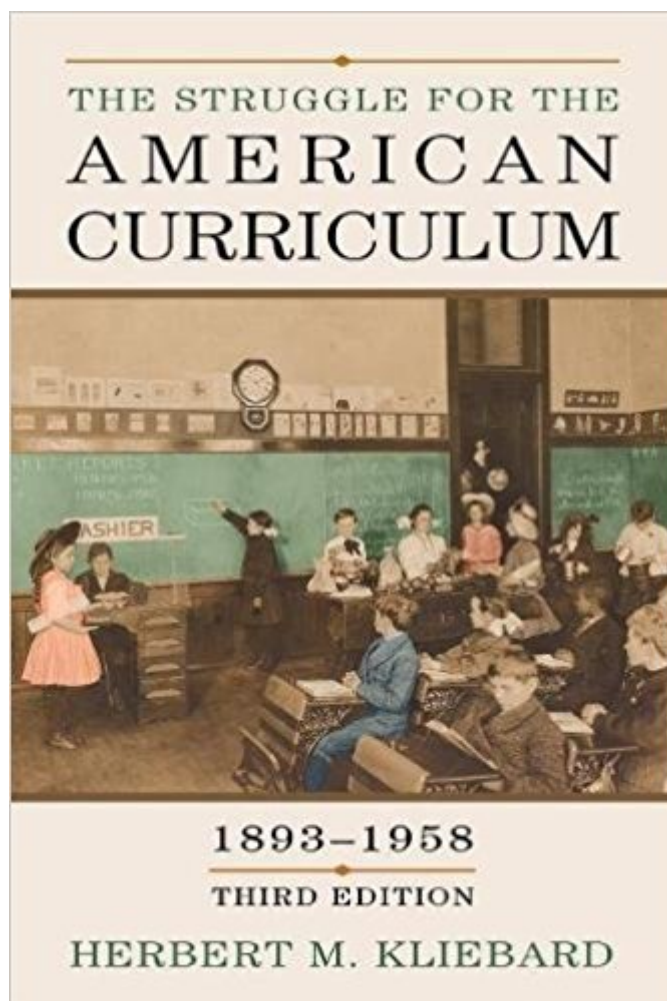


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# The Struggle For The American Curriculum, 1893-1958



## Synopsis

Published in 1987, the first edition of *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* was a classic in curriculum studies and in the history of education. This new third edition is thoroughly revised and updated, and includes two new chapters on the renewed attacks on the subject curriculum in the 1940s and 1950s, as well as the way individual school subjects evolved over time and were affected by these attacks.

## Book Information

Paperback: 360 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 3 edition (August 3, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415948916

ISBN-13: 978-0415948913

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #50,983 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in [Books > Textbooks > Education > History & Theory](#) #55 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > History](#) #59 in [Books > Textbooks > Education > Curriculum & Instruction](#)

## Customer Reviews

"Almost by definition, a classic text resists revision. But Herbert Kliebard's *"Struggle for the American Curriculum* is a welcome exception. Retaining its focus upon conflicts between curriculum theorists, Kliebard's latest edition adds new chapters about changes in school subjects themselves.

The result is a lot like Herb Kliebard himself: concise, witty, graceful, and wise. Kliebard is a gentleman as well as a scholar, and it shows."-Jonathan Zimmerman, New York University

"Kliebard's book has many strengths: it is lucidly written and the author discusses a wide range of issues and people in a succinct, fair, and scholarly manner. For these reasons alone it should appeal to a wide audience."

Praise for the previous editions-Harvard Educational Review "Just as Kliebard's was an impressive voice calling for the study of curriculum history, so his own response to that need is impressive. *"The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* is

well-researched and gracefully written, insightful as well as interesting."Praise for the previous editions-Teachers College Record

Herbert M. Kliebard is Professor Emeritus of Educational Policy Studies and Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is the author of *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946*.

Good book regarding the history of education in the United States. Be careful not to mistakenly accept every thing as fact. Although Kliebard is regarded as an authority on this subjects others prominent scholars will disagree with some of his assessments of the past.

Used at Indiana State University for a course.

Very narrative style, but if you can navigate it, the information and insight are both amazing.

It is helpful for you to understand the history of American curriculum.

Great condition! Quick service! Book just as described in entry. Met my expectations and those stated in description. Thank you!

Keliebard's book introduces the readers to the long history of American education. Essentially, education was something the wealthy used to keep their places in life, but eventually as education became more widespread, it became problematic and the fight for the American Curriculum began to take shape. With its many twist and turns, the reader is given a glimpse into why education is the way it is, and the many voices and philosophies that helped shape it into its current hegemonic institution. The movement that has left the widest and most permanent imprint on education is that of social efficiency, rooted in the concepts of the Industrial Revolution - get them in and get them out. Sadly, that is the way things truly are. The battle goes on. Recommended for anyone questioning the underlying beliefs of our current educational system.

The *Struggle for the American Curriculum* is not a book to entertain; it is a book to be read in order to understand the sordid history that begat today's subject-oriented, objective-laden, test-obsessed curricula. Kliebard reveals the American curriculum is not neutral. It was the results of many tense compromises (between racist pseudo-scientists and ideologues) and economic exigencies (the rise of industry, the Great Depression, and the Cold War). The curriculum that emerged from these struggles was a highly politicized animal, often divorced from actual research, teacher input, and

students' needs. Perhaps the most tragic irony is how little we seem to have learned from these past struggles; in the ongoing debates on curriculum reform, we're racing back to where we started. The *Struggle for the American Curriculum* helped me understand the multifaceted power relationships that shape curriculum. No longer do I see American curriculum as a neutral entity. Whether it is Charles Elliot reifying the Western ethnocentrism in the Committees of 10 and 15, or the Texas Board of Education approving ethnocentric history textbooks in today's draconian test culture, we cannot shake the value-laden decisions that prize one group's knowledge over another. Most frightening is the pervasive sense of déjà vu I felt in reading Kliebard's book. The curricular reforms we believe will ameliorate inequality are too often the ghosts of races already run. In our efforts to close achievement gaps, we may be stuck perpetuating them.

Kliebard's "Struggle", now in its third edition, is considered by most to be one of THE most important books about the history of American education. Starting in the early 1890's with the Committee of Ten, Kliebard gives the reader a coherent version of a rather complex story, the story of how four factions have competed to build American schools in their own image. Interestingly, Kliebard shows how each faction was able to have profound influence on public education and how we think about education in general. Those who believe that schools should be a place where young people are intellectually engaged in worthwhile learning for the ultimate purpose of developing active democratic citizens may walk away from the book a little depressed since Kliebard does seem to indicate that the factions who believe schools are meant to 1) prepare young people for jobs 2) secure American hegemony in the global marketplace, or 3) indoctrinate students to be obedient patriots who conform blindly to whatever adults tell them are the ones who in the end have had the most influence on what our children are actually doing (or not doing) in public schools. Kliebard's quote of Joel Spring in the Afterword rings true for democratic educators who have dedicated their lives to improving education for the common good. Spring contends that the "social efficiency" faction has left such a deep impression on American education that any efforts at reform are hopeless because there are certain organizational features of our schools which we take for granted as normative inhibit freedom and individuality and demand social adaptation. At any rate, this book is great for anyone who wants to learn more about the deep history of why our schools look the way they do and who is patient enough to read through an intelligent and scholarly work.

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