



The New York Center for Teacher Development, Inc.

In affiliation with the University of Massachusetts Global (Extended Education)

COURSE SYLLABUS

<u>Course:</u>	EDZU 9985	The Homework Debate: Understanding the Best Practices for Our Students
<u>Credit Hours:</u>	3.0 credits / 45 hours	
<u>Instructor:</u>	Denise Black	

Course Description

“I hate homework” is commonly heard from every child and parent at some point. Homework is an established institution in our education process. An established institution that teachers receive little to no training on. As educators, we want to provide our students with all the tools they need to be successful. Homework may be one of these tools but, how can we make it useful and less painful? A serious examination of the process of assignments and the effect they have on students and families is necessary. Teachers enrolled in this course will be led through a focused and collective study of this institution around the world and their places of work. We will give a discourse on the reasons for: the start of this practice, data collected over the years on the effectiveness of assignments, how other countries respond, family involvement, opinions, socioeconomic differences, anxiety, and changes over time (pandemic) to come to an understanding of the best practices for our students. The importance of setting standards for our students that promote the best results academically and emotionally is the goal of this course.

Course Goals

To Know

1. what are some of the concerns about homework.
2. what was one of the main initiatives that made homework important in the United States.
3. what political climate caused this.
4. your district's policies and neighboring districts.
5. different approaches in other countries.

To Understand

1. how current homework practices can vary in different socioeconomic areas, does this give all students the opportunity for high achievement.
2. benefits of doing homework
3. downside of homework

and To Be Able To

1. recognize the best homework practices for your district, school or classroom that promotes quality experience

2. discuss ideas to add creativity to assignments
3. examine/talk through a balance for students that have responsibilities after school hours
4. examine/talk through a balance for students with less support at home
5. implement a healthy balance of strategies to promote success in the classroom and life

Course Outline

- I. **Reflecting on homework experiences and the history of homework**
 - a. Definition, a family perspective, personal journey
 - b. How does homework look in your classroom?
 - c. History of homework
 - i. addressing the initial push for homework
 - d. The homework disparities between other countries
 - e. Share and discuss the achievement data for the U.S. to other countries

- II. **Identify homework's educational value**
 - a. Discuss: Article on the necessity of homework
 - i. Create a survey to ask your class their opinion on homework
 - ii. Use your students' surveys to explore new ideas
 - b. Video
 - i. Do you have a real-world example you share with your students
 - c. Homework and Family Engagement
 - i. Share how this looks in your classroom.
 - ii. What are some of the school community activities within your district?
 - d. Learning Not Working
 - i. Ask students to create an assignment
 - e. Motivational Quotes
 - i. Share personal favorites

- III. **Navigate through the apprehension towards homework including socioeconomic concerns**
 - a. Discuss the freedom to explore
 - b. Homework isn't equitable in every home
 - i. How do you close the gap in your classroom
 - c. Supporting students with challenges
 - i. Share how you identify students in need?
 - ii. Support staff
 - d. Homework adds to an already full-time job - parents as well as students
 - e. Grading Homework - Adapting policies
 - f. Homework has not been proven to provide results
 - i. Article

- ii. Do you follow the time rule?
- g. Opinion

IV. Homework policies and new challenges.

- a. Look at your district's homework policy on their website
 - i. Share and discuss your findings compared to another district with unlike population
 - ii. Share and discuss your classroom policies
 - iii. Look into what your district offers to support with homework
 - iv. Video
- b. Stress Levels
 - i. gather a class consensus on the amount of homework they have daily
 - ii. Share your experience with students dealing with school related stress?
- c. The effects the pandemic had on homework
 - i. Share your experience with pandemic changes and homework
 - ii. Research the extra support (money) your district was given to help students close the gap of lost education time. Were there positive results?
 - iii. "survival mode"
- d. Best Excuses for Not Doing Homework
- e. In Conclusion -The Pros and Cons of Homework
 - i. Share the points that you feel strong about and how this will help you nurture even more successful students.

V. Final Project

- a. Choose a unit of study in your classroom, minimum of 5 days, and develop homework assignments. Be creative, make it fun for you and your students. I hope you can use this class to think about quality homework that helps to bring better results for yourself and allows your students to acknowledge the positive aspects of homework. Included are the 5 questions to ask before assigning.
- b. Lesson Plan - 5 days
 - i. Topic
 - ii. Objective
 - iii. Lesson
 - iv. Homework

Methods of Instruction

Teachers enrolled in this course will work through the debate surrounding the effects of homework. Primary and secondary sources will be evaluated to develop awareness and recognize the best practices for meaningful assignments. They will analyze methods of out of school learning in other countries compared to the United States. They will communicate and share successful strategies, tips and stories for home/school connection. They will complete assignments assessing their understanding of the socioeconomic disparities and closing the gap. They will watch videos to gain a better understanding of how to maximize the benefits of homework and minimize drawbacks. They will develop a unit of study and apply strategies learned from this course to use in their own classroom.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

In order to earn an A, a student must complete all assigned readings, assignments, and discussion forums. The student must complete a five-day unit of study using the strategies from this course to develop interesting at home assignments.

In order to earn a B, a student must complete all assigned readings, assignments, and discussion forums. The student must complete a three-day unit of study using the strategies from this course to develop interesting at home assignments.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, and e-mail.

Time Validation

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Block 1: Homework History/ Personal Experience	
Homework: Define, Watch an experience, share your information, share your experience.	2.00
Parent and teacher views. Classroom routine, outside influences.	1.00
History of homework, reflect and share 3 major aspects	2.00
Disparity of homework, look at China, UK, Finland - compare / contrast	2.00
United States comparison	2.00
Block 2: Identify Homework's Educational Value	
NYT articles. discuss- make a survey for your class / share results	2.00
Video - Respond to real world ideas	2.00

Family engagement: read, watch video, what does this look like in your classroom - share ideas	2.00
Learning Not Working - Students create an assignment share/use in classroom	2.00
Motivational Quotes	1.00
Block 3: Navigate through the apprehension towards homework including socioeconomic concerns	
Sedentary lifestyle - No room for creativity- Read article - comment	2.00
The homework gap - video - real experience- how can you close the gap in your classroom	2.00
Socioeconomic concerns - support systems	2.00
Homework vs Extra Curricular Activities	2.00
Grading Homework - different policies -share/comment	1.00
"Is Homework Necessary?" Time rule - is this realistic? Analyze results	2.00
Opinion - changing educational views	1.00
Block4: Homework policies and new challenges	
Compare policies with neighboring district - Support systems	2.00
Stress - Video with student perspective- survey amount of daily homework - share/comment	2.00
Pandemic Changes	2.00
Best Homework Excuses - Share	1.00
Pros and Cons - Review - will you make any changes?	2.00
Block 5: Final Project	
Choose 5 day Unit	2.00
Lesson Plan	2.00
Creative homework assignments	2.00
Total Time (in hours)	45.00