

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

*Ninth Edition*

John Jarolimek / Walter C. Parker





NINTH  
EDITION

# SOCIAL STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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# Preface

Each year thousands of women from Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa come to the United States for a few days' visit and then quietly return to their homelands. Why do these women migrate to the United States in such large numbers only to stay for a few days or a week? To vacation? To attend a conference? To visit relatives or friends? No. These women come because they are pregnant, are near the end of their term, and want their child to be born on American soil, thereby qualifying the infant for United States citizenship. The practice is actually illegal, but it is nearly impossible for authorities to enforce the laws that prohibit it. Thus, these expectant mothers are willing to go to great expense, enormous inconvenience, discomfort, and considerable risk, to give their child that most precious of gifts—citizenship in this land of freedom and opportunity. What an astounding contrast with many of us who are already here and take our citizenship for granted!

For the children of these mothers and all others who are born in this country, American citizenship, or more correctly, United States citizenship, is legally their birthright. But is legal citizenship all there is to being a responsible and participating citizen? We think not; and in this book we argue that citizenship in a democratic society requires the individual to have a functioning familiarity with certain knowledge, skills, and values. Moreover, while the individual citizen's *rights* are constitutionally guaranteed, there are no such assurances that the individual citizen will face up to his or her *responsibilities*. For the latter to obtain, citizens must be taught those behaviors and attitudes that are prerequisite to this broader concept of democratic citizenship in a free society.

The role of the elementary school teacher in this process is critical. Except for the family, no other social agency or institution shapes the life of the young child as profoundly as does the elementary school. It is during these formative years that children are the most flexible and most receptive to the basic learnings that are the foundation stones of responsible citizen-



ship. The evidence is overwhelming that the teacher is the essential ingredient in a child's getting a good education. It is the purpose of this book to help prospective teachers build professional knowledge and skills that are known to contribute to a quality education in social studies and citizenship.

Since this book was last published, there have been incredible changes in the international community of nations. Today it is impossible to get a wholly accurate political map of the world! Some newly formed nations are enjoying independent status that they may not have had for several hundred years. Those that are experimenting with democratic political and economic institutions and processes are looking to the democracies of the Western World as their models, and often look first to the United States for direction and guidance. The children who now fill the classrooms of America will be major players in the exciting domestic and global events in the next six to eight decades.

In revising this book, we have been mindful of this changing world in which we live and of the many changes occurring in education itself. The integration of learning is a major concern of many teachers today, and we have introduced a new chapter on the subject. Additionally, we have infused the concept of integration of learning throughout the text. Readers will find a much heavier emphasis on cooperative learning than was evident in earlier editions. Sections on concept learning have been expanded; there is a more extended treatment of the use of biographies; and we present new perspectives on assessment, particularly authentic assessment. A change of major proportions in this edition is the emphasis on multicultural education, flowing from the rapidly shifting demographics of school populations.

With this ninth edition, I am pleased to introduce as coauthor Professor Walter C. Parker of the University of Washington College of Education. Professor Parker's background of classroom teaching, university-level teaching, social studies curriculum consulting, research scholarship, and authorship is of immense value to this book. He is one of the authors of the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill social studies series for the elementary and middle school grades. Professor Parker has been active in social studies work nationally and internationally and is well known in social studies professional circles. His rich experience brings fresh perspectives and insights to this text, and I am extremely pleased to welcome him aboard as a colleague and coauthor.

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John Jarolimek



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(found between pages 100 and 101)
- Making Curriculum Connections  
(found between pages 340 and 341)

I

**ORIENTATION TO  
SOCIAL STUDIES  
EDUCATION**



# 1

## The Social Studies Curriculum

**I** love to teach! When I work with my kids in the classroom and imagine their kicking around this planet until 2060, it blows my mind! I do my best teaching in social studies because it is there that I can challenge the students to really think about the exciting world in which we live. I want them to leave my class feeling good about themselves and about the fantastic future that can be theirs . . .”

Such enthusiasm for teaching social studies is characteristic of good elementary school teachers. Indeed, elementary and middle school teachers *need* to have a sense of vision of the future for the children they teach. Users of this text will be teaching a part of the human family that is destined to be in charge of the affairs on this planet during the next six to eight decades. Seated in the classrooms of today’s teachers are many children who, as senior citizens, will help this nation celebrate its Tricentennial anniversary! This, of course, presumes that there actually will be such an event. Whether this nation survives to its Tricentennial and beyond depends in no small measure on how well the forthcoming generations of schoolchildren are instructed in the responsibilities of democratic citizenship. All of this is meant to suggest that teachers of elementary and middle school children have a heavy responsibility for the future of the children they teach and, indeed, for that of the nation.

