

**HOME ASSIGNMENT AS A PANACEA FOR SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF THE
SUBJECT MATTER: A CASE STUDY OF EMINENT SCHOLARS
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY, AKWA IBOM STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of home assignments as a reliable means of promoting deep and lasting understanding of subject matter among students at Eminent Scholars International Academy, Akwa Ibom State. Drawing from the idea that learning continues beyond the classroom, it examines how thoughtfully designed assignments help students reinforce lessons, develop independence, and build essential academic skills. The study highlights both the benefits and challenges associated with home assignments, emphasizing the importance of proper structure, guidance, and feedback from teachers. The study concludes that when effectively implemented, home assignments serve as a practical and impactful approach to improving students' comprehension, engagement, and overall academic performance. It also recommends that teachers should design home assignments that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application.

KEYWORDS: Home Assignment, Sound Knowledge, Subject Matter, Eminent Scholars International Academy, Akwa Ibom State

INTRODUCTION

Learning is not confined to the four walls of a classroom; it extends into students' homes, where knowledge is revisited, reinforced, and internalized. Home assignments, as an integral part of modern education, provide students with the opportunity to engage with subject matter independently, fostering critical thinking and self-directed learning (Khan, Khan, & Riaz, 2019). At Eminent Scholars International Academy, Akwa Ibom State, teachers have long employed home assignments as a strategic tool to consolidate classroom instruction, ensuring that students not only memorize content but also understand and apply it effectively. Such assignments encourage students to take ownership of their learning, allowing them to explore concepts beyond the immediate guidance of the teacher (Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Köller, 2019).

The role of home assignments extends beyond academic reinforcement; they also cultivate essential life skills such as time management, discipline, and responsibility. Research indicates that students who consistently complete assignments demonstrate higher levels of engagement, better retention of knowledge, and improved problem-solving abilities (Xu & Wu, 2021; Olanrewaju & Adeyemi, 2020). These benefits are particularly relevant in the Nigerian educational context, where structured learning support outside school hours can bridge gaps in comprehension and prepare students for examinations and practical applications. At ESIA, structured assignments are designed not only to evaluate knowledge but also to promote analytical reasoning and creativity, making learning a continuous process rather than a one-time classroom activity.

Despite the acknowledged benefits, debates persist regarding the optimal design, quantity, and impact of home assignments. Excessive or poorly structured assignments may lead to student burnout, plagiarism, or superficial learning, while well-planned tasks can act as a panacea for deep understanding of the subject matter (Cooper, 2017). This study therefore investigates how home assignments at Eminent Scholars International Academy influence students' grasp of concepts, skill development, and academic performance. By focusing on real classroom practices, student experiences, and teacher insights, the research highlights the potential of home assignments to enhance learning outcomes and serve as a fundamental pillar for sound knowledge acquisition.

Concept of Home Assignment

Home assignment, often referred to as homework, is defined as tasks assigned to students by teachers that are intended to be carried out during non-school hours. These assignments serve as a bridge between classroom learning and independent practice, helping students reinforce knowledge, prepare for upcoming lessons, or apply skills to new situations.

According to Olojoro (2023), it refers to any (academic) task or project that a teacher gives to a student to complete outside of class. Students gain valuable experience in time management through the completion of homework assignments at home. This not only encourages students to think critically and imaginatively about how to address problems, but also helps them take ownership of their own education. By reinforcing what they learn in class, promoting individual study, and assisting them in developing a better understanding of the subject.

According to Yavich & Davidovitch (2020), it is defined as “tasks that teachers assign to students at school, which the students are required to complete after school hours, and which are considered a common learning strategy”. It can be defined as learning activities and tasks that are meant to be performed after the formal school lessons, and which can be performed within the school area (the school library or classroom). Also, it is a repetitive exercises that are practiced until the material is mastered (for example, math exercises), or mastering the material by reading and memorization.

According to Masalimova et al. (2023), it generally refers to tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside regular class hours. It can help students gain a

deeper understanding of the material they are studying. It can also give them practice in applying what they have learned.

