

Forum

Student Opinion Matters

Too much homework massacres student's homelife

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Staff Reporter

The most ironic part about this article is the fact that I can't focus on it, all because I'm stressed out and piled with homework assignments. Nearly 100 math problems, two journalism articles, a plush model of a mole and a French III essay is putting me back a couple hours tonight. It's around 1 a.m. already, and I still have so much to do. Last night was just the same, and the night before that. This has gone to far. Teachers are assigning too much homework, and schools have crossed the line when it comes to class work outside of school.

Homework has become not only a study tool, but an Olympic sport. You have to "sprint" through that science lab write out, through the back of the math book for all of the answers because you simply don't have time to do the whole 100 problems tonight, and then to spark notes to write a book report "Of Mice and Men" because you've done is skimmed the first couple of chapters. You're exhausted and your brain feels fried. All of a sudden, homework is all about surviving another day, and not about absorbing the material.

Don't think our generation is alone in this. Right now, the homework load we survive with is an actual national predicament. Students, parents and teachers are all battling over the amount of out-of-class work we get every night. Students can't handle the workload, parents are losing their family time and teachers feel the pressure from the government and the school board to pump students' minds with information until they explode. No one's happy. Everyone is frazzled and too few are doing anything to change it.

So why do we do it? Why do teachers rely so much on teaching outside the classroom instead of more effectively teaching during instruction time? All of us have had a teacher that relies on worksheets and textbook reads during class to teach the kids instead of talking about the subject or using hands-on lessons. The students notice this and feel like the teacher just doesn't put the effort into teaching that the students are putting into homework and studying for class, and they lose interest. It's a chain reaction,

downward slide. Aside from absorbing information on fuller scales, homework helps develop abilities such as managing time, honing organizational skills and developing the ability to learn by

they touched the curriculum. They live by the curriculum, they breathe only the curriculum. As long as it's said somewhere in the semester, they've reached the standards for their curriculum.

Think about the students that spend

days

at

the library

before

finals, and

end any social

contact, just so they might get into Harvard. The memorization and the trips to Office Depot for note cards,

yourself, but how much is too much?

I'm not going to spend this article picking apart teachers for what they're doing wrong. I want to focus mostly on the amount of pressure that's focused on high school students right now.

I don't care if you're a straight-A student or a lazy failing bum, no one hates getting good grades. The pressure to get into that college of your dreams is so tough and so unmerciful, many just quit. Is that any way to keep a school system going? A curriculum so hard and unforgiving that the soaring dropout percentage is considered okay? According to Nces.ed.gov, between 347,000 and 544,000 sophomores to seniors leave school each year without successfully completing a high school program in the last decade. That's insane!

The first thing I'd like to chat about is the teachers: the teachers that are no Dead-Poet-Society-Robin-Williams, but they got their diploma and they don't mind the hours. Or the kind of teachers that think that fundamentals and strictly-controlled behavior in a classroom is the only way. And then there are the teachers that don't believe that they could pull off a major learning experience, so they settle by having students take notes and give text reads, so at least

the acronyms to remember math formulas and the nights conjugating French verbs over and over because you chose to take French III this year instead of trying something new, just because it might catch the eye of an interviewer. The amount of focus and absolute mutiny of any healthy things that teenage kids should be doing is tearing apart our students and their families. This system causes students to stay up all night, not because they procrastinated, but because the workload has just reached that point. So far, it doesn't seem like it is much of a working system and I feel like someone should be doing something about it.

Parents also apply pressure. Colleges are harder than ever to get into, and the race to have a "special" child has reached it's peak. "No Joe Average would get into Whitworth anymore, Kelsey," Jay Schrader, concerned parent of Kelsey Schrader, sophomore (that's me!), said. "If I put in my college application, they probably wouldn't even glance at it."

For some reason, the typical stereotype of a perfect college student includes perfect grades, many extracurricular activities and something that stands out about the

student. The pressure to be extraordinary and never fail has driven some kids to suffer immense stress, sickness and even dropping out.

It's hard not to give up. It's tough to understand that each worksheet you turn in will affect that end result. It's difficult to want something so bad that you let your values and morals deviate.

If you really are struggling with homework, go to bed on time and wake up early. You'll feel more productive and if you get to school early, you can also get help from teachers. You'd be surprised how many teachers arrive early.

Use the Tutor Center. Although it might be a little scary and the dead silence is a little daunting, it is worthwhile. You don't even need to need use the tutor option because it's a great place to get homework done.

If you're so overwhelmed and there's just no way out, talk to your counselor. There's actually programs you can get into so that your homework load is less, and if nothing else, the counselor can help you talk to teachers and see if there's a chance for a little leeway. You never know, maybe you'll find yourself with some time to actually eat dinner with your family or watch a little "ER."

Standardized tests are not only option

IKE MCGINNIS

Staff Reporter

My parents do not nag me about standardized test scores, which I like, but others at this school are getting upset with being forced to take prep courses for tests. Some students just say they do not do well on standardized tests. How are we to know how smart someone is from how they did one day filling out bubbles? It makes absolutely no sense that colleges make such a big deal out of tests instead of considering other things, like character and activities.

The main problem is, while you must pass CIM benchmarks to add value to your application and you must take the ACT or SAT for any school to accept you. There is no way of getting out of taking these tests without putting your future at stake. Some may like the tests as a way to judge education, but

there needs to be alternate options for students. My personal opinion is to do away with these tests all together.

After graduating from West Linn, I will become a hot tub repairman. There are not many of them and in a suburban area, I will control Portland. I don't even have to be that great at it. I will just change the water and charge them \$200, because what are they going to do, call another hot tub repairman? Then I will double my business by becoming a pool boy and get women like the women from Desperate Housewives. Life will be sick. That is only my option for not taking SAT's but there should be others.

Other options should include a college official coming to see you in an academic decathlon like in Billy Madison; I really think it could work. The students would have to do something in music, athletics, theatre

and other subjects in school. It would show how well-rounded a student is and it would give colleges a chance for the to meet them.

Another option should be an interview and to talk out a few problems with a college official. It would show the way your brain thinks rather than if you filled the right bubble or not. Another option is if you can beat up the school's official president in a cage fight, you are automatically accepted.

I really think that standardized tests are just a lazy attempt for schools to know their applicants. I know it must be harder for big public schools to personally look at each student wanting to get in, but there needs to be options for those instead of, "you must get this score on this test." If you do not want to deal with that at all, there will always be a job for you at my hot tub repair/pool boy company.