Analyzing a Textbook

*Textbooks are all different in content, organization, and presentation so a teacher must be able to analyze that textbook’s strengths and weaknesses. There are 10 different areas to look at when analyzing a social studies textbook which are as follows: physical appearance, organization, opportunities for student decision, learning aids, skill development, relationship to reader, treatment of societal issues, difficulty, bias, and overall.

I. **Physical Appearance:** first impression of cover, colors used, artistic style, illustrations, physical attributes

II. **Organization:** division of textbook (units, sections, lessons), special sections of each lesson, sequencing of concepts

III. **Student Decision:** opportunities for students to make decisions about how to learn the content, if content is expressed in a variety of ways, combination of illustrations and text, comprehension questions to allow students to decide if they understand the content

IV. **Learning Aids:** “extra” sections in the textbook allowing students to learn beyond the body text, thought-provoking prompts or questions, discussion ideas, sources beyond the textbook

V. **Skill Development:** problem-solving and inquiry skill building, comprehension strategies practiced, promotes student higher-level thinking

VI. **Relationship:** talks to reader/learner, uses the pronoun “you,” questions are directed toward the reader

VII. **Treatment:** treatment of societal issues, representation of diversity, discussion of gender, religion, race, ethnicity, poverty, environmental issues

VIII. **Difficulty:** reading level, difficulty of content presented, age-appropriateness

IX. **Bias:** book written to a particular group of people of a certain race, economic status or gender, societal issues glossed over or omitted

X. **Overall:** overall rating of this textbook: is this the best learning tool for these students?