Homework Practices: Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Efficacy and Purpose

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Homework Practices: Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Efficacy and Purpose

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership
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of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by
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Keywords: Homework, Homework Effectiveness, Homework Purpose
ABSTRACT

Homework Practices: Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Efficacy and Purpose

by

Christy Hoeke

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and parent perceptions of homework effectiveness and homework purpose. Specifically, the researcher examined teacher and parent perceptions, perceptions of teachers in different grade level bands, and perceptions of teachers with different levels of experience. In this nonexperimental quantitative study, the researcher examined and analyzed the answers provided on an anonymous survey (Appendix A) provided electronically to educators and parents of students in five school systems in northeast Tennessee.

Parents had a higher perception of both homework effectiveness and homework purpose. Homework effectiveness was perceived as higher by the “other” group (not k-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12) in comparison to the 9-12 group of teachers. There were no significant differences in perceptions of homework effectiveness among the k-2, 3-5, and 6-8 groups of teachers. Homework purpose was perceived as higher in the 9-12 group than in the 3-5 group and the “other” group of teachers. No significant differences were found between the k-2 and 6-8 groups of teachers on homework purpose. There was no significant difference between perceptions of homework effectiveness or homework purpose among teachers with different levels of experience.

This study revealed that parents tend to perceive a greater benefit in homework for both effectiveness and purpose than teachers do. While the level of teacher experience does not influence teacher perception of homework effectiveness or purpose, there are some significant
differences in perceptions of teachers by different grade level bands. Recommendations are made to conduct further research on the topic of homework design, the impact of grading policies on homework perceptions, and homework differentiation.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all my family. Without their support, I could not have completed this process. They never once complained about my writing time or about listening to my “aha” moments or frustrations. Stuart was my rock, and Ben and Claire are my inspiration. My mom Carolyn, dad James, and sister Lori have always supported my educational progress. Their love and support mean the world to me.
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I want to thank the many colleagues I have worked with who have listened to my thoughts over the past few years. Your inspiration and support helped me keep my sanity. I am a much richer person for your encouragement and influence. I hope that in whatever ways our paths cross in the future, we all reap the benefit of my experiences on this journey.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In August 2016, second grade teacher Brandy Young of Godley, TX, sent a note home with her students stating that she would not assign homework. The resulting Facebook post about her note went viral and was the lead story on many national news shows. Homework has a history of causing stress to both parents and students (Gill & Schlossman, 2004; Kralovec & Buell, 2001). The National Education Association (NEA) (2006) has recommended 10-20 minutes per night for first grade students and an additional 10 minutes for each grade thereafter. Some parents and critics against homework argue that teachers are assigning much more than the NEA recommended amount (Bennett & Kalish, 2006; Kralovec & Buell, 2001; Simplicio, 2005). Among researchers there is much debate about whether homework is beneficial (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006; Kohn, 2006). Because of the scarcity of recent research on the topic, articles written by respected researchers were cited despite their age.

Homework is generally defined by Cooper (1989a) as “assignments made by teachers that are meant to be completed during nonschool hours” (p. 41). While many researchers study and write about homework, studies have shown widely differing results and there is not a solid positive or negative consensus (Cooper et al., 2006). Homework has many factors that aggravate research studies: design of the homework, age of the students, effect on grades, effect on achievement measured by classroom tests, effect on achievement measured by standardized tests, and student attitudes. Other factors include parental involvement, completion of work, and discrepancies between the perceived time it should take and the actual time spent (Cooper et al., 2006; Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Bennett and Kalish (2006), Kohn (2006), and Kralovec and Buell (2000) embraced the idea that homework was not only unnecessary but also potentially
harmful to students. Conversely, Marzano and Pickering (2007) and Frey and Fisher (2011) reported that the benefits of well-designed homework outweigh the possible but unlikely negatives. A meta-analysis by Cooper et al. (2006) provided a thorough exploration of the research. However, their results were mixed and interpreted differently by parties on both sides of the issue (Kohn, 2006; Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

Complaints by students and parents are not the only issues associated with the appropriateness of homework. School systems often expect teachers to assign homework that is meaningful and pertinent; students do not want to waste time when the work is rote or too difficult. Many teachers are not trained in homework design during their college preparation or given adequate professional development once they are hired and opinions vary on whether homework should be graded. Many students are not willing to do homework without the reward of a grade and others refuse to do it even when failure to do the work can negatively affect grades (Vatterott, 2011).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and parent perceptions of the effectiveness of homework and to discover how teachers and parents perceive homework effectiveness and purpose for different ages of students. Additionally, the purpose was to learn how teachers with different years of experience viewed homework and determine the homework design experiences teachers have had in their professional development – both preservice and inservice. In this nonexperimental quantitative study, the researcher examined and analyzed the answers provided on an anonymous voluntary survey sent electronically to educators and the parents of students in five school systems in northeast Tennessee (Appendix A).
Homework has traditionally been assigned to students in the United States for many reasons. Generally for third grade and higher the reasons given for assigning homework are academic: preparing students for new learning, practicing skills, rote learning such as spelling words or multiplications tables, and extending learning to offer students an opportunity to go further than they did in the classroom (Cooper et al., 2006). In kindergarten through second grade, the purposes have traditionally been nonacademic – to keep parents informed of what is occurring in the classroom, to build good study habits, and to build good attitudes. Despite complaints in the media by homework critics, the amount of homework students report being assigned has not changed dramatically since the 1980s, except in the lower grades (Loveless, 2014). Loveless analyzed data from a survey about homework by the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) and found that the quantity of homework students report being assigned has remained relatively stable, if not decreasing slightly. NAEP is considered the nation’s report card.

As early as the 1900s, educators and psychologists debated about whether homework benefited students (e.g. Gill & Schlossman, 2004; Kralovec & Buell, 2000; Loveless, 2014). Bennett and Kalish (2006) stated that when a child came home from school the time should belong to the family. Parents should decide what children do in their after school hours. Young children need time to move and play; they no longer receive time at school as the requirements for state mandated testing accountability grow. Disgruntled parents are quick to weigh in both with the schools and the media. Parent advocates have done studies with other parents by conducting interviews and collecting evidence condemning homework.

The majority of students do not have an excessive amount of daily homework (Loveless, 2014). There appears to be discrepancy between the research literature and public opinion.
Cooper et al. (2006) suggested that more empirical studies be conducted based on the lack of conclusive studies and the flawed nature of many studies. Many teachers report that they are not highly trained in good homework design (Tas, Sungur-Vural, & Öztekin, 2014). Homework design is a crucial step in a process that has been slighted by school systems and university training (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). If students and parents are going to expend energy doing homework, it should be valuable and beneficial (Vatterott, 2011). A search of educational databases has revealed a lack of studies about homework and professional development. Self (2009) suggested ways to make homework more relevant and engaging; it did not describe best practice or ongoing planning and development.

One reason for debate is the manner in which homework research has been structured. Studies (i.e. Fox, 2016; Landers, 2013; Rudman, 2014) have considered different variables and make comparisons difficult. Because results and definitions can be interpreted in more than one way, many authors are able to use the same results to see different trends. According to Cooper et al. (2006), the variety of factors that researchers may choose for their focus made it difficult or impossible to compare them or generalize the results.

**Research Questions**

This nonexperimental quantitative study used six research questions to examine differences between teacher and parent perceptions of homework, teacher perceptions based on years of experience, and teacher perceptions based on grade level taught.

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?
RQ2: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?

RQ3: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?

RQ4: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

RQ5: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

RQ6: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

Rationale

Many of the sources cited in the literature review noted a lack of research on the topic of homework efficacy and benefit. For example, Cooper et al. (2006) noted that studies linking a causal relationship to homework effectiveness would take considerable resources coupled with willing volunteers. They further suggested that more longitudinal and nonexperimental studies be conducted. Many researchers have questioned if giving homework on a consistent basis is the foundation of the benefit or if homework should only be given when necessary. Another facet of the debate on homework is that research can be manipulated to show both sides of every opinion (Cooper, 1989b).
Statement of Significance

The findings of this study may identify the need for more education and professional development for teachers on the issue of homework. The findings may confirm a need for more long-term research into specific ways students could benefit from well-designed homework. Moreover, the findings may support educators and researchers in looking more closely at the intangible concepts that are supposed benefits of homework such as positive attitudes toward school.

Homework has been an American tradition since the beginning of the twentieth century, and tradition can be difficult to change (Suskind, 2012). Research on the impact of homework is limited and controversial. The Wright (2010) study was an analysis of the perceptions of homework effectiveness and purpose in middle Tennessee. Voorhees (2011) wrote that teachers should not assign work to be done outside of class unless the design and effectiveness of the work was substantial. The media reported on parent complaints against homework, so teachers experimented with not assigning homework in individual classrooms. Voorhees (2011) was unable to find a study that asked parents and teachers about their perceptions of homework effectiveness and purpose. Voorhees was also unable to identify specific studies that explored teacher training in homework design.

Definitions of Terms

The terminology used in this study may not be familiar to readers. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, definitions are provided for five terms.

Academic homework: Tasks assigned by teachers to be done outside of the class in which they were assigned.
**Homework effectiveness:** The impact of homework on academic achievement that may be positive or negative.

**Homework purpose:** An instructor’s reason for making a homework assignment that may be academic or nonacademic.

**Nonacademic homework:** Tasks that do not pertain to instruction with reasons including establishing communication between home and school, building work ethic, and student responsibility.

**Program for International Student Assessment (PISA):** An assessment that measures reading, math, and science literacy for students and encompasses more than 70 countries and educational systems (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2016).

**Limitations and Delimitations**

One limitation of this study is the voluntary participation by teachers who received a link to the electronic survey and access to parents who could respond to the survey (Appendix A).

Another limitation of the study is that voluntary participation may not yield a representative sample of the population. The survey instrument was created specifically for this study; therefore, the instrument itself is a limitation of the study.

A delimitation is that the survey was sent only to employees of five school systems in northeast Tennessee and made available to parents through school newsletters and websites. During the study, the researcher was employed as a teacher by one of the participating school systems, but not in a position to affect policy outside the classroom. Another delimitation is that the results of this survey are not generalizable to students or parents in other settings.
Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of homework, providing definitions of terms, rationale, and research questions that guide the study. Research that has been published about homework is explored in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in this study in that a survey was used to evaluate and understand the perceptions that teachers and parents have about homework. The data collected underwent statistical analysis and the findings are presented in Chapter 4. Conclusions of the study are discussed and implications for practice and further research are presented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Homework has long been an accepted part of education in the United States. The popularity of homework varies with cycles in the national climate (Cooper et al., 2006). When the government or people of the US worry that student achievement in other countries is outshining that of the US, homework becomes popular (Gill & Schlossman, 2004). Jackson (2007) posited that when parents are comfortable with their lives, providing extra experiences, and needing extra time with their children, homework is decidedly unpopular. However, the aforementioned conditions ordinarily apply only to the middle class and affluent; families of lower socioeconomic classes tend to show greater variability in their acceptance of homework. While many want their students to succeed, the parents need either helpful tips or formal training in effective ways to help when they feel their knowledge of the subject is insufficient (O’Sullivan, Chen, & Fish, 2014).

The effect that homework has can be debated and is based on the research of scholars like Cooper (1989b) and Pope (2010). One group of critics is adamantly opposed to homework and asserts that homework has no value for anyone (Bennett & Kalish, 2006; Kohn, 2006; Kralovec & Buell, 2000). When homework is designed well, it results in achievement for students (Christopher, 2008; Cooper et al., 2006; Maltese, Tai, & Fan, 2012; Marzano & Pickering, 2007). While teacher preparation in effective homework design varies, the accepted premise remains that teachers should assign homework (Cooper et al., 2006).

