

Analysis – Social Studies Class Analyses
Schroon Lake Central School
David Jones
June 2007

Overview of Conclusions

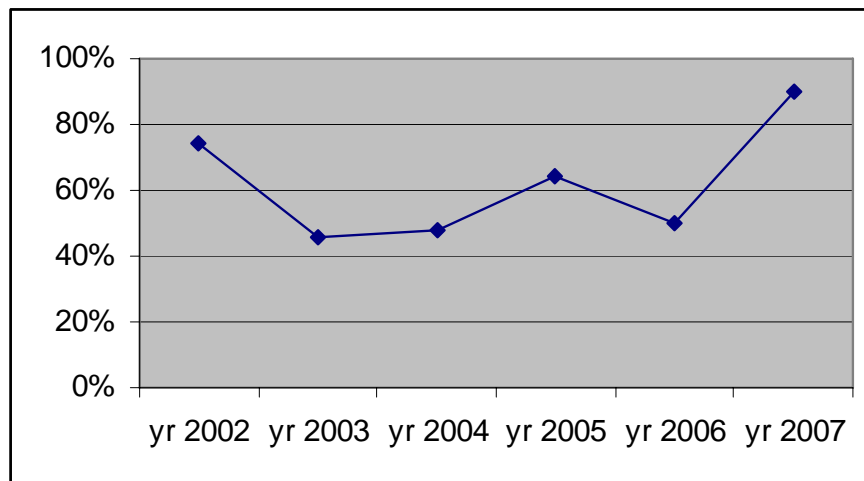
- Students in grade 8 hit an all-time high class average (90% earned 3 or 4) for the NYS Social Studies Test compared to the past 5 years compared to other 8th graders at SLCS **and** compared to 3 other schools.
- Students in grade 8 scored 12 points higher on average in the period 2005-2007 inclusive than they did 2002-2004 inclusive.
- While my “extended task” scoring needs to be tightened up a bit, my “high order tasks” are strong measures of the state standards for Social Studies.
- I have now adjusted my assessment system to reflect the state standards (there was only a 3 point difference between average in the class and on the multiple-choice portion of the NYS test this year).
- Strategies implemented last October appear to have been successful in enhancing student performance on the state test.
- Performance on the multiple-choice portion of the NYS test is consistently highly predictive of performance on the whole test.

This analysis is a follow-up to one done in October 2006 and January 2007. The original purpose of the analysis was to develop a plan for increasing student performance on the NYS Social Studies Test based on measurable data. The continuing purpose is to identify successful strategies and to identify any predictive measures from class assessments.

Summary of performance on the 8th grade Social Studies test since 2002 at Schroon Lake

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
4	13%	5%	8%	12%	4%	32%
3	61%	41%	50%	52%	46%	58%
2	26%	55%	42%	36%	38%	11%
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%
score 3-4	74%	46%	48%	64%	50%	90%

Graph: Percentage of students earning 3 or 4 on NYS Social Studies Test since and including 2002



Comparison with three local schools 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	AVG
SLCS	74%	46%	48%	64%	50%	56%
Willsboro	81%	74%	47%	84%	56%	68%
Johnsburg	81%	74%	47%	84%	90%	75%
Minerva	43%	40%	60%	73%	66%	56%

Strategies List

These are the strategies implemented since October 2006:

- Administer midterm exam after 5 day review of all material since grade 7.
- End regular class work 30th 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.

These are the additional strategies implemented since January 2007:

- Assign constructed response questions from old NYS exams for a period of 20 weeks. Distribute so few students have the same paper in a given week.
- Review method: review by theme instead of chronology. (I think this was particularly effective.) The themes were drawn from old US History Regents exam thematic essay questions.
- 7th and 8th grade tests now include multiple-choice questions from old State Exams. (Although grade 8 goes to all short-response tests by January)
- Additional AIS offered to bottom 1/3 performing students in the class to one hour per week.

Questions for this Paper:

What is the relationship between “Extended Task” Scores and scores on the NYS Social Studies test?

- 15 (of 19) 8th graders contracted for “high order” extended tasks in 2006-2007. Of those, 1 did not complete the task and scored zero.
- Of those that completed the task, the average score on the task was 88. The average score of these students on the NYS SS exam was 75 (an average difference of 13 points).

