



BATTLEGROUND

SCHOOLS

VOLUME 1

Edited by Sandra Mathison and E. Wayne Ross



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For Colin, who daily draws us onto the battleground of schools.

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GUIDE TO RELATED TOPICS

LEGAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

- Academic Freedom for K–12 Teachers
- Accountability
- Civil Rights
- Desegregation
- Finance
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- Religion and Public Schooling
- Textbooks

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

- Accountability
- Assessment
- Class Size
- Critical Pedagogy
- Culturally Relevant Education
- Curriculum
- Discipline
- E-Learning
- Evaluation
- Gifted and Talented Education
- Grading Policies
- Homework
- Human Development
- Inclusive Schooling

Pedagogy
Retention in Grade
Standardized Testing
Technology and Schooling
Textbooks

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND FORMS OF SCHOOLING

Afterschool Programs
Alternative Schools
Alternatives to Schooling
Compulsory Schooling
Early Childhood Education
Finance
Foundations and Schools
GED (General Educational Development) Test
Head Start
Homeschooling
Integrated Mental Health Services in Schools
International Comparisons of Student Achievement
Leadership
Middle Schools
Parental Involvement in Schools
Progressivism
Rural Schools
Single-Sex Schools
School Choice
Small Schools
Time in School
Tracking
Urban Education

SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

Bilingual Education
Business and Corporate Involvement
Civil Rights
Clothing and School Uniforms
Commercialization of Schools
Desegregation
English Language Learners
Gender
Government Role in Schooling
Homeless Children and Schools
Knowledge
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Youth
Media and Schools
Military in Schools

Nutrition in Schools
 Popular Culture and Schooling
 Purpose of Schools
 Race, Racism, and Colorblindness in Schools
 Religion and Public Schooling
 Youth Activism

SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND DISCIPLINES

Art Education
 Citizenship Education
 Creationism, Intelligent Design, and Evolution
 Foreign Language Education
 Global Education
 Literacy Education
 Mathematics Education
 Multiculturalism
 Physical Education
 Science Education
 Social Studies Education
 Sports in Schools

SOCIAL, MORAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bullying
 Character Education
 Dropouts
 Drug Use and Prevention
 Mental Health
 Moral Education
 Motivation and Learning
 Safety and Security in Schools
 School Counseling
 Sexuality Education

TEACHERS AND TEACHING

Academic Freedom for K–12 Teachers
 Teacher Education
 Teacher Knowledge
 Teacher Licensure
 Teacher Unions
 Teaching

PREFACE

The *Battleground: Schools* volumes provide a historically situated description of the most salient controversies in schooling during the past century. Many of these controversies have persisted over this long period of time (such as what should be taught in the subject areas or the role of standardized testing in schools), and some are more contemporary (such as the role of technology in education or commercialization in schools). Controversial issues in schooling are topics about which there is no consensus of values or beliefs. By their nature, these controversial issues generate diverse opinions and debate on the distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad practice, justice and injustice, and on interpretations of fairness and tolerance. These are topics on which reasonable people sincerely disagree. Schools and education become sites of controversy because of their universality and the high expectations about what schools can accomplish. Controversies in schooling are driven by educational research, politics, courts, and grassroots movements.

Scholars and the interested public will find this collection helpful to gain a quick understanding of what is and has been happening in schools. Written in nontechnical language, this collection is easily accessible for high school and college students and an interested lay public, but scholars of education will find the collection useful as a reference on a wide variety of educational topics. Each essay concludes with suggested further readings for readers who wish to delve more deeply into a particular topic. In addition, many essays include graphs, charts, and illustrations that provide a quick sense of the magnitude or nature of the particular controversial issues.

We have selected 93 controversial issues to include in this collection, issues that have ebbed and flowed, or appeared sometime in the last 100 years of

schooling in United States. A thorough review of educational research literature, our own professional experience in schooling, and the assistance of an editorial board of prominent educational scholars aided us in identifying the topics to include in this collection. Indeed there are additional issues that might have been included, but the constraints of book length led us to choose these as the most central, both for their longevity and for the likelihood that these issues will persist well into the future.

