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Homework is good for students debate

Sometimes, I feel as if I have been doing homework my entire life. As a child growing up, I moved from worksheets, dioramas and book reports to essays, major projects and term papers. When I began teaching, I had lessons to prepare and my students' homework became my homework for grading. (And, on occasion, it was quite obvious that I was putting a bit more effort into MY homework than they put into theirs!) As my children reached school age, "Mom's rules" on homework included: homework comes first, don't wait until the last minute on a project, etc. But somehow their homework still bled over into my life. . . . So, how important is this icon of education? Is homework helpful or harmful? Is it something that, as many students claim, just eats up their time and energy for no real purpose? Do we, as educators, need new practices that move away from homework or are we simply afraid to change, stuck on those famous eight words, "But, we've never done it that way before. . . ."?

In support of the view of homework as helpful, many educators stress that specifically aligning homework to the learning task is part of the strategy for building understanding. The website Focus on Effectiveness cites several studies showing that in elementary school, homework helps build learning and study habits (Cooper, 1989; Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, & Greathouse, 1998; Gorges & Elliot, 1999). Also noted is the point that 30 minutes of daily homework in high school can increase a student's GPA up to half a point (Keith 1992). Many students need time and experience to develop the study habits that support learning, and homework can provide that as well as the ability to cope with mistakes and difficulty (Bempechat, 2004). Those teachers who take the time to add instructive comments to their feedback to homework get the greatest return on their efforts in after-school work. (Walberg, 1999). But what about the students who are doing it wrong and then have to "unlearn" incorrect information? When considering the view that homework is harmful, author and speaker Alfie Kohn states that there is no real evidence showing homework to be beneficial to elementary students. In an EdWeek article, he writes that he found no correlation between homework and improved standardized assessment scores. Regarding secondary students, Kohn said that there is a slight correlation between homework and improved test scores and grades but there is no evidence that the improvement is because of homework rather than other activities. Stating that there is no proof that homework benefits students in other ways such as good study habits, independence or self discipline, Kohn could find no disadvantage to reducing or even eliminating homework altogether but finds the homework trend continues to grow. So, what is the answer - is homework helpful or harmful? Do we continue current practices or throw homework out altogether? A balanced perspective most likely is the best response. Time spent on homework should align with the student's age - a short time spent in elementary school, up to 90 minutes for middle school or junior high aged students and between 1½ and 2 ½ hours per night (not per subject!) in high school (Harris, 2006). Another suggestion is to multiply the student's grade by ten to determine the appropriate number of minutes of homework per night (example - a fifth grader should have no more than 50 minutes of homework per night). If we want the best results, we'll keep homework time within these time ranges with allowances made for individual needs of students and families. Key takeaways: Remember the main purposes of homework: to build rote memorization and automaticity; to provide time to deepen understanding through elaboration and to increase readiness for new information. Assign homework that includes very few concepts so students can learn them on a deeper level (Healy, 1990). Match homework to the learning goal for a more focused learning experience. Provide appropriate and timely feedback. Students need to know what was correct, what needs to be changed, etc., and they need this information sooner rather than later. Waiting several days or even weeks to provide feedback limits or even eliminates the effectiveness of the assignment. Parental involvement should be limited to facilitating the completion of homework - not teaching content or doing the work for a child. Parents who get too involved in an assignment inhibit rather than enhance learning. Related Reading: Students who Struggle in the Mainstream: What their Homework Patterns May Tell You Building a Foundation for School Readiness for Low Income Children The great homework help, "is homework helpful or harmful" is something that has been going around for decades now. Different stakeholders, including parents, students and teachers have different views when the question "is homework helpful or harmful" comes around. The advantages and disadvantages of homework are definitely relative. They primarily depend on the time the students need to put in and the level of difficulty. Also, whether or not teachers should permit parents help with homework. On the one hand, students feel that it is an unnecessary burden that eats up their time. On the other hand, teachers feel that homework is necessary to reinforce learning. Whether or not homework is helpful or harmful will thus, always have two sides to it. Let us look at why homework is good and why homework is bad for you and how you can make doing homework a piece of cake-Is Homework Helpful or Harmful: Why Homework is Good? There are a variety of reasons why teachers and educators feel that homework is good for a student's learning-Learning reinforcement This is especially true for younger students. Often students face 'out of sight, out of mind.' In the absence of homework, what they learn at school gets lost on the way home. Students, in such a situation, are unable to connect the dots in the next lesson. Homework, thus, acts as a tool to reinforce what is learnt at school. Practice makes perfect Since the learning speed and capacity of all students is different, why homework is good becomes apparent. Homework encourages the