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THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT OF HOMEWORK ON INCREASING STUDENT MOTIVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This article deals with the influence of homework within the context of higher education. It navigates the viewpoints of educational experts, who either champion homework for its positive effects on academic achievement or critique it for its potential to negatively impact students psychologically. Positioned as an advocate for homework, the author aims to substantiate its beneficial role in the learning process by emphasising its key characteristics. The study synthesizes contemporary research perspectives on homework, establishing a working definition as teacher-assigned tasks undertaken by students beyond scheduled class time. The increasing prominence of online learning is explored, with a detailed presentation of engaging online homework assignments tailored to specific foreign language skills. Furthermore, the article proposes a range of motivational strategies for online homework, focusing on personalization, clear communication, varied task formats, interactive elements, timely feedback, community building, and the effective use of technology. Thus, the main aims of the study are to substantiate the beneficial role of homework in higher education by synthesizing research, outlining principles for effective design, addressing implementation challenges, and proposing motivational strategies for online assignments. In addition, several promising directions for future research are suggested, including longitudinal studies on the impact of online homework.

Keywords: homework, motivation, online language learning, higher education, beneficial effects of homework, teacher challenges.

Statement of the research problem. The tasks that teachers assign to students to be completed by them beyond the framework of a ninety-minute class in higher education is often referred to as home assignment or homework indicating that the location where such work should be done is outside the educational establishment

where the students, who have to perform such tasks, study. At present, there is much debate among educational experts whether homework plays a crucial role in the educational process. Advocates of home assignments emphasise their advantages and beneficial effects on students' academic performance and positive development, while their opponents point out their negative characteristics in that they can be time-consuming, cause fatigue in students, and psychologically might impact them harmfully. As a proponent of homework [4], I intend to prove its favourable impact on the learning process by singling out its valuable characteristic features.

Analysis of relevant of research and publications. M. Lazzarich [7] agrees with R. Yavich and N. Davidovitch [12] and accepts their definition of homework, in that homework is teacher-assigned work done by students after school, which they perceive as a normal part of their education.

C. Sowton [10] claims that it is not only the educational establishment where learning takes place, but also the home of students after the classes. Home assignments «encourage autonomous thinking and should help students develop learning strategies that do not require the intervention of a teacher (self-checking and correction of errors, working with dictionaries, etc.)» [1, p. 51]. Therefore, K. Brandl [1] believes that the ultimate step in planning any lesson by a teacher should be devoted to considering what work has to be completed by students after the classes based on the material learned by them in the lesson with the purpose of its consolidation.

S. Darn [2] enumerates several principles that must be observed when planning a lesson in order for the home assignment to be effective. He mentions that students understand the purpose, usefulness and value of homework. He explains that it is of utmost importance that tasks be relevant, enjoyable, varied, manageable, encouraging, and achievable. Furthermore, S. Darn recommends that once home assignment is set, it must always be assessed and feedback given, otherwise teachers risk their students' losing interest in the topic and becoming demotivated.

S. R. Pandey and D. N. Kaudal [9, p. 82] admit that homework has both positive and negative influences on students and the learning process in general. However, their research showed the prevalence of positive effects. They call attention to the fact that «doing homework gives space for thinking, planning, creative writing and critical thinking».

Most recent considerations related to the issue of homework are about the application of artificial intelligence (AI) by students in solving home assignments. Although this is an under-researched area, M. Turós, R. Nagy and Z. Szűts [11] drew some crucial pedagogical implications from the survey results. They determined that it was highly necessary to provide educational programs where ethical AI use could be promoted.

The purpose of the article. Therefore, the main purpose of the article is to clarify the most crucial benefits of homework, present the challenges it means for teachers and students, emphasize its positive effects on student motivation and their skills development. It is also aimed to indicate several strategies for increasing student motivation in online foreign language homework. As a final objective, the article tries giving and overall picture of what effective homework actually means.

Presentation of the main material of the study. One of the numerous benefits of homework is that it provides increased exposure and practice of the material learned during official school lessons. Homework significantly increases the time students spend engaging with the target language outside the classroom, which is crucial for building proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It allows students to revisit and solidify concepts and skills learned during class at their own pace, leading to better retention and deeper understanding.

