

St Joseph's College

Homework

Principles & Procedures

Middle School



St Joseph's College
GOOMERA

Courage to Love, Learn and Serve

Overarching Statement

'Homework can be what learning is at its best: grabbing hold of the world and making it make sense for you'

(Stern, J.)

Aims

- To encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning together with the development of organisational and study skills and workload management.
- To promote self-reliance and self-confidence and encourage the habit of independent learning.
- To assist students to meet deadlines and target dates so they are prepared for Senior School.

Rationale

Learning at home is an essential part of good education. Regular homework is important. It gives students the opportunity to practise for themselves the tasks learned in class and contributes towards improving a range of important skills. Homework builds confidence to come to the classroom equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed. It assists young people to personalise their learning and allows children to work at a pace which suits them and their ability.

Appropriate Tasks

Tasks should have clear learning intentions and success criteria, linked to the learning programme. Teachers should be careful to ensure that homework time is not regularly used simply for “finishing off” work carried out in class. This can often place too heavy a burden on some children and too light a demand on others. Curriculum Leaders and the College Leadership Team should ensure that the overall homework programme is balanced in the type and scale of tasks and manageable for both students and teachers.

What does the research say?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) says that setting students high-quality homework has an average impact of:

- 2 months' additional progress in a year in primary schools
- 5 months' additional progress in a year in secondary schools

However, a section on homework in secondary schools adds that:

... beneath this average there is a wide variation in potential impact, suggesting that how homework is set is likely to be very important.

The section on homework in secondary schools says that there is some evidence to suggest that homework is most effective when used as a "**short and focused intervention**".

Benefits are likely to be more modest, up to two or three months progress on average, if homework is more routinely set (for example, learning vocabulary or completing practice tasks in mathematics every day).

It also says that the evidence suggests:

- Homework should not be used a punishment for poor performance
- **A variety of tasks** with different levels of challenge is likely to be beneficial
- It is important for students to receive **specific and timely feed forward** on their homework
- The purpose of homework, such as increasing knowledge or fluency in a particular area, should be made clear to students

Effective homework

To be effective homework should be:

- Varied and interesting
- Appropriate to the needs and abilities of the student
- Well explained and objective-led
- Relevant to the ongoing work of the class or group
- Manageable within a reasonable amount of time
- Recognised and rewarded by meaningful feed forward given as appropriate

Research by Cathy Vatterott identifies 5 fundamental characteristics of good homework:

- **Purpose:** teachers should assign homework when it has a specific purpose, rather than as a matter of routine
- **Efficiency:** homework should not take an "inordinate" amount of time
- **Ownership:** students' motivation is linked to how connected they feel to the content. Providing students with a choice in homework assignments or connecting assignments to students' interests can create a sense of ownership
- **Pupils' competence:** homework should be differentiated by ability level, so that all students feel competent completing it
- **Aesthetic appeal:** assignments that are "visually uncluttered", have less information on the page and make use of graphics, are more appealing to students

This research is summarised in an article by Nicole Schrat Carr published in *School Community Journal*, an American academic journal. It can be accessed on [SharePoint](#).

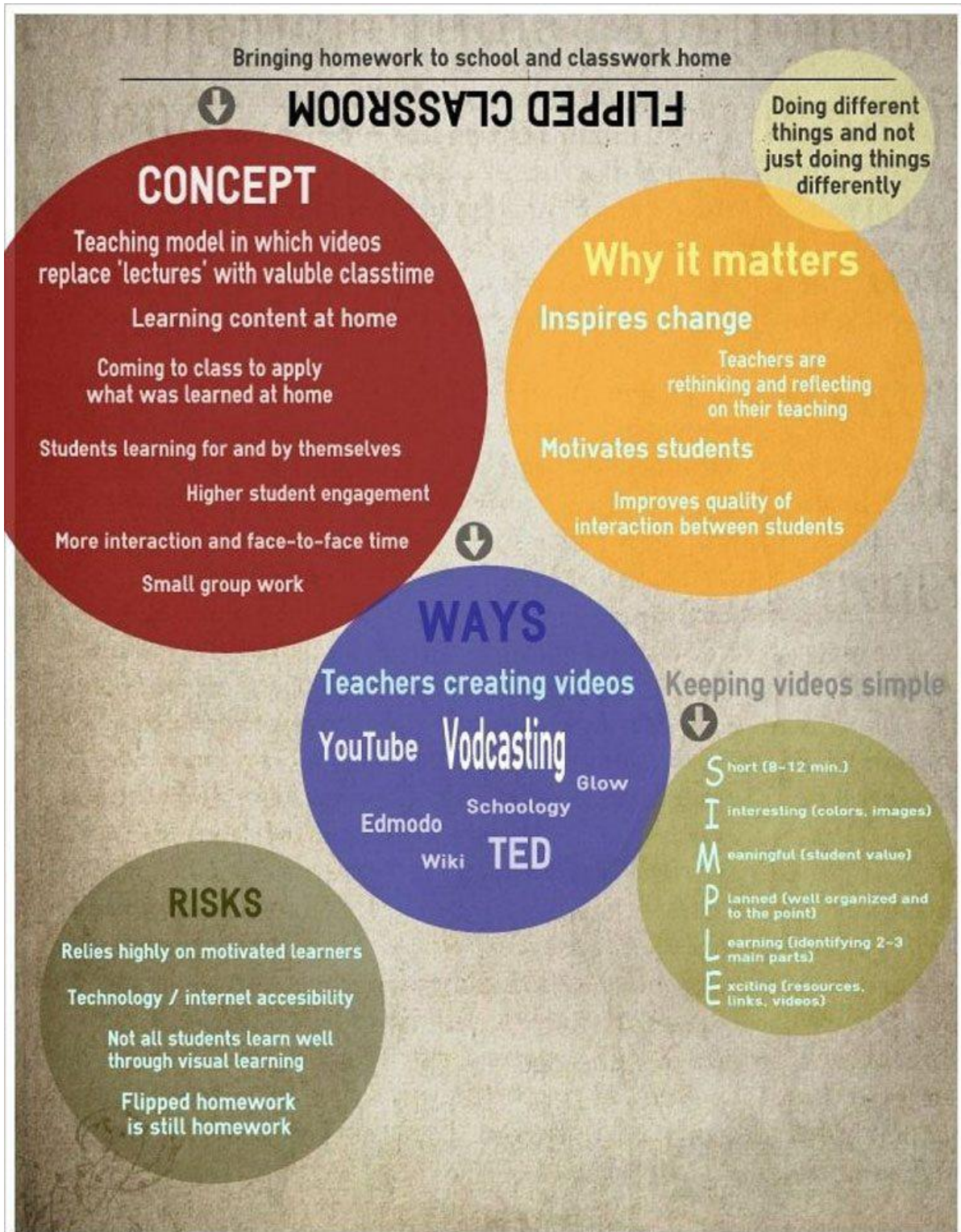
One example of a homework strategy that helps to develop independent learners is **Tic Tac Toe**. This offers students a menu of choices: students choose three tasks that form a straight line (horizontal, vertical or diagonal), with the additional requirement that the line must pass through the central box. This is the core task. Each row also includes not only a practical / creative task, but also an emphasis on various communication skills. And it is the *choice* of those tasks that provides a motivational tool.

