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## Exploring the Attitudes of Parents and Students Toward Homework

Pearl A. Jackson

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**EXPLORING THE ATTITUDES OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS  
TOWARD HOMEWORK**

Pearl A. Jackson, B.S.

An Abstract presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Lindenwood  
University in Partial Fulfillment to the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Art  
2000

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes of parents and students toward homework. Since homework can be an effective learning experience for students and can involve parents in their children's education, the researcher sought to gain an insight into the area of homework as seen from the perspective of these individuals. The study examined the attitudes of 30 parents and 30 students in a Sixth Grade Center in St. Louis County. Data for the study was collected by having each of the study's participants complete an attitude survey related to the subject of homework. The results were analyzed, and the findings were discussed. The researcher found some similarities between the current study and previous research, including the importance placed upon homework by parents and the amount of time spent on homework by students. In addition, some apparent differences of opinions between parents and students were identified. Other findings were discussed, limitations were acknowledged, and implications for future study were suggested.

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COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY

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Jerry Bolden M. A.

## Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to my husband, Vernon Jackson who continuously encouraged and insisted that I believe in my abilities. To my parents James (deceased) and Juanita Pruitt, who taught me how to endure until the end and to believe in the power of prayer.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my three children, Vernon II, Jessica, and James who showered me with love even during the times I was unpleasant to get along with. To my sister, Vanessa who was there for me to talk to and who really stepped in as an older sister in my time of need. I want to give special thanks to Ms. Helen Mitchell who assisted me in getting research information I needed in order to complete my thesis. To my pastor and church members for giving me the spiritual uplift I needed when I began to experience doubt and a sense of hopelessness and I want to also thank my spiritual partners at work.

Additionally, I want to thank several of my close friends, Mary and Dorothy, for being there for me as best friends and a support system. To Jerry who has become a special friend of mine and has shown me how to prioritize and take care of business. Finally, I want to thank Phyllis, a good friend who stuck with me and went through the sweat and tears with me as we struggled to bring an end to what seemed to be a long and endless journey. Above all, I want to thank God for his goodness and his grace.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Homework has been a controversial issue for decades (Cooper, 1989a). Homework elicits a variety of reactions from educators, parents, and students. Proponents of homework believe that it increases academic achievement, improves students attitudes toward school, promotes proper study habits, encourages students to learn outside of the classroom, and involves parents in the educational process (Allerman & Brophy, 1991; Cooper & Nye, 1994).

Opponents have argued that homework results in over-exposure to academics and limits time for leisure and community activities, and that parental involvement can be negative if parents pressure children or are confused about how to help them (Baumgtner, Bryan, Donahue, & Nelson, 1993). In general, researchers have found that there is a positive relationship between homework and achievement, and between parental involvement in homework and student attitudes about school (Epstein, 1983, 1985; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Walberg, Paschal, & Weinstein, 1985).

Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, supplements and reinforces work done in school (Swanson, 1992). In addition, Swanson has found that homework fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility and brings home and school closer together. Several researchers have agreed that

homework allows parents to see the work their children do, which can increase their appreciation and support of their children.

By now it is considered a given that parents are children's first and most important teachers (Sullivan, 1998). By helping children with their homework, parents can convey how much they value what their children achieve in school. Sullivan suggests in her article, "Parents Are Integral to Student Learning" that the act of parents making sure that their children's homework is done communicates to children that parents believe education is important.

Several researchers have found that parents don't always know much about the curriculum, the technology, and the grading systems in their children's learning. Some experts say that students' homework usually catches up with their parents' knowledge in junior and high school (Bailey, 1997). Bailey stated in her article that an author (Judy Gabraith) of a teen handbook titled "Gifted Kids Survival Kit" noted it is normal for parents to feel frustrated when their children's homework is over their heads. She also states that it is crippling to feel inadequate as a parent, especially when it comes to homework.

One theorist, (Howard Gardner) urges parents to treat homework as an opportunity, not a threat. He believes that the major problem surrounding homework is that it is seen as an intrusion from outside, to which parents and children must react. Children value their "out of school" time; they would probably rather be playing with friends or watching TV than sitting at a desk. Nevertheless, many parents are afraid that unless their children do homework,

they will not get into a good college or will not develop good habits (Gardner, 1999).

Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of classroom work (Hong, Milgram, and Perkins, 1995). In general, researchers have found that there are three basic types of homework: practice, preparation, and extension. Practice assignments reinforce newly acquired skills. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own. Preparation assignments help students get ready for activities that will occur in the classroom. Students may, for example be required to do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class. A more creative type of homework is extension. Extension homework requires students to take concepts or skills learned in class and apply them to real life situations or projects. Extension assignments are frequently long-term continuing projects that parallel class work. Students must apply previous learning to complete these assignments, which include science fair projects and term papers.

### Purpose

Although many studies have examined the relationship of homework to achievement gains (e.g., Cooper, 1989; Snow et al., 1991), there have been few studies examining the attitudes of parents and students regarding homework.



It is generally known that a parent's interest can spark enthusiasm in a child and help teach the most important lesson of all, that learning can be fun and is well worth the effort. Families play a vital role in educating America's children. What families do and their attitude toward learning is more important to student success than whether they are rich or poor, whether parents have finished high school or not, or whether children are elementary, junior high, or high school (Hooper, 1999).

Teachers often approach school counselors with a variety of concerns, but this researcher has found that many parents have concerns regarding homework and are desperately looking for an answer to homework problems that their children encounter. According to Judith Hooper (1999), an author of an article titled, "A Parent's Guide to Doing Homework," a child's ego is especially fragile at homework time. She has found that a positive approach to homework is crucial and does have long lasting affects on children's attitude toward homework problems. In order to present strategies to assist parents with issues of homework and how to make homework a positive experience for children, it is important to identify parent and student concerns regarding homework.

Lifestyle changes affecting today's families, demand that schools reconsider how much, how often and why they assign homework. Homework is too valuable to learning to be eliminated, but is more effective when educators are more in tune with concerns of both parents and students. Therefore, as school counselors, the connection between home and school can be developed and

established as educators are informed of the attitudes toward homework , since homework is one of the key areas of concern in our nation today.

Today's families are often pressed for time and do not need to spend a lot of time on meaningless homework. Therefore, the researcher studied the topic of homework to discover the answer to the following questions:

- A. What are parents attitudes toward homework?
- B. What are students' attitudes toward homework?

