

# Intensive Courses at Sample School

---

Retention, Critical Thinking, and the Student Learning Experience

# Overview

- Sample and Limitations
- Findings
  - Student Surveys
  - Student Interviews
  - Student Attendance
  - Student Performance
- Lessons Learned and Ideas for the Future

# Sample and Limitations

## Data Sample

- 5 ninth-grade courses: Global History, Living Environment, Spanish, ELA, math
- 77 students surveyed, once before intensives began, 6 times during, once after
- 15 students interviewed (high, mid, and low performers), before, during, and after intensives
- Content Assessments from Semesters 1 and 2
- Powerful Paragraph, Essays, Labs from Semesters 1 and 2

## Data Limitations

- Self-reported data: Perception vs. Reality
- Missing data
- Comparability of pre and post data
- Outside factors

# Findings: Student Survey

## Student Survey:

We asked students to rate themselves on 15 statements before and during each cycle.

- 1) I feel comfortable asking questions in my intensive class.
- 2) I feel comfortable talking to my teacher in this class if I'm struggling with something in their class.
- 3) I find it easy to pay attention in this class.
- 4) I feel excited by what I'm learning in this class.
- 5) I have gotten a lot of feedback from my teacher on how I'm doing in this class.
- 6) My conversations with my teacher help me to understand how I can do better and what I can do next.
- 7) I know what I'm expected to learn in this class.
- 8) I understand why I'm learning what I'm learning in this class.
- 9) I have enough time in this class to learn.
- 10) I know what my strengths and weaknesses are in this class.
- 11) I have the opportunity to present my best behavioral strength in this class.
- 12) I have the opportunity to present my best academic strength in this class.
- 13) I regularly get to connect what I'm learning in this class to the real world.
- 14) I remember what I learned in this class after the unit test is over.
- 15) Think of a typical lesson in this class this cycle. About how much of the time would you say you were engaged or "checked in"?

# Student Survey:

The responses to 7 statements changed significantly in intensives.

1) I feel comfortable asking questions in my intensive class.

2) I feel comfortable talking to my teacher in this class if I'm struggling with something in their class.

➔ 3) I find it easy to pay attention in this class.

4) I feel excited by what I'm learning in this class.

➔ 5) I have gotten a lot of feedback from my teacher on how I'm doing in this class.

➔ 6) My conversations with my teacher help me to understand how I can do better and what I can do next.

7) I know what I'm expected to learn in this class.

8) I understand why I'm learning what I'm learning in this class.

9) I have enough time in this class to learn.

10) I know what my strengths and weaknesses are in this class.

11) I have the opportunity to present my best HOWLS strength in this class.

12) I have the opportunity to present my best academic strength in this class.

13) I regularly get to connect what I'm learning in this class to the real world.

14) I remember what I learned in this class after the unit test is over.

15) Think of a typical lesson in this class this cycle. About how much of the time would you say you were engaged or "checked in"?

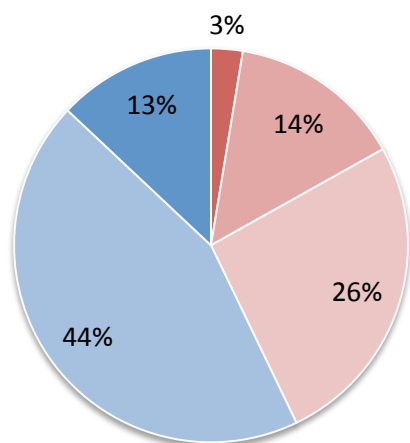
## → Attention Span: Students felt better able to pay attention in class.

The number of students who found it easy to pay attention in class rose 15 percentage points from 57% before intensives to 72% by the end of intensives.

