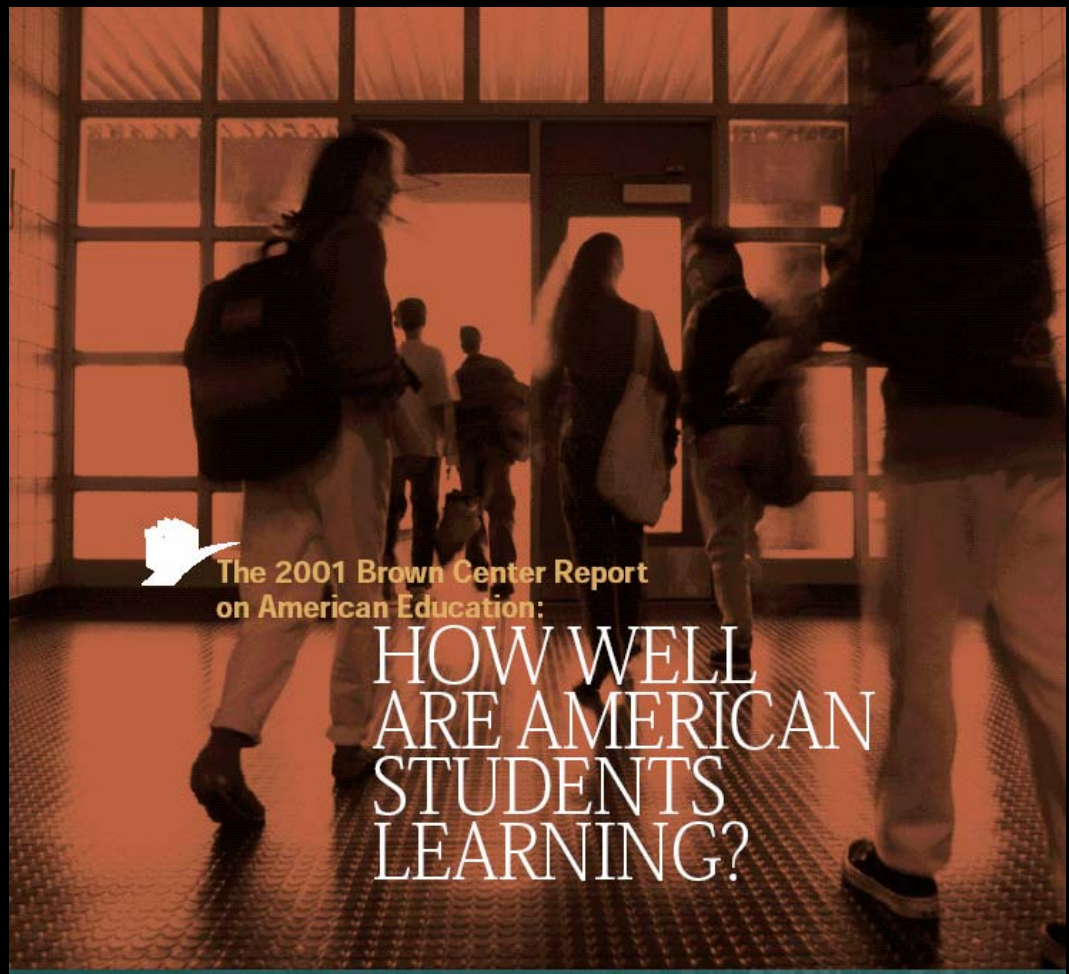


The 2001 Brown Center Report on American Education:

HOW WELL ARE AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING?

With special sections on high school culture and urban school achievement

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

2001 BROWN CENTER REPORT OVERVIEW

1. Reading & Math Achievement in the 1990s
2. Update on State Tests
3. TIMSS Analysis of U.S. Math Curriculum & Instruction
4. Is the Reading Gap Really Widening?
5. High School Culture
6. Urban School Achievement

Main NAEP Reading Scores (1992-2000)

Table 1

	1992	1994	1998	2000
12th grade	292	287	291	—
8th grade	260	260	264	—
4th grade	217	214	217	217

Main NAEP Math Scores (1990-2000)

Table 2

	1990	1992	1996	2000
12th grade	294	300	304	301
8th grade	263	268	272	275
4th grade	213	220	224	228