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Literature

#### Homework and Achievement

Hong, Milgram, and Perkins (1995) define homework as “tasks assigned to learners by teachers, that are to be done outside of school time and without teacher direction.” Homework is usually done at home and alone but may be done in other places or with other people. Schools throughout the world often use homework as a teaching strategy. Many educators consider homework to be one of the most important factors contributing to high academic achievement. Research on homework as a teaching strategy presents a wide range of opinions. Some research strongly criticizes the use of homework, while other research claims that the proper use of homework can produce immediate and dramatic improvement in academic achievement. This difference is often related to the students’ grade level. For instance, homework had a significant, positive effect on student achievement at the high school and college levels. However, homework at the elementary and middle school levels did not have positive effect on achievement (Hong et al, 1995).

Ornstein (1994) reports that the amount of homework performed by the individual student is related to academic performance. In a study of international educational achievement tests conducted in nineteen countries, including the United States, and involving 133,000 elementary and secondary schools, the number of hours per week spent on homework was significantly related to



achievement. In addition, homework commented upon by teachers could raise, on the average, the typical student from the 50<sup>th</sup> to 70<sup>th</sup> percentile in cognitive performance (Walberg, Paschal, & Weinstein, 1985).

Often, all students in a class are given the same assignment, as if all students learn at the same rate or have the same abilities. In assigning homework, teachers rarely consider individual differences. Also, teachers rarely correct, grade, or return homework on a regular basis. Despite the fact that student achievement is correlated with checked and returned homework at all grade levels, in more than one – third of the cases, teachers do not provide feedback to students about homework (Ornstein, 1994).

Miller and Kelley (1994) similarly suggest that time spent on homework was the second best predictor (after ability) of students' achievement and grades. Also, homework significantly improved test scores when compared to a no – homework condition. Therefore, homework appears to be positively associated with academic achievement. Homework helps children do better in school when assignments are meaningful, are completed successfully, and are returned with constructive comments from the teacher (Paulu, 1995). According to the H.T. Wing School homework page from the Internet, if homework is to be valuable, teachers must provide students with prompt acknowledgement, recognition and feedback about homework.

Additional research investigating the relationship of homework to achievement indicates that time spent on homework has positive effects on learning. These effects hold true when controlling for factors such as ability and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, homework has been identified as one of the most important practices for establishing a successful academic environment (Olympia, Sheridan, Jenson, & Andrews, 1994).

#### Positive Aspects of Homework

There are aspects of homework that go beyond academic achievement. Homework can have several positive effects on students and parents. Homework has an immediate impact on retention and understanding of the material it covers. Homework can improve students' study skills, improve students' attitudes toward school, and teach students that learning can take place anywhere. Additionally, homework helps to foster character traits such as independence and responsibility (Cooper, 1989a). For instance, homework requires students to develop techniques of organizing their own time so that they can complete schoolwork and participate in activities that interest them (Corbally, 1995).

Finally, an advantage of homework is that it allows students to finish incomplete classwork (Foyle, 1993). Students who do not complete work in class may benefit from assistance at home. Homework can also allow parents to express positive attitudes toward their children's achievement. Related research shows that the parent is the most positive influence on the amount of time spent on homework (Ornstein, 1994). It is the parents job to be the child's primary

disciplinarian. This entails managing their children's time well and gradually teaching their children to manage their own time until they become adults (Gorman, 1996). Homework gives students an opportunity to practice, reinforce, and extend skills and concepts taught during the school day. Homework helps children develop responsibility for the constructive use of time.

#### Negative Aspects of Homework

Homework can also have negative effects on students. Some educators believe that the extra time spent on homework can cause students to become bored with academic material (Hinchey, 1996). Homework decreases the amount of time that students can spend on leisure or community activities. Another negative effect of homework is that parental involvement may result in parental interference that causes confusion in students if the parents' instructional techniques differ from the teacher's techniques. Homework can also lead to cheating. For example, students may directly copy another student's work, or parents may give so much assistance that the parents actually complete the assignment (Cooper 1998).

Finally, students have more activities and options that compete for their time: jobs, sport activities, church choir, television, and family chores (Blegen, 1998). In addition, she noted that some teachers reported that students appear to perceive homework to be useless drudgery.

Homework can also accentuate existing social inequities (Cooper, 1989a). More children today also have personal difficulties that are associated with a host



of problems in school, including the ability to complete homework successfully (Blegen, 1998). These include:

- Trouble or unstable home lives;
- Lack of positive adult role models;
- Teenage pregnancies and parenting responsibilities;
- Chemical dependency problems; or
- A high rate of mobility, found among families who move their children from school to school.

Children from disadvantaged homes will have more difficulty completing assignments than middle class students, because they may not have a quiet, well – lit place in which to work (Cooper, 1989).

#### Types of Homework

The type of homework can also have an impact on its effectiveness and parents and attitudes toward homework.. Homework assignments, particularly in the elementary grades, should be short, should require commonly found household items, and should lead to success experiences (Cooper, 1989a). In addition, according to Ornstein (1994), although drill sheets may be necessary for low – achieving students, other students need more meaningful homework assignments.

Boers and Caspary (1995) suggest that real – life homework is beneficial because this type of homework helps students develop positive attitudes toward school and involves significant adults in the children’s lives. Examples of real –

life homework include reading newspapers, writing letters, doubling recipes, and interviewing grandparents about their heritage. The philosophy behind this type of homework is that students will remember the skills and strategies that they learn in school if they use these skills in their everyday lives.

Researchers caution teachers concerning the use of new material that had not yet been taught in class as homework. Although this material can challenge some students to work independently, new material may simply confuse and frustrate most learners (Rose, 1994).

The use of computer – generated homework is another possibility that has been shown to increase student achievement. Computers offer endless patience, immediate feedback, and a one-to-one learning situation. Computer homework offers drill and practice that can be a powerful instructional tool (Milkent & Roth, 1989).

Finally, although several types of homework exist, researchers seem to agree that no matter what the homework assignment is, homework should never be given as a punishment (Cooper, 1989a). Homework as punishment sends a negative message to students about homework and in turn negatively impacts learning. Obviously, teachers have a significant role in the homework process. Although homework assignments vary greatly, homework facilitates learning most effectively when teachers respond to it with written feedback. Specific feedback on errors draws attention to material that was not adequately learned. This feedback allows students to focus on improvement in weak areas rather than

reexamining work that was well done. Written praise on homework had a positive effect, but was considerably more effective when comments on errors were also included (Elawar & Corno, 1985).

### Teachers' Role in the Homework Process

Teachers can also make homework more beneficial by providing help or suggestions for parents. For example, homework could contain built-in instructions for a helper. Related suggestions that build on homework helping strategies, such as encouraging children, loosely monitoring homework activities, or working several problems together, could make parent-child interaction during homework more productive and satisfying for both parent and child. By making their suggestions, teachers may assist parents in having more focused and productive involvement in their children's homework (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Buro, 1995).