History of Homework

As early as Plato in ancient Greece, the purpose of education has been defined by different philosophies such as seeking truths, discovering ways to solve problems, learning to
think, or support achievement (Ozman & Craver, 1981). Pragmatist John Dewey was instrumental in guiding American education philosophical standards. He alleged that education should teach students to learn from experience and form good moral attitudes. By the time America was establishing and defining public school systems, the philosophical idea that school was the work of children emerged. The work ethic that continued to drive American public education facilitated the evolution of schooling from the one-room schoolhouse, through graded classrooms, to eventually the elementary, middle, and high school structures that are common in American public schools today. The purpose of American schools has also become more specific. Schools have been defined as training grounds for American culture as well as promoting the superiority of the American way and people (Spring, 2011). In the early nineteenth century, students were not required to attend school beyond the age of 14, so students whose families elected to have them attend school past 14 rarely complained about homework. Homework was necessary in one-room schools because students prepared for an oral presentation of their learning, which was the style of schooling in that time; to be successful, they must prepare at home (Gill & Schlossman, 2004).

In the first half of the twentieth century, critics began to question the loss of free time for elementary children. Most negative attention focused on the belief that homework restricted younger children from physical activity and time outside. Critics also suggested that children should be given time to explore creative outlets such as music and art. As early as the 1930s critics pointed out that homework research did not confirm that homework improved academic achievement for elementary students. Parents supported homework because it allowed them to be involved with the school and kept children home at night. During this time, there were no recommendations for homework standards for elementary students (Gill & Schlossman, 2004).
By the end of the 1950s, America’s space race with the Russians accelerated parents’ desire for students to have rigorous instruction and homework. Great pressure was placed on teachers and schools to improve the US world standing in math and science achievement. However, since the 1960s, a 15-year cycle emerged whereby each phase changed the pressure on parents and students and reversed support for homework (Cooper et al., 2006). The impetus for homework at all grade levels can be traced back to two US Department of Education (USDOE) publications from the 1980s – *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, Larsen, & NCEE, 1983) and *What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning* (USDOE, 1987). Walberg (1986) gave specific recommendations on homework in his report. The math scores of American students on an unnamed assessment were compared to the scores of students in other nations. The recommendation was for teachers to regularly assign well-designed homework related to the class work because American students were third from the bottom in eighth grade mathematics and at the bottom for twelfth-grade algebra and calculus (Walberg, 1986).

**Purpose of Homework**

Homework is commonly perceived to raise academic achievement in students (Brock, Lapp, Flood, Fisher, & Han, 2007; Cooper, 1989b; Dettmers, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Kunter, & Baumert, 2010; Maltese et al., 2012). Cooper et al. (2006) noted that the purpose of homework assignments might be academic or nonacademic. Linking home and school, developing positive attitudes toward learning and school, and improving self-discipline are all mentioned as nonacademic reasons for homework in early elementary grades. The academic purpose of homework is to raise achievement. Academic assignments are often a practice of skills, preparation for new learning, or an extension of learning. Other uses of homework can be to punish students or to fulfill administrator expectations (Cooper et al., 2006).
Many critics of homework take issue with the nonacademic purposes of homework because they are intangible and take away parental choice in shaping the child. Kralovec and Buell (2000) suggested that self-discipline is a good example of a trait that cannot be measured, but must be taught. While a teacher may assign homework, the parent encourages, reminds, or harasses the child to complete the work. This is not an example of the teacher helping a student become self-disciplined because of the assignment.

Kohn (2006) argued against nonacademic benefits. He suggested that because there is no way to measure the nonacademic benefits, they should not be used as reasons to assign homework. He goes so far as to suggest that experimental research be conducted with one group receiving homework and another receiving no homework. Bennett and Kalish (2006) also questioned the logic of expecting early elementary students to develop good work ethics because they are not at the appropriate developmental stage for that. Cooper (1989b) however, supports giving younger students homework for nonacademic purposes saying that it helps them understand that learning can also take place away from school.

Motivation and self-regulation are nonacademic benefits of homework. In a review of self-regulation homework studies by Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011), studies involving elementary and middle school students were analyzed. Stoeger and Ziegler (2008) found that when trained in the classroom fourth-grade students could learn to manage their time more effectively for self-regulation of homework. However, the training they received from their teachers to improve this nonacademic benefit of homework took 5 weeks.

Corno and Xu (2004) suggested that a nonacademic purpose of homework could be training for future jobs, not in skills but in approach and stamina. As students progress through school, they should be made aware that their job at this stage is to develop a good work ethic.
Homework is designed to be work. Just like a job, the boss is in control and sets the timeframe and acceptable standards. Projects may need to be divided into workable units, references and materials must be assembled, and performance earns a reward. While work earns financial rewards and benefits, students in school are rewarded with grades. Major differences between work and school are that homework is not typically supervised by the teacher and students are still learning, whereas employees are expected to know how to learn. One implication Corno and Xu (2004) suggested from their research is that teachers should be mindful that parent supervision varies widely and most parents could benefit from helpful tips on the right amount of supervision. Another suggestion is that teachers must be aware of the potential for burnout if the work is too difficult or time consuming.

In his review of self-regulated learning, Bembenutty (2011a) examined the positive and negative aspects of this facet of learning. When middle and high school students have been trained on goal setting or have the innate ability, they are more purposeful in their actions and have a better success rate at completion. Students who are not trained or who lack the innate ability may resort to ineffective strategies and use them to explain their lack of success. Maladaptive behaviors include procrastination, defensive pessimism, and self-handicapping; these behaviors prevent students from attaining academic achievement. By teaching students to take responsibility and recognize which behaviors are ineffective, Bembenutty (2011a) suggested that students would have learning outcomes that were more successful and strongly supported the use of homework as a learning tool. Bembenutty (2011a) suggested that more research be done in the areas of homework quality and innovation.

Rosário et al. (2015) studied how homework’s purpose affected mathematics achievement. Sixth-grade teachers were assigned to randomly selected classes to give practice
homework, preparation homework, or extension homework. In this study, the researchers found that, of the three purposes of homework, the one with the most positive impact on achievement was extension. The researchers theorized that the outcome was because the extension homework was problem solving, and problem solving is generally perceived by students as challenging. Rosário et al. also noted that they had difficulty recruiting schools based on the interference that research would cause on preparation for testing. Teachers in the study also commented that they would appreciate differentiating for student needs but that, with the number of students they taught and the material they must cover for testing, they did not have time. Rosário et al. (2015) suggested that since practice homework is the type assigned most often then that purpose should be better scrutinized in the future.

**Time Spent on Homework**

The amount of homework that is appropriate for elementary students has become a focus of the homework debate. Cooper (1989b) made specific recommendations for homework on both the amount by grade and policies for teachers and schools. The NEA (2006) also listed the National PTA guidelines on their website. Cooper’s (1989b) recommendations are more detailed than the NEAs. The NEA simply advises a time limit of 10-20 minutes per night with 10 additional minutes added per advancing grade. For example, a sixth-grade student would be expected to do about 60 minutes of homework per night. In elementary grades, Cooper (1989b) suggested no homework for kindergarten students, one to three assignments (not to exceed 15 minutes each per week) in Grades 1-3, and two to four assignments each week (15-45 minutes each) for Grades 4-6. Cooper (1989b) recommended more for secondary based on his research that homework promotes academic achievement. In Grades 7-9, Cooper (1989b) suggested 45 to 75 minutes of homework (three to five assignments) a week. In grades 10-12, four to five
assignments a week lasting 75 to 120 minutes each was recommended. Cooper (1989b) only supports a minimal amount of time spent on homework through Grade 3. His guideline is 45 minutes per week, while the NEA’s suggestion of 30 minutes a day could total 150 minutes a week. Cooper’s (1989b) guidelines also suggest that schools and administrators should coordinate days teachers are allowed to assign homework when subjects are taught by more than one teacher.

Bennett and Kalish (2006) discussed the overwhelming nature of assigning too much homework. They argued that cognitive research on children does not support the loss of sleep, loss of playtime, and stress that excessive homework causes children and families. In his blog, Winch (2011) discussed the physical and emotional ramifications of too much homework. His example, Timmy, is a fifth-grade student who does 2 to 3 hours each night, and often studies for tests and does projects on weekends (Winch, 2011). According to Cooper (1989b), at that age, Timmy should be assigned no more than 3 hours total for the week, across all subjects and the NEA (2006) recommendation would allow 50 minutes per night.

Cooper (2001) acknowledged that there are negative consequences for excessive homework and urged moderation. He noted that many nonacademic leisure activities teach important lessons; students could become bored with learning when there is no relief and parents may put too much pressure on their children or confuse them with other instructional techniques. He also stated that students from lower socio-economic homes might be at a disadvantage due to lack of materials or parental support. Cooper (2001) admitted that homework at the elementary level provides no academic advantage for students, but recommended that young students be assigned homework because of the nonacademic benefits.
The pressure put on families and students when too much work is assigned can cause homework to become counterproductive according to Cooper et al. (2006). Even for secondary students, in studies showing positive academic gains attributed to homework, more than 3 hours of homework each night has provided less academic growth than limiting it to less than 3 hours. The negative effect of excessive time spent on homework by high school students also appeared in studies by Galloway and Pope (2007) and Galloway, Conner, and Pope (2013).

Refuting the excessive amount of homework that critics quote, Gill and Schlossman (2003) analyzed the data collected by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Students completed surveys as part of the study and data collected in 1999 showed that homework volume has not substantially increased in the last 25 years. Some data noted by researchers indicated that high school students reported doing less homework than 13-year-olds and that the number of elementary students spending more time on homework has increased. Diary data were collected for kindergarten through third-grade students (who are not tested by the NAEP) in a study by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The amount of time that groups of students spent on homework doubled between the two collection points in 1981 and 1997. These data reinforce the viewpoint of critics of excessive homework such as Kralovec and Buell (2000).

Hafner, Ingels, Schneider, Stevenson, and Owings (1990) conducted a longitudinal study of eighth-grade students known as the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), which included both cognitive tests and a questionnaire. Eren and Henderson (2011) suggested that for students in grades 7-11 an extra 30 minutes of math could raise their scores almost two grade levels based on analysis of the NELS:88 data. They recommended that teachers assign an additional 60 minutes of math and English. Extra work in science and history had
either no impact or diminished test scores. They also analyzed the impact of teacher quality and effectiveness and noted that ineffective teachers tended to assign more homework in math. Eren and Henderson (2011) posited that teachers may be aware of their shortcomings and attempted to use homework to compensate. They also noted that more than 7 hours of homework a week had a negative effect on test scores.

In a 2014 report, Loveless provided an updated analysis of the NAEP data. His conclusions were the same as those of Gill and Schlossman (2003). Loveless also provided details about the data collected by UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute. A survey of college freshmen that has been conducted since 1966 supported that the amount of homework done by successful college students has not exceeded 6 hours a week for the majority of freshmen. The percentage of students reporting 6 hours in 2012 was 38.4%. Loveless (2014) noted that reports in the media of excessive homework are likely true, but affect only a small percentage of a very vocal population. Loveless also noted that in two national homework polls conducted in 2006-2007 by MetLife and Public Agenda between 11% and 15% of parents say there is too much homework.

