The Impact of Homework for K-12 Schools

Annotated Bibliography (lv)

Prof. Laura Valdiviezo
Emma Britton
Ellie Zandvakili

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Introduction

This annotated bibliography features peer-reviewed research publications on the impact of homework in k-12 settings. The diverse number of publications cover a range of contexts (i.e. urban, rural, US based, international), grade levels (k-12), and stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and school administrators) related to the homework issue. 60 selected works address one or more of the following questions of concern to the Amherst Regional Public School District: a) is it a good practice for teachers to assign homework to students? Under what circumstances and why? b) How much homework is appropriate for students based on their grade level? c) What kind of impact does homework have on teaching and learning? Research selections are organized based on grade level.
Research on all grade levels


This study aims to investigate learning assessment practices used by Jordanian teachers of mathematics for grades (1-6) in Amman. The sample for the study consisted of 402 teachers. A questionnaire of 72 items was developed around four domains, namely: questions, homework, exams, and alternative strategies. Validity and reliability were established. Results of the study showed that the mean of the scores for the four domains and the entire items are medium, the highest was on exams and the lowest on the homework. ANOVA analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences related to number of courses and gender.


This report examined whether parent training increased parent-child interactions during the completion of second grade students’ Interactive Homework Assignments (IHA) in reading. IHA is homework designed specifically to increase parent involvement and student achievement and the author suggests that it can facilitate increases in a student’s ability to draw inferences from their reading, which is a skill closely aligned with proficiency in reading acquisition. The second grade level was chosen for the study because teachers were concerned with preparing students a high-stakes assessment in third grade called the SAT9. The results of this study indicated that specific parent training over a brief time period (approximately four weeks), had the potential to improve the academic performance of academically at-risk students.


This qualitative study considers how 8 high school teachers shape homework practices for newcomer immigrant students in one International school in New York City. During interviews, teachers were asked about their purposes for assigning homework, their beliefs about factors affecting their students’ homework completion, and any adjustments they made for newcomer students. The author found that teachers assigned homework in order to a) give newcomer immigrants the opportunity to review material from class and to preview upcoming material, b) assess/ evaluate students’ understanding c) develop English proficiency and d) give students grades and motivation (i.e. motivation to prepare for exams). Regarding the factors that relate to homework completion for newcomer immigrants, teachers responded that their students generally did homework when they were able to do so and understood what was being asked of them. Challenges that inhibited students from completing homework included inability to complete homework, limited time, or the fear of making mistakes. Ways that teachers adjusted homework assignments included visual aids, simplifying vocabulary, and supplementing assignments with materials to guide student work. Moreover, teachers also adjusted their
expectations, looking for evidence of effort rather than mastery in assignments. Implications of this study are that teachers should ensure homework assignments are manageable for each students’ level of ability, and also communicate the purposes of homework to students and their parents.


The author of this paper offers that immigrant adolescents are a group of students who could particularly benefit from the academic learning, review, and practice opportunities offered through homework. Through the use of focus groups and surveys, this study aimed to describe the homework experiences of newcomer immigrant students (n=192) from one urban high school in New York City. More particularly, the researcher was concerned with the facilitators and impediments immigrant students faced when doing their homework. Study findings indicated that students’ English proficiency and ability to comprehend course materials/assignments were both key determinants for whether students experienced homework as easy or difficult. Another impediment reported by 40% of students was the difficulty they experienced in comprehending the vocabulary used in homework assignments. Moreover, in focus groups, students commented that they had limited or no help outside of school because their immigrant parents were working long hours or had limited English ability. Among the reported factors helping students to do homework were: understanding the course materials (75.5%), having clear instructions (59.9%), and having assignments broken into smaller steps (58.3%). Implications of the study suggest the need for teachers to design homework assignments that immigrant students can understand and complete. The author suggests that having students begin homework in class is one promising strategy.


It is common for teachers in all districts across the United States to give homework to their students. Given the rising numbers of children from nondominant backgrounds in American schools, a question that merits consideration is how children from nondominant backgrounds—particularly in large urban centers—are impacted by teachers' homework practices. In this study the researchers explored the reasons why teachers in one large U.S. urban center assigned homework, the kinds of homework teachers assigned, and teachers' beliefs about the impacts of this homework on their students' success at school. They collected surveys from 133 elementary school teachers (grades K through middle school) and interviewed a subgroup of 27 teachers from the larger group. Results revealed that although most teachers engaged in homework practices that were similar to those identified in current research (e.g. giving students skill-based practice in math and spelling), most teachers made provisions for students from nondominant backgrounds, including those who came from homes where English was not spoken at home, or those whose parents did not have additional financial resources to purchase materials for children to complete their homework.

As a part of this study, a survey of homework experiences was administered to 1,527 elementary and junior high students in several different types classrooms, including regular (n = 1,242), resource (n = 234), and self-contained special education (n = 51) classrooms. The results found significant effects across group, grade, and group by grade interactions for survey items related to the amount of homework, the type of homework, time spent doing homework, opportunities to do homework at school, parents' assistance, students' beliefs about homework assignments and grading, and students' feelings about homework and school. The higher incidence of negative feelings and opinions from students in resource room programs suggests that students' understanding of assignments, the nature of the assignments, and the feedback given to students are all important issues requiring closer evaluation in the future. The results also suggest that changes in homework assignments and grading may make the transition from elementary to junior high school particularly difficult for students with special needs.


For this study, students (n = 709), parents, and teachers (n = 82) completed a questionnaire concerning the amount of homework assigned by teachers, the portion of assignments completed by students, and attitudes about homework. Student achievement measures were also collected. Generally, weak relations were found between the amount of homework assigned and student achievement. However, positive relations were found between the amount of homework students completed and achievement, especially at upper grades (6-12). At the lower grades (2-4), teacher-assigned homework was related to negative student attitudes. At the upper grades, teachers with more positive attitudes toward homework and those whose students performed more poorly on standardized tests reported assigning more homework. A path analysis for lower grades indicated that class grades were only predicted by standardized test scores and the proportion of homework completed by students. At the upper grades, class grade predictors also included parent, teacher, and student attitudes.


This brief offers teachers and policymakers a review of empirical research on the impact of homework on student achievement. The author offers that homework has the most positive effects on the achievement of high school students, and that middle school students benefit about half as much as high schoolers. However, Cooper (2001) suggests that the effect of homework on elementary school students’ achievement is “trivial” (p. 36) because younger students have more limited attention spans and less developed study skills. Recommendations for the amount of homework include a) a gradual increase for elementary schoolers for each grade they advance, not to exceed 1 hour b) 1-2 hours a night for middle schoolers b) for high schoolers, more is better (to a limit). A simple and commonly cited rule is 10 minutes per night, multiplied by grade level.

The article begins with a presentation of reasons for the minimal influence of homework research, and educational research in general, on policy and practice. The authors propose that the practical use of research is hampered by the complexity of real-world settings, by flawed research designs, and by the probabilistic nature of research outcomes. Systematic research syntheses are offered as providing one way to overcome these difficulties. The authors also provide a definition for homework, a brief history of public attitudes toward homework and a listing of positive and negative effects attributed to homework. Then, the results of a research synthesis and a survey study are described that provide evidence for answering a complex and controversial question: How much time should students spend on homework each night? Little association is found between the amount of homework young students complete and achievement. The association grows progressively stronger for older groups of students. Other research suggests that young children have limited ability to keep their attention focused and have not learned good study skills. Two examples are provided showing how the research results can be used to evaluate the appropriateness of recommendations for policy and practice.


In a synthesis of 16 years of US-based research on (1987–2003), Cooper et al. (2006) found that homework generally had positive influence upon student achievement (grades k-12). For instance, for studies that used surveys to correlate time spent on homework with achievement scores, 50 out 69 correlations were positive. However, across studies, a stronger correlation between homework and achievement existed for students in grades 7-12 than in for students in grades K-6 and the high school grades had the strongest positive correlation. Cooper et al. (2006) located only 6 unpublished experimental studies which imposed a homework or no-homework condition on students (grades 2-12) in order to study the effect of homework. Though methodological considerations make it difficult to draw conclusions of causality, all of these 6 studies indicated a positive effect of homework on achievement outcomes.


This discussion paper discusses a common problem among teachers: students who do not complete their homework. The authors offer that urban students may not complete work either because they do not know how or because of difficult home circumstances. Instead of punishing students who do not complete their homework, the authors advocate for creating a strong academic culture that convinces them to engage with their schoolwork. The authors also cite several examples of high performing urban schools for which they base recommendations for establishing such a culture. They recommend that teachers assign homework that is a) authentic (i.e. project-based or inquiry-based work) b) useful in class the next day c) drawing on ideas important to students d) doable and started during school. The authors also offer that teachers can
help students to succeed with homework by anticipating any problems they will have, being clear about their expectations for homework, and by collaborating with other teachers to problem solve.


Using longitudinal data from the Programme for Student Assessment (PISA), this study considered the role of 9th and 10th grade German students’ (n=3,483) emotions during mathematics homework time. Results revealed that students’ perceived quality of assigned mathematic homework tasks affected their experience of unpleasant emotions during homework time, and negative emotions were negatively related to homework effort. Moreover, the researchers found that both homework expectancy beliefs and homework emotions predicted mathematics achievement. In other words, the students who experienced negative emotions during homework showed lower achievement gains. The implications of this study suggest that teachers should assign homework that is a) interesting for students, b) integrated with classroom instruction c) reinforces classroom learning and is d) not too challenging.


This survey study investigated the views of science homework held by 7th and 8th grade students in Turkey (n=1,584). The survey used a homework scale to measure student responses in three main areas: function, attitude, and behavior. When asked about the time they spent on various activities out of school during the week, the majority of students indicated that they spent between 1-3 hours doing homework, and less than 1 hour researching prior to completing their homework. When asked about the functionality of homework assignments, female students overall held more positive views than male students. However, measures of attitude and behavior were similar across gender. Moreover, 7th grade students overall held more positive views about homework (as measured by function, attitude and behavior) than 8th grade students. Lastly, the researchers found a positive relationship between the amount of time students spent on homework, and students views across the measures. In other words, middle school students who spent more time on homework were more likely to view science homework positively.


Drawing attention to the environmental and fiscal concerns of paper use in schools, this study seeks to determine whether online homework creates a measurable effect upon student performance as compared to traditional, paper-based homework. This study took place in two environmental science classes for 11th and 12th grade students, where one group completed homework assignments online, and the second group on paper. The researcher found that the two groups had similar rates of completion and grades on homework, but that the online group scored 9.5% higher on their quarterly final grades. However, in-class participation was found to be
significantly higher for the group who completed paper homework. The results imply that the use of online homework can at least maintain the performance level of high school students (as compared to the use paper homework), but will not necessarily increase student performance.


This article uses data from the children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 to estimate time-lagged growth models of the effect of several types of parental involvement on scores on elementary school achievement tests and the Behavioral Problems Index. The findings suggest that parental involvement does not independently improve children’s learning, but some involvement activities do prevent behavioral problems. Interaction analyses suggest that the involvement of parents with low socioeconomic status may be more effective than that of parents with high socioeconomic status.


