

eLearning Homework

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Abstract

Physical classrooms, once the norm, are now being supplemented and in some cases supplanted with eLearning. This new environment has impacted every segment of learning. "Traditional homework," assigned to reinforce a response to teacher directed lessons, versus homework in the new eLearning environment, is a focus of this article. Teacher roles for supporting basic requirements and helpful hints to support parents/caregivers in this new eLearning role are addressed. Suggestions for teachers, parents and students are also discussed. Topics include assisting, planning, intervening, setting time, place, schedules, routines and limiting distractions. Other considerations, i.e. tools, and strategies, as well as student mental and physical needs supporting ownership for learning are also included.

Keywords: Homework: strategies, tips, how-to-do, ideas, routines, and other tools. Categorically describing/suggesting things for teachers/parents/students to consider, as well as teacher roles, student roles and parent/caregivers' roles in implementing eLearning with your student(s), are the authors' goals. Many links are included for individual needs.

Introduction

The readers of this article may have one or more children requiring assistance with homework. The challenges of eHomework are multiplied by the number. Finding a place to do eHomework while supporting needs, and being successful, is daunting. Further impacting this dynamic learning environment, may be adult family members also working from home. God Bless You! Our goal is helping families and teachers choose manageable solutions within individual contexts.

Why Homework?

Homework is one aspect of the general education curriculum that has been widely recognized as important to academic success. Teachers have long used homework to provide additional learning time, strengthen study and organizational skills, and in some respects, keep parents informed of their children's progress (7; Warger, 2001). When we were in the physical classroom and the teacher said, "for homework..." we thought "oh no!" We saw homework as a burden, a waste of time or an imposition on our "free" time. For many students, homework can be

frustrating because it makes them spend time and attention when they could be spending effort doing something more “interesting.” (7). Here are some common reasons students are unmotivated in doing homework:

- Assignments are too easy, too hard, or seemingly pointless
- Students aren’t interested in (or passionate about) the subject matter
- Students are intimidated by the work and/or feel like they don’t understand the assignment
- Homework isn’t fun, and students would rather spend their time on things they enjoy (Robinson, 2020).

Today in the virtual classroom, homework is doing schoolwork at home. There are four basic types of homework. Practice homework, designed to help the students learn and remember the concepts taught in class, such as math problems. Preparation homework, given students prior to a concept to help learn it later. Extensions homework, where students are asked to apply their skills on a special project. Integration homework, like extension homework, pertains to class presentations or events like a history fair, invention convention or other project-based learning (White, 2019).

Within this article we focus on two types: The first is classroom homework, assigned by the teacher after class has been taught in the physical classroom and/or virtually, designated in this article as “cHomework.” This is homework usually assigned as practice or as formative assessment. The second homework, referred to as “eHomework” is when the instructional setting is in the home and not in the school classroom. eHomework, also known as eLearning, is an equivalent to the physical classroom instruction. The following expectations need to be shared among teachers, parents, and students within the eLearning context.

Communication

Homework is an extension of what students have learned in class, either the physical classroom or eLearning classroom. To ensure that both c/eHomework are clear and appropriate, parents and students must be sure the teacher has provided answers to the following questions. Make certain all parties engaging in eLearning are on the same page:

- Ensure students and parents have information regarding the policy on missed and late assignments, extra credit, and available adaptations
- Establish a set homework routine at the beginning of the year
- Assign work the students can do
- Assign homework in small units
- Explain the assignments clearly
- Write the assignments on the virtual chalkboard and leave them there until the assignments are due
- Remind students of due dates periodically
- Coordinate with other teachers (if applicable) to prevent homework overload (Warger, 2001).

Ensure clear home/school communication is in place (Warger, 2001). Homework accounts for one-fifth of the time successful students invest in academic tasks, yet students complete c/eHomework in environments over which teachers have no control. Many students experience learning difficulties. Some may be working within an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Teachers and parents of students with difficulties/learning differences must communicate clearly and effectively with one another about homework policies, required practices, mutual expectations, student performance on homework, homework completion difficulties, and other homework-related concerns (Warger, 2001).

Recommended ways teachers can improve communications with parents include:

- Encouraging students to keep assignment books
- Providing a list of suggestions on how parents might assist with homework. For example, ask parents to check with their children about homework daily
- Providing parents with frequent written communication about homework (e.g., progress reports, notes, letters, forms)
- Sharing information with other teachers regarding student strengths and needs and necessary accommodations (Warger, 2001).

Ways administrators can support teachers in improving communications include:

- Supplying teachers with the technology needed to aid communication (e.g., iPad, telephone answering systems, e-mail, homework hotlines)
- Providing incentives for teachers to participate in face-to-face meetings with parents (e.g., release time, compensation)
- Suggesting the school district offer after school eHomework and/or peer tutoring sessions to give students extra help with homework (Warger, 2001).

Accommodations

Generally, when students with a special need diagnosis participate in the general education curriculum, they are expected to complete homework along with their peers. Just as students within the classroom may need instructional accommodations, they may also need eHomework accommodations (Warger, 2001).

Warger (2001) suggests necessary modifications to the c/eHomework assignment be made before assignments. These modifications identify practices that will be most helpful to individual students and have the potential to increase their involvement, understanding, and motivation to learn. The most common homework accommodations are:

- Provide virtual additional one-on-one assistance to students
- Monitor students' homework more closely
- Allow alternative response formats (e.g., allow the student to audiotape an assignment rather than using a handwritten format)
- Adjust the length of the assignment
- Provide a peer tutor or assign the student to a virtual study group
- Provide learning tools (e.g., iPad, calculators)
- Adjust evaluation standards
- Give fewer assignments (Warger, 2001).

The authors will be discussing calendars, schedules, lists, and planners later in the article, but they are particularly important when discussing accommodations.

Teacher Role

So how do we make student eHomework plausible (10)? A correct formula for homework enhances students' development as independent learners with better study skills, more positive academic attitudes, and greater responsibility toward learning (3). c/Homework should be a review or further practice of something learned in class. Ensure the homework assigned can be completed by students independently. We do this by conducting comprehension checks and using practice activities in class, making sure students feel confident enough to work on their own. We encourage students to ask questions about anything they need clarified and indicate pages of the textbook being used (if applicable) so students can find key information while working (8). These practices need replicating within the eLearning format.

The authors see the parent/teacher relationship, especially in eHomework, a dual responsibility between parent and teacher. While working at home, it is the parents/caregivers' responsibility to check/give daily feedback on homework. This should be done in front of the student. Do not be casual about homework. Students must know it is an essential component of the eLearning, eHomework process (White, 2019). Be focused on positive outcomes (16). Teachers must take into consideration the time and skill resources of parents when requiring their involvement (5). Providing parents/caregivers appropriate resources, with clear instructions must be the highest priority.

Parents/Caregiver's Role

Just as there was no manual on how to be a parent handed to you by the doctor when your child arrived, the authors are sure you did not receive a "Homework Manual" for either cHomework or eHomework. However, through trial and error, here you are the parent of a child or children faced with eHomework. All parents want children to succeed in their schooling. Some might get anxious about this responsibility. It is a parent/caregivers responsibility to ensure their children are learning and are given homework help. Many parents are in the trenches (at home) with their students, trying to keep students motivated, rather than rebelling, when it comes to completing e/Homework.