The essays are authored by an impressive number of first-rate educational scholars. Never before has such a pre-eminent and diverse group of scholarly perspectives been combined in one collection. The authors each have demonstrated through their publications and research their prominence in their particular area. Many are award-winning scholars. Some are also practitioners. No single ideology prevails. Throwing a cocktail party for the 118 authors would be an intellectually exciting event—the room would brim with scholarly discourse and diversity of perspective and would reflect the cultural and ethnic mosaic of U.S. society. The reader can learn more about individual authors by consulting the alphabetically listed biographies included in this collection.

The essays are arranged alphabetically by topic. Each essay summarizes the nature of the controversy, including major players and events relevant to the topic. In a number of cases, timelines of critical events are also included. And each essay concludes with readings for further investigation of the topic. The complete volume concludes with a general bibliography of works that address the topics covered in this encyclopedia.

To give the reader further access to this volume, there are two helpful lists: An alphabetical list of the topics is included at the beginning of the volume, as well as a list of all the topics grouped under broad headings, called the Guide to Related Topics. Finally, the book ends with a comprehensive index.

It goes without saying that we could not have prepared this collection without the collaboration and cooperation of many people. We thank all of the contributors to *Battleground: Schools* who took on the metaphor of schools as a battleground with a keen eye for describing what has been happening in U.S. schools over the past century. We appreciate the help the Editorial Advisory Board provided in identifying the most salient issues to include and in identifying contributors. Thanks also to Marie Ellen Lacarda, whose idea this encyclopedia was—we appreciate her thinking of us as good stewards of the project. And thanks to Kevin Downing, our editor at Greenwood, who has provided the necessary supports and just enough encouragement to bring these volumes to fruition.

Neither of us has ever shrunk from controversy, and so we find ourselves in comfortable territory in these volumes. We would like to thank our many colleagues over the many years, on all sides of our own individually championed controversies, as well. While it is easy to thank those with whom you agree, as these essays suggest, those with whom we do not agree are equally important in helping us to reflect upon and give good reasons for the positions we hold. Without the counterpoint, our point is diminished.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A CONTROVERSY?

Controversial issues in schooling are topics about which there is no consensus of values or belief. By their nature, these controversial issues generate diverse opinions and debate on the distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad practice, justice and injustice, and on interpretations of fairness and tolerance. These are topics about which reasonable people sincerely disagree. Schools and education become sites of controversy because of their universality and the high expectations about what schools can accomplish. Controversies in schooling are driven by educational research, politics, courts, and grassroots movements. The essays in this encyclopedia provide an historically situated description of salient controversies in schooling during the past century. Many of these controversies have persisted over this long period of time (such as what should be taught in the subject areas or the role of standardized testing in schools), and some are more contemporary (such as the role of technology in education or commercialization in schools).

WHENCE COMES CONTROVERSY?

Events and people have created, contributed to, and sustained controversies in schooling and education over the past century. Many social, political, and technological events occurring outside of schools have an impact on schools, and if there is disagreement about how and if schools should respond, controversy ensues. Some events are meant to solve controversies in schools, and while resolution sometimes occurs, just as often the attempts at resolution

sustain disagreements and schools continue to be a battleground for different value positions. Court cases, legislation, and educational research are all such events. But individual people and their ideas also inhabit the battleground of schools and their ideas become the weapons in the ongoing struggle for power and control over schools both as an organization and an institution.

Events

Court Cases

Even before the 1900s the courts played an important role in schools. When value conflicts arise in schools the disputants turn to the courts to arbitrate those differences. Seldom do the courts settle matters for all times, although they do bring moments of quiet in controversies. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1869 maintained that schools could be racially separate but equal, but *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 changed that ruling. And now, there are continued challenges to the Brown decision. The longevity of some court decisions is remarkable though, such as the *Scopes v. Tennessee* trial of 1925, which challenged the Butler Act passed to protect the teaching of divine creation and disallowing the teaching of evolution. Although Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution, the court case created a public discourse that resulted in the repealing of the Butler Act. Throughout these essays readers will see that court cases are key weapons on the school battleground, in issues of children's rights, academic freedom, racial segregation and integration, gender relations, and many more. The courts have been and will continue to be used in an effort to quell controversy in schools, but in so doing they inevitably sustain and sometimes even sensationalize those controversies.

