The Homework Dilemma:

A Literature Review

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Abstract

The issue of homework has been a "hot topic" in school communities for generations, and the current age is no exception. A cycle of public outcries – roughly 20 to 30 years each – driven by both academic research and the popular media, and advocating alternately for either more or less homework, began at the turn of the 20th century and has spilled into the first decade of the 21st century as well. Over the decades hundreds of surveys and studies have been conducted to address questions related to homework in the lives of students, teachers, and parents, and advocates both for and against homework have found support for their positions in the data. Most recently, the generally-accepted belief that homework fosters self-discipline, time management skills, individual intellectual initiative, enhanced academic achievement, and increased communication between home and school have been called into question in the popular press, further fueling the public debate. In response to concerns and confusion expressed by parents and teachers in a single school community regarding the purposes of homework and the experiences of children and families, this literature review aims to sort out the current thinking on homework in order to help readers better understand the broad philosophical context within which we must formulate and articulate school policy and practice.

The Homework "Issue"

Sunday, January 31st, 2010… 8th Grader Georgia's Weekend To-Do List:

- Literature: read pp. 75-101 in Cynthia Voigt's *Jackaroo* and fill in chart on personality traits of characters;
- Social Studies: read pp. 8, 12, 14, 16, and 44 in *Medieval Life* and take notes in a three-column chart;
- U.S. History: read pp. 88–103 in *A History of US: War, Peace, and All That Jazz (1918-1945)* and take notes;
- Chinese: practice story for the Chinese New Year program;
- Science: a) create five sets of index cards with Swahili numbers 1-10 for experiment on the impact of color on memorization; b) draw up and print out "test" page; c) draw up and print out data analysis chart;
- Language Arts: a) locate, copy, and decorate a poem for personal collection of poems on the theme of "romance"; b) write a paragraph describing reasons for choosing this particular poem; c) complete this week's independent reading log;
- 8th Grade Independent Research Project: a) continue reading about child labor in the global clothing industry; b) fill out at least 25 index cards;
- Math: no homework this weekend, as Friday's class was used for review rather than the introduction to a new lesson.

First off, a disclaimer…Georgia's homework load was unusually heavy on this particular Sunday, as she had been away from school for the previous three days at a skating competition and had therefore fallen behind somewhat in her weekly assignments. Nevertheless, this "to do" list represents a fairly typical assortment of assignments that she, as an 8th grader in a progressive middle school, is routinely expected to complete outside of class over a period of a week or so.

As such, Georgia has little time in her life for anything but schoolwork. She spends seven hours in classes every day, after which she attends an after-school homework program until she is rescued at 6:00 pm. She arrives home by 6:30, grabs a bite to eat, and then she's back at the books until at least 9:00 – and it's sometimes as late as 11:00 before her head hits the pillow. Despite the creative nature of many of her assignments, the degree of choice she is granted in her work, and her teachers' willingness to adjust her assignments to accommodate her methodical and time-consuming work habits, Georgia is frequently reduced to tears of frustration and exhaustion, claiming that "there just aren't enough hours in the week to do everything I'm supposed to do."

Georgia is not alone. As Head of the above-mentioned progressive school, I have heard many complaints over the years, and particularly in recent months, from parents of children who are similarly struggling. I hear stories of children declining weekend play dates with friends or a walk to the neighborhood park with a parent because they can't afford the time away from their homework, stories of children giving up piano or dance lessons because they need their weekday afternoons for homework, stories of tears and arguments with parents over assignments, stories of children who loved school a year or two ago and now hate it.

The stories aren't the complete picture, to be sure. Many students manage our school's academic expectations without difficulty, and some are hungry for an even higher bar. But the fact that our current system is not working for a good number of students warrants some examination. In order to address this matter, both as a parent and as a school leader, I have felt the need to step back from our immediate experience and investigate the current popular and professional literature regarding homework – its appropriateness and effectiveness at different grade levels, its impact on family life, and the trade-offs that are involved given the limited number of hours in the day – so as to formulate and be able to articulate the broad philosophical context within which we should be considering our school's policies and practices regarding homework.