There are many ways parents can encourage their children to do their homework. View eHomework as a partnership in learning between the teacher and the home (3). A parent/caregiver's role in their child's life is very important. Cooperation between home, school and child can show students they form a strong supporting team together. Form this teacher-home team and actively communicate with each other. Teachers should share directions with parents/caregivers and suggest appropriate instructional techniques (3). While involving students in eHomework is largely the teacher's job, parents/caregivers can help by "creating a home environment conducive to children getting their eLearning accomplished."(White 2019).

Remember to share the benefits of homework with students. Make sure they know; they own their learning. Help them understand how to express the need for help in their learning and the consequences of not being responsible for eHomework. Parents/caregivers have the responsibility to motivate their student(s) (22). Make yourself available, praising your student's efforts.

Encourage them to achieve more (White, 2019). Encouragement can be done regardless of how much you as a parent can be involved. Allow your child/children to make choices promoting responsibility. If you take too much control over the situation, it will turn into a power struggle. Promote thinking while also accepting mistakes happen and need correcting (White, 2019).

Parents need to concentrate more on the skill(s) required to complete the c/eHomework than the actual assignment(s) material given. Sometimes your child will need help with a certain skill, such as reading. The teacher will ask you to tutor them at home, possibly giving you some advice on the method and the materials. While their advice on the method may be golden, take the materials they recommend with a grain of salt.

You know your child best and if you have a better idea of how to practice the skills in question, then do so. Schools do not always have the flexibility to engage students with individualized materials. You have the freedom to try something else — use it (Fee, 2017). Help your child see that the skills they are practicing are related to things you do as an adult (5).

For example, your child is tearing up over a long-division worksheet and you remember your method for getting the answer. However, the teacher's instructions are different. Do you show your method? While you have the ability and right to show your child a different way to do something, have a conversation with the teacher first.

Confusing your child with different approaches may not be the appropriate solution. Authors' personal experiences have shown when ready, most students can use multiple methods once the student fully understands the concepts. This goes hand and glove with the above comments. Let your student(s) explain things to you. A great way to learn is by explaining the subject matter to someone else. Once your child revises their materials, let them give you a short lecture on what they learned. You can ask questions, pretending you don't understand, and let them guide you through the problems. In this way, they won't feel like a student being questioned, but a teacher in charge of the subject. Explaining is an important life skill. This ability will come in handy even after the "chemistry homework" is handed in (Fee, 2017).

Let your child correct their own mistakes. If your child gives an incorrect answer to a question, or their calculation is not correct, that's ok: They are learning. Don't immediately tell them the correct answer, just let them know they are incorrect and get them to rethink their answer. At best, you can help them by giving them some clues as to the correct answer. If that doesn't work, it's best for them to revise and find the correct answer themselves. Keep in mind they don't need to do everything in one day, and the second revision can come the next day or even a bit later. In this way, they can solidify what they know and with fresh concentration work out the problems they could not solve before (Fee, 2017).

Dealing with homework can be a source of great stress (Linsin, 2014). Be engaged and not forceful (22). Micromanaging and nagging only makes students feel incapable or frustrated. Be a cheerleader (14). Depending on your knowledge, skills, and abilities, other roles you can assume are:

Be a stage manager. Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework. Make sure the needed materials (paper, pencils, dictionary, and other supplies needed) are available (5).

Be a monitor. Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration. If your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers. If frustration sets in, suggest a short break (5).

Be a mentor. When the teacher asks you to play a role in homework, try to comply. If homework is meant to be done alone, stay away. Homework is a great way for students to develop independent, life-long learning skills (5).

Be a role model. You may be one of the many that can or will work at home. Do your work habits provide a good example? As in all things concerning parenting, you must set a good example ... not do as I say but do as I do. Children are more likely to follow their parents' examples than their advice (1). When your child does homework, don't sit and watch TV. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook (5).

Be a motivator. Homework provides a great opportunity for you to tell your child how important school is. Be positive about homework. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires (5).

There is such a thing as too much parental involvement. Know when to back off (10). Parents/caregivers need to understand they only give guidance to the child/children, not answers. Everyone can learn from some level of struggle, and your child/children should search for some answers by themselves (White, 2019). Make sure your student/students complete the assignments and learn the material themselves.

Do NOT take over and finish the work. If your child/children don't understand their assignment, encourage them to ask their teacher for more help before or after class. Within eHomework, this will occur online. It's always tough to watch a child struggle, but this can be where the most growth happens (10). Over-involvement can be a bad thing (14; Berlinsky-Schine, 2018).

If there are continuing problems with homework, get help. Use online homework help. There are many good services providing full tutorials on how to do any task. AssignCode.com is a service offering help with any subject. You will work with an online solver who will provide answers to any questions and problems (12). Other online sources are Monday.com or Accelo (Gohil, 2013).

Even as online homework help may prove to be efficient, personal help may be the best way to help students with their homework. Hire a tutor. Educational experts are the best option for homework help if you find your own assistance is not enough, or if you simply can't find the time, like many of us (11, 12).

Student Role

Study habits promoting successful learning must be learned from an early age. Whether students are doing cHomework or eHomework, they must learn to focus on tasks. When you work on a school project, your mind should be set only on the project. Do not try to multitask (2, 4). Maintaining a sense of purpose requires a consistent level of concentration and drive. How can students develop a positive sense of purpose for eHomework? Think about...

- What values you want to live by
- What kind of person you'd like to become
- What long-term goals would be meaningful to you
- How you'd like to contribute to the good of others
- What your duties and responsibilities are
- What relationships you'd like to nurture

Avoid last-minute work or cramming for tests/exams. If students feel their school life is just about striving to get good grades, they will likely run out of steam. For younger students, focus on a positive mindset. Be responsible, know you must be the owner of your learning.

For older students, build on the preceding foundation by choosing a clearer vision about how your academic pursuits fit into the bigger picture of your future. This clarity will help you be more successful in school. Understand how you shape your education and life with every completed – or failed – task (4). Take a few minutes to prepare for each class. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

Preparing for class is something the authors encourage every student to do. Each night think about the classes you'll be having the following day in school. It only takes a few minutes for young learners to think about the next day's activities. For older students, skim the textbook or notes, so you'll be familiar with what will be covered the next day. In addition, do a quick recap of the previous topic, because the new topic will likely build on what you've already learned. This process won't take long, but it will have a future pay off in your educational success.

Teachers' use class meetings through online technology. Once students have completed homework, it needs to be checked. Checking can be done many ways and depends on the type of activity assigned. Teachers or parent/caregivers should check most writing exercises thoroughly for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors before asking students to present their work to the class. This will help them practice the right material rather than repeating mistakes. If the e/Homework being shared is a worksheet consisting of fill in the blank or short answer type questions, check answers as a class before collecting/viewing online submission sheets. This may mean students who did not complete their homework will fill in the answers as they participate in class. If you notice a student doing this, make note of this and have an individual private conversation with them. (8). Read the parent suggestions following and add your ideas to "teacher planning" for enabling positive parent/student successful c/eHomework instruction.

