

# Homework

Frequently Asked Questions

# Should I assign homework to elementary students?

- Look at page 61 and use the chart on p. 160 to determine the percentile gains
- What do you conclude about assigning homework to students in grades 4-6?
- However, besides increasing test scores, what are some of the other reasons we assign homework?

# Cooper, 1989

“I recommend that elementary students be given homework even though it should not be expected to improve test scores. Instead, homework for young children should help them develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students the idea that learning takes work at home as well as at school.”

# How much homework should I assign?

Grade Level	PA Dept of Ed, 1973	Leone & Richard, 1989	Bond & Smith, 1966	Strang, 1975	Keith, 1982	Tymms & Fitz-Gibbs, 1992
Primary	30		20-29	10		
Upper Elementary	45-90		30-40	40*		
Middle School	90-120	50	50	60*		
High School	120-180			120	60*	60

\*Estimates based on author's comments

# The Bad News for HS Students

- Keith's data indicates that for every 30 minutes of additional homework a student does per night, the overall GPA increases about half a point.
- GPA = 2: add 30 minutes: GPA = 2.5

# What about parents?

- Parent involvement should be kept to a minimum.
- They have minimal or even negative effects.
- They can “facilitate” but not solve problems.

# What's the purpose of homework?

## ■ Practice

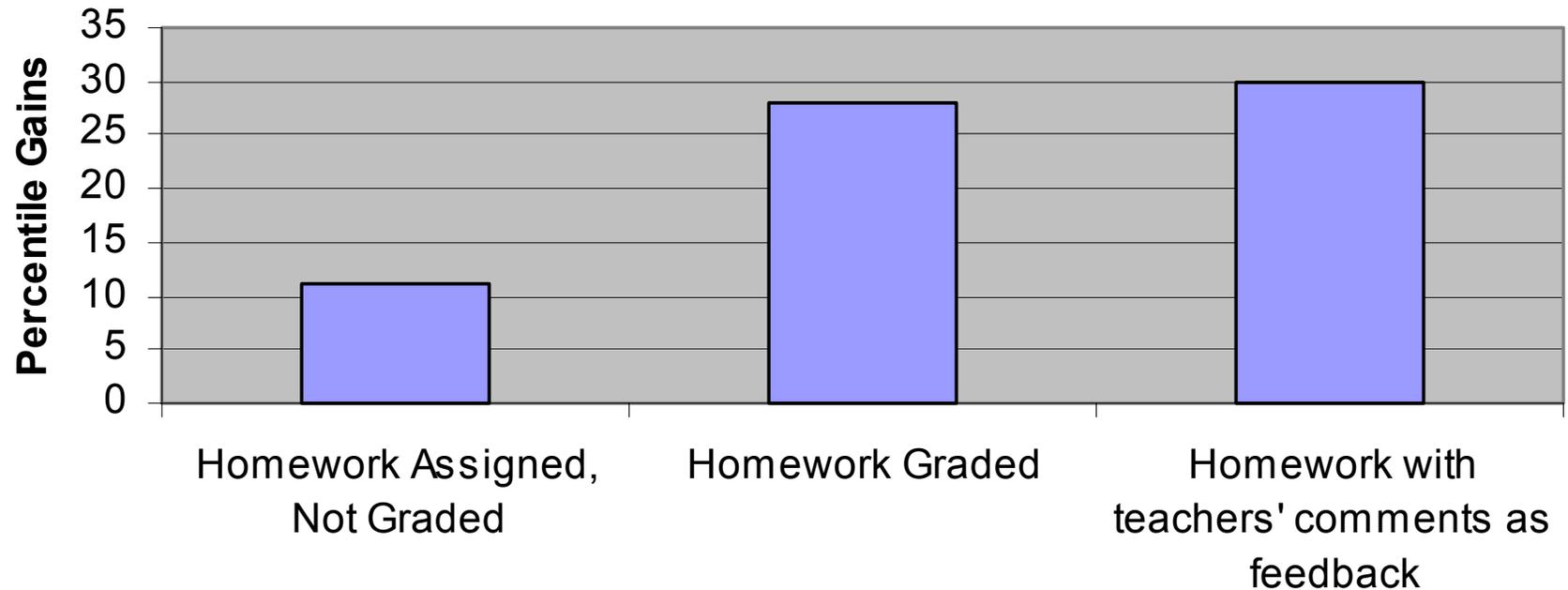
- Structured around familiar content
- NOT Practice Makes Perfect but PERFECT Practice Makes Perfect.

## ■ Preparation or Elaboration

- Begin thinking about a concept before studying it in class
- After studying, ask students to elaborate.

# Should I grade homework?

## Research Results for Graded Homework



# Classroom Practice

- Establish and communicate a homework policy (Book, p. 65 and Workbook, p. 121)
- Design assignments that clearly articulate the purpose and outcome.
- Vary approaches to providing feedback
  - What strategies do you use to respond to homework?

**What skills do  
you teach?**

# So what about practice?

- Mastering a skill requires lots of focused practice: see pp. 67-68
- Skill learning is a “shaping” phase
  - Students adapt skills
  - Students attend to their own understanding of a skill (Why am I doing this?)
- Deal with only a few examples during the shaping phase
  - Japanese vs. Americans

# Classroom Practice for Skills

- Determine which skills are worth practicing
- Schedule massed and distributed practice
- Charting accuracy and speed
- Practice specific elements of a complex skill or process: “focused practice”
- What would happen if?
- Make a commitment to increasing students’ understanding of skills and processes