Researchers offer recommendations for teachers to use in making homework effective. Black (1997) suggests that teachers assign homework that helps reinforce major curriculum ideas rather than isolated skills. Homework assignments should challenge without causing confusion or frustration. In addition, teachers should provide students with the information and resources to successfully complete homework. The teacher can help students understand the value of homework by making sure that the homework assignments require students to transfer the knowledge and skills learned in school to problem-solving



outside of school.

Teachers should keep grading to minimum. Cooper (1989b) states that homework should not be viewed as an opportunity to test and should be successfully completed by nearly all students. Therefore, teachers should not discriminate among different performance levels. Homework is an ideal situation for building intrinsic motivation in students. By grading homework, teachers may have students completing assignments out of fear of negative consequences. Therefore, teachers should collect homework, check it for completeness, and give instructional feedback. This method allows teachers to use homework to diagnose individual learning problems and prepare for appropriate instruction.

Similarly, Ornstein (1994) suggests that teachers provide comments on homework. According to the author, "It is better to require less homework and check and return it, than to provide a great deal of homework that will not be checked and returned." In addition, teachers should review homework in class the following day and discuss problems or questions that students may have encountered while doing the assignment. This review could be used as a warm-up or review exercise. The teacher may also discuss new homework as the closing activity of the lesson. This method of assigning new homework could help prevent poorly designed homework assignments at the last minute in order to fulfill a perceived requirement to assign homework. This researcher started a "Teachers Linking With Counselors" (TLC) Program in an attempt to better serve students and their parents with concerns they may have. This program program

will also assist in developing attitudes for parents and students when their homework concerns become the concerns of the ones in a position to make a change.

### Counselor's Role in the Homework Process

Researchers have reported encouraging findings regarding the counselor's role in the educational process. O'dell, Rak, Chermonte, Hamlin and Waina, 1996, cited findings by Gibson (1990), and Valine, Higgins, and Hatcher (1982) that stated that teachers believe that counselors make valuable contribution to instructional programs and that counseling services are needed and viewed positively.

School counselors are child advocates whose mission includes the promotion of the development of all students and whose beliefs incorporate respecting the worth and dignity of the individual, enabling positive change, empowering leadership, promoting collaboration, and acquiring and applying knowledge (Hagemeirer & Michael, 2000). Parents, whose most valuable relationship is with their child, and students, who are feeling pressures of societal changes as well as academic achievement, are desperately reaching out for assistance. Parents and students are the two public groups that can benefit a great deal from the school counselor. It is the school counselor's basic responsibility to see that parents and students know the counselor is there for them (Hagemeirer & Michael, 2000)



Presently, parents and students are concerned about the major issues facing students in society. Parents and schools are exerting extreme pressure on students towards academic achievement. Counselors can assist in improving study skills, train students in problem-solving, goal setting, time management and self-management (Hagenmeirer & Michael, 2000). In general, these are all important qualities needed in successfully completing homework according to the research (Hagemeirer & Michael, 2000). When students can successfully complete homework, they feel good about themselves, which in turn make parents feel satisfied as well.

School counselors can provide a variety of resources for parents to assist their child in the homework process. It is the role of the school counselor to work with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community (Rye & Sparks, 1991). This researcher has found in even as a new counselor, that school counselors can be that calming factor that comes between a parent whose child and family have been negatively affected by homework difficulty as well as homework overload. School counselors can also help students as well as parents see the benefits of homework and develop positive attitudes regarding homework.

#### Parental Involvement

According to Cooper (1998), parental attitudes with respect to study at home have direct, positive effects on their children's classroom achievement. Attitudes about homework may be transmitted from parent to child, and parental involvement in the homework process effects their child's education.

Homework can be used to increase parental involvement in the education of their children. Sullivan and Sequeira (1996) reported that a weekly summary of homework assignments sent home by the teacher allows students and parents to plan their time accordingly. Teachers can involve parents by giving hands-on assignments. For example, either during or after a unit on measurement, parents can work with their children on a homework project that involves using common household materials, such as ruler, cups, teaspoons, and half-gallon or gallon containers. When students see real-life applications for what has been taught in class, the learning becomes more meaningful.

Research on parental involvement in students' homework (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995) showed that parental involvement in homework was based on the parents' understanding of the children's characteristics and the parents' own abilities. Parents saw themselves as having an active role to play in their children's homework. The parent's role often included structuring homework activities, motivating children, and interacting with the teacher about homework assignments and suggestions for help. Most parents in the study reported that successful efforts in helping with homework were a significant part of being a good parent for their elementary children. Many teachers agree that parental involvement of this type is truly beneficial to students, teachers, and parents.

However, not all homes are able to be supportive of homework. Unfortunately according to Sullivan and Sequeira (1996), an increasing number of latchkey children return home from school to empty homes. Parents or parental

figures are often not present until late in the day. In addition, parental help may be limited or unavailable because of economic priorities or crowded schedules. Even parents who are available for help may lack the skills and information necessary for offering effective help (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

In a study of parental use of goal setting and rewards for improving children's homework performance, Kelley and Miller (1994) found that both of these strategies could improve homework performance. Goal setting is a form of self-monitoring and self-evaluation. When applied to academic tasks, goal-setting produces improved task engagement, academic achievement, and enhanced motivation. Goal setting directly targets the homework process, rather than the product, and provides a framework around which children can complete homework. Each parent and child in the study divided homework assignments into specific, small goals. Initially, the parent and child each suggested a goal. For example, the child will complete five math problems in the next ten minutes. If the child completed goals in significantly more or less time than was allotted, subsequent goals were adjusted accordingly.

Another strategy studied by Kelley and Miller (1994) was the use of contingency contracts between parents and their children to improve homework performance. Each week, the parents and child negotiated contracts that specified daily and weekly rewards contingent on achievement of homework goals and bringing all necessary materials home. The parent was instructed to identify several rewards from which the child could choose. Parents changed rewards



occasionally to prevent the child from becoming bored with reward choices. Also, the contract specified sanctions to be implemented if the child failed to bring home necessary materials. Both strategies, goal setting and contingency contracts, introduced increased structure to the homework process. Since goal setting required parents and students to divide assignments into smaller segments, parents were able to provide feedback in a more effective manner as an on-going process.