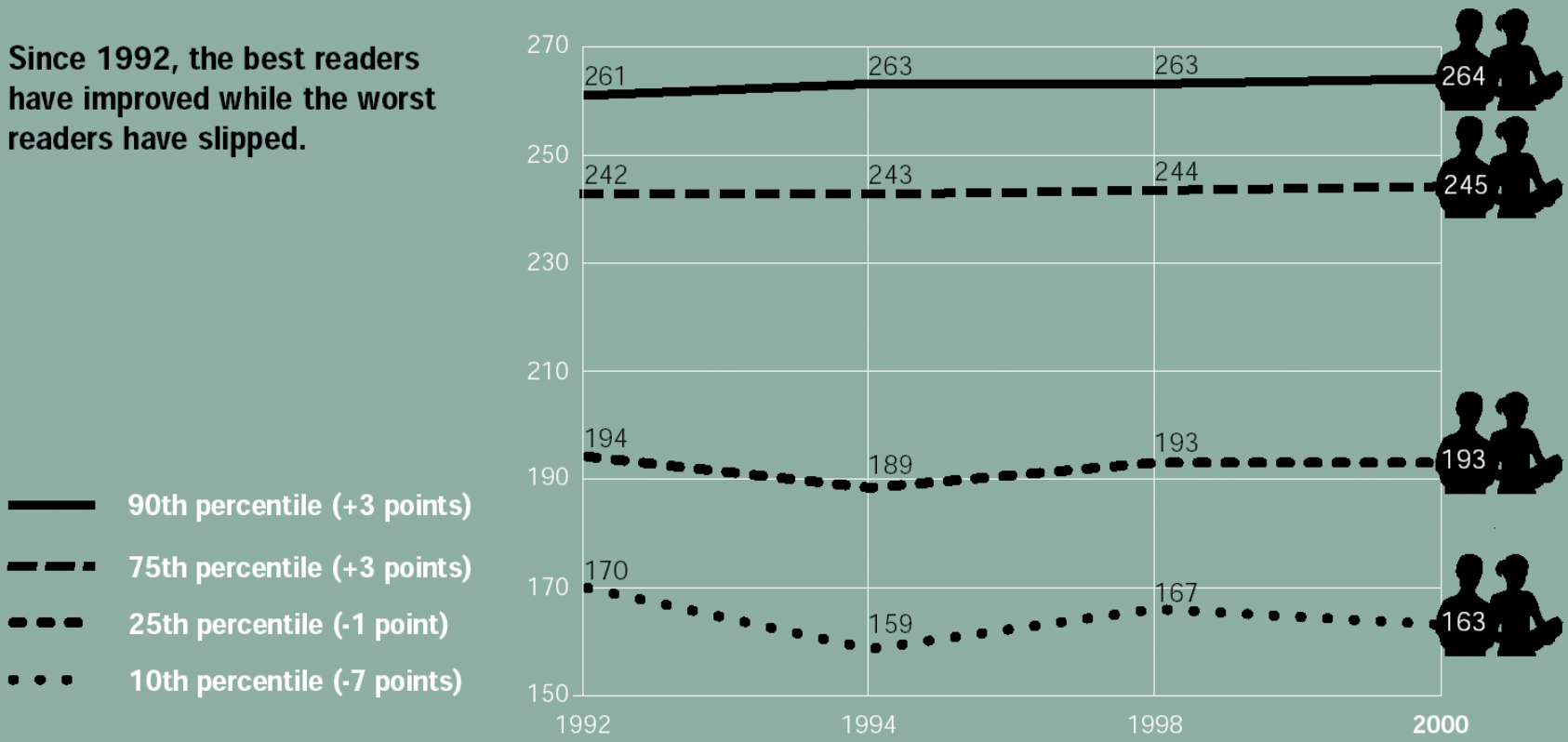
Is the Reading Gap Really Widening?

Main NAEP shows a widening reading gap.

Fourth grade reading scores as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992-2000.

Fig 3

Since 1992, the best readers have improved while the worst readers have slipped.



State NAEP Reading Scores
(Grade 4)

Table 8

25th Percentile

	States Improving	States Unchanged	States Declining
1992–1994	0	17	16
1994–1998	12	23	0