Zuzanek (2009) analyzed student perceptions of time spent on homework and found that the attitudes students had about homework skew their reporting of how it negatively affects their ability to participate in other activities. Zuzanek stated that the results showed students’ unstructured time (i.e. television watching, electronic gaming, and socializing) were more affected by homework. However, additional homework correlated to better grades. While students did not show a high interest in doing homework, they reported being more interested in homework than spending time in class.
Time vs. Completion and Effort

Marzano and Pickering (2007) noted that completion of homework is a better indicator of success than time spent on homework. An issue with homework is getting students to complete assignments. Watkins and Stevens (2013) studied a school implementing *No Excuses Homework* that was a program designed to shift attitudes about homework completion in school culture. Students could not receive zeroes or grades under 70 on homework; they would be required to revise or attend after-school programs to complete tutoring. In the study, the school climate changed in a positive way to expect completion of homework, not accept failure as an option, involve parents in changing student attitudes, and provide feedback and assistance for learning. By requiring completion of homework, more students received passing grades and high school credits. Results of the study did not identify any effects on standardized test scores, only that it positively influenced homework completion rates (Watkins & Stevens, 2013).

Maltese et al. (2012) noted that completion of homework was a more important factor than time spent on homework. Their findings suggested that struggling students spend much more time on homework with a less positive effect. If one student can complete an assignment in 20 minutes and another worked 45 minutes without completing the assignment, the student with the incomplete assignment received less benefit. Nevertheless, they recommended that for math and science, American high school students should spend more time doing homework. They analyzed NELS:88 data from Hafner et al. (1990) and ELS:2002 data from Ingels, Chen, and Owings (2005) to ascertain the link between time spent on homework and achievement in tenth-grade science and math students. Unlike the results that Eren and Henderson (2011) obtained, Maltese et al. (2012) found that 1 to 2 hours spent on daily homework resulted in the highest
grades and test scores. However, any time spent on homework earned students higher test scores than students who did not complete homework.

Flunger et al. (2015) examined the effort students put into homework. After acknowledging that most researchers look primarily at time spent on homework as the main indicator of a study, they examined the amount of effort put forth by eighth-grade students. Students were divided into five groups for the purpose of analysis, based on their responses to a Likert-scale questionnaire. Students were labeled as fast learners, high-effort learners, average students, struggling learners, and minimalists. These categories were based on time spent, completion, and effort on homework. Flunger et al. (2015) noted that time is often poorly estimated by students because they do not distinguish between active work and the time they say they dedicate. They found that effort was a better indicator of success than time spent on homework. Those students who put more effort into homework achieved better results than those who put in more time. In the Flunger et al. (2015) study, the time spent on homework showed that students who were struggling or who were easily distracted often reported spending more time on homework.

In their study of ninth-grade English students, Wilson and Rhodes (2010) surveyed students about their attitude toward homework. High school students in this study had strong feelings about homework. Whereas 69% of the students agreed that homework was meaningful, a larger number (73%) noted that they did not like it. Students also responded that 86% would be more likely to complete homework if they were allowed to start during class. Only 39% of the responding students said they frequently completed their homework. The researchers noted that 43% of students reported that they did not understand their homework. Wilson and Rhodes (2010) identified a variety of reasons that students do not complete homework, including that it
is boring, they do not understand the assignment, assignments were not meaningful, and the teacher did not give feedback. Students also listed jobs and extracurricular activities as commitments that left little time and energy for homework. Wilson and Rhodes (2010) suggested strategies that teachers could implement to increase homework completion rates. Similar to Cooper’s (1989b) suggestions, they noted that teachers should select specific days to assign subjects to avoid excessive homework, teachers should be mindful of the time it may take to complete homework assignments, and teachers must assure that students understand how to do the work. Timely feedback is also critical to homework success.

**Homework and High Achievement**

Though Gill and Schlossman (2003) and Loveless (2014) obtained similar results from analyzing data from the NAEP, other studies returned different results. Galloway et al. (2013) examined high-performing high school students. They opined that their study addressed the lack of empirical evidence for nonacademic benefits that Kralovec and Buell (2000) noted. Because the students in this Galloway et al. (2013) study attended schools in communities with high performance expectations, parents and students expected and embraced homework loads on an average of 3 hours or more a day. Over 4,000 students participated in the survey that contained Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The high school students in the study reported stress (72%), a physical symptom within the month (82%), and not getting enough sleep (68%) because of their homework load. Students reported that homework overwhelmed other developmental aspects of their lives. Students said they completed homework assignments because of the expectations that the level of work prepared them for their future. The nonacademic effects of this study were decidedly negative in nature (Galloway et al., 2013).
The results obtained by Galloway et al. (2013) were supported by another study of high achieving students in New York. Strong (2016) noted that students who had chosen Advanced Placement (AP) classes and a rigorous schedule to pursue an Ivy League education pushed to their limits. Their self-imposed workloads left them sleep deprived, often negatively affected their intrinsic desire to learn, and promoted cheating for the grade. Students were forced into competitive, sometimes unhealthy relationships with their peers. In interviews conducted as part of the qualitative study, students expressed that some accomplishments had little meaning because they were simply expected and that students overloaded their schedules with difficult classes just to stand out; this was a general trend in this high-achieving school. In his conclusion, Strong (2016) noted a need for administrators to consider safeguarding the students by helping teachers organize and manage homework assignments. Strong’s words echoed statements about coordinating homework made many years before by Cooper (1989b).

A recurring theme in high-achieving schools is that the stress on students to achieve has a negative impact on their learning (Pope, 2010). The homework and grades are a means to an end. Students fail to see learning as the desired outcome and focus only on getting by or getting work done. Schools that collaborated with Challenge Success (Pope, 2017), an initiative dedicated to reducing stress for high achieving students, tended to shift focus to engaging the students and developing their critical thinking and creativity. One outcome was a shift from the traditional 7-period schedule to modified or rotating blocks that allowed students greater time to engage with the subjects rather than moving quickly from one to the other without time for deeper thinking. Block scheduling also allowed students time to start homework during class (Pope, 2010).

Conner, Pope, and Galloway (2009) noted that for many high-achieving students, the difficulty of homework assignments is not an issue, but the length of time needed to complete
them is overwhelming when many teachers assign homework on the same nights. In this study, a very high percentage of students admitted to cheating at least once to finish. Students also need time for extracurricular activities, which are an important part of college admissions applications for high achieving students. However, extracurricular activities are often dropped in favor of having time to sleep or complete more homework. The Conner et al. (2009) study referenced Challenge Success (Pope, 2017) and noted that reforms, such as changing schedules, coordinating homework among teachers, and changing final exam times to before breaks seemed to have a positive effect on reducing stress. In a course as challenging as AP Biology, when homework was cut in half in conjunction with other changes, test scores went up. Their final suggestions were that all parties (parents, students, and teachers) must work together to improve learning outcomes with less stress (Conner et al., 2009).

**Homework Effects**

Chang, Wall, Tare, Golonka, and Vatz (2014) studied the effect of homework in foreign language class. They expressed a desire to understand if the focus of research on homework in core courses would generalize to foreign language. The study was conducted using adults and purports to add to the existing body of literature on homework practice; study participants were learning a foreign language to advance their careers. The assessment for the language course was the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), a computer-based assessment, which tests a variety of languages. Based on the standardized assessment and a survey the participants completed, Chang et al. (2014) found strong positive correlations between attitudes about homework relevance, feedback, and grading. The researchers noted that student attitudes were likely influenced by their performance in the class. They noted, as did Cooper et al. (2006), that there was a negative correlation between time spent on homework and outcomes.
In a study designed to analyze the link between homework and its effect on achievement, Trautwein, Schnyder, Niggli, Neumann, and Ludtke (2009) had study participants in Switzerland administer a questionnaire and standardized test to eighth grade students learning French as a required second language. The questionnaire included items about grades, how often students were given homework in the subject, how much effort the students put into their homework, and if the students had negative emotions about their homework tasks. The first finding was that future researchers should carefully consider the many variables included in studying the topic of homework. Depending on the variables analyzed, many different conclusions could be drawn from the same study. Trautwein et al. (2009) found that homework could have negative, positive, and zero effect. They noted that homework that is more frequent seemed to correlate with higher achievement; however, the classes that received more homework were also upper track – more advanced – so the results were confounded. They also noted that time spent on homework tended to be longer for less proficient students and often did not correlate with effort. Their final comments stated that the findings were likely not generalizable to younger students and there would likely be differences when subject matter and culture were considered (Trautwein et al., 2009).

Fernández-Alonso, Suárez-Álvarez, and Muñiz (2015) generated results very similar to Trautwein et al. (2009) in their study in Spain. Using results from second-year secondary students, roughly the age of American eighth grade students, the researchers analyzed questionnaires and tests in math and science. They excluded students from the study who reported doing little or no homework. Fernández-Alonso et al. (2015) found that independently completing homework was the variable most likely to show a positive correlation to achievement; time and the need for assistance with homework showed a negative correlation. Like Trautwein et al. (2009), Fernández-Alonso et al. (2015) revealed that frequent homework
had a stronger relationship to achievement. They recommended that homework for all subjects be assigned regularly with about 1 hour total providing optimal effect.

Xu (2009) examined the differences between the ability of eighth grade students in rural and urban settings to manage their homework time. Using data collected from the Homework Management Scale (HMS) that was given to over 600 students, Xu found that urban students were more motivated to achieve academically than were rural students. When he analyzed the data, Xu found positive statistically significant correlations for high achieving students on the variables of self-motivation, managing time, handling distraction, controlling emotion, and arranging the environment. The tests comparing rural and urban students showed statistical significance on the variable of self-motivation; the other four variables showed no statistical significance. A lower expectation in rural communities was given as a possible reason for the students being less driven to complete academic work. Xu (2009) suggested that rural middle schools should give parents guidance on how to motivate students regarding homework completion.

Teacher Perception of Homework

Brock et al. (2007) found that teachers primarily assign homework for four reasons: teachers consider that the skill practice is beneficial to students, parents want it, the district expects it, and homework teaches discipline and responsibility. Teachers in the Brock et al. elementary school study assigned homework as reading, packets of worksheets, and practice in spelling and math. Some teachers in the study also adapted homework for students who struggle, however about two-thirds of the teachers gave everyone the same homework, stating grade level standards must be taught and met by all. Teachers stated that reading at home improves the students’ abilities in reading. They also stated that skill practice as homework improved students’
learning. Teachers in the Brock et al. study designed homework that would not require special materials to complete. Teachers reported that they put special systems in place for students who needed assistance completing homework, such as working with peers over the phone or having teacher assistance by phone available after school; homework was usually not graded, though there were exceptions noted. Homework was a pass or fail category on the grade card (Brock et al., 2007).

Tas et al. (2014) studied the value teachers put on homework. The study linked perceptions of parents and teachers because the researchers looked at how effectively science teachers communicated expectations with parents. Because the teachers stressed that homework was important to acquisition of subject matter, they communicated with parents and suggested the best strategies for providing help. Tas et al. (2014) found that science teachers in this study assigned more homework in research and problem solving than in memorizing and summarizing. This strategy was effective so that students did not conclude that homework is all about one type of learning.

