

Keynote—BOOST conference 2010
Homework and families: Issues, trends, and challenges

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Notes from the presentation

Homework is part of our history and culture

The “cult”ure of homework is akin to faith

We have a moralistic attachment to homework, believing that “more is better”

Homework is also a scapegoat for everything wrong with education—a cure-all

“More homework would make our country more competitive”, critics say
If kids don’t do homework, they will get “soft”, critics say

Agree or disagree?

Homework teaches responsibility
Lots of homework is a sign of rigor
Homework is “the job of childhood”

Due to economic diversity and differences in home environments, homework can discriminate.

Parents differ in their beliefs about the place of academic work in life

All academics/all the time
Balancing chosen activities
Leisure and happiness
Family responsibilities and paid work

It’s just not fair to fail kids for not doing homework

“Those D’s are misleading”

Mistakes teachers may make

Assigning busy work
Assigning homework that can’t be done without help
Underestimating how long the task takes

The 10 Minute Rule

endorsed by the PTA and NEA
no more than 10 minutes of homework per grade level per night (all subjects combined)

Homework trends

FROM

Every subject, every night, every book

No coordination between teachers

No consistency in % homework counts in grade

Harsh late policies

Zeros for missing assignments

All homework done at home

Homework support programs are the future

TO

Designated nights, more web work

Calendars limiting number of tests, projects

Designated days for subject tests

Building-wide/district-wide policies
limiting % of grade

More lenient late policies

Zeros Aren't Possible programs

Time during the school day

After school Homework Support Programs