Additional studies have been conducted on the importance of the home variable in school achievement. According to one such study (Reynolds & Walberg, 1991), parent' understanding of students' homework style preferences was associated with more positive attitudes toward homework but not to homework achievement by these students. Although parents may have understood the students' homework style preferences, they did not necessarily accept them. Therefore, parents may not provide a homework environment that matches their child's preferences.

Finally, since parents differ in interest, knowledge, teaching skills, and available time, Cooper (1989b) recommends that the formal role of parental involvement in homework be kept at minimum. The parental role should be geared toward the parent's expression of the value of school achievement. Parents can also assist by drawing contracts with their children about study times or simply signing homework before it is returned to school. In numerous cross-cultural comparisons of academic achievement, American students perform poorly as compared to those in other cultures. One possible explanation for the

lower performance of American students is the small amount of time that American students spend on learning activities, including homework, and their negative attitudes toward homework (Hong et al., 1995). Children need to know that their parents and adults close to them think homework is important. If students know their parents care, students have a good reason to complete assignments and turn them in on time. According to Paulu, (1995), there is a lot that parents can do to show that they value education and homework.

Parents can:

- Set a regular time for homework
- Pick a place that is well lit, supplies close by, and is fairly quiet
- Remove distractions (televisions, telephone, radio, people)
- Set a good example (read or work on something while child do homework)
- Show an interest (talk about school and learning)
- Monitor assignments (check for understanding and completion of homework)

#### Cross-cultural Difference in Students' and Parents' Views of Homework

Students in different cultures experience different attitudes toward homework in a study by (Hong et al., 1995). Chinese students stated they did homework because they enjoyed it and because they wanted to avoid punishment by their teachers. Interestingly, Chinese students had the most homework but did not develop negative attitudes about homework.

However, Japanese and American students spent less time on homework and enjoyed it less. In China, family members helped their children with homework more than in Japan or in the United States. While 92% of Chinese fifth graders in a study received help, 78% of American fifth graders and only 69% of Japanese fifth graders were given help (Chen & Stevenson, 1989). In all of the cultures, children who performed less well in school received the greater amounts of help from their parents in completing homework assignments. Also, when considering who had responsibility for seeing the completion of homework, American parents were less likely than Chinese or Japanese parents to believe that children should assume primary responsibility for completing their homework.

These cross-cultural comparisons suggest that American children do not enjoy doing homework, and that their parents believe they must intercede to see that their children complete their homework (Chen & Stevenson, 1989). In addition, despite the fact that American parents did not give large amounts of assistance on homework, they believed that, in comparison to Chinese and Japanese parents, they were more capable of helping their children with homework. Their help was more important for their child, and they gave more assistance than most parents did. However, these self-assessments do not seem valid, when considering the children's scores on achievement tests (Hong et al., 1995).

Surprisingly, in the study of the three cultures, the amount of time that parents spent helping their children with homework were negatively related to



their children's achievement in Reading and Math. In another cross-cultural study, Hong et al, (1995) found that Korean parents were more aware than American parents of their children's homework style preference. These preferences are highly important in determining homework behavior. For example, Korean parents understood the child's need for more or less light, which is an aspect of the learning environment that parents can easily adjust. By contrast, American parents understood their children's preference to learn in the morning or evening, which is an aspect of learning that parents cannot change. Therefore, since American students often work in conditions that they do not prefer, their homework achievement is lower than their Korean counterparts.

#### Research on Parents' and Students' Attitudes Toward Homework

A sixth grade homework survey done by Zerbe and Coffman (1994/95) showed that most students consider homework to be a value and not too much is being assigned. Fifty-five percent (47) of the 84 students who participated in the survey stated that their nightly assignments were "about right". Most of the students (57%) also thought that homework was necessary. Most students in this study (88%) stated that they always or almost always complete their homework. Almost 77% of the students stated that they worked one hour or less on assignments.

In a special homework edition of Family Education Network (FEN, a website that can be on the Internet, an author (Margy Davidson) questioned several parents and (FEN) members about homework hassles in their homes and

reported their responses. One member reported that they felt that a lot of the grumble about homework directly comes from parents' limitations and not the child. Another member believed that the problem seemed to be that homework has become a means of learning at home with review following in class rather than learning in class with review following at home. Yet another parent felt that children spent more time on schoolwork than the parent or the teacher spent at a full time job. "When do children get to be children?" this parent wonders.

One twelve year-old girl reported that she felt overloaded! This young lady stated that she spends 2 to 3 hours on homework every night and agrees that children should have some free time at home. Although some parents and students did see homework as a hassle, other parent's views of homework were quite the opposite.

One parent felt that homework was essential and looked at it as an extension of what's done at school. She stated that it develops a sense of responsibility in her children. Another member who is also a parent reported that her family loves homework. She reported that their secret to keeping their children excited about homework was to simply do it in the morning while they ate breakfast.

Another member of (FEN) saw homework as family time while another mother of three saw homework as a full-time job.



### Summary of Review of the Literature

Homework can be an essential part of a student's education. Parental involvement in education can be increased through the use of homework (Sullivan & Sequoia, 1996). In a study of parental involvement in homework (Hoover – Dempsey et al., 1995), researchers found that parents saw themselves as having an active role to play in their children's homework. However, parental help may be limited or unavailable because of crowded schedules or the lack of skills and information needed to offer effective help. Kelley and Miller (1994) found that parents and children can work together to set goals and create contracts that promote successful completion of homework. If teachers assign homework effectively, it can be productive and academically rewarding for students and for their parents. However, Cooper (1989b) suggested that the parental role in homework should be kept at a minimum and should be geared toward the parent's expression of the value of school achievement.

Homework can also improve students' study skills and teaches students that learning can take place anywhere. Homework involves parents in the school process by making them aware of their children's achievements and growth. Useful homework can facilitate academic achievement. However, student achievement is not determined by the amount of time spent on homework but by the quality of assignment. Students who experience success with homework will develop a positive attitude toward learning. Students possess a variety of levels of maturity, aptitudes, learning styles, and interests. Teachers must consider these

factors when assigning homework. However, There needs to be continued research on homework and it's impact on the learning process. Attitudes toward homework from students and parents are a critical aspect to the process of homework on a prediction of academic achievement.

As a result of these studies, it remains to be seen what attitudes toward homework were held by middle school students and by their parents. In order to determine what attitudes exist in a particular school, the researcher investigated the attitudes of parents and students toward homework.

#### Design of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes of parents and students toward homework through a descriptive study. The researcher expected to find that a wide variety of opinions were held by parents and students concerning the topic of homework. The researcher sought to obtain this information by generating two surveys. One survey required completion by each student participant, while the other required completion by each student's parent. The results were compiled, and student and parent attitudes based upon these results were identified.