- Assignments can provide opportunities for students to apply their language skills in practical situations, such as writing emails, reading articles, or listening to authentic materials. Furthermore, teachers can tailor homework to address the specific learning needs and levels of individual students, providing targeted practice where it is most needed.

- Another advantage of homework is that it can bridge the gap between classes, helping students prepare for upcoming topics and consolidate previous learning. Moreover, completing assignments independently fosters autonomy, responsibility, time management, and good study habits.

- On the other hand, homework also provides teachers with valuable insights into students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses, allowing for adjustments in teaching strategies and targeted feedback.

There are numerous challenges that teachers have to face when assigning homework. In what follows, some of the most significant problems are indicated.

- When planning the teaching process, teachers need to design what home assignments they will give to their students. Numerous challenges will emerge during planning that teachers will have to face and overcome. First, tertiary students often have demanding schedules with multiple courses and commitments, so the amount and complexity of homework need careful consideration to avoid overload and burnout. In addition, teachers need to take into account that not all students may be equally motivated to complete homework, and uninteresting or poorly designed tasks can further decrease engagement.

- Teachers should always ensure the clarity of instructions in homework, because vague or unclear instructions can lead to confusion and frustration, hindering the learning process. Homework should aim to develop all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in a balanced way. At the same time, homework should be meaningfully linked to what is being taught and practised in class to reinforce learning effectively. What most teachers believe to be negative is the potential for cheating or reliance on external help when students do their homework. In order to reduce the risk of cheating or taking advantage of external help, teachers need to design tasks that encourage genuine learning and minimize opportunities for plagiarism or excessive reliance on others. It is true that assessing and providing effective feedback on homework can be time-consuming for instructors. However, meaningful and timely feedback is crucial for student progress.

The significance of online or distance learning has increased recently. Online platforms offer a wealth of possibilities for engaging and effective homework beyond traditional worksheets [5]. In what follows (see Table 1), one can find some ideas for home assignment categorized by skills.

Table 1**Feasible ideas for online home assignment for tertiary students**

Skill to be developed	Task type	Description
Vocabulary and Grammar	Interactive Flashcards and Games	Platforms like Quizlet, Memrise, or Kahoot! allow students to create and practise vocabulary and grammar concepts through engaging games, quizzes, and flashcards. These often include spaced repetition features for better retention.
	Gap-fill and Cloze Exercises with Automated Feedback	• Many learning management systems (LMS) and dedicated language learning platforms allow for the creation of interactive gap-fill exercises that provide immediate feedback on correctness.
	Sentence Building and Ordering Activities	• Tools that allow students to manipulate words and phrases to form correct sentences help reinforce grammatical structures in a practical way.
	Online Quizzes and Short Tests	Regularly scheduled low-stakes quizzes on vocabulary and grammar can help students stay on track and provide instructors with insights into areas needing reinforcement.
	• Corpus-Based Activities	Students can explore online language corpora to see how vocabulary and grammar are used in authentic contexts. Assignments could involve finding examples of specific grammatical structures or collocations.
Reading	Interactive Reading Comprehension Exercises	Online texts can be paired with interactive questions (multiple choice, true/false, short answer) that provide immediate feedback.
	Annotation and Highlighting Tasks	• Tools that allow students to annotate online articles or texts with their notes, translations, or analyses encourage active reading.
	• Online Reading Logs and Reflections	Students can be asked to read articles, blog posts, or short stories in the target language and then write brief summaries or reflections on the content and their understanding.
	• Collaborative Annotation	Some platforms allow students to collaboratively annotate a text, sharing their insights and questions with peers.
	Digital Storytelling Analysis	Students can read digital stories or interactive narratives and analyse linguistic features, cultural references, or narrative structures.
Listening	Interactive Listening Comprehension with Multimedia	Embedding audio or video clips with accompanying interactive questions (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, transcription) helps develop listening skills.
	Podcast or Song Analysis	Students can listen to podcasts or songs in the target language and answer questions about the content, identify specific