Parent Suggestions/Organizational Skills

Organizational skills give students more control of their work. For example, parents can help students find a "steady study spot" with all the materials they need for accomplishing their task. It is important to set aside a quiet place to study. Reading with and to younger children, discussing homework assignments, and monitoring children to make sure they complete their homework, sets students up for success. (Cromwell, 1998; Feldman, 2004).

Homework tips can help students effectively complete their eHomework. Working through challenges may help your child be more independent and confident. If eHomework continues to be a challenge for your child, seek further suggestions from the teacher in a parent-teacher meeting (White, 2019). Each of the following section will address topics for parent/caregivers to consider adopting, when embarking on this new journey as parent/caregiver/teacher assistant.

Place

We suggest earlier ages be closest to you and by extension the oldest the furthest.

When your child was doing cHomework after school, a favorite homework spot was the kitchen table. This was a perfect place to work because you were close by to answer any questions. This may not be the perfect place however, for eHomework.

The first consideration in finding a place: make sure the space supports concentration on homework instead of interacting with other students (Cromwell, 1998; Gohil, 2013). Establish a dedicated defined "working" space. Having a defined homework area helps students focus on the task at hand—working in a quiet, comfortable space minimizes potential distractions from unfamiliar sights or sounds. Something as simple as a special place to work can boost a child's motivation and, in turn, focus and confidence (4, 14).

This space will not only motivate students to accomplish the homework, but also keep them away from the distractions in other areas of the house (22).

Creating a dedicated, defined, nice friendly study space (22) must provide a quiet place to do c/eHomework, if you want to get homework done well and efficiently (20).

Finding a quiet place for e/cHomework entails picking a time throughout the day when everyone is away from home or, pick a corner of the house where they can relax and study. You also need to have the ability to supervise and/or provide help (13). This is age and maturity determinate.

Discussing student(s) "quiet zone" with your family or friends may be beneficial as well, so they understand the time is crucial to academic success (13). Because eHomework is new and you may find you need more motivation to complete tasks, it may help if you find a new place to do your e/cHomework. For instance, try doing your homework sitting on your bed, or under a tree in your back yard when a change of pace is needed. Setting up a new "homework spot" may give a motivational lift and help work completion. Make sure you know you must be accountable for your work in order to have this special place (Robinson, 2020).

Routines, Schedules, Planners

Parents need to be motivator and monitor. Part of your routine should include asking your student(s) about assignments, quizzes, and tests. Always, encourage your child to do better. Check their completed work and give feedback. Make yourself available for questions and concerns (1; White, 2019).

Make a schedule for your child if they are young. Assist or complete schedules with older students. Find a time of day when your child concentrates best and when you're available to help. Choose a regular study time. Some learners work best in the afternoon, following a snack and play period. Other learners may prefer to wait until after dinner (20; White, 2019).

Establishing and communicating an e/cHomework schedule will help parents and students know what to expect. Encourage students to use time-management skills. Having a consistent schedule helps students develop an effective homework routine. Structured time will help young learners and teens develop good study habits (11).

Once you have a schedule, write it down. The research literature supports using a planner.

Get a weekly or monthly calendar, block out regular time each week for homework and studying (14; White, 2019). To get the most out of your calendar, look at the list and then in addition include recurring commitments, family events, religious activities, doctors' appointments, etc. When you read the section on study habits you will come across "using a timer." Here a timer is used to motivate your child. Break the assignment into chunks and set the timer while your child works. Then, encourage your child to beat their time for each chunk. Time dedicated to homework is divided into shorter time spans, optimally 20 to 25 minutes each for younger students and more as needed for older. These spans have small breaks of about 5 minutes in between. The goal is to work without distraction then have a short break.

Using student planners are ideal. (11, 13; White, 2019; Robinson, 2020). The schedule tells you when things are to be done, the planner gives details for accomplishing what is scheduled. Your child has mapped out their reading, math, spelling, science, and social studies/history work for the week. If you monitor this task and check in on your child/children, it will become automatic for them over time. It is important for students to understand the work they are responsible for completing each week and the amount of time it will take. Give them independent accountability by teaching them how to be independent and accountable with their work (23).

Always use a homework planner to record homework, projects, tests, and assignments as soon as they are assigned. This will ensure they aren't forgotten (25). Use Post-it notes on the front door to remind students of important scheduled times. Set an alarm or two if needed. Create a daily reminder to check your calendar and planner (Wong, 2020).

Your planner is probably packed with notes, events, and assignments already. (And if you're not using a planner, it's time to start!) But planners can do more for you than just remind you when an assignment is due. If you're using a planner with time labels, it can help you visualize how you need to spend your day. A planner with time labels breaks your day down into chunks, and you assign tasks to each chunk of time. For example, you can make a note of your class schedule with assignments, block out time to study, and make sure you know when you need to be at a practice.

Once you know which tasks take priority, you can add them to any empty spaces in your day. Planning how you spend your time not only helps you use it wisely, it can help you feel less overwhelmed (Robinson, 2020). Encourage using a planner.

- Use Google Calendar or Google Keep (an old-fashioned planner also works well) to track important dates and time. Soon, you'll become a more effective student (Wong, 2020).
- Students with learning differences often need additional organizational support. Just as adults use calendars, schedulers, lists, and other devices to self-monitor activities, students can benefit from these tools as well (19).

A lot of eHomework may be assigned in a week. Student(s) time management skills and planning for successful completion require a proper schedule (7; Berlinsky-Schine, 2018). For students, cHomework is a challenging task. Take the time to plan for assigned readings and assignments. eHomework does not mean putting away homework for a few days and catching up coursework and/or projects the night before the due date (13).

Set out a clear and achievable study plan, allowing yourself some room for the unexpected. Write out a weekly schedule with dates and times. Make sure to set aside enough time to focus on school without distractions (13). For bigger assignments, i.e. projects, outlines, or essays, it is beneficial to set a personal deadline to finish before the actual due date. One or two days is an ideal time to do extra revisions, editing and time to review work with clear eyes. Include the following in your planner:

- Homework
- Projects
- Studying for tests
- Bringing your textbook to school
- Bringing your water bottle to school
- Bringing your calculator into the exam hall for a math exam

Assisting with Feedback

Research suggests, students who received personal, targeted feedback about their c/eHomework outperformed students who received only scores on their assignments (Feldman, 2004). Always check homework (White, 2019). Keep positive. Young students need instant feedback. It is okay for parents of young grade-schoolers to aid in correcting mistakes. Providing feedback is very important for students. It helps improve their understanding of mistakes. Knowing as soon as possible improves student ownership, confidence, and future performance. Both teachers and parents need to be prompt and positive when giving c/eHomework feedback. This will encourage students to make improvements promptly. Few students remember homework details or assignments after a week, this is why immediate homework feedback has a greater impact on student performance (Gohil, 2013; White, 2019).

Encourage students to go through every mistake on their tests and exams. Ask the following questions (Wong, 2020) for analysis:

- Was the mistake due to carelessness?
- Did I forget a key fact?
- Did I have a poor understanding of a certain concept?
- How can I make certain that I won't repeat the mistake?
- How could I have prepared better and what will I do for future tests?
- This analysis should help make continual progress in better note taking, study habits and test taking skills.

