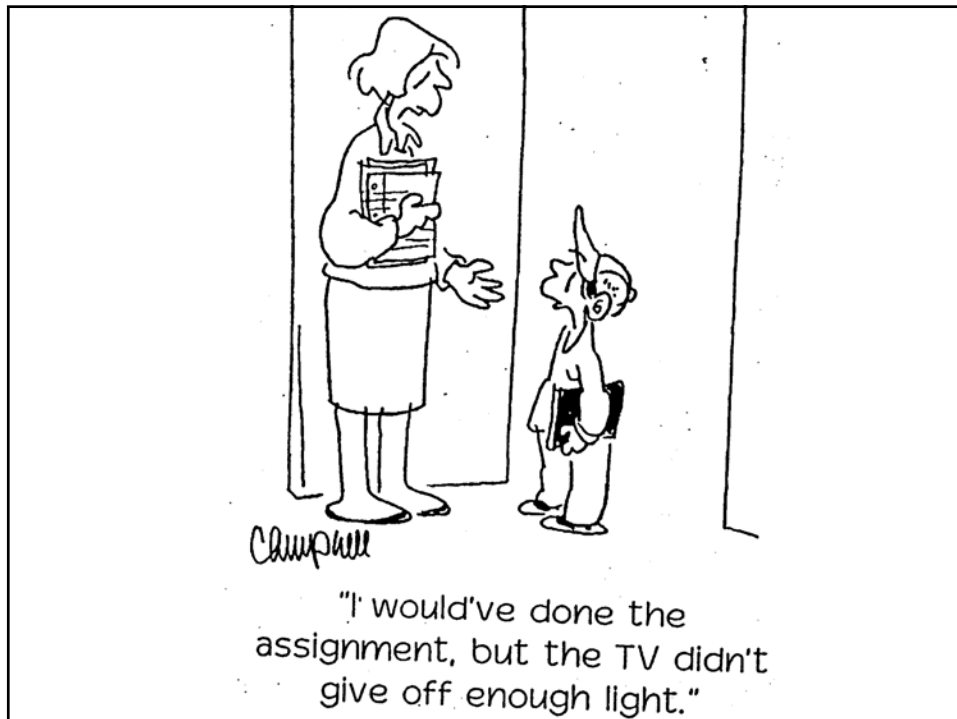
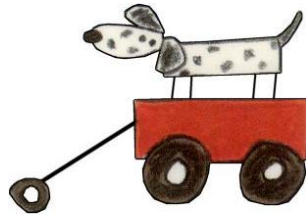




## Best Practices in Homework

Using Message Forums to  
Implement Research





## Warm up! the Human Scattergram

- On a scale of 1-10...
  - How often do you use homework in your classroom?
  - How satisfied are you with your current homework practices?
  - How frequently do you use technology in your instruction?



## Session goals

- What does effective homework look like?
- What is a message forum?
- How can a message forum be used?
- How do I make a message forum?