75th Percentile

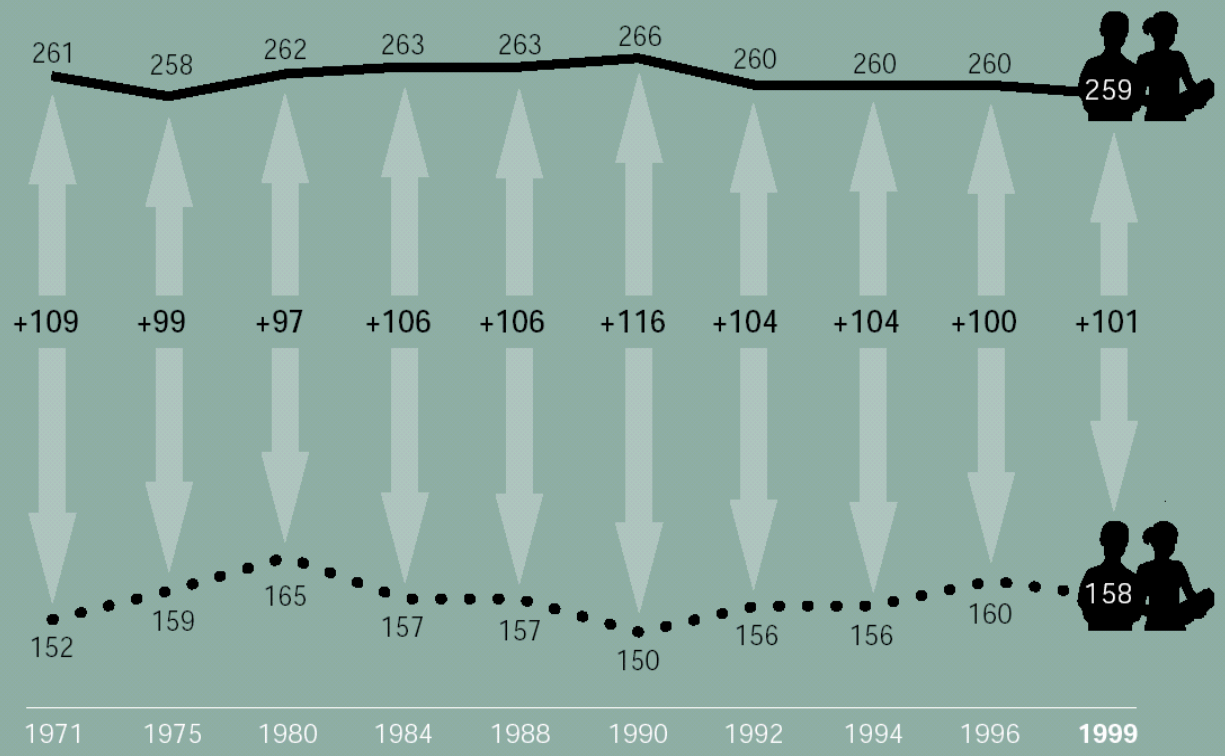
	States Improving	States Unchanged	States Declining
1992–1994	3	29	1
1994–1998	2	32	1

The trend NAEP tells a different story.

Age 9 reading scores as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1971-1999.

Fig 4

As opposed to the main NAEP, the trend test shows that the gap between the best and the worst readers shrank in the 1990s.



90th percentile (-2 points)

10th percentile (+6 points)

READING GAP
CONCLUSIONS

1. **Reading Gap has two phases.**

2. **Gap widened in first phase, narrowed in second.**

3. **On the trend NAEP, gap narrowed from 1990 to 1999.**

Part III URBAN SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement in the Nation's Top Fifty Cities, 2000
Rank-ordered by City Population
(Scores on State Tests)

Table 11

City	State	School District	Z-Score	% Free Lunch	% Black + Hispanic	City Population Rank
New York City	NY	New York City Public Schools	-2.40	0.58	0.74	1
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles Unified School District	-1.31	0.73	0.82	2
Chicago	IL	Chicago Public Schools	-2.29	0.56	0.86	3
Houston	TX	Houston Independent School District [1]	-1.02	0.60	0.86	4
Philadelphia	PA	School District of Philadelphia	-3.38	0.42	0.75	5
San Diego	CA	San Diego Unified School District	-0.25	0.64	0.50	6
Phoenix	AZ	Paradise Valley Unified District [1]	1.44	0.16	0.10	7
San Antonio	TX	San Antonio Independent School District [1]	-2.23	0.80	0.94	8
Dallas	TX	Dallas Independent School District	-3.18	0.65	0.86	9
Detroit	MI	Detroit Public Schools	-1.42	0.64	0.93	10
San Jose	CA	San Jose Unified School District	0.00	0.43	0.51	11
San Francisco	CA	San Francisco Unified School District	0.25	0.65	0.38	12
Indianapolis	IN	Indianapolis Public Schools	-2.64	0.64	0.59	13
Jacksonville	FL	Duval County Public Schools	-0.41	0.38	0.42	14
Baltimore	MD	Baltimore City Public School System	-2.73	0.65	0.85	16
El Paso	TX	El Paso Independent School District [1]	-1.03	0.59	0.80	17
Memphis	TN	Memphis City Schools	-2.66	0.38	0.82	18
Austin	TX	Austin Independent School District	-1.52	0.42	0.59	19
Milwaukee	WI	Milwaukee Public Schools	-4.40	0.66	0.72	20
Boston	MA	Boston Public Schools	-1.95	0.46	0.73	21
Seattle	WA	Seattle Public Schools	0.24	0.19	0.31	22
Charlotte	NC	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	-0.69	0.29	0.43	23
Nashville	TN	Nashville-Davidson City Public Schools	-1.22	0.32	0.43	25
Fort Worth	TX	Fort Worth Independent School District	-1.53	0.53	0.70	27
Denver	CO	Denver Public Schools	-1.70	0.51	0.68	29
Tucson	AZ	Tucson Unified School District [1]	0.08	0.34	0.47	31
New Orleans	LA	New Orleans Public Schools	-1.98	0.70	0.92	32
Long Beach	CA	Long Beach Unified Public School District	-0.88	0.64	0.58	34
Virginia Beach	VA	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	0.26	0.17	0.26	35
Las Vegas	NV	Clark County School District	-0.39	0.27	0.33	37
Sacramento	CA	Sacramento City Unified School District	-0.47	0.59	0.43	38
Fresno	CA	Fresno Unified School District	-1.16	0.62	0.53	39
Atlanta	GA	Atlanta Public Schools [1]	-0.87	0.74	0.92	40
Miami	FL	Miami-Dade County Public Schools	-1.77	0.53	0.84	44
Mesa	AZ	Mesa Unified School District [1]	1.00	0.19	0.19	45
Oakland	CA	Oakland Unified School District	-1.31	0.60	0.73	46
Minneapolis	MN	Minneapolis Public Schools	-3.40	0.54	0.45	47
Colorado Springs	CO	Colorado Springs Public Schools	0.12	0.23	0.23	48
Pittsburgh	PA	Pittsburgh Public Schools	-1.80	0.42	0.56	49