If you praise specific improvements, young learners will become more inclined to do a "good job" the first time (14). Remember, be focused on positive outcomes as much as possible (16).

Distractions/Procrastination

In truth most people only have one or two major roadblocks keeping them from getting their c/eHomework done well and on time. If your student has difficulty keeping focused, create a designated, distraction-free space for them to do homework, and use it every day. Make it their place. Have this space near you (a desk in the kitchen, the dining room table). This allows you to monitor their attention to task (27). Make sure this place includes everything the student needs and is isolated enough to protect from noise and distractions (4).

Having a good workspace area helps the student focus. Working in a comfortable space minimizes potential distractions from unfamiliar sights or sounds. It would be great if you could keep a consistent study area for your student (White, 2019).

Try to find a quiet location where there won't be a lot of noise. Limit access to screens while doing homework unless needed for required work. Put together a focus-oriented playlist (or choose one on your favorite streaming service) and put your headphones on while you work.

You may find other people, like your friends and family, are your biggest distraction. If they are, try setting up some homework boundaries. Let them know when you'll be working on homework every day and ask them if they'll help you keep a quiet environment. They'll be happy to lend a hand! (Robinson, 2020).

Doing homework on the kitchen counter, living room or dining table may not be beneficial for your child. Having distractions around them like television, food, people, and certain home decors may take away their attention from doing and finishing their homework (22).

Create a space of peace. You need to designate an area free from distractions. When diversions are present, it may reflect in your work quality and hinder your education.

When you know you have been assigned a lot of work to be done in the week and the deadline is coming up, then your time management skills, planning of work and other activities, matters.

Make a proper work schedule (7). We live in an always-on world, and there are many things clamoring for our attention. From friends and family to pop culture and social media, it seems like there's always something (or someone!) distracting us from the things we need to do (Robinson, 2020). The 24/7 world we live in has affected our ability to focus on tasks for prolonged periods of time. Research has shown that over the past decade, an average person's attention span has gone from 12 seconds to eight seconds. And when we do lose focus, it takes people a long time to get back on task. One study found it can take as long as 23 minutes to get back to work once we've been distracted. No wonder it can take hours to get your homework done! (Robinson, 2020).

The biggest obstacle to doing well in school is distractions. To overcome distractions, you can't depend on willpower. Few of us have the willpower necessary to fight off all the distractions that surround us in this digital era (Wong, 2020). The key to c/eHomework success is to eliminate all the obstacles and excuses that get in the way (Linsin, 2014). If you have a hard time focusing when you're doing your homework, eliminate as many distractions as possible. A good strategy for success is to turn off all distractions. Most distractions are noise. This means no TV, radio, music, movies, cell/smartphone, calling friends, and internet, if possible. Focus on the work.

Exceptions to this rule are homework assignments involving computer usage, or calling a classmate about an assignment (1, 5). Limiting distractions will enable focusing on the task at hand. Positively avoid social media. Becoming absorbed in your studies, improves learning (2, 13, 25; Cromwell, 1998; Verma, 2019). [Headphones used properly either as an accommodation or to isolate are exceptions to noise distraction] (6).

Some ways to eliminate distractions before they become distractions:

- Turn off notifications on your phone/tablet
- Delete all the apps that distract you
- Put your phone/tablet in another room before you start work
- Set a long password to unlock your phone/tablet
- Restrict your Internet access
- Have only one tab open in your browser at a time
- Find an accountability partner as you make these changes (Wong, 2020).

Another way to avoid distractions is to isolate yourself from them. If you get distracted a lot, this will lead to annoyance and you will not get done with homework as fast as you wanted. It will be easier for you to work in an environment where you have a chance to focus on the task and complete it without being distracted (12). Schedule a specified time for schoolwork each day and isolate yourself in your designated study area free from outside noises and distractions (13).

The authors mentioned earlier in this section the major distractions deal with noise. There is a caveat to distractions beyond noise. The caveat is complaining and whining. Students who drag things out are often doing so for your attention. They're enjoying the interaction on some level. Ease frustration by letting them complain. Listen, empathize ("Wow, that is a lot of work"), and state their feelings back to them ("You sound upset"). Once your child feels understood, they'll be more likely to accept your suggestion and better able to focus on what needs to be done (Dolin, 14). If you must stay in the room, have your child work in a spot that's farther away from whatever you're doing, and avoid joining in (14).

A corollary to distractions is procrastination. Merriam Webster (9) defines procrastinate "to put off intentionally and habitually." In other words, procrastination is when you choose to do something at the last minute on a regular basis. If you've ever found yourself pulling an all-nighter, trying to finish an assignment between periods, or sprinting to turn in a paper minutes before a deadline, you've experienced the effects of procrastination (Robinson, 2020). If nothing else helps, engage parents to control you from time to time. Just let them check in and remind you

about work. Do not try to make them do homework for you (4). If you're a chronic procrastinator, you're in good company. In fact, one study found 70% to 95% of undergraduate students procrastinate when it comes to doing their homework. Unfortunately, procrastination can negatively impact your grades.

Researchers found procrastination can lower your grade on an assignment by as much as five points...which might not sound serious until you realize it can mean the difference between a B- and a C+. Procrastination can also negatively affect your health by increasing your stress levels, which can lead to other health conditions like insomnia, a weakened immune system, and even heart conditions. Getting a handle on procrastination can not only improve your grades, it can make you feel better, too! (Robinson, 2020). The big thing to understand about procrastination is that it's not the result of laziness. Laziness is defined as being "disinclined to activity or exertion." In other words, being lazy is all about doing nothing. Procrastinators don't put things off because they don't want to work. Instead, procrastinators tend to postpone tasks they don't want to do in favor of tasks they perceive as either more important or more fun. Put another way, procrastinators want to do things...as long as it's not their homework (Robinson, 2020).

The authors identified procrastination as a type of distraction. Because putting off doing homework is a common problem, there are many tactics for addressing procrastination. At first glance, it may seem like procrastination and being unmotivated are the same thing. Both issues usually result in your child putting off their homework until the very last minute. But there's one key difference: many procrastinators are working; they're just prioritizing work differently. They know they're going to start their homework ... they're just going to do it *later*. Conversely, people who are unmotivated to do homework just can't find the willpower to tackle their assignments.

Procrastinators know they'll at least attempt the homework at the last minute, whereas people who are unmotivated struggle with convincing themselves to do it at all. For procrastinators, the stress comes from the inevitable time crunch. For unmotivated people, the stress comes from trying to convince themselves to do something they don't want to do in the first place (Robinson, 2020).

Student Suggestions (Younger Students)

If homework gets too hard, ask for help. Ask assistance from parents/caregivers or if they are busy and you have older siblings, ask them. If you really need it, make sure you ask for help (5, 7). Know your learning style(s). Some students are auditory, some visual, some kinesthetic and others a combination of learning styles. The following link offers further suggestions: <https://5homework.com/blog/how-to-get-motivated-to-do-homework-11-tips-for-students/>

Every person has their own learning mode and channel of getting information that works best for them. Some learn best through listening, other by reading the material to grasp it properly, and some even must move around a bit to make their minds work best. You need to know you're learning style and use it for additional motivation in completing c/eHomework. Receiving information, the way you learn best, really improves mood and makes eLearning better.