The Literature Review Process

Over the past few years I've been aware of a number of books published for the popular press that rail against the evils of homework (Kravolec & Buell, 2000; Kohn, 2006; Bennett and Kalish, 2006). Using these as a starting point, with access to the Teachers College library collection and research databases at my fingertips, I "followed my nose" through bibliographic references and online searches. The research "out there" on the subject of homework is overwhelming; one analysis, for example, synthesizes 180 studies and hundreds of interviews with teachers and parents (Cooper, 2008). For the purpose of this review, especially given the time allotted, I was forced to limit my investigation to secondary sources that summarize or comment on the research, rather than delving into the research itself. (The one exception to this was a relatively in-depth reading of the 2007 survey conducted by MetLife.) Each review or commentary comes with a particular slant, and I made a concerted effort to include in my review sources that would likely challenge my personal bias on this topic.

Historical Overview

Monday, February 1st: Overheard at 8:13 a.m. on 92nd Street between Madison and 5th Avenue in New York City…a 40-ish father, to his 8 year-old daughter whom he is accompanying to school: "You know, when I was your age I didn't really *have* any homework."

One of the most significant findings of this literature review is that the issue of homework has been a hotly-debated concern for the past 100 years, at least. A cycle of public outcries – roughly 20 to 30 years each – driven by both academic research and the popular media, and advocating alternately for either more or less homework, marked the entire 20th century and has spilled into the first decade of the 21st century as well (Cooper, 2008).

In the waning decades of the 19th century, drill and repetition were the accepted practices for extending learning beyond the classroom and were seen as exercising the mind as a muscle (Cooper, 2008). This viewpoint began to shift at the dawn of the 20th century. The California Civil Code of 1901, for example, stated that "no pupil under the age of fifteen years in any grammar or primary school shall be required to do any home study" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 39). In the early decades of the 20th century, a movement that likened homework to child labor, led by physicians who claimed that children needed at least five hours of outdoor play per day, resulted in reduced expectations for academic work beyond the school day (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Theories of progressive education, taking root in the early decades of the 20th century and culminating in the 1940s, held that children should be encouraged to follow their natural inclinations and should not be hampered by undue amounts of homework. The Society for the Abolition of Homework was in full swing by 1930. Regarding school as the children's workplace, the homework battle was linked to the labor rights movement as anti-homework proponents advocated for the rights of children (Kravolec & Buell, 2000).

With the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957, however, a nationwide panic set in regarding the perceived competitive disadvantage of U.S. students, and increased homework was viewed as part of the answer to this challenge (Bennett & Kalish, 2006, Cooper, 2008). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the pendulum had swung back once again, and parents were calling for a reduction on the pressure imposed on children (Cooper, 2008). This movement was linked to a broader societal discontent with the quality

of life in a fast-paced world. Once again, with the publication of Studs Terkel's *Working*, a parallel was drawn between "the grind" experienced by adults and the expectations being foisted on children (Kravolec & Buell, 2000).

In 1983, the tide turned yet again with the U.S. Department of Education's publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which suggested a causal relationship between the U.S. educational system and its failing economy (Kravolec, 2000). "Far more homework" (quoted in Bennett & Kalish, 2006, p. 36) once again became seen as a critical measure in correcting both the nation's failing education system and its declining role in the global economy. The adoption of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002 further promoted homework as a critical component of the effort to raise standards and boost test scores in U.S. schools (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Finally, parent anxiety regarding children's preparedness for the competitive college admissions scene has reinforced this push for an increase in homework expectations during the past two decades (Cooper, 2008).

A conflicting viewpoint, expressed in the March 1998 issue of *Newsweek* in an article entitled, "Homework Doesn't Help," began to turn the tide once again with the claim, based on current research findings, that homework is "generally pointless until middle school" (quoted in Kravolec & Buell, 2000). The past decade has seen the latest version of push-back on the homework issue with the publication of a number of books, including *The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning,* by Etta Kralovec & John Buell (2000), Alfie Kohn's *The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing* (2006), and *The Case Against Homework: How Homework is Hurting Children and What Parents Can Do About It* by Sara Bennett & Nancy Kalish (2006), all of which call into question the effectiveness and humaneness of homework as we currently know it.