		vocabulary, or analyse cultural elements.
	Dictation Exercises with Automated Checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some platforms offer automated dictation exercises that provide immediate feedback on spelling and grammar.
	Voice Recording and Submission	Students can record themselves responding to prompts or summarizing audio content, allowing for assessment of listening comprehension and speaking (integrated skills).
Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Online Journaling or Blogging	Platforms can be used for students to maintain regular journals or blogs in the target language, focusing on personal experiences, reflections, or responses to prompts.
	Collaborative Writing Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools like Google Docs or wikis enable students to work together on writing tasks, such as creating stories, reports, or presentations.
	Peer Review Activities	Online platforms can facilitate peer review of written work, allowing students to provide and receive feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and content.
	Short Essay or Paragraph Responses	Assignments can require students to write short essays or paragraphs in response to specific questions or prompts related to course content.
	Creative Writing Tasks	Encourage creativity through online storytelling, poetry writing, or script writing in the target language.
Speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Voice and Video Recording Assignments	Students can record themselves responding to prompts, participating in simulated conversations, or giving short presentations.
	Online Discussion Forums with Audio / Video Options	Encourage spoken interaction through discussion forums that allow for audio or video posts.
	Synchronous Online Meetings for Short Presentations or Discussions	Utilize video conferencing tools for brief, assessed speaking activities in a virtual environment.
	Interactive Dialogue Simulations	Some platforms offer interactive scenarios where students can practice conversations by typing or speaking their responses.
Speaking <i>cont.</i>	Culture and Intercultural Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Online Research and Presentations on Cultural Topics: Students can research aspects of the target culture and present their findings online through videos, slideshows, or interactive presentations.
	Virtual Tours and Online Exploration	Assignments can involve exploring virtual museums, historical sites, or cultural events related to the target language.
	Online Interviews or Exchanges with Native Speakers (if feasible)	Platforms can facilitate virtual exchanges with language partners for cultural learning and language practice.
	Analysis of Authentic Cultural Materials	Students can analyse films, music videos, advertisements, or social media posts from the target culture.

Strategies for increasing student motivation in online foreign language homework.

Motivation is key to successful language learning, especially in online environments where students need to be self-directed. A. Kamalova [6] describes online homework as an innovative technology of teaching a foreign language. There exist certain strategies that can be applied by teachers to enhance motivation in online foreign language homework [8].

1. Making homework relevant and meaningful (i.e. teachers should connect assignments to students' interests, goals, and real-life situations, and show them how the homework contributes to their overall language proficiency and future opportunities)

2. Providing clear purpose and instructions (i.e., teachers should ensure that students understand why they are doing the assignment and how they can complete it successfully, because vague or confusing instructions can be demotivating)

3. Offering variety and choice (i.e., teachers should incorporate a range of assignment types to satisfy different learning styles and preferences. When possible, it is useful to offer students some choice in topics or formats)

4. Making homework engaging and interactive (i.e. teachers are advised to utilize the multimedia capabilities of online platforms to create interactive and stimulating tasks, and incorporate games, videos, audio, and collaborative activities)

5. Providing timely and constructive feedback (i.e. teachers should give prompt and personalized feedback that shows students that their work is valued and helps them understand how to improve. It is crucial that teachers highlight their strengths as well as areas for development) [3]

6. Fostering a sense of community (i.e., teachers should encourage interaction and collaboration among students through online forums, group projects, and peer feedback activities, because feeling connected to classmates can increase motivation).

7. Offering opportunities for success (i.e., teachers should design assignments that are challenging but achievable. It is always useful to break down larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps to build confidence in students towards home assignments).

8. Incorporating gamification elements (i.e., teachers should consider using points, badges, leader boards, or other game-like elements to increase engagement and make learning more fun).

9. Displaying student work (i.e., with their permission, teachers can share examples of excellent student work to provide models and inspire others).

10. Using technology effectively (i.e., teachers should take advantage of the unique features of online tools to create dynamic and engaging homework that would be difficult or impossible in a traditional classroom).

