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Homework: A effective learning tool in education

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Abstract: This paper studies in detail about the concept of homework, its objective and its importance for students. It describes both the positive and negative outcomes of homework. It also highlights on how students get mentally affected due to excess homework causing their performance to deteriorate in future exams. This content includes some comments said by some parents and students during past research.

Keywords: skills , strategy , assignement , homework practice , Authenticity, Hyperactive , Obesity, Basic Academic skills, Sedentary activity .

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPT OF HOMEWORK

Homework, or homework assignment, refers to tasks assigned to students by their teachers to be completed outside of class. Common homework assignments may include a quantity or period of reading to be performed, writing or typing to be completed, problems to be solved, a school project to be built or other skills to be practiced. It is described as preparatory school work done outside school (especially at home) You know you are about to enter a war zone with homework at the heart of the battle. Every school day brings something new, but there is one status quo most parents expect: homework. The old adage that practice makes perfect seems to make sense when it comes to schoolwork. But, while hunkering down after dinner amongst books and worksheets might seem like a natural part of childhood, there's more research now than ever suggesting that it shouldn't be so The basic objectives of assigning homework to students are the same as schooling in general: To increase the knowledge and improve the abilities and skills of the students. However, opponents of homework cite homework as rote, or grind work, designed to take up children's time, without offering tangible benefit . Homework may be designed to reinforce what students have already learned, prepare them for upcoming (or complex or difficult)lessons,extend what they know by having them apply it to new situations, or to integrate their abilities by applying many different skills to a single task. Homework also provides aoppportunity for parents to participate in their children's education . There are three types of homework: practice, preparation, and extension. Practice reinforces new skills. For example, a student may be given a set of math problems for homework that are similar to the ones completed in

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class. Preparation helps students prepare for future classroom activities such background research on an upcoming topic. Extension is normally a long-term project that goes along with class work throughout the year. Examples are term papers or science fair projects .

HISTORY OF HOMEWORK

It seems as though they have been around forever. Historically, homework was frowned upon in American culture. With few students interested in higher education, and due to the necessity to complete daily chores, homework was discouraged not only by parents, but also by school districts. In 1901, California legislature passed an act that effectively abolished homework for those who attended kindergarten through the eighth grade. But, in the 1950s, with increasing pressure on the United States to stay ahead in the Cold War, homework made resurgence, and children were encouraged to keep up with their Russian counterparts. By the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, the consensus in American education was overwhelmingly in favor of issuing homework to students of all grade levels . In a study done at the University of Michigan in 2007, research concluded that the amount of homework given is increasing over time. In a sample taken of students between the ages of 6 and 9, it was shown that students spend more than two hours a week on homework, as opposed to 44 minutes in 1981. Harris Cooper, nations top homework scholar, concluded after a comprehensive review that homework does not improve academic achievements for grade school students. Cooper analyzed dozens of students and found that kids who are assigned homework in middle and high school actually score "somewhat" better on standardized tests, but that kids who do 60 to 90 minutes of homework in middle school and more than 2 hours in high school actually score worse . In the 1800s the majority of children did not go to school beyond grammar school. Those who did, ended up having to do "memorization and drilling of facts" (Gill and Schlossman, 1996). During the 1900s restrictions were placed on homework. California homework law in 1901.

PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

basic of assigning homework to students are the same as schooling in general: to increase the knowledge and improve the abilities and skills of the students to prepare them for upcoming (or complex or difficult) lessons, to extend what they know by having them apply it to new situations, or to integrate their abilities by applying different skills to a single task. Homework also provides an opportunity for parents to participate in their children's education. Homework is designed to reinforce what students have already learned.

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Teachers have many purposes for assigning homework including:

- practice,
- preparation,
- participation
- personal development,
- parent–child relations,
- parent–teacher communications,
- peer interactions,
- policy,public relations, and punishment.

