

1. Social Studies: To whom does an education belong?

[Article 1 of 10: Background for examining why the proposed Social Studies Frameworks should be abandoned.]

The framework for Social Studies now being adopted by states plays down history, economics, geography, and political theory.[1] In their place, it develops in impressionable youngsters a set of beliefs that engineer social transformation toward their approved version of “good citizens” aligned with international attempts to unify the world’s schooling.

Before the National Council for the Social Studies designed the new framework it never asked: Does an education belong to the individual or to the State. The result is an unworkable idea that vastly limits student opportunities and could cripple American culture for a long time.

Organizations that fostered Common Core dropped pursuing standards for social studies before the NCSS decided to continue on its own.[2] Their result by design seems mind-numbingly pedantic, decorated with Common Core Literacy Guidelines that mask the switch from useful knowledge to beliefs favored by authorities. A roadmap helps see a rough approximation of framework levels, state variations of which obscure how useful content has been replaced:

- Key Understandings—are

labeled enduring with no reason to endure

- Inquiry Arc—wants students to ask questions they have no foundation to ask, confusing key ideas with undefined principles.

- Themes—pass off buzzwords as “unifying”

- Key ideas—confused with understandings, inquiries, and principles

- Content Specification—misdirects vendors from what matters

- Practices—shift students’ focus to research methods leaving little time for history

- Requirements—in New York subject students to an emotional culture war.

The framework that claims to make children “college and career ready” generates fog more likely to produce unanchored semi-articulate drones absent multi-disciplined lessons of experience that lead to wisdom.

Underneath it all, the framework teaches to meet official needs, not student needs. Students need to master basic principles of society, laws of economics, and development of political theory. They need to become astute enough to demand experts explain themselves clearly. Let’s return to examining the past for principles that help students deduce what they can know, how they should act, and how they should interact with others.

The framework is not the answer, nor is what has been recently taught insofar as academics are not alarmed at what is being attempted. The following series of articles explain why doing nothing is better than imposing the Frameworks. Doing nothing gives local districts the opportunity to compete in the crucible of competitive ideas for better alternatives.

Article topics include:

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- To educate or school
- A culture war
- Key understandings represent cultural bias
- Unencumbered with principles
- Irrelevant themes
- Specifications that misdirect
- Practices that obscure history
- The battle for individuals in society
- Centralized transformation is not education

[Next article: **Should classes educate or school?**]

[1] National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) College, Career & Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3 Framework)

[2] The National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)