Conclusion: the extended tasks are probably too easy. There were 32 extended tasks among these 15 students, of which 13 (40%) were scored 100. These tasks were mostly debate. The debate probably needs to be evaluated more strictly.

What is the relationship between “High Order Task” Scores and scores on the NYS Social Studies test?

	Exams	Essays / DBQ's	Listening	Debates	AVG
Class Avg.	71	81	86	91	82
Compare to NYS SS Test	-5	+5	+10	+15	+6.25

- There were 22 high order tasks this year (6 exams including midterm, 7 essays / DBQ's, 3 debates, 1 presentation, 5 listening) assigned in 8th grade in 2006-2007.
- Of the 55% of the student's grade that was of the high order tasks category, 35% are essays, 26% are exams, 22% are listening.
- The exams and essays seem to be the closest measures that reflect the NYS standards.

To what degree is the mid-term exam, consisting of the previous year's multiple-choice section of the NYS exam, predictive of performance on the NYS exam?

Class of ...	Year Class Average	Class Average on the M-C Portion of NYS test	Class Avg : M-C test
2010 on 2007 NYS test	78%	75%	+ 3
2010 at midterm (2006 test)	74%	61%	+10
2011 (2006 test)	76%	64%	+12

The class improved its performance on the test by 14 points from midterm to final. I should note that the midterm included questions on material we had not yet covered. These questions were not counted when calculating a midterm grade, but were included in the above score. I have no basis on which to use the midterm to predict performance on the NYS test.

What is the relationship between final average in the class and score on the NYS exam? Has it changed from last year (2006)?

My efforts to bring my class assessments more in line with the NYS standards, as defined by this test, are bearing some fruit.

- There was only a 3 point difference between class average on the NYS test and class average in the class for the year.
- There was only a 6 point difference between class average on all high order tasks and average on the NYS test.
- There was only a 5 point difference between class average on all exams and essays and the average on the NYS test.

I think I can confidently conclude that my measures reflected the state standards this year.

How predictive is performance on the multiple-choice portion for performance on the whole test?

The average on the multiple-choice section of the test was only 1 point off from the average on the whole test. At the midterm, this difference was only 3 points. For the 2006 test, the difference was only 3 points. I think it safe to say that performance on the multiple-choice section of the test is highly predictive of how they will perform on the whole test.

What do kids think worked?

On 11 June, I surveyed present 8th graders about the year (survey attached).

- Students' top three positive effecting strategies were 1)ending regular class work on 30 April for an entire month of review; 2) assigning them constructed response questions from old NYS tests over 20 weeks; 3) Reviewing by theme instead of by chronology.

Among the student suggestions that appear significant:

- “[Suggest] more work without resources because on the test u [sic] can’t use resources.”
- “do more w/ [sic] 7th grade”
- “discuss listening activities”

**What were 7th grade scores on a modified NYS test that served as their final exam?
How predictive will this be of their performance on the real test next year?**

Seventh graders were given a 2-part final exam. The first part was made up of 50 multiple-choice questions from previous years' NYS Tests. The class average on that portion of the test was 71%. Next year will reveal any relationship.

SURVEY
Grade 8 Social Studies
Mr. Jones
June 2007

The number of 8th graders achieving 3 or 4 on the NYS Social Studies Test this year surpassed 5 years of scores for our school.

	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
score 3-4	74%	46%	48%	64%	50%	90%

Naturally, I would like to capture a list of what we did and keep doing it so I can increase the chances that other 8th grades to come will also set records.

What do you think worked best?

Here is a list of things I did to try to enhance your performance. For each, score how strong you think this strategy was: 0 = no effect; 1, 2, 3 = strong effect.

- ___ Administer midterm exam after 5 day review of all material since grade 7.
- ___ End regular class work 30th 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.
- ___ Assign constructed response questions from old NYS exams for a period of 12 weeks. Distribute so few students have the same paper in a given week.
- ___ Review method: review by theme instead of chronology. (I think this was particularly effective.) The themes were drawn from old US History Regents exam thematic essay questions.

What, if anything, worked best for you in this class?

Any suggestions for improvement?