ADVANTAGES OF HOMEWORK

- Homework is important because it is at the intersection between home and school. It serves as a window through which you can observe your children’s education and express positive attitudes towards your children and their education. As children grow older, homework and the amount of time engaged in homework, increases in importance. For teachers and administrators, homework is a cost effective way to provide additional instruction in practice.
- Lets examine the six constructive purposes for homework in the context of your child's educational experience. The first two are the most important and obvious. Through practice and participation in learning tasks, homework can improve your child’s achievement. Thus, it would be expected that if homework were completed accurately, not only would your child's general knowledge and grades improve but your child would also increase mastery of basic academic skills, such as reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.
- Homework can provide other benefits. Your child's ability to bring an assignment home, gather and organize necessary materials to complete the assignment, return the assignment and receive a grade, strengthens his or her sense of responsibility. Time management skills are learned. There is also improved development of personal skills such as time management gained by completing homework. Further, when homework proceeds smoothly it can become a positive aspect of your relationship with your child.



- Finally, although we often do not consider that homework serves a school administrative role, it offers schools an opportunity to let parents know what their children are learning. Thus, homework can play a public relations role by keeping parents informed about class activities and policies. Homework can also fulfill an administrative role in helping schools achieve their overall mission of improving student's achievement.
- Homework is a bridge that joins schools and parents. From the school's perspective there is the opportunity to monitor students' independent progress. For parents there is the potential to gain a greater appreciation of education and to express positive attitudes towards their children's achievement.
- Some educators argue that homework is beneficial to students, as it enhances learning, develops the skills taught in class, and lets educators verify that students comprehend their lessons. Proponents also argue that homework makes it more likely that students will develop and maintain proper study habits that they can use throughout their educational career.
- Homework prepares students for upcoming class topics.
- Homework teaches students to work independently and develop self-discipline.
- Homework encourages students to take initiative and responsibility for completing a task.
- Homework allows parents to have an active role in their child's education and helps them to evaluate their child's progress.
- Homework activities relate what is learned in school to children's lives outside of school and helps to connect school learning to the real world.
- Homework teaches students about time management.
- Homework teaches students how to set priorities.
- Homework helps teachers determine how well the lessons and material are being understood by their students.



- Homework teaches students how to problem solve.
- Homework gives students another opportunity to review the class material.
- Homework gives parents a chance to see what their child is learning in school.
- Homework teaches students that they have to do things, even when they don't want to.
- Homework teaches students how to take responsibility for their part in the educational process.
- Homework teaches students how to work independently.
- Homework teaches students the importance of planning, staying organized and taking action.

DISADVANTAGES OF HOMEWORK

- It limits children to practice what they are learning in class. Teachers would normally want to validate whether students actually understood what was discussed during class or not, and this is where homework comes in useful to check every student's progress.
- It prevents parents from seeing the quality of a curriculum. By banning homework, the only real way for parents to see what is going on with their children at school would be to personally observe the class by themselves.
- It does not help children in preparing for college. Homework is seen as a proper foundation for students to cope with what is expected of them in higher education. By getting used to these tasks, they would be ready for the tasks thrown at them in college.
- Teachers sometimes give too much homework to the students which in turn create pressure on the students and the real objective of giving the homework is diluted as the objective of the homework is to help the students in revision and a better understanding of the topics and not to unnecessarily pressurize the students.
- Another problem with it is that student sometimes loses interest in studies as too much of a thing can result in hate towards that thing and if student is studying for whole day in school and after coming from school also he or she has to do the same thing then it can be frustrating which ultimately may result in loss of interest towards studies.



- Another problem with it is that sometimes teachers give it only for the sake of it and there is no real benefit of giving the homework. In other words, students do not learn or gain from the assignments given at school leading to students doing futile work in the name of homework's.