This study examined the effect of parental involvement in homework on academic performance in public primary schools in Teso North Sub County, Busia, Kenya. The study objectives were to establish the types of homework assistance children received from their parents, to ascertain the extent of parental involvement in homework, and to examine the association between parental involvement in homework and school academic performance. All teachers, head teachers, students and parents in public primary schools were targeted. Thirty schools were first randomly sampled and then 532 respondents (30 head teachers, 30 parents, 192 teachers and 280 students) were then sampled. Parents and head teachers were purposively sampled while teachers and students were proportionately sampled. A descriptive survey design was employed and data was collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using means, percentages and frequencies and qualitative data was reported directly. T-tests, Pearson moment correlation coefficient, and OLS regression coefficients were used to test hypotheses. The results indicated that female parents were more willing to assist children in homework. Parents provided limited assistance in areas such as reading, writing and solving difficult sums. Parental involvement in homework was positively correlated with academic performance. Since educational gains of students relate to parental involvement, the authors conclude that parents have a significance in the educational processes of their children. The authors suggest that parents who do not assist children in homework should be sensitized to do so.


In this study, the researchers examined the effect of homework on math, science, English and history test scores for eighth grade students in the United States. Noting that failure to control for these effects yields selection biases on the estimated effect of homework, they found that math homework had a large and statistically meaningful effect on math test scores in their study.
sample. However, additional homework in science, English and history were found to have little to no impact on students’ respective test scores.


The researchers argue that the practice of homework is deeply embedded in upper middle class communities. Considering this, their survey study considered the relationship between time spent on homework, well-being, and behavioral engagement for high school students (n=4,317) across 10 high performing schools located in upper middle class communities. By considering these factors, the study focuses on the nonacademic effects of homework. During a 40 minute survey, students were asked both closed and open ended questions about related to their homework, including load, usefulness, stress level, physical health, time available for other activities, and engagement in school. The researchers found that students spent an average of 3.11 hours per night on homework; however, the average time differed by grade, with 9th and 12th graders spending less time on homework than 10th and 11th graders. Female students were also found to spend on average more time than male students did on homework. Though time on homework was positively correlated with school engagement behaviors, the majority of students in high performing schools (72%) reported being either often or always stressed over homework assignments; of this group, 82% reported having at least one physical symptom during the month they took the survey. On average, students received only 6.8 hours of sleep, and 68% reported that school work often or always interfered with sufficient sleep. Moreover, the researchers found a positive relationship between time spent on homework and stress, lack of sleep, and dropping other activities. The implications of this study push against the tendency to assign heavy homework loads to students in high performing schools.


This article examines homework’s place in American K-12 schooling over the last century and draws three main conclusions. First, homework has always aroused strong passions, both pro and con. Second, despite prominent press reports to the contrary in the early 20th century and again today, the best evidence suggests that most parents have consistently supported homework over the last 100 years. Third, homework practice is slow to change but is not unmovable, as evidenced by increases in high school homework in the decade after Sputnik and recent increases in homework for children in grades K-2. Nevertheless, the authors offer that the academic excellence movement of the last 20 years has succeeded in raising homework expectations only for the youngest children.


In this article, the authors used several national surveys to provide a 50-year perspective on time spent on homework. They find that the great majority of American children at all grade levels spend less than one hour studying on a typical day and offer that this amount that has not
changed substantially in at least 20 years. Moreover, high school students in the late 1940s and early 1950s studied no more than their counterparts did in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. They also offer that changes in the educational opinion on homework over the last half century have had little effect on student behavior, with only two notable exceptions: a temporary increase in homework time in the decade following Sputnik, and a new willingness in the last two decades to assign small amounts to primary-grade students.

Gilliland, K. (2002). Homework: Practice for students or a snack for the dog?. Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 8(1), 36-37.

Similarly to other scholars, this author offers that homework has the most significant impact when it is commented on and graded by the teacher. The short reference guide which follows this statement is designed for middle school parents as a response to the question, “How can I help my child with math homework?” A few suggestions for parents include a) find a good place in the home for their child to do homework with adequate lighting b) talk with child about how to get started and what tasks to prioritize c) be available to respond to requests for help d) ask problem solving questions such as “How do you think you might start this problem?” or “Can you show me a similar problem that might give you a clue for how to begin?” and e) talk to the teacher when difficulties with homework arise.


The author poses the question, “is homework good for middle school science students?” and suggests that the answer is “yes, no, and it depends.” This short review offers some recommendations for ensuring that students benefit from homework that is assigned in middle school science classes. The recommendations are as follows: a) develop guidelines in cooperation with parents and students about study times, removing distractions, etc., b) provide in-class supervised study sessions to help struggling students with homework and study strategies, d) assign no more than 1-2 hours of homework in all subjects each night, e) help students to construct short-term goals in completing homework assignments, and f) distribute homework in small doses rather than through a single more extensive assignment.


This study examined parent involvement in their children's literacy development and the knowledge of parent involvement among their children's teachers. Participating in this study were 102 parents of elementary school students. Parents rated their involvement in their children's literacy development on a 50-item scale that included items measuring involvement in literacy promotion activities such as taking their child to the library, working on projects with their child, helping in the child’s classroom, and reading in the child's presence. Eight teachers of these children also rated the parents’ literacy involvement on the same scale. The findings revealed that parents reported being more involved in their children's literacy development than the teachers reported for these same parents. However, the majority of dissimilar responses between parents and teachers were on items teachers could not observe firsthand.

This meta-analysis of 41 studies examines the relationship between parental involvement and the academic achievement of urban elementary school children. Analyses determined the effect sizes for parental involvement overall and subcategories of involvement. Results indicate a significant relationship between parental involvement overall and academic achievement. Parental involvement, as a whole, was associated with all the academic variables by about 0.7 to 0.75 of a standard deviation unit. This relationship held consistent for White and minority children and also for boys and girls.


Extant data collected through the Experience Sampling Method were analyzed to describe adolescents' subjective experiences relating to homework. Analyses explored age and gender differences in the time adolescents spent doing homework, and the situational variations (location and companions) in adolescents' reported concentration, effort, interest, positive affect and stress while doing homework. Regarding age differences, middle school students reported more positive experiences when homework was done with companions and in locations other than home, whereas high school students reported more positive experiences when homework was done alone and at home. Regarding gender differences, girls, regardless of age, reported greater stress than boys when doing homework alone, and lower stress when doing homework with friends. High school girls reported lower interest than middle school boys when doing homework alone. Findings provide an understanding of age and gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of homework, which might help both educators and parents structure engaging homework environments.


Considering that many high school students complete their homework during school time, this study aimed to determine whether during homework outside or inside of school had a relative influence on students’ grades. To consider this issue, the researchers used data on US high school students (n=13,546) from the National Education Longitudinal Study to develop structural equation models for determining the magnitude of effect that multiple presumed influences had on multiple presumed outcomes. Findings showed that out-of-school homework had a substantial positive effect on high school students’ grades, whereas in-school homework did not have an effect. Such findings suggest that even when students begin their homework in school, schools/teachers should encourage them to complete homework at home, rather than during the school day.

Kitsantas, A., Cheema, J., & Ware, H. W. (2011). Mathematics achievement: The role of

The authors premise their study with the notion of homework as a tool to help students develop self-regulation and self-efficacy. Given this, their study aimed to examine how time spent on homework and available resources to complete homework related to high school students’ self-efficacy and achievement in mathematics across gender and ethnicity. The study used US based data from the Program International Student Assessment and questionnaire data from National Center for Educational Statistics which was completed by 5,456 fifteen-year-old students. To measure mathematics efficacy, the questionnaire asked questions such as, “how confident do you feel about doing the following calculations…” The findings indicated that students spent on average about one fifth of their homework time on mathematics (an average of 3.69 hours per week). Mathematics self-efficacy and achievement were highly correlated and achievement gaps decreased as homework resources increased (i.e. having books and a quiet place to study). Moreover, increased time spent on homework was associated with a decrease in mathematics achievement. The implications of these findings suggest that teachers should provide resources to help students complete their homework successfully and in a timely manner, and focus on building students’ self-efficacy in mathematics.


This three-year ethnographic study considers how middle school students (n=14) make meaning of mathematics homework, and the role of their identity in making meaning. The researcher asked, “How do students come to value (buy in) or reject (check out) mathematics homework?” To answer this question, the researcher interviewed 14 students and 10 of their parents, finding that students who ‘buy in’ to homework developed aspects of their identities related to school and have a positive relationship with their teachers, whereas students who ‘check out’ developed identity aspects that support them in rejecting homework. Findings also indicate that these two categories were not static, and that students shifted between them (in either direction). The most common negative meanings that students attached to mathematics were that it was less enjoyable than other activities, that they disliked math, and that it is too much work. The most common negative meaning parents attached to math homework was that it was too much work and stress for their children. Both parents and students also attached positive meanings to homework, the most commonly mentioned themes were connected to the utility rather than the value of homework. For instance, interviewees attributed homework to higher grades, advancing onto the next grade level, and to test preparation.


This study considers the association between time spent on homework and academic performance in science and math for 10th grade students. The researchers used two large-scale, nationally representative datasets and applied a multiple linear regression model to the data to address this area of inquiry. While 1990 NELS data indicate that the average amount of time
spent on homework was 33 minutes for science, and 37 for math, findings from this dataset indicate that students who completed 1-2 hours of daily homework in each of the two considered subject areas earned the best grades and standardized test scores. However, when taking in account the second large data set (ELS), the researchers found a positive association between time spent on math/science homework and standardized test scores, but not between time and high school students’ grades. The overall implication of this research suggests that any amount time spent on homework relates to higher standardized test scores as compared to not completing homework.


The study sought to establish and compare the views of rural and urban primary school pupils on homework in Zimbabwe, using six purposively sampled Masvingo rural and urban primary schools. The inquiry employed a qualitative methodology in which data were gathered through semi-structured personal interviews and document analysis. A sample of thirty rural and thirty urban 5th grade students were interviewed. Forty-five homework exercise books were analyzed. On one hand, the investigation established that there were some students who liked homework and others who disliked it in both rural and urban schools. However, there were more students in urban areas who viewed homework in a positive light than there were in rural schools. The paper unearthed home and school factors as the causes of rural and urban students’ different views on homework. The researchers make several recommendations. Firstly, the government should endeavor to narrow the gap between the socio-economic statuses of the rural and urban populace in Zimbabwe as it is a major contributor to pupils’ different views on homework. Secondly, rural schools should be improved in terms of the quality of teachers and teaching-learning resources. Also, parents in both settings need to be encouraged to take an interest in their children’s homework. Moreover, teachers from both rural and urban schools need to take homework more seriously as their attitudes to homework influence students’ views on it.


This study aimed at explaining Romanian teachers’ perception about homework. In survey conducted online with voluntary participation, 51 primary teachers were involved. Teachers’ responses highlighted their beliefs for the need to assign daily homework and the importance of parents’ involvement in monitoring the homework assigned to their children. Respondents also praised the benefits of homework for students, fully ignoring the disadvantages of homework. The authors attribute the main causes of this situation to in the peculiarities of the Romanian education system. They offer that a change of the unilateral beliefs of teachers, parents, teacher trainers, curriculum creators about homework should be led by the active involvement of education professionals. The researchers advocate for further systematic research on homework practices, and that research results be addressed to all stakeholders.