Concept of Sound Knowledge of the Class Lesson

The concept of sound knowledge of a class lesson refers to the teacher's deep, accurate, and well-structured understanding of the subject matter, which enables effective delivery and meaningful student learning. Sound knowledge goes beyond basic familiarity with content; it involves mastery of key concepts, awareness of common misconceptions, and the ability to connect ideas to real-life contexts. A teacher with sound knowledge can present information clearly, adapt explanations to suit diverse learners, and respond confidently to students' questions. This ensures that the lesson is coherent, engaging, and aligned with curriculum objectives.

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which integrates subject-matter expertise with instructional techniques that make material comprehensible to students, is closely associated with good knowledge in contemporary pedagogy (Shulman, as developed in recent studies). Strong content knowledge makes teachers more capable of creating engaging lesson plans, using successful teaching strategies, and effectively assessing students' comprehension. Furthermore, research shows that students achieve higher academic performance when their teachers demonstrate a clear and confident grasp of lesson content (Baumer, 2016; Guerriero, 2017).

Furthermore, creative teaching methods and the use of technology in the classroom are supported by solid knowledge. In light of the growing emphasis on 21st-century skills, educators must not only be knowledgeable about their subject but also adept at presenting it using interactive techniques and digital tools. This encourages critical thinking and increases student involvement. Continuous professional development, such as attending workshops and reviewing current literature, is essential for maintaining and improving sound knowledge in teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, 2020).

Roles of Home Assignment

➤ Enhance understanding of concepts

Homework is an important part of the learning process since it reinforces information acquisition and extends education outside of the classroom. Improving comprehension of ideas presented in class is one of the main responsibilities. Students can delve further into subjects and solidify their understanding by interacting with the content on their own. Studies have shown that consistent home assignments improve students' retention and mastery of subjects (Cooper, 2017).

➤ Developing self-discipline and responsibility

Developing self-control and accountability is another crucial aspect. Students develop critical organizational skills by managing their time, adhering to instructions, and meeting deadlines through home assignments. These skills are transferable to higher education and professional environments, making assignments a tool for personal development (Trautwein & Köller, 2016).

➤ **Critical thinking and problem-solving**

Additionally, home assignments promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students develop their ability to think independently and creatively when they are required to assess, examine, or apply knowledge in real-world situations. This process promotes higher-order cognitive skills that are central to academic success (Xu & Yuan, 2018).

➤ **Promote research and information literacy**

Assignments also encourage information literacy and inquiry. To successfully complete assignments, students must find, assess, and synthesize knowledge from a variety of sources. This not only improves academic performance but also equips students with skills necessary for lifelong learning (Peeverly, 2017).

➤ **Feedback for both students and teachers**

Additionally, homework assignments give professors and students feedback. When assignments are finished, teachers can evaluate students' comprehension, spot misconceptions, and modify their lessons to suit their requirements. Similarly, students receive feedback that highlights areas of strength and weakness, guiding further study (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2016).

➤ **Academic responsibility and motivation.**

Lastly, homework fosters drive and academic accountability. Regularly completing assignments helps students feel responsible for their learning outcomes. When assignments are meaningful and well-structured, they also enhance intrinsic motivation, encouraging active engagement with the curriculum (Fan, 2017).

Types of Home Assignment

Homework is typically a set of academic assignments given to students by their teachers. It is to be completed outside of school or at home, and serve as a link between the classroom learning and the ability for students to study independently. Homework helps solidify a student's learning through practice, builds their study habits and skills, and fosters responsibility for their learning. It can come in the form of worksheets, reading, creative projects or revising for tests and quizzes.

➤ **Practice Assignments**

Students are most frequently given practice homework at home. They are intended to support knowledge and abilities that have previously been imparted in the classroom. Exercises, drills, and problem-solving activities are frequently included in these assignments. As noted by Cooper et al. (2020), practice assignments help student's master concepts through repetition and continuous engagement, thereby improving academic performance.