Student Suggestions (Older Students)

Have a specific plan or objective for each study session. Many students say their mindset toward studying is, "they will study hard". This might sound good, but it means they have no specific objective or plan. Effective students approach academics differently. For each study session, have a clear, intentional objective or goal to achieve. For example, reading through a set of notes thoroughly or completing 30 multiple-choice review questions.

If there are several assignments due during a week, divide the homework according to due dates and course required details. Do your research and make sure you have a clear direction. Seek teacher clarification if needed (7).

Review any new information you've learned on the same day. This daily review won't take long to complete, but it's a vital step that ensures you stay on top of the material. Applying this tip will also help you move the information to your long-term memory more quickly.

Effective students **write everything down**. This includes homework to be completed, test and exam dates, project deadlines, completion dates, school, and family events, etc. Don't assume you'll be able to remember. Write it down to stay organized. This tip might sound extreme, but life gets busy as you get older and this tip will serve you well for the rest of your life.

Don't multitask. It's a fact: There's no such thing as multitasking. Whenever you're multitasking, you're just switching between tasks. This reduces your studying efficiency. Instead, focus on one task at a time, and you'll find that you'll get more done in less time.

Having a detailed calendar of goals, you plan to accomplish each day will give you a definitive plan to achieve those goals. Schedule your time so you can complete tasks in a set time frame. Get help and ask questions if you have not successfully accomplished your task in the planned time frame (Gohil, 2013). Your schedule should break study tasks into 1-hour blocks with 15 minutes of breaks in between for older students and 25-minute blocks with 10-minute breaks between for younger students.

Before you start working on an assignment, read through all the questions and problems. As you do, mark the questions you think are "easy" to answer and begin with those. (Robinson, 2020). Encourage yourself with easy things so you can boost your confidence.

Break big projects into smaller chunks. Big tasks seem complicated and overwhelming. This is why many students procrastinate. By breaking big tasks into smaller tasks, your brain is better able to consolidate and understand the information. This facilitates an enriched learning experience, as opposed to rote learning, where you essentially forget information after or even during assessment. Enjoying the feeling of accomplishment always gives students more confidence. Completing smaller tasks within a large project helps the homework session stay on a positive note. Moving on to more difficult concepts may seem less daunting (White, 2019).

Use memory techniques. Memory techniques are powerful ways to learn information more quickly. Some useful ones are: Acronyms, Visualization, Chunking, and Association. **Test yourself periodically.** Do practice questions and keep a list of the mistakes made, so you won't repeat those mistakes on an exam. Sometimes it is helpful to look at a difficult lesson or concept from a different perspective. For example, if math is a problem, think of a scenario where the solution could be applied in a real-life situation. For help in the sciences, mnemonic devices may help you memorize facts. Getting creative with studying and homework can make things easier and more fun (11).

Notes: Note taking is important because it helps you pay attention. (Wong, 2020). Take notes in your own words. Take notes in a linear, sequential manner. The material presented is in a logical progression for building the knowledge of the subject. Writing clear and complete notes will help you process information. They can be reviewed before a test (25). For c/eHomework, write down important points just as you do in a traditional classroom setting. Taking notes may make it easier to remember the important pieces of information you will need to retain (13).

Keep notes on a regular Word document and click on the "Ctrl" & "F" key to find information. This has been a tremendous help when taking online quizzes and exams. Your notes are all available on the same document and easier to find when needed, rather than having your information scattered in various areas (13).

Last but not least, the key to developing resilience is to take full responsibility for your actions. This means you refuse to blame others for anything going on in your life. No blaming your teachers, parents, or friends. No blaming the school principal or the government. No playing the victim. When you take this approach toward your student life, you'll see something you can do to improve the situation. Accept responsibility.

Student Assessment

Finding the best way to study is an ongoing process. It isn't something that can be left to the night before the test. You should be constantly improving your study skills to better understand what works (and what doesn't). Learning how to study better helps avoid panic and frustration the next time a big test is coming up. After all, you are more likely to do well and be less stressed before a test when you have had time to properly review and practice the material. Mastering effective study habits not only makes it easier to learn but will also help you get better grades (25).

When you are doing eHomework you will also have cHomework. The cHomework will be in the form of formative assessment which is the planned classroom practice of eliciting evidence of student learning minute-to-minute, day-by-day. How does c/eHomework fit into this definition? Homework helps teachers elicit evidence of student learning (Dyer, 2014).

cHomework is about practicing (or integrating) new learning, much like scrimmages in basketball or football. Teachers must provide students with feedback on their homework, and time to use the feedback to get better at what they are doing [and learning] (Dyer, 2014).

Effective teachers make exam questions based on the amount of time spent on a lesson and/or concept. If the topic is crucial in connecting future learning, more emphasis will be placed on assessing student acquisition of important/developmental knowledge. Test taking conditions in the physical classroom are different from eLearning conditions. The authors recommend taking practice exams under eLearning exam conditions. One or two practice exams should be sufficient. The practice tests will help prepare students dealing with the time constraints of the exam. Start studying for tests at least one to two weeks (for older students), one or two days (for younger students) in advance. Make sure to use physical planners or technology i.e. phone, computer, etc. to alert impending tests.

Lists

Lists are important in managing homework. There are several lists your student needs. Lists/ Checklists help track progress. This way, you will immediately notice if they are falling behind (2).

Checklists help you know tasks needing completing. By using checklists, parents/caregivers and students can each know schoolwork tasks. The clickUp app helps you store information and manage tasks (White, 2019). Make prioritized to-do lists, so you can see tasks, and homework you have to do and note items needing your attention right away (7, 14, Robinson, 2020).

To-do lists help many students manage their assignments more effectively. They complete homework efficiently leaving more personal time and relieving stress (12). Prioritizing your to-do list helps you visualize which items need your immediate attention (Robinson, 2020). Here is how it works: at the beginning of each day, sit down and make a list of all the items you need to get done before you go to bed. This includes your homework, but it should also consider any activities, practices, chores, events, or jobs you may have. Once you get everything listed, it's time to prioritize using the labels A, B, and C. Here's what those labels mean:

- **A Tasks:** These are required tasks to be done—i.e. activities/work/lessons/ or turning in an assignment—Label A.
- **B Tasks:** These are lesser time sensitive tasks. For example, studying for a test you have next week. It's important, but it doesn't have to be done right away—Label B.
- **C Tasks:** These are less important tasks with no real consequences if you don't get them done immediately. For example, you're hoping to clean out your closet, but it's not an assigned chore from your parents—Label C. (Robinson, 2020).

Check off your to do list so you see how much you accomplished. This will help remind you how productive you've indeed been. Keeping a "to do" and "done" list is a positive motivator (Wong, 2020).

Create a Call List. According to Ann Dolin, M.Ed., a former teacher, and author of *Homework Made Simple*, students, from kindergarten on, need a list of three or four classmates they can call when they forget an assignment. The study buddy/friend can read your child weekly spelling words, remind assignment directions over the phone or via text snap a picture of a worksheet. One mom used this fun planner to get her daughter organized!(14).