This study used a between-groups design to measure the effectiveness of group coaching on improving the homework completion of middle school students (n=50) who were having difficulty with homework. Students with diagnosed learning disabilities (n=24) and students without diagnosed learning disabilities (n=33) were part of the sample. The researchers were interested in understanding whether group coaching was a more effective treatment for improving homework completion than homework centers. Findings showed that both group coaching and the homework center were effective interventions in decreasing homework problems. However, for middle students having difficulty completing homework, there was a tendency for students with disabilities to produce better outcomes in the homework center, whereas students without disabilities appeared to do better with group coaching.


This experimental study examined the effects of individualized, learning-style homework on middle school students (n=167) attending a parochial school in New York City. The experimental group was given individualized, learning-style homework and the control group was given guidelines for completing traditional homework assignments. Results showed that both groups demonstrated an increase in reading, mathematics, science and social studies achievement, but the middle students in the experimental group (who were given individualized homework assignments based on their learning style) showed larger gains than the control group across subject areas. Implications suggest that middle school teachers can provide individualized choices in homework assignments based on students’ identified learning styles and teach students to identify and capitalize on their learning-style strengths in order to facilitate their academic achievement.


This paper explores teachers’ habits (1) in terms of setting homework for their students and (2) in terms of building on homework in the classroom. Based on data collected in UNESCO’s Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE), the sample size of this analysis is about 200,000 Primary grade 3 and 6 students in 16 Latin American countries. The SERCE study applied standardized achievement tests and context questionnaires to these students, their families, teachers and principals of the schools involved. Choosing four aspects (student, classroom, school and country) for their multilevel study and focusing on two subjects (Mathematics and Language), the authors of this paper investigated the relationship between homework and students’ academic achievement. The results of their analysis show that the majority of Latin American teachers set homework in all or almost all classes. 90% of teachers estimated that it took their students between 15-30 minutes to complete their homework. Follow-up figures in terms of checking and correcting homework were somewhat lower, as was the number of teachers who actually built on homework in teaching sessions. This study highlights
the importance of following up on the content covered in homework in the classroom to maximize effective learning during class.


This survey-based study aimed to determine the preferences of middle school students (n=211) in regards to 17 kinds of homework adaptations in a district of Illinois. Of this sample, 17 students had learning disabilities, and 194 were general education students. Of the 17 kinds of homework adaptations included in the survey, the adaptations most preferred by middle schoolers were a) giving assignments that are finished at school b) allowing extra credit assignments c) beginning assignments in class and checking for understanding d) giving assignments that can be completed without any help and e) allowing small groups to work together on assignments. The least preferred homework adaptation was giving different assignments from the assignments that are given to other students. Through group comparisons, the researchers found that students’ preferences for adaptations were not mediated by learning disability nor by level of achievement (as indicated by standard test scores).


This study aims to produce a deeper understanding of the relationship between perceived parental homework involvement (i.e. parental homework control and parental homework support), student homework behaviors (i.e. time spent on homework completion, time management, and amount of homework completed), and student academic achievement. Using Mplus 5.1, a structural equation model was fit for 1683 students at different stages of schooling (grades ranging 5-10). The data showed that student homework behaviors, perceived parental homework involvement, and academic achievement were significantly related. However, results varied depending on the student’s grade level. For instance, in middle and high school, perceived parental homework involvement was related to students’ homework behaviors, but not in elementary school, and although students’ homework behaviors were related to academic achievement at each school level, the direction and magnitude of the relationships varied. Specifically, the relationship between perceived parental homework involvement and academic achievement was found to be stronger in middle and high school than in elementary school, and student homework behaviors were found to mediate the association between perceived parental homework involvement (control and support) and academic achievement only in middle and high school.


This study considered the relationship between parental assistance and mathematic homework
for both high and low achieving students from low income families. The study participants included 79 middle school students in an urban district, as well as their parents and mathematic teachers. Findings indicated that the provision of structure was the most common method of parental involvement in mathematic homework as compared to other methods (i.e. direct assistance, autonomy support). Findings also indicated that the parental provision of structure contributed significantly to middle school students’ mathematic grades. Another finding related to parental efficacy: parents who felt more confident that they could help their child succeed with math homework also more frequently provided direct assistance with homework. However, the implications of this study emphasize the importance of helping parents with lower self-efficacy realize that they can help their children succeed by providing structure (even if they cannot provide direct assistance).


Offering that intrinsic motivation is linked to academic performance, this experimental study considered the effects of choice in homework assignments on motivation and academic performance. Participants in the study were 9th-12th grade high school students (n=207) in two urban high schools in the Southeastern US and the experimental treatment (homework choice vs. no homework choice) was administered over a 4 week period by preservice teachers in various subject areas (i.e. chemistry, history, psychology, earth science, government). Students were also surveyed about their perceived motivation. Results showed that high school students reported higher intrinsic motivation when they received a choice in homework and also performed better on a unit test, as compared to when they did not receive a choice. Students also tended to complete more of their homework when provided with choices, but choice appeared to have little effect on the amount of effort they put into homework or the value they attributed to it.

Acknowledging that designing multiple homework assignments is a challenge for teachers, the authors offer that teachers and schools can develop a system for sharing homework assignments.


Using Dutch data on elementary school students, this study analyzed whether assigning homework had a heterogeneous impact on student achievement. Addressing potential biases by using a difference-in-difference approach, the researcher found that the test score gap was larger in classes where all students were assigned homework than in classes where no students were assigned homework. The researcher also found that students belonging to the upper part of the socioeconomic scale performed better when homework is given, whereas students from the lowest part were unaffected. However, the more disadvantaged children also got less help from their parents with their homework. The researcher suggests that homework can amplify existing inequalities in schools because it draws on differing home inputs.


This paper offers a brief critique of key issues in the current homework debate with particular
reference to research literature, theoretical perspectives, educational policy and other professional publications. The author points to an emerging discourse between homework in academic literature and classroom pedagogy and identifies a number of opportunities for further research. Ultimately, it is argued that whilst a range of work has been published around certain aspects of homework, many complexities remain and conclusive answers are most likely to be found only within the cultural context where the homework is actually undertaken.


The authors begin this paper by discussing both supporting views on homework (as articulated by teachers) and opposing views on homework (as articulated by parents and students), which inspired their research study. Using of data collected in a high performing Indiana middle school (student and parent surveys, teacher homework philosophies, sample homework assignments, and homework hallway charts), this study sought to establish a model for evaluating homework practices in schools. Study findings suggest that the following practices help to balance the amount of homework given to middle school students: a) team-level homework coordination through the use of hallway homework charts to ensure that students do not receive too much homework across subject areas, b) designating a few minutes at the end of class to begin the assigned homework, c) avoiding the assignment of homework that requires fully functioning independent skill for lower achievers, and d) balancing conceptual and procedural learning in mathematics.


This study was conducted by two high school English teachers who surveyed their students (~180) and also interviewed other English teachers regarding homework practices. Their study considered whether teachers were being sensitive and supportive of students’ outside interests (i.e. extracurricular) when they assigned homework. The survey asked high school English students about how they spent their time outside of school, and about their impressions of homework. One finding revealed through teacher interviews was that some assigned homework so that students could teach themselves material not covered in class due to lack of adequate time. Moreover, in surveys, 57% of high school English students frequently turned to outside resources (i.e. book summaries) to help them complete and understand their assigned reading, while 75% used these resources at some point during the school year to complete assignments. The paper also discussed the difficulties that students faced in balancing school and extracurricular activities. 62% of students reported devoting at least 4 hours of time to extracurricular activities during the week. Based on the study results, the authors discussed a few adaptations they have made, as teachers, to their own homework practices including: a) selecting fewer books and shorter texts, b) building reading time in class, and c) allocating more class time for students to use critical thinking skills expected from homework assignments (i.e. reflecting, analyzing, processing texts).

The authors of this study suggest that free time is a cost effective reward which is both appealing to high school students and easy to implement in the classroom. This study sought to determine whether contingent free time as a reinforcement for homework completion could improve the frequency of 12th grade English students’ (n= 50) homework completion. These students were in two separate English classes within an urban high school in British Colombia. The study used a multiple baseline single subject replication design, where the free time condition was made available, unavailable, then subsequently available to students in the two classes over limited time periods. When the free time condition was available, students were dismissed 3 minutes early if their homework was completed during class. Findings indicated that implementation of the free-time procedure during class time increased the frequency of homework completion for both classes of 12th grade English students. Moreover, findings from the survey which was given to students at the end of the study, indicated that high school students generally value free-time highly.


This study investigated the longitudinal associations between children’s academic performance and their mothers’ affect, practices, and perceptions of their children in homework situations. The children’s (n=2,261) performance in reading and math was tested in Grade 1 and Grade 4, and the mothers (n=1,476) filled out questionnaires related to their affect, practices, and perceptions while their children were in Grades 2-4. The results showed that more homework-help reported by mothers was associated with slower development of their children’s academic performance from Grade 1-4. This negative association was stronger especially for mothers who perceived their children not to be able to work autonomously. The second finding was that children’s good academic performance in first grade predicted mothers’ perception of child’s ability to be autonomous and had a positive affect in homework situations later on, whereas poor performance predicted mothers’ negative affect, help, and monitoring. The third finding was that mothers’ negative affect mediated the association between children’s poor performance, maternal practices, and perceptions of their children.


This mixed methods study focused on Hong Kong elementary school teachers’ perceptions about the nature and purpose of homework and their preferences about assignment types. Findings draw from questionnaire survey data collected from 317 teachers together with focus group interviews involving 38 teachers. On the whole, respondents supported the use of homework assignments to serve various academic and nonacademic functions. Tension between tradition and change was reflected through their preferences for drilling versus non-drilling assignment type. Furthermore, questionnaire survey results indicated that teacher efficacy related
to a preference for non-drilling assignments and to endorsement of the homework functions of enhancing long-term learning and supporting home-school communication. Implications for homework design, teacher preparation, and future research on teacher conceptions are also discussed.


This survey study investigated Turkish middle school science teachers’ homework practices (n=168), finding that nearly all science teachers (93.4%) assigned homework frequently (either once a week or at the end of each class). The survey also asked teachers about the type of homework they assign, and researchers found the most common types to be problem solving (96.4%) and research (94.5%). When asked about the purpose of giving homework, the most weighted response was for students to practice knowledge and skills learned in class (M=4.67), and the second most weighted response was to improve students’ sense of responsibility towards learning (M=4.61). Another finding obtained through statistical analysis was that class size was related to the value that teachers attach to homework: teachers were less likely to give value to homework if their class size was larger.


This survey study considered the impact of homework for middle school students (n=705) in the Denizli province of Turkey. The survey asked students in grades 6-8 about their views on science homework and found that student views did not differ significantly on the basis of gender or education level of parents. Students’ views did however differ (in terms of statistical significance) on the basis of their grade level. Survey results indicate that 70.4% of students expressed a positive opinion about science homework helping them to understand subject matter. Nearly all students (87.1%) said that teacher correction of homework makes a contribution to their learning by promoting dialogue between the teacher and students. However, only 43.2% of students said that science homework should be obligatory.


This investigation employed a randomized interdependent group contingency and randomized reinforcers to improve homework completion and accuracy of spelling performance in 21 elementary school students. An ABAB reversal design across all students was employed. Results showed this intervention to have a positive impact on both spelling homework completion and accuracy rates.