**3) I find it easy to pay attention in this class.**

**Before Intensives (n=77)**

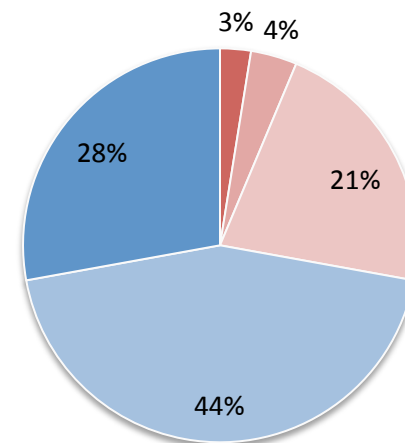
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



**3) I find it easy to pay attention in this class.**

**Cycles 4-6 (n=158)**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

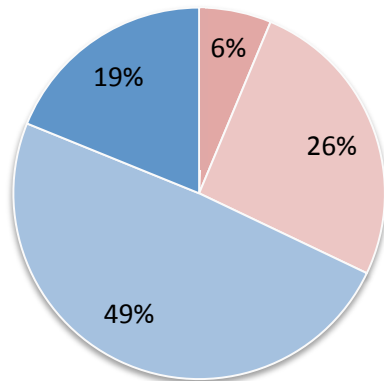


## → Teacher Feedback: More students felt conversations were helpful.

The number of students who said their conversations with teachers helped them to understand how they could do better rose 12 percentage points from 68% at the start of intensives to 80% during intensives.

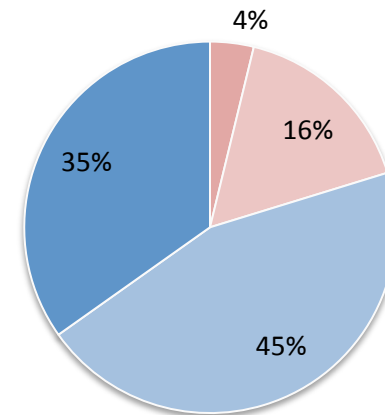
**6) My conversations with my teacher help me to understand how I can do better and what I can do next.**  
Cycles 2-3 (n=159)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



**6) My conversations with my teacher help me to understand how I can do better and what I can do next.**  
Cycles 4-6 (n=158)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree





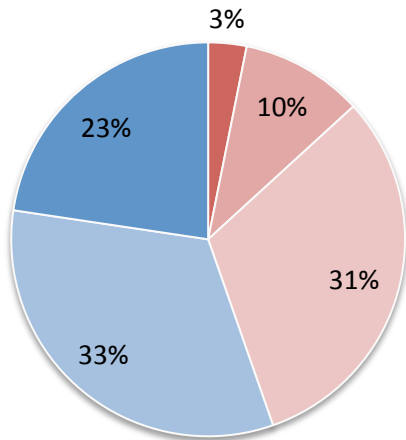
## → Teacher Feedback: Students reported getting more feedback from teachers.

The number of students who said they got a lot of feedback from teachers rose from 56% at the start of intensives to 71% at the end of intensives.

**5) I have gotten a lot of feedback from my teacher on how I'm doing in this class.**

**Cycles 2-3 (n=159)**

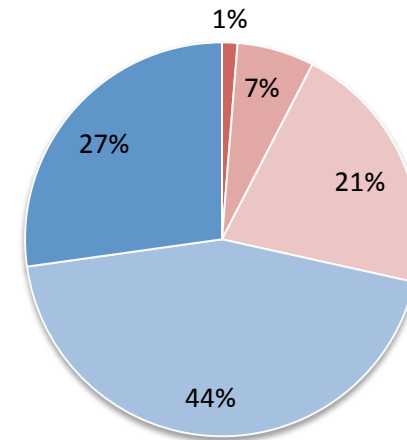
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



**5) I have gotten a lot of feedback from my teacher on how I'm doing in this class.**

**Cycles 4-6 (n=158)**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



# Findings: Post-Intensives Student Survey

## Post-Intensives Student Survey:

We asked students to rate 8 statements after intensives had ended.

- 1) My learning improved in my intensive classes in the second trimester compared to the first trimester.
- 2) Shorter classes help me to learn better than longer classes.
- 3) Having one intensive class each cycle made it easier for me to focus on my learning.
- 4) By the time I saw my teachers again after 4 weeks of not seeing them, I had difficulty remembering what I learned before.
- 5) I can connect what I've learned in my intensive classes to what I've learned in my ELA and math classes.
- 6) It's not easy for me to stay on task during my intensive classes because they are longer.
- 7) My teachers know me better in my intensive classes than in my other classes, because I spend more time with them.
- 8) I learn better when my class meets every day for the entire trimester, rather than intensively for two weeks at a time.

