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The purpose of homework, like school work is learning. Homework is important for students of all ages as it helps them build on what they have already learnt in the classroom, and prepares them for the next stage in their learning.

Homework is also valuable for teachers as it helps them assess the progress of their students. Research carried out in Australia and overseas shows a clear link between the time spent by students on out-of-class study and student achievement.

Homework helps to bridge the gap between home and school. It should be seen by teachers, students, parents and caregivers as a vital part of the home-school partnership which supports young people while they learn. (Extract from Department of School Education Draft Homework Policy 1994)

Homework — work that is assigned during class to be done outside the regular class meeting time (at home during off-class time or at some other location and time) — is an integral part of the educational program.

Homework should:

- be meaningful and relevant both to the class work and to the student;
- help the student develop useful skills and gain increased insight into class work;
- contribute directly as well as indirectly to the student's performance evaluation.

Although regular homework requires self-discipline and individual commitment on the part of the student, the best results occur when homework is a collaborative effort between school, teachers, students, and parents. Yet it is recognised that some time in a student's out of school life must be devoted to physical, social and other activities. Homework is an educational tool, not a disciplinary measure.

The following are examples of the four basic types of homework:

- Practice
- Preparation
- Extension
- Creativity

Practice

Practice homework provides opportunities for students to continue what has been presented and practised in class. For example, a math teacher may assign additional problems for homework after a math concept has been presented and practised in class. Such homework can be effective when a

skill needs practice, but become dull and counterproductive if used extensively with students who have the skill well in hand.

Preparation

Preparation homework has the purpose of preparing students for the next lesson. For example, a science teacher may assign the reading or study of textbook material in order to prepare students for a forthcoming class discussion. Preparation homework serves its purpose best when students understand what is to be accomplished by completion of the homework.

Extension

Extension homework have the purpose of extending a previously learned skill or body of knowledge. For example, a social studies teacher may assign the reading of library reference material in order for students to gain additional insight into concepts being studied. Extension homework is also long-term; but, more importantly, it focuses on student production, not merely reproduction.

Creativity

Creativity homework provide opportunities for students to apply previously learned knowledge. It also includes the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. For example, the English teacher may provide opportunities for students to respond to a piece of literature through written, artistic, or dramatic expression.

Objectives of Homework:

- To reinforce and extend learning initiated in class.
- To promote good work habits.
- To develop abilities for studying independently.
- To encourage individual initiative.
- To provide extra practice in fundamental skills.
- To encourage use of community resources.
- To enrich learning.
- To increase parental awareness of the school's programs.
- To create an opportunity for individual responsibility.

A student's responsibilities:

- To know what the homework is before leaving the classroom.
- To make a written note of the homework in the student's diary for later reference.
- To complete and hand in the homework on time.
- To seek help when "stuck" on a problem with homework.
- To do his own work.

- To use time wisely.
- To recognise that for some students some homework will take more than the same homework will take for other students.
- To catch up on any work missed due to absences from class.
- To know that a student always has homework —sometimes formal homework; sometimes less formal and practice work; sometimes material to read; sometimes getting ready for a test; and sometimes general study and review of the material presented in a class.

A teacher's responsibilities:

- To make the homework clear.
- To explain how the homework might best be carried out — timeline and other support required. (The amount of support provided will be lessened as students become more adept at organising themselves).
- To show the relevance of the homework to the class work.
- To be available to help students with homework problems.
- To collect, mark (or in some form check or evaluate), and return the homework quickly.
- To use homework as part of the student's final evaluation.
- To recognise that for some students some homework will take more time than the same homework will take for other students.
- To be aware that students have activities outside of school which provide valuable and necessary life lessons for them.
- To use homework to reinforce and practise, to expand and extend, to create and apply, to prepare and gain background, etc., but not to teach anew.
- To be sensitive to the unique factors inherent in group homework.
- To be aware of the homework set by other staff and to attempt to “spread the load”.
- To provide a moratorium on homework in the week prior to a formal assessment period and during school holidays. NB: This may vary for senior classes.

A parent's responsibilities:

- To provide a suitable place for a student to do his homework.
- To encourage the student to complete homework.
- To recognise that for some students some homework will take more time than the same homework will take for other students.
- To know that a student always has homework —sometimes formal homework; sometimes less formal and practice work; sometimes material to read; sometimes

getting ready for a test; and sometimes general study and review of the material presented in a class.