# Homework Strategies for Special Education Students

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## Before we get started…

- Students need to be able to use the agenda properly.
- Are the books coming home?
- Have a dedicated "Take Home" folder.
- Is the backpack scary?
- IEP Accommodations?
- Second set of books.
- Is modified homework allowed?

## What is your Homework Philosophy?

- This will vary from teacher to teacher and parent to parent but…*I* believe homework should be used to strengthen the understanding of pre-taught lessons and skills and to prepare the student for tests and quizzes.
- Homework fosters academic independence and organizational skills.

## "Common Core"

- The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects ("the Standards") are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.
- www.engageny.org

## Grade 6 Math

- The Superintendent of Highways is interested in the number of commercial vehicles that frequently use the county's highways. He obtains information from the Department of Motor Vehicles for the month of September and determines that for every 14 non-commercial vehicles, there were 5 commercial vehicles. If there were 108 more non-commercial vehicles than commercial vehicles, how many of each type of vehicle frequently use the county's highways in the month of September?
- READ, READ, READ!

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## The Environment

- A clutter free table or desk.
- Supplies like pencils and *erasable* pens should be handy.
- External stimuli should be kept to a minimum. No T.V, radio
- Corkboard for posting schedules, upcoming quizzes and tests.
- A posted homework template to be followed each time.

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## When Should HW be Started?

- *Generally* directly after school is the best time.
- Students would benefit from a natural sugar snack (e.g., fruit pieces) before beginning.
- Medication concerns.

## What About the Kitchen Table?

- There's nothing wrong with it, as long as it's a truly a productive place.
- Are you fostering independence?

## "I have to sit next to him or the work will never get done!"

- Age level?
- Ability level?
- Set achievable expectations.
- Try to wean yourself away.

## "My daughter is spending three hours a night on homework!"

- Elementary students should be spending *approximately an hour* each day on homework.
- Secondary students may spend considerably more, depending on their courses.
- An *open and constructive* dialogue should be ongoing between teacher and parent regarding HW problems.

## The Stress!

- Don't let homework lead to meltdowns, crying or screaming.
- If HW is not accomplished within a reasonable amount of time, **STOP!**
- Perhaps it can be completed in the AM or at early morning extra help at school.

## Some Successful Strategies

- Timer
- Contracts (template included)
- Reward systems
- HW chart (template included)
- "Hit and Run"
- Study Buddy

- Start with the easiest HW first.
- Frequently misspelled word list on the desk.
- Can after school extra help sessions be used for difficult HW?
- What about alternative assignments?

## More About Contracts and Reward Systems

- Make it as simple as possible.
- The student *must* be involved in the planning and choose a reward that is important to *them.*
- Avoid using money as a reward.
- The student must be understand the contract.
- Consequences must be *clear and realistic.*
- Post the contract or HW chart in a visible place.
- **BE CONSISTENT!**
- If it's not important to you, it won't be important to them.
- Amendments will need to be made as you go on, but that is **OK**!

## Homework and Assistive Technology

- Have the student type their HW using PC if allowed.
- Franklin Speller can be helpful for definitions and correct spellings.
- Older students can utilize speaking software. Dragon Naturally Speaking
- With texts on tape/CD and through the internet students can listen to chapters.
- Bookshare.org
- iPods/iPads for audiobooks
- Kurzweil 3000
- Kindles
- "Classlinks" allows students to access files from school.

## Homework Helper Materials

- Template for contracts.
- Template for HW chart.
- Assorted graphic organizers for writing, studying and thinking.

## Questions and Comments