## Post-Intensives Student Survey:

On 4 statements there was no significant difference between classes.

- 1) My learning improved in my intensive classes in the second trimester compared to the first trimester.
- 2) Shorter classes help me to learn better than longer classes.
- 3) Having one intensive class each cycle made it easier for me to focus on my learning.
- 4) By the time I saw my teachers again after 4 weeks of not seeing them, I had difficulty remembering what I learned before.
- 5) I can connect what I've learned in my intensive classes to what I've learned in my ELA and math classes.
- 6) It's not easy for me to stay on task during my intensive classes because they are longer.
- 7) My teachers know me better in my intensive classes than in my other classes, because I spend more time with them.
- 8) I learn better when my class meets every day for the entire trimester, rather than intensively for two weeks at a time.

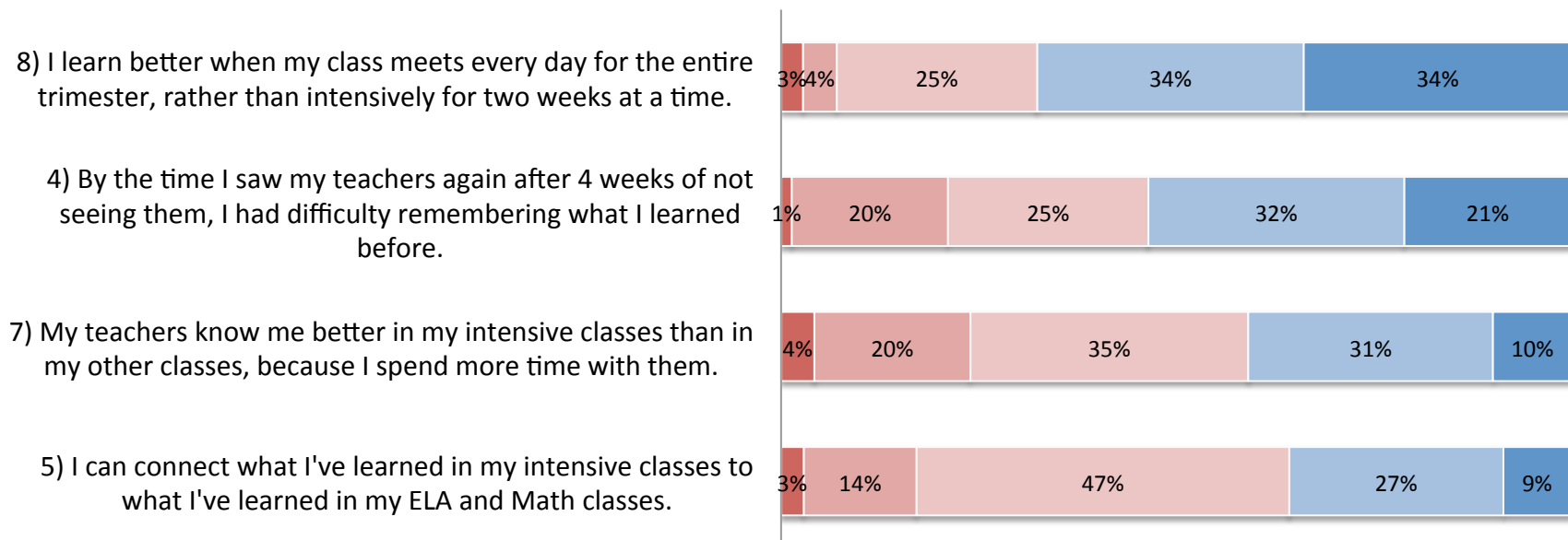
# Post-Intensive Reflection:

## Students had mixed responses to intensives.

Nearly three-quarters (68%) of the students felt they learned better when their classes met every day throughout the trimester. Some students (41%) felt their intensive teachers knew them better, but a large portion (35%) were not sure.

