

Students' Reasons for Not Doing Their Assignment

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Abstract

This action research investigated the reasons why students do not do their assignment. A researcher-made questionnaire checklist was formulated and administered among the 32 respondents purposively chosen for the study. Findings showed that the top three reasons were as follows: The first three reasons implied that these students were bombarded with multiple tasks they have to go through, as these require time management to cope with the challenges of getting things done, while the last reasons connote laziness. Teacher's monitoring contributed much to the wholesome attitude of the students. They were motivated to improve their work, probably because they were inspired by the constructive criticism they received.

Keywords: reasons, assignment

1. Introduction

The teacher seeks to influence learning, but finds himself meeting the students in so short a time each day that much of the students' learning occurs outside the school. Assignments for study in school are therefore given to be done at home which may serve as a motivating factor for students, especially if they are geared to the students' interests, needs and capabilities. Audio-visual materials such as films, movie clips, etc. are excellent motivating devices. These maybe used to stimulate students' interest on the topic itself.

In mastery learning and in instructional approaches, checking or reviewing the previous day's assignment is very common. This is to recall the previous lesson, to evaluate learning, and to help students understand better the lesson.

Giving of assignments has been practiced by teachers among the students; however, observation shows that when the teacher gives assignments, not all of the students comply.

This research was conducted to find out the reasons why students do not do their assignments. From the results of this research, the researcher hopes to propose measures to effect change, leading to the students' non-compliance with their assignments.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

The need to systematically collect, evaluate, and return all seatwork and homework is a sign of good classroom management. Although this would entail extra effort on the part of the teacher, it is necessary to effective teaching. Under no circumstances should a teacher fail to collect or evaluate this material; it must never be thrown away or stored.

Shirran (2006) ^[5] is on the opinion that experienced teachers always have the best intention of evaluating students' work, but corresponding rubrics should be made clear to the students so they would know what the teacher really requires and how the students will be evaluated. On the student's perspective, feedback tells him that somebody cares for his work, or a teacher is interested, and that somebody is giving him an affirmation for his efforts (Broohart 2008) ^[1].

Webster (1996) ^[7] states that homework is lessons to be studied or work to be done outside the classroom, but Smith (1990)

suggests that homework should not be assigned as busy work, simply to be sure pupils have an assignment; it should serve a purpose that is fully understood by the pupil and must be the application of recent learning, since class periods do not allow opportunities for students to apply what has been learned during the period. This is the goal of drill according to Ornstein (1990) ^[3] to make sure that the students understand the prerequisite skills for the day's lesson.

Many teachers assign projects or activities on a long-term basis (Smith 1996) ^[6]. These assignments may be for a week, a month, or even an entire school year. The pupils involved are then guided to be certain that they complete the assignment within the time allowed for it. Such assignments are invariably valuable to a student. However, the teacher should periodically check, to ensure that the student is planning his time and will not let the assignment go so long that he must try to do it all in one night.

Daily homework assignments are more often used for instructional purposes than are long-range assignment. However, there are many considerations that the teacher should bear in mind regarding the daily assignments. If the work is to be done outside of school, the pupil who habitually skips his responsibilities in doing the assignment should be monitored. In some cases, the lack of preparation may not be the fault of the pupil; some households do not provide support for facilities or give sufficient time to do the task.

Rhoadas (1993) examined the effectiveness of homework intervention training program for parents of children who consistently fail to submit assignments and who belonged to the intellectually average group. The activity was done on a structure home-based program with the involvement of the parents. Using a single-case time series design and conducted for one school year, results showed a significantly positive academic performance of the students.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following question.

1. What are the students' reasons for not doing their assignment?

The Research Paradigm

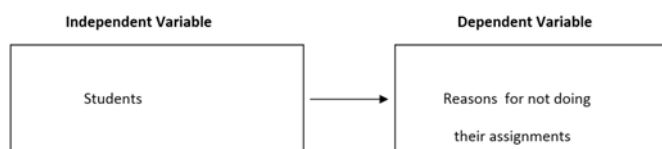


Fig 1: Students’ reasons for not doing their assignment.

The Research Design

Method and Procedure

The subjects of the study were the 32 Bachelor of Science in Education students. To gather the data, a teacher-made checklist of the students’ reasons for not doing their assignment was constructed and used for the study.