Working together

In c/eHomework, encourage students to find people who are motivated and focused. Spend time with students who are positive, kind, generous and hardworking. Communication with other students is vital. Students learn from each other and cooperative learning is the same online in c/eHomework (13, 16; Gohil, 2013). Remember communication is the number one thing making online learning a positive experience. Make sure you are getting to know your classmates as much as possible. Positive communication is an important aspect of online learning. You never know when you will make a new friend! (13, Gohil, 2013).

If students are having trouble with homework, help them find a friend or classmate they can trust. Explain to them you're trying to change your homework habits. Ask them if they'd be willing to check in with you once a week to see if you're meeting your goals (13, 16; Gohil, 2013; Robinson, 2020).

In cHomework, you likely studied with a friend. In eHomework do the same. Create a study group with some of the best students in your class and don't be afraid to ask for help (2). If you're having trouble motivating yourself, it's okay to turn to others for support. Bring together a group of your friends or classmates and pick one time a week where you meet online and work on homework together. You don't have to be in the same class, or even taking the same subjects. The goal is to start and finish your assignments (13, 16; Gohil, 2013; Robinson, 2020).

Another added benefit of a study group is helping one another if you're struggling to understand the material covered in your classes. This is especially effective if your lack of motivation comes from being intimidated by your assignments. Asking friends for help may help you get a handle on the material. Your homework may become less difficult (13, 16; Gohil, 2013; Robinson, 2020).

A study team of 2-3 or more virtual friends can become a discussion group. Connect with peers and team up for group assessments. Help each other with proof-reading tips and exchange resources. Talking to other students opens our mind and keeps us motivated (13, 16). Remember email etiquette is essential and extremely important. Always be proper and polite. It is the only form of communication many online programs have. When you are writing, make sure you remain positive.

Motivation

People who lack motivation to do their homework are more likely not to do it at all, or to spend more time worrying about it than completing the homework. This holds true for c/eHomework.

The key to getting homework done when you're unmotivated is to figure out what does motivate you, then apply those things to homework. It sounds tricky...but it's simple once you get the hang of it!

As a student you have a plan, materials, and goals. However, it is equally important to be motivated. You need to encourage yourself. Have positive thoughts and words about yourself. Remind yourself, "you can do it". This task is achievable and within your abilities. Print or write down encouraging sayings and place them where they can clearly and easily be seen. See how motivation to do homework grows with each saying of encouragement (4). If needed add rewards to motivate c/eHomework completion. Students who do well in school, avoid waiting to study. Instead, they get down to work and prepare assignments or study for exams.

Rewards

In life, when you do your job well, you get paid. You may receive a bonus for meeting a deadline or get promoted for a job well done. Just like in the real world, students like to be rewarded for their efforts. There are many extrinsic ways to motivate students to complete their homework.

As we mentioned, procrastination happens when your students prioritize other activities over getting their homework done. Both you and your child can add some fun back into the process by rewards for getting their work done.

Rewards can be anything your student(s) find motivating. Maybe it's hanging out with a best friend or an extra ten minutes of video game time. As long as you're choosing something that makes homework worth doing, you'll be successful (Robinson, 2020). Rewards are a simple way to encourage you to get to work, even when you don't feel like it (Wong, 2020). The trick is to keep the incentives small and to give rewards often. This allows students to experience small wins for getting work done through goal setting and rewards.

Other Study Habits

Questions

Whether your homework is c/Homework or e/Homework if you have questions, ask questions. It is important if a student is struggling with a topic, to promote being proactive and seek help. Asking parents/caregivers, siblings, friends, or teachers about something you find hard to understand, is a great way to stay engaged. Asking questions also ensures you will master the new material (Wong, 2020).

If you have a question it is not silly to ask. Your questions will likely be logical and insightful. Ask questions as soon as you have them. There are many negative consequences for failing to "ask." Convincing yourself you will eventually learn the subject and then finding later you still do not understand the topic, delays your comprehension. Generally, with eHomework, one week is built off the knowledge of the past week.

If you do not understand week one, you will have greater difficulty in week two, and so on. Remember, if you do not understand, just ask. Everyone is there to help. Failure to ask may cost you a good grade on an assignment and then succeeding ones (13, 25).

Other Resources and Suggestions

You wouldn't expect a carpenter to get his job done without his tools, and all students young through teens also need their study tools. Supplies like highlighters, post-it notes, and even simple necessities like pens and pencils are needed for homework. It may not seem like much, but keeping your student stocked with the supplies they need will promote responsible studying so they can help themselves (11).

When selecting your dedicated defined friendly quiet study space, be sure it is a well-lit place to do homework. (1, 5, Eiraldi, et al., 2012; White, 2019). While the space is important what is in the space is equally important. Get a comfortable chair [remember posture] (4, 22; Wong, 2020).

Along with the chair your student will need a vertical surface for any written homework, such as an easel or even taping the work to a flat surface on the wall (26). Regardless of the working surface there should be enough surface space for their books and other materials they need when doing their homework (22).

Ensure your student has a computer, dictionaries, necessary books, a calculator, drawing instruments, stationery, notebooks, paper, pencils, glue, scissors. Make these things available for use and within reach (1, 5, 20, 22; White, 2019; Wong, 2020). Research findings indicate achievement gaps diminish with the increase in availability of homework resources (3).

As we are now in a very modern age, gadgets are the first choice for all research needs. Students are given their own computer, tablets, iPads, or cellphones. Yes, these may be the easiest and most convenient tools we can give them for their homework needs, but it is also good to equip students with encyclopedias, magazines, craft materials, and other books. Having these available in your own home, ensures fewer disruptions in student work. If certain materials are unavailable, they can use alternative choices and be creative with homework (22).

Websites such as Kidblog.org and Smartkiddies.com are a great way to engage and motivate students to do their homework. Smartkiddies.com students get to create an avatar and receive interactive rewards and certificates for completing homework. Kidblog.org students can discuss questions and answers with their peers and practice skills. (19).

Use Online Resources

eHomework will require you to navigate around your classroom home tabs. This is where you will find your weekly assignments and activities. You will also find your teacher information and fellow classmate connections. Learn your school website so you know how to access your library, upcoming classes, website information, technical support, and more information pertaining to your context. Also make sure you know how to contact your school, teachers, and other people when you have a question or concern. Take time to click on each tab on the school website to see what they all do and mean before you get started (13).

Use Google, Ask, and other online resources. Find online programs that check plagiarism, grammar, and spelling errors such as Grammarly (15).

Technology

You have the entire world at your fingertips. Use the Internet to your advantage. You can find copious amounts of information on any imaginable subject, online. You can research entire events from history, in color. A renowned mathematician can take your hand and work you through a problem. A scientist can explain exactly how our solar system works. Use your time and resources, wisely (2; White, 2019).

Use Apps

They are great tools to get your student started on several good applications and sites. Socratic scans the internet for solutions to complex problems and shows students the explanations. Keep in mind using this app may require some oversight from parents to make sure students are reading the explanations and doing the work, not just looking for answers. There are also many apps providing reference tools to aid in homework completion, including: Translate, Dictionary.com, National Geographic World Atlas HD and CalcMadeEasyFree.