A study of tenth-grade students in China revealed that teacher perceptions of student feelings are not always accurate. Hong, Wan, and Peng (2011) found that tenth-grade students, as self-reported on a questionnaire, were more negative about homework than their teachers knew. In mathematics, students claimed they did not complete work because the assignments were too difficult. However, the students were more critical of themselves than teachers were; researchers noted there is likely a cultural element to the study. The teachers were mostly accurate in their knowledge of student beliefs in homework behaviors, such as competence and performance. In regards to English subject homework specifically, students usually said they were assigned more homework than what the teachers reported (Hong et al., 2011).
Sallee and Rigler (2008) studied their own English classes and the impact homework had on students. Through surveys and interviews of the teachers and students at their high school, they found that the teachers assigned homework because the amount of reading they requested would take too long to cover in class or they wanted students to “teach themselves” (Sallee & Rigler, 2008, p. 47). Teachers also sent a mixed message about the importance of homework. They often only spot checked homework and the impact of homework assignments on the students’ grade was as much as 20% to 30%. Sallee and Rigler questioned how homework affected students in lower socioeconomic groups and those who struggled with learning. When students did not have computer access, financial means, or parental support at home, assigning homework seemed to put them at a disadvantage, and an assignment that might seem like a quick read can quickly become overwhelming for students who struggle with reading. Sallee’s and Rigler’s (2008) results led to changes in school-wide practice at their high school.

Peltier (2011) studied the differences in teacher attitudes about homework in Mississippi. Her results identified no significant relationship between teacher attitudes and homework practices at the elementary and high school levels. The middle school level and special education classes in her study did show a significant relationship between teacher attitudes and homework practices; however, in her summary, Peltier stopped short of explaining exactly what the relationship was. She noted that the responding teachers from two school districts in her study supported assigning the same homework to all students regardless of socioeconomic level. Peltier (2011) reported that 47% of teachers gave all students the same work. This is at odds with the suggestions of Marzano and Pickering (2007) who stated that homework should be differentiated and students should have a choice of assignments.
Barnholtz (2008) studied the practice of sending home summer homework in Missouri. Packets of work were sent to all students to keep their skill level from dropping during the time out of school. The summertime phenomenon was noted in a study done by Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003). Their term “summer reading setback” (p. 68) has been used to describe loss of reading level during the summer, usually by students of lower socioeconomic levels. At the school Barnholtz (2008) studied, they have taken this summer homework approach for all students with all subjects for more than 60 years. During her study, Barnholtz examined the practice twice to determine if teachers continued to have confidence that the practice was effective. After surveying and interviewing teachers, she found that most were satisfied with the practice because it gave them student feedback. When students kept logs of the books they read, teachers learned their preferences for genres. Teachers also trusted that even the math and less structured writing assignments kept children engaged and ready to learn when they returned (Barnholtz, 2008).

Viadero (2009) noted in her analysis of the MetLife Survey (Markow, Kim, & Liebman, 2007) data that teachers with 21 or more years of experience were more likely to trust that homework was beneficial. These veterans were also more comfortable assigning and discussing homework than were teachers who had 5 years or less experience. Teachers reported spending approximately 8.5 hours weekly planning or grading homework (Viadero, 2009). The survey also found that, “Eight in ten teachers (83%) believe that doing homework is important or very important” (Markow et al., 2007, p. 19).

Parental Involvement

In a study conducted in Finland by Silinskas, Niemi, Lerkkanen, and Nurmi (2013), researchers wanted to learn what impact parent help had on students in Grades 1 and 2. Children
in Finland begin first-grade at the age of 7 and are not taught reading or math before then. The researchers found that parents tended to help more when students were struggling; the researchers theorized that struggling students might have parents who were unskilled with their assistance, poor learners themselves, or less educated. The results showed a negative effect of parental assistance with the child’s skill development. Parents who were forceful with their assistance or helped without being asked lowered the children’s performance. Silinskas et al. (2013) found that a positive effect of parental assistance with homework was that children were more likely to complete homework and have fewer behavior issues.

In an experimental study of the benefit of parent assistance with homework, Van Voorhis (2011) found that training parents in helping with homework could provide benefit. Van Voorhis undertook a 2-year experimental study in which teachers were trained in homework design and parents were instructed in how to help their students. Van Voorhis used an interactive system called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS). TIPS used high volume communications with parents, work sent home consistently with sufficient time for families to participate, and feedback from parents. Using the TIPS intervention with third- and fourth-grade students, Van Voorhis (2011) reported that when parents were guided in the correct way to help their student, family stress levels regarding homework decreased. When homework was specifically designed to align with curriculum and state standards, student standardized test scores showed significant increases. Van Voorhis (2011) noted that homework design must be improved, and teachers needed more professional development time. Kralovec and Buell (2000) discussed TIPS in their book, but had a very negative outlook about the program because it can be expensive and verifiable beneficial results were not always obtained.
Moroni, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli, and Baeriswyl (2015) studied the effect that parent’s help with homework had on sixth-grade students in Switzerland. Their goal was to determine if there was a difference between the quality and quantity of the parental involvement. The researchers labeled helpful intervention by parents as support and intrusive intervention as interference. They found no significant correlation between support and interference. However, they found that support raised reading achievement and interference lowered it. When the quantity of homework was analyzed, the researchers found that frequent involvement was negatively associated with achievement. They suggest that children likely view greater parental assistance more as interference than as support (Moroni et al., 2015).

Another study that yielded similar negative results of parent involvement was conducted by Núñez et al. (2015). In a study of parent involvement in homework that spanned elementary through high school levels, Núñez et al. analyzed parent involvement in terms of control and support. In the study, control was defined as pressure on students to complete homework, and support was interpreted as favorable help. Núñez et al. also looked at parent involvement and its relationship to academic achievement. They found that support had a positive effect on homework completion at all levels, whereas control had a negative effect. At the middle and high school levels, parental support had a positive influence on academic achievement. However, at all levels, parental control had a negative effect on academic achievement (Núñez et al., 2015).

Tam and Chan (2009) conducted research on elementary school students in Hong Kong. Using a combination of homework diaries and student and parent questionnaires, the researchers gathered data to determine parent involvement and its relation to academic outcomes. Tam and Chan found that because of Chinese culture, societal expectations, and a high value of education most parents and students spent a large amount of time on homework. Parents supervised,
provided structure, and assisted with assignments for many children (Tam & Chan, 2009). According to the findings of this study, parents who did not participate often had lower education levels or additional children in the home (Tam & Chan, 2009). For early elementary students in this study, parent support trained children to recognize that self-regulated learning would lead to higher academic performance. For older elementary students, parent support fostered independent learning. The findings indicated that younger children needed parent support, but the support did not need to last into later elementary years to have a positive influence on academic performance (Tam & Chan, 2009).

When Fox (2016) studied homework and families in North Carolina to determine best practice for students at risk because of socioeconomic status, she found that the six female parents in the study appreciated homework as a communication tool and a way to establish a home routine for their children. The mothers also viewed homework time as quality time for the family and a way to occupy students at home without using TV or video games. All the children in the family met as a group, receiving help from siblings or other family members. According to Fox’s findings, more homework was preferred, as the experiences were very positive for the group that she studied. The participants valued the family time and opportunity for education enhancement (Fox, 2016).

**Stress Attributed to Homework**

Pressman et al. (2015) delved into homework load and the issue of stress on families and students. After surveying parents who had children in grades kindergarten through 12, Pressman et al. found that students in grades K-2 were spending too much time on homework – according to the NEA (2006) recommendations. The researchers found that when parents did not trust their own competence to help with homework, family stress caused by homework was higher, and that
when the child also disliked homework the effect was significantly higher. Student grades caused more stress in the family than homework. An interesting issue they uncovered about homework was that when parents helped their children with work, teachers were not able to diagnose academic difficulties as easily (Pressman et al., 2015).

In a study designed to measure homework stress in the special education population, Katz, Buzukashvili, and Feingold (2012) surveyed fourth- to sixth-grade students and their parents. They found that students with learning disabilities and their parents have more stress associated with homework than the students without learning disabilities had. The researchers suggested that students with learning disabilities are less persistent and avoided homework more often. Additionally, Katz et al. (2012) found that teachers often did not differentiate homework assignments for students, which caused heightened stress on special education students.

When Cheema and Sheridan (2015) administered the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) (OECD, 2016) survey from 2012 to US high school students, they found significant relationships between math anxiety, math achievement, and time spent on homework. As math anxiety rose, math achievement declined; time spent on math homework positively correlated with math achievement (Cheema & Sheridan, 2015).

Documenting an extreme example of stress, Lange and Meaney (2011) conducted a series of in-depth interviews with two students who received help from parents. After observing 10- and 11-year-old students in math classes, two girls were interviewed about their homework experiences. The homework assignments were rote practice of math multiplication tables. One student had a typical experience because she maintained the role of compliant student and her mother assumed the role of teacher. Another student had such a negative experience interacting with her father that the report used the word “traumatised” (Lange & Meaney, 2011, p. 49).
second student struggled with mathematics; her father attempted to teach it the way he had been taught, which clashed with the approach the child’s teacher had taken. The student had a very negative physical response, screaming and leaving the room. She eventually asked her parents not to help her with homework. What may be thought of by a teacher as simple practice, may in fact cause harm and stress when parents are put in the role of teacher (Lange & Meaney, 2011).

American lawyer-turned-filmmaker Abeles (2009) turned her family stress into a rallying cry for homework reform. Abeles produced a film about her struggle to help her daughter overcome a stress-related illness brought on by homework. Whereas the documentary is anecdotal, it caught the attention of homework researchers Kohn (2006), Kralovec and Buell (2000), and Bennett and Kalish (2006). The documentary film was so well received that Abeles (2009) collaborated with the researchers to launch a website to assist other parents in advocating for change in homework policies in their communities. The Healthy Homework Toolkit (Abeles, 2013) suggested appropriate homework strategies to prevent students and families from experiencing the high anxiety that homework could cause. They suggested having students and families select activities to complete at home, eliminating homework during breaks from school, and creating well-designed homework assignments that extend learning that could not be done in class (Abeles, 2013).

**Student Emotions Regarding Homework**

In their study of emotions during mathematics homework, Dettmers et al. (2011) found that design and challenge played a big role in the way students perceived homework and the stress it caused. When longitudinal data from the PISA (OECD, 2016) were examined for ninth and tenth-grade German mathematics students, the researchers found that when students perceived well-designed homework, they had fewer unpleasant emotions associated with doing
the work; when the work was perceived to be challenging, student emotions were more unpleasant. Dettmers et al. (2011) used both student and class level variables, which revealed a statistical difference. Challenging work was associated with achievement at the class level, but at the student level, the association was negative. Their recommendations included giving students coping strategies to deal with homework stress (Dettmers et al., 2011). It was also recommended that quality homework design played a significant role in achievement and that rote tasks, as Cooper (1989b) noted, tended to produce negative results.

Landers (2013) found that student attitude and family support are important to homework having a positive effect on achievement and academic success. In her 3-year qualitative study, Landers observed middle school math classrooms and conducted case studies of two students. The two boys espoused a similar attitude about the importance of homework to their future academic success. However, one student who had parent support and came to identify himself as a smart student, always completed homework and was successful. The other student, whose parent support was minimal, chose to identify himself as popular and social, but rarely completed work and failed his seventh-grade math class (Landers, 2013).

Hong, Mason, Peng, and Lee (2015) studied the effects of anxiety on achievement in high school math and English students. Hong et al. hypothesized that the value students placed on homework would influence motivation and anxiety; the study explicitly did not measure homework impact on achievement. The researchers found that students who valued homework were more worried about negative outcomes and grades than students who did not value homework. However, student anxiety led the students to put forth less effort on homework especially mathematics. Because Chinese teachers typically award grades for homework, less effort because of anxiety issues could result in lower achievement and learning (Hong et al.,
2015). Tam and Chan (2009) noted in their study of primary students that the Chinese culture values education highly.

