning success is often measured by students' ability to recall and reproduce information provided by the teacher. However, this approach tends to promote *surface learning*. In contrast, *deep learning* emphasizes analysis, interpretation, and the connection of concepts with real-life contexts. Therefore, a shift in the learning paradigm, from a memorization-based culture to one oriented toward deep understanding, is both a challenge and a necessity in efforts to improve the quality of Social Studies learning (Noptario et al., 2025; Yamin et al., 2025).

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Table: Challenges in Implementing Deep Learning in Social Studies Learning

Aspect	Key Points	Explanation
Teacher Competence	Limited digital literacy and pedagogical readiness	Many teachers lack skills in integrating technology and still rely on teacher-centered methods, hindering deep learning implementation.
Technological Infrastructure	Unequal access to technology	Limited internet access, digital devices, and learning platforms constrain the use of innovative, technology-supported learning approaches.
Curriculum Constraints	Time limitations and content overload	Dense curricula push teachers toward faster, memorization-based methods, leaving little room for deep exploration, discussion, and reflection.
Learning Culture	Dominance of memorization-based learning	Traditional emphasis on rote learning discourages critical thinking, requiring a shift toward analysis, interpretation, and meaningful understanding.

Based on these various challenges, it can be concluded that the implementation of *deep learning* in Social Studies learning requires comprehensive support from multiple aspects, including teacher competence, technological infrastructure, and curriculum policy. Efforts to improve teachers' digital literacy through professional training, the provision of adequate technological facilities, and the development of more flexible curricula oriented toward deep learning are essential steps in supporting the successful implementation of this approach. With sufficient support from the education system, *deep learning* has the potential to become an effective instructional strategy for developing students' critical thinking skills and improving the quality of Social Studies learning in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the *deep learning* approach is an instructional innovation oriented toward deep conceptual understanding, active student engagement, and the development of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The characteristics of Social Studies (IPS) learning, which focus on the study of social phenomena, analysis of societal issues, and contextual learning,

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demonstrate strong alignment with the principles of *deep learning*. The integration of *deep learning* in Social Studies can be implemented through various instructional models and strategies that encourage concept exploration, critical discussion, and investigation of social problems through approaches such as *project-based learning* and *inquiry learning*. The application of these approaches has been shown to play an important role in developing students' critical thinking skills by promoting processes of information analysis, reflection, and systematic problem-solving.

However, the implementation of *deep learning* in Social Studies learning still faces several challenges, including limited teacher digital literacy, pedagogical readiness, technological infrastructure support, and a learning culture that remains oriented toward memorization. Therefore, comprehensive support is required through the enhancement of teacher competencies, strengthening of educational policies, and the development of supportive learning environments to ensure that the implementation of *deep learning* in Social Studies can be carried out optimally and sustainably.

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