Data Importance: Real-World Examples

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For this exercise I chose to examine the Florida School and District Grades dataset from Google Public Data. I imagined that I would be creating data visualizations for parents of Eighth graders in the Sarasota school dristrict who are looking for information that will help them determine where to send their children for high school. The two particular audiences are all parents in general and parents of English as a Second Language students.

In this situation, the two audiences would be interested in different types of information to help them make their decisions.

In the general group of parents, I think they would be concerned in the various graduation rates of the various high schools and how the graduation rates have changed over time and are currently trending. This is a main concern for parents in general because they want to ensure that their children will be attending a school that cultivates an environment where most students are able to graduate and where their children’s peers will be high performing students who are more likely to pursue higher education.

In the group of parents of English as a Second Language students, I think they would be concerned with how the different high schools cater to students who might not have the best English language skills upon entry. This could be the group’s main concern because some high schools, even the ones with the highest graduation rates, might not have the best curriculum and/or teaching personnel for their children.

For both data visualizations, the best way to represent the data is a line chart with year (2015/2016 to 2018) on the x-axis and the subject of interest as a percentage on the y-axis. This is a simple visualization that both audiences would be able to comprehend. I chose to include all high schools in the Sarasota school district, even though most parents would likely be choosing between a select few or just two particular high schools. All of the high schools are represented by unique lines which are labeled on the right side of the visualization. I also included a line for Sarasota school district as a whole. The weakness of these visualizations is that the lines are somewhat clustered. One way to alleviate this weakness would be to crop the y-axis instead of ranging all the way from 0 to 100%. Another weakness is that since I chose to include all high schools, the amount of colors that were used means some are similar and can be hard to decipher with a quick glance. On the other hand, this type of visualization is great at showing how changes happen over time. For example, you can easily the increasing graduation rates at Imagine School and Booker High School.