Flipped Classroom

A flipped classroom is one where students are introduced to content at home, and practice working through it at school. In this blended learning approach, face-to-face interaction is mixed with independent study via technology. Students watch pre-recorded videos at home, then come to school to do the homework armed with questions and at least some background knowledge.

The concept behind the flipped classroom is to rethink when students have access to the resources they need most. If the problem is that students need help doing the work rather than being introduced to the new thinking behind the work, then the solution the flipped classroom takes is to reverse that pattern.

This doubles student access to teachers – once with the videos at home, and again in the classroom, increasing the opportunity for personalisation and more precise guiding of learning. In the flipped classroom model, students practice under the guidance of the teacher, while accessing content on their own. Of course, as with any L&T strategy, a flipped approach should be used alongside a repertoire of approaches towards homework.



Learning Programmes

Each department's Learning Programme includes a detailed synopsis of the learning, resources that the teacher uses to guide the students learning. It will contain modifications and students specific learning and teaching focused activities. The learning Programme outlines recommended homework activities for all subjects each week.

Time Allocation

There is no absolute consensus on how long students should spend doing homework. The EEF toolkit page on homework in secondary schools, linked to above, says that some studies suggest that the optimum amount of time for secondary school students to spend on homework is between 1 and 2 hours a day.

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Research from the Department for Education (DfE) in the UK, published in 2012, says the following:

Time spent on homework was a strong predictor of better attainment and progress in all three core academic subjects as well as better social-behavioural outcomes and improvements in these between ages 11 and 14.

Any time spent on homework was found to be beneficial, but the strongest effects (for attainment and progress) were for those who reported spending two or more hours daily after school on homework.

Student responsibilities

Students should:

- Always have their Diary with them
- Record the Subject, activity/task, location of where to find it (Teams or OneNote) and the due date.
- If absent, they are expected to find out what work has been missed and catch up on it
- Resolve problems with homework before the deadline. If necessary students should see the teacher concerned for help.
- Take pride in doing their best.

Students are encouraged to develop a study timetable that includes their sporting and social commitments. They must try to ensure that homework tasks are not left until the last minute - leave enough time to ask questions.

Role of parents / caregivers

Parents and caregivers play a key role in the education of their children. As students progress through secondary school, parents can provide a supportive environment in which the young person can develop the necessary study skills to move towards independent learning. Our homework principles take account of parents as partners in learning.

In partnership we ask that parents / caregivers:

- Regularly check the student diary
- Try and provide a reasonable place where students can work
- Encourage students to meet homework deadlines
- Make it clear to students that they value homework and support the College in explaining how it can help them to progress.
- Encourage students and praise them when homework is completed.

Support & Sanctions

Although it is recognised that homework is best done at home, support is provided in school. A 'Homework desk' is available in the Resource Centre with Mrs McKeague and Mr de Souza.

Procedures for students persistently not completing homework are managed by the Curriculum Leaders and may include e.g. monitoring cards.

Helpful websites

[BBC Bitesize](#)

[Fact Monster](#)

[Khan Academy](#)

[Study Geek](#)

[National Geographic Kids](#)

[That Quiz](#)

[Quizlet](#)