



## Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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### **Classroom Practice in Assigning Homework** from Classroom Instruction that Works by Robert Marzano, et al.

1. **Establish and communicate a homework policy.** Students and their parents need to understand the purposes of homework, the amount of homework that will be assigned, consequences for not completing homework, and a description of the types of parental involvement that are acceptable. Establishing, communicating, and then adhering to clear policies will decrease potential homework-related tensions and increase the likelihood that homework will enhance student achievement. Things to consider include the following.
  - Parents should set up a consistent, organized place for homework to be done.
  - Parents should help the student set up a consistent schedule for completing homework.
  - Parents should encourage, motivate, and prompt their children to complete homework. If a student has consistent problems completing the work, the parent should contact the teacher.
  - Parents should encourage their children to explain the steps that they are following—saying which steps are easy and which are difficult. The parent can convey this information to the teacher during a conference.
  - With exceptions, a student should spend on homework approximately 10 times her grade level (e.g., a ninth grader would spend 90 minutes, etc.).
2. **Designate homework assignments that clearly articulate the purpose and outcome.** Sometimes students do not know whether the homework is designed to provide practice for what they already know

or to prepare them for new information or elaborate on information that has been introduced. Sometimes, they might even think that the teacher only cares whether they simply complete the assignment—not whether they've learned anything.

Consequently, it is important to identify clearly the purpose of a given homework assignment and communicate the purpose. Using a template such as the following is one way to ensure that students know what they are doing and why they are doing it.

- Subject: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date Due: \_\_\_\_\_
- What I have to do tonight: \_\_\_\_\_
- Purpose of assignment: \_\_\_\_\_
- What I have to already know of be able to do in order to complete this assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

At the beginning of the course, the teacher reviews how to fill out the blanks. Invariably, students like the security that comes from knowing what is expected of them. By giving a clear sense of what they are supposed to do and why they are being asked to do it, such an approach provides that security to students

3. **Vary the approaches to providing feedback.** Feedback serves to enhance student achievement. In reality, not all homework will receive the same level of teacher attention. Grading and commenting on each assignment is not always possible. In such cases, students might be asked to discuss in class their homework, pointing out what they did easily and what they had trouble with. In addition, students might be asked to write in class about their experience with the previous night's assignment, keeping the papers in a portfolio whose contents would serve as the basis for a later student / teacher conference.