11. Offering rewards and recognition (i.e., teachers should acknowledge effort and progress through praise, virtual rewards, or other forms of recognition, because students like their performance and work to be recognized).

12. Promote autonomy and self-regulation (i.e., teachers should encourage students to take ownership of their learning by setting goals, choosing learning strategies, and reflecting on their progress) [3].

13. Integrating homework with in-class activities (i.e., teachers should ensure that homework is not seen as separate from classroom learning but as a valuable extension and reinforcement of it).

To sum up, implementing the above types of assignments and motivational strategies, can create effective and engaging online homework that significantly contributes to foreign language learning at the tertiary level.

In summary, it can be concluded that effective homework tasks that are motivating can usually be characterised as relevant, i.e. they are connected to learning goals and potentially real-world or personal interests; engaging, i.e. they are interesting, varied, and appropriately challenging; autonomous, offering some degree of choice and promoting independent learning; achievable, i.e. they provide clear

expectations, support, and opportunities for success. Finally, effective homework tasks are also feedback-rich as they provide timely and constructive feedback that guides student improvement.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. In conclusion, the debate surrounding homework in higher education reveals a consensus on its potential to positively influence learning outcomes when designed and implemented effectively. While acknowledging concerns about workload and potential negative impacts, the research synthesized here underscores the significant benefits of homework in reinforcing classroom learning, fostering autonomous learning skills, and providing valuable insights into student progress. The shift towards online learning has further expanded the possibilities for creating engaging and skill-specific homework through diverse digital tools and platforms. Ultimately, the effectiveness of homework hinges on its relevance, clarity, variety, interactivity, and the provision of timely feedback. Educators can transform homework from a burdensome task into a powerful instrument for enhancing foreign language acquisition and broader academic development at the tertiary level.

Further research could explore several directions. Firstly, investigating the long-term impact of different types of online homework assignments on student retention and proficiency gains in foreign languages would be valuable. Secondly, research could focus on identifying optimal homework loads and types that minimize student fatigue and maximize engagement across diverse student populations. Finally, examining the correlation between teacher training in designing effective online homework and student motivation and outcomes could provide valuable insights for professional development initiatives.

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Ілона ГУСТІ. Позитивний вплив домашніх завдань на підвищення мотивації студентів у вищій освіті.

У статті розглядається вплив домашніх завдань у контексті вищої освіти. Подані різні точки зору експертів у галузі освіти, які або підтримують домашні завдання за їхній позитивний вплив на академічні досягнення студентів, або критикують їх за їхній потенціал зайняти багато часу, викликати втому та негативно впливати на психологію студентів.

Обґрунтовано корисну роль домашніх завдань у процесі навчання, підкреслено їх ключові характеристики.

У статті розглянуто сучасні дослідницькі перспективи щодо домашніх завдань, встановлюючи робоче визначення як завдань, призначених вчителем, які виконуються студентами поза запланованим часом уроків.

У статті охарактеризовано проблеми, з якими стикаються викладачі під час розробки завдань. Далі досліджується зростаюча важливість онлайн-навчання, з детальним представленням різноманітних та захопливих онлайн-домашніх завдань, адаптованих до конкретних навичок іноземної мови.

Крім того, у статті пропонується ряд мотиваційних стратегій для онлайн-домашніх завдань, зосереджуючись на персоналізації, чіткій комунікації, різноманітних форматах завдань, інтерактивних елементах, своєчасному зворотному зв'язку, розбудові спільноти та ефективному використанні технологій. Таким чином, основними цілями дослідження є обґрунтування корисної ролі домашніх завдань у вищій освіті шляхом синтезу досліджень, окреслення принципів ефективного проектування, вирішення проблем впровадження та пропозиції мотиваційних стратегій для онлайн-завдань.

Запропоновано кілька перспективних напрямків для майбутніх досліджень, включаючи подовжені дослідження впливу онлайн-домашніх завдань, дослідження оптимального навантаження та аналіз взаємозв'язку між підготовкою вчителів та успішністю учнів у виконанні домашніх завдань.

Ключові слова: домашнє завдання, мотивація, типи домашніх онлайн завдань, знання мови, студенти.

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