One of the acknowledged leaders in the field of homework research, from the mid-1980s to the present day, is Dr. Harris Cooper, a professor in the Department of Psychology and Director of the Program in Education at Duke University. In 1986, with grants from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, Cooper drew on his expertise in conducting research syntheses and began studying and collating the research on homework. By 2001 he had published the second edition of *The*

Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents, a summary of more than 200 research studies on homework, its effectiveness in boosting academic performance, and its effects on the lives of children and families. An updated version of this review, incorporating an additional 60 studies, was then published in 2007, further contributing to the conversation among educators, parents, and school districts, as well as in the popular media.

Throughout his publications, Cooper claimed to have "had no strong predisposition favoring or opposing homework" at the outset of his studies in the mid-eighties (Cooper, 2007, p. xii), and his stated aim throughout was "to help everyone involved in the process make sound decisions about homework. My objective," he wrote in 2007, "is to provide readers with the terms, definitions, and research evidence needed to hold conversations about homework in a constructive manner" (Cooper, 2007, p. x).

Contributing further to national conversation, in 2007, MetLife focused its *Survey of the American Teacher* – an annual publication since 1984 – on the subject of homework. Conducting surveys of 2101 3rd-12th grade students, 501 parents of school-aged children,1000 public school teachers, and 20 administrators, the authors sought "to contribute to the understanding of homework" by including the perspectives of these stakeholders (p. 11). Similarly, the National Education Association, in a recently published article "Research Spotlight on Homework," cites research conducted by the Brookings Institution and the Rand Corporation that debunks the claims in the popular media that students have too much homework. All of this is to say that at *any* stage in the century-long debate on the value (or not) of homework, opinions may be found that contradict whatever viewpoint is currently being promoted in the academic research or the mainstream literature.

The Findings

So where does this leave us?

A pamphlet published by the National Education Association in 1981 categorized the types of homework as follows: a) providing students with an opportunity to practice newly acquired skills; b) preparing students for a subsequent class meeting; or c) extending student learning beyond the classroom through individual and creative endeavors (La Conte, 1981). The pamphlet goes on to list the intended outcomes associated with homework, including the fostering of discipline, responsibility,

accountability, and time management; allowing for the coverage of more material in a given course; providing students with necessary practice; and creating increased communication between home and school. These claims are echoed more or less verbatim throughout the literature of subsequent decades, linking homework with improved academic achievement overall.

In the anti-homework literature spanning eleven decades, the positive effects listed above are challenged as being unfounded assumptions that are – for a host of reasons – universally accepted by a public that regards homework as simply "a fact of life" or "tradition." "Belief in the value of homework is so firmly entrenched that most families accept without question this nightly ritual," write Kravolec & Buell (2000, p. 10). The anti-homework literature holds that there are, in fact, countless *negative* effects associated with homework, including the following:

- undue stress in children;
- a burden to parents and families
- a loss of interest in academics due to overload;
- physical and emotional fatigue;
- confusion on the part of students in the absence of the teacher or due to parent intervention with alternate instructional techniques;
- copying from friends;
- decreased intellectual initiative;
- dependence on external rewards or expectations,
- reduced opportunities for non-academic learning, recreation, and play;
- lack of physical exercise;
- obesity;
- lack of adequate sleep;
- strained relations between parents and children, and between parents themselves;
- loss of family time;
- inequity across socioeconomic lines with regard to opportunity for academic success.

Examining the Positive Effects of Homework

Given the almost universal acceptance of the importance and necessity of homework, a deeper analysis of the presumed positive effects listed above seems in order. Certainly some of the claims of positive outcomes are undeniable. Preparing for a literature or history class by reading in advance an assigned section of a shared text frees in-school time for meaningful discussion. According to many studies, independent practice in recently-acquired skills can boost unit test scores and overall academic achievement, and given appropriate assignments and parent support, the benefits of homework for students with learning disabilities can be positive (Cooper, 2007).