### Post-Intensives Student Survey Q4,5,7,8 All classes (n=71)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



## Post-Intensives Student Survey:

On 4 statements, there was a significant difference between classes.

- 1) My learning improved in my intensive classes in the second trimester, compared to the first trimester.
- 2) Shorter classes help me to learn better than longer classes.
- 3) Having one intensive class each cycle made it easier for me to focus on my learning.
- 4) By the time I saw my teachers again after 4 weeks of not seeing them, I had difficulty remembering what I learned before.
- 5) I can connect what I've learned in my intensive classes to what I've learned in my ELA and math classes.
- 6) It's not easy for me to stay on task during my intensive classes because they are longer.
- 7) My teachers know me better in my intensive classes than in my other classes, because I spend more time with them.
- 8) I learn better when my class meets every day for the entire trimester, rather than intensively for two weeks at a time.

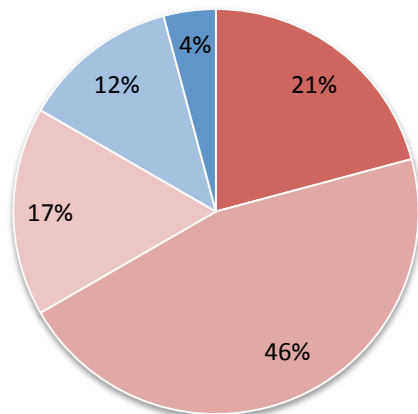
## → Perception of Learning: Students in 9A felt their learning improved.

Over half (58%) of the students in 9A felt their learning improved in intensives, compared to only 16% of the students in 9B and 32% in 9C.

**1) My learning improved in my intensive classes in the second trimester, compared to the first trimester.**

**Class: 9B (n=24)**

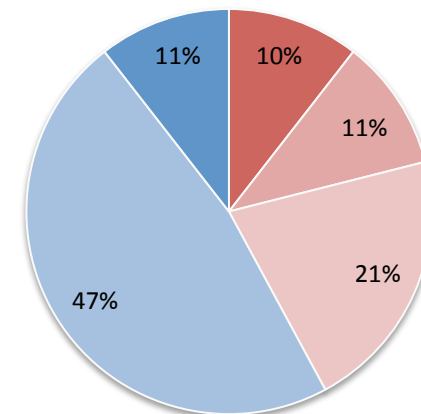
■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Not Sure ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree



**1) My learning improved in my intensive classes in the second trimester, compared to the first trimester.**

**Class: 9A (n=19)**

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Not Sure ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree



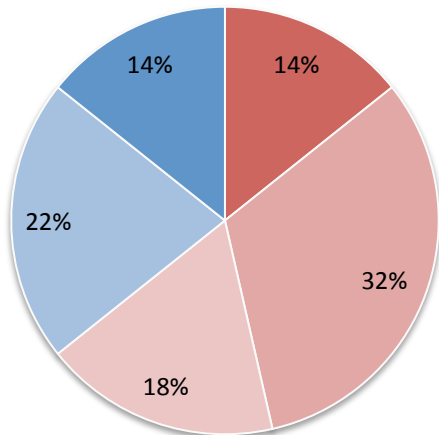
## → Focus on Learning: Students in 9A found it easier to focus on learning.

Most (85%) of the students in 9A found it easier to focus in intensives, compared to only 36% of the students in 9C and 37% in 9B.

**3) Having one intensive class each cycle made it easier for me to focus on my learning.**

**Class: 9C (n=28)**

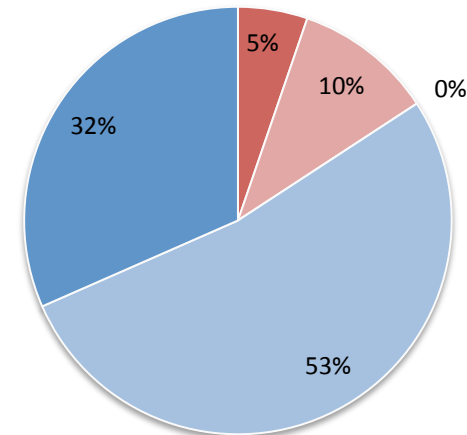
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



