

2004 Global Studies Regents Exam Analysis

Procedures for the Exam

1. June 17, 2004 (12:00 – 3:00pm) The exam was administered to students in the high school gymnasium. Students were seated in master alphabetical order. At the conclusion of the exam, papers were collected in this order as well. (The analysis on the following pages do not include students who did not show to take the exam. Also, students whose Scantrons were hand scored are not included in some multiple choice statistics.)

Prior to the day of the exam, labels had been created to speed up the process of grading. The scantrons were separated and run for the entire grade level. The rest of the exam was kept together in master alphabetical order in piles of 25. One teacher was selected to read the nine scaffolding questions and read the NYS standards for that question. The teacher then graded all the exams to in order to maintain uniform standards.

2. June 18, 2004 Graders finished the work on the scaffolding questions as detailed above.

Graders were divided into two groups. One group worked on the DBQ and the other group was given the thematic essay. There were eight graders and 10 packets; eight copies of each packet's grading sheets were made with the names in alphabetical order. One non-grader was responsible for placing Scantrons back in the exams and recording master scores. The remaining graders were divided between the DBQ and thematic essays and read the standards for their essay. Two readers independently read and then scored the DBQ and thematic essays. A third reader was used to reconcile scores that varied by more than one number.

Graders finished the work on the Thematic and DBQ essays. All scores were recorded and compiled on the master lists. Copies of final grades were made and disturbed to the teachers.

Summary: 8 hours of grading by 10 teachers for 248 papers.

About the Analysis Packet

Kevin Murray and John Ball on June 24 and 25, 2004 conducted the analysis. The packet contains copies of the raw scores, and the analysis done with those scores. All charts are labeled to match the corresponding tables.

Table One (See Table One for detailed analysis of the Multiple Choice section of the exam)

Total Score Level

96% of all students received regents credit for the exam.
40% of all students received mastery level scores (85-100%)
35% of all students showed proficiency level scores (75-84%)
20% of all students showed competence level scores (65-74%)

Approximately 40% of our students achieved mastery level, this is lower than last year's 44%, however this was a harder exam and approximately 58 students were in 80 to 84 range.

Multiple Choice Score Level

77% of all students received passing level scores (65% or better) for the multiple choice

20% of all students received mastery level multiple-choice scores (85-100%)
32% of all students showed proficiency level multiple-choice scores (75-84%)
25% of all students showed competence level multiple-choice scores (65-74%)

Approximately 20% of our students achieved mastery level, this is lower than last year's 43%, however there was an increase in the rates of proficiency and competency levels from last year.

See Table 2 for detailed analysis of the multiple-choice section of the exam.

Scaffolding IIIA Score Level

97% of all students received passing level scores (65% or better) for the scaffolding.

89% of all students received mastery level scaffolding scores (85-100%)
7% of all students showed proficiency level scaffolding scores (75-84%)
4% of all students showed competence level scaffolding scores (65-74%)

Essay II - Thematic Score Level

64% of all students received passing level scores (3 or better) for the thematic essay.

3% of all students received mastery level thematic essay scores (5)

15% of all students showed proficiency level thematic essay scores (4-4.5)

26% of all students showed competence level thematic essay scores (3-3.5)

Approximately 64% of our students achieved passing level scores, this is higher than last year's 49%, however greater improvement can be obtained.

The large increase can be accounted for a greater emphasis spent on writing throughout the year and the essay was a history based questions that clearly defined the tasks for the students, unlike last year which had vague goals and was difficult for the students to understand the question they were being asked to answer.

Essay IIIB - DBQ Score Level

57% of all students received regents level scores for the DBQ essay.

4% of all students received mastery level DBQ essay scores (5)

9% of all students showed proficiency level DBQ essay scores (4-4.5)

44% of all students showed competence level DBQ essay scores (3-3.5)

The scores between last year's exam and this years exam are remarkable similar, there are no major shifts in the percentages. Students need to be more aware that "outside information" can include content learned in other disciplines. The students were troubled by the use of two documents in one question; this caused confusion, however the proctors quickly clarified it.

Analysis & Evaluation

The analysis focused on the implementation of Bloom's taxonomy. The majority of the multiple-choice questions tested the lower level thinking skills. Only 13 were based on the higher level thinking skills. (See Table 2)

The scaffolding questions for the documents integrated both lower and higher level thinking skills. They incorporated comprehension, analysis and knowledge.

The accompanying DBQ essay called for synthesis, knowledge and comprehension. Students were deficient in synthesizing and failed to supply sufficient details to validate their thesis. The inability of students to address all aspects of the task accounts for the large percentage of students scoring in the competency range. Teacher consensus also stated that proficient by rates by a three or higher on the essays in accordance with the state standards.

The Thematic essay focused on turning points. The students had to explain the circumstances leading up to the turning points and analyze the effect of the turning points. Students had difficulty organizing the essay and recognizing constructs such as, cause and effect, or positive and negative factors could have produced a more coherent essay. Students also did not fully address all aspects of the task, such as only analyzing only one turning point or both turning points in a very limited fashion.

Comparison with the June 2003 results shows a significant increase in both DBQ and thematic essay scores. Teacher consensus was that this year's essays were fair because the topics were history based and required knowledge, which students had a large base to draw from. Teacher consensus also stated that proficient by rates by a three or higher on the essays in accordance with the state standards.

When the June 2003 conversion chart was compared to the June 2004 conversion chart a difference of approximately 2 points was detected between the charts. The objective (multiple choice) portion of the exam was given comparable weighting this year as last year. This reflects the State's goals of increasing the expectation for the exam.

In both multiple choice questions and essay responses, a major student weakness appears to be an inability to recall the factual details that are presented in the course. An emphasis needs to be made requiring students to move from the general ideas to the specific details of social events. An increase in detail would improve both multiple choice and essay scores and fits with the New York standards and expectations.

The 2004 Global Studies exam reflects a cross disciplinary focus that is being emphasized by the state. In order to improve scores at Grand Island School District, a coordinated cross-disciplinary focus must also be implemented. Examples of this could include topics like a coordinated effort with Science on environmental studies, or core skill standardization such as essay writing and note taking with English, which could then be adjusted to meet the needs of each department. Students should also be reminded not to compartmentalize their learning.

Recommendations

- 1) Place greater emphasis on vocabulary development, both social studies and more sophisticated general vocabulary.
- 2) Essay writing skills should encompass:
 - a) development of organizational skills.

- b) requiring specific reference to number of document utilized in the DBQ
- c) use of old style Regents exam essays to provide a basis for the thematic essay.
- d) emphasize the use of detail and facts in all essays

- 3) Focus on developing use of higher-level critical thinking skills, i.e. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation for essay writing.
- 4) Chronology (general historical era) & the elements of geography should be more thoroughly integrated into the historical content.
- 5) Continue the practice instituted two years ago of a midterm that reflects the Regents format as a form of integrated practice/
- 6) Continue to hold 9th & 10th grade team meetings to coordinate instructional efforts.
 - September - review Regents analysis and implications for the school year.
 - January - share ideas about what is working.
 - May - formulate review strategies.