Digging a bit *more* deeply into the claim that homework is associated with increased academic achievement, however, raises some troubling questions. To begin with, the language Cooper uses to summarize his analysis of dozens studies of homework effectiveness can hardly be regarded as a ringing endorsement for the practice. "It would not be imprudent," Cooper writes, "based on the evidence in hand, to conclude that doing homework can cause improved academic achievement," particularly among high school students. "Still, this assertion must be quickly followed by the qualification that the positive effect of homework on achievement for young students may be limited" (Cooper, 2007, p.37). The timidity of Cooper's claim may be attributed to the fact that studies in the "effectiveness" of homework are plagued by the issue, common to much scientific inquiry, of "correlation" vs. "causality" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000). How can we know whether time spent on homework actually *boosts* student learning or achievement, or whether other factors that play out in both areas are responsible? Furthermore, claims regarding the effectiveness of homework in promoting student learning and achievement beg the question of what "achievement" means, anyway, along with a host of other questions that Kravolec and Buell raise. "How do we know…that homework helps at any level? And helps do what? Raise test scores? Make our children better people, or better citizens? Enable them to become more creative? Develop an interest in lifelong learning? And compared to what? Is it better to do homework or watch TV? Play outside? Go on a trip with parents and silblings? Daydream? Work in the community? Visit with friends? And what does 'better' mean in this context, anyway?" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 10)

Finally, regarding the proposition that homework promotes the many non-academic outcomes listed above, it appears that "no experiment…has ever been conducted to investigate common claims about responsibility, self-discipline, and so on," and that "no evidence exists to support those claims" (Kohn, 2007, pp.52-3). Furthermore, a convincing argument may be made that "self-discipline does not mean primarily learning that life is tough and that one must generally do what one is told. It means learning to manage freedom…(by having) gradually expanding opportunities…(to) be responsible for free time" (Buell, quoted in Kohn, 2007, p. 64).

And as for the development of good work habits, Kravolec & Buell propose that "participating in the decisions of the household and collaborating with others on common chores…are important life skills that…require good work habits. For many children, these habits are never learned because homework gets in the way of that work" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 13).

Examining the Negative Effects of Homework

Health Concerns

Beginning in the early 1900s, advocates of the abolition of homework cited health risks as a primary concern. In January 1900, Edward Bok, the editor of the *Ladies Home Journal*, published an article entitled "A National Crime at the Feet of American Parents" that called for a maximum of five hours of "brain work" per day for children in order that they might enjoy more sunshine and fresh air (Kravolec & Buell, 2000). In 1935, a letter to the editor of the New York Times railed that "homework is directly responsible for more undernourished, nervous, bespectacled, round-shouldered children than you can possibly imagine" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 44). In the more recent literature, Bennett and Kalish (2006) bemoan "the creation of the homework potato," claiming that the sedentary nature of homework may contribute to childhood obesity, while citing numerous studies suggesting that physical activity is more likely to improve concentration, memory, classroom behavior, and ultimately, academic achievement – all of which, of course, are the presumed aims of homework. Especially in light of recent research that has been brought forth through the publication of Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* (2005) and Stuart Brown's *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* (2009), it is becoming increasingly clear that children need more opportunities for unstructured activity – especially in nature – in order to develop into well-rounded, healthy, whole individuals.

Homework not only interferes with children's ability to play outdoors, but contributes to sleep deprivation as well. According to the 2007 MetLife survey, 48% of elementary school students report getting fewer than nine hours of sleep on school nights, and 60% of high school students report getting less that eight hours of sleep on a school night. Meanwhile, the National Sleep foundation recommends that children between the ages of five and twelve get 9 to 11 hours of sleep per night, and that teens get 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep per night (*MetLife Survey*, 2007, p. 57).

A related health concern that has been raised in the popular media of late is the strain on children's bodies caused by the weight of their backpacks. Alfie Kohn points out the disturbing tendency of those raising this concern – *People* magazine, for one – to "treat the symptom rather than the cause" by recommending that parents purchase for their children backpacks with shoulder pads! (Kohn, 2007, p. 95)

Stress

One would certainly conclude that the repercussions of homework listed above – substantial time spent on homework on top of an already lengthy school day, the lack of opportunity for outdoor exercise and unstructured play, and an inadequate amount of sleep – would contribute to undue stress in the lives of children. Interestingly, however, the 2007 MetLife Survey found that "more than eight in ten parents believe that their child's teachers assign the right amount of – or even too little – homework, and threequarters of students report that they have enough time to do their assignments." The commentary goes on to observe that "these findings are somewhat surprising given recent attention in the popular press regarding parents who feel that too much homework is assigned, placing an undue burden on students' and families' time" (*MetLife Survey,* 2007, p. 15).