This discussion paper begins by pointing out that some parents are at odds with their children’s teachers over large amounts of homework. Citing research that has indicated an overall trend in increasing time spent on homework in the US since the 1980s, Vail considers one district in Piscataway, NJ which instituted a policy limiting homework at the high school to two hours a night, and less in middle and elementary school. The district’s policy also discouraged the assignment of homework over the weekends or holidays, and prohibited teachers from grading such assignments. The Piscataway school district policy was endorsed by Harris Cooper, a well-known scholar on the issue of homework and it also conformed to homework recommendations from the National PTA and National Education Association. On the other hand, the author points out that some teachers in affluent communities feel pressured by parents to assign larger amounts of homework to their students, mentioning a few of such school districts in Massachusetts (Lexington and Newton) that have contended with this phenomenon.


This article presents a case study of one rural high school that created a “No Excuses” homework expectation as an intervention and a means of overcoming the impending threat of losing their state accreditation. As a part of this reform, the school created a culture where students were required to redo or revise any incomplete/unsatisfactory homework assignments or to attend after school tutorial time. The school also created a set of interventions (involving leadership personnel) for students who were struggling to complete homework. Sources of data for the case study included focus groups with faculty and students, interviews with the principal and vice principal, and quantitative data. Results suggest that high expectations (as part of a larger cultural transformation) have an impact on high school students’ academic performance. However, the researchers suggest that homework should be embedded and sustained throughout the school’s culture in order to be impactful.


This survey study considered 9th grade students’ (n=136) attitudes about homework in one urban high school. The survey was administered by two English teachers in the school. Survey results indicated that only 39% of high school freshmen reported completing their homework frequently but 69% indicated that they think homework is meaningful. Moreover, 87% felt that teachers assigned too much homework. The authors offer that teachers can help motivate students to do homework, by demonstrating how and why assignments are meaningful, by providing time in class to begin assignments, and by offering feedback on completed assignments.


In this article, the authors describe data from 6 case studies of children doing third-grade homework with their parents. The study combined observation and interview data from children,
parents, and teachers to take a close look at the dynamics of homework and its potential to develop self-responsibility in children. They discussed both methodology and results in the context of related investigations and modern theoretical directions. The data provided clear evidence that everyday experiences with homework, as mediated by parents, provided opportunities for children to learn to cope with various difficulties and distractions associated with doing homework. The researchers also discussed the ways in which children seized homework opportunities, began to develop strategies and skills for doing homework, and the nature of the mediation that their parents provided.


The author examined purposes for doing homework perceived by 920 students in Grades 5–12. Through an exploratory factor analysis, 8 homework purposes were reduced to two main categories/factors: ‘intrinsic reasons’ and ‘extrinsic reasons’ for doing homework. Both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons were found to relate positively to students’ use of homework management strategies. However, only intrinsic reasons for doing homework were related to a lower frequency of incomplete homework and to a higher self-reported grade. Each factor was further subjected to a 2 × 2 × 2 (Grade × Gender × Homework Help) analysis of variance. Older students and students who did not receive homework help were more likely to disagree that they did homework for extrinsic reasons. The effect of homework help on intrinsic reasons for doing homework was apparent among only the boys.


This article considers the survey responses of 9th and 10th grade students (n=205) in one predominately Caucasian rural high school. The survey asked students about their perceived purposes for doing homework, and management of emotions while doing homework. Xu (2005) links their responses to characteristics such as a gender, grade level, and parents’ level of education. Findings showed that homework emotion management was not related to grade level nor to parents’ education level. However, gender and family homework help were associated with home emotion management strategies (i.e. taking a break, calming down, asking family/friends for help, etc.). Girls and students who received family help reported more frequently using homework emotion management strategies. Moreover, reported intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for doing homework were associated with greater use of homework emotion management strategies. Xu (2005) found that the intrinsically motivated reasons (i.e. developing discipline, learning study skills) for doing homework (reported by high school students) were also the best predictor of emotional management strategies. The implications of this study point to the important role that families can play in helping their children to develop emotion management strategies in regards to their homework.


This article considers the survey responses of 5th and 6th grade middle school students (n=194)
in regards to the characteristics, purposes, and management of their homework and the researcher links their responses to student and family characteristics. Students who participated in this survey were attending a rural middle school with a predominately Caucasian student body. On average, students spent 4.46 hours a week doing homework, but there was a large variability in this number. Of particular interest to this study were the homework management strategies reported by students (i.e. turning off the television, prioritizing and planning, self-praise) Findings indicated that homework management was not related to grade level, parental education, time spent on homework, nor to extrinsic reasons for doing homework. However, the variables of gender and family help were associated with use of homework management strategies for middle school students. Girls and those who received family help with homework were more likely to manage their homework. Lastly, higher levels of intrinsic purposes for doing homework were associated with more frequent use of homework management strategies.


By offering that homework “rarely reflects a single purpose,” (p. 459-460) this study considered the multiple purposes 11th grade students in the Southeastern US reported doing homework. Both rural (n=681) and urban (n=306) were given a homework purpose survey that had 15 possible purpose statements. Xu (2010) determined that students’ reported purposes could be reduced into three principal categories: 1) learning-oriented reasons 2) adult-oriented reasons 3) and peer-oriented reasons. Findings indicated that urban high school students are more likely to do homework for adult-oriented reasons than their rural counterparts.


In this article, the author first examined five major homework challenges of students, including arranging a conducive homework environment, budgeting time and pacing themselves to meet homework deadlines, handling homework distractions, keeping themselves motivated during homework sessions, and coping with negative affect or mood swings encountered while doing homework. The author then discussed a range of strategies that students can use to deal with these challenges as well as implications for teachers and families seeking to help students manage their homework more responsibly.


Using the Trends in International Mathematics and Science study data from 2003, this study sought to identify the relationship between 8th grade students’ homework practice (n=4,972) and their mathematics achievement (as measured by assessment results) in Hong Kong. The three dimensions considered in relation to mathematics achievement were frequency and amount of homework, types of homework, and usage modes of homework. In addition to asking students about these dimensions in a survey, mathematics teachers participating in the study (n=144) were asked about the frequency and amount of homework they gave to students. The researchers
applied a 2-level hierarchical linear model to the data to analyze the data and to report the following findings: 70% of students reported that they received mathematics homework at least three or more times a week. Secondly, there was a statistically significant and positive relationship between the amount of time spent on homework and student achievement. However, the same positive relationship was not found between frequency of homework assignments and student achievement. In regards to type of homework, a significantly positive impact was found between problem/question type and student achievement. Moreover, a positive relationship was found between students who reviewed/corrected their homework during class time, and their achievement. Lastly, a negative relationship was found between having students start homework in class and their achievement.
Research on secondary education


This qualitative study considers how 8 high school teachers shape homework practices for newcomer immigrant students in one International school in New York City. During interviews, teachers were asked about their purposes for assigning homework, their beliefs about factors affecting their students’ homework completion, and any adjustments they made for newcomer students. The author found that teachers assigned homework in order to a) give newcomer immigrants the opportunity to review material from class and to preview upcoming material, b) assess/evaluate students’ understanding c) develop English proficiency and d) give students grades and motivation (i.e. motivation to prepare for exams). Regarding the factors that relate to homework completion for newcomer immigrants, teachers responded that their students generally did homework when they were able to do so and understood what was being asked of them. Challenges that inhibited students from completing homework included inability to complete homework, limited time, or the fear of making mistakes. Ways that teachers adjusted homework assignments included visual aids, simplifying vocabulary, and supplementing assignments with materials to guide student work. Moreover, teachers also adjusted their expectations, looking for evidence of effort rather than mastery in assignments. Implications of this study are that teachers should ensure homework assignments are manageable for each students’ level of ability, and also communicate the purposes of homework to students and their parents.


The author of this paper offers that immigrant adolescents are a group of students who could particularly benefit from the academic learning, review, and practice opportunities offered through homework. Through the use of focus groups and surveys, this study aimed to describe the homework experiences of newcomer immigrant students (n=192) from one urban high school in New York City. More particularly, the researcher was concerned with the facilitators and impediments immigrant students faced when doing their homework. Study findings indicated that students’ English proficiency and ability to comprehend course materials/assignments were both key determinants for whether students experienced homework as easy or difficult. Another impediment reported by 40% of students was the difficulty they experienced in comprehending the vocabulary used in homework assignments. Moreover, in focus groups, students commented that they had limited or no help outside of school because their immigrant parents were working long hours or had limited English ability. Among the reported factors helping students to do homework were: understanding the course materials (75.5%), having clear instructions (59.9%), and having assignments broken into smaller steps (58.3%). Implications of the study suggest the need for teachers to design homework assignments that immigrant students can understand and complete. The author suggests that having students begin homework in class is one promising strategy.

Drawing attention to the environmental and fiscal concerns of paper use in schools, this study seeks to determine whether online homework creates a measurable effect upon student performance as compared to traditional, paper-based homework. This study took place in two environmental science classes for 11th and 12th grade students, where one group completed homework assignments online, and the second group on paper. The researcher found that the two groups had similar rates of completion and grades on homework, but that the online group scored 9.5% higher on their quarterly final grades. However, in-class participation was found to be significantly higher for the group who completed paper homework. The results imply that the use of online homework can at least maintain the performance level of high school students (as compared to the use paper homework), but will not necessarily increase student performance.


This survey study investigated the views of science homework held by 7th and 8th grade students in Turkey (n=1,584). The survey used a homework scale to measure student responses in three main areas: function, attitude, and behavior. When asked about the time they spent on various activities out of school during the week, the majority of students indicated that they spent between 1-3 hours doing homework, and less than 1 hour researching prior to completing their homework. When asked about the functionality of homework assignments, female students overall held more positive views than male students. However, measures of attitude and behavior were similar across gender. Moreover, 7th grade students overall held more positive views about homework (as measured by function, attitude and behavior) than 8th grade students. Lastly, the researchers found a positive relationship between the amount of time students spent on homework, and students views across the measures. In other words, middle school students who spent more time on homework were more likely to view science homework positively.


This discussion paper discusses a common problem among teachers: students who do not complete their homework. The authors offer that urban students may not complete work either because they do not know how or because of difficult home circumstances. Instead of punishing students who do not complete their homework, the authors advocate for creating a strong academic culture that convinces them to engage with their schoolwork. The authors also cite several examples of high performing urban schools for which they base recommendations for establishing such a culture. They recommend that teachers assign homework that is a) authentic (i.e. project-based or inquiry-based work) b) useful in class the next day c) drawing on ideas important to students d) doable and started during school. The authors also offer that teachers can help students to succeed with homework by anticipating any problems they will have, being clear about their expectations for homework, and by collaborating with other teachers to problem solve.

Using longitudinal data from the Programme for Student Assessment (PISA), this study considered the role of 9th and 10th grade German students’ (n=3,483) emotions during mathematics homework time. Results revealed that students’ perceived quality of assigned mathematic homework tasks affected their experience of unpleasant emotions during homework time, and negative emotions were negatively related to homework effort. Moreover, the researchers found that both homework expectancy beliefs and homework emotions predicted mathematics achievement. In other words, the students who experienced negative emotions during homework showed lower achievement gains. The implications of this study suggest that teachers should assign homework that is a) interesting for students, b) integrated with classroom instruction c) reinforces classroom learning and is d) not too challenging.


