

Researcher Ian Lillico's Homework Grid Explanations

Read:

This cell should be a very regular one as it is acknowledged that reading is an essential part of learning and a skill that translates to every facet of life. Reading, here, includes reading for pleasure, reading fiction, newspapers, magazines, textbooks and assigned reading of texts set by teachers as class work. Research indicates that reading improves reading! When students read fiction it improves their empathy and helps them deal with failure and disappointment. Children can retreat into fantasy when times get tough.

Be read to:

Being read to is an essential part of developing the desire to read and bonding with parents. It enables children to imagine and form thoughts in their heads. By parents using intonation and expression, children get a love of books and stories. Older siblings and other family members should also read to children, as this is bonding and a very memorable time of childhood. This would also encompass material suggested by schools or teachers and is the place where parents may need to explain written instructions from school on assignments and other set tasks.

Shopping:

This is an active pastime and a very valuable one in gaining a number of life skills including budgeting, selecting, discerning, totaling, money handling, reading item labels and discovering what things cost and value for money. Many students leave school without these skills and these should be developed early in life. This includes grocery and other shopping including clothes and hardware etc. This is also a bonding activity with one or both parents and siblings. As it is active there is more chance of children discussing issues they face with parents.

Physical activity:

This is a crucial part of the grid and should be a daily part of every student's home life and work. There is a need for young people to have less sedentary lives, get fit and learn active skills that should see them grow into healthier, happier adults. This entry would include all forms of sport training dictated by coaches or done individually by children to master skills or improve endurance. It also includes activities with parents and siblings such as walking, riding a bicycle, bushwalking, fishing, walking the dog and a whole range of active pursuits both indoors and outdoors. This, again, when done with one's parents, enhances communication and assists with the building of strong and lasting bonds between adults and children.

Housework:

This is absolutely compulsory and must be a daily part of the grid. Students are often opting out of family life and not doing chores, which places a lot of stress on parents, particularly where both parents work or in the case of single parents who are very busy doing the job of two parents. Children must not make parents their servants. At the very least they need to pick up after themselves and assist with activities for their benefit such as helping prepare meals, tidying their rooms and other parts of the house, cleaning the house and keeping it clean and tidy both inside and outside. Outdoor work could include weeding, gardening, raking and sweeping, painting and decorating. Many handyman skills are necessary for them to be able to manage their own dwellings in later years. Again when housework is done with parents or siblings, it becomes a bonding activity and should enhance family life.

Art:

This can be expanded to include artistic pursuits such as pottery, painting, drawing and sketching, needlework and sewing and general creative pursuits and hobbies under the Art and Craft banner. Children need to be creative and stay creative throughout their Primary and Secondary school years. Students who select more scientific subjects in lower and upper secondary schooling risk losing much of the creative talent they demonstrated in early years. This should be continued so that they balance their pursuits to include work and leisure activities. This can also include class work set by schools and teachers, which fit into this grid entry.

Teach your parents:

One of the best ways of consolidating what one has learnt is to teach the concept to another. This can be set for class work or happen spontaneously to enable students to brief parents about work covered, but go a step further and try to explain and teach particular topics learnt that day or that week. One of the best types of assigned class work is where the teacher requires the students to teach Mum /Dad / Siblings specific topics covered on a hand out sheet which includes a time factor (limited to a maximum of 10 minutes!) and a place for the parent to rate the effectiveness of the teaching with perhaps a mark out of 5 for delivery and content. When a child is preparing material to present in this section, it is reinforcing learning of the concept and by verbalizing it to another it is further consolidating the learning process. This is also an excellent way to enhance home / school co-operation.

Play a game with an adult:

This is different to playing with friends and brothers or sisters. This is a special time to develop communication, problem solving and skills that can be transferred from adult to child. It can also teach the child to win and lose graciously. This could include outdoor games of all sorts as well as indoor pastimes such as crosswords, Scrabble, Yahtzee and a plethora of board games which emphasise pictorial, verbal, linguistic, monetary and even social skills. It should also be the place to allow for more interaction between child and parent that has often been replaced by computers and television. Development of patience and cooperation is a highlight of this grid entry.

Assignments / Project research:

This section is where set assignments with due dates and time factors can be researched. It includes finding out information from both Free to Air and Pay Television, the Internet, dictionaries and encyclopedias, libraries, parents and host of other sources. As knowledge can now be obtained 24 hours a day from wherever you are this skill should be done outside the classroom. As computers can provide audio, video, graphics etc, students should develop techniques for collecting information at home and processing it at school. It would be better for the research to be brought to the classroom where the teacher and other students, then, can advise on the assimilation, discrimination, synthesis and presentation of the data into the format required by the teacher - be it an essay, project or assignment.

Use computer for work:

Computing skills are absolutely essential for boys and girls in their future working life and leisure pursuits. Many students only use computers for recreation, but they must also learn to use the whole range of services that computers supply including researching information, communicating with family and friends, testing hypotheses, writing and word processing and using specific programs to develop skills such as painting programs, spreadsheets, data bases and telecommunications. Time should be limited as this is mostly sedentary work and often reclusive. More emphasis on using computers more effectively can be taught in schools with the aid of parents and children should see the computer as a tool rather than a toy!

Cultural:

This is an essential part of a child's life. They should develop early appreciation of The Arts and be taken to concerts, shows and production including Live Theatre. A number of Pay Television channels are devoted to cultural pursuits and this could be a good place to include those as part of *homework*. There are often cultural programs on Free to Air Television as well and this should mean parents and children can be more selective in choosing culturally rich programs in the broadest sense. This is also the place to include music lessons, band practice, choir, drama rehearsals etc that many students already do immediately after school or at home.

* Exploration Syndicate has also added **Maintenance** to this list of activities. For the majority of students, maintenance covers spelling and basic facts and/or numeracy knowledge practise activities.