

What Do You Do If Students Don't Turn In Homework?

Subject: no homework
Date: Wed, 29 Nov 2000 18:41:55 -0800
From: Andrew Rose <affirmingandy@YAHOO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I'm getting homework from 3 or 4 students out of 20 in my IMP 1 class and about 8 out of 25 in IMP 2. Any ideas about what to do with the time at the beginning of class when we're supposed to be discussing it? More than half of the students are getting Ds and Fs.

One thing I've been trying that seems to be helping is giving those students a transparency and pen and letting them make an overhead while other students work on a 'warm up'. Then the student presents and gets extra participation points. You can only get the points if you did the homework.

Re: no homework
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 15:44:19 -0800
From: Dan Branham <dانب@MEDIAONE.NET>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Are you allowing students to turn in the homework late? I only give my students 60% on homework that is not ready to be presented at the beginning of the class period that it is due. My past experience with IMP 1 students has been that they want to try to "catch up" at the end of the semester. I really try to encourage them to come to class with their work done so that they can discuss and revise it.

Instead of giving extra credit to your students who are not prepared (why reward them?), I would instead have the students who are prepared get the opportunity to earn the extra credit. You reward the behavior that you want to see happen again. If only 4 students out of 20 are turning in homework regularly, you should expect that most of your students would be failing. (I would expect this in any math course that I taught, not just in IMP.)

Keep working on it and try to make some parent contacts so they are informed about their child's progress. Hopefully some of these conversations will be productive.

Dan Branham
Fresno High School
Fresno, CA

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 18:23:16 -0800
From: Faith Muirhead <foizym@YAHOO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I'm student teaching at Truman HS in the Bronx and it wasn't long before I decided the 30% passing rate was unacceptable. Calling home, talking one-on-one with the students, got more homework, but it's so time-consuming.

We've noticed a huge improvement in the homework handed in when we give the students daily feedback. We grade their homework using a 5 point rubric based on completeness. And we use a spreadsheet for

their grades, we actually put the grade on the spreadsheet in front of them, so they see the zero go into the gradebook, and then the affect on their average. Conversely they see 5's go in for their completed homework and watch their grade increase a little every day. This gives them constant feedback and a way to take ownership for their grade. It's no longer something we give them, but rather, something they earn. We've seen hw rates go from 5% to 90% in some classes.

We made a no late homework policy as well. It's so easy to get someone else's homework and copy it.

It's worked so far.

Good luck.
Faith

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 21:02:08 -0800
From: Andrew Rose <affirmingandy@YAHOO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Faith, this sounds sound.

This may sound basic but I really am starting from almost scratch,

Could you clarify a little about what time during the class you do this?

With 28 students I'm not sure when I could get all the grading done and entered - when during the class period do you grade? What are the students doing while you grade?

-a

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 17:31:24 -0500
From: John G Rair <rair1@JUNO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Andrew,

I have the same problems you do with homework. Half of my classes have D's and F's also. So I may not be the one to offer suggestions, but here's one anyway. Your idea sounds like a good one. I may try that myself.

I have found that if kids start an assignment in class, they are more likely to finish it on their own time. So as much as I hate to give up the class time, I've been trying to reserve the last 10 min of class to go over the directions and help them get started on the first problem (or the one that I think will be most confusing for them).

Jennifer Rair

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2000 07:19:31 -0600
From: "Cardwell, K. Lane" <Cardwki@TULSASCHOOLS.ORG>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Andrew,

I have experimented over the last several years and am having good success (approx. 90% completion) with the following strategy.

I stamp homework papers at the beginning of each hour. (I use space-themes because I'm a space-nut and the students love the "aliens.") I place the stamp below the work they completed prior to class. I do not stamp a paper with no work.

As we discuss the assignment, students are expected to add notes to their papers, BELOW the stamp. (Very few assignments are "right" answer only, so there is almost always something to add.)

After the discussion, students put their papers into a group folder. Over night, I grade the papers and they get them back the next day. Once a week I give each student a printout from my gradebook program so they can see where their grade stands. (Not as big an impact as watching the grade entered into the computer, but it works for me.)

My grading rubric is very specific. Homework grades are out of 8 points.

