

Social Studies Assessment

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Overview of Talk

- **The MEAP as a Curriculum/The Curriculum of the MEAP**
- **Orientations to Social Studies**
- **Exploring the MEAP in light of the orientation to Social Studies**
- **Questions/Discussion**

A good test:

- 1. Is congruent with, and reflective of, the curriculum and of the goals of social studies education**
- 2. Requires students to display knowledge and think with/about it.**

Quality teaching/learning:

Requires empowered teachers and students who are interested in what is being learned and who are willing to implicate themselves and the world in their teaching/learning.




Forms of Curriculum

1.Explicit Curriculum

2.Implicit Curriculum

3.Null Curriculum



**The MEAP as a
Curriculum/The Curriculum
of the MEAP**

Imposition/disempowerment

“There was no discussion about why we need to teach to the MEAP. They basically said: ‘Your comments are not welcomed; just do it.’ I couldn’t believe it! I can’t believe that teachers who have real questions are told by the people from the MDE that the MEAP needs to be done. Well, why does it NEED to be done? WHO says it needs to be done?”

Sequence

“We have to start the year with the Constitution because there are many constitutional principles on the MEAP. We’re afraid that if we do the curriculum in order, by the time we get to the Constitution it’s going to be too close to the MEAP that we may not have the time to focus on it as we should. So we start with the Constitution and then go back: We do the Constitution, the Core Democratic Values, then back to the colonial times and work our way forward from there.”

Is it a Social Studies Test?

- **“What the MEAP asks doesn’t evaluate students’ knowledge in social studies. It gives students various charts and graphs and short scenarios and then tests students on their skill level, their reading and writing ability, their overall intelligence, maybe. You could take a kid with a very high IQ who has never been in a social studies classroom and give him the social studies MEAP and he’ll do very well.”**

This REALLY makes me mad—like there’s nothing! Oh, my gosh! It’s like our whole ~~year is not necessary at all.~~ That just blows me away. I mean it’s nice to be able to reason things and look at something and pull out information from that, but I’d like to see more of a balance. I would like to see more of ‘Have you learned some basic facts here?’ It’s almost as if we don’t even need to teach the curriculum if we can teach them how to read a graph or look at a map. It almost makes you feel like, ‘Why bother?’”

The Essay Question

“The MEAP tries to put us all in a box; there are only two sides to an issue—it’s either black or white. But as a social studies teacher, you constantly try to show students things are more complex and recognize the various shares in between. But I believe the MEAP will never allow for that.”

“I tell my students to take a stand either for or against and state it clearly. I tell them: ‘It doesn’t matter what you believe, just pick a position and go with it. Choose whatever will be easiest for you to write.’ I do that because they will get marked down if they say: ‘You should have school uniforms in middle school but not in high school or the other way around.’ Those evaluating the MEAP don’t like that type of answer. So we tell the kids to just take a position: ‘Take one side or the other, whether you believe it or not, and just go with that.’ It would obviously be nice to be able to have them look at something from multiple perspectives and at multiple levels—both of which are high order thinking—but this is the structure of the test; a perfect example of how we are dumbing down our kids.”

The MEAP as the Organizer of Instruction

- **“Every time I have to do something specifically so that students will be successful on the MEAP, it steers me away from the type of teacher I want to be.”**

- **“I don’t know why I say I teach the MEAP all the time. We teach with the pressure of the MEAP. I don’t think we always teach to the MEAP.”**

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- **The impossibility of being a successful social studies teacher:** either you follow the standards OR the MEAP; you cannot be successful in both.
 - **Teachers’ response:** Double efforts in MEAP preparation
 - **The MEAP as oppressor and validator**

Orientations to Social Studies Education

- “Best Story” (Transmission)**
- “Disciplinary” (Transaction)**
- “Postmodern/Critical” (Transformation)**

MEAP QUESTIONS (grade 9)

**What is the best way to export coal and iron
from New Zealand to other countries?**

- aircraft**
- railroads**
- ships**
- trucks**

Susan's New Business


Susan has been working in an office, but now she would like to stay home with her young children. Susan has been making jewelry as a hobby for many years. She has sold many pieces to friends and at local art fairs. Susan is starting a small business and is now selling her creations to jewelry stores.

What is an important economic role Susan's business?

- it is a source of pride for the community
- it is an important employer for her community
- it is a way for consumers to acquire unique products
- it is a major source of revenue for the federal government

Susan places some of her profits in a savings account. What role does the federal government play in this account?

- It limits the amount of savings
- It insures the money in the account
- It sends payments to bank customers
- It approves the opening of the account

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- Which of the following is the best description of a duty performed by the President of the United States when he is acting as Commander in Chief?**
- The President raises money for his political party
 - The President proposes new laws for Congress to pass
 - The President makes decisions about national security
 - The President prepares the annual budget for the United States



Why is the Arctic Ocean important to the United States?

- The polar regions play a part in regulating Earth's climate
- The Arctic Ocean is a popular tourist destination for many Americans
- The frozen ice serves as a water supply for the United States in times of drought
- Recreational fishing in the Arctic Ocean is important to the United States economy