#### Definition of terms

1. Homework: Assignments made by the classroom teacher that students are to complete outside of the regular classroom at some time other than the regular school day.

2. **Worksheet:** Paper copied by the teacher and given to students to complete by following directions on the paper.
3. **Project:** An assignment that may require students to use resource books, such as encyclopedias or library books, to find facts on a particular subject and then create a model, poster, report, or other representation of the given topic using common household items.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants for this study. The subjects were 30 students, and 30 parents of those students in a suburban elementary school in the University City School District in St. Louis Missouri. The student subjects were sixth graders in a homogeneously grouped Sixth Grade Center in which students were of average to high academic ability. Table 1 illustrates the demographics of the participants in this study. As shown in Table 1, students included 40 % (n=12) male and 60 % (n=18) female participants. In addition, Table 1 show that 40 % (n=12) of the students were 11 years old, and 60 % (n=18) of the students were 12 years old.

**Table 1 Demographic Information on Student Participation**

Demographic Variable	Range of responses	f	%
Students' gender	Boy	12	40%
	Girl	18	60%
Students' age	11 years old	12	40%
	12 years old	18	60%

Data on the demographics of parent participants, as shown in Table 2, show that 27 % (8) were male and 73 % (22) were female. In addition, participants were in the following age ranges: 3 % were from 20-29, 60 % were from 30-39, 33% were from 40-49, and 3 % were 50-59. The employment status of parents in the survey showed that in 3 % were not employed outside the home,



77% were employed full-time outside home, and 20 % were employed part-time outside the home.

In addition, Table 2 showed that the number of children in the home of parent participants were as follows: 16.5 % had one child, 37 % had two children, 20 % had three children, 20 % had four children, and 6.5 % had 5 or more children. Finally, Table 2 shows the marital status of parent participants. Fifty seven percent of parent participants were currently married, while 43 % were not currently married. Each student and parent in the study completed separate surveys.

**Table 2 Demographic Information on Parent Participants**

Demographic Variable	Range of Responses	f	%
Parent gender	Males	8	27%
	Females	22	73%
Parent's age	20-29	1	3%
	30-39	18	60%
	40-49	10	33%
	50-59	1	3%
Employment status	*Not employed	1	3%
	*Employed full-time	23	77%
	Employed Part-time	6	20%
Number of Children In home	1	5	16.5%
	2	11	37%
	3	6	20%
	4	6	20%
	5 or more	2	6.5%
Parent marital status	Married	17	57%
	Not married	13	43%

Note \*Refer to employment status outside the home

### Instrument

The instruments used in the study were opinion surveys created for students and their parents. The student's survey (Appendix B1) consisted of two sections. Part I of the survey included thirteen multiple-choice questions that required the students to mark the response with an X that best described their attitudes toward homework. Part II of the student survey consisted of two questions that asked students their age and gender for demographic purposes. Similarly, the parent survey (Appendix B2) consisted of two sections. Part I of the survey included eleven multiple-choice questions that required participants to mark the response with an X that best described their attitudes toward homework. Part II of the parent survey included five questions that were designed for demographic purposes including gender, age range, employment status, marital status, and number of children in the home.

Difficulties were encountered in attempting to locate an appropriate questionnaire for this study. Several attempts were made through out of state phone calls to test and measurement sites, university libraries, instructors, and Internet resources requesting information on surveys. Several libraries within the St. Louis area were visited; searches through Mental Measurements Yearbooks, Test in Print on the Internet, and through professional journals were made, as well as attempts to contact test publishers and distributors regarding surveys related to parent and student attitudes relating to homework.

Although some instruments did have some items similar to what the researcher was looking for, many items dealt with other issues of homework instead of attitudes toward homework. Therefore, the search for an opinion survey relating to attitudes toward homework that had already been developed proved unsuccessful with the time allotted to complete this study.

Both author-developed surveys were pilot tested by a group of parents and students in a similar sixth grade class in the same school to check for clarity of the instruments. In addition, the principal, assistant principal and school counselor reviewed the instruments to check the appropriateness of survey questions.

### Procedure

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study by submitting necessary documentation to the principal and assistant principal (Appendix A, B1 & B2) of a local elementary school. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and posed no threat of harm to any participants. In addition, participants were advised of their right to not answer questions with which they were uncomfortable or to withdraw from the study altogether.

A pilot study of the attitude surveys was conducted. A total of 10 parents and 10 students completed surveys, and necessary changes were made in the survey as a result of this study. Both parents and student participants were requested make notes of items that were difficult to respond to and why. Item 8



on the student survey had to be changed for clarity. It originally read, "Students homework completion in place designed for studying," and was changed to "Student completes homework in the place designed for studying and homework." Eight of the 10 students found item eight hard to answer and noted that they did not understand what the question was asking.

Student participants were selected through convenience sampling. One student was asked by the principal to distribute the surveys on a "first come first serve basis" at the start of school day. Volunteer participants were instructed to take the parent survey home to be completed by their parent and asked to complete their student survey at school in their Total Quality Student Preparation (TQSP) classroom, which is the first class they attend to prepare them for the day. Student participants completed the survey form in class and placed the completed forms in an envelope inside a box also located inside their class. The designated student collected the surveys at the end of each day for about a week and placed the sealed student surveys in a box located in the main office.

Parent participant' surveys were brought home by their child attending the sixth grade center along with a letter explaining the survey. Parents were given written instructions with regard to completing and returning the survey. Parent participants were requested to return the survey in the envelope provided by their child or they could bring the survey back and place it in the designated box located inside the office.



To ensure confidentiality of student participants and parent participants, the researcher was not present during the completion or collection of student and parent surveys. The parent surveys took two weeks longer to be returned than the student surveys.

### Data Analysis

The responses of both student and parent surveys were tallied and analyzed. The frequency of responses for each question was recorded. Percentages were computed for each possible answer using the frequency of particular responses to each question. Frequencies and percentages were listed on tables for comparison purposes. The results were compared to previous studies cited in the Review of Literature. The researcher found some similarities and differences in the results of this study compared to previous studies. These comparisons were identified and discussed.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

In Table 3, the results of how students responded on the Student Homework Opinion Survey are shown. Students reported their feelings about homework. The majority (60%) usually or sometimes liked it, while 27% usually did not like it, and 13% never liked it. Table 3 also shows the varying amounts of time spent on homework each day. A majority (57%) spent between 30 minutes and 1 hour on homework, while about one fourth (26%) spent more than an hour on homework and about 16% less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour on homework.

In terms of television watching while doing homework, more students (70%) usually or sometimes watched television, while 17% always watched television and only 13% never watched television while doing homework as shown in Table 3.

