

## Beyond the Apple's Discussion Guide to Equitable Homework

Watch our video: [What's The Purpose of Homework?](#)

Here are a few samples of research about the value of homework:

[Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Assessment Matters](#) (2014)

[Don't Give Kids Homework: A discussion with Alfie Kohn](#)

[Increasing The Value of Homework by Nicole S Carr](#) School Community Journal, 2013, Vol.23, No.1

While the research about homework appears to be endless, the interpretation of the research appears to be somewhat rigid – one's either "fer it" or "agin it".

Whether you, your school, or your district is solidly for or against homework, there's general agreement that homework, if and when assigned, should be purposeful and focused on extending student thinking and problem solving.

Since it's clear that the homework discussion isn't going anywhere, here are some things to consider when discussing homework.

First, we share [Dr. Justin Tarte's](#) list of homework assumptions we make:

- Students have a home
- Students have time to complete homework
- Students care if they complete homework
- Students / parents have the language to complete the homework
- Student have a place to complete the homework
- I am the only teacher assigning homework

Now, let's look at Nicole S. Carr describes as the keys to effective homework:

- Purpose
- Efficiency
- Ownership
- Competence
- Aesthetic appeal (visually uncluttered)

and her procedures for assigning homework:

- Assign homework at the beginning of the class on a topic that has been or will be covered in class
- Explain the homework
- Post the homework
- Start the homework in class
- Provide feedback promptly

Give it a try: Have a look at homework recently assigned in your class. Use these questions to discuss the purpose and value of the assignment:

1. Is this assignment tied to prior learning?
2. Does this homework connect lesson content to the real world?
3. Is this homework designed to be completed independently? Are alternate versions available for students who excel or struggle?
4. How will you make adaptations that acknowledge Dr. Tarte's assumptions?
5. Does the student need accompaniment by a parent / sibling to complete this assignment? If so, is the parent / sibling available?
6. Will the feedback you provide enhance student learning?
7. Do you use student results to inform your instruction?
8. What is the consequence of consistently incomplete homework?
9. Is there an option for the parent / guardian comment on his / her child's level of engagement and/ or difficulty?