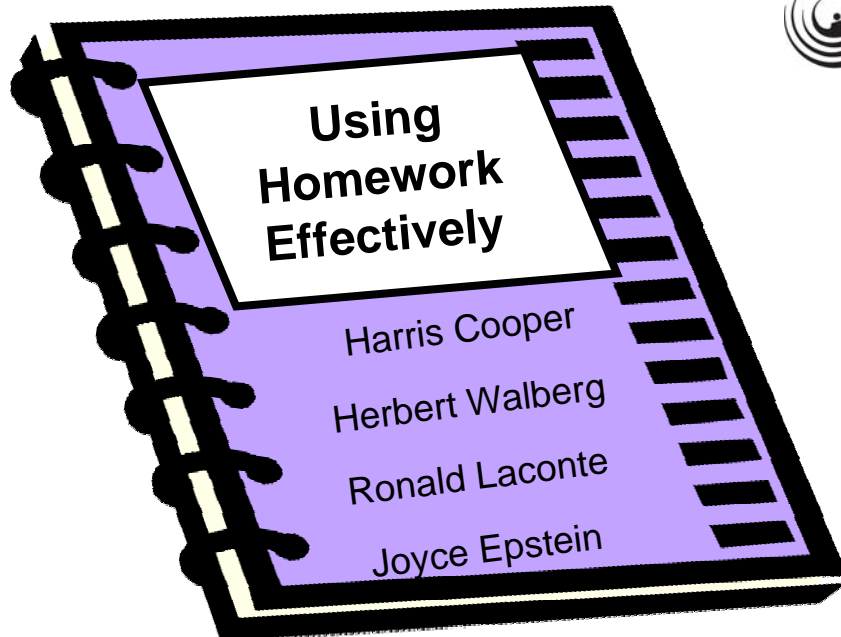
*A Union of Professionals*

**AFT ER&D**  
A Professional Development Program



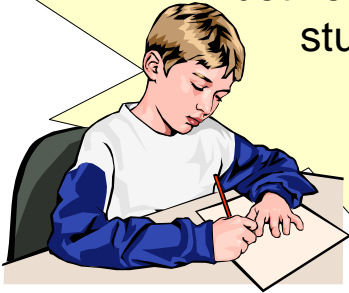
## *Foundations of Effective Teaching I*

### *Using Homework Effectively*



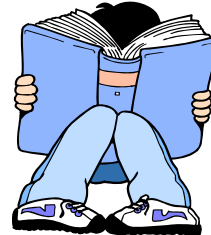
**Research Finding**  
(over the past 40 years)

There is a positive relationship  
between homework and  
student learning.



**Research Finding**

When learning is extended  
into the home, students  
benefit by:



- Increased skills, achievement, and test scores;
- Completion of homework;
- More positive attitude toward schoolwork;
- Higher self-concept as a learner;
- View of the parent and home as more similar to the teacher and school;
- Realization that learning takes place outside of the classroom.

Epstein, 1995

## Research Finding-- Effective Homework

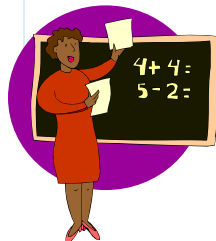
- Covers material already taught and reinforces previously learned skills;
- Can integrate complex skills previously taught, but isn't used to teach complex skills;
- Designed at appropriate level of difficulty (95% success rate);
- Is motivating, relevant, useful (especially for older students).



## Research Finding Effective Homework

Homework is taken more seriously by students when teachers:

- prepare written directions;
- discuss what is to be done;
- integrate the assignments with classroom instruction;
- give a grade for it.



What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning, 1986



## Research Finding

## Effective Homework

To achieve a positive impact, homework must be well-designed and commented upon by the teacher.

Cooper, 1989;  
Walberg, Paschal, and Weinstein, 1985

When students receive specific, individual feedback about homework errors, they:

- Rate enjoyment and value of subject higher
- Have reduced anxiety
- Have improved self-concept and attitude toward school

Elawar and Corno, 1985



## Characteristics of Good Homework Assignments

Good assignments:

- let students know what they are to do;
- can be completed successfully;
- are not too long;
- can be completed within a flexible time frame;
- require only resources that are available in the home or neighborhood;
- reinforce and provide practice of previously taught skills;



## Characteristics of Good Homework Assignments

Good assignments:

- are not just unfinished class work;
- are interesting to students and lead to further exploration and study;
- stimulate creativity and imagination in the application of skills;
- encourage students to work cooperatively;
- stimulate home and class discussion.



## Three Types of Homework

### Practice

Reinforcement, application,  
attaining automaticity



Should--

- ✓ Match ability and background of each student
- ✓ Be creative, not repetitive
- ✓ Receive feedback from teacher



## Three Types of Homework

### Preparation

Readying students for next learning activity



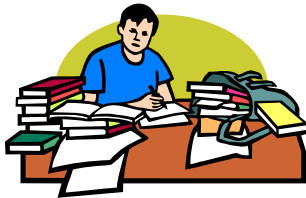
- ✓ Provides background knowledge
- ✓ Requires gathering or organizing information



## Three Types of Homework

### Extension

Long-term projects



- ✓ Require individual application, research, and study outside the classroom
- ✓ Frequently based on teacher- or student-identified problems
- ✓ Result in performance or product





## What is a message forum?

- A message forum allows users to submit their ideas and respond to those posted by others.
- It can be available to the public or password protected.
- It can be focused around a particular topic or open for any type of discussion.



