

HOMework

Student achievement rises significantly when teachers regularly assign and students consistently complete homework. The extra study that homework provides helps students at all levels of ability. Homework boosts achievement because the total time spent studying influences how much is learned. While time is not the only ingredient for learning, without it achievement is diminished. Homework also gives students experience in following directions, making judgements and comparisons, raising additional questions for study, and developing responsibility and self-discipline.

To make the most of what students learn from homework, teachers need to give the same care in preparing homework assignments as they give to classroom instruction. Homework is most useful when teachers carefully prepare the assignment, thoroughly explain it, and give timely comments and criticism when the work is completed. Also students are more willing to do homework when they believe it is part of instruction, when it is evaluated, and when it counts as part of their grade.

In many math classes, homework is used as practice. Initially, that practice should be “guided” practice to ensure that students are proceeding correctly. When students begin their homework assignment in class, teachers need to monitor their understanding. To accomplish this, teachers should require students to do several problems and check them before they are left to do the remainder of the assignment independently. Besides assigning a problem set for homework, teachers might also require students to copy definitions, algorithms, and write brief explanations to explain the day’s work.