A closer look at the MetLife data, however, reveals some contradictory evidence. One can argue that public attitudes regarding homework are so calcified that survey results – such as those listed in the previous paragraph – must be seriously questioned. In the case of the above claim that public opinion favors the amount of homework that is currently given, for example, data associated with other survey questions actually shows that 29% of parents report that "homework is a major source of stress and disagreement" in their families (*MetLife Survey*, 2007, p. 92). In addition, "the *Survey* found that homework-related stress is common among students." Nine in ten students (89%) feel stressed about doing homework at one time or another, including one-third of students (34%) who frequently ("very often" or "often") feel stressed about homework (*MetLife Survey,* 2007, p. 137). This data, combined with the sleep deprivation figures cited above, flies in the face of the earlier findings of parent and student perceptions. Apparently the belief in the value of homework is so ingrained in the American psyche that *despite* students feeling stressed, and *despite* their not getting enough sleep, students and parents nevertheless report that the right amount of homework is being assigned. This discrepancy

points to major flaws in all of the research relating to homework – that surveys measure *perceptions*, regardless of whether those perceptions are grounded in reality and right thinking.

A related concern cited in the anti-homework literature is that the stress associated with homework generates such negative feelings about academics that it suffocates children's natural desire and inclination toward learning. Absent the element of choice that characterizes passionate curiosity on the part of children (and learners of *all* ages, for that matter), and taking on the quality of externallyimposed drudgery, "most of what homework is doing is driving kids *away* from learning" (Kohn, 2007, p. 67).

Impact on Family Life

Although the *MetLife Survey* found that "the majority of parents do not see homework as getting in the way of family time or as a major source of stress and disagreement in their family," and furthermore, that "nine in ten parents report that helping their child with homework provides an opportunity for them to talk and spend time together" (*MetLife Survey,* 2007, p. 92), these data beg the question of whether homework is the *best* way for parents and children to engage with one another. Furthermore, this finding is called into question by much of the popular literature, in which the language used to describe parent/child dynamics around homework includes such vocabulary as "cajole," "negotiate," "bribe," "compromise," and "friction." It is not only parent/child relationships that can suffer over homework, but parent/parent relations as well as the adults in the family may have different attitudes toward the role of homework in family life (Bennett & Kalish, 2007).

A 1984 article in *Teachers College Record* called for attention to be given to "the ecology of homework," how homework is integrated into – or disrupts – family life (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 29). The issue of "family fallout" (Bennet & Kalish, 2006) is a critical element of the homework debate to consider. With a push toward "meaningful" homework that involves higher order thinking, many students cannot carry out their assignments without adult support. And yet with the numbers of parents working outside the home, most families can't afford to devote adult time to homework help.

An ironic tale relating to the burden homework places on parents involves Gary Natriello, who in 1996 with Ed McDill issued a report recommending creative homework assignments to stimulate student learning. A year later, in an article published in the *Teachers College Record,* "Hoist on the

Petard of Homework," Natriello wrote, "I am probably on the high end of the scale of parental commitment…I am also way up there in terms of support for higher-order learning…But I have discovered that after a day at work, the commute home, dinner preparations, and the prospect of baths, goodnight stories, and my own work ahead, there comes a time beyond which I cannot sustain my enthusiasm for the math brain teaser or the creative story writing task" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 17). Kravolec & Buell even go so far as to challenge homework on civil liberties grounds. Speaking of the relationship between public schools and families, they write, "We should question whether homework may not represent an intrusion by the state into our private lives. We would hardly stand for a government mandate that we spend an hour each night on citizenship training…But in essence, that is exactly what the homework ritual is. The school, as an instrument of the state, has invaded our family time with its agenda" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 24).