In terms of the reasons why students said they did homework, more (50%) reported that they wanted to avoid trouble from parents, while 30% feared receiving bad grades. Only 20% stated that they learned from doing homework. None reported that they enjoyed it or did it to avoid trouble at school.

Students had different preferences of homework types as shown in Table 3. A majority (67%) of students preferred doing a worksheet, while only 33% of students preferred to create a project or write a report. No students preferred writing a story. The homework completion rates of students are also shown in Table 3. A majority (77%) either usually or always completed homework, while

only 23% sometimes completed it and no students reported never finishing their homework.

When asked about the amount of homework they usually had, a majority (67%) reported they had too much homework, and 33% reported they had the right amount of homework. No one reported that they did not have enough homework. Sixty seven percent of the students completed their homework in a place designed for studying, while 33% did not.

When asked about the main purpose of homework, a majority (50%) of students said that homework helped them learn, while 37% believed the purpose was to let parents see what was happening in school. Thirteen percent felt that the main purpose of homework was to have something to do after school and no students felt homework was given to get extra help at home. Students also did homework at different times. Table 3 shows that the majority (50%) of students usually did homework right after school, while 33% did homework after a break after school and 17% did homework right before dinner. None reported doing their homework in the morning before school.

A variety of reasons existed for homework incompleteness, as shown in Table 3. Thirty three percent of students reported that they had no problems completing homework. However, 20% said that homework was too hard, 17% reported that they were too tired, 7% said that they lacked necessary materials, 10% claimed homework was too boring, but none reported that they did not have enough time to complete homework, while 13% had some other reason not listed



for problems completing homework. Table 3 shows several sources of assistance for homework. The majority (67%) had parents to assist them, while only 13% had a brother or sister. None sought the help of a classmate, neither did they get someone else to help them with their homework.

Finally, Table 3 shows the responses of occurrence of parental checking of homework, as reported by students. When asked how often parents checked their homework, more students (46%) reported that their parents always or most of the time checked their homework. Only 9% reported their parents hardly ever or only when asked, checked their homework.

Parents also had a variety of responses on questions asked of them. As shown in Table, when asked their view on the amount of homework given, the majority (53%) reported that it was the right amount of homework while 30% said it was too much. None reported that there was not enough homework given. In terms of parent's providing assistance with homework, 50% always or usually helped while 50% occasionally helped or helped when needed, and none reported that they never helped. Parents were asked if they reviewed their child's homework and more parents (56%) reported that they always or most of the time reviewed their child's homework. Forty three percent of parents reported that they occasionally reviewed their child's homework and none reported never reviewing homework.

When asked who had the responsibility for seeing that homework was completed, a majority (83%) believed it was mainly or totally the child's

responsibility and only 16.5% believed that the parent and child had equal responsibility. None of the parents claimed it was mainly the parent's responsibility. In terms of parents' attitudes about the importance of homework, a large majority (90%) of parents thought it was very important, while only a few parents (7%) thought that it was mostly busy work., and even less that that (3%) felt that homework made children hate school. None of the parents felt that homework had no importance at all.

Parents acknowledged Helping children with studies, with a majority (67%) always or usually helping, while 30% were sometimes helping. Only 3% stated that they never helped their children with studies. On the question of homework type preferred by parents, a majority (60%) of the parents chose a worksheet, while 40% chose either a project or report that the child could complete alone, or chose a project or report that would require parental assistance. Response to items assessing parent's desire for a weekly assignment sheet revealed that the majority of parents felt that a weekly assignment sheet would be helpful while 220% did not feel that a weekly assignment sheet would be helpful.

It is also reported in Table 4 the parents' support/supervision of their child's homework habits. A majority of parents (83%) said that their child had a required time to complete homework, while 17% had no such requirement. Also as shown in Table 4, a majority of parents (77%) reported having a certain place for their child to do homework, while 23% did not.

Finally, parents ranked after school activities in order of importance. Activities included homework, extra-curricula activities, free-time, and chores or other jobs. As shown in Table 4, a majority of parents (80%) endorsed homework as most important, with only 3% listed it as second in importance, 10% ranked it as third most important, and a mere 7% as least important. The majority (67%) of parents endorsed extra-curricular activities as least important and 17% of parents ranked it as most important. None of the parents thought chores and other jobs were most important, although 33% ranked it second in importance and a majority (60%) ranked it third in importance.



Table 3  
STUDENT RESPONSE TO HOMEWORK OPINION SURVEY

<u>STATEMENT</u>	<u>RANGE OF RESPONSES</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Students' feelings about homework	Usually like it	7	23%
	Sometimes like it	11	37%
	Usually don't like it	8	27%
	Never like it	4	13%
2. Students' daily time spent on homework	Less than 30 minutes	5	16.5%
	30 minutes to 1 hour	17	57%
	1 to 2 hours	5	16.5%
	More than 2 hours	3	10%
3. Students' TV watching frequency during homework	Always	5	17%
	Usually	7	23%
	Sometimes	14	47%
	Never	4	13%
4. Students' reason for homework completion	Enjoy doing homework	0	0%
	Trouble from parents if Homework is not done	15	50%
	Trouble at school if Homework is not done	0	0%
	Get bad grades if I don't Do my homework	9	30%
	Doing my homework Helps me learn	6	20%
	Worksheet	20	67%
	Project (model, poster)	5	16.5%
5. Students, homework type preference	Write a story	0	0%
	Write a report	5	16.5%

Table 3 Cont.

## STUDENT RESPONSES TO HOMEWORK OPINION SURVEY

(n = 30)

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Range of response</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
6. Students' homework completion rate	Always	14	47%
	Usually	9	30%
	Sometimes	7	23%
	Never	0	0%
7. Students feeling on amount of homework	Too much homework	20	67%
	Right amount of homework	10	33%
	Not enough homework	0	0%
8. Student complete homework in the place designed for studying and homework	yes	20	67%
	No	10	33%
9. Students' main purpose for homework	Helps me learn	15	50%
	Lets parents see what I'm learning	11	37%
	Gets extra help from home	0	05
	Gives me something to do after School	4	13%
10. Students' usual homework time	Right after school	15	50%
	After a break after school	10	33%
	Right before dinner	5	17%
	In the morning before school	0	0%
11. Students' homework completion problems	No problems	10	33%