0 points: No work prior to entering class

Up to 3 points: Assignment not understood

>>>Summarize what the assignment says in your own words

>>>Write questions you have about the assignment

>>>Write ideas about approaches you could try,
including people you would ask for help if you could

4 points: Assignment attempted, less than half finished above the stamp

5 points: Assignment attempted, half to nearly finished above the stamp

6 points: Assignment completed (right or wrong)above the stamp

Add 1 point for partial notes below the stamp

Add 2 points for complete notes below the stamp

Grading is actually very quick using this rubric. I get quite a few 8 out of 8's. The few students who didn't do the homework can get 2/8, but I point out frequently that this is NOT passing and you can't do it all the time. (They pick up on that pretty quick from the printouts.) Also, students who don't "get it" at home have an option of getting better than 2 out of 8 by summarizing and writing questions and ideas.

Feel free to use and/or modify. Hope it helps.

Lane Cardwell
Tulsa Memorial High School

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2000 07:17:03 -0800
From: Sandee Margeson <margesos@OCS.D.ORECITY.K12.OR.US>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

What's new? Algebra students don't turn in their work either. We kind of solved the problem by not allowing late work and grading "A, B, C, F". Anything below 60% is an "F". This is a department policy and has helped considerably.

Sandee Margeson

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 17:46:36 -0800
From: Andrew Rose <affirmingandy@YAHOO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

i give them one day late, although i switched this week to turn it in by Friday (so max 4 days late)

yeah, I used to let them turn it in late and the end of the semester was madness, no more of that. I gave a bunch of low grades and they seem to be taking things more seriously (some).

I must have written unclearly, the only students that can present are the ones who have done the HW.

yes, calling parents helps.

andy rose,
san francisco

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2000 14:55:06 -0800
From: Betsy Adams <sadams@DHVX20.CSUDH.EDU>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I also stamp homework, except that I use a stamp that coincides with the homework theme. (I teach IMP 3.) I ask the students to grade themselves on a 4 point scale. If the student has not done any work, I don't stamp the paper. The student can still get 1 point if they work on the problem before we start the presentations and add to their work during the presentations. My students know that a one is not a good grade, but the one point encourages them to be involved in one is going on in the presentations.

Betsy Adams
CA Academy of Math and Science

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2000 16:19:56 -0800
From: Faith Muirhead <foizym@YAHOO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Andrew,

Five minutes at the beginning of class walk around with your grade book and record a done/not done grade 0-5. This is NOT a content grade, but a completion grade. You allow the students to correct their own work, and collect it to review if you wish. Collect the ones you really want to concentrate on and read.

Students can be working on a "Do Now" or something of the like, or even putting up their results on a transparency or overhead.

Faith

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sat, 2 Dec 2000 09:05:17 -0800

From: Harriet Davis <hdavis@CRUZERS.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

An addition to the stamping hw - I stamp the last line of the hw if it is not complete and hand out red pens for additions during the presentations - then students turn it in, and I give full credit if the additions and corrections complete the hw. Kids have said they like the red pens because it helps them see the corrections/additions better than a pencil!

Harriet Davis

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sat, 2 Dec 2000 14:39:59 EST
From: Dale Brunsvold <DBrunsvold@AOL.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I realize this is an entirely different tack on the homework issue altogether and I can't imagine it won't ruffle a few feathers. Since the issue is very complex for me I am not sure I will be able to completely state my point. So as I imagine lots of questions perhaps it could be another point of discussion and developing conversation.

I think that all the advice so far given is just fine - given that all involved are working from a very similar paradigm. Which is: That it is the teacher's responsibility to figure out some method of modifying the behavior of the students so that the homework gets handed in in some fashion.

Before reading people like Alfie Kohn or a number of others who discuss alternative paradigms (Maxine Greene, Vygotsky read a certain way, Brent Davis out of University of British Columbia) my orientation was similar and my problems identical. Now I realize what follows will sound either pathetically idealistic, unrealistic, or both. Furthermore I claim no hard and fast 'method' as such that will effect the situations I will describe. It is just that the above mentioned authors have shattered the old paradigm of my own unfortunate education for good.

