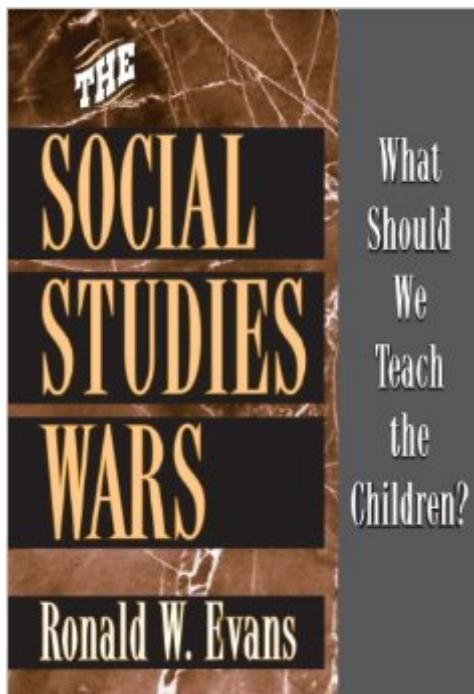


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The Social Studies Wars: What Should We Teach The Children?



Synopsis

This work describes and interprets the continuing battles over the purposes, content, methods, and theoretical foundations of the social studies curriculum.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

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Customer Reviews

This is a useful book for anyone interested in pedagogy or historiography. It is not quite what I expected. I was expecting a book on the current culture wars and how they effect teaching social studies today. Instead it was a history of the debate between those who would have history be the first discipline and those who advocate a broader multidisciplinary approach called social studies. I am wholeheartedly in the history first camp. I grew up in the era of the "social stew" version of social studies, and I learned no real history until 11th grade. My secondary school education contained no world history, economics, or psychology education whatsoever. This made it very difficult for a person wanting to major in history in college, and I had to work twice as hard to get up to date. This book is a good overview the battle between social conservatives who feel that the role of history instruction is to educate good citizens and teach children to appreciate America's history and government and the social engineering reformers who want to use social studies to indoctrinate young people in their particular political views on how society needs to be changed. The author effectively outlines the swings back and forth between these opposing approaches to instruction and the political movements behind each new generations attempts to define social studies and decide what should be taught. Unfortunately, the author is decidedly biased towards the social

activist camp and caricatures the social conservatives and advocates of history first as being backward and ill-informed. The reformers are always painted as enlightened, and the back to basics folks are depicted as reactionaries motivated by fear. I would give the book a higher rating if it did not have this bias and if it were updated to include current educational debates such as vouchers, charter schools, funding cuts, standardized testing, and national standards.

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