Want to Facilitate a Field Trip in *Your* Class?

Homework typically constitutes any activity you ask students to complete outside of class. It can either help students prepare for the next class or can allow them to fully delve into topics learned in a previous class.

Why should you facilitate Homework in your class?

Possible learning goals: Have students learn as they struggle with more challenging questions than can be worked through during the time constraints of class. Have students practice questionson their own to test and deepen their understanding. Have students complete work that you will not have time to complete in class. Have students prepare for class.

How-To Guide

Prep	• Make the purpose of the assignment clear • Write questions to challenge students to think and integrate information. • Determine whether students will complete homework individually or as a group
During	• Be available for questions
After	• Establish consequences for missed/late assignments • Grade assignments

Prep
Make the purpose of the assignment clear
- Think carefully about why students are doing homework. Is it to prepare for the next class? To practice material learned in class? To synthesize new information? Etc. Make it clear to students why they are being asked to complete homework to help motivate them to complete it.
- Emphasize that the assignments are not just busy-work, but rather there to help students deepen their understanding of material.

Write questions to challenge students to think and integrate information.
- Students are more motivated to work on a homework assignment if the questions are interesting. Here are some things to consider:
    - Avoid fact regurgitation – students feel that repeating readily available facts is busy work and will not be motivated (and will most likely complain). Rather think of problems that applies information to new situations of challenges them to think critically
    - Vary types of questions – students can get bored if the same type or format of question is used. Vary the types of problems and format of responses. For example you can have students draw their responses, write short answers, or respond to a class-blog.
    - Make questions personal and close to real-life situations – students will be more engaged if the questions are relatable. Use real-world data, reference activities on

campus, or require students to generate their own data when possible while writing questions
- In addition to covering new material, revisit old topics.
    - Help students remember previously covered topics by having questions that incorporate old material with the new material. By repeating older material and having students retrieve previously learned knowledge, it helps them remember and learn

Determine whether students will complete homework individually or as a group
- There are benefits to having individual assignments and group assignments. If you decide to have group work, encourage students to first work independently to test their own understanding before getting together with a study-group to work on the assignment.
- Benefits of having individual assignments:
    - Students can build confidence as they complete the work independently
    - Self-testing is a good way for students to evaluate how well they understand the material in a low-pressure environment
    - Students will learn the material more concretely if they have to struggle a little to complete the assignment
- Benefits of having group assignments:
    - Students can tackle more difficult questions in a group as they can pool their knowledge
    - Students can teach each other. This benefits the students who are struggling as they can get help they need. It also benefits the students who are teaching as they need to further cement the information to clearly communicate their reasoning
    - Students appreciate multiple approaches to solving problems, especially for open ended questions that challenge students critical thinking skills
    - Enhances communication and team-work skills

During

Be available for questions
- Students may have questions while completing their homework. Have a designated system for them to contact you – either have office hours, an email policy, etc.
- Don't be afraid to edit or clarify a question to the entire class if several students get suck at the same point.

After

Establish consequences for missed/late assignments
- Have a policy for missed work and stick to it. Also have a policy for what an accepted excuse will be

Grade homework assignments
- Students learn most from constructive feedback on their assignments. Praise good responses and indicate where errors occurred on incorrect responses
- Post an answer key so students can compare their responses to the 'correct' response. This also cuts back on grading time, as you do not have to re-write correct answers for each student.

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