Achievement in the Nation's Top Fifty Cities, 2000
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Detroit	MI	Detroit Public Schools	-1.42	0.64	0.93	10

Urban District Achievement
Z-Score Summary

Z-Score Range (SD Units)	Percentage of Cities (n=39)
≥ 0.00	21%
< 0.00	80%
< 1.00	62%
< 2.00	26%

Achievement of Poor Urban School Districts in Selected States, 2000

Table 12

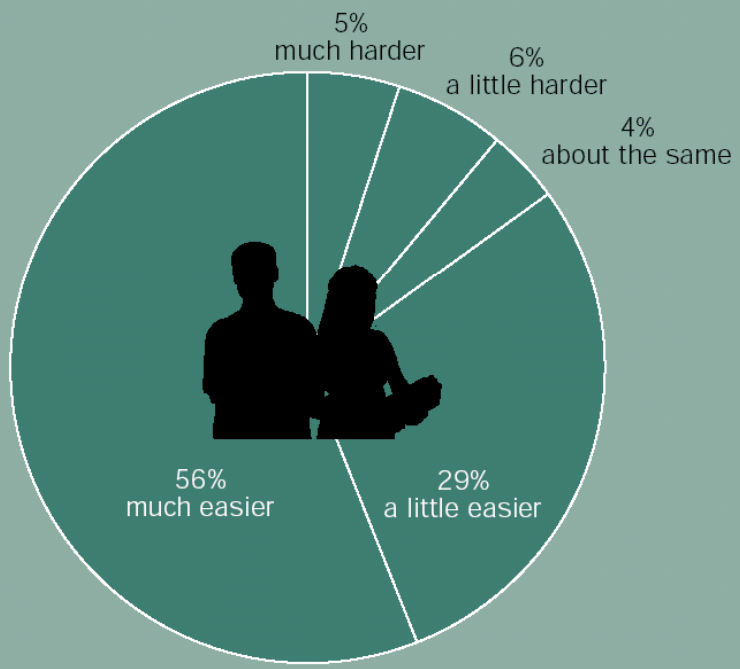
State	Districts	Average Z-Score	Standard Error	% Free Lunch	% Black + Hispanic
North Carolina	1	+0.26	—	0.40	0.57
Florida	6	-0.43	0.30	0.45	0.43
Louisiana	6	-0.53	0.37	0.55	0.62
Arizona	10	-0.65	0.20	0.52	0.73
Georgia	7	-0.72	0.11	0.56	0.69
Texas	44	-0.72	0.17	0.59	0.75
California	64	-0.75	0.07	0.63	0.51
Washington	2	-0.98	0.40	0.44	0.41
Colorado	2	-1.10	0.60	0.46	0.60
Virginia	9	-1.24	0.25	0.50	0.64
New York	12	-1.88	0.20	0.53	0.49
Illinois	4	-1.89	0.17	0.51	0.76
Massachusetts	4	-2.05	0.37	0.50	0.72
Pennsylvania	8	-2.05	0.44	0.48	0.50
Michigan	16	-2.09	0.22	0.56	0.67
Indiana	6	-2.27	0.38	0.53	0.56
Maryland	1	-2.73	—	0.65	0.85
Minnesota	2	-3.31	0.08	0.52	0.36
Wisconsin	1	-4.41	—	0.66	0.72

Part II HIGH SCHOOL CULTURE

American classes are easier.