Table 3 Cont.  
STUDENT RESPONSE TO HOMEWORK OPINION SURVEY

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Range of Responses</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
11. Cont.	My homework is too hard	6	20%
	I am too tired	5	17%
	I don't have supplies	2	7%
	Homework is too boring	3	10%
	I don't have enough time	0	0%
	Other	4	13%
12. Students' homework assistance sources	Nobody	6	20%
	Parent	20	67%
	Brother or sister	4	13%
	Classmate	0	0%
	Someone else	0	0%
13. Students' report to frequency of parental checking of homework	Always	7	23%
	Most of the time	7	23%
	Sometimes	8	27%
	Hardly ever	2	7%
	Only when I ask him/her to	6	20%

(n=30) Student Participants

Table 4  
 PARENTS RESPONSE TO HOMEWORK OPINION SURVEY  
 (N = 30)

Statement	Range of Responses	f	%
1. Parent's feeling on amount of Homework given	Too much homework	9	30%
	Right amount of homework	16	53%
	Not enough homework	5	17%
2. Parent's frequency of homework assistance	Always	3	10%
	Usually	12	40%
	Occasionally	8	27%
	Only when needed	7	23%
	Never	0	0%
3. Parent's frequency of reviewing homework	Always	10	33%
	Most of the time	7	23%
	Occasionally	13	43%
	Never	0	0%
4. Parent's perception of homework responsibility	Totally child's responsibility	8	26.5%
	Mainly child's responsibility	17	57%
	Mainly parent's responsibility	0	0%
	Parent and child have equal Responsibility	5	16.5%
5. Parent's feelings on child's homework	Very important	27	90%
	Ruins family time	0	0%
	Mostly "busywork"	2	7%
	Makes children hate school	1	3%
	Not important	0	0%
6. Parent's studying assistance	Always	14	47%
	Usually	6	20%



Table 4 cont.

PARENT'S RESPONSES TO HOMEWORK OPINION SURVEY

(N = 30)

---

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Range of responses</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
6. Cont.	Sometimes	9	30%
	Never	1	3%
7. Parent's homework preference	Worksheet	18	60%
	Project or report that child can Complete alone	6	20%
	Project or report that require Parental assistance	6	20%
8. Parents desire for weekly assignment sheet	Yes	24	80%
	No	6	20%
9. Required homework time for child	Yes	25	83%
	No	5	17%
10. Required place for child to complete homework	Yes	23	77%
	No	7	23%

---

Table 4 Cont. PARENT'S RESPONSES TO HOMEWORK OPINION

<u>Statement</u>		<u>Frequencies of Responses</u>			
		Most important	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Least important
11. Frequencies of parent's rankings importance of After-School activities					
	Homework	24	1	3	2
	Extra-curriculum	5	3	2	20
	Free-time	1	16	7	6
	Chores and other jobs	0	10	18	2
12. Percentages of parent's ranking importance of After-School activities					
	Homework	80%	3%	10%	7%
	Extra-curriculum	17%	10%	7%	67%
	Free-time	3%	53%	23%	20%
	Chores	0%	33%	60%	7%

(n=30) Parent Participants

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

The present study examined the attitudes of parents and students toward homework. Results of the study indicated that parents viewed homework as being mainly or totally the child's responsibility. This acknowledgement by parents supports the idea that homework helps to foster the character traits of independence and responsibility in children (Cooper, 1989a).

In addition, the majority of parents in this study reported that homework was very important to their child's success in school. These views are shared by researchers and supported in previous studies. According to Miller and Kelly (1994), homework is positively associated with academic achievement. Children who spend more time on homework, on the average, do better in school, and the academic benefits increase as children move into the upper grades (Paulu, 1995). In completing homework, children are allowed to review and practice what they have learned; get ready for the next day's class; learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials, and encyclopedias; and explore subjects more fully than time permits in the classroom (Paulu, 1995).

Parents are the most positive influence on the amount of time spent on homework (Ornstein, 1994). The responses of parents and students in this study showed that parents were involved in assisting students, often without being asked to help in homework completion. Although other people helped students with homework, in some of the cases, parents provided the help most of the time. In

addition, several parents shared responsibility with students by assuring that homework was completed and for checking for mistakes.

Cooper (1989a) found that drill sheets may be necessary for low-achieving students, but other students need more meaningful assignments. Based on the attitudes of the students and parents of the sixth-grade students studied here, parents and students held similar opinions regarding homework preference. More students in this study as well as parents preferred worksheets for homework as opposed to projects and reports.

Although some students enjoy projects and meaningful written assignments, these activities can be very time consuming. The students in this particular study attend from four to five different classes a day and may be required to complete homework in each class as a couple of students stated on the survey for the pilot study as a comment. Boers and Caspary (1995) suggest that students benefit more from real-life homework than from worksheets. Real-life homework, such as writing letters or reading newspapers, helps students develop positive attitudes toward school.

Parents in this study supported previous research (Hoover – Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995) by stating that they had an active role in their children's homework. This role included reviewing or helping with homework, as well as structuring the homework completion process. Parents in the current study helped to structure the homework process by requiring their children to do homework at a certain time and place each day. Student responses further supported this



adherence to a routine by stating that, in only a few cases, homework was completed after school and before dinner each day. This routine helps students to complete assignments, since the schedule is constant. However, responses by nearly three-fourths of parents indicated that their children do their homework in a place designed for studying, about two-thirds of students indicated that they do their homework in such a place. In addition, almost half the students reported that they sometimes watched television while doing homework. This information could suggest that parents may have to be more vigilant about how children are doing homework.

More than 50% of students reported spending 30 minutes to one hour on homework each day. About eight of the 30 students, which is approximately a little less than a third of the students, reported spending more than an hour on homework daily. Despite this fact, about two-thirds of the students believed that they had too much homework. The other third thought the amount of homework was about right

In contrast, 53% of the parents indicated that the amount of homework was appropriate, while 30% reported that too much homework was assigned and about 17% stated that their child did not get enough homework. None of the students thought that too little homework was given to students. Olympia et al., (1994) found that the time spent on homework has positive effects on learning and has been identified as one of the most important practices for establishing success in

an academic environment. Parents who had a negative view of homework may have an adverse impact on their child's academic motivation.

Parents in this study agreed with the idea that a weekly list of assignments sent home on Mondays would be helpful. Sullivan and Sequeria (1996) reported that such a summary of homework assignments would allow students and parents to plan their time accordingly. Only one – fifth of the parents in this study believed that the weekly sheet would not be helpful.

#### Limitations of the Study.

The researcher acknowledges that this study, while adding to the available literature base, does have other related issues that should be addressed. Due to the time constraints on this study, the survey instruments did not cover all of the issues related to the area of homework. In addition, the limited sample size and lack of randomization provided a very narrow perspective of an area that affects nearly all students and their parents. Therefore, the generalizability of these findings is limited. One additional limitation was that the instrument used for this study was developed by the researcher and a more widespread use of the instrument would increase its validity.