HOMEWORK RELATED RESEARCH REVIEW

- The amount of homework given does not necessarily affect students' attitudes towards homework and various other aspects of school Epstein (1988) found a near-zero correlation between the amount of homework and parents' reports on how well their elementary school students behaved. Vazsonyi & Pickering (2003) studied 809 adolescents in American high schools, and found that, using the Normative Deviance Scale as a model for deviance, the correlation was $r = .28$ for Caucasian students, and $r = .24$ for African-American students. For all three of the correlations, higher values represent a higher correlation between time spent on homework and poor conduct.[9]
- Bempechat (2004) says that homework develops students' motivation and study skills. In a single study, parents and teachers of middle school students believed that homework improved students' study skills and personal responsibility skills.[10] Their students were more likely to have negative perceptions about homework and were less likely to ascribe the development of such skills to homework.[10] Leone & Richards (1989) found that students generally had negative emotions when completing homework and reduced engagement compared to other activities.
- Homework has been identified in numerous studies and articles as a dominant or significant source of stress and anxiety for students. Studies on the relation between homework and health are few compared to studies on academic performance Cheung & Leung-Ngai (1992) surveyed 1,983 students in Hong Kong, and found that homework led not only to added stress and anxiety, but also physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomachaches. Students in the survey who were ridiculed or punished by parents and peers had a higher incidence of depression symptoms, with 2.2% of students reporting that they "always" had suicidal thoughts, and anxiety was exacerbated by punishments and criticism of students by teachers for both problems with homework as well as forgetting to hand in homework.
- A 2007 study of American students by MetLife found that 89% of students felt stressed from homework, with 34% reporting that they "often" or "very often" felt stressed from



homework. Stress was especially evident among high school students. Students that reported stress from homework were more likely to be deprived of sleep

- Homework can cause tension and conflict in the home as well as at school, and can reduce students' family and leisure time. In the Cheung & Leung-Ngai (1992) survey, failure to complete homework and low grades where homework was a contributing factor was correlated with greater conflict; some students have reported teachers and parents frequently criticizing their work. In the MetLife study, high school students reported spending more time completing homework than performing home tasks.[15] Kohn (2006) argued that homework can create family conflict and reduce students' quality of life. The authors of Sallee & Rigler (2008), both high school English teachers, reported that their homework disrupted their students' extracurricular activities and responsibilities. However, Kiewra et al. (2009) found that parents were less likely to report homework as a distraction from their children's activities and responsibilities. Galloway, Conner & Pope (2013) recommended further empirical study relating to this aspect due to the difference between student and parent observations.
- Galloway, Conner & Pope (2013) surveyed 4,317 high school students from ten high-performing schools, and found that students reported spending more than 3 hours on homework daily. 72% of the students reported stress from homework, and 82% reported physical symptoms. The students slept an average of 6 hours 48 minutes, lower than the recommendations prescribed by various health agencies.
- A study done at the University of Michigan in 2007 concluded that the amount of homework given is increasing. In a sample taken of students between the ages of 6 and 9 years, it was shown that students spend more than 2 hours a week on homework, as opposed to 44 minutes in 1981.
- However, younger students who spend more time on homework generally have slightly worse or the same academic performance than those who spend less time on homework. Homework does not improve academic achievements for grade school students. Low-achieving students receive more benefit from doing homework than high-achieving students. However, schoolteachers commonly assign less homework to the students who need it most, and more homework to the students who are performing well.

GENERAL HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework. Avoid having your



child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

- Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available. Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.
- Help your child with time management. Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.
- Be positive about homework. Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.
- When your child does homework, you do homework. Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers. Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.
- When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it. Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.
- If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away. Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.
- Stay informed. Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.
- Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework. Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.



CONCLUSION

In summation, there are basically pros and cons as mentioned above. An increase in work, both at home and in school, means less physical activity for students, which can be directly linked to health issues among students. These negative aspects of homework have even led schools to ban midterms in order to limit the homework-induced stress of students. Besides a complete ban, recommendations to address this issue focus on major reductions in the amount of homework assigned. Understanding these important issues surrounding excessive homework helps people become aware of the negative effects and gives people insight into how to make changes to improve the situation of homework that doesn't work. The solution is not to totally eradicate homework. We could reduce homework to 10 minutes per grade level. First grade would receive 10 minutes; second grade would receive 20 minutes, and so on. The only two issues with this strategy are that teacher communication would be very important, and teachers would have to address students who take longer to work. If schools can overcome these goals, this strategy could be very useful. Another idea is to totally ban homework except for reading, projects, and catch-up work. If students are falling behind in classes, the work would have to be completed at home.

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