Fig 5

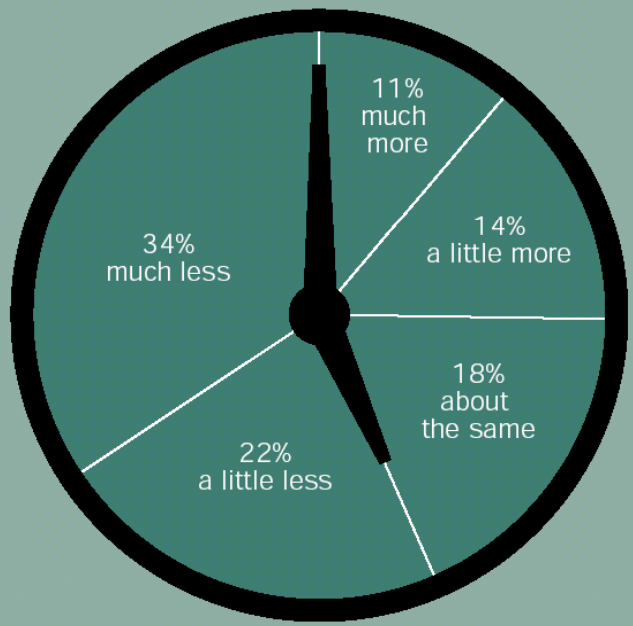
The survey asked foreign exchange students to compare their U.S. classes to classes in their home country.



American students don't spend as much time on schoolwork.

Fig 6

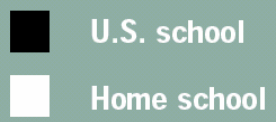
Exchange students were asked: "Compared to students in your home country, do you think U.S. students spend more, less, or about the same amount of time on schoolwork?"

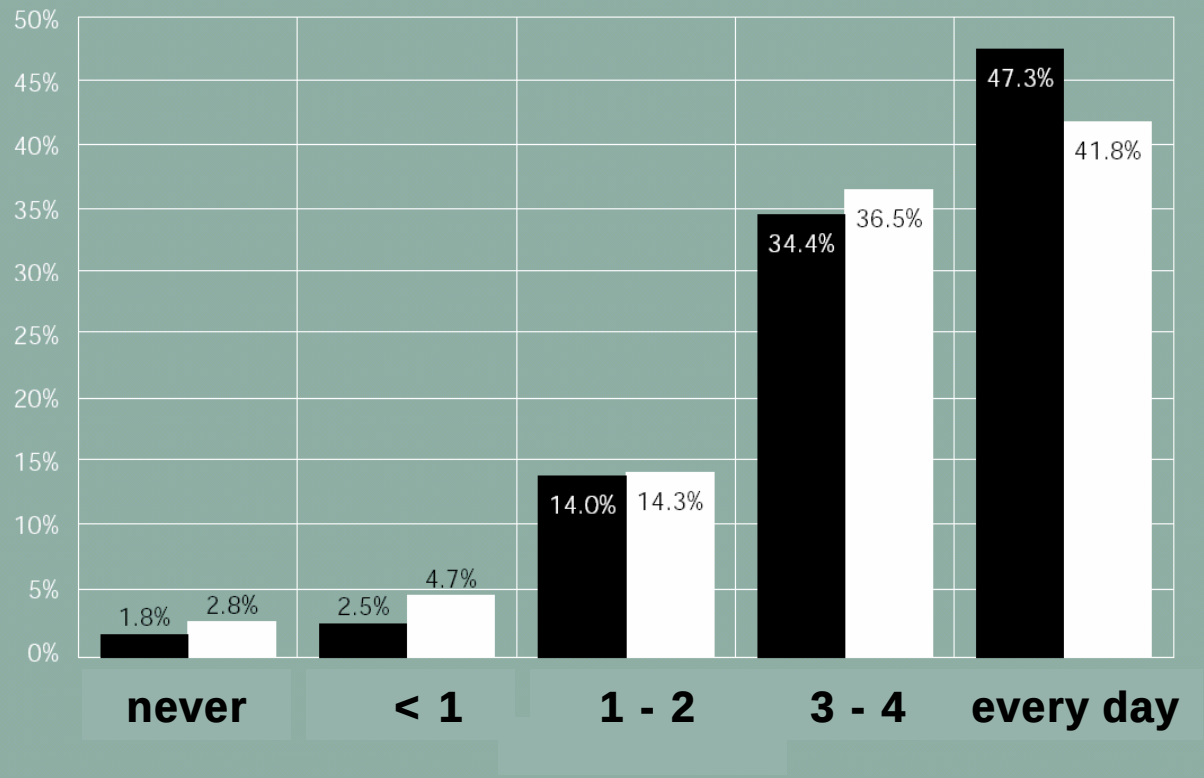


Math homework is assigned with equal frequency in the U.S. and abroad.

Fig 7

Exchange students reported how many days per week math homework was assigned at their U.S. school and at their home school.