students to practice and re-practice what they learn at school. This way if they have the slightest confusion in any concept, they can rework it and then go back to their teacher with the problem they are facing. This practice helps students master the concepts taught at school and excel academically. Time management While lessons in school focus on conceptual clarity, homework aims to help students frame answers to questions in a given time frame. This helps students learn the art of time management. This comes in handy for students during exam time. As they have already spent time answering questions, they are able to finish their exams in the given time and more efficiently. Art of priority setting Student life is often a time of confusion and lack of priority setting. Overwhelmed with number of activities they need to take care, students are unable to decide the order of doing each one. Doing homework can help students prioritize better as they have to decide which homework to finish first. Is Homework Helpful or Harmful: Why Homework is Bad for You? If you look at the above section, you may think homework wins the 'is homework helpful or harmful' debate. However, there is a flip side to this. This means that there are some disadvantages of homework too. Let us have a look at this flip side of is homework harmful or helpful-Unnecessary stress According to a survey by Stanford, 56% of students felt that homework was a means of primary stress for them. On the other hand, only 1% of students felt that homework did not cause stress to them. Homework causing stress has many reasons to it. Firstly, students feel the stress of finishing the homework on time. Secondly, they also feel stressed out contemplating the consequences of getting the answers wrong. Health problems A direct consequence of stress due to homework comes in the form of health problems. Students who get more homework often suffer from health problems. Headaches, lack of sleep, exhaustion, stomachaches, etc. While these health problems may seem small in the beginning, they can lead to chronic illnesses in the longer run. Imbalance in life Spending too much time on homework also prevents students from having an active social life and mingling with friends and peers. Always busy with homework, students are unable to socialize in a healthy manner which leads to difficulty in communication in the later stages of life. Additionally, due to homework, students are unable to take part in extra-curricular activities. This stands in the way of their holistic development. Since more career professions now look for all-rounded candidates, such students might get on the back burner. Is Homework Helpful or Harmful: The Balancing Act It is definitely true that there are benefits of homework. These advantages make it desirable and do play a significant role in helping students raise their grades. However, as they say that too much of anything is bad, the same goes for homework too. It is important to note that students and teachers need to strike a balance between a variety of factors for maximum efficiency-The correct amount For homework to be genuinely helpful and not become a nightmare for students, it should be of the optimum amount. While there is no standard benchmark as to how much homework is less or more, there are certain parameters that top educators advice. For instance, for a primary school student, the optimum homework should not take more than 20-25 minutes. A middle school student, should spend about 45 mins. For a high school student, the amount will depend on the discipline the student opts for, but it should not take more than 1.5-2 hours. Consistency While the amount is one determinant of is homework helpful or harmful, its consistency with classroom learning is also important. This simply means that students should be given homework on the lines of the syllabus done in the class. More often than not teachers complete one topic in class and give away the next one as homework. However, the right approach should be to give practice questions on the first topic itself. Homework on a completely new topic stresses students more than usual and makes them despise it. How to do your Homework without Stress? Thanks to the coming together of education and technology, students can have access to instant help when it comes to homework. There are a plethora of homework help edtech platforms that are making life easier for students. Such platforms like TutorBin are a repository of professional tutors who are available to help out students stuck with their homework. They offer a variety of benefits-Reduce stress- As students can get some help and guidance from these homework help sites, it reduces their stress. This is especially true when students have very less time in hand and a lot to do. Better grades- A study by Stanford illustrates that 33% students are under the pressure of getting good grades which negatively impacts their physical and mental health. These platforms ensure that students receive 100% correct solution with the right methodology. Thus, students are able to achieve better grades and do not feel the burden of homework too much. Key Takeaways To sum up the 'is homework helpful or harmful' there are a few points one needs to remember-Homework has several advantages for students, in short capsules Homework reinforces learning and helps the students learn the art of time management and better answer writing However, too much homework is bad for a student's physical and mental health It acts as a constant stressor and can even lead to severe headaches, exhaustion and sleeplessness It is important to balance the homework to reap the benefits out of it Students should receive homework based on which grade they are in and what disciplines they opt for Homework should be a practice of what has already been done in class, and not a new topic altogether Students have the option of access online homework help platforms to seek assistance and reduce their stress and achieve better grades If you are ever under the burden of homework, and are seeking a burden to bail you out, TutorBin is just a click away. Get homework help from subject matter experts and have the time to develop holistically.

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