

Taking the Buzzkill out of Homework

A lesson on homework by Jonathan Green

Objectives (1 min)

Make explicit

To have TCs thoughtfully engage with the topic of homework

To develop my own understanding of homework by exploring other TCs attitudes towards it

To develop some strategies for assigning meaningful homework

Hook (2mins)

Questioning Homework

- Ask students to write down some single word associations of homework for 1 minute.
 - Examples could be:
 - Fun, awesome, terrible, stupid, waste of time

Introduction (5 mins)

Background information on subject

Why did I choose to look at homework?

- Alfie Kohn Article that Claire Rushton had as one of her optional readings. It sparked some memories about my own personal experience with homework.
 - I remember having homework when I wanted to be outside playing road hockey
 - If my friends were doing something interesting, I was FAR more interested in doing THAT thing than I was answering some questions about the fur trade

How much Influence should teachers have in their students lives?

- Students already see us for 5 hours a day
- Should they be expected to continue to engage with us after school hours?
- If we are valuing unstructured exploration time in schools more and more, should we not be encouraging that sort of thing during a student's free time?
- Are we exporting our values onto children in their own homes?

- If a student and their family decide it is okay for her to play video games ALL day who are we to say that is a poor use of their time?

In Class Reading (10mins)

*Stanford Research Shows Pitfalls of Homework
(It's very short)*

Access articles through:

<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/march/too-much-homework-031014.html>

While reading the article I would like TC's to think about the one word associations that they made earlier and see if there are any connections to the article.

Pair/Share in Inquiry Groups

After reading the article pose some discussion questions:

- What are your reactions to the article? Does it ring true? Can you poke any holes in it?
- Does this article make you wonder about anything?
- How much stress does homework create for you?
- How much stress does homework create for your students?

Creating Meaningful Homework (10mins)

Establishing at home connections

-Throughout our time in the UBC BEd Program we have constantly been told that making connections is critical to acquiring knowledge

-Bridging the physical gap between the classroom --- the community --- the home can be accomplished by assigning homework

Recognizing that:

- assigning too much homework can be detrimental.
- rote memorization of most academics has limited impact and generally stressful
- parental involvement in student learning is essential
- homework diminishes a student agency in their free time

How do we create meaningful homework which:

- does not take up too much student time
- encourages critical thinking
- bridges the classroom --- the community --- the home

- brings parents into the process

Problem:

You are teaching a unit on the water cycle. After doing a substantial amount of research on homework you have determined that you are not interested in making the students spend hours of their at home time developing a poster which no one will ever see. What would be some take home questions, activities, or problems which would create meaningful connection to the water cycle unit that a child could accomplish in 5 minutes?

Conclusion (1 min)

Reviewing what we have talked about

Establishing a takeaway

What I really want you to take away today is that not all homework is good homework and although you may think that what is being taught in your classroom is very important to our students it is not the only thing going on in their lives. They have stuff to do that is more important than assignments and it's called play.