#### Implications for Future Study

While the current study focused on the attitudes of parents and students in a homogeneously grouped sixth-grade, the examination of the attitudes of parents and students in different grade levels would provide valuable insight to the area of

homework. In addition, since homework plays if not as much or a more important role at the junior high or high school levels, further research in the area of homework effectiveness would be useful. Also, while the current study examines a broad view of the attitudes of parents and students in one particular sixth grade center, a qualitative study using a smaller sample may provide more in- depth results than those found in this study.

# APPENDIXES

The first appendix contains a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the text of this report. The names are listed in alphabetical order of the last name. The names of the persons who have been named in the text of this report are listed in alphabetical order of the last name.

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## Appendix A

## Participant Cover Letter

January 17,2000

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am a student in the Professional and School Counseling Masters Program at Lindenwood University, and I am currently completing my thesis project titled "Parent and Student Attitudes toward Homework." I am conducting a survey of students and parents of students enrolled in the Ronald E. McNair Six-Grade Center in the University City School District. It is my hope, that information you provide in this survey, help this district as well as other districts better address the concerns of parents.

All information in this survey is intended to be anonymous. Please do not put your name or your child's name on this survey. Your responses will be reported as a group. For example, I may report how several 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents responded to a question, but not how an individual 6<sup>th</sup> graded parent responded.

Your decision to answer these questions is voluntary. It's alright if you choose not to fill out the survey. It is also alright to choose to answer some questions and not others. However, I believe that your answers will help school administrators and staff better understand parents and students feelings regarding homework and help us as educators to better meet your needs.

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. If you have any questions, you may contact me through my email address, [Papteach@aol.com](mailto:Papteach@aol.com). After completing the survey, please seal them in the envelope provided and send the survey back to school with your child by January 31, 2000. Your child may drop off both surveys (parent and student) in a special box located inside the main office and will be given a candy treat for their participation.

Sincerely,

Pearl Jackson  
School Counselor  
PAP

## Appendix B1

### Homework Opinion Survey for Students

**Directions:** Please mark the response that best describe your attitude toward homework by placing an X on the line next to the response of your choice. Select only one response per statement. If you wish to change your answer, erase your previous answer completely and mark your new answer.

#### Part I

1. Student's feeling about homework

- I usually like it
- I sometime like it
- I usually don't like it
- I never like it

2. Student's daily time spent on homework

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 1 to 2 hours
- More than 2 hours

3. Student's TV watching frequency during homework

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

4. Student's reason for homework completion

- I enjoy doing my homework
- Trouble from parents if I don't do my homework
- Trouble at school if I don't do my homework
- I'll get bad grades if I don't do my homework
- Doing my homework helps me learn

5. Student's homework type preference

- Worksheet
- Project (model, poster)
- Write a story
- Write a report

Appendix B1 (continued)

6. Student's homework completion rate

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

7. Student's feeling on amount of homework

- Too much homework
- Right amount of homework
- Not enough homework

8. Student completes homework in the place designed for studying and homework completion

- Yes
- No

9. Student's Main Purpose of homework

- Helps me learn
- Let's parents see what I'm are doing in school
- Gets extra help from home
- Gives me something to do after school

10. Student's usual homework time

- Right after school
- After a break after school, but before dinner
- Right before dinnertime
- In the morning, before school

11. Student's homework completion problems

- I have no problems completing homework
- My homework is too hard
- I am too tired
- I don't have what I need to do my homework (supplies)
- Homework is too boring

Appendix B1 (continued)

- I don't have enough time
- other

12. Student's homework assistance sources

- Nobody
- Parent
- Brother of sister
- Classmate
- Someone else

13. Student's response to frequency of parental checking of homework

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Only when I ask him/her to check it

**Part II**

14. Student's gender

- Boy
- Girl

15. Student's age

- 11 years old
- 12 years old
- 13 years old



## Appendix B2

## Homework Opinion Survey for Parents

Directions: Please mark the response that best describe your attitude toward homework by placing an X on the line next to your choice. Select only one response per statement. If you wish to change your answer, erase your previous response completely and mark your new answer.

**Part I**

1. Parent's feelings on amount of homework given

- Too much homework
- Right amount of homework
- Not enough homework

2. Parent's frequency of homework assistance

- Always
- Usually
- Occasionally
- Only when needed
- Never

3. Parent's frequency of reviewing homework

- Always
- Most of the time
- Occasionally
- Never

4. Parent's perception of homework responsibility

- Totally child's responsibility
- Mainly child's responsibility
- Mainly parent's responsibility
- Parent and child have equal responsibility

5. Parent's feelings on child's homework

- Very important
- Ruins family time
- Mostly "busy work"

Appendix B2 (continued)

- Stressful
- Makes children hate school
- Not important

6. Parent's studying assistance

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

7. Parent's homework type preference

- Work sheet
- Project or report that student could complete alone
- Project or report that would require parental assistance

8. Parent's desire for weekly assignment sheet

- Yes
- No

9. Required homework time for child

- Yes
- No

10. Required place for child to complete homework

- Yes
- No

11. Please rank the following after-school activity responses from 1-4 according to your perception of importance with 1-most important, 2-2<sup>nd</sup> most important, 3- 3<sup>rd</sup> most important, and 4- least important.

- Homework
- Extra – curricular
- Free time
- Chores or other jobs

Appendix B2 (continued)

**Part II**

1. Parent's gender

- Male
- Female

2. Parent's age

- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 and over

3. Parent's Employment status

- Not employed outside of home
- Employed full - time outside of home
- Employed part - time outside of home

4. Number on children in home

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

5. Parent's Marital status

- Married
- Not married

Appendix C

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education**  
Childrens Research Center, 51 Gerty Drive  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Phone: 217-333-1386 • Toll Free: 800-583-4135 • Fax: 217-333-3767 • EMail: askeece@uiuc.edu  
ERIC/EECE web address: <http://ericeece.org>  
National Parent Information Network web address: <http://npin.org>

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**To: Pearl Jackson**

**From: Kelly Granberry**

**Date: June 25, 1999**

In response to your request, I have found information on surveys of parents and students on homework. I included some information on the U S Department of Education Survey as well as others I found searching ERIC. I hope that this information is helpful to you. The results represent a sample of what is available in ERIC on your topic, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive database search. I am sending directions for obtaining the full text of ERIC documents or journal articles and our standard ERIC/EECE information packet.

**Hope this helps - good luck with your search!**



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