Evaluation of Education Overview

This is an evaluation of our current education system, and a breakdown of the time used over the course of a school week. All 5 periods are 50 minutes long, each class has a different teacher. Each topic is different. Although all categorizations are subject to my personal discretion, I will state my reasoning for each categorization. The entire class will be categorized, so this will not only be an evaluation of each class, but also (if the class is guided by the state) an evaluation of the curriculum put in place by the state. Homework will not be included in the data, however it will be mentioned as an observation.

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that the subject of study will primarily determine the balance between the degree of Rote Learning & Fact and Understanding & Comprehension content in the curriculum. I hypothesize that the level of Irrelevant & Unnecessary information will primarily be dependent on the teacher. I hypothesize that the subject with the highest percentage of Rote Learning & Facts is Spanish II, and the highest level of Understanding & Comprehension and Irrelevant & Unnecessary content is Civics & Economics. I hypothesize that the subject with the lowest levels of Rote learning & Facts is English II, and I hypothesize that the subject with the lowest level of Understanding & Comprehension is Spanish II, I hypothesize that the subject with the lowest levels of Irrelevant & Unnecessary content is Computer Science.

1. Rote Learning & Facts

For example, vocabulary review, tenses, conjugations, science terminology, memorizing dates, formulas, and information that requires little to no comprehension, and is focused primarily around retention. This usually involves excessive repetition, such as performing the same math concept with different numbers. Any of the Who, What, When, and Where questions.

2. Understanding & Comprehension

For example, the relationships between two science terms, the functioning of an atom, rather than the names of its parts. When and how to use learned vocabulary tenses, how to construct a sentence. The How and Why questions, going deeper into the material. Finding the ulterior, often still referencing the facts, however far more abstract than concrete. In some cases interpretational.

3. Irrelevant & Unnecessary

For example, a teacher explaining an impertinent event in order to stimulate interest. Any time dedicated to the explanation or performance of the unfortunate technicalities of standards, such as grades, tests, quizzes, projects. All of these are appropriate ways for students to exemplify their knowledge (and occasionally understanding), however they remain unnecessary and often detrimental due to their detraction from the concept at hand or its importance. Any time spent on socializing or the topic being diverged to personal or irrelevant matters.

4. Uncategorized

Any time that does not fit in with the above categories.

5. Review

Any time that is dedicated to reviewing subject material from the curriculum or previous curriculums. For example, learning about the angle of depression and elevation in both Geometry and Pre-Cal.

Comments

An Evaluation of Education Overview

Classes	Days	Monday - Day 1						Tuesday - Day 2						Wednesday - Day 3						Thursday - Day 4						Friday - Day 5					
Spanish II		25	0	11.5	11	0	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	0	2	14	1	10	27	0	0	10	0	13	27	0	9	14	0	0
Biology		20	6	8	7	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	0	0	13	1	8	3	1	9	12	0	25	23	0	0	27	0	0
Civics and Economics		17	4	1	7	0	21	17.5	19	7	2	0	0	17	21	7	3	2	0	16	7	11	16	0	0	21	8	17	4	0	0
English II		15	8	20.5	5.5	0	1	16	4	0	7	0	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	42	0	1	7	0	0	45	0	0	5	0	0
Computer Science Elective		0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	7	43	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	50	0
Pre Calculous		0	0	8	1	5	36	0	0	5	10	0	35	0	0	0	10	0	40	7	8	0	28	*	7	18	5	11.5	8.5	0	0
Category		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

* 15 minutes were spent receiving and explaining our PSAT scores, this time was documented in category 4

1. Rote Learning & Facts

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2. Understanding & Comprehension

For example, the relationships between two science terms, the functioning of an atom, rather than the names of its parts. When and how to use learned vocabulary tenses, how to construct a sentence. The How and Why questions, going deeper into the material. Finding the ulterior, often still referencing the facts, however far more abstract and concrete. In some cases interpretational

5. Uncategorized

Uncategorized.