**3) Having one intensive class each cycle made it easier for me to focus on my learning.**

**Class: 9A (n=19)**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree





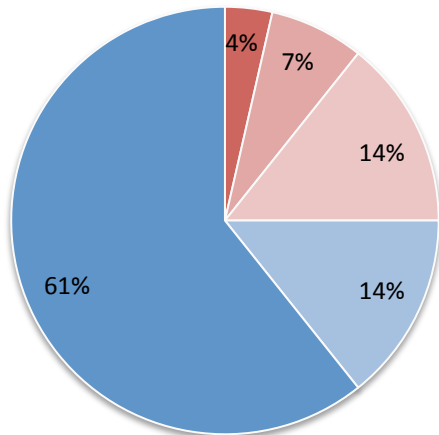
## → Class Length: Students in 9C felt they learned better in shorter classes.

Three-quarters (75%) of students in 9C preferred shorter classes, compared to only 58% of students in 9A and 67% in 9B.

### 2) Shorter classes help me to learn better than longer classes.

Class: 9C (n=28)

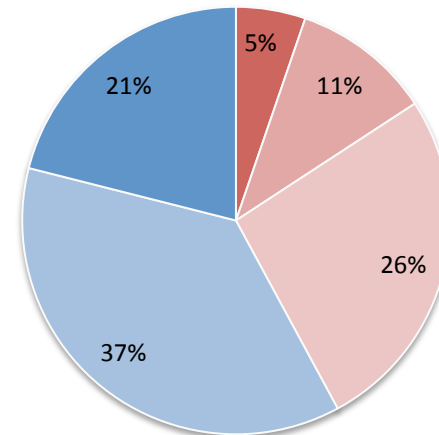
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



### 2) Shorter classes help me to learn better than longer classes.

Class: 9A (n=19)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



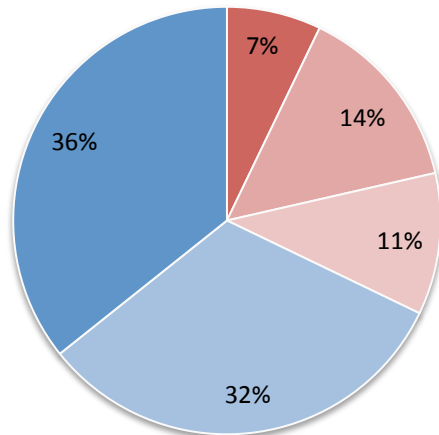
## → Staying on Task: Students in 9C found it difficult to stay on task.

Nearly three-quarters (68%) of students in 9C found it difficult to stay on task in intensives, compared to only 42% of students in 9A and 58% in 9B.

**6) It's not easy for me to stay on task during my intensive classes because they are longer.**

**Class: 9C (n=28)**

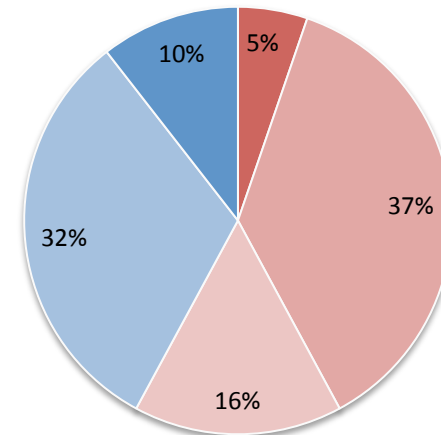
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



**6) It's not easy for me to stay on task during my intensive classes because they are longer.**

**Class: 9A (n=19)**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree



# Questions

What surprised you?

What questions does this raise for you moving forward?

# Findings: Student Interviews

## How has your learning changed?

The majority of students interviewed felt their learning was better.

### Who thought so?

Students previously identified as high performers:



Students previously identified as medium performers:



Students previously identified as low performers:



# I'm learning better with intensives because... I have more time to learn.

"I learn better in intensives. I got more opportunities. We had more time to do things. We went straight through and got to complete things."

"In this class I learned better because I stayed in the class longer. I learned more things."

"I prefer intensives. There's more time and more opportunities to do labs and trips."

