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The Homework Trap: How Excessive Assignments Kill Creativity

👤 Hani Rashid 📅 November 5, 2024

By, Abdulwahed Jalal Nori

In the beginning, I want to clarify that I am writing this article not as an expert and certainly not to downgrade the incredible work teachers do. They play a crucial role in our children's education, and I appreciate their dedication. Rather, I am expressing my concerns as a father who cares deeply about the well-being of my children and their future. I welcome the insights and opinions of experts on this important topic.

In today's fast-paced world, the pressure on our children to excel academically is overwhelming. As a father, I often feel the

weight of this expectation, not just for my children but also for myself. Homework has become a staple in education, seen as necessary for reinforcing lessons and building discipline. However, I have come to realize that it's slowly killing the creativity that is essential for my children's development.

Creativity thrives in an environment where children can explore and imagine freely. Unfortunately, homework tends to impose strict structures and deadlines, leaving little room for the kind of imaginative thinking that fuels innovation. My children spend hours on rote tasks that prioritize getting the right answers over exploring ideas. This focus on results over the creative process diminishes their ability to think outside the box and hinders their problem-solving skills.

The sheer volume of homework also adds stress—not just for the children but for parents like me. After a long day at work, I come home to the pressure of ensuring my kids catch up on their assignments. This stress detracts from our quality family time, which should be about bonding and enjoying each other's company.

Many teachers are now assigning homework online through platforms like Google Classroom. While the idea is to engage students with technology and promote a paperless approach, it often backfires. Navigating these platforms can be a headache for both parents and kids, adding another layer of stress. Instead of fostering excitement about learning, it can turn homework into a frustrating chore that takes away from the joy of discovery.

Furthermore, due to the emphasis on exams and results, many parents feel compelled to send their children to tuition centers. These centers can create a strange environment where children, after spending a full day in school from 8am to 4pm, head straight to tuition for additional subjects. It is as if what

they have learned in school is not deemed sufficient. Sometimes, teachers even recommend these tuition centers, further pressuring parents to enroll their kids there. This cycle can lead to burnout and a lack of enthusiasm for learning, as children find themselves in a constant grind of academic demands.

Childhood should be a time for exploration, where learning happens through play and creativity. Activities like building forts, drawing, or storytelling allow children to express themselves and experiment with ideas. Unfortunately, excessive homework and tuition rob them of these essential moments of free play, stifling their creativity in the process.

Additionally, homework encourages a linear way of thinking. Children are given problems to solve and expected to follow a set method, which can discourage unconventional thinking. True creativity often involves connecting seemingly unrelated ideas and approaching problems from new angles—something that homework’s rigid framework does not support.

Curiosity is natural in children; they want to ask questions and explore the world around them. Yet, the monotony of homework often replaces this curiosity with boredom and frustration. When assignments feel irrelevant or uninspiring, children lose their intrinsic motivation to learn. This shift can lead them to view learning as an obligation rather than a passion, further diminishing their creative spark. Moreover, the one-size-fits-all homework assignments ignore the unique strengths and interests of each child. This homogenization can lead to disengagement, as children may not feel their individual creativity is nurtured. The cumulative effect of excessive homework can even lead to burnout, particularly among younger children who are still developing their cognitive and emotional capacities. An exhausted child is less likely to engage in creative activities like drawing or playing outside, leading to a disinterest in creativity over time.

As we look to the future, it is crucial to rethink the role of

homework and tuition in education. Creativity is vital not just for personal growth but for preparing children for a workforce that values innovation. By reducing the volume of homework, re-evaluating the reliance on tuition, and replacing them with more creative, project-based tasks, we can nurture a generation that is not only academically proficient but also imaginative and resourceful.

Schools should consider implementing practical policies such as limiting the amount of homework assigned to students, allowing for more flexible deadlines, and incorporating creative, hands-on projects that inspire curiosity. Training teachers to recognize the importance of creativity in learning and encouraging them to assign collaborative group work can also help shift the focus from individual performance to collective discovery. Lastly, fostering an open dialogue with parents about the impact of homework and the role of tuition can create a supportive community that prioritizes both academic success and the well-being of our children.

We need to acknowledge that fostering creativity is just as important as academic achievement. In a world that increasingly values innovation over rote memorization, we cannot afford to stifle our children's creativity. It's time to free our kids from the chains of excessive homework and tuition, allowing their creativity to flourish while reclaiming the precious family time that is essential for our well-being.***

(The writer, Dr. Abdulwahed Jalal Nori is an academic at the Department of Fundamental and Inter-Disciplinary Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.)

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Hani Rashid

