



HOMEWORK REFLECTION

Staff Meeting

21 June 2010

NOTES

BACKGROUND

In response to occasional enquiries about the purpose of homework, we are reviewing what we do. This will include:

- a. Teacher review
- b. Parent survey
- c. Student survey
- d. An updated version of our homework guidelines
- e. Generic 'helping at home' suggestions

In this staff meeting teachers should draw on their experiences as a teacher and, if appropriate, as a parent who has had their own child doing homework.

TEACHER REFLECTION

- 1) Listened to NAT Radio show re homework:
http://podcast.radionz.co.nz/inst/inst-20100516-0812-Insight_Sunday_16_May_Homework-048.mp3
- 2) Round robin – in no more than 1 minute, each teacher was invited to respond to the radio show and state their view on the purpose of homework (Monica to scribe using TFA chart).
- 3) Roamed the room to see examples of homework.
- 4) Discussed these questions with the group:
 - i. Who should follow up uncompleted homework?
 - ii. Are rewards appropriate for completed homework? If so, what?
 - iii. Should families be able to 'opt out'?
 - iv. Would a homework contract, completed at the beginning of the year, be a useful way of clarifying expectations (from both sides)?
 - v. Other comments or ideas.

NOTES

- Prof. Hattie suggested that homework should not include 'new learning' and that reading and basic facts should form the core of any tasks.
- The radio programme journalist favoured the use of a 'challenges' type homework system that encouraged broader recognition of life skills such as learning the guitar, cooking for the family, visiting the elderly.

- HVS teacher responses suggested that while such tasks should not be the core of HVS homework, they could be included to provide variety.
- They also felt that such 'social' homework was more a family responsibility.
- Homework should be reasonably brief and achievable.
- It should be related to what was being learnt at school or practice of previous learning or background for new learning.
- Teacher time and energy needs to be directed to what happens in the classroom. Therefore any homework system must be manageable.
- Teachers commented that those children who don't do homework are often those who they considered would benefit most if they did do it.
- 'Fun' activities like puzzles help provide variety.
- Teachers want to be flexible. Some families want more homework, some less. Such requests can be met.
- Teachers stated that it was important to respect the wishes of parents but clear communication regarding these wishes was important.
- We should have high expectations.
- Teachers commented that it was, at times, hard to find a balance between too easy, too hard, too much, not enough, too much parent input, no help at all etc.
- They considered that a 'homework contract' between parent/child/teacher would be useful. This would give parents the opportunity to 'opt out', from Year 3-6. For this to work, any guidelines must be clearly communicated.
- They agreed that it was appropriate to reward effort and that this was up to the discretion of the teacher.
- Teachers agreed that uncompleted homework was their responsibility to follow up.