## Who thought so?

High-performers:



Medium-performers:



Low-performers:



# I'm learning better with intensives because... I can focus on one class.

“You can focus on that one class. During the normal schedule there are too many classes. It’s all over the place.”

“Before I had to worry about more things. In this class you can focus on that topic.”

“I learn better because I could just focus on three classes at a time, but now I have to worry about all my classes.”

## Who thought so?

High-performers:



Medium-performers:



Low-performers:



# I'm learning better with intensives because... Teachers know me better and give me more attention.

"The intensive teachers judge me for how I learn, and they know how I am during the week because they have me more. They know more about me."

"I learned better because I had more time to be with that teacher. They gave me more advice... Now the focus isn't on me. It's less personal."

"I got to know them better. They got to know the students better. I talk to them less now because they have 90 other students. I'm just giving them more work. I don't want to bother them."

## Who thought so?

High-performers:



Medium-performers:



Low-performers:





Given the choice, would you prefer intensives?  
The majority of those interviewed preferred a regular schedule.

### Who thought so?

Students previously identified as high-performers:



Students previously identified as medium-performers:



Students previously identified as low-performers:



# I'm struggling more with intensives because...

## Classes are too long – I get tired or bored.

### Who thought so?

“It’s just too many hours in the same class.”

“I prefer the regular schedule because I get really tired in intensives and I start to slack in my work. I learn a lot, but I get tired sitting in the same classroom for a long time.”

“I like the regular schedule. If I get bored of one class, I know when it’s going to end. I feel like the day moves quicker.”

High-performers:



Medium-performers:



Low-performers:



# I'm struggling more with intensives because... It's hard to focus in class.

"It's hard to focus. You're taught a bunch of different things in one period, then you have to bring all that information together and take a quiz in one day. For regular classes, you can focus on one lesson per class, then the next day you move on to the next lesson."

"You think you have more time, you can leave for a few minutes, but that's not right. If you zone out for a minute, you're missing a lot more than in a normal class. And it's hard to focus for three hours, to be honest. If I know I have a restricted class period, I have to get it done. I can't just catch up with the material tomorrow."

## Who thought so?

High-performers:



Medium-performers:



Low-performers:



# Other Changes in Student Responses

## What helps you learn the most?

- Fewer students mentioned **hands-on** activities, videos, or field trips.
- Fewer students mentioned the connection to the real world.
- More students talked about extra time, repetition, and slow pace.

## What motivates you to learn?

- More students talked about preparing for success in **college**. Fewer students mentioned preparing for success beyond college.

# Questions

What surprised you?

What questions does this raise for you moving forward?

# Findings: Student Attendance

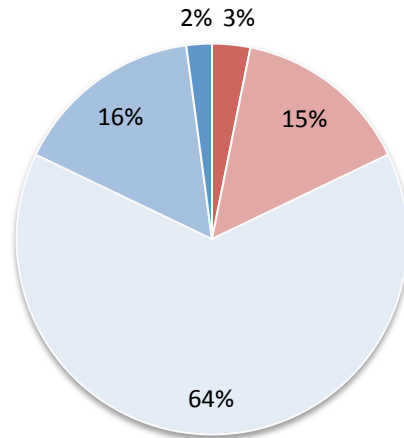
## Attendance:

Students showed little change in daily attendance.

The majority of students (64%) maintained their T1 attendance rates within 2 percentage points.

**Change in Attendance from T1 to T2  
(n=95)**

■ Large Drop (10+ pts) ■ Small Drop (2-10 pts) ■ About the same  
■ Small Gain (2-10 pts) ■ Large Gain (10+ pts)



# Findings: Student Performance



# Retention of Learning:

19 students made 5+ point gains on content assessments in at least two classes.