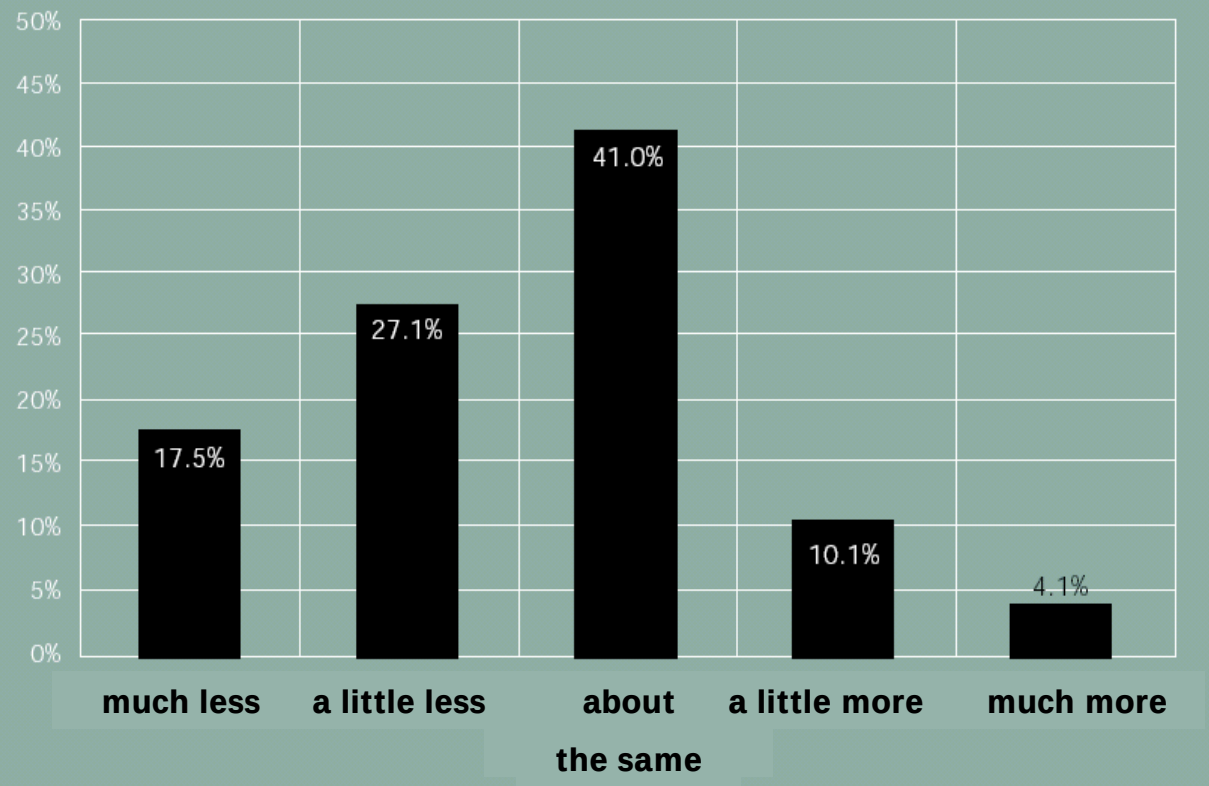




Success in math means less in the U.S.

Fig 8

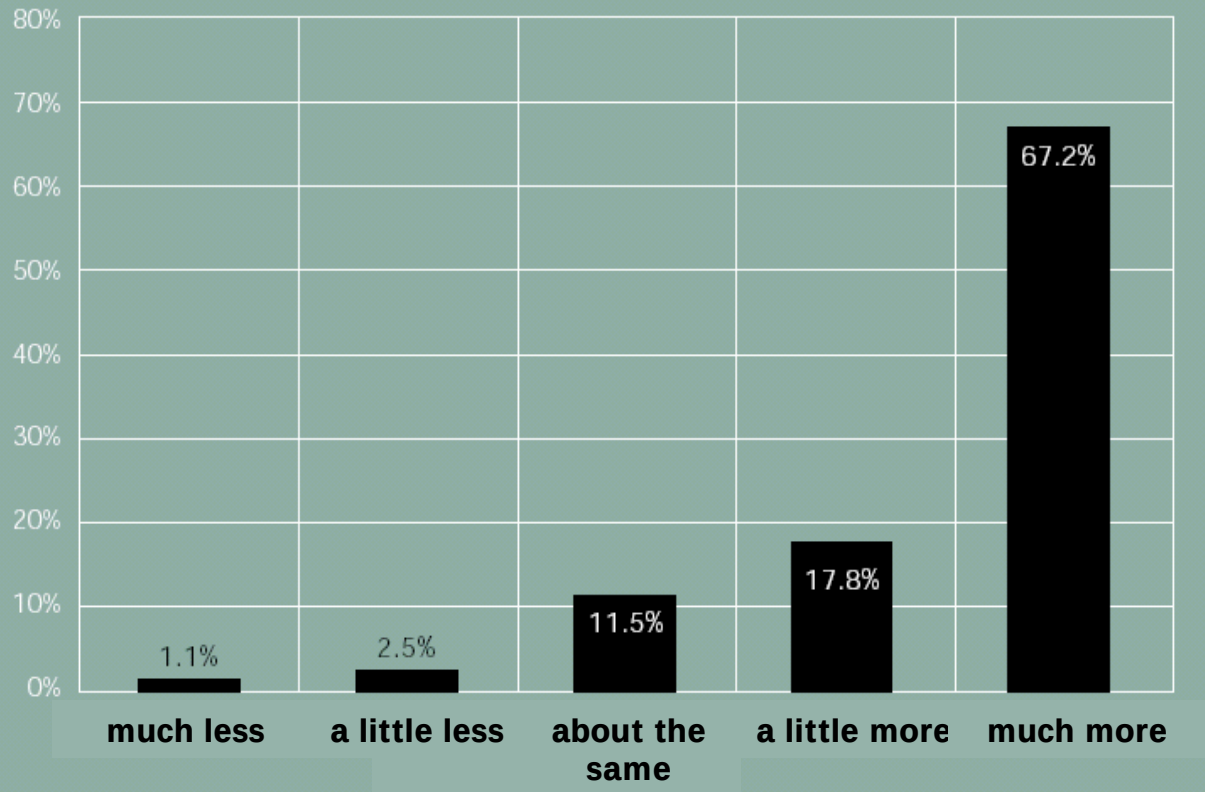
Exchange students were asked, "Compared to students in your home country, how important do your U.S. friends think it is to do well in math?"