3. Irrelevant

Any time spent on socializing or the topic being diverged to personal or primarily irrelevant matters.

4. Formalities and the explanations thereof

Any time dedicated to the explanation or performance of the unfortunate technicalities of standards, such as grades, tests, quizzes, projects and homework. All of these are appropriate ways for students to exemplify their knowledge (and occasionally understanding), however they remain unnecessary and often detrimental due to their detraction from the concept at hand or its importance.

6. Review

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Observations and homework evaluation during the week	Monday Observations & Additional Notes	Tuesday Observations & Additional Notes	Wednesday Observations & Additional Notes	Thursday Observations & Additional Notes	Friday Observations & Additional Notes
Spanish II	As all Spanish classes, we began with 10 minutes of explaining how we are and what is new. Everyone in the class answers separately. We followed with new vocabulary and then homework discussion and performance. There is little to question as to the reason behind Spanish, why each word is what it is. Foreign languages offer concrete learning, nothing more.	I was unable to attend Spanish today because I was sick.	Today we were lectured by our teacher on our lack of care for our homework. We were accused of randomly inserting the spanish vocabulary words from the word bank into the sentence. Which I will plead "*mea culpa,*" I admit to this "crime." As a punishment, we were handed a quiz which counted for 50% of our quarter quiz grade on the vocabulary that we had been given two days earlier. During this lecture, we were explained the importance of Spanish in our lives. This is an exact quote from our Spanish teacher who will at this point remain anonymous: "This class has the *most* real world application of all subjects." Her argument was that spanish the fastest growing language in the U.S. other than english.		
Biology	Much of the time spent is reviewing previous information, not at intermittent parts of the lesson, but designated review time. Small periods of comprehension which are occasionally introduced in learning new facts. The comprehension is typically in the form of analogies, or real life examples.	I was only in Biology for the last 15 minutes, so I decided to omit any of my collected data.	We reviewed the same information we have the past two days, we also review the procedure that we had read and written on for homework that preceding night for about 15 minutes.		
Civics and Economics	It should be noted that most of the review present in this class as well as Biology, is material that has already been covered this year. For instance the structure of the justice system, which we have reviewed several times. Very intense facts today, all of which were the political affiliations, backgrounds, and personal history of the supreme court justices. The majority of class participation was in the form of reading their notes rather than asking questions or making constructive comments.	All of class, as with every Civics class, English class, Pre-cal class, and sometimes Biology class, we spend the majority of the day reviewing the previous nights reading or the previous nights homework. This is often executed in a question and answer format, where the teacher will ask a question with a factual answer, and the students will answer. Today there was a decent amount of comprehension, however the explanations are often extravagant and redundant.	Today we talked in extravagant detail about the privileges of the president. This included references to specific examples of the president using his power to obtain popular artist figures in music. This was strictly used as a tactic to keep the students interesting, while she may have succeeded, I found the conversation sufficiently boring, irrelevant, and utterly desperate.	Similar to the Spanish teachers speech, our Civics teacher gave us a 15 minute lecture about why government is great (emphasizing democracy of course) and why civics is important. In her lecture she mentioned a reoccurring statement in her arguments for democracy. "Our government is great because we have a revolution every 2 years." Of course referring to elections, I countered her argument by stating the astounding 95% incumbent re-election rate in the house and 90% in the senate.	
English II	The factual information mentioned refers to the time dedicated to simply stating what happened in the book, rather than questioning the way it happened, or providing any deeper thoughts. We spent 18 minutes discussing our weekend, which was facilitated and initiated by the teacher.	We began with explaining the contents of last nights homework, and then moved to strict factual regurgitation of the facts of the book, scenes, characters, WHAT happens, not WHY it happened.	Today class was taken up by an annual dodgeball tournament in which many students participate. It took up this period and the following lunch period.		
Computer Science Elective	Every computer science class involves a few programs that the student must create. The book has all the necessary steps needed to create the program, which leaves little room for thinking creatively.	We began with the explanation of our mid-term assignment, which was an independent project. This allowed for some creativity, however it was limited by standards put into place so that students would produce adequate work.	Worked on independent project.		
Pre Calculous	Todays class began slowly, with much socializing. The rest of the class was review on the homework that we've already had a lesson on.				