Students may need psychological support from teachers to be successful with homework as they advance from elementary to middle school or junior high. Katz, Kaplan, and Gueta (2010) conducted a cross-sectional study of student perceptions of teacher support and the effect on homework performance. As students left the traditional elementary environment where teachers often take on a nurturing role, they needed additional support from teachers. In adolescence, many students experience insecurity, even at a time when they seek greater independence. Katz et al. (2010) found that when the students felt psychologically supported by their teachers, motivation to do homework increased. These findings indicate that relationships may be a seriously undervalued factor in achievement.

**Homework Design**

Kohn (2006) contended that homework design had been neglected and that teachers assigned homework only because it is expected. Despite raging debates on other homework issues, this is an area where most researchers agree. Marzano and Pickering (2007) acknowledged that inappropriate homework might decrease student learning and that schools should have teachers provide effective homework. They agreed that too much homework could be detrimental and noted that the amount of completed homework was a more accurate predictor of positive affect than time spent on homework. However, Marzano and Pickering (2007) stopped short of explaining how to design effective homework.

Frey and Fisher (2011) defined the types of effective homework as fluency practice, spiral review, application, and extension and posited that students should only receive homework after extensive practice with a skill in class, high-quality instruction, and corrective feedback.
Homework should also be differentiated and student choice should be considered. Self (2009) suggested that, even for younger students, creating meaningful assignments is key. Making classroom skills relate to home and community, engaging the whole family in an activity, student choice, and reporting success back to the class are all valuable ways to help students understand the benefits of homework.

Dettmers et al. (2010) conducted a study to determine if homework design could shape student motivation, behavior, and achievement. They found that when homework assignments were thought to be moderately rigorous, student learning increased. If assignments were thought to be too simple or too hard, they were not deemed beneficial. The researchers also suggested that assignments be individualized to challenge students without over-stressing them and to match student interests. Supporting the discussion about the amount of time spent on homework, Dettmers et al. (2010) noted that time spent had a negative correlation to achievement; they also speculated that struggling students spent more time, to less effect.

Voorhees (2011) related a case in which homework was ineffective for a struggling student purporting that when teachers are not well trained in homework design, they can assign homework that students are not able to do independently. Voorhees related an instance of a fifth-grade student who was sent home with a passage to summarize that was at a twelfth-grade reading level. Because the student was not reading at a twelfth-grade level, the text was completely inaccessible and set the child up for failure. Voorhees called this practice homework malignancy whereby not only must teachers carefully consider the assignments, teachers must also know student reading levels and plan with that in mind. If an assignment is at an inaccessible reading level or contains many new vocabulary words, students will lose confidence
in their ability to complete homework assignments. As Frey and Fisher (2011) and Marzano and Pickering (2007) noted, differentiation is an important element in homework design.

Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) suggested that homework should be designed to be interactive. In many instances students want parents to help with homework, but parents are unsure how and how much to help. Epstein and Van Voorhis evaluated the effect on achievement TIPS had in three longitudinal studies of middle school students. While no significant impact was noted on math achievement in the study, the TIPS system improved family understanding of schoolwork. In a quasi-experimental study in science, TIPS students received higher science grades on their report cards than students who were not given family involvement instructions. In addition to the TIPS system, Epstein and Van Voorhis briefly discussed the concept of “homemade homework in which parents and children design a family-related activity for students to conduct on important activities and responsibilities at home” (2001, p. 190). It is used at home to practice school skills along with home conferences, which are assignments whereby, “students select a few examples of their writing, read or discuss them with a family partner, and write a reflection on the suggestions they received to improve their writing in the future” (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001, p. 190). The researchers suggested that schools and teachers should carefully consider the way they design homework. Parent involvement can be important, but learning effective design is critical.

Positive Effects Credited to Homework

In a study of data collected by the National Education Longitudinal Study from 1988 (NELS:88) (Hafner et al., 1990) and the Educational Longitudinal Study from 2002 (ELS:2002) (Ingels et al., 2005), Maltese et al. (2012) looked at which facets of student achievement homework influenced. NELS:88 and ELS:2002 data were collected from students who were in
math and science classes in tenth grade. The researchers stated that the data supported the idea that any time spent on homework raised standardized test scores; their results did not show a positive correlation between homework and grades. They also noted some mixed results in time spent on homework. Like Cooper et al. (2006) and Dettmers et al. (2010), the higher times spent on homework – more than 2 hours in this study – seemed to produce less benefit than just 1 to 2 hours. Like other researchers, Maltese et al. (2012) theorized that students who struggled spent more time on homework with fewer results and that saturation reduced benefit. Homework items structured like standardized test items resulted in higher scores on standardized tests. This effect may be one reason this study found stronger links between homework and test scores rather than homework and grades (Maltese et al., 2012). The researchers recommended that students at the secondary level spend more time on homework. According to their data, students participating in the NELS:88 and ELS:2002 surveys only reported being assigned about an hour a day in 2002.

Another study that analyzed NELS:88 data was conducted by Eren and Henderson (2011). Looking at the NELS:88 data (Hafner et al., 1990), Eren and Henderson discovered that the effect of homework varied among subjects. An extra hour each day of homework in math and English at the high school level positively affected standardized test scores. However, extra homework in history and science had no effect or even had the potential to decrease scores. Students of higher ability benefitted more from homework, and students whose parents had a high school diploma or some college showed higher positive effects from homework than students whose parents have either no high school diploma or a college degree or higher. They also noted a negative correlation to teacher quality. The teachers of perceived lower quality assigned more homework, leading to the conclusion that effective teachers were able to complete
instruction during class time. A limitation of the research is that the data were more than 20 years old and came solely from student responses to a survey (Eren & Henderson, 2011).

**Making Homework Effective for Students**

For some researchers and practitioners, the focus is how to make homework better for students. Differentiation is a suggestion that many have made (Frey & Fisher, 2010; Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Other valid strategies may also alleviate frustration and encourage students to become more engaged. Christopher (2008) noted that homework should be viewed by both teachers and students as rehearsal. As such, it should serve as a formative assessment that is not graded. Students should receive specific feedback so they can practice better to prepare themselves for summative assessments, the tests that are graded. Christopher gave specific feedback on tests as well so that students know which skills they should continue to practice.

When students pursue their hobbies, they practice because they want to improve or because they find it enjoyable. Cushman (2010) noted that the students she interviewed reported that most of their homework was rote, not requiring thought, or seemed to be busywork. If they could see the purpose, they would take greater responsibility for it. These thoughtful students shared that receiving feedback, not grading the work, differentiation, and giving them a chance to practice together would make homework experiences more meaningful to them. Students also suggested that teachers collaborate to keep the workload manageable so they could learn to enjoy the homework as practice (Cushman, 2010).

Vatterott (2011) was a critic of using homework as summative assessment. In the US, 70% of teachers grade homework. The reasons teachers gave for grading homework was ensuring that students do it, rewarding hard work, and giving student grades an extra boost. While teachers were often well meaning, grading homework skewed mastery assessment and in
the end did not help students. Vatterott (2011) suggested that feedback should still be given by marking for correctness, but no grade should be assigned, as practice should count as formative assessment. She contended that the purpose of homework should be learning and skill mastery, rather than a way to help students pass classes (Vatterott, 2011).

Vatterott (2014) suggested that if students were allowed to take some control of homework and focus on learning, a shift toward higher thinking skills could be made. As opposed to the rote assignments that are criticized by Cooper et al. (2006), Vatterott (2014) suggested having students diagnose their level of understanding about a topic and provide them with differentiated assignments. She also emphasized the importance of feedback and teaching students, that practice homework does not carry penalty. By using rubrics and checklists to help students with self-assessment, students could set goals for learning materials in a way that worked for them.

The role of feedback was explored by Fyfe (2016). When she studied fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade algebra students, Fyfe found that students who had less background knowledge in the topic benefitted more from feedback of any type than students who had higher knowledge of the subject. Students in this study completed computer-based homework and were given a variety of feedback methods including none. Feedback had no impact on students with a high knowledge level. However, for students with a lower knowledge level, feedback did not necessarily improve homework scores, but positively affected post-test scores. Fyfe (2016) did not suggest if the findings of the impact of feedback by computer would correlate to feedback from a live instructor.

An alternative to traditional homework is the flipped classroom concept. Rather than students completing their assigned practice at home, students access the instruction portion
through online programs and then complete work during class when the instructor is present. Álvarez (2011) studied a high school in Michigan that moved to the flipped classroom concept with the help of a grant and dramatically raised the student success level in the school. Unlike the stress caused by parents trying to help their children, the homework help came from the teacher. Some researchers have found that students appreciate the novelty of a different approach like the flipped classroom. Cooper et al. (2006) also noted in his interview that his assistant researcher Patall found similar results with students. When they were allowed to select homework activities, it raised their intrinsic motivation (Bembenutty, 2011b).

**Outside Activities that Impact Achievement**

Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) found that American students showed higher achievement scores when they had time for free reading and engaged in activities with their families such as church, games, and dining together. Time spent studying did not show a positive or negative effect on tests used to measure achievement. While the Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) study was designed to analyze the impact of family structure on children, the findings suggested that allowing students time with family and time for activities other than homework could significantly affect a student’s overall achievement.

Classroom practitioner Spencer (2014) noted that, with his children and his students, well-intentioned homework assignments were often completed by parents or students were compelled to ask for extensions so parents could provide materials after being paid. When he assigned skill-based work rather than projects, the completion rate was not much better. His decision to support learning over the perception of increasing achievement resulted in a monthly newsletter to parents that suggested extensions to the classroom learning. When parents
requested homework, Spencer would send assignments with answer keys. This practice work was not graded and was voluntary.

Suskind (2012), a first-grade teacher and adjunct professor, discussed the importance of play in developing the type of creative mind that could become highly productive in engineering. Unstructured time is necessary for this development and problem-solving skills are developed through creative play. Children develop internal motivation through play, unlike homework whereby punishment is a result when deadlines are not met. Suskind’s (2012) suggestion was to allow children time to play so creative thinking could be developed rather than merely training students to do rote tasks.

**Homework in the Elementary School**

During an 8-year study conducted in the 1980s, Chen and Stevenson (1989) collected cross-cultural data through academic tests, surveys, and interviews. The Chinese and Japanese cultures were viewed as more supportive and higher achieving in education than culture in the US. In 1980, the researchers studied students selected from Grades 1 and 5 who were living in Japan, China, and the US. They revisited the students from first grade when they entered fifth grade. The researchers conducted two other studies in other cities in China and the US in 1986. These further studies focused on students in Grades 1, 3, and 5. Their results showed more homework was assigned in the cities in Japan and China than in cities in the US. The achievement levels of students in China were higher; however, the Chinese children and their parents reported very positive attitudes about homework, causing the researchers to suggest that attitude toward homework, rather than amount, might be a bigger factor in academic success. Chinese students reported wanting to avoid the teacher’s punishment as a reason to complete
homework. Chinese and Japanese teachers also reported placing higher value on the impact homework has on learning (Chen & Stevenson, 1989).

Wright (2010) conducted a qualitative study using fourth-grade students from Tennessee. A theme she noted in both students and families was concern about the time spent doing homework. Wright conducted her research at the school where she served as principal and was aware of the common parent complaint of excessive homework. Teachers involved in the study had set their own homework policy and tried to limit the amount of homework to 1 hour or give students and parents strategies for managing their time. Teachers stated that the students who complained about excessive homework were the students who struggled to complete work in a timely manner. In her findings, Wright (2010) suggested devising a consistent homework policy for each school.

