

**Analysis – US History 8 Midterm - SLCS**  
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This analysis is a follow-up to one done in October.

The midterm examination in US History 8 (class of 2011) given in January 2007 was the multiple-choice section of the New York State Intermediate Social Studies Test given to students at the close of grade 8 in June 2006 (class of 2010). The exam followed 5 days of review and students had access to test questions from old exams (but NOT the particular questions on this test).

The test score entered in the record as a midterm examination was adjusted to account for two factors: 1) the test included questions we did not yet cover in class; 2) the test is harder than the class.

**Variables Altered October 2006:**

- Administer midterm exam after 5 day review of all material since grade 7.
- End regular class work 30<sup>th</sup> April for an entire month of review in May before the exam.
- Align the grading system more closely with the NYS standards (use state rubrics to grade papers, use state test questions on examinations, etc.) Try to make the average difference between the overall class average and exam score 7 points.
- Drop only one grade per quarter.
- Restrict extra credit options and eliminate grades that only measure effort, not knowledge or skill.

To adjust for the fact that some questions were not covered in class yet, these did not count against the student unless he got them wrong.

There were two adjustments to compensate for the difficulty of the test relative to the difficulty of the class: eight points was added to each student's grade (On last June's State exam, the Class of 2010 averaged 10.9 points higher in their overall class grade compared to the test score). Non-required questions that students got correct were counted in their favor, thus potentially decreasing the number of points each question was worth.

Getting a midterm measurement was not the only reason for administering this exam. It intended to give students a high stakes reason and opportunity to review what we have learned so far since seventh grade toward enhancing performance on the June exam. It was also a program evaluation for my own information. I wanted to know if the changes I made in the class last October had made any difference.

***What makes me say that the class easier than the test?***

In a review of all 8<sup>th</sup> graders who took the Intermediate Social Studies Test from 2002 through 2005 in four schools (Johnsburg, Minerva, Schroon Lake, and Willsboro), only 61% "passed" (scored 3 or 4). If we assume that the test represents the performance level expected by the state, then we can conclude that only 61% of students can reach the state standards. If I set my class grading system to the state standards, only around 60% could be reasonably expected to pass each year.

I have, however, resolved to attempt to bring my class grading system more closely in alignment with the state. I am aiming for a 7 point discrepancy between performance on the state test and overall average in my class. This test revealed a 12

point difference: students scored an average of twelve points lower on the test than their class average.

***Were the adjustments to the score valid?***

The class average overall for the year so far is 76. The average **adjusted** score

Average Number of Students achieving the Standards in Social Studies (i.e., scoring 3 or 4) based on the NYS Intermediate Social Studies Test: Schroon Lake, Johnsbury, Minerva, Willsboro Schools over 4 years (2002-2005)				
<b>SLCS</b>	<b>Johnsbury</b>	<b>Minerva</b>	<b>Willsboro</b>	<b>AVG:</b>
61%	71%	54%	57%	61%

on the exam was 80. Midterm and final exam scores should probably be below a class average owing to the large amount

of material covered. It is likely the adjustments were a little too generous. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to stay with the formula I set since students expected it.

***How predictive is multiple-choice score of performance on the whole test?***

There was only a 3 point average difference between the whole test score and the score on the multiple-choice section of results of the Class of 2010. Although it is hard to conclude from a single test, the difference is small enough that I am comfortable concluding that the multiple-choice part is highly predictive of performance on the whole test. I will continue to study this.

***What is the relationship between this test and class average?***

There is still an average of a twelve point difference on average between what students score on the exam and what they score in the class.

<b>Class of ...</b>	<b>Class Average</b>	<b>Class Average on the M-C Portion of the 2006 State Exam</b>	<b>Average Difference</b>
2010	74%	61%	10
2011	76%	64%	12

***Conclusions***

- The Class of 2011 is **as** well prepared for the June exam as any class so far was in June of the year they took it. 55% would “pass” the exam if it were given now (Five months before they have to take it).
- The changes I made to my grading system have not made any impact on the relationship between my course expectations and the State’s. Students still score an average of more than 10 points less on the exam than my course. To date, I am undecided on how to proceed. It may be that the measures I took will not take effect until I have data for the entire year.
- There is no evidence yet that steps I have taken are enhancing student performance beyond state or local average levels.
- Next question: To what degree will the next 3 months of lessons positively affect the scores of students in the level 2 range? My goal is a 70% passing rate.