The question that then came before me changed. It was no longer "how do I get the homework handed in" but instead, "gosh, now that I have this actual, real, stupendous curriculum called IMP, how do I actualize it in the classroom?" Essentially I was forced to try and create a consistent environment that made the whole enterprise authentic. And I have to say this from my own point of view: the techniques of grades, daily top-down evaluations of students by teachers/ring-in-the-nose leading of daily lessons etc and on and on - all that stuff I was brought up on for the most part, is inherently contradictory to the spirit of IMP. It creates a classroom where on the one hand the curriculum is attempting to actualize the learning spirit, if I may so express it, of the child, and on the other hand, the old methods continue the damping down, if not the downright annihilation, of that same spirit.

I had the astonishing good fortune in my IMP training to be under the amazing Rocky Mountain Captain, Jean Klanica (forgive me here Jean) and by the way, for those utterly enraged by what they have read so far, I'm the culprit here. What I learned, in some of the most powerful learning experiences of my own life, in the summer sessions organized by Jean and Sheri and Larry and Brian, and a number of other teachers, was how amazingly consistent IMP is with the paradigms advocated by the above mentioned authors. Paradigms with names like, situated cognition and socio-constructivism (not just constructivism here) and apprenticeship.

And I found, taking the enthusiasm and conviction of those sessions back with me into the classroom that I could really, authentically and responsibly give the classroom back to the students; and they responded. Of course not right away! My god look at what's been done to them before they got to us! But over time, seeing that I wasn't going to give up and take the General's position in front of the classroom anymore, seeing that they were really being asked to figure something out together, take part in serious, substantive

conversation from which their answers had to come, things turned around (and I AM talking Copernican here). I consider the entire first year as, in the main, designed with this whole reorientation in mind.

So that when the second year started (I have taught all four years a couple of times now) they came into the classroom after summer break truly changed - healed a bit perhaps - and knowing what the learning in my room was gonna be about.

Now I have painted over the difficulties. I don't mention the extant problems etc. But I tell you that for all the problems I may still have my heart tells me the path is healthy, upbuilding (synonym here is Edifying). And that the behavior modification hell we were brought up in just isn't gonna work. Except, sadly enough, one can probably eventually figure out a way to make anything appear to work.

I hope my impassioned conviction in this regard did not cause me to mis-speak or insult. I am famous for getting carried away!

Apologies in advance and happy holidays,

dale brunsvold

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: .Sat, 2 Dec 2000 12:26:52 -0800
From: Bonnie Blustein <bonnie.blustein@WORLDNET.ATT.NET>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Thank you, Dale! For holding fast to a vision of what real education is really about. The whole structure of our society undermines our efforts to transform our classrooms. This is not a reason to give up on the classroom, but rather to take on the structure of society.

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sun, 3 Dec 2000 08:24:08 -0500
From: Ahmet Baytas <BaytasA@MAIL.MONTCLAIR.EDU>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

Dale, take a look at "Other People's Children" by Lisa Delpit, just to tighten your arguments, for no other reason.

I believe a lot of what you say is true, and have seen it bearing fruit already in my ninth grade classes, but you didn't get to the point of homeworks. What level of responsibility do you students take for their learning outside of your room, at home? Are they coming to class after year one with their homework well thought out so there is something to analyze, etc.?

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sun, 3 Dec 2000 22:26:50 EST
From: Dale Brunsvold <DBrunsvold@AOL.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

What responsibility does anyone take - student or otherwise - when they are embodied in authentic situations in their lives? Is this really even a question?

To the degree that the classroom (mine) is inauthentic I am forced to methods to modify behavior. Hey, aphoristically speaking, that didn't sound too bad! Yeah, when I don't get homework I know my classroom is losing its grasp of reality. And when that happens the first temptation is to look to the student as the problem. It's a lot easier. I have the power. In fact, the establishment's implicit acceptance of the paradigm would actually judge me as incompetent if I didn't exercise that power there and then to modify student's behavior accordingly.

I myself felt (feel) I needed (need) to get more real with the curriculum. If I did (do) the students would () respond.