➤ **Preparatory Assignments**

Before a new subject is covered in class, preparatory assignments are assigned. They encourage pupils to read ahead or investigate new concepts in order to get them ready for future classes. According to Müller and Seidel (2021), such assignments stimulate

curiosity and activate prior knowledge, making classroom instruction more effective and interactive.

➤ **Extension Assignments**

Extension assignments push students to apply their knowledge in novel or practical contexts by going beyond what is taught in the classroom. These assignments frequently entail projects, investigations, or artistic endeavors. As illustrated by Darling-Hammond. (2022), extension assignments promote critical thinking, creativity, and deeper understanding of subject matter.

➤ **Project Assignments**

Students must work on a project for a longer amount of time, either alone or in groups. These tasks could involve creating presentations, carrying out experiments, or writing reports. As noted by Thomas (2020), project-based assignments enhance problem-solving skills, collaboration, and independent learning among students.

➤ **Remedial Assignments**

Remedial assignments are made especially for pupils who have trouble grasping particular ideas. These assignments concentrate on going over challenging subjects again and offering more assistance. According to Hattie (2021), remedial assignments play a crucial role in bridging learning gaps and improving overall academic achievement.

How to Respond to Home Assignment

➤ **Understand the Assignment Question**

Carefully read the instructions to identify what is required. Pay attention to keywords like *explain*, *analyze*, *compare*, or *evaluate*, as they determine how you should respond. Understanding the question ensures that your answer remains relevant and focused (Bailey, 2018).

➤ **Identify Key Requirements**

Break the question into parts and note specific requirements such as word count, format, referencing style, and submission guidelines. This helps ensure that no part of the assignment is overlooked.

➤ **Conduct Preliminary Research**

Gather information from reliable academic sources such as journals, textbooks, and credible websites. This step provides the evidence needed to support your arguments and improves the quality of your response (Walliman, 2017).

➤ **Develop a Clear Thesis or Main Idea**

Formulate a central argument or purpose that your assignment will address. This thesis guides the entire response and keeps your writing focused and coherent.

➤ **Create an Outline**

Organize your ideas into a structured format: introduction, body, and conclusion. An outline helps present ideas logically and ensures smooth flow between paragraphs (Neville, 2016).

➤ **Write a Strong Introduction**

Introduce the topic and briefly state the purpose or main argument of your assignment. A clear introduction sets the direction for the reader.

➤ **Develop Body Paragraphs**

Each paragraph should focus on one main idea, supported by evidence and examples. Use credible sources to strengthen your arguments and demonstrate understanding.

➤ **Apply Critical Thinking**

Go beyond description by analyzing and evaluating information. Compare viewpoints, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and justify your arguments with evidence.

➤ **Use Proper Referencing**

Cite all sources correctly using the required citation style (e.g., APA, Harvard). Proper referencing avoids plagiarism and shows academic integrity (Pears & Shields, 2019).

➤ **Write a Clear Conclusion**

Summarize the key points discussed and restate the main argument. Avoid introducing new ideas in the conclusion.

➤ **Edit and Proofread**

Review your work to correct grammatical errors, improve clarity, and ensure coherence. This step enhances the overall quality of your assignment.

➤ **Manage Your Time Effectively**

Start early and allocate time for research, writing, and revision. Good time management reduces stress and allows for a more polished final submission.

Problems of Home Assignment

In educational institutions, home assignments—also known as homework—are frequently used to support classroom learning, encourage individual study, and foster critical thinking abilities.

➤ **Academic overload and stress**

Home assignments (commonly referred to as homework) are widely used in educational systems to reinforce classroom learning, promote independent study, and develop critical thinking skills. However, despite their intended benefits, numerous studies since 2016 have identified several persistent problems associated with home assignments, particularly among secondary school students.

➤ **Inequality in access to resources**

Inequality in resource access is another major issue. Not every student has equal access to internet connectivity, parental support at home, or encouraging learning conditions. As highlighted by Fernández-Alonso. (2019), disparities in socioeconomic status greatly influence students' ability to complete assignments effectively, thereby widening the academic achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners.