The researchers argue that the practice of homework is deeply embedded in upper middle class communities. Considering this, their survey study considered the relationship between time spent on homework, well-being, and behavioral engagement for high school students (n=4,317) across 10 high performing schools located in upper middle class communities. By considering these factors, the study focuses on the nonacademic effects of homework. During a 40 minute survey, students were asked both closed and open ended questions about related to their homework, including load, usefulness, stress level, physical health, time available for other activities, and engagement in school. The researchers found that students spent an average of 3.11 hours per night on homework; however, the average time differed by grade, with 9th and 12th graders spending less time on homework than 10th and 11th graders. Female students were also found to spend on average more time than male students did on homework. Though time on homework was positively correlated with school engagement behaviors, the majority of students in high performing schools (72%) reported being either often or always stressed over homework assignments; of this group, 82% reported having at least one physical symptom during the month they took the survey. On average, students received only 6.8 hours of sleep, and 68% reported that school work often or always interfered with sufficient sleep. Moreover, the researchers found a positive relationship between time spent on homework and stress, lack of sleep, and dropping other activities. The implications of this study push against the tendency to assign heavy homework loads to students in high performing schools.

Gilliland, K. (2002). Homework: Practice for students or a snack for the dog?. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 8*(1), 36-37.

Similarly to other scholars, this author offers that homework has the most significant impact when it is commented on and graded by the teacher. The short reference guide which follows this
statement is designed for middle school parents as a response to the question, “How can I help my child with math homework?” A few suggestions for parents include a) find a good place in the home for their child to do homework with adequate lighting b) talk with child about how to get started and what tasks to prioritize c) be available to respond to requests for help d) ask problem solving questions such as “How do you think you might start this problem?” or “Can you show me a similar problem that might give you a clue for how to begin?” and e) talk to the teacher when difficulties with homework arise.


The author poses the question, “is homework good for middle school science students?” and suggests that the answer is “yes, no, and it depends.” This short review offers some recommendations for ensuring that students benefit from homework that is assigned in middle school science classes. The recommendations are as follows: a) develop guidelines in cooperation with parents and students about study times, removing distractions, etc., b) provide in-class supervised study sessions to help struggling students with homework and study strategies, d) assign no more than 1-2 hours of homework in all subjects each night, e) help students to construct short-term goals in completing homework assignments, and f) distribute homework in small doses rather than through a single more extensive assignment.


Considering that many high school students complete their homework during school time, this study aimed to determine whether during homework outside or inside of school had a relative influence on students’ grades. To consider this issue, the researchers used data on US high school students (n=13,546) from the National Education Longitudinal Study to develop structural equation models for determining the magnitude of effect that multiple presumed influences had on multiple presumed outcomes. Findings showed that out-of-school homework had a substantial positive effect on high school students’ grades, whereas in-school homework did not have an effect. Such findings suggest that even when students begin their homework in school, schools/teachers should encourage them to complete homework at home, rather than during the school day.


The authors premise their study with the notion of homework as a tool to help students develop self-regulation and self-efficacy. Given this, their study aimed to examine how time spent on homework and available resources to complete homework related to high school students’ self-efficacy and achievement in mathematics across gender and ethnicity. The study used US based data from the Program International Student Assessment and questionnaire data from National Center for Educational Statistics which was completed by 5,456 fifteen-year-old students. To measure mathematics efficacy, the questionnaire asked questions such as, “how confident do you feel about doing the following calculations…” The findings indicated that
students spent on average about one fifth of their homework time on mathematics (an average of 3.69 hours per week). Mathematics self-efficacy and achievement were highly correlated and achievement gaps decreased as homework resources increased (i.e. having books and a quiet place to study). Moreover, increased time spent on homework was associated with a decrease in mathematics achievement. The implications of these findings suggest that teachers should provide resources to help students complete their homework successfully and in a timely manner, and focus on building students’ self-efficacy in mathematics.


This three-year ethnographic study considers how middle school students (n=14) make meaning of mathematics homework, and the role of their identity in making meaning. The researcher asked, “How do students come to value (buy in) or reject (check out) mathematics homework?” To answer this question, the researcher interviewed 14 students and 10 of their parents, finding that students who ‘buy in’ to homework developed aspects of their identities related to school and have a positive relationship with their teachers, whereas students who ‘check out’ developed identity aspects that support them in rejecting homework. Findings also indicate that these two categories were not static, and that students shifted between them (in either direction). The most common negative meanings that students attached to mathematics were that it was less enjoyable than other activities, that they disliked math, and that it is too much work. The most common negative meaning parents attached to math homework was that it was too much work and stress for their children. Both parents and students also attached positive meanings to homework, the most commonly mentioned themes were connected to the utility rather than the value of homework. For instance, interviewees attributed homework to higher grades, advancing onto the next grade level, and to test preparation.


This study considers the association between time spent on homework and academic performance in science and math for 10th grade students. The researchers used two large-scale, nationally representative datasets and applied a multiple linear regression model to the data to address this area of inquiry. While 1990 NELS data indicate that the average amount of time spent on homework was 33 minutes for science, and 37 for math, findings from this dataset indicate that students who completed 1-2 hours of daily homework in each of the two considered subject areas earned the best grades and standardized test scores. However, when taking in account the second large data set (ELS), the researchers found a positive association between time spent on math/science homework and standardized test scores, but not between time and high school students’ grades. The overall implication of this research suggests that any amount time spent on homework relates to higher standardized test scores as compared to not completing homework.

This study used a between-groups design to measure the effectiveness of group coaching on improving the homework completion of middle school students (n=50) who were having difficulty with homework. Students with diagnosed learning disabilities (n=24) and students without diagnosed learning disabilities (n=33) were part of the sample. The researchers were interested in understanding whether group coaching was a more effective treatment for improving homework completion than homework centers. Findings showed that both group coaching and the homework center were effective interventions in decreasing homework problems. However, for middle students having difficulty completing homework, there was a tendency for students with disabilities to produce better outcomes in the homework center, whereas students without disabilities appeared to do better with group coaching.


This experimental study examined the effects of individualized, learning-style homework on middle school students (n=167) attending a parochial school in New York City. The experimental group was given individualized, learning-style homework and the control group was given guidelines for completing traditional homework assignments. Results showed that both groups demonstrated an increase in reading, mathematics, science and social studies achievement, but the middle students in the experimental group (who were given individualized homework assignments based on their learning style) showed larger gains than the control group across subject areas. Implications suggest that middle school teachers can provide individualized choices in homework assignments based on students’ identified learning styles and teach students to identify and capitalize on their learning-style strengths in order to facilitate their academic achievement.


This survey-based study aimed to determine the preferences of middle school students (n=211) in regards to 17 kinds of homework adaptations in a district of Illinois. Of this sample, 17 students had learning disabilities, and 194 were general education students. Of the 17 kinds of homework adaptations included in the survey, the adaptations most preferred by middle schoolers were a) giving assignments that are finished at school b) allowing extra credit assignments c) beginning assignments in class and checking for understanding d) giving assignments that can be completed without any help and e) allowing small groups to work together on assignments. The least preferred homework adaptation was giving different assignments from the assignments that are given to other students. Through group comparisons, the researchers found that students’ preferences for adaptations were not mediated by learning disability nor by level of achievement (as indicated by standard test scores).

This study considered the relationship between parental assistance and mathematic homework for both high and low achieving students from low income families. The study participants included 79 middle school students in an urban district, as well as their parents and mathematic teachers. Findings indicated that the provision of structure was the most common method of parental involvement in mathematic homework as compared to other methods (i.e. direct assistance, autonomy support). Findings also indicated that the parental provision of structure contributed significantly to middle school students’ mathematic grades. Another finding related to parental efficacy: parents who felt more confident that they could help their child succeed with math homework also more frequently provided direct assistance with homework. However, the implications of this study emphasize the importance of helping parents with lower self-efficacy realize that they can help their children succeed by providing structure (even if they cannot provide direct assistance).


Offering that intrinsic motivation is linked to academic performance, this experimental study considered the effects of choice in homework assignments on motivation and academic performance. Participants in the study were 9th-12th grade high school students (n=207) in two urban high schools in the Southeastern US and the experimental treatment (homework choice vs. no homework choice) was administered over a 4 week period by preservice teachers in various subject areas (i.e. chemistry, history, psychology, earth science, government). Students were also surveyed about their perceived motivation. Results showed that high school students reported higher intrinsic motivation when they received a choice in homework and also performed better on a unit test, as compared to when they did not receive a choice. Students also tended to complete more of their homework when provided with choices, but choice appeared to have little effect on the amount of effort they put into homework or the value they attributed to it. Acknowledging that designing multiple homework assignments is a challenge for teachers, the authors offer that teachers and schools can develop a system for sharing homework assignments.


This study was conducted by two high school English teachers who surveyed their students (n~180) and also interviewed other English teachers regarding homework practices. Their study considered whether teachers were being sensitive and supportive of students’ outside interests (i.e. extracurricular) when they assigned homework. The survey asked high school English students about how they spent their time outside of school, and about their impressions of homework. One finding revealed through teacher interviews was that some assigned homework so that students could teach themselves material not covered in class due to lack of adequate time. Moreover, in surveys, 57% of high school English students frequently turned to outside resources (i.e. book summaries) to help them complete and understand their assigned reading,
while 75% used these resources at some point during the school year to complete assignments. The paper also discussed the difficulties that students faced in balancing school and extracurricular activities. 62% of students reported devoting at least 4 hours of time to extracurricular activities during the week. Based on the study results, the authors discussed a few adaptations they have made, as teachers, to their own homework practices including: a) selecting fewer books and shorter texts, b) building reading time in class, and c) allocating more class time for students to use critical thinking skills expected from homework assignments (i.e. reflecting, analyzing, processing texts).


The authors of this study suggest that free time is a cost effective reward which is both appealing to high school students and easy to implement in the classroom. This study sought to determine whether contingent free time as a reinforcement for homework completion could improve the frequency of 12th grade English students’ (n= 50) homework completion. These students were in two separate English classes within an urban high school in British Colombia. The study used a multiple baseline single subject replication design, where the free time condition was made available, unavailable, then subsequently available to students in the two classes over limited time periods. When the free time condition was available, students were dismissed 3 minutes early if their homework was completed during class. Findings indicated that implementation of the free-time procedure during class time increased the frequency of homework completion for both classes of 12th grade English students. Moreover, findings from the survey which was given to students at the end of the study, indicated that high school students generally value free-time highly.


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This article presents a case study of one rural high school that created a “No Excuses” homework expectation as an intervention and a means of overcoming the impending threat of losing their state accreditation. As a part of this reform, the school created a culture where students were required to redo or revise any incomplete/unsatisfactory homework assignments or to attend after school tutorial time. The school also created a set of interventions (involving leadership personnel) for students who were struggling to complete homework. Sources of data for the case study included focus groups with faculty and students, interviews with the principal and vice principal, and quantitative data. Results suggest that high expectations (as part of a larger cultural transformation) have an impact on high school students’ academic performance. However, the researchers suggest that homework should be embedded and sustained throughout the school’s culture in order to be impactful.