Montessori schools do not have a homework policy. Chattin-McNichols (2016) stated that in Montessori schools, students are grouped in two- or three-year age spans. The Montessori Method is very student centered and based on child development theory; rather than being tied to standardized assessments, these schools set their own curriculum. Bagby and Sulak (2014) explored the research on homework to see if including it in the Montessori curriculum would be appropriate. After analyzing the work of Cooper et al. (2006) and other researchers in psychological development, Bagby and Sulak (2014) found many reasons to oppose homework for elementary Montessori students and recommend it only for secondary Montessori students.

Rudman (2014) noted that the literature on homework effect in the elementary school is scant. He stated that very little research in primary schools has taken place in Great Britain. He also identified problematic factors of homework research, specifically that there is a lack of professional agreement on homework effect, a high correlation between negative attitude and
amount of homework, a shortage of differentiated homework activities, and issues with the role of student responsibility in homework. His qualitative research was completed in the school where he was the headmaster and the students ranged in age from 5 to 11 years old. In interviews with the students, Rudman (2014) found that students were more concerned with the enjoyment of homework than its academics. When the homework assignment was not interesting, students would complete it only if they understood how it helped them. Parent concerns included frustration when homework was too difficult or was assigned during holiday breaks. Parents showed the greatest support for the idea that homework prepares students for secondary school. While personalizing homework was mentioned as an area in which teachers could improve, Rudman stated that individual differentiation was not necessary, but offering choices would suffice. In his final statements, Rudman (2014) stated that well-designed homework with clear purpose had the potential to increase learning and child development.

Research Debates

The effect that homework actually has is debated often. Cooper et al. (2006) did a meta-analysis of the research on homework and discovered that very little of the published and unpublished research has strongly confirmed specific homework practices to be beneficial; there are simply too many variables to be considered regarding homework practice. To summarize, Cooper et al. (2006) found that elementary students showed no benefit or a negative effect from homework, middle and high school students showed moderate gains on standardized tests because of homework, and that more research that is experimental should be conducted. The difficulty of conducting experimental research stemmed from the fact that, if homework is beneficial, excluding a group from the benefit is not ethical (Cooper et al., 2006).
Cooper et al. (2006) also noted the nonacademic purposes of homework. Many teachers in early elementary grades assign homework to encourage learning outside school. A problem noted with this, and expounded on by Kohn (2006), is that NEA (2006) time recommendations are being ignored by some teachers and young students are sometimes doing more work than their high school counterparts. This finding is supported by Loveless (2014). Kohn identified character building and learning to take initiative as nonacademic benefits posited by homework advocates and admitted that there was no research to support these assertions. While Kohn severely criticized almost all the research and those researchers who support homework, Marzano and Pickering (2007) suggested that although some of Kohn’s (2006) arguments have merit, he did not have a clear understanding of the positive research findings.

Simplicio (2005) examined discussions by two sets of homework critics and linked his perceptions to theirs. He cited three points about the problems with homework research. First, there is very little consistency in homework assignments across teachers, grade levels, and schools. Each school system devises a policy, but systems do not oversee planning or teacher coordination of assignments. Cooper (1989b) mentioned the same problem when students had multiple teachers. Simplicio’s (2005) second point is that homework assignments can be ineffective when teachers assign extension work to students who do not yet understand the skill. He contended that other effects of this problem are that students lose the enjoyment of learning and parents may try to help by doing the work for them. His third point regarding the homework problem is that students learn that teachers often grade on completion instead of accuracy, so they rush through the assignment to turn in something, which can impede their learning of the material. Even with these issues, Simplicio (2005) trusted that homework had value. His
recommendation was to create supervised learning environments at the school so students could get the support they needed; he said that students would learn more in this situation.

Jackson (2007) suggested that research could not reveal the impact of homework. He stated that anecdotal evidence was powerful but did not translate into quantitative data. It was not possible to quantify nonacademic purposes such as developing good habits. By the time students reached secondary school age, they had accumulated many years of homework practice and begun to rebel against it. During the elementary and middle school years, students learned that teachers minimized homework because fewer students did it as they progressed through the grade levels. Homework became a punishment for teachers who had to plan separately for those who finished and those who did not. When students began high school and homework affected achievement, they had amassed too many negative experiences with homework. According to Jackson (2007), well-designed homework played a significant role in secondary success, but he emphasized that early elementary homework should be carefully considered.

Many of the questions about research on homework were explored by Cameron and Bartel (2009). They conducted two surveys in Canada with teachers and parents. Noting that many of the same issues debated in the US were also occurring in Canada, they sought to understand homework issues. Based on their survey results, Cameron and Bartel found large discrepancies between the amount of time the teachers thought the homework they assigned would take and the actual time students spent. They also stated that a confounding element of homework was that time spent on homework varied widely from student to student, by day, and by assignment. Parents reported being unhappy with the difficulty of homework, its impact on family time, and the negative feelings toward school that homework stress created in their children. Cameron and Bartel (2009) also noted that teachers who were parents held a more
negative attitude toward homework than other teachers did. Parents supported homework less when the work was drill or review. As an outcome of these findings, the Minister of Education in Canada asked each school board to review policies on homework.

The Center for Public Education (CPE) (2017) hosts a website that provides articles dealing with many research topics including the homework debate so members of the public can read the information in non-technical language. They cite many of the same sources used in this study and do not promote nor vilify the practice of homework. They reinforce that homework research is not clear, there are many research studies published regularly that refute each other, and that there seems to be greater benefit from homework as students get older.

Summary of the Literature

The many variables involved in homework practice have prevented researchers from coming to a consensus about the effect homework has on student achievement. Cooper (1989b) suggested that because the practice may be beneficial, it would be unethical to conduct true experimental studies that would withhold homework from students. He noted that because many of the studies that had been carried out were flawed, additional longitudinal and quasi-experimental studies should be conducted (Cooper et al., 2006).

Cooper et al. (2006) said that homework was used for many purposes, both academic and nonacademic. Younger students may develop work ethic and study skills from homework, while older students may increase their learning of content. It has been very challenging to quantify the nonacademic purposes of homework (Jackson, 2007), whereas, many studies on the effect of homework on academic achievement have been done (Chang et al., 2014; Fernández-Alonso et al., 2015; Trautwein et al., 2009; Xu, 2009).
Many studies have been used to examine the amount of time spent on homework as an indicator of achievement or effectiveness (Cooper et al., 2006; Eren & Henderson, 2011; Gill & Schlossman, 2003; Loveless, 2014). Critics of homework have said that too much time spent on homework results in stress and negative outcomes (Bennett & Kalish, 2006; Cooper, 2001; Galloway & Pope, 2007; Galloway et al., 2013; Winch, 2011). Many studies show a stronger correlation to achievement when effort and completion of homework are considered than there is with time spent on homework. Students who struggle or become easily distracted tend to spend more time on homework but get less benefit from it (Flunger et al., 2015; Maltese, et al., 2012; Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

Parents may help their children with homework, but some parents create unnecessary stress by pushing students too much or confusing them by presenting different methods of learning (Lange & Meaney, 2011; Moroni et al., 2015; Núñez et al., 2015; Pressman et al., 2015). Other parents appreciate the connection to what their students are learning and support homework practices (Fox, 2016; Tam & Chan, 2009; Van Voorhis, 2011).

One of the biggest complaints from homework critics comes from how much time young children are expected to spend on homework (Bennett & Kalish, 2006; Kohn 2006; Kralovec & Buell, 2001). Loveless (2014) acknowledged that the amount of time young children spent on homework has risen; however, it is still not as high as critics claim. For high-achieving high school students who push themselves, homework can take a toll on sleep, family relations, and extra-curricular activities, which can lead to depression (Conner et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2013; Pope, 2010). Systems, schools, and teachers should coordinate homework planning to keep students from being overwhelmed (Cooper, 1989b; Simplicio, 2005). Critics advocate for eliminating all but well-designed, necessary homework (Abeles, 2009; Kohn, 2006).
To be effective, homework must be well designed and differentiated (Cushman, 2010; Frey & Fisher, 2011; Jackson, 2007; Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Teachers should be realistic about the time different students will need to complete assignments (Cameron & Bartel, 2009; Chen & Stevenson, 1989). Homework that is interactive and affords students choice often inspires students to do the work (Cushman, 2010; Vatterott, 2014). To be most effective, students should receive timely feedback and no grades (Fyfe, 2016; Vatterott, 2011). Researchers have found that free time for creative activities with families can enhance learning without formal homework (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Spencer, 2014; Suskind, 2012).

Because many studies show that homework is more effective in improving achievement for secondary students than it is for elementary students, many researchers and critics disagree on assigning homework in the elementary school (Bagby & Sulak, 2014; Cooper, 1989b; Jackson, 2007). Some researchers studying elementary school homework found that parents and students see positive outcomes from homework (Rudman, 2014).
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and parent perceptions of the effectiveness of homework and to discover how teachers and parents perceive homework effectiveness and purpose for different ages of students. Additionally, the purpose was to learn how teachers with different years of experience viewed homework and determine the homework design experiences teachers have had in their professional development – both preservice and inservice. In this nonexperimental quantitative study, the researcher examined and analyzed the answers provided on an anonymous voluntary survey sent electronically to educators in five school systems in northeast Tennessee. Parents were also given the opportunity to complete a voluntary anonymous survey.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

This nonexperimental quantitative study used six research questions and associated null hypotheses to examine differences between teacher and parent perceptions of homework, teacher perceptions based on years of experience, and teacher perceptions based on grade level taught.

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?

$H_0$:$I_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.

RQ2: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?
H₀₂₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.

RQ₃: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?

H₀₃₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.

RQ₄: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

H₀₄₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

RQ₅: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

H₀₅₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

RQ₆: Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?
H₀6₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

Instrumentation

A survey was designed by the researcher and used specifically for this study. After a preliminary pilot study of the survey was conducted with teachers in educational leadership classes, the survey was modified based on their feedback before it was sent to participating school system teachers and parents. The final version contained 11 items exploring perceptions of homework designed with a 6-point Likert-type scale with an area for additional comments included for each item. Item 1 determined agreement to participate in the survey; respondents who did not agree were excluded from the results. Items 2, 3, 7, and 8 addressed RQs 1, 2, and 3 pertaining to homework effectiveness perceptions. Items 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12 addressed RQs 4, 5, and 6 pertaining to homework purpose perceptions.

Item 13- *Homework causes tension in homes* was used to gather perceptions of homework tension and Item 14- *Typical homework assignments include* was used to identify the types of homework sent home. Item 15- *I am answering questions as a...* was used to determine if the respondent was a teacher or parent and determined which items the respondent should address (Teachers: Items 16-19 or Parents: Item 20). Item 16- *I feel confident designing homework assignments because I have training from college or professional development in homework design* was used to gather data from teachers about their training in homework design and Items 17- *The grade band in which I teach includes*, 18- *My years of teaching experience is*, and 19- *My current position in education is* were used to collect demographic data from teachers. Item 20- *My child is in the following grade*, was completed only by parents to determine their child’s
grade in school. Items 13-\textit{Homework causes tension in homes}, 14-\textit{Typical homework assignments include}, and 16-\textit{I feel confident designing homework assignments because I have training from college or professional development in homework design}, were not analyzed quantitatively, but were discussed in the summary. The demographic data collected in the survey was specific to the analysis. No items identifying school systems or individuals were included in the survey.

