

Why There Should Be Less Homework:

A Look At Modern Assignments

## WHY THERE SHOULD BE LESS HOMEWORK

Homework is a staple of academic life. Kind of like rice is to Asians. It occupies an odd position in the academe, not anticipated, wanted, or asked—sometimes, actively despised. Mostly, homework is given and taken without much glee and expectation; it has become something almost all students slog through with gritted teeth. Not like how rice is. Because, as it is designed mostly, homework is burdensome.

And one way to fix this? Less Homework.

Wait! I'm aware it sounds crazy, even counter-intuitive. People always say studying more equals more opportunities for success, so it would stand that more homework would equal more of those opportunities as well; but both of those statements are not entirely true. Some students find schooling hard and having more homework places an additional weight on those students, especially in subjects like math and science—**MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO ENRICH HIS KNOWLEDGE WITH SUCH ARCANE SYMBOLS AS NUMBERS!** ...as one wouldn't say. Look. Math and science are hard. Science with math? Much so. Homework about science with math? Mind-boggling! Lessening homework doesn't mean that students are given less opportunities for studying, it just means that they've more time to rest from a day's work of school in the comfort of their own homes—and saddling them with as much homework as you can possibly create within a day, disrupts that leisure time. They're tired in school and they're tired at home. Which is always bad when it happens. Homework is not bad per se—just that too

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much of it will undoubtedly become a sore pain in the neck. Unlike rice. And sore pains have a nasty habit of being painful sometime later.

How can you be like this? You might ask. How can you so diminish a hallmark of education that has existed for decades? Are you a monster? Firstly, no, I'm not and calling me that is counter-productive. Secondly, a hallmark though homework may be, it surprisingly offers not much of a lasting effect on a student's education—according to a study<sup>1</sup>, homework increases academic performance... a meager amount—almost negligible, really.

Now, I'm not advocating against the concept of homework, I am only stating the demerits of how contemporary homework is made; because although it's intended to be a simple tool, it brings with it a complex web of parental support, academic confidence of student, teacher competency, home environment and many, many other things, for it to be effective—and that's just the minimum requirement; and a teacher might be tempted to not just give homework all together. But that's not a better solution either.

Because, as a constructivist, or someone inclined towards Piaget's views might say, learning is meaningful understanding; and homework is the best way to evoke that—but, with the way homework is mostly done, there's too much meaning and less understanding. And too much meaning becomes a salad of nonsense for a student. Indeed, there's much evidence to vindicate

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<sup>1</sup>When is Homework Worth the Time?: Evaluating the Association Between Homework and Achievement in High School Science and Math

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the humble homework despite its flaws—homework, done well, is a great vehicle for students to attain personal meaning in their learning, but if you belt them out every day of the week, that purpose becomes lost and jumbled—such so, that homework is universally despised, its absence a cause for celebration and much rice. But those aren't moments for rice.

Homework's useful; and teachers should make best use of the tools in their disposal, but not overdo it. Take the time to carefully tailor homework if you're going to give it; instead of doing it just for the sake of it. A single well-crafted assignment is better than a hundred poorly made ones. And well, if you're not convinced: have rice—rice is always better than nothing.

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