

## THE MAIN IDEA's PD suggestions for Improving Homework Practices

### ⇒⇒⇒ *Teacher Handout*

### I. Opening Discussion Questions

Discussion questions:

- What are some of your biggest concerns when it comes to homework?
- What has informed what you know and what you do in your homework practices (teacher ed class, your own experiences, expectations from your school or district)?
- Have you changed your homework practices over time?
- In your ideal situation, how would homework be viewed and used in your class?

### II. Self-Evaluation of Homework Practices

*12 Practices that Influence the Impact of Homework on Student Learning*

Read through the descriptions of the high-impact homework practices below and rate how frequently or how well you accomplish each practice on a scale of 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

		Chapter	Description of High-Impact HW Practice	Self-Rating
The HW Assignment	1. Purpose	Chapter 1	I identify the purpose of the HW (diagnostic, introductory, formative, or summative) and clearly communicate it to the students.	
	2. Relevance	Chapter 2	HW is connected to standards, next steps in the curriculum, the real world, or future success in college and career.	
	3. Doability	Chapter 2	I make sure the students have enough background knowledge, time, and resources to complete the HW.	
	4. Quantity	Chapter 2	I take into account the amount of HW assigned (about 10 min per grade, e.g., 50 minutes for a 5 <sup>th</sup> grader).	
	5. Rigor	Chapter 3	I ensure homework challenges students with different levels of thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge).	
	6. Options	Chapter 3	I provide students with options without compromising standards.	
Responding to Homework	7. Grading	Chapter 5	I only grade homework that is summative, not formative.	
	8. Late HW	Chapter 5	I address late homework with behavioral consequences, <i>not</i> by lowering a grade. My grades are purely reflective of student learning, not behavior.	
	9. Feedback	Chapter 5	If my HW is worth giving, then it is worth providing feedback for, so students receive feedback on <i>all</i> homework (either from me, themselves, or a peer).	
	10. Record Keeping	Chapter 5	I keep records of student performance on HW to help me adjust instruction and this is separate from my grades.	
Assigning HW	11. Student Capacity	Chapter 4	In assigning HW, I take into account student jobs, family commitments, extra-curriculars, availability of HW help, and resources (computer, Internet).	
	12. Teacher Capacity	Chapter 4	In assigning HW, I take into account the time needed to provide feedback, do the necessary grading, and record student progress.	

### III. Discussion of Self-Evaluation Results

Discussion questions:

- Highlight which of the 12 practices above you gave yourself the highest ratings for (4-5). In small groups, share your effective homework practices so colleagues can learn from you and you can learn from them.
- The book (as well as a lot of other research) highlights two issues: the importance of **feedback** and the importance of **not including behavioral issues** in academic grades. These approaches to homework may be new to you, so discuss them. With colleagues, discuss what you think of the following points from the book:
  - ⇒ “If an assignment is worth giving, it must be worth evaluating.” (p. 46)
  - ⇒ “When teachers just check homework in without correcting it, neither the teacher nor the student has an understanding of its accuracy.” (p.56)
  - ⇒ “Some reasons for not completing homework are the result of a behavior [like procrastination]... Behaviors should result in behavioral consequences, not academic consequences. Do not lower the grade or reduce assignment points.” (p.76)
- Now look at the 12 areas in the chart above that you gave yourself the lowest self-ratings for (1-3). With a partner, discuss these areas and choose the ones you would like to improve.

## IV. Implementing Best HW Practices

After identifying which of the 12 practices you would like to address to increase the impact of homework, follow the implementation process outlined in the book by completing the chart below the steps:

*Step 1: Identify the desired state* – Make sure you understand the 12 high-impact homework practices from the self-evaluation.

*Step 2: Evaluate current practices* – This is what you did with your self-ratings in the chart above.

*Step 3: Implement practices* – Begin to implement the new practices or approaches.

*Step 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of new practices* – Use the chart below to evaluate your progress.

<b>New Homework Practice(s) I Plan to Implement:</b>		
What I plan to do:	When:	Support and/or resources needed:
<b>Evaluation of New Practices</b>		
How fully am I implementing the new practices (rate from 1 to 5)?	Rating and Notes:	
<i>Am I seeing improvement in any of the following areas (if yes, cite examples or evidence):</i>		
A. Student learning/achievement	A. Evidence and notes about improvement:	
B. HW completion rates	B. Evidence and notes about improvement:	
C. Student attitudes about and engagement with HW:	C. Evidence and notes about improvement:	
D. Teacher use of HW results to inform instruction	D. Evidence and notes about improvement:	
E. Student use of feedback on HW	E. Evidence and notes about improvement:	
Which HW practices do I plan to tweak to further improve?	HW practices to continue to improve:	

### \*\*\* Extra – Take the Flipped Teaching Challenge

The book introduced one of the most up-to-date HW practices to increase the impact of homework – flipped teaching.

A. Discuss “flipped teaching.”

B. Watch this 6-minute video that introduces eduCanon – a free service that lets teachers build flipped lessons by compiling videos from TeacherTube, Vimeo, etc. and creating questions for them: <http://bit.ly/1138cld>

C. Create your own flipped lesson (alone or in pairs) by doing the following:

- 1) Choose a video for your students to watch at home.
- 2) Write questions students will answer while watching.
- 3) Outline a lesson for the next day based on the video and the questions.

D. On your own after this meeting, plan more thoroughly for a flipped lesson with the book’s template:

<b>FLIPPED TEACHING PLANNING TEMPLATE</b>
<b>Topic:</b>
<b>Standards addressed:</b>
<b>As a result of the video, students will know and be able to do the following:</b>
<b>How will students be assessed on this content?</b>
<b>In addition to watching the video, students will be asked the following question to process what they have learned:</b>
<b>Length of time student needs to watch the video and complete any related assignment:</b>