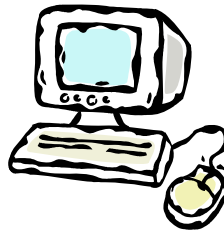
## How can a message forum be used in the classroom?

- Pull out students' background knowledge before beginning a new unit (preparation).
- Continue a discussion that was started during class (practice).
- Offer an extension on a topic discussed in class (extension).
- Allow classmates to know one another better.



## Is this really effective homework?

- Students know what they are to do.
- Not too long.
- Interesting.
- Flexible time frame.





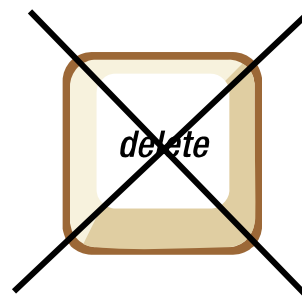
## Real-life Examples

- Colony IV Homegroup book discussion  
[http://stonebridge.stillwater.k12.mn.us/Olives\\_Ocean\\_Response\\_Page.html](http://stonebridge.stillwater.k12.mn.us/Olives_Ocean_Response_Page.html)
- Spanish 4 Homework blog  
[http://highschool.stillwater.k12.mn.us/hora\\_dos.html](http://highschool.stillwater.k12.mn.us/hora_dos.html)



## Suggestions

- Modeling and guided practice
- Etiquette and expectations
- Grading and rubrics
- Don't hit delete!





## Let's differentiate!

- Experienced users – brainstorm additional uses for message forums or great ideas for technology-related homework.
- Novice users with a website – learn how to set up a message forum.
- Novice users without a website – play with the message forums on our session site.



## How do I make a message forum?

- If you don't already have a web page, contact your school's technology administrator to set up your individual web page.
- Go to the site administration page for your school and enter your username and password.
- Click "Add a subsection" on the page where you want your message forum to appear.





## Directions continued...

- Type a name for the subsection and click “blog” for type of subsection. (This allows you to password protect the section.) Then click “Create subsection.”
- Click “Edit” for your new subsection. (Also be sure to click the red dot at some point to turn the section on. It should turn to green.)
- Title your subsection and write any basic directions you need for students in the “Section intro”.
- Click “Access settings.” Click the box to password protect the blog. Enter a password for your blog and a message for users to see when they need to enter the password.



## Directions continued...

- Click on “Message Forum.”
- Click “add new”
- Give a title to this forum.
- Choose the number of messages you want to be displayed on the main page (summary threads). Messages beyond that number will be displayed on subsequent pages.
- Change “permit HTML” to “No.” This will help to prevent spam messages being automatically posted to the blog.
- Enter your email under “Admin email” if you want new messages to be sent to your inbox.
- Write the specific directions for this particular forum in the “description” box.



## What's Next?

- Try a message forum in your classroom
- Use the characteristics of effective homework to incorporate other technology applications into homework
- Share your great ideas with the other session participants in our message forum
- Seek help for frustrations and challenges from the “experts” in our session group
- Share how student achievement has been impacted and how students have reacted to the effective use of technology in homework.



## Good luck!

- Session message forum:  
[http://highschool.stillwater.k12.mn.us/Best Practices in Homework Message Forums.html](http://highschool.stillwater.k12.mn.us/Best_Practices_in_Homework_Message_Forums.html)
- Andrea Vizenor :  
[vizenora@stillwater.k12.mn.us](mailto:vizenora@stillwater.k12.mn.us)
- Andrea Schueler:  
[schuelera@stillwater.k12.mn.us](mailto:schuelera@stillwater.k12.mn.us)

