Activity 8.5: Surveying Student Opinions About Homework

**Background and Purpose:** As stated in Activity 8.4, homework is used for a variety of reasons. Often it is a form of independent practice and an extension of guided practice (it should not be an extension of instruction). At other times, however, homework, is used to introduce new content prior to later consideration or discussion in class. In all instances homework has implications beyond academic learning and influences family and peer dynamics and its use has been controversial. In this activity you will collect and analyze students' opinions about homework. It could be done in conjunction with Activity 8.4.

**Directions:** This action research project can be done alone, however, it may be more interesting and informative if done with classmates or colleagues. Use the following steps to plan and complete a study of opinions about homework held by students in your classroom and/or school.

**Step 1 – Plan:** Using a questionnaire similar to the one attached gather students’ opinions about their homework assignments over a period of several days. Include in your plan ways to vary the type of homework given during the period of the study. Decide whether the questionnaire will be given just to the students in your class or those of colleague in other classrooms as well.

**Step 2 – Administer the questionnaire:** This questionnaire takes only 2 or 3 minutes to complete. However, it is important to administer it efficiently and in the same way each time.

**Step 3 – Analyze:** Tabulate the data from the questionnaire. Then consider some of the following questions:

- Which type of homework seems to have produced the highest completion rate?
- Which type of homework seems to have produced the highest satisfaction?
- What reasons did students give for not completing homework assignments?

**Step 4 – Reflect:** Consider whether or not your approach(es) to homework are producing the desired effects. What seemed to work well? If done with colleagues, did your approach(es) to homework differ. What kind of changes might you consider?
Student Homework Questionnaire

I (we) am (are) interested in your ideas and opinions about my (our) homework assignments. Don’t put your name on this questionnaire, because I (we) want your answers to be confidential.

1. Check (✓) the proportion of the homework you normally complete.

_______I completed 100% of my homework.
_______I completed about 75% of my homework.
_______I completed about half of my homework.
_______I completed about 25% of my homework.
_______I did not do any of my homework.

2. If you didn’t complete all your homework, please record the reason(s). You may check more than one.

_______I didn’t have time.
_______I didn’t understand the homework.
_______I was ill.
_______I had family commitments that prevented completing the homework.
_______Other reason(s)____________________________________________________________________

3. Please tell me (us) the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements listed below by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I found the homework assignments very interesting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Homework assignments were difficult but challenging.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Homework assignments were too easy and a waste of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Homework assignments were too difficult for me.</td>
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</tbody>
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If you have other comments, please write them below.

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