Legislation

As mentioned above, laws are passed that create or contribute to controversies in education. Whether to safeguard particular beliefs (like the Butler Act of 1925), to provide entitlements to redress injustices (like Title I, Head Start, or the Civil Rights Act), to direct educational policy and practice (like the National Defense Education Act, Educational for All Handicapped Children Act, or laws that enable charter schools to be created), legislation is a key contributor to controversy in schools. When laws are enacted a problem is inherently defined and forms of redress prescribed. Inevitably there are disagreements with both. In part because it is contemporary, but also because of the unprecedented intrusion of the federal government into educational policy and practice, the No Child Left Behind Act (the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act—itsself a source of controversy) demonstrates well the disagreements over what is wrong with schools and how they should be remedied. The fierce battle over the reauthorization of this legislation attests to its contribution to controversies that cut deeply into the nature of schooling in the United States.

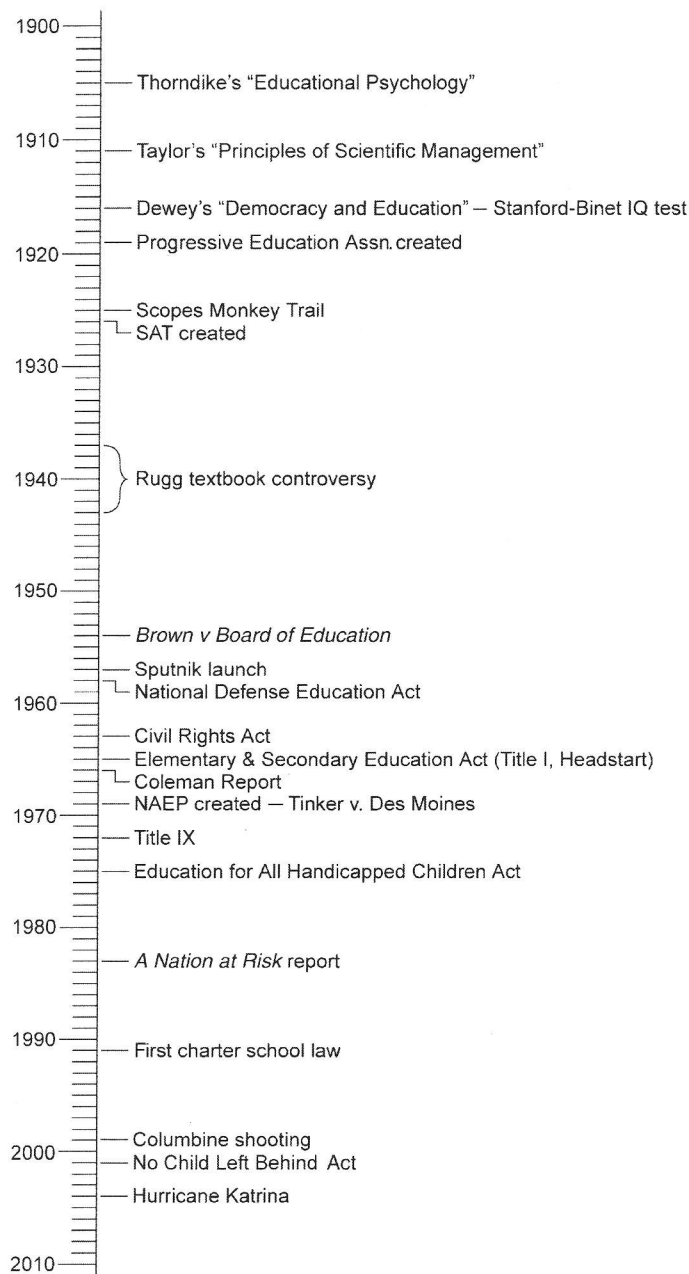


Figure 1 Key events contributing to controversy in education.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN EDUCATION PROJECTS

These on-line history projects are continually evolving; they include timelines as well as essays.