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This article considers the survey responses of 9th and 10th grade students (n=205) in one predominately Caucasian rural high school. The survey asked students about their perceived purposes for doing homework, and management of emotions while doing homework. Xu (2005) links their responses to characteristics such as a gender, grade level, and parents’ level of education. Findings showed that homework emotion management was not related to grade level nor to parents’ education level. However, gender and family homework help were associated with home emotion management strategies (i.e. taking a break, calming down, asking
family/friends for help, etc.). Girls and students who received family help reported more frequently using homework emotion management strategies. Moreover, reported intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for doing homework were associated with greater use of homework emotion management strategies. Xu (2005) found that the intrinsically motivated reasons (i.e. developing discipline, learning study skills) for doing homework (reported by high school students) were also the best predictor of emotional management strategies. The implications of this study point to the important role that families can play in helping their children to develop emotion management strategies in regards to their homework.


This article considers the survey responses of 5th and 6th grade middle school students (n=194) in regards to the characteristics, purposes, and management of their homework and the researcher links their responses to student and family characteristics. Students who participated in this survey were attending a rural middle school with a predominately Caucasian student body. On average, students spent 4.46 hours a week doing homework, but there was a large variability in this number. Of particular interest to this study were the homework management strategies reported by students (i.e. turning off the television, prioritizing and planning, self-praise) Findings indicated that homework management was not related to grade level, parental education, time spent on homework, nor to extrinsic reasons for doing homework. However, the variables of gender and family help were associated with use of homework management strategies for middle school students. Girls and those who received family help with homework were more likely to manage their homework. Lastly, higher levels of intrinsic purposes for doing homework were associated with more frequent use of homework management strategies.


By offering that homework “rarely reflects a single purpose,” (p. 459-460) this study considered the multiple purposes 11th grade students in the Southeastern US reported doing homework. Both rural (n=681) and urban (n=306) were given a homework purpose survey that had 15 possible purpose statements. Xu (2010) determined that students’ reported purposes could be reduced into three principal categories: 1) learning-oriented reasons 2) adult-oriented reasons 3) and peer-oriented reasons. Findings indicated that urban high school students are more likely to do homework for adult-oriented reasons than their rural counterparts.


Using the Trends in International Mathematics and Science study data from 2003, this study sought to identify the relationship between 8th grade students’ homework practice (n=4,972) and their mathematics achievement (as measured by assessment results) in Hong Kong. The three dimensions considered in relation to mathematics achievement were frequency and amount of homework, types of homework, and usage modes of homework. In addition to asking students
about these dimensions in a survey, mathematics teachers participating in the study (n=144) were asked about the frequency and amount of homework they gave to students. The researchers applied a 2-level hierarchical linear model to the data to analyze the data and to report the following findings: 70% of students reported that they received mathematics homework at least three or more times a week. Secondly, there was a statistically significant and positive relationship between the amount of time spent on homework and student achievement. However, the same positive relationship was not found between frequency of homework assignments and student achievement. In regards to type of homework, a significantly positive impact was found between problem/question type and student achievement. Moreover, a positive relationship was found between students who reviewed/corrected their homework during class time, and their achievement. Lastly, a negative relationship was found between having students start homework in class and their achievement.

The author of this paper offers that immigrant adolescents are a group of students who could particularly benefit from the academic learning, review, and practice opportunities offered through homework. Through the use of focus groups and surveys, this study aimed to describe the homework experiences of newcomer immigrant students (n=192) from one urban high school in New York City. More particularly, the researcher was concerned with the facilitators and impediments immigrant students faced when doing their homework. Study findings indicated that students’ English proficiency and ability to comprehend course materials/assignments were both key determinants for whether students experienced homework as easy or difficult. Another impediment reported by 40% of students was the difficulty they experienced in comprehending the vocabulary used in homework assignments. Moreover, in focus groups, students commented that they had limited or no help outside of school because their immigrant parents were working long hours or had limited English ability. Among the reported factors helping students to do homework were: understanding the course materials (75.5%), having clear instructions (59.9%), and having assignments broken into smaller steps (58.3%). Implications of the study suggest the need for teachers to design homework assignments that immigrant students can understand and complete. The author suggests that having students begin homework in class is one promising strategy.


This qualitative study considers how 8 high school teachers shape homework practices for newcomer immigrant students in one International school in New York City. During interviews, teachers were asked about their purposes for assigning homework, their beliefs about factors affecting their students’ homework completion, and any adjustments they made for newcomer students. The author found that teachers assigned homework in order to a) give newcomer immigrants the opportunity to review material from class and to preview upcoming material, b) assess/evaluate students’ understanding c) develop English proficiency and d) give students grades and motivation (i.e. motivation to prepare for exams). Regarding the factors that relate to homework completion for newcomer immigrants, teachers responded that their students generally did homework when they were able to do so and understood what was being asked of them. Challenges that inhibited students from completing homework included inability to complete homework, limited time, or the fear of making mistakes. Ways that teachers adjusted homework assignments included visual aids, simplifying vocabulary, and supplementing assignments with materials to guide student work. Moreover, teachers also adjusted their expectations, looking for evidence of effort rather than mastery in assignments. Implications of this study are that teachers should ensure homework assignments are manageable for each students’ level of ability, and also communicate the purposes of homework to students and their parents.

This discussion paper discusses a common problem among teachers: students who do not complete their homework. The authors offer that urban students may not complete work either because they do not know how or because of difficult home circumstances. Instead of punishing students who do not complete their homework, the authors advocate for creating a strong academic culture that convinces them to engage with their schoolwork. The authors also cite several examples of high performing urban schools for which they base recommendations for establishing such a culture. They recommend that teachers assign homework that is a) authentic (i.e. project-based or inquiry-based work) b) useful in class the next day c) drawing on ideas important to students d) doable and started during school. The authors also offer that teachers can help students to succeed with homework by anticipating any problems they will have, being clear about their expectations for homework, and by collaborating with other teachers to problem solve.


Using longitudinal data from the Programme for Student Assessment (PISA), this study considered the role of 9th and 10th grade German students’ (n=3,483) emotions during mathematics homework time. Results revealed that students’ perceived quality of assigned mathemathic homework tasks affected their experience of unpleasant emotions during homework time, and negative emotions were negatively related to homework effort. Moreover, the researchers found that both homework expectancy beliefs and homework emotions predicted mathematics achievement. In other words, the students who experienced negative emotions during homework showed lower achievement gains. The implications of this study suggest that teachers should assign homework that is a) interesting for students, b) integrated with classroom instruction c) reinforces classroom learning and is d) not too challenging.


Drawing attention to the environmental and fiscal concerns of paper use in schools, this study seeks to determine whether online homework creates a measurable effect upon student performance as compared to traditional, paper-based homework. This study took place in two environmental science classes for 11th and 12th grade students, where one group completed homework assignments online, and the second group on paper. The researcher found that the two groups had similar rates of completion and grades on homework, but that the online group scored 9.5% higher on their quarterly final grades. However, in-class participation was found to be significantly higher for the group who completed paper homework. The results imply that the use of online homework can at least maintain the performance level of high school students (as compared to the use paper homework), but will not necessarily increase student performance.

The researchers argue that the practice of homework is deeply embedded in upper middle class communities. Considering this, their survey study considered the relationship between time spent on homework, well-being, and behavioral engagement for high school students (n=4,317) across 10 high performing schools located in upper middle class communities. By considering these factors, the study focuses on the nonacademic effects of homework. During a 40 minute survey, students were asked both closed and open ended questions about related to their homework, including load, usefulness, stress level, physical health, time available for other activities, and engagement in school. The researchers found that students spent an average of 3.11 hours per night on homework; however, the average time differed by grade, with 9th and 12th graders spending less time on homework than 10th and 11th graders. Female students were also found to spend on average more time than male students did on homework. Though time on homework was positively correlated with school engagement behaviors, the majority of students in high performing schools (72%) reported being either often or always stressed over homework assignments; of this group, 82% reported having at least one physical symptom during the month they took the survey. On average, students received only 6.8 hours of sleep, and 68% reported that school work often or always interfered with sufficient sleep. Moreover, the researchers found a positive relationship between time spent on homework and stress, lack of sleep, and dropping other activities. The implications of this study push against the tendency to assign heavy homework loads to students in high performing schools.


Considering that many high school students complete their homework during school time, this study aimed to determine whether during homework outside or inside of school had a relative influence on students’ grades. To consider this issue, the researchers used data on US high school students (n=13,546) from the National Education Longitudinal Study to develop structural equation models for determining the magnitude of effect that multiple presumed influences had on multiple presumed outcomes. Findings showed that out-of-school homework had a substantial positive effect on high school students’ grades, whereas in-school homework did not have an effect. Such findings suggest that even when students begin their homework in school, schools/teachers should encourage them to complete homework at home, rather than during the school day.


The authors premise their study with the notion of homework as a tool to help students develop self-regulation and self-efficacy. Given this, their study aimed to examine how time spent on homework and available resources to complete homework related to high school students’ self-efficacy and achievement in mathematics across gender and ethnicity. The study
used US based data from the Program International Student Assessment and questionnaire data from National Center for Educational Statistics which was completed by 5,456 fifteen-year-old students. To measure mathematics efficacy, the questionnaire asked questions such as, “how confident do you feel about doing the following calculations…” The findings indicated that students spent on average about one fifth of their homework time on mathematics (an average of 3.69 hours per week). Mathematics self-efficacy and achievement were highly correlated and achievement gaps decreased as homework resources increased (i.e. having books and a quiet place to study). Moreover, increased time spent on homework was associated with a decrease in mathematics achievement. The implications of these findings suggest that teachers should provide resources to help students complete their homework successfully and in a timely manner, and focus on building students’ self-efficacy in mathematics.


Offering that intrinsic motivation is linked to academic performance, this experimental study considered the effects of choice in homework assignments on motivation and academic performance. Participants in the study were 9th–12th grade high school students (n=207) in two urban high schools in the Southeastern US and the experimental treatment (homework choice vs. no homework choice) was administered over a 4 week period by preservice teachers in various subject areas (i.e. chemistry, history, psychology, earth science, government). Students were also surveyed about their perceived motivation. Results showed that high school students reported higher intrinsic motivation when they received a choice in homework and also performed better on a unit test, as compared to when they did not receive a choice. Students also tended to complete more of their homework when provided with choices, but choice appeared to have little effect on the amount of effort they put into homework or the value they attributed to it. Acknowledging that designing multiple homework assignments is a challenge for teachers, the authors offer that teachers and schools can develop a system for sharing homework assignments.


This study was conducted by two high school English teachers who surveyed their students (n~180) and also interviewed other English teachers regarding homework practices. Their study considered whether teachers were being sensitive and supportive of students’ outside interests (i.e. extracurricular) when they assigned homework. The survey asked high school English students about how they spent their time outside of school, and about their impressions of homework. One finding revealed through teacher interviews was that some assigned homework so that students could teach themselves material not covered in class due to lack of adequate time. Moreover, in surveys, 57% of high school English students frequently turned to outside resources (i.e. book summaries) to help them complete and understand their assigned reading, while 75% used these resources at some point during the school year to complete assignments. The paper also discussed the difficulties that students faced in balancing school and extracurricular activities. 62% of students reported devoting at least 4 hours of time to extracurricular activities during the week. Based on the study results, the authors discussed a few adaptations they have made, as teachers, to their own homework practices including: a) selecting
fewer books and shorter texts, b) building reading time in class, and c) allocating more class time for students to use critical thinking skills expected from homework assignments (i.e. reflecting, analyzing, processing texts).


