

How the Reduction of Homework Cultivates a Better Learning Experience

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For the typical American student, school feels like a traumatizing nightmare that one will never wake up from. Thus, many students are looking towards the examples of Korea and Finland, two countries that spend fewer than three hours on homework a week, yet still excel in academics, as an education model that could help relieve their pain by reducing homework (Teng 14). With many policymakers such as François Holland actively considering such a shift in education policy, it becomes imperative to understand how effective reducing homework can be for students. The discussion will deal with first, the psychological benefits, and second, the added intellectual exploration benefits.

Sleep is a rare commodity for many students as a result of excessive homework, with the majority of students not getting enough sleep. In fact, on school nights, more than half of all students sleep fewer than eight hours a night, far less than the recommended amount of nine hours (Ponte 12). Lack of sleep not only decimates an individual's ability to pay attention in class and think creatively, but it ruins learning as a whole. By staying up the extra hour in order to get that last vocab word memorized, hours of productive learning and creativity are lost. Homework is also one of the most direct contributors to stress, which not only ruins an individual's ability to focus in class and pay attention, but also degrades a student's mental and physical health. In fact, in 2013 Stanford University reported that 56 percent of students reported excessive homework as their primary stressor, alongside physical health detriments, and ostracization from society (Levy 16). These symptoms of instability from homework not only directly trade off with an individual's focus and learning, but they also help cultivate a stigma of hatred towards homework, something that not only destroys the value of said homework, but also can hamper passion for learning. Top researchers found that more positive attitudes towards homework were linked directly to higher achievement and learning in that specific area (Chang

et al., 14). Thus, by reducing a currently excessive amount of homework, individuals will feel like their homework is less of a chore and more of a tool to excel in academics. Busy work could be substituted for more thought provoking and abstract assignments with actual benefits.

Ironically, homework has been touted as a great time management teacher, except if you have lots of homework, there aren't very many outside things to manage. Reducing a student's homework load could be an effective step in allowing students to spend more of their time in extracurricular projects, which not only allows students to follow their passions, but also allows for more in-depth learning to occur. Extracurricular activities like Debate and Science fairs are phenomenal when it comes to learning about real world policymaking and many different science fields, but with mass amounts of homework, students have far less time to dedicate to such extracurricular activities, thoroughly harming the breadth of education that could be gained from activities such as these (Strauss 14). A massive amount of homework also destroys passion driven research. Instead of having the extra hour to study something you are greatly interested in, such as international relations or doing a world-changing science experiment, individuals are sucked into doing more homework. In fact, the five-hour rule, a process of constant learning used by Bill Gates and Benjamin Franklin, exemplifies the benefits of passion driven research, as devoting an hour a day to a topic you are passionate about enables students to become outstandingly more productive, creative, and capable of learning.

When returning to how beneficial a reduction of homework can be for students, there is a clear academic consensus on two areas, the incredible psychological benefits, and the ability for students to explore their passions. So, to policymakers like François Holland, for the sake of students everywhere, reduce homework and create a more educated population.

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