		Retention										
		Global			Spanish			ELA			Science	Math
Student Name	Class	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T2	T2
		75%	83%	↑ 8%	63%	64%	→ 0%	81%	87%	↑ 6%	92%	
		80%	92%	↑ 12%	89%	94%	↑ 5%	92%	93%	→ 1%	97%	96%
		65%	82%	↑ 17%	52%	70%	↑ 18%	78%	66%	↓ -12%	74%	
		50%	83%	↑ 33%	67%	80%	↑ 13%	62%	56%	↓ -6%	72%	
		65%	71%	↑ 6%	70%	82%	↑ 12%	77%	62%	↓ -15%	71%	80%
		70%	76%	↑ 6%	78%	90%	↑ 11%	54%	47%	↓ -7%	80%	100%
		75%	85%	↑ 10%	24%	43%	↑ 18%	60%	60%	→ 0%	78%	
		80%	47%	↓ -33%	59%	65%	↑ 5%	61%	70%	↑ 9%	92%	
		80%	86%	↑ 6%	67%	83%	↑ 16%	69%	59%	↓ -10%	70%	56%
		30%	76%	↑ 46%	67%	63%	→ -4%	54%	61%	↑ 6%	70%	
		60%	77%	↑ 17%	42%	73%	↑ 30%	60%	62%	→ 2%	47%	83%
		70%	91%	↑ 21%	91%	94%	→ 3%	59%	78%	↑ 18%	82%	
		55%	86%	↑ 31%	18%	25%	↑ 8%				47%	49%
		65%	87%	↑ 22%	68%	67%	→ -2%	73%	79%	↑ 6%	78%	51%
		65%	80%	↑ 15%	62%	72%	↑ 10%	73%	60%	↓ -13%	29%	71%
		60%	72%	↑ 12%	85%	83%	→ -2%	46%	62%	↑ 16%	85%	
		80%	87%	↑ 7%	84%	93%	↑ 9%	84%	70%	↓ -14%	99%	
		55%	69%	↑ 14%	76%	62%	↓ -14%	68%	75%	↑ 7%	79%	49%
		70%	82%	↑ 12%	62%	73%	↑ 11%	78%	61%	↓ -17%	17%	

# Retention of Learning:

20 students dropped 5+ points on content assessments in at least two classes.

		Retention										
		Global			Spanish			ELA			Science	Math
Student Name	Class	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T2	T2
		80%	59%	↓ -21%	77%	70%	↓ -8%	79%	73%	↓ -5%	71%	50%
		90%	90%	→ 0%	85%	77%	↓ -8%	88%	75%	↓ -14%	99%	80%
		90%	88%	→ -2%	77%	71%	↓ -7%	86%	71%	↓ -15%	83%	64%
		80%	72%	↓ -8%	78%	66%	↓ -13%	68%	70%	→ 2%	73%	50%
		55%	48%	↓ -8%	82%	68%	↓ -14%	50%	49%	→ -2%	79%	
		75%	86%	↑ 11%	73%	49%	↓ -23%	73%	53%	↓ -20%	75%	
		90%	88%	→ -2%	78%	73%	↓ -6%	90%	72%	↓ -18%	67%	68%
		70%	44%	↓ -26%	78%	66%	↓ -13%	74%	59%	↓ -15%	41%	29%
			84%		88%	59%	↓ -29%	81%	56%	↓ -24%	90%	60%
		75%	66%	↓ -9%	67%	45%	↓ -21%	69%	62%	↓ -8%	64%	65%
		85%	81%	→ -4%	73%	57%	↓ -17%	79%	61%	↓ -18%	52%	54%
		75%	83%	↑ 8%	86%	81%	↓ -5%	79%	70%	↓ -8%	77%	83%
		55%	77%	↑ 22%	61%	27%	↓ -33%	63%	34%	↓ -29%	54%	
		70%	41%	↓ -29%	67%	69%	→ 2%	73%	62%	↓ -10%	77%	53%
		80%	84%	→ 4%	71%	66%	↓ -5%	74%	62%	↓ -12%	79%	
		90%	53%	↓ -37%	91%	65%	↓ -26%	74%	64%	↓ -11%	48%	
		80%	70%	↓ -10%	70%	44%	↓ -25%	72%	77%	↑ 6%	62%	
		85%	53%	↓ -32%	90%	83%	↓ -7%	81%	82%	→ 1%	73%	64%
		45%	67%	↑ 22%	76%	69%	↓ -7%	62%	43%	↓ -19%		55%
		85%	80%	↓ -5%	73%	58%	↓ -15%				80%	94%

# Critical Thinking:

11 students made 5+ point gains on critical thinking tasks in at least two classes.

