

Homework, Mindfulness and Reducing Stress Weber Library

Guest speaker: Dr. Joseph D'Angelo (Dr. D), College Board Certified Instructor of Teachers of AP English, retired from Manhasset High School: District Specialist in Programs for Gifted Youth, and nationally recognized private consultant for gifted students with learning deficits, discussed research on the topic of homework appropriateness. For Questions: dangelo11030@yahoo.com

Identifying Stressors Underlying the Debate:

- Homework, appropriateness and overload, is being actively discussed in national, regional and local communities.
 - Inadequate sleep:
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx?nfstatus=401&nftoken=0000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000&nfstatusdescription=ERROR:+No+local+token>
 - Quantity and quality of homework assignments: The National PTA, National NEA, and Duke's prominent homework researcher Harris Cooper, PhD, Battle Over Homework, all concur on the 10 minute homework rule for each grade level through elementary school up to a maximum of two hours, noting that homework must be meaningful and purposeful:
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/03/homework.aspx>
 - Quality of student focus when doing homework.
 - Complex curriculum at the AP level and less time to deliver instruction in New York State than in other schools nationally (with each AP course typically having one to two hours of homework per night).
 - Common Core implementation fundamentally changing the relationship of teacher to student, requiring that the teacher focus on keeping the job, rather than on the needs of the students, which may result in less meaningful homework.

Identification and Implementation of Solutions

- Each school district needs a clear, current district-wide homework policy developed by all constituents, including BOE, administrators, teachers, parents and students that relies on currently accepted research.
- Clear communication to parents and students from guidance counselors and school officials about the homework expectations at all grade-levels, including homework in AP and advanced learning courses is critical.
- Parents must sit with students from elementary through middle school to discuss the child's thinking about assignments to monitor if they are being efficient and directed.
- Parents must set up a homework area free of screens and other distractions from elementary through middle school.
- Parents must communicate with teachers when they observe learning issues and reflect back to teachers when homework proves excessive.
- Parents must communicate to administrators, if they feel unsatisfied with classroom teacher response.
- Teachers must create meaningful, purposeful homework.

Mindfulness and Stress:

- Dr. D is not expert in Mindfulness, but sees the value of helping an individual through personal stress.
- Mindfulness is a good technique but is not a solution.
- Mindfulness has been a profitable program (www.greatschools.org)
- If outside forces, such as homework overload, are causing the stress, an unintended consequence of focusing on mindfulness may be children feeling personally responsible rather than having adults solve the external issues.

Study Tips for Students and Parents:

- Study for an exam until student feels mastery; in one hour do a 5-10 min review, and do this two more times in the next two hours. (NOT three hours in a row-ever)
- The 5-10 min review pushes the material from short-term to long-term memory. The three reviews are KEY to storing the information in long-term memory.
- Eliminate distractors from your work area including screens.
- Turn off the Wi-Fi in your home after 10:00 pm for elementary and middle school students.
- Promote good sleep habits.
- Read to and with your children at all age levels.
- Discuss different approaches to the work in open-ended conversations with students at all levels.

**If You Are interested in AGATE's Homework Sub-Committee,
Email Us: portagate@gmail.com**