

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 321

HOMEWORK

FOREWORD

The East-Central School Board believes that homework can be a positive experience for all and a complement to learning, on condition that certain study-based recommendations are met. Therefore, teachers and school management will focus their planning on the facts and statements that follow before assigning homework:

Drawn from the document published by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada entitled "*Assessment Matters!*, N^o. 7, 2014 — CMEC."

1. For the most part, the results support the conventional wisdom that everything is good in moderation.
2. In the early grades, more time spent on homework does not mean higher performance.
3. Overall, results from large-scale assessments seem to be consistent with other research suggesting that older students benefit more from homework than younger students do (Muhlenbruck, Cooper, Nye, & Lindsay, 2000, p.6.)

Drawn from the mega analysis produced by John Hattie— *Hattie J. (2009), Visible Learning, A synthesis of over 800 meta-analysis relating to achievement. New York: Routledge.*

4. The higher the student's level, the higher the impact homework will have on learning and performance. Students in grades 10, 11 and 12 will draw more benefits from time spent doing homework compared to a student in grades 7, 8 or 9. Elementary students will draw very little benefit from homework relevant to their performance. Yet, according to Cooper, homework can help develop good study habits and favour a positive attitude toward school in addition to showing that learning requires as much work at home as it does at school—Cooper, H. (1989b). *Synthesis of Research on Homework. Educational Leadership*, 47(3), 85–91).
5. There is no positive connection between the time spent by the student doing homework (duration) and his or her performance.
6. Less homework is better, but for elementary students, time spent doing homework, be it of long or short duration, has little if any impact on performance.
7. The involvement of parents is a positive aspect in the development of a student's autonomy, but it becomes negative when they are required to give instructions. Assigning homework for which a parent must give instructions or teach a concept must therefore be avoided. However, a parent can be involved in establishing a routine and supervising homework.
8. The very nature of homework is an excellent indicator of the impact on learning; consequently, we notice a clear effect when the material is not complex or new for the student. What has the least influence is when the required task requires superior abilities in thinking or project-based learning. For example, it is too difficult for the majority of students to further certain concepts by developing a multi-

step project at home. The task will be done with not much learning and will probably be finished by a parent; that is if the parent supports it at all. The same applies to essay questions in social studies, for example, or to the resolution of a mathematical problem.

9. The impact is greater when homework consists of simple learning, words and algorithms to memorize and practice or some kind of repetition. Learning can be reinforced by practicing mental calculations in mathematics, memorizing a poem or ordinary terms and studying definitions.
10. Large amounts of homework, combined with very little follow-up and feedback from the teacher is an ineffective teaching strategy.
11. Homework assignments must be short, frequent and must be subject to follow-up and feedback from the teacher; ideally, the assignment must also be started in class.
12. Homework does not help in the development of time-management skills.
13. Teaching, not homework, has the MOST impact on the student's learning. Teaching is that much more effective if the relationship between the teacher and the student is a positive one.
14. It is important to emphasize reading and phonological awareness.
15. Exposure to reading has the most value. (Reading by an older student, reading in pairs, silent reading.)

Guidelines

The assignment of homework must be based on the 15 principles set out previously; it is the responsibility of the principal to supervise all that is sent home and to address any infringement to these under the code of ethics of the teaching profession. Taking these principles into consideration, the following procedures are to be followed:

1. The role of reading as part of homework:

1. At the elementary level, teachers will set up a home reading program. The program will value the development of pleasure in reading and will be stimulating, but will not impose a written component or "résumé." Works in both languages will be included in the program and teachers will respect the student's skill level (books suitable to student's level.) Without setting minimums or maximums, teachers will differentiate according to the student's skill. For example, cycle 1 programming will encourage phonological awareness, whereas the cycle 2 program will favour novels, series or comic books.
2. In high school, cycle 1, teachers will also set up a reading program. As with the elementary program, the objective is to develop a taste for reading in both languages without having to submit a written report. However, follow-up in the classroom is crucial in order to have any effect on performance. In order for reading time to be meaningful, it is important to adjust the time requirement to the student's capacity. In general, reading periods will be longer than 20 minutes in order to be successful in developing literacy skills.

2. Learning by rote, practice and repetition:

1. At the elementary level, teachers might establish a program to practice mental calculation. These activities must include an element of play (cards, dice, etc.), and not just be a series of photocopied exercises.

2. If at the elementary level, cycle 2, and high school, cycle 1, homework involves study work or revision, strategies and specific study techniques must be learned in the classroom beforehand. The study content will not be new material, complex problems or projects. The sessions must also be subject to follow-up in the classroom if they are to have an impact on the student's performance.

3. Amount of homework:

1. The school board recognizes that for high school students in cycle 2, homework is an integral part of completing basic courses that are more elaborate and complex. At this stage in their schooling, students benefit from practice and revision at home. Studies clearly indicate that it will have a positive impact on their performance. On the other hand, teachers must consult with each other so that the tasks are not a burden. Teamwork is essential to coordinate the amount of homework that will be given to students. A homework session should not last more than an hour and a half.

4. The role of parents:

1. Parents have a considerable role to play in the development of a child's autonomy. At the elementary level, they might read with their child, keep time of the reading session, play a simple mental calculation game, read while their child is reading, etc. Parents might study along with an older child, ask questions of interest, keep time of the homework session, etc. They can also ask questions about readings (for example: what is the subject, what are the protagonists doing?), without playing the role of the teacher, nor being placed in that position. If a child does not understand division, for example, practicing division should not be a homework assignment. In this instance, a parent must communicate with the teacher and, if the situation persists, take it up with the principal.

5. Communication:

1. The school board encourages punctual and clear communication with parents about everything that touches their child's education. Hence, every school team will give instructions about homework at the start of the year. Parents who disagree with procedures concerning homework will first discuss it with the concerned teacher. If still unsatisfied, the parents can address their concerns to the principal. If there is still no resolution at the school level, a complaint can be forwarded to the school board's management.

References

Articles 18, 20 and 60 of the School Act

Student Evaluation Regulation 169/98

Student Evaluation Policy