Success in sports is dramatically more important in the U.S.

Fig 9

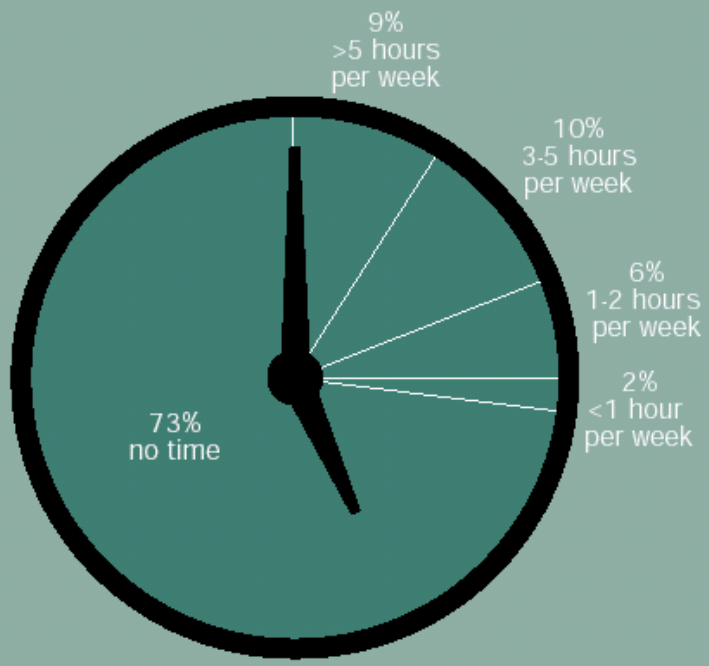
The survey asked, "Compared to students in your home country, how important do your U.S. friends think it is to do well in sports?"



Exchange students aren't distracted by part-time jobs.

Fig
10

Students were asked, "During a normal school week in your home country, how much time before and after school do you usually spend working at a paid job?"

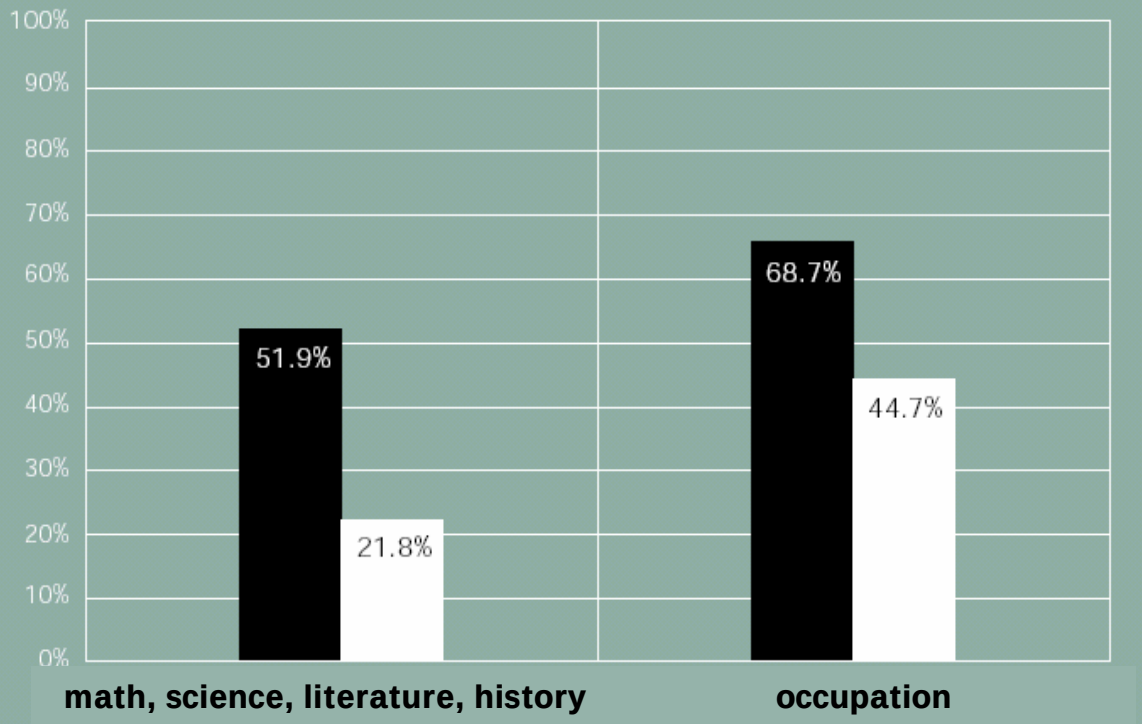


American and exchange students differ on why they go to school.

