



HEADLINES

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I Hate Homework!

Don't be confused, this is not a quote from one of your children. This is a quote from you and me and every other parent who has had to hover over their daughter or son sitting motionlessly at a recently cleared kitchen or dining room table with pencil poised over a blank page.

For most of us, who endured years of our own homework purgatory, there is a cruel irony about listening to our parents' voices come out of our own "enlightened" mouths as we encourage, cajole and threaten the next generation about the consequences of unrequited homework expectations.

Having said all of that, the traditional approach to homework is not the sacrosanct institution that we sometimes believe. There is considerable research evidence to indicate that years of school assigned homework may not have had the impact on the teaching and learning process that we once thought.

For example, a recent ASCD study in the United States found the following discouraging statistics: 65% of homework assigned is unnecessary and marginal (at best) to student learning; 45% of all homework is never referred to again in class; 75% of overnight work is not marked, shared or evaluated in any way to ensure accurate completion or to address concerns; 80% of "taken up" overnight homework is peer reviewed to ensure completion or accuracy but there is not meaningful analysis to aid in student understanding; 35% of all submitted homework is never marked or returned; and, 67% of what is returned is not done so in a timely fashion. Are you depressed yet?

Given these stark statistics, should homework simply be scrapped? The answer, obviously, is "no", but what is clearly necessary is a re-thinking of how we use homework to enhance learning, the extent to which the homework that is assigned reflects the academic priorities and philosophy of the school, and, the establishment of a truly collaborative approach to the assigning and completion of homework that involves on-going discussions

both among teachers, and between home and school. According to the research, homework definitely has a role in a number of specific instances: when reinforcement of a newly learned concept is clearly necessary; when time (as in "there isn't enough in the school day!") is a factor; and, when you want to actively engage parents in the learning process. So, what can schools do to ensure that students and their parents appreciate the value of doing work beyond the end of the school day? To begin with schools have to ask themselves so hard questions: Is what we are assigning essential? Is it better done at home than at school? Is it effectively integrated into our programme plan for the next day? Clearly, some things simply must be done at home in the evening or on the weekends: completing work not finished in school; review and revision of written work; test preparation; assigned reading; project work; research that is beyond the resources of the school; in short, almost anything that can't be accomplished within the constraints of a regular school day. Both the 6-11 Divisions and the MYP Division are currently working to review and revise our approach to homework. Our goals are: to categorize the type of tasks that we assign for students to do; to prune the unessential, prioritize the rest; and, to maintain collaborative discussions among staff to guard against inconsistencies and overloading.

What are we asking of you to support our drive for more effective homework? Please try to remember to monitor your children's agendas and the portal; ask your children about their homework – if they say that they did it at school, ask to see it anyway and look to see not just "how much" but also "how valuable"; and, try not to negotiate away your child's responsibilities for homework with a late night email to the teacher (we are a flexible bunch, but let your child take ownership of the situation). In the final analysis, we are all working in concert to do the best for your child. Open, positive communication, patience and understanding on both sides are the key to student success.



Learning in Action: The MYP Personal Project Fair

UPCOMING EVENTS

MYP Sports Day

March 2nd

"The Pearl"

6-9 Opera

March 4th

MYP Curriculum Series

March 10th

Royal Visit: Prince Edward At Somersfield

March 17th

Spring Break March 26– April 10