History of Education: Selected Moments of the Twentieth Century: [http://fcis.oise.](http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/index.html#90s)

[utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/index.html#90s](http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/index.html#90s)

History of American Education Web Project: <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfrnb/index.html>

American Educational History: A Hypertext Timeline: <http://www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/educationhistorytimeline.html>

Educational Research and Scholarship

While some argue that educational research has little to contribute to schools and schooling, the essays in this volume suggest a different story. For example, John Dewey's influence on schools and education in the last century is remarkable. So too is the influence of Frederick Taylor, an engineer and not an educator, yet someone whose ideas reverberate in the organization and administration of every school. And the influence of psychologists on the many and competing conceptions of learning (whole language or phonics, behaviorism or constructivism, internal or external motivation, and so on) sustain controversies about pedagogy and human development (cognitive, moral, and physical). Specific works of educational scholars have also been the source of controversies in education—the development of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in 1926 was proffered as a solution to the need for greater efficiency in dealing with ever-larger numbers served by the schooling system. The use of standardized tests has always been a source of conflict, and there is no reason to believe this will change. Another example is the creation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1969, a test developed for one purpose but one that has since been reformulated to serve some interests at the expense of others. Sometimes studies have had a profound impact on the definition of what matters in schools—James Coleman's *The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study* in 1966 is one such example. To this day, the Coleman report (as it is simply referred to) is used to support arguments about school finance, the nature of parental involvement, and a host of issues about the relative importance of schooling in determining life's chances.

Social, Technological, and Political Events

But it isn't just what happens within schools or the educational system that creates controversy and turns schools in a battleground. Events that are part of the cultural epoch have been key in drawing schools into larger controversies. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 set off alarms about American students' poor preparation in science and math, enough so that the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed the following year; while its scope was wide ranging, the intent was to bolster American progress in the space race with the Soviet Union. Many technology advances, perhaps most notably the creation and uses of computers and digital information, produce skirmishes in schools: How

should computers be used, can kids still learn arithmetic if they use a calculator, do computers keep kids from thinking for themselves, are digital sources of information better or worse than print sources, and so on. Recently, catastrophes (such as the Columbine shootings, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina) have fomented disagreement about how schools should respond. The increased presence of the Religious Right in American social and political life has fueled the fires of old controversies (like the separation of church and state, including issues like the role of prayer or the teaching of evolution) and created some new (like the role of special interests in school boards). Schools do not exist in isolation, and indeed they are perhaps the common battleground for seeking resolution of differences of belief and value. The human right of all persons to education is widely accepted—and explicitly set out in international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—and schools, as the primary manifestation of this right, provide a common context in which many differences are made public.

People

Many people's ideas and scholarship have contributed significantly to the nature of education and schooling in America, but a few scholars stand out for the extent to which their work fomented controversy in education, controversy that indeed has lasted throughout most of the twentieth century. These individuals' ideas are still at the heart of many controversies: Frederick Taylor's scientific principles of management are still evident in the ways schools are organized; the Progressive education movement, initiated by John Dewey and including Harold Rugg and George Counts, is alive and contested; and Ralph Tyler's hand can be seen in much of modern curriculum and assessment. These names recur throughout the essays in this encyclopedia, attesting to the foundational nature of their ideas and their sustaining qualities.

Frederick Taylor (1856–1915)

The publication of *The Principles of Scientific Management* in 1911 set forth the four basic principles of Taylorism: (1) replace rule-of-thumb work methods with methods based on a scientific study of the tasks; (2) scientifically select, train, and develop each employee rather than passively leaving them to train themselves; (3) cooperate with the workers to ensure that the scientifically developed methods are being followed; and (4) divide work nearly equally between managers and workers so that the managers apply scientific management principles to planning the work and the workers actually perform the tasks. Taylor, an engineer, was not himself interested in schools. His focus was on using scientific methods (like time and motion studies) to determine the most efficient way to produce goods. However, his ideas were appealing at a time when schools were grappling with too few teachers and classrooms and too many immigrant children to educate. If Taylor's principles were applied to education it was assumed there would be the same positive effect as in manufacturing, clerical work, and

other production contexts. Schools became departmentalized, students began moving from teacher to teacher, and educational finance became a field. Over the years, Taylor's principles of efficiency have often prevailed in contexts such as the school consolidation movement, year round schooling, high-stakes testing, and educational-management organizations (EMOs).