Missed Opportunities

In answer to claims that homework is critically important to children's academic achievement – however unfounded these claims may be – much of the current literature calling for a re-examination of the issue raises the question of priorities. What else might children be doing with the time they're spending on homework? In a statement issued in 1966, for example, the National Education Association called for weekends and one evening in the middle of the week to be left homework-free, so that "the pupil has the opportunity to develop appreciation and skill in art and music and participate more fully in the social life of the family and community" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 49). Alfie Kohn commends the Head of the Golden Independent School in Golden, Colorado, for issuing a statement to parents that reads, "6 ½ hours a day in school is enough…Kids and families need the rest of the days/evenings/weekends/holidays for living – playing, having friends and pets, shopping, solving problems, cooking, eating, (doing) chores, traveling, playing on sports teams, communicating, finding out about world news, playing musical instruments, reading for pleasure, watching movies, collecting things, etc., etc., etc. (Kohn, 2007, p. 16).

A Question of Equity

A final concern regarding homework relates to the broader societal issue of academic equity with regard to homework. As Kravolec & Buell point out, "As Americans, we don't like to talk about class, but when we talk about the homework spread over the kitchen table, we have to recognize that some tables are bigger than others. Our class position in this society influences our ability to help our children with their homework in subtle and complex ways." (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 25). Students whose parents are, for whatever reason, unable to lend a hand with homework are at a disadvantage relative to their peers when homework requires adult intervention. The possible reasons for parent unavailability are many, including difficulty with the English language, limited educational background, stress related to their own employment (or lack thereof), or other family obligations. Kravolec & Buell point out that "rather than foster equality, schools unwittingly heighten inequality…In order to have the greatest opportunity, students must have equal access to academic resources for the completion of schoolwork" (Kravolec & Buell, 2000, p. 101). Even Cooper (2007), an advocate for the implementation of regular homework, concedes that homework can increase the achievement gap between students from affluent and low-income families.

Conclusions & Next Steps

The experience of conducting this literature review has highlighted the complexity of the issue of homework in the lives of teachers, students, and families. Educators, researchers, and parents have been debating every conceivable angle on the matter for decades, and research findings have been massaged to support widely divergent conclusions and positions, either for or against homework. During the past decade serious and compelling challenges to widely accepted beliefs and practices regarding homework have been raised, however, and these warrant deep consideration.

Given the fact that homework is likely to remain with us, and given how tied it is to broad social, economic, and political realities and perceptions, any attempt to implement sweeping policy recommendations is ill-advised. Rather, those of us within our own school communities must take a hard look at the many issues related to homework in the lives of children, parents, and teachers, examine our individual and corporate assumptions, analyze the research and commentary that is currently available,

and come to some agreement as to the principles that will guide our practice as we move forward. Steps toward this end might include the following:

- To begin with, sharing the findings of this literature review with the school's faculty and interested parents will provide a springboard for further conversation.
- Convening a working group of faculty and parents to explore the matter more deeply will allow for deliberate consideration of the issues rather than "knee-jerk" responses based on individual experiences. Shared reading of many of the books and articles listed at the end of this review, along with some eloquent pieces written by our own faculty and staff members, would provide some common ground for moving forward.
- A well-constructed survey to draw out perceptions and experiences from our student and parent body is probably in order. Questions should be designed that focus on 1) the time students spend on homework; 2) the perceived value of different kinds of homework; and 3) what opportunities families see as lost to homework (Kravolec & Buell, 2000). Additional areas for investigation suggested by the literature reviewed here might include the degree of parent involvement with different kinds of homework, the emotional landscape of the homework experience for children and families, the amount of sleep our students are getting, and more. Samples of surveys may be found in *The Case Against Homework*, and many other resources included in this review will suggest valuable survey questions.
- Given our school's stated aim of inspiring engaged learning in children through a high degree of choice in their academic pursuits, I hope teachers will feel inclined to launch informal experiments relating to homework with their students. Would student learning be significantly reduced if less out-of-school homework was assigned? What might happen, for example, if students were invited to design their own math review homework based on what they feel they need practice on? How might we adapt our approach to summer assignments ("we expect you to be engaged in intellectual activity during the summer, but you may choose what this looks like, and we expect you to report back to us in September") to "homework" during the school year?

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