The authors of this study suggest that free time is a cost effective reward which is both appealing to high school students and easy to implement in the classroom. This study sought to determine whether contingent free time as a reinforcement for homework completion could improve the frequency of 12th grade English students’ (n= 50) homework completion. These students were in two separate English classes within an urban high school in British Colombia. The study used a multiple baseline single subject replication design, where the free time condition was made available, unavailable, then subsequently available to students in the two classes over limited time periods. When the free time condition was available, students were dismissed 3 minutes early if their homework was completed during class. Findings indicated that implementation of the free-time procedure during class time increased the frequency of homework completion for both classes of 12th grade English students. Moreover, findings from the survey which was given to students at the end of the study, indicated that high school students generally value free-time highly.


This article presents a case study of one rural high school that created a “No Excuses” homework expectation as an intervention and a means of overcoming the impending threat of losing their state accreditation. As a part of this reform, the school created a culture where students were required to redo or revise any incomplete/unsatisfactory homework assignments or to attend after school tutorial time. The school also created a set of interventions (involving leadership personnel) for students who were struggling to complete homework. Sources of data for the case study included focus groups with faculty and students, interviews with the principal and vice principal, and quantitative data. Results suggest that high expectations (as part of a larger cultural transformation) have an impact on high school students’ academic performance. However, the researchers suggest that homework should be embedded and sustained throughout the school’s culture in order to be impactful.


This survey study considered 9th grade students’ (n=136) attitudes about homework in one urban high school. The survey was administered by two English teachers in the school. Survey results indicated that only 39% of high school freshmen reported completing their homework frequently but 69% indicated that they think homework is meaningful. Moreover, 87% felt that teachers assigned too much homework. The authors offer that teachers can help motivate
students to do homework, by demonstrating how and why assignments are meaningful, by providing time in class to begin assignments, and by offering feedback on completed assignments.


This article considers the survey responses of 9th and 10th grade students (n=205) in one predominately Caucasian rural high school. The survey asked students about their perceived purposes for doing homework, and management of emotions while doing homework. Xu (2005) links their responses to characteristics such as a gender, grade level, and parents’ level of education. Findings showed that homework emotion management was not related to grade level nor to parents’ education level. However, gender and family homework help were associated with homework emotion management strategies (i.e. taking a break, calming down, asking family/friends for help, etc.). Girls and students who received family help reported more frequently using homework emotion management strategies. Moreover, reported intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for doing homework were associated with greater use of homework emotion management strategies. Xu (2005) found that the intrinsically motivated reasons (i.e. developing discipline, learning study skills) for doing homework (reported by high school students) were also the best predictor of emotional management strategies. The implications of this study point to the important role that families can play in helping their children to develop emotion management strategies in regards to their homework.


By offering that homework “rarely reflects a single purpose,” (p. 459-460) this study considered the multiple purposes 11th grade students in the Southeastern US reported doing homework. Both rural (n=681) and urban (n=306) were given a homework purpose survey that had 15 possible purpose statements. Xu (2010) determined that students’ reported purposes could be reduced into three principal categories: 1) learning-oriented reasons 2) adult-oriented reasons 3) and peer-oriented reasons. Findings indicated that urban high school students are more likely to do homework for adult-oriented reasons than their rural counterparts.
Research on middle school


This survey study investigated the views of science homework held by 7th and 8th grade students in Turkey (n=1,584). The survey used a homework scale to measure student responses in three main areas: function, attitude, and behavior. When asked about the time they spent on various activities out of school during the week, the majority of students indicated that they spent between 1-3 hours doing homework, and less than 1 hour researching prior to completing their homework. When asked about the functionality of homework assignments, female students overall held more positive views than male students. However, measures of attitude and behavior were similar across gender. Moreover, 7th grade students overall held more positive views about homework (as measured by function, attitude and behavior) than 8th grade students. Lastly, the researchers found a positive relationship between the amount of time students spent on homework, and students views across the measures. In other words, middle school students who spent more time on homework were more likely to view science homework positively.

Gilliland, K. (2002). Homework: Practice for students or a snack for the dog?. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 8*(1), 36-37.

Similarly to other scholars, this author offers that homework has the most significant impact when it is commented on and graded by the teacher. The short reference guide which follows this statement is designed for middle school parents as a response to the question, “How can I help my child with math homework?” A few suggestions for parents include a) find a good place in the home for their child to do homework with adequate lighting b) talk with child about how to get started and what tasks to prioritize c) be available to respond to requests for help d) ask problem solving questions such as “How do you think you might start this problem?” or “Can you show me a similar problem that might give you a clue for how to begin?” and e) talk to the teacher when difficulties with homework arise.


The author poses the question, “is homework good for middle school science students?” and suggests that the answer is “yes, no, and it depends.” This short review offers some recommendations for ensuring that students benefit from homework that is assigned in middle school science classes. The recommendations are as follows: a) develop guidelines in cooperation with parents and students about study times, removing distractions, etc., b) provide in-class supervised study sessions to help struggling students with homework and study strategies, d) assign no more than 1-2 hours of homework in all subjects each night, e) help students to construct short-term goals in completing homework assignments, and f) distribute homework in small doses rather than through a single more extensive assignment.

This three-year ethnographic study considers how middle school students (n=14) make meaning of mathematics homework, and the role of their identity in making meaning. The researcher asked, “How do students come to value (buy in) or reject (check out) mathematics homework?” To answer this question, the researcher interviewed 14 students and 10 of their parents, finding that students who ‘buy in’ to homework developed aspects of their identities related to school and have a positive relationship with their teachers, whereas students who ‘check out’ developed identity aspects that support them in rejecting homework. Findings also indicate that these two categories were not static, and that students shifted between them (in either direction). The most common negative meanings that students attached to mathematics were that it was less enjoyable than other activities, that they disliked math, and that it is too much work. The most common negative meaning parents attached to math homework was that it was too much work and stress for their children. Both parents and students also attached positive meanings to homework, the most commonly mentioned themes were connected to the utility rather than the value of homework. For instance, interviewees attributed homework to higher grades, advancing onto the next grade level, and to test preparation.


This study used a between-groups design to measure the effectiveness of group coaching on improving the homework completion of middle school students (n=50) who were having difficulty with homework. Students with diagnosed learning disabilities (n=24) and students without diagnosed learning disabilities (n=33) were part of the sample. The researchers were interested in understanding whether group coaching was a more effective treatment for improving homework completion than homework centers. Findings showed that both group coaching and the homework center were effective interventions in decreasing homework problems. However, for middle students having difficulty completing homework, there was a tendency for students with disabilities to produce better outcomes in the homework center, whereas students without disabilities appeared to do better with group coaching.


This experimental study examined the effects of individualized, learning-style homework on middle school students (n=167) attending a parochial school in New York City. The experimental group was given individualized, learning-style homework and the control group was given guidelines for completing traditional homework assignments. Results showed that both groups demonstrated an increase in reading, mathematics, science and social studies achievement, but the middle students in the experimental group (who were given individualized homework assignments based on their learning style) showed larger gains than the control group across subject areas. Implications suggest that middle school teachers can provide individualized choices in homework assignments based on students’ identified learning styles and teach students to identify and capitalize on their learning-style strengths in order to facilitate their academic achievement.

This survey-based study aimed to determine the preferences of middle school students (n=211) in regards to 17 kinds of homework adaptations in a district of Illinois. Of this sample, 17 students had learning disabilities, and 194 were general education students. Of the 17 kinds of homework adaptations included in the survey, the adaptations most preferred by middle schoolers were a) giving assignments that are finished at school b) allowing extra credit assignments c) beginning assignments in class and checking for understanding d) giving assignments that can be completed without any help and e) allowing small groups to work together on assignments. The least preferred homework adaptation was giving different assignments from the assignments that are given to other students. Through group comparisons, the researchers found that students’ preferences for adaptations were not mediated by learning disability nor by level of achievement (as indicated by standard test scores).


This study considered the relationship between parental assistance and mathematic homework for both high and low achieving students from low income families. The study participants included 79 middle school students in an urban district, as well as their parents and mathematic teachers. Findings indicated that the provision of structure was the most common method of parental involvement in mathematic homework as compared to other methods (i.e. direct assistance, autonomy support). Findings also indicated that the parental provision of structure contributed significantly to middle school students’ mathematic grades. Another finding related to parental efficacy: parents who felt more confident that they could help their child succeed with math homework also more frequently provided direct assistance with homework. However, the implications of this study emphasize the importance of helping parents with lower self-efficacy realize that they can help their children succeed by providing structure (even if they cannot provide direct assistance).


The authors begin this paper by discussing both supporting views on homework (as articulated by teachers) and opposing views on homework (as articulated by parents and students), which inspired their research study. Using of data collected in a high performing Indiana middle school (student and parent surveys, teacher homework philosophies, sample homework assignments, and homework hallway charts), this study sought to establish a model for evaluating homework practices in schools. Study findings suggest that the following practices help to balance the amount of homework given to middle school students: a) team-level homework coordination through the use of hallway homework charts to ensure that students do not receive too much
homework across subject areas, b) designating a few minutes at the end of class to begin the assigned homework, c) avoiding the assignment of homework that requires fully functioning independent skill for lower achievers, and d) balancing conceptual and procedural learning in mathematics.


The authors of this study suggest that free time is a cost effective reward which is both appealing to high school students and easy to implement in the classroom. This study sought to determine whether contingent free time as a reinforcement for homework completion could improve the frequency of 12th grade English students’ (n= 50) homework completion. These students were in two separate English classes within an urban high school in British Colombia. The study used a multiple baseline single subject replication design, where the free time condition was made available, unavailable, then subsequently available to students in the two classes over limited time periods. When the free time condition was available, students were dismissed 3 minutes early if their homework was completed during class. Findings indicated that implementation of the free-time procedure during class time increased the frequency of homework completion for both classes of 12th grade English students. Moreover, findings from the survey which was given to students at the end of the study, indicated that high school students generally value free-time highly.


This survey study investigated Turkish middle school science teachers’ homework practices (n=168), finding that nearly all science teachers (93.4%) assigned homework frequently (either once a week or at the end of each class). The survey also asked teachers about the type of homework they assign, and researchers found the most common types to be problem solving (96.4%) and research (94.5%). When asked about the purpose of giving homework, the most weighted response was for students to practice knowledge and skills learned in class (M=4.67), and the second most weighted response was to improve students’ sense of responsibility towards learning (M=4.61). Another finding obtained through statistical analysis was that class size was related to the value that teachers attach to homework: teachers were less likely to give value to homework if their class size was larger.


This survey study considered the impact of homework for middle school students (n=705) in the Denizli province of Turkey. The survey asked students in grades 6-8 about their views on science homework and found that student views did not differ significantly on the basis of gender or education level of parents. Students’ views did however differ (in terms of statistical significance) on the basis of their grade level. Survey results indicate that 70.4% of students expressed a positive opinion about science homework helping them to understand subject matter.
Nearly all students (87.1%) said that teacher correction of homework makes a contribution to their learning by promoting dialogue between the teacher and students. However, only 43.2% of students said that science homework should be obligatory.