A Disconcerting Truth

In sharing this independent endeavor with a classmate, I was confronted with a comment which instilled a feeling exemplary of my disconcert with the current education system. Immediately after seeing the project, without reading or asking any questions, she asked "What class is this for?" I am in a similar situation when found reading a book, such as *The Question of God*, and asked the same question. When answered, incredulity showers down their face, and their immediate question is "Why then?" Students no longer believe that any academically related endeavor can be under the motivation of oneself. As a student body, and ultimately humanity as a whole, is becoming extrinsically motivated. Whether the incentive be sex, praise, wealth or drugs, self-motivation is dying.

I did not make as diligent observations on the last two days in part because I was losing motivation, and in part because any information that would have been noted seemed redundant given the repetitious and mundane style of education.

I have spoken to teachers about the negligible difference of success in school intelligence plays. Intelligence simply allows a smaller workload on the student, if one is unintelligent and incredibly diligent and withholding to frustration and confusion, they can achieve the same level of success in school. It is perfectly possible to pass a course without understanding any of it. Textual references, memorization techniques, and test taking skills are the only necessary components to success in our system. This allows the comparison of students and computers or robots, no creativity is required, only the performance of specified actions.

Another phrase I have commonly heard teachers say is "all you need to know." This can be expanded to "all you need to know for the test" or further to "all you need to know to get past this class" or even "all you I expect you to know and therefore all you should know." This immediately limits what students are going to learn.

"This class has the *most* real world application of all subjects." -Spanish teacher, 12/2/09

Everyday in this school, and I'm assuming most schools, is dull, repetitious and predictable. I believe this is the reason for a loss of interest in students. A major flaw I see in the education system is its focus on the next step: college. Even with this predictable subsequent level of education, high schools do not provide accurate information on students. A student could be astoundingly diligent, intelligent, and creative, but what they are evaluated on, what is put on paper for the colleges to scrutinize is not even what the teacher has seen the student exemplify, but what the student has implemented into a project, or essay, or test. This leaves students who are unable to conform to the standards that accurately evaluate their intelligence and capabilities at a disadvantage. No student is able to conform entirely without morphing or in some case inhibiting their capabilities. This is frustrating. Imagine a student who has completed all assigned work with sufficient effort, but never turned the work in. They have achieved the exact same level of "improvement" as our system would put it, however a college will see them as and with the students who are not capable of doing there work and have not achieved alleged "improvement."

If a computer could answer it, I will not.

I find it absurd that the majority of received work in school requires no creative thought, and simply diligence and the ability to follow directions. Students act as computer programs, executing actions, following algorithms, and producing an end product which is at best a collection of various inputed components, but is often just the regurgitation of these inputs. The level of accordance with the teachers requirements is represented as a grade. Thus, essentially, we are graded on our ability to follow directions. And remember that our academic success directly correlates to our financial success in life in addition to many other successes.

"Repetition does not imply comprehension!"
-J.P. December 2009.

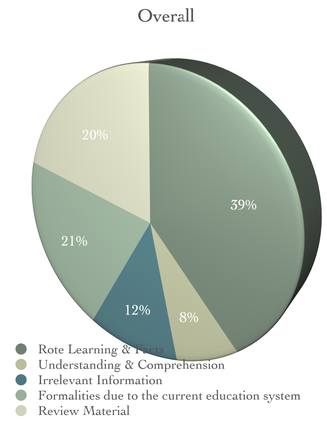
Comments

Raw Data

Results

Averages	All Days Averaged					
Spanish	25.5	0	5.625	12.25	0.25	6.375
Biology	18.5	1.75	4.25	14.75	0.75	10
Civics	17.7	11.8	8.6	6.4	0.4	4.2
English	29.5	3	5.375	6.125	0	6
Computer Science	0	0	0	1.4	48.6	0
Pre Calculus	5	2.6	4.9	11.5	1.25	23.6
Category	Rote Learning & Facts	Understanding & Comprehension	Irrelevant Information	Formalities due to the current education system	Uncategorized	Review Material