		Critical Thinking											
		Global			Spanish			ELA			Science		Math
Student Name	Class	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	Writing	Labs	HOWLS
		63%	71%	↑ 8%	64%	72%	↑ 8%	76%	69%	↓ -7%	90%	75%	
		68%	74%	↑ 6%	78%	88%	↑ 9%	81%	88%	↑ 8%	96%	80%	80%
		68%	64%	→ -4%	73%	82%	↑ 8%	70%	82%	↑ 12%	95%	83%	100%
		68%	64%	→ -3%	72%	78%	↑ 6%	57%	71%	↑ 14%	77%	88%	75%
		70%	77%	↑ 7%	73%	69%	→ -4%	75%	83%	↑ 8%	73%	70%	100%
		70%	63%	↓ -7%	41%	59%	↑ 19%	64%	76%	↑ 12%	73%	100%	
		65%	69%	→ 4%	53%	74%	↑ 21%	67%	74%	↑ 6%	82%	75%	
		50%	54%	→ 4%	56%	63%	↑ 6%	52%	76%	↑ 25%	56%	67%	95%
		70%	79%	↑ 9%	73%	86%	↑ 12%	82%	80%	→ -2%	75%	85%	75%
		70%	80%	↑ 10%	64%	58%	↓ -6%	72%	86%	↑ 14%	23%	45%	75%
			61%		67%	73%	↑ 6%	59%	77%	↑ 17%	82%	33%	75%

# Critical Thinking:

12 students dropped 5+ points on critical thinking tasks in at least two classes.

		Critical Thinking											
		Global			Spanish			ELA			Science		Math
Student Name	Class	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	T1	T2	Change	Writing	Labs	HOWLS
		65%	59%	↓ -6%	84%	60%	↓ -25%	82%			81%	40%	75%
		70%	59%	↓ -11%	83%	72%	↓ -11%	74%	67%	↓ -7%	77%	58%	95%
		65%	54%	↓ -11%	75%	67%	↓ -8%	78%	76%	→ -2%	61%	58%	
		63%	50%	↓ -13%	80%	60%	↓ -20%	64%			56%	40%	65%
		68%	59%	↓ -8%	92%	73%	↓ -19%	73%	79%	↑ 6%	80%	100%	
		70%	54%	↓ -16%	88%	63%	↓ -24%	64%	87%	↑ 23%	72%	100%	
		70%	59%	↓ -11%	58%	51%	↓ -7%	77%	73%	→ -4%	64%	5%	65%
		70%	63%	↓ -7%	88%	76%	↓ -12%	73%	75%	→ 2%	94%	85%	
		73%	66%	↓ -7%	88%	65%	↓ -22%	79%	80%	→ 1%	78%	83%	
		70%	57%	↓ -13%	69%	56%	↓ -13%	78%	77%	→ -1%	50%	35%	
		65%	55%	↓ -10%	80%	59%	↓ -21%	61%	86%	↑ 25%	13%	92%	
		68%	57%	↓ -10%	69%	57%	↓ -12%	70%	81%	↑ 11%			75%

# Questions

What surprised you?

What questions does this raise for you moving forward?

# Lessons Learned

## 7 Promising Practices from the Ninth-Grade Team

1. Plan ahead.
2. Dig in to the material.
3. Be creative: projects, fieldwork, inquiry, movement, film, discussions, technology, 20% time.
4. Give personalized feedback.
5. Differentiate.
6. Develop critical thinking.
7. Encourage student ownership.

# Revising the Model

## Ideas for the future from the Ninth-Grade Team

### I. Which **students** does the model best serve?

- Upperclassmen vs. lowerclassmen
- High level vs. low level

### II. Which **courses** are most conducive?

- Project-based, goal-centered, interdisciplinary
- Hands-on, fieldwork-friendly
- Electives vs. Core
- Connection to internships, off-site coursework

### III. What does the **schedule** look like?

- Uninterrupted, contained blocks
- Hybrid intensive and regular schedule
- Options for differentiation
- Daily contact for skill development

# Next Steps