This article considers the survey responses of 5th and 6th grade middle school students (n=194) in regards to the characteristics, purposes, and management of their homework and the researcher links their responses to student and family characteristics. Students who participated in this survey were attending a rural middle school with a predominately Caucasian student body. On average, students spent 4.46 hours a week doing homework, but there was a large variability in this number. Of particular interest to this study were the homework management strategies reported by students (i.e. turning off the television, prioritizing and planning, self-praise) Findings indicated that homework management was not related to grade level, parental education, time spent on homework, nor to extrinsic reasons for doing homework. However, the variables of gender and family help were associated with use of homework management strategies for middle school students. Girls and those who received family help with homework were more likely to manage their homework. Lastly, higher levels of intrinsic purposes for doing homework were associated with more frequent use of homework management strategies.


Using the Trends in International Mathematics and Science study data from 2003, this study sought to identify the relationship between 8th grade students’ homework practice (n=4,972) and their mathematics achievement (as measured by assessment results) in Hong Kong. The three dimensions considered in relation to mathematics achievement were frequency and amount of homework, types of homework, and usage modes of homework. In addition to asking students about these dimensions in a survey, mathematics teachers participating in the study (n=144) were asked about the frequency and amount of homework they gave to students. The researchers applied a 2-level hierarchical linear model to the data to analyze the data and to report the following findings: 70% of students reported that they received mathematics homework at least three or more times a week. Secondly, there was a statistically significant and positive relationship between the amount of time spent on homework and student achievement. However, the same positive relationship was not found between frequency of homework assignments and student achievement. In regards to type of homework, a significantly positive impact was found between problem/question type and student achievement. Moreover, a positive relationship was found between students who reviewed/corrected their homework during class time, and their achievement. Lastly, a negative relationship was found between having students start homework in class and their achievement.
**Research on elementary school**


This study aims to investigate learning assessment practices used by Jordanian teachers of mathematics for grades (1-6) in Amman. The sample for the study consisted of 402 teachers. A questionnaire of 72 items was developed around four domains, namely: questions, homework, exams, and alternative strategies. Validity and reliability were established. Results of the study showed that the mean of the scores for the four domains and the entire items are medium, the highest was on exams and the lowest on the homework. ANOVA analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences related to number of courses and gender.


This report examined whether parent training increased parent-child interactions during the completion of second grade students’ Interactive Homework Assignments (IHA) in reading. IHA is homework designed specifically to increase parent involvement and student achievement and the author suggests that it can facilitate increases in a student’s ability to draw inferences from their reading, which is a skill closely aligned with proficiency in reading acquisition. The second grade level was chosen for the study because teachers were concerned with preparing students a high-stakes assessment in third grade called the SAT9. The results of this study indicated that specific parent training over a brief time period (approximately four weeks), had the potential to improve the academic performance of academically at-risk students.


It is common for teachers in all districts across the United States to give homework to their students. Given the rising numbers of children from nondominant backgrounds in American schools, a question that merits consideration is how children from nondominant backgrounds—particularly in large urban centers—are impacted by teachers' homework practices. In this study the researchers explored the reasons why teachers in one large U.S. urban center assigned homework, the kinds of homework teachers assigned, and teachers' beliefs about the impacts of this homework on their students' success at school. They collected surveys from 133 elementary school teachers (grades K through middle school) and interviewed a subgroup of 27 teachers from the larger group. Results revealed that although most teachers engaged in homework practices that were similar to those identified in current research (e.g. giving students skill-based practice in math and spelling), most teachers made provisions for students from nondominant backgrounds, including those who came from homes where English was not spoken at home, or
those whose parents did not have additional financial resources to purchase materials for children to complete their homework.


This article uses data from the children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 to estimate time-lagged growth models of the effect of several types of parental involvement on scores on elementary school achievement tests and the Behavioral Problems Index. The findings suggest that parental involvement does not independently improve children’s learning, but some involvement activities do prevent behavioral problems. Interaction analyses suggest that the involvement of parents with low socioeconomic status may be more effective than that of parents with high socioeconomic status.


This study examined the effect of parental involvement in homework on academic performance in public primary schools in Teso North Sub County, Busia, Kenya. The study objectives were to establish the types of homework assistance children received from their parents, to ascertain the extent of parental involvement in homework, and to examine the association between parental involvement in homework and school academic performance. All teachers, head teachers, students and parents in public primary schools were targeted. Thirty schools were first randomly sampled and then 532 respondents (30 head teachers, 30 parents, 192 teachers and 280 students) were then sampled. Parents and head teachers were purposively sampled while teachers and students were proportionately sampled. A descriptive survey design was employed and data was collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using means, percentages and frequencies and qualitative data was reported directly. T-tests, Pearson moment correlation coefficient, and OLS regression coefficients were used to test hypotheses. The results indicated that female parents were more willing to assist children in homework. Parents provided limited assistance in areas such as reading, writing and solving difficult sums. Parental involvement in homework was positively correlated with academic performance. Since educational gains of students relate to parental involvement, the authors conclude that parents have a significance in the educational processes of their children. The authors suggest that parents who do not assist children in homework should be sensitized to do so.


This study examined parent involvement in their children's literacy development and the knowledge of parent involvement among their children's teachers. Participating in this study were 102 parents of elementary school students. Parents rated their involvement in their children's literacy development on a 50-item scale that included items measuring involvement in
literacy promotion activities such as taking their child to the library, working on projects with their child, helping in the child’s classroom, and reading in the child's presence. Eight teachers of these children also rated the parents’ literacy involvement on the same scale. The findings revealed that parents reported being more involved in their children's literacy development than the teachers reported for these same parents. However, the majority of dissimilar responses between parents and teachers were on items teachers could not observe firsthand.


This meta-analysis of 41 studies examines the relationship between parental involvement and the academic achievement of urban elementary school children. Analyses determined the effect sizes for parental involvement overall and subcategories of involvement. Results indicate a significant relationship between parental involvement overall and academic achievement. Parental involvement, as a whole, was associated with all the academic variables by about 0.7 to 0.75 of a standard deviation unit. This relationship held consistent for White and minority children and also for boys and girls.


The study sought to establish and compare the views of rural and urban primary school pupils on homework in Zimbabwe, using six purposively sampled Masvingo rural and urban primary schools. The inquiry employed a qualitative methodology in which data were gathered through semi-structured personal interviews and document analysis. A sample of thirty rural and thirty urban 5th grade students were interviewed. Forty-five homework exercise books were analyzed. On one hand, the investigation established that there were some students who liked homework and others who disliked it in both rural and urban schools. However, there were more students in urban areas who viewed homework in a positive light than there were in rural schools. The paper unearthed home and school factors as the causes of rural and urban students’ different views on homework. The researchers make several recommendations. Firstly, the government should endeavor to narrow the gap between the socio-economic statuses of the rural and urban populace in Zimbabwe as it is a major contributor to pupils’ different views on homework. Secondly, rural schools should be improved in terms of the quality of teachers and teaching-learning resources. Also, parents in both settings need to be encouraged to take an interest in their children’s homework. Moreover, teachers from both rural and urban schools need to take homework more seriously as their attitudes to homework influence students’ views on it.


This study aimed at explaining Romanian teachers’ perception about homework. In survey conducted online with voluntary participation, 51 primary teachers were involved. Teachers’ responses highlighted their beliefs for the need to assign daily homework and the importance of parents’ involvement in monitoring the homework assigned to their children. Respondents also
praised the benefits of homework for students, fully ignoring the disadvantages of homework. The authors attribute the main causes of this situation to the peculiarities of the Romanian education system. They offer that a change of the unilateral beliefs of teachers, parents, teacher trainers, curriculum creators about homework should be led by the active involvement of education professionals. The researchers advocate for further systematic research on homework practices, and that research results be addressed to all stakeholders.


This paper explores teachers’ habits (1) in terms of setting homework for their students and (2) in terms of building on homework in the classroom. Based on data collected in UNESCO’s Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE), the sample size of this analysis is about 200,000 Primary grade 3 and 6 students in 16 Latin American countries. The SERCE study applied standardized achievement tests and context questionnaires to these students, their families, teachers and principals of the schools involved. Choosing four aspects (student, classroom, school and country) for their multilevel study and focusing on two subjects (Mathematics and Language), the authors of this paper investigated the relationship between homework and students’ academic achievement. The results of their analysis show that the majority of Latin American teachers set homework in all or almost all classes. 90% of teachers estimated that it took their students between 15-30 minutes to complete their homework. Follow-up figures in terms of checking and correcting homework were somewhat lower, as was the number of teachers who actually built on homework in teaching sessions. This study highlights the importance of following up on the content covered in homework in the classroom to maximize effective learning during class.


This paper offers a brief critique of key issues in the current homework debate with particular reference to research literature, theoretical perspectives, educational policy and other professional publications. The author points to an emerging discourse between homework in academic literature and classroom pedagogy and identifies a number of opportunities for further research. Ultimately, it is argued that whilst a range of work has been published around certain aspects of homework, many complexities remain and conclusive answers are most likely to be found only within the cultural context where the homework is actually undertaken.


Using Dutch data on elementary school students, this study analyzed whether assigning homework had a heterogeneous impact on student achievement. Addressing potential biases by using a difference-in-difference approach, the researcher found that the test score gap was larger in classes where all students were assigned homework than in classes where no students were assigned homework. The researcher also found that students belonging to the upper part of the socioeconomic scale performed better when homework is given, whereas students from the
lowest part were unaffected. However, the more disadvantaged children also got less help from their parents with their homework. The researcher suggests that homework can amplify existing inequalities in schools because it draws on differing home inputs.


This mixed methods study focused on Hong Kong elementary school teachers' perceptions about the nature and purpose of homework and their preferences about assignment types. Findings draw from questionnaire survey data collected from 317 teachers together with focus group interviews involving 38 teachers. On the whole, respondents supported the use of homework assignments to serve various academic and nonacademic functions. Tension between tradition and change was reflected through their preferences for drilling versus non-drilling assignment type. Furthermore, questionnaire survey results indicated that teacher efficacy related to a preference for non-drilling assignments and to endorsement of the homework functions of enhancing long-term learning and supporting home-school communication. Implications for homework design, teacher preparation, and future research on teacher conceptions are also discussed.


This investigation employed a randomized interdependent group contingency and randomized reinforcers to improve homework completion and accuracy of spelling performance in 21 elementary school students. An ABAB reversal design across all students was employed. Results showed this intervention to have a positive impact on both spelling homework completion and accuracy rates.


In this article, the authors describe data from 6 case studies of children doing third-grade homework with their parents. The study combined observation and interview data from children, parents, and teachers to take a close look at the dynamics of homework and its potential to develop self-responsibility in children. They discussed both methodology and results in the context of related investigations and modern theoretical directions. The data provided clear evidence that everyday experiences with homework, as mediated by parents, provided opportunities for children to learn to cope with various difficulties and distractions associated with doing homework. The researchers also discussed the ways in which children seized homework opportunities, began to develop strategies and skills for doing homework, and the nature of the mediation that their parents provided.

In this article, the author first examined five major homework challenges of students, including arranging a conducive homework environment, budgeting time and pacing themselves to meet homework deadlines, handling homework distractions, keeping themselves motivated during homework sessions, and coping with negative affect or mood swings encountered while doing homework. The author then discussed a range of strategies that students can use to deal with these challenges as well as implications for teachers and families seeking to help students manage their homework more responsibly.