The questionnaire was conducted during the researcher’s class with this group of students. The respondents were requested to check as many as they could the reasons why they do not do their assignments. Different measures to remedy the giving of assignments were given three consecutive weeks after the results were sought.

Using the descriptive method of research, the researcher analyzed the result using frequency count, percentage and rank.

Action

In lieu of giving assignments to the students, the researcher decided to introduce the following measures for three weeks prior to the final examination.

1. During the first week, students were given extra drills and exercises. After the topic was introduced and basic exercises were given, each student was instructed to write his own topic sentences as the teacher individually checks their outputs. Suggestions were given to improve their written sentences. Feedback on the common errors committed was then discussed in class.
2. During the second week, students were grouped into threes to ensure that everybody participated in the discussion. Smaller groups were preferred for ease of monitoring and to ensure that each student takes part in the discussion.
3. On the last day of the same week, instead of written assignment, the teacher assigned reading materials for the next lesson and a short check-up test was given before the start of the class.
4. A compromise was made between the students and the teacher. A series of activities will be given to them in lieu of their final exam, after which, the total points for all the activities would be equivalent to the final exam. Final mark was immediately given to them.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the data revealed the following: “I’m too tired to work on my assignment after a hectic day’s schedule” got 75% (ranked 1st); “I prioritize working on my reports and projects needed for the next day” got 65.62% (ranked 2nd); “I don’t understand the lesson” got 62.50% (ranked 3rd); “I usually forget to do my assignment” got 56.25 (ranked 4th); “The assignment is too complicated that it eats up my time in the library” got 53.12% (ranked 5th); “I do not know the answer because the teacher’s instructions are not clear” got 50% (ranked 6th); “Teachers give too many requirements other than assignment” got 46% (ranked 7th); “I misplace the instructions because I don’t write them on my notebook” got 31.25% (ranked 8th); “I don’t have the drive to work on my

assignment” got 25% (ranked 9th); “The subject matter does not appeal to me” got 12.5% (ranked 10th); and “I prefer to net with my friends and play my mobile phone because it’s more interesting” got 9.37% (ranked 11th). Table 1 shows the data.

Table 1: Students’ Reasons for not doing their Assignments

Reasons	f	%	Rank
I’m too tired to work on my assignment after a hectic day’s schedule	24	75	1
I prioritize working on my reports and projects needed for the next day	21	65.62	2
I don’t understand the lesson	20	62.50	3
I usually forget to do my assignment	18	56.25	4
The assignment is too complicated that it eats up my time in the library	17	53.12	5
I do not know the answer because the teacher’s instructions are not clear	16	50	6
Teachers give too many requirements other than assignment	15	46	7
I misplace the instructions because I don’t write them on my notebook	10	31.25	8
I don’t have the drive to work on my assignment	8	25	9
The subject matter does not appeal to me	4	12.5	10
I prefer to net with my friends and play my mobile phone because it’s more interesting	3	9.37	11

The first two reasons suggest that college students were overburdened with school tasks that they could hardly comply with; however, the activities given them provide wholesome exposure to set them ready to the job they’re heading to.

The third reason requires time management to cope with the challenges of getting things done. Since assignments were given as follow-up of the lesson learned to evaluate learning, students should be resourceful and creative enough to make both ends met.

The last three reasons connote lacking enthusiasm on the part of the students. Probably, these students lack motivation to keep on.

Generally, the immediate feedback of the requirements given seemed interesting to the students. They were motivated to improve their work, probably because they were inspired by the feedback they received. Furthermore, the subject matter was very useful to them as English majors.

Given room for discussion, students seemed willing to participate and give their own opinion, especially if they work by pairs. Teacher’s monitoring contributed much to the wholesome attitude of the students.

The not so promising results of the test based on reading assignment proved that students may not have favored the teacher’s giving of assignments, or they may be too busy with the end term requirements bombarded by each of their subject teachers.

Recommendations

For effective teaching, teachers should give comments, explaining in detail what they really expect from their students’ assignments. The more attention and recognition students receive, the more that they are willing to do assigned tasks. Watching for signs of confusion among students and briefly dealing with them increases their willingness to make things done.

Students work better with their peers. If assigned to work as a team, students should work in smaller groups for everybody to

participate. Teachers should monitor the students' in a groupwork to be alert on the problems they may encounter. In English classes, daily practice and drill may be used as a motivation, especially when new concepts are introduced.

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