



**Social**  
**Studies in**  
**Secondary**  
**Education**

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**David G.**  
**Armstrong**

*Social Studies  
in Secondary  
Education*

DAVID G. ARMSTRONG

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DEDICATION

*To John R. Rogers High School, Spokane, Washington*

## PREFACE

THE SOCIAL STUDIES MIGHT BE DESCRIBED as a collection of enthusiasms in search of a purpose. Some have said that the social studies has suffered relative to other school subjects because of a lack of agreement concerning its elemental function. This concern for a clear conception of purpose has stimulated much spirited debate, but little movement toward consensus.

Regarding discussions centering on the purpose of social studies instruction, this book seeks a middle ground. The position that there is, or even ought to be, a single central purpose around which social studies programs are organized is rejected, as is the view that the purposes of social studies instruction are as broad as the purposes of the school. Rather, the social studies is viewed as serving a limited number of central purposes. Knowledge of this range of purposes is seen as providing a context for social studies educators' artistry as they design programs that strike a reasoned balance between students' individual needs and imperatives of the cultural milieu within which these students live.

Social studies teachers, if they are to make reasoned decisions about their programs, need to know both "where the social studies has been" and "where the social studies may be going." The first two chapters introduce special problems associated with social studies instruction, describe historic trends in the field, and suggest a basic framework that can be used to determine emphases of individual programs.

The five chapters in the second section of the book focus on aspects of the instructional planning process. General guidelines and specific examples are introduced that relate to content organization, long-term and short-term planning, identification of individual student characteristics, evaluation of students' performance, and classroom organization.

Concerns of the tax-paying public related to "getting their money's worth"

from education have placed new pressures on schools to provide unequivocal evidence of students' progress. One consequence of this development has been a renewed interest in teaching basic skills. The three chapters in the third section focus on some relevant social studies skills. Procedures are introduced for dealing with students' reading difficulties, providing students with ways of locating and organizing information, and familiarizing students with skills associated with the general area of graphic literacy.

In the fourth section, three chapters are devoted to information related to strategies and techniques of instruction. A basic framework for systematic sequencing of instruction is introduced. Detailed examples illustrate the application of a number of effective teaching techniques.

The five chapters in the fifth section have been included to illustrate the great range of special topics and themes found in social studies programs. Clearly these five chapters do not provide anything approaching a comprehensive treatment of all topics featured in social studies programs today. For example, though not described here, themes such as women's studies and Holocaust studies have a place in the social studies program in many schools. The themes in this section were selected because they tend to be fairly representative of the range of special topical offerings in the secondary social studies program. To those interested in social studies teaching even this small sample should suggest the desirability of preparing for "breadth" as well as "depth" in their college and university preparatory programs.

Material derived from history and the social sciences continues to receive emphasis in most secondary social studies programs. The three chapters in the sixth section focus on these academic disciplines. Special problems associated with teaching contents from the individual disciplines are highlighted. Additionally, some contemporary approaches to organizing discipline-based instruction are introduced.

The final chapter focuses on the social studies as a profession. Sources of general professional information are introduced, and several organizations of interest to social studies teachers are described. There is a heavy emphasis on the personal responsibility of the individual social studies teacher for his or her own professional growth and development.

This book could not have been written without the support and willing help of many kind people. My special thanks go out to Raymond F. Tirrell of State University College, Oneonta, New York. His meticulous readings (and rereadings) of various drafts of individual chapters were of invaluable assistance as the writing process went forward. Thanks, too, are due to Jesus Garcia of Texas A&M University and James B. Kracht of Illinois State University for their willingness to respond to preliminary versions of several chapters.

Beth Van Cleave spent many tedious hours typing and retyping the manuscript. My very special thanks go out to her for a dedication to a task which, I am sure, she must have thought destined to "go on forever." Appreciation also is

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Finally, my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Nancy, and my son, Tim, who gracefully put up with a husband and father who was forever going back to the office “to work on the book.”

DAVID G. ARMSTRONG

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