Averages	All Days Averaged
Rote Learning & Facts	16.033333
Understanding & Comprehension	3.1916666
Irrelevant Information	4.7916666
Formalities due to the current education system	8.7375
Review Material	8.3625



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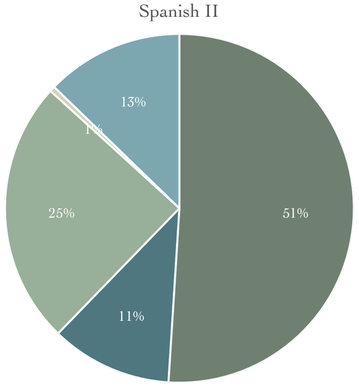

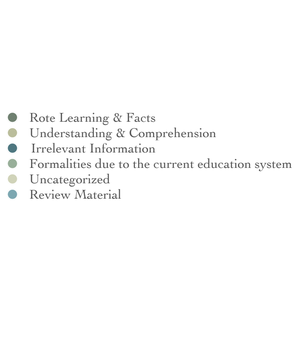

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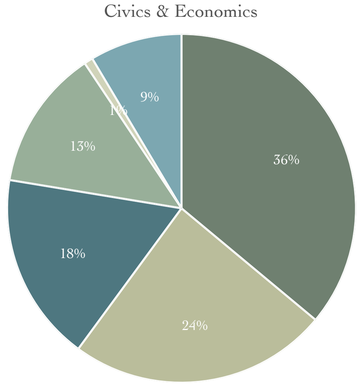
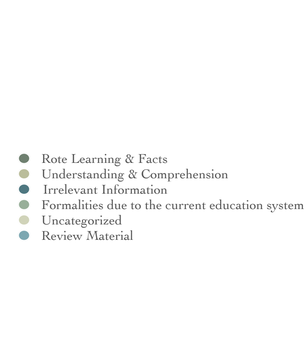
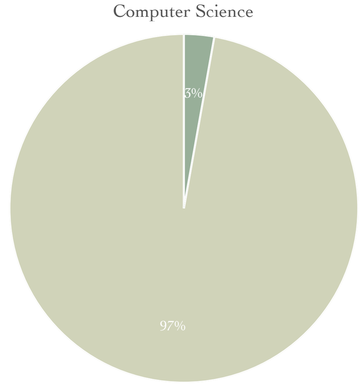
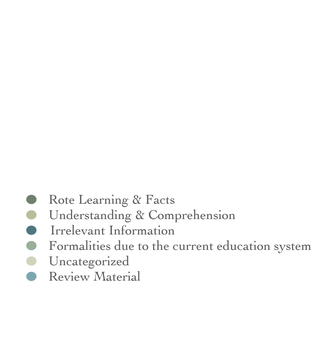