To keep research organized, create an online flashcards account, and keep the tab open while online. Create a folder for each class and make a set of cards for the various study topics. Copy data to a flashcard and include a link back to the source. The flashcards are stored online and can be accessed using a computer or phone. (13). If you need a little extra nudge to make sure you're getting your homework done on time, it's a good idea to set some reminders on your phone. This works especially well if you have a set homework time scheduled. If you've decided you're doing homework at 6:00 pm, you can set an alarm to remind you. Similarly, if you use your phone as your planner, you may have the option to add alerts, emails, or notifications to scheduled events. Many **calendar apps**, including the one that comes with your phone, have built-in reminders that you can customize to meet your needs (Robinson, 2020).

Apps that track activity include Monday.com or Accelo. Any productivity app helps in learning time management. Users can analyze the information collected, then make decisions for improving productivity (Gohil, 2013).

Limit social media. If your homework requires your laptop or tablet, it can be harder to limit your access to distractions i.e. Facebook or Twitter. There are apps you can download that will block certain websites while you're working. Also, silence notifications and text messages on your computer. Avoid opening your email account unless it is necessary. If you don't need access to the internet to complete your assignments, turn off your WiFi. Cutting out the online chatter is a great way to make sure you're getting your homework done (13; White, 2019; Robinson, 2020).

Time Tick tock, tick tock, times a wasting and I still have my homework to do! The authors were amazed when they were doing this section. There are so many aspects of time in our daily eHomework lives. Time-management skills enable students to complete work without feeling pressure and allowing for more free time. Working to set a definite study time for doing homework, is an important task. Parents can help with this time management skill (Cromwell, 1998; Eiraldi, et al., 2012; Verma, 2019). Before we go any further let's get real.

Make time for your schooling. No matter how busy you are, you're going to have to cut time out of your life to focus on school. Sacrifices will have to be made (13). Success in eHomework boils down to one skill. This skill can be applied to everything you do in life. It is called, "Time Management." Consider your child's developmental level when setting the amount of time for homework.

Estimate **how much study time** you will need. Set up a schedule and inform your family/ housemates. It's imperative to have the people you live with support your study time needs (13). Look at how much time is needed to do involved homework versus easy homework. If you know what's easy and what's hard, do the hard work first. Take a short break if you are having trouble keeping your mind on the assignment (5).

Organize study and homework projects remembering to make time for long-term projects (5). Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates. If you need special materials for the project, make sure to tell your parents to get them for you well in advance (5, 25).

Children in grades K thru 2 should not **spend** more than 10 to 20 minutes each day doing homework. Children in grades 3 to 6, should spend 30 to 60 minutes a day. Students in middle and high school may spend 30 minutes per subject. While high school students can focus for over an hour, first-graders are unlikely to last more than 15 minutes on a single task. Allow your child to take breaks, perhaps as a reward for finishing a section of the work.

Best Time/Regular Time

Start by discussing the **best time** to do homework. Does your child need down time before settling into homework, or do they prefer getting to work right after school? Let them experiment to see when works best. Have them try different homework conditions. Some students work better in silence, others with background music. Find the time when you can **work the best**. Try to leave the most complex assignments for this time span. Working when you are the most productive is important when you need motivation. Try to fit your studies into this opportunity window (4). Do your homework at the same time every day, be it right after school, just before dinner, or right after dinner. Try not to leave homework until just before you must go to bed (2). Find a place that makes studying easy (18).

For eHomework start in early morning. Dedicate a **specific amount of time each day**. A lot can come up in life, and there will always be many distractions. Schedule a regular study time. Some kids work best in the afternoon,

following a snack and play period; others may prefer to wait until after dinner (1). Whether a morning person or a night owl, dedicate time to studying. Regardless of your preference, Manage Time Carefully.

Health

eHomework, due to its major disruption of the daily routine, and studying are important, but equally important is staying well and healthy. Remember your student needs sleep, exercise, and a healthy eating plan in addition to completing schoolwork as part of their organization strategy. They need a healthy mind in a healthy body. Our brain can only work to its fullest if our body is well. Have regular *breaks* that involve exercise, fresh air and eating good food! Preparing a healthy meal or going for a run is not wasting your time. Remember to spend time with family. It is good to have some balance. It's good for your overall happiness, sanity and for the preservation of relationships.

Breaks

A break could involve eating a snack, running around outside, or simply relaxing (10; Wong, 2020). Block out time for relaxation in your weekly schedule to ensure that you don't burn out (Wong, 2020). Having some rest during your eHomework is important. Otherwise, you will get tired much faster, and your brain won't be able to focus. Have a rest for 5-10 minutes each hour of work, and you will feel much better. A break helps you get a breather to use the bathroom. Stay on track while also getting a few minutes of peace and relief. Decide on a task, set a timer for 25 minutes, and work! If a distraction pops into your head, write it down, but get back to the task. When the timer goes off, have another small break. Go for a walk, have a small treat, or find a dog to cuddle (12, 13).

Sleep

Do not miss out on your sleep. If you are tired, you will not be productive. And you will not be able to follow your *plan* (2). We as human adults need seven to eight hours of sleep to function well (13; Wong, 2020). Students who perform well are effective learners. Research shows sleep is a vital part of becoming an effective learner. Sleep boosts memory and enhances learning. So, go to bed at roughly the same time every day, and make it a priority to get 8 hours of sleep a night (21; Wong, 2020).

Olson (17) of Mayo Clinic states the amount of sleep you need depends on various factors — especially your age. While sleep needs vary significantly among individuals, consider these general guidelines for different age groups:

Newborns	14 to 17 hours a day
12 months	About 10 hours at night, plus 4 hours of naps
2 years	About 11 to 12 hours at night, plus a 1- to 2-hour afternoon nap
to 5 years	10 to 13 hours
6 to 13 years	9 to 11 hours
14 to 17 years	8 to 10 hours
Adults	7 to 9 hours

As parents you are probably looking at the chart and asking who this person is! The next section on exercise is also very important because you want to wear your student out so they will get a good night's sleep.

Three additional comments need to be made here that pertain to sleep. When we wrote earlier about assessment, we know traditionally cramming all knowledge before a quiz has been a well-known tradition. Studying is key to successful learning. We are not talking about studying the night before, but throughout the content topic being studied. The night before a quiz should be dedicated to a good meal and sleep. When the brain is asleep, the mind can think clearly and go over past studying tips (13).

The second comment regards resting which is a must (see breaks). The last comment is remembering the importance of developing good posture. Bad posture can lead to *distraction*, tiredness, and health problems. Good posture improves your mood, and enhances your memory and learning. So, sit up straight, pull your shoulders back, and lift your chin. You will perform better in school (Wong, 2020).

Exercise

Make **exercise** a fixed part of your weekly *routine*. Exercise during eHomework should be at least 20 to 30 minutes a day depending on age and health. Most students have an abundance of physical energy, so make sure they get lots of exercise. The pre-virus routine had exercise. Now, you must schedule "distanced" exercise. Just encouraging and

supporting body movement is important (16). Regular exercise helps you remember information better, enhances your concentration, and makes you more creative.

Eating

Research Suggests the better your nutrition, the better your brain function. Schools have breakfast and lunch for their students for a reason. Here are some basic tips to eat more healthily:

- Eat vegetables and fruit
- Eat meat and fish
- Eat eggs
- Eat nuts
- Avoid processed foods
- Avoid sugar
- Avoid trans fats
- Avoid artificial sweeteners
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid sugary beverages (Wong, 2020).

