

An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research

By Ellen Condliffe Lagemann

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Since its beginnings at the start of the 20th century, educational scholarship has been a marginal field, criticized by public policy makers and relegated to the fringes of academe. *An Elusive Science* explains why, providing a critical history of the traditions, conflicts, and institutions that have shaped the study of education over the past century.

"[C]andid and incisive. . . . A stark yet enlightening look at American education."—*Library Journal*

"[A]n account of the search, over the past hundred or so years, to try and discover how educational research might provide reliable prescriptions for the improvement of education. Through extensive use of contemporary reference material, [Lagemann] shows that the search for ways of producing high-quality research has been, in effect, a search for secure disciplinary foundations."—Dylan William, *Times Higher Education Supplement*

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
Lagemann, who is chair of humanities and the social sciences at New York University and president of the National Academy of Education, has a long history in the field of higher education. In this candid and incisive study, she examines how Americans perceive the people who practice education and explains why their low-status work has undermined the possibilities for developing a strong professional community and a generative scholarly tradition. Weak financial support led to weak research, which in turn led to continued weak financial support. This catch-22 situation has also contributed to the lack of public support and respect. Taking a historical perspective, Lagemann critically examines problems associated with educational scholarship and argues that federal requirements for program evaluation have resulted in an improved understanding of the education policymaking process. She considers not only where education research may have gone astray but also the promising directions it may be taking in the future. A stark yet enlightening look at American education, research methodologies, and federal government funding agencies and their practices, this book is recommended for academic and larger public libraries.DSamuel T. Huang, Northern Illinois Univ., DeKalb
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Review
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From the Inside Flap

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