\textbf{Sample}

Five school systems in northeast Tennessee were surveyed for this study: Greene County Schools, Greeneville City Schools, Hawkins County Schools, Rogersville City School, and Unicoi County Schools. All employees and parents of students in the five school systems were invited to participate. Participants of the study included 441 employees and 134 parents from five school systems in northeast Tennessee. The sample consisted of the teachers and parents who responded to the survey. All responses were included in the study. School systems were selected based on similar geographic and demographic populations.

\textbf{Data Collection}

Prior to beginning this study, the researcher obtained the required permissions from her dissertation committee, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Tennessee State University, and the directors of the school systems (Appendix B). Data were collected after asking participating school systems to send all employees an email that included a link to the electronic survey; \textit{Survey Monkey} was used as the electronic survey platform (Appendix A). The researcher contacted principals in Greene County to request that parent participation be solicited through school newsletters and school websites; the other schools systems declined to send the survey link in newsletters or post it on websites. Participating schools were provided with an introductory message for inclusion in newsletters distributed to parents, so those with Internet
access could complete the electronic survey. Teachers who were also parents or guardians of school-aged students were asked to complete the survey twice, once for each of their roles. To protect the anonymity of all respondents, no identifying information was collected.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0 data analysis program was used to analyze data collected from the survey instrument. Each research question had a corresponding null hypothesis. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance. Independent t-tests were used to analyze and compare perceptions of homework effectiveness and homework purpose for Research Questions 1 and 4. Research Questions 2, 3, 5, and 6 were analyzed using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test to compare the differences among the grade level bands and the years of teacher experience.

Summary of the Chapter

A survey was used to gather data from teachers and parents in five school systems in northeast Tennessee. Teachers received an introduction to the study and the electronic survey link through their school email. Their participation was voluntary and anonymous. Parent participation was solicited through school newsletters and websites. Employees who were also parents were asked to complete the survey twice by recording their responses as teacher once and parent once.

By conducting a survey to determine what perceptions teachers and parents in northeast Tennessee have of homework effectiveness and homework purpose, the researcher was able to compare perceptions between parents and teachers, among teachers of different grade levels, and among teachers with different years of experience. Statistical analysis of data was conducted using Independent t-tests and ANOVAs. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to discover teacher and parent perceptions of homework effectiveness and homework purpose. The researcher analyzed survey responses on the perception of homework effectiveness and homework purpose among parents and teachers, teachers of different grade levels, and teachers with different years of experience. Participants in the study included 441 employees and 134 parents from five school systems in northeast Tennessee.

In this chapter, data were presented and analyzed to answer six research questions and six corresponding null hypotheses. Data were collected through an anonymous online survey that was distributed to participants by the school systems. Data were analyzed from 11 survey items measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale. Participants were given the option to comment on each item. Comments were not statistically analyzed, but were discussed in Chapter 5.

Research Question 1

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?*

\[ H_{01}: \text{There is no significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.} \]

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate differences among the mean scores of the perception of homework effectiveness dimension and teachers and parents. The mean effectiveness score was the test variable and the grouping variable was teacher or parent. The test was significant, \( t(573) = 3.68, p < .001 \). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Parents (\( M = 3.43, SD = .94 \)) showed a significantly higher perception of homework
effectiveness than teachers showed ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .72$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.45 to -.11. Figure 1 shows the distribution for the two groups.

![Box Plot](image)

**Figure 1.** Mean scores for teacher and parent groups on homework effectiveness dimension. (o indicates cases with extreme values)

**Research Question 2**

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?
Hₐ2₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among grade level bands of teachers and the perception of homework effectiveness dimension. The factor variable included five levels (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”). An additional group labeled “other” was added to the levels to include survey responses that did not fit the pre-designated categories. The “other” group was comprised of educators such as administrators and special education or related arts teachers who taught k-8. The dependent variable was the mean perception of homework effectiveness score. The ANOVA was significant, $F(4, 436) = 3.29, p = .011$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between the perception of homework effectiveness and the grade level band taught, as assessed by the $\eta^2$, was large (.29).

Because the overall $F$ test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate pairwise difference among the means of the five groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. There was a significant difference in the means between the 9-12 group and the “other” group ($p = .030$) with the “other” group having a higher perception of homework effectiveness. However, there was not a significant difference between the means of the k-2 group ($p = .110$), 3-5 group ($p = .853$), and the 6-8 group ($p = .261$). It appears that the “other” group had a higher perception of homework effectiveness than the 9-12 group did. There were no significant differences among the grade level bands. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the five groups are reported in Table 1. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the groups.
### Table 1

*Pairwise Differences of Grade Level Bands, Effectiveness Dimension*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>k-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.04 to .72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.24 to .52</td>
<td>-.48 to .08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-.11 to .69</td>
<td>-.35 to .26</td>
<td>-.15 to .46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.02 to .75</td>
<td>-.21 to .31</td>
<td>-.01 to .51</td>
<td>-.19 to .38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.* Mean scores for grade band groups on homework effectiveness dimension. (○ indicates cases with extreme values)
Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among levels of teacher experience and the perception of homework effectiveness dimension. The factor variable included four levels (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years). The dependent variable was the mean perception of homework effectiveness score. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 435) = 1.30, p = .273$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the levels of teacher experience, as assessed by $\eta^2$, was small (.01). The results indicate that the number of years of teacher experience did not significantly affect their perception of homework effectiveness. The means and standard deviations for the four groups are reported in Table 2. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the groups.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Teacher Experience, Effectiveness Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

H₀₄₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate differences among the mean scores of the perception of homework purpose dimension and teachers and parents. The mean purpose score was the test variable and the grouping variable was teacher or parent. The test was
significant, \( t(573) = 3.15, p = .002 \). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Parents (\( M = 3.63, SD = .90 \)) showed a significantly higher perception of homework purpose than teachers showed (\( M = 3.38, SD = .76 \)). The 95\% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.42 to -.08. Figure 4 shows the distribution for the two groups.

![Box plot showing mean scores for teacher and parent groups on homework purpose dimension.](image)

*Figure 4. Mean scores for teacher and parent groups on homework purpose dimension. (o indicates cases with extreme values)*

**Research Question 5**

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?*
H051: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among grade level bands of teachers and the perception of homework purpose dimension. The factor variable included five levels (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”). The “other” group was comprised of educators whose assignment did not fit the pre-designated categories, such as administrators and special education or related arts teachers who taught k-8. The dependent variable was the mean perception of homework purpose score. The ANOVA was significant, $F(4, 436) = 4.43, p = .002$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between the perception of homework purpose and the grade level band taught, as assessed by the $\eta^2$, was large (.39).

Because the overall $F$ test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate pairwise difference among the means of the five groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. There was a significant difference in the means between the 9-12 group and the “other” group ($p = .007$) and between the 9-12 group and the 3-5 group ($p = .014$). However, there was not a significant difference between the means of the k-2 group ($p = .077$) and the 6-8 group ($p = .533$). It appears that the 9-12 group had a higher perception of homework purpose than the 3-5 group and the “other” group. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the five groups are reported in Table 3. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the groups.
Table 3

*Pairwise Differences of Grade Level Bands, Purpose Dimension*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>k-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-.18 to .62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>-.24 to .56</td>
<td>-.36 to .24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.11 to .73</td>
<td>-.24 to .41</td>
<td>-.18 to .47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.09 to .86</td>
<td>-.02 to .53</td>
<td>.04 to .56</td>
<td>-.13 to .47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.* Mean scores for grade band groups on homework purpose dimension. (o indicates cases with extreme values)
Research Question 6

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

H₀6₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among levels of teacher experience and the perception of homework purpose dimension. The factor variable included four levels (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years). The dependent variable was the mean perception of homework purpose score. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 435) = .92, p = .433$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between the levels of teacher experience, as assessed by $\eta^2$, was small (.01). The results indicate that the number of years of teacher experience did not significantly affect their perception of homework purpose. The means and standard deviations for the four groups are reported in Table 4. Figure 6 shows the distribution of the groups.

Table 4

Levels of Teacher Experience, Purpose Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 or more</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Summary

Analysis of the data collected through a survey of 573 teachers and parents led the researcher to observe that parents have a significantly higher perception of the effectiveness and purpose of homework than teachers do. Regarding groups of teachers divided by grade level bands, perception of homework effectiveness in the “other” group was significantly higher than the 9-12 group but showed no significant differences among the k-2, 3-5, and 6-8 groups. For the same sample of teachers divided by grand level bands, perception of homework purpose was significantly higher in the 9-12 group than in the 3-5 group and the “other” group but showed no
significant difference in the k-2 and 6-8 groups. There were no significant differences noted among the level of teacher experience groups in perceptions of homework effectiveness or homework purpose.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and parent perceptions of the effectiveness of homework and to discover how teachers and parents perceive homework effectiveness and purpose for different ages of students. Additionally, the purpose was to learn how teachers with different years of experience viewed homework and determine the homework design experiences teachers have had in their professional development – both preservice and inservice.

Conclusions of Findings

The researcher analyzed survey responses to determine if differences existed among the perceptions of teachers and parents, teachers of different grade bands, and teachers of different levels of experience. The data analyses reported were based on six research questions with corresponding null hypotheses that were tested at the .05 level of significance. The independent variables in the study were grade level bands and levels of teacher experience. The dependent variables were homework effectiveness mean scores and homework purpose mean scores. The statistical analysis reported in this study was based on the six research questions presented in Chapters 1 and 3. The online survey was conducted during May of 2017.

Research Question 1

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?*

An independent-samples t test was performed to evaluate differences in the mean scores of the perception of homework effectiveness dimension between teachers and parents. There was
a significant difference in the scores with parents perceiving homework to be more effective than teachers perceived.

The survey allowed additional comments. Some teacher comments suggested that homework allowed students to cheat, have parents complete work for them, or that some parents were not able to help students because teaching methods were different in the past. Similar teacher concerns probably influenced those who answered without comment, which resulted in the parent perception of homework effectiveness to appear higher. Because many teachers give grades for homework, parents likely equate good grades with effectiveness (Vatterott, 2011). Van Voorhis (2011) found that parents perceive homework as having a positive benefit on academic success. The findings of this study support the research.

**Research Question 2**

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) and the perception of homework effectiveness dimension. Because of a high number of additional comments from teachers who taught a wider variety of grades than the bands listed, an additional group was added and called “other” (educators whose assignment did not fit the pre-designated categories, such as administrators and special education or related arts teachers who taught k-8). There was a significant difference in the means between the 9-12 and the “other” group with the “other” group having a higher perception of homework effectiveness. There were no significant differences among the grade level bands regarding teacher perceptions of homework effectiveness.
One comment came from a respondent who identified as an administrator in the “other” group, “If the homework is meaningful and enhances the knowledge of the subject [it is an effective way to increase student achievement].” A teacher from the 9-12 group stated, “If it is to enhance learning or to apply the learning – yes – but not just assign homework for the sake of assigning homework.” The “other” group perceiving homework effectiveness to be higher than the 9-12 group was likely based on negative perceptions of homework effectiveness by the 9-12 group. Conner et al. (2009) noted negative perceptions of homework effectiveness at the high school level based on academic stress. The findings of this study support the research.

**Research Question 3**

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework effectiveness dimension of the homework survey?*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) and the perception of homework effectiveness dimension. There were no significant differences among any of the groups. The results indicate that the number of years of teacher experience did not significantly affect their perception of homework effectiveness. Viadero (2009) found similar results in her analysis; she found that teachers with 21 or more years of experience had a higher perception that homework helped students reach academic goals, but did not state statistical significance to teachers with other levels of experience.