I recall the time that I was in my first year and I was working on this. One day my mentor for the weekly meeting happened to be present. There was a presentation. Afterward, no questions, right? So I proceed to begin to kick things into the next segment of our work when my mentor asks a question. The student responds. She isn't satisfied and continues with another question. Questions that had other people starting to listen, starting to think etc. At the time I thought they were just 'good questions.' But as the years have gone by I see it differently now. There was a tone to her questions that embodied a number of things. First of all, absolute respect for what had been presented. Then, real probing interest in the issue and the points still outstanding for her. A sincere belief that the student she asked either would know the answer or be able to participate in the conversation mano a mano. A lack of condescension (that still leaves me a bit red-faced in the thinking back). She was being so gol-darned real with this kid! And it had an effect that rippled throughout the room. Backs straightened (or so it seemed) heads moved into that unmistakable cock where real serious thinking is being attempted for one's own understanding, not to satisfy a teacher who already has the answer.

... I appreciated another comment from someone about holding fast to a vision of what education is all about. I guess it is more the vision I like to talk about than the daily how to of this and that. Isn't the Vision, after all, day in and day out, that drives us to become ever more real with the students? For me it is the vision that is being attacked, dismantled into a reductio ad absurdum by the technicians of education, the soundbitten fears of parents, the impossibly tiresome, social-darwinist conceit of many math professionals, the spooked wariness of fundamentalists of all persuasions who just can't imagine anything new could be any good - except of course for HDTV.

Me? I pray to St. John Dewey every night 'fore I go to bed...

dale

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sun, 3 Dec 2000 19:46:44 -0800
From: Sarah E Adams <seamath@JUNO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I also have my students do their corrections in red pen. I store red pens in their calculator boxes. I allow them only to have a red pen in hand during presentations and small group discussions before homework presentations. The simple reminder about red pens helps them realize the difference between what's done outside of class and what they've added. I also encourage them to write a classmate's name next to an addition that was a revelation to them. That way they can later talk to that person if they're confused when they revisit that assignment a few days later.

Betsy Adams

Subject: Re: no homework
Date: Sun, 3 Dec 2000 21:18:04 -0800
From: Sarah E Adams <seamath@JUNO.COM>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

I agree with you, Dale, that vision is essential. It's always important to think about what is necessary to help students catch the vision that student learning and engagement is what's important. Even when I'm thinking about seemingly superficial things like red pens and scoring, I need to keep my vision clear. Thanks for your comments.

Betsy Adams

Subject: homework
Date: Sun, 3 Dec 2000 23:13:47 -0700
From: Chew <cck2@USWEST.NET>
Reply-To: Interactive Mathematics Program <IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
To: IMPTEACH@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU

For the sake of clarity - I call IMP a constructivist curriculum and the teaching technique that compliments this IMP-like curriculum a "learner-centered" pedagogy or teaching approach. Learner-centered meaning the opposite of "teacher-centered" (rows, lecture and parroting). In the learner-centered classroom the teacher provides the opportunity (through the choice of curriculum, classroom design, organization and management) for the students to self- teach. The premise here is that when we do our own learning, we do the most long lasting and personally meaningful job.

In a teacher-centered classroom the students are obligated to come with certain tools in their toolbox, i.e. pencil, pen, paper, calculator, book. In the learner-centered classroom the student must add to that toolbox the ability to think and act independently, listen deeply, discuss and present ideas clearly, the inclination to make use of the ideas of others, and the capacity to self judge learning progress.

Unfortunately, the extra tools needed in the learner-centered toolbox cannot be purchased -- they must be developed. When a student's first experience with a learner-centered approach and constructivist curriculum occurs after eight or so years of teacher-centered experience, there is cause for a great deal of disequilibrium. We are not only changing the toolkit requirements, but we are changing the student's vision of how school should be and likely changing this vision for perhaps only one of the many classes they attend in a day.

The homework in the IMP curriculum seems to set a stage, or plant seeds for ideas yet to come, therefore making it important, but it can't be important to the student until he or she deems it so. I think that as your students are allowed to develop learner tools, you will see improved participation in homework. When you fight with them over homework you are allowing them to drag you back to the old school they know best. Concentrate on milking each day for real group participation, real discussion, real questions. Stop now and then just to talk about their progress in developing their set of learning tools. At the end of a day when group work was a featured piece in the curriculum and ask "What part did working in a group play today? Or if presentation was a key, ask "How did presentation affect what you learned today? You will find that as they take charge and begin verbalizing what it means to learn they will also take charge of homework.

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