Students were asked to rate each reason as "very important," "somewhat important," or "not important."

Fig 11

Much higher percentages of the sample said that intellectual development and career preparation were "very important" to foreign students than to their American counterparts.

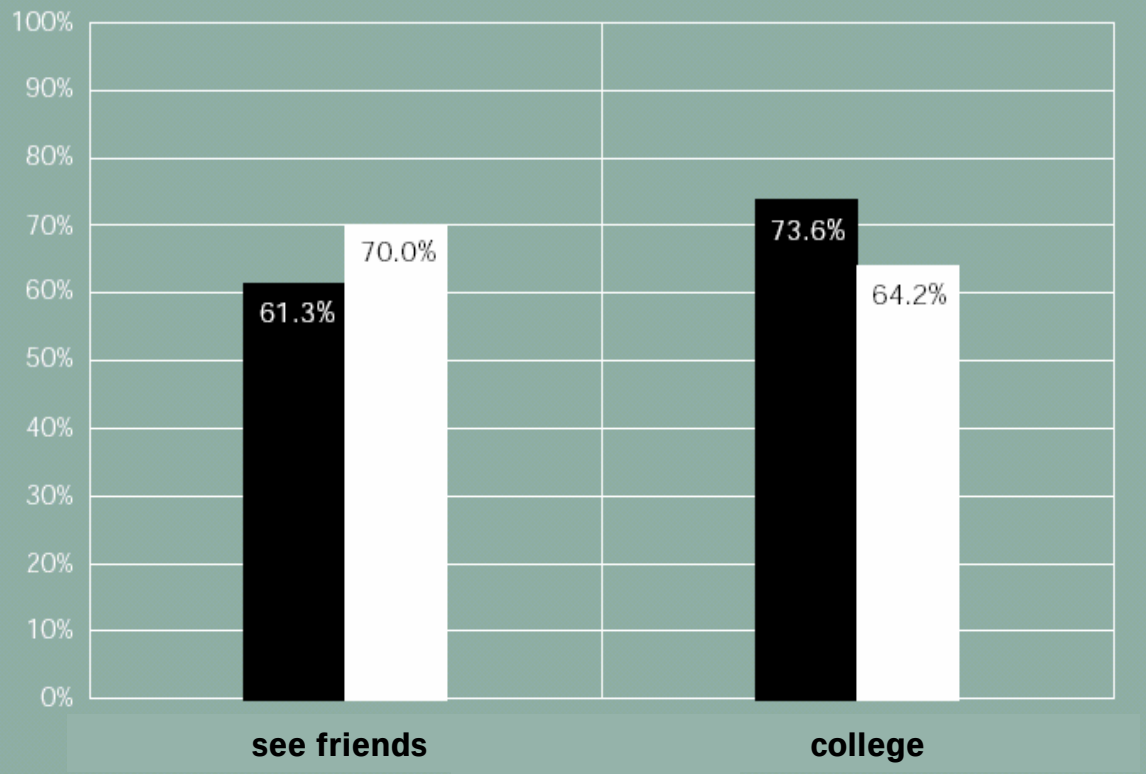


But there are two areas of agreement.

Students were asked to rate each reason as "very important," "somewhat important," or "not important."

Fig 12

Both U.S. and exchange students see social life and college preparation as "very important" reasons for going to school.



In home country

In U.S.

How do U.S. high schools compare to those abroad?
Foreign exchange students believe...

...American schools are easier.

...American students don't work as hard.

...American students don't care as much about success at mathematics.

...American students care more about success at sports.

...American students devote more time to part-time jobs.

...American students are skeptical of the value of "learning for its own sake."

...American students are less aware of how school prepares them for an occupation.

…American students are equally aware that school prepares them for college.

...High schoolers in the U.S. and all over world enjoy being with their friends at school.

2001 BROWN CENTER REPORT CONCLUSIONS

1. Math scores were up in the 1990s; reading scores were flat.

2. The two NAEP tests give different stories on the reading gap.

3. Urban schools vary in achievement. Urban districts serving poor children appear to do better in the Sun Belt states.

4. U.S. high school culture contains formidable obstacles to academic excellence, among them, the low value teens place on academic accomplishments, the high value placed on athletic success, and the distraction of part-time work.