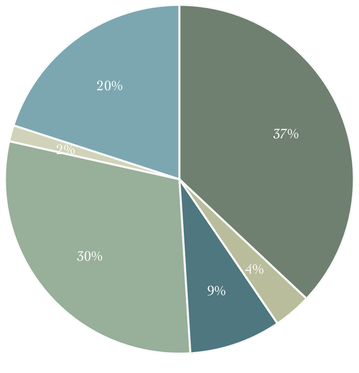


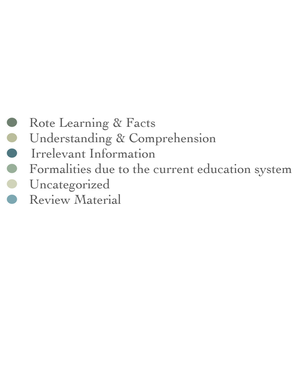
Computer Science



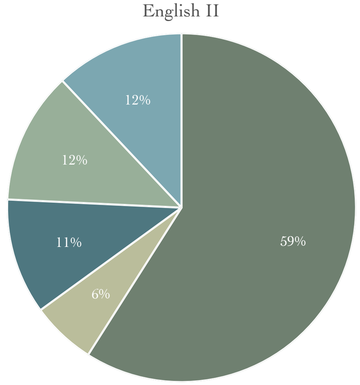


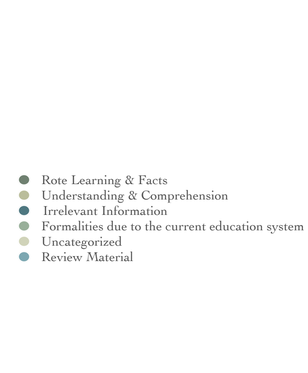
Biology



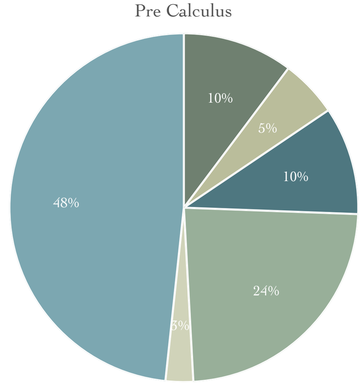


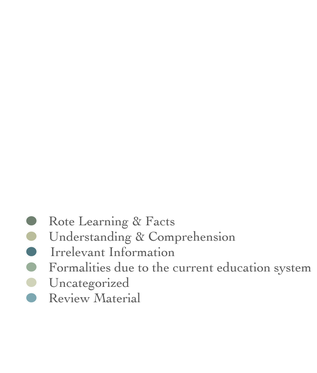
English II





Pre Calculus



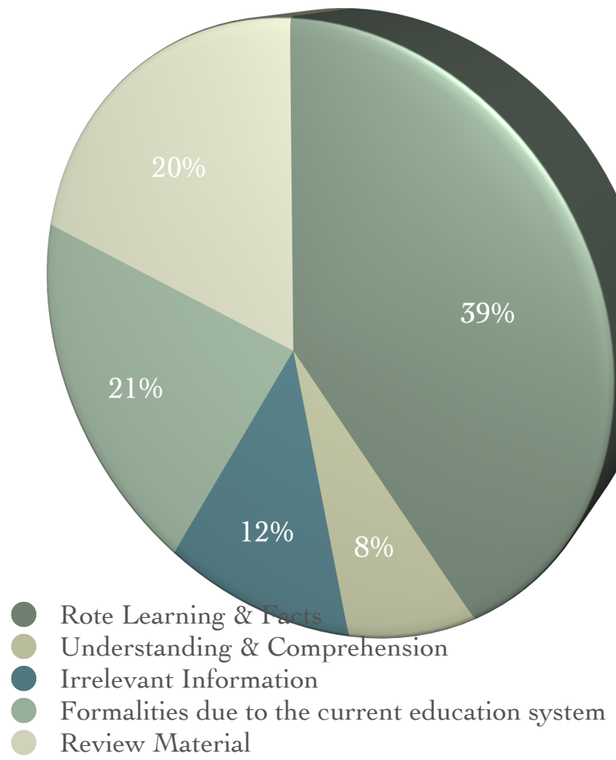


Comments

Results

Data Analysis

Overall



This data shows the overall distribution of time dedicated to the listed categories under all of the subjects combined.

Conclusions

My hypothesis was primarily correct, the only major error in my hypothesis was the miscalculation of the amount of rote learning, and factual study in English II. I misinterpreted our discussions, and saw them as more conceptual then they really are. They are in fact primarily based on facts in the book, and how they relate to each other, not how they relate to conceptual ideas and underlying themes.

Comments

Data Analysis & Conclusions