➤ **Lack of student motivation and engagement**

Another prevalent problem is low student interest and motivation. Students sometimes become disinterested in assignments that are repetitive, extremely challenging, or unrelated to real-world situations. Núñez. (2017) found that students' intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in homework completion, and poorly designed assignments can lead to procrastination and low academic performance.

➤ **Parental involvement can become problematic**

Parental engagement can sometimes become troublesome. Excessive parental control or intervention may impede pupils' independence and learning, even while some degree of support is advantageous. Moroni. (2016) observed that intrusive parental involvement can create pressure and reduce students' sense of responsibility, ultimately affecting their academic development.

➤ **Limited effectiveness of homework in improving learning outcomes**

The limited ability of homework to enhance learning outcomes is another issue. Not every homework assignment has a significant impact on academic success. Fan. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis showing that the relationship between homework and performance is moderate and varies depending on quality rather than quantity. Assignments that don't have defined goals or feedback systems frequently don't improve learning.

➤ **Time management difficulties**

Lastly, a lot of students struggle with time management. It might be difficult to juggle extracurricular activities, family obligations, homework, and relaxation. Xu (2018) emphasizes that poor time management skills can lead to incomplete assignments and increased academic pressure, particularly among younger learners.

Mitigating Strategies to the Problem of Home Assignment

Despite being essential for learning, homework can lead to issues such as an excessive workload, student stress, and unequal access to resources. By implementing efficient strategies, these problems can be mitigated and the teaching process enhanced.

➤ **Balanced assignment design**

One such strategy is balanced assignment design. Teachers should ensure that the quantity and quality of homework given to pupils are appropriate for their age and ability level. Overly difficult or demanding assignments can lead to stress, burnout, and a decline in motivation. Research emphasizes that well-structured, meaningful homework improves learning outcomes without overwhelming students (Kohn, 2016).

➤ **Incorporating student choice and flexibility**

Another strategy is to provide students flexibility and choice. Allowing students to select the topics or formats for their projects might increase their enthusiasm and involvement.

Flexible deadlines and differentiated tasks also accommodate diverse learning needs and personal circumstances, reducing anxiety and promoting inclusivity (Trautwein, 2019).

➤ **Parental and teacher support**

To lessen homework problems, parents' and teachers' support is crucial. Teachers can provide precise directions, examples, and critique, while parents can offer guidance without completing the student's work. Supportive involvement enhances understanding and reduces stress, but excessive interference should be avoided (Cooper & Tindal, 2016).

➤ **Time management and planning skills**

Time management and planning skills are also helpful tactics. By learning how to prioritize tasks, break up work into small chunks, and schedule study time, students may boost productivity and reduce stress at the last minute. Studies indicate that time management training positively impacts homework completion and academic performance (Xu & Yuan, 2018).

➤ **Use of technology and online resources**

Homework difficulties can also be lessened by using technology and internet resources. In situations where textbooks or other resources are few, educational platforms, collaboration tools, and interactive materials offer students extra help and information access. When integrated effectively, technology can make homework more engaging and accessible (Katz, 2018).

➤ **Use of technology and online resources**

Finally, regular introspection and feedback help identify problems early on. Teachers can evaluate students' progress and adjust assignments based on their workload capacity and performance. Encouraging students to reflect on their learning strategies fosters self-regulation and reduces frustration associated with difficult assignments (Fan, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, home assignments remain a powerful tool for deepening students' understanding of what they learn in the classroom, especially when they are thoughtfully designed and properly guided. The experience at Eminent Scholars International Academy, Aka, shows that assignments can go beyond routine tasks to become meaningful learning experiences that build confidence, independence, and critical thinking in students. When teachers provide clear instructions and timely feedback, and when students approach assignments with commitment, learning becomes more continuous and impactful. Ultimately, home assignments, when effectively managed, serve as a reliable pathway to achieving sound knowledge of subject matter and preparing students for both academic success and real-life challenges.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should design home assignments that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application.
2. Schools should establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure timely completion and originality.

3. Parents should be engaged to support their children's learning without completing assignments for them.
4. Professional development workshops for teachers could enhance strategies for assignment creation and feedback.

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