Scolnik (16) writing on positive parenting, says eating more fish or taking fish oil supplements is helpful in improving focus. Doing the research on this article, Dr. Notar now knows why his doctor has him on fish oil. To summarize, eating well, exercising, stretching arms and legs, plus getting plenty of sleep and taking regular breaks for 10-15 minutes, helps keep focus and avoids eye strain from excessive computer time.

Confidence

Students must be confident in their studies and the work they do. Strive for excellence in all your c/eHomework courses (3, 7, 14). When students don't understand, encourage them to persevere. Parents/caregivers, siblings, friends, teachers, and all helpers, must work so eLearners succeed within the c/eHomework context. Short-circuit negative thinking by sitting down and figuring out the first problem together. Prime their memory so students remember how to do the rest. Then heap on the praise: "You did a great job on that one! Try the next one now." (3, 7, 14).

Another strategy: Have your child show you similar problems worked on in class. This may prompt their memory and help retrace steps. Plus, you see what has already been learned (14).

As parents instill confidence in students to handle homework assignments, make sure your praise is genuine and specific. Show a positive attitude for homework completion. If student's express dissatisfaction or frustration, verbally encourage them while giving them a short break before they continue (3, 7, 14; White, 2019).

Stress

Homework is a part of every student's school experience, starting as early as preschool. Yet sometimes it can be a source of stress for busy families. Students who lose focus or motivation are typically discouraged. They're often discouraged because they feel as if they won't do well academically, so they lose hope.

Manage your thoughts and emotions effectively, especially when faced with disappointment. Wong (2020) says to do this, take a step back and ask yourself the following questions. This may encourage a more positive and resilient mindset.

- Are these thoughts true?
- Are these thoughts helpful?
- Am I taking things too personally?
- How can I view the situation more positively?
- Do I need to forgive the other person?
- Do I need to forgive myself?
- How can I be more compassionate toward myself?
- What productive actions can I take to improve the situation?

Students who don't manage their stress well are more likely to experience performance anxiety and their grades suffer. To manage your stress levels:

- Perform deep breathing exercises
- Listen to music
- Spend time with friends on a regular basis (eHomework use social media)
- Exercise
- Read a book
- Take a few minutes to reflect at the end of each day

The **sensory strategies** below apply to ALL children and are of utmost importance for those with sensory differences. After a long challenging day at school, the last thing a child needs are homework...but, since it is part of school, they must adopt an attitude thinking, "I will do what I can do." Providing sensory solutions may help! Keep these two things in mind. First, the brain and nervous system are still sorting out and processing all of the multi-sensory input from the school day, so insisting on homework to be completed the minute a child gets home is probably the worst thing you can do for their brain. Secondly, it is critical to give the brain time to sort out and decompress, THEN re-boot the brain by sensory activities to maximize attention to task, executive functioning, cognition, and to do the homework process efficient and a success! (26).

A Sensory Life. Top 16 Sensory Strategies for Homework!

- Give the child a 30-minute free sensory play break when they arrive home or before starting c/Homework. Many students may enjoy this as a reward after homework (26).
- During the 30 minute break, offer various sensory activities, primarily vestibular and proprioceptive (26).
- Also suggest resistive sucking and blowing games prior to homework such as a bubble mountain (26).
- Offer a crunchy or chewy snack during homework or drinking something resistive through a straw, such as a fruit smoothie or even non-dairy yogurt or pudding (26).
- Offer chewing gum during homework or another oral sensory tool (26).
- Be sure homework is completed in a quiet area, not in the kitchen or living room; unless you can be sure it will be quiet and distraction free (26).
- Allow the school work to be done on a clipboard while sitting in a squish box or in another sensory retreat with adequate lighting (26).
- Offer earplugs or noise cancelling headphones during homework (even when in a quiet place) as the sound of the fan or noises outside can be enough to disrupt sensory processing for those who have difficulty filtering out auditory input (26).
- Try using a vertical surface for any written homework, such as an easel or even taping the work to a flat surface on the wall. You can also encourage using a chalkboard or dry erase board for working out math problems and such. (26).
- Use an indoor or outdoor swing or trampoline for working on memory type homework such as studying for a test or for studying a spelling list (26).
- Use a ball chair instead of a standard chair (26).
- Place Theraband or other resistance bands around the base of the chair for pushing and pulling with the legs or wrap over shoulders for deep pressure and resistive work with the arms. The resistance bands can also be wrapped around the arm of the chair. (26).
- Another alternative is laying prone on elbows for working on homework, especially when reading (26).
- **Never** allow homework to be done with the TV on in the background (26).
- Offer tools such as a weighted lap pad or vibrating pillow to be used during homework (26).
- And how could I forget, a fidget toy of course! (26).

Summary

As a student, choose each day to make school your top priority (13). Treat studying like a job! (13) K-12 is your job as a student. Look at your parents ... do they have fixed times to be at work just like you must go to school? Do they bring homework to do after their regular working hours? Isn't that their homework?

Always remember, study is your work. Consciously choose to show up, absorb wonderful content available to you, schedule in assessments, lectures, tasks, and really set and keep those boundaries. Have a success mindset. Implement firm boundaries. Keep a schedule like your life depends on it. Set daily goals. Make checklists, prove you can successfully work efficiently and independently (13).

Homework is a way to develop your skills and deepen knowledge (Verma, 2019). Homework is about practicing (or integrating) new learning, much like scrimmages in basketball or football (24).

Parents/caregivers plan enough time for homework, sleep, physical activity, family, and friends. Provide support so your student(s) get the most out of homework. Gradually shift responsibility for homework completion to your children. Help them set goals, engage in time management, monitor their learning environment, and effectiveness of strategies. Help students evaluate their performance based on goals. Plan how much time homework completion should take before starting an assignment. Make a calendar. Develop a checklist for long-term assignments by dividing the assignment into smaller sections. Encourage students to self-reflect and discuss outcomes in terms of strategies. If it takes a long time to complete a nightly assignment, check to see whether they are being distracted. Common distractions can range from viewing video clips to instant messaging.

Both general and special education teachers consistently report homework problems seem to be exacerbated by deficient basic study skills. Many students, particularly students with special needs, should be instructed in organizational and study skills. Here is a list of organizational strategies basic to homework:

- Identify a location for doing homework that is free of distractions
- Have all materials available and organized
- Allocate enough time to complete activities and keep on schedule
- Take good notes
- Develop a sequential plan for completing multi-task assignments
- Check assignments for accuracy and completion before turning them in
- Know how to get help when it is needed
- Turn in completed homework on time (Warger, 2001).

Conclusion

All e/Homework can be stressful. Remember, the road to success is built one step at a time (Wong, 2020). As a student and in life in general, *Success*, is about daily choices and habits. Implement one or two tips in the coming week and get some like-minded friends to join you. As you gain momentum, implement more tips. You'll soon find you're becoming a more successful student who's leading a more balanced life (Wong, 2020).

P.S. While this article is about students; parents who are working at home may also find the suggestions helpful. As a teacher/grandparent, I know the struggle with e/learning is real but following these suggestions may make a positive difference.

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