When the public school movement developed momentum in the 1840s, the idea was to educate a citizenry that could meet the challenge of self-government. To enhance their economic opportunities, people were at that time moving in large numbers to the big cities and to the open lands of the West. The vastness of the country and the isolation of many areas resulted in regional dialect differences that were creating problems of communication. Communities were becoming more and more heterogeneous with respect to wealth, religion, ethnicity, and national origins. The society needed a “glue” to hold it all together, and reformers of the time saw the common school as just the vehicle to do the job. The term *common school*



was used not to mean ordinary, but to mean that it was to be a school for everyone's children. One reformer of the time described *common* as "the air we breathe in common." The schools were to be free, they were to have a common curriculum, and they were to serve all the children of all the people.

The establishment of the free public school system in this country was a clear statement that the nation believed that it could not have a population of uneducated people. That is to say, education of the masses was perceived as a public good. We see many of the same kinds of concerns being expressed today. The National Commission on Excellence in Education proclaimed in 1983 that we were "a nation at risk" because the education that young Americans were receiving was not adequate for the kinds of challenges they would face as citizens in the modern world.<sup>1</sup> What the Commission said—and what several other study groups since then have said—is that a quality education is the key to this society's future. Without a collective intelligence afforded by a rigorous school curriculum, the chances are slim that the United States can solve its myriad social problems, retain its competitive edge, or contribute in wholesome ways to the planet's future.

## SOCIAL STUDIES AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

.....

Concerns about deficiencies in education ordinarily focus on basic literacy on the one hand, and on the highly specialized, technical knowledge and skills that are marketplace oriented on the other. But the education of free people for life in a democratic society needs to go far beyond teaching for simple literacy and developing useful job skills. This society places high value on individual decision making, on social participation, on self-determination, and on citizen participation in the determination of public policies. But how can citizens involve themselves in these processes if they are not informed about the issues and have no commitment to the society's values and principles? The question answers itself. It is social studies education that must take seriously the challenge that gave birth to public education in this nation a hundred and fifty years ago: namely, to educate citizens who are willing and able to face up to their responsibilities as a free people. No other area of the school curriculum is as specifically charged with citizenship education as is social studies. Such an education should prepare the student of today to become "an informed person, skilled in the processes of a free society, who is committed to democratic values and is able, and feels obliged to participate in social, political, and economic processes."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>Walter Parker and John Jarolimek, *Citizenship and the Critical Role of the Social Studies*, NCSS Bulletin No. 72. (Published jointly by Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, and Boulder, CO: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Social Science Education Consortium, 1984), 6.

Research from the behavioral sciences tells us that in large measure human beings *learn* to become who and what they are. One does not inherit the culture through genetic transmission; the culture has to be transmitted through teaching and learning from one generation to the next, or it is lost. It is significant that all human societies make provisions for the young to learn the social and cultural imperatives that characterize that society's particular way of life. In this way, the society perpetuates itself; it provides for social continuity. Through education, the individual becomes acquainted with the mainstream or common culture.

Life in modern societies is so complex and the need for knowledge and skills is so great that the family is simply not able to teach children and youth all that they need to know. Accordingly, schools assume a major responsibility for the transmission to the young of certain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are deemed to be important. The entire school curriculum shares the responsibility for citizenship education, but social studies has historically occupied a unique role in contributing to that process.

A publication of the National Council for the Social Studies defines social studies as an important component of the school curriculum:

Social studies education is a basic subject of the K–12 curriculum that (1) derives its goals from the nature of citizenship in a democratic society that is closely linked to other nations and peoples of the world; (2) draws its content primarily from history, the social sciences, and, in some respects, from the humanities and science; (3) is taught in ways that reflect an awareness of the personal, social, and cultural experiences and developmental levels of learners; and (4) facilitates the transfer of what is learned in school to the out-of-school lives of students.<sup>3</sup>

The major mission of social studies education is to help children learn about the social world in which they live and how it got that way; to learn to cope with social realities; and to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to help shape an enlightened humanity. Social studies focuses specifically on citizenship education, which means learning to participate in group life. The outer edges of that participation for today's child is the global community.

In a democratic society based on individual freedom and citizen participation, citizenship education, and, therefore, social studies education, is directed toward the attainment of two quite different, and sometimes contradictory, ultimate ends. The first has to do with *socialization* and the other with *social criticism*. As a society, we have to depend on individual citizens to "do the right thing" most of the time. Through socialization, citizens internalize values and attitudes that cause them to behave willingly in accordance with prevailing expectations and norms. This is an essential requirement of orderly social life.

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<sup>3</sup>National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Studies Curriculum Planning Resources* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1990), 20.