John Dewey (1859–1952)

In stark contrast with the principles of Taylorism was the rise of the Progressive Era in public education. Born about the same time, John Dewey saw the world quite differently, and the influence of his ideas continues to this day. The publication of *Democracy and Education* in 1916 and the creation of the Progressive Education Association in 1919 mark the beginning of the Progressive Era, which ranged from 1880 to 1920, although the underlying ideas have long survived that period. While Taylor focused on efficiency to increase productivity, Dewey and the progressives focused on the effectiveness of schools in promoting democratic principles. Schools and education should be directed to: (1) helping each individual recognize his or her own abilities, interests, ideas, needs, and cultural identity, and (2) developing of critical, socially engaged intelligence, enabling individuals to understand and participate effectively in the affairs of their community in a collaborative effort to achieve a common good. This approach to education was and is referred to as child-centered and social reconstructionist. While these principles have probably never been manifest widely in American schools they have nonetheless prevailed throughout the century, providing the counterpoint to management principles. While the Cold War dampened the enthusiasm for progressive education, a number of recent educational reforms demonstrate that these principles live on, such as the Coalition for Essential Schools, the small schools movement, free schools, and whole schooling.

Harold Rugg (1886–1960)

In 1938, Columbia professor Harold Rugg's *Man and His Changing World*, a social science textbook, was published, and the controversy this sparked set the pattern for textbook publishing to the present. Rugg's text, in spite of its sexist title, reflected the principles of progressivism, including racial understanding, democracy, and social justice. The fact that he encouraged skepticism about business practices attracted the attention of the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Legion, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, among others. Rugg's textbooks were considered too critical of private enterprise, and the business community's campaign against the texts was highly successful: Sales in 1938 were 300,000 and by 1942 had dropped to 21,000, including book burnings in some communities. Lobbying by powerful groups has been a mainstay in determining what textbooks, library books, and curriculum materials are used in schools. Business interests continue to hold sway and have been joined by the interests of the Religious Right.

George Counts (1889–1974)

Continuing the progressive principles, George Counts published a slim volume, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Teachers, he suggested, should be the leaders in society, taking an active change agent role in economics, politics, and morality. Education was the means for social change, he argued, and his argument was renounced by conservatives of the day. Counts understood the extent to which schools were a means for maintaining the status quo, and while he was clearly influenced by Dewey, Counts' faith in schools as sites for social and economic change had a more collectivist sensibility (society-centered rather than child-centered). Conservatives of the time labeled him a communist (which he was not) and the discourse of the day laid open an ongoing disagreement about who would control schools and toward what ends. Today, neoliberalism is the dominant discourse in schooling, but the refrain of George Counts' challenge to schools to build a new social order is still heard, especially in alternative schools, culturally relevant education, critical pedagogy, and liberatory notions of education.

Ralph Tyler (1902–1994)

Much of the modern era in American education (from the 1920s to the present) has been touched by Ralph Tyler's work. (Both Tyler and Counts were students of Charles Judd at the University of Chicago.) An advisor to six U.S. presidents, Tyler was the key figure in the development of many educational policies—as architect of the evaluation for the Eight Year Study he developed common and still prevailing notions of curriculum, evaluation, and student assessment. In 1949, Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* was published, and “the Tyler rationale” became a mainstay in defining what curriculum studies is. Tyler was a key figure in the development of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and he initiated the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Tyler likely served on more national policy-oriented committees and commissions than any other education scholar, and so his influence still rings through curriculum studies, pedagogy, evaluation, and assessment.

Modern Scholarly Contributions to Controversy

It remains to be seen who the lasting key contributors to controversies in education and schooling will be, but a number of possibilities recur through this collection of essays: Jean Anyon, Michael Apple, James A. Banks, William Bennett, Chester E. Finn Jr., Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Deborah Meier, Diane Ravitch.

SHOULD SCHOOLS BE A BATTLEGROUND?

Characterizing schools as a battleground may seem unnecessarily provocative. What the metaphor suggests, though, is a lively discourse about competing

fundamental values and beliefs and how they are played out within schools. When controversies and struggles cease, schools will have become the agents of a single-minded indoctrination, a state that is singularly undesirable in a democracy. While today's controversy may lead to tomorrow's consensus, new and revived controversies will arise. That controversy is the steady state within education and schooling is a good thing, and what is to be guarded against are discourses, power relations, and institutionalized practices that disallow controversies to be debated in public and forthright ways. Deliberation in democracy (whether through legislation, courts, grassroots movements, or educational scholarship) does not guarantee particular outcomes, but it does set forth principles that insure that neither coercion nor brute economic power should determine how schools should be, and thus how American society should be. Deliberation is not, however, a guarantee for resolution. That schools are a battleground signals a healthy democracy.

Sandra Mathison and E. Wayne Ross