**Research Question 4**

*Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between teachers and parents on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?*
An independent-samples t test was performed to evaluate differences among the mean scores of the perception of homework purpose dimension and teachers and parents. Parents showed a significantly higher perception of homework purpose than teachers did.

Not all parents perceived homework purpose as positive. One parent selected *strongly disagree* for Item 5-*Homework is an effective way to promote positive attitudes about learning*, making this comment, “*strongly disagree* – it makes my children hate school.” Another parent commented, “Students need time to be children and spend time with family.” One parent of a high school student stated, “My child has never liked school and hates homework. There is always tension/frustration when he has a lot.” Teachers who chose to comment also had similar negative perceptions of purpose. One teacher wrote, “I think it does just the opposite. Would you have a positive attitude if you worked all day and then went home and had to work more?” Another teacher selected *disagree* for the concept that homework promotes good work habits, “Good work habits should be practiced throughout the school day.” A negative middle school teacher’s response was, “Homework is something that teachers feel they must give. It serves very little purpose.” While overall parent perception of homework purpose was higher than teachers’ perceptions, parent perceptions reflect their children’s experiences. Students with a negative attitude about school respond to homework negatively. Parents with negative experiences were more likely to comment rather than just select from *agree* or *disagree* choices. Bennett and Kalish (2006) found similar negative outcomes from parents whose children disliked homework. Bembenutty (2011a) discussed the positive side of homework purpose when students learn to practice self-regulation and other nonacademic purposes. The findings of this study support the research.
Research Question 5

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship among grade level bands of teachers (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and “other”) and the perception of homework purpose dimension. There was a significant difference in the means between the 9-12 and the “other” group and between the 9-12 group and the 3-5 group. There were no significant differences between the k-2 and 6-8 grade level groups regarding teacher perception of homework effectiveness. The 9-12 group appeared to have a higher perception of homework purpose than the 3-5 group and the “other” group.

A 9-12 teacher commented, “The primary purpose of homework is to ensure that students are prepared for postsecondary [education]. If this preparation can be done within the school day, then homework is unnecessary.” While the end of the statement does not support homework, the beginning recommends giving homework when necessary. A 3-5 teacher commented, “Students are also kids – they need time to be social and energetic! So – NO.” A comment from an administrator in the “other” group was, “It depends on the child completing the homework and the support the child has at home.” This same respondent answered other purpose questions with disagree and somewhat disagree so the comment should be perceived more as negative. The “other” group and the 3-5 group appear to recognize student negative attitude issues associated with homework; the 9-12 group recognizes the importance of preparing students for their future education by whatever means necessary. Jackson (2007) noted that negative attitudes toward homework began to emerge in elementary school, as students tired of the constant drain on their
time. Pope (2010) noted the same phenomenon with high-achieving high school students. The findings of this study support the research.

**Research Question 6**

Is there a significant difference in the mean scores among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) on the perception of homework purpose dimension of the homework survey?

A one-way analysis of variance was performed to evaluate the relationship among levels of teacher experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years) and the perception of homework purpose dimension. There were no significant differences among any of the groups. The results indicate that the number of years of teacher experience did not significantly affect their perception of homework purpose.

**Additional Items Analysis**

Some of the items included in the survey were designed to collect data that were not statistically analyzed for comparisons but would provide deeper information on other perceptions of homework. On Item 13-*Homework causes tension in homes*, 80.6% of all respondents *strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree* that homework causes tension in homes. Parents *strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree* 80.4% and teachers *strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree* 75.9%. None of the parents surveyed elected to write a comment for that item. One teacher said, “Parents who are unable to help their children may be more inclined to place a lesser emphasis on the work at all.” Another teacher commented, “Yes, particularly in those homes where there is not sufficient support or a current knowledge base.” Many teachers who commented had alternative views of why homework causes tension including, “depends on how mature parents
are” and “parents and students think extra-curricular sports/activities are more important.” One teacher included a detailed comment on the issue,

There are really three types of parents: 1) those who expect homework therefore want it, 2) those who think homework is cruel and unusual punishment, and 3) those who either are not involved or simply do not care. Note: there are more of #3 than #1 and #2 combined.

The dynamic of student-parent interaction appeared to be a major factor in the comments by teachers on the perception of stress. No particular comment on Item 13-Homework causes tension in homes, addressed the issue regarding the amount of homework being the cause of the stress. Other comments on different items suggested that issues with homework were based on large amounts being assigned and on quality of homework assignments. Issues of parent interaction resulting in tension in homes caused by homework is documented in the literature (Lange & Meaney, 2011; Moroni et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015; Pressman et al., 2015.)

Teachers responded to Item 16-I feel confident designing homework assignments because I have training from college or professional development in homework design. Overall, 66.1% of teachers strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the item. The percentage varied among the levels of experience groups. The most confident (77.7%) were teachers with 6-10 years of experience. The group with the least confidence (57.5%) was the group with 16+ years of experience. A teacher with over 16 years of experience commented, “Homework design was not, nor has been, a topic in any of my college coursework or professional development opportunities.” Another teacher from the same experience group said, “I feel confident in assigning work when needed because I use data to drive instruction and because I know my students... not because I received training. I don’t remember how to assign homework even being discussed in school.” Based on responses to the survey, teacher participants in east Tennessee indicate they are qualified and confident in designing and assigning homework. Loveless (2014)
and Tas et al. (2014) noted a lack of professional development for teachers; the trend in east Tennessee, based on results of this survey, appears to be that college coursework and professional development are being implemented more now than in the past. Item 14—Typical homework assignments include, asked teachers and parents to identify types of homework that were assigned by teachers. Table 5 shows the responses by percentage of types of homework reported by grade level.

Table 5
Types of Homework Assigned, Percentages Broken Down by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Rote Practice</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Worksheets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>k-2</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications for Practice

The findings and conclusions of this study have enabled the researcher to note the following recommendations for homework practice:

1. Teachers perceived that the most effective homework assignments were reading and doing memorization or rote practice, especially in the k-2 and 3-5 groups. Some teachers expressed concern in comments that homework assignments were not completed by students, either because parents assisted too much or because students cheated. One teacher said, “Class work is more important than homework.” For the k-2 and 3-5 grade levels, limiting homework to reading and rote practice would be good practice (Frey & Fisher, 2011). Teachers should limit
homework assignments to self-selected reading and rote practice of skills that need reinforcement.

2. The nonacademic purposes of homework including causing students to develop good work habits, developing a positive attitude about learning, and maximizing time spent on learning outside of school may not be as positive as parents who participated in this survey perceived. Teachers see the student attitudes and morale differently than parents do. As Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) noted, spending time together eating dinner, playing games, and participating in church activities may foster achievement more effectively than homework without causing the negative bias toward school and learning that some students develop in response to homework. Parents should train their children in the areas of good work habits and positive attitudes at home. Teachers should not assign homework in an effort to improve learning attitudes.

3. Tension in homes caused by homework may be alleviated by stronger communication between teachers and parents. Explicit instructions should be sent home that outline how much or what type of help is expected or allowed from parents (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001). In cases where the tension of homework is caused by the amount of time homework takes, teachers should coordinate efforts to follow the recommendations for time limits suggested by Cooper (1989b) and the NEA (2006). Teachers and administrators should communicate specific expectations with parents on a regular basis.

4. While teacher experiences in coursework and professional development on homework vary widely, educational institutions and school systems should
intentionally plan training on designing and assigning homework (Cooper, 1989a; Viadero, 2009). School systems that have formal homework policies should provide professional development specifically on those policies.

**Implications for Further Research**

Results of this study indicate that parents have a higher perception of homework effectiveness and purpose than teachers do. The results also suggest that there are differences in the perception of homework effectiveness and purpose among teachers in different grade bands. The following recommendations are identified for future research regarding homework perceptions:

1. Conduct research into the impact of eliminating homework grades. Vatterott (2011) suggested that homework should not be included in grading practices. Parent perceptions of homework effectiveness may change if homework were not graded. Research may help teachers and parents recognize whether or not homework enhances learning or is relied on to enhance grades.

2. Conduct large scale, longitudinal research on homework effectiveness. This suggestion was also made by Cooper et al. (2006).

3. Use qualitative research to examine teacher, parent, and student perspectives of homework effectiveness and purpose.

4. Conduct an experimental study with teachers giving the experimental group specific training in homework design and compare student outcomes at the end of the study.

5. Conduct a quantitative study among schools that do not assign homework and schools that do assign homework. Standardized test scores could be analyzed to determine the impact of homework effectiveness.
6. Conduct an experimental study in which teachers provide students with homework options. Differentiated assignments, design-your-own homework, and menus of homework options could be offered to determine which types of choices benefit student learning.

7. Conduct a qualitative or quantitative study to examine the perceptions of parents of students in different grade levels on the impact of homework.

Chapter Summary

The objective of this quantitative research was to discover if perceptions of homework effectiveness and homework purpose differed between teachers and parents, teachers in different grade bands, and teachers with different levels of experience in five school systems in east Tennessee. A total of 573 teachers and parents consented to participate in an anonymous online survey. The findings of this study were organized to answer six research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses. Statistically analyzed survey items were reported in Chapter 4. Conclusions were drawn from the analyses; discussion of Items 13-*Homework causes tension in homes*, 14-*Typical homework assignments include*, and 16-*I feel confident designing homework assignments because I have training from college or professional development in homework design*, were presented. The findings indicated that many of the same debates that exist in the literature were issues within the sampled population. Recommendations for practice as well as implications for future research were made based on the findings and conclusions.

Study Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher and parent perceptions of homework effectiveness and homework purpose. Specifically, the researcher examined teacher and parent perceptions, perceptions of teachers in different grade level bands, and perceptions of teachers
with different levels of experience. In this nonexperimental quantitative study, the researcher examined and analyzed the answers provided on an anonymous survey provided electronically to educators and parents of students in five school systems in northeast Tennessee.

The results of the survey showed that parents had a higher perception of both homework effectiveness and homework purpose. Homework effectiveness was perceived as higher by the “other” group in comparison to the 9-12 group of teachers. There were no significant differences in perception of homework effectiveness among the k-2, 3-5, and 6-8 groups of teachers. Homework purpose was perceived as higher in the 9-12 group than in the 3-5 group and the “other” group. No significant differences were found between the k-2 and 6-8 groups of teachers on homework purpose. There was no significant difference between perception of homework effectiveness and homework purpose among teachers with different levels of experience.

This study revealed that parents tend to perceive greater benefit in homework for both effectiveness and purpose than teachers do. While the level of teacher experience does not influence teacher perception of homework effectiveness or purpose, there are some significant differences in perceptions of teachers by different grade level bands. Recommendations are made to conduct further research on the topic of homework design, the impact of grading policies on homework perceptions, and homework differentiation.


Suskind, D. (2012). What students would do if they did not do their homework: Research consistently shows that homework has only a slight effect on educational achievement. So, why do teachers continue to assign homework? *Phi Delta Kappan, 94*(1), 52-55. (EJ997962). doi:10.1177/003172171209400110


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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey

Perceptions of Homework

Welcome to My Survey

Dear Participant:

My name is Christy Hoeke, and I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on a Doctorate in Education in Educational Leadership. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a dissertation study. The name of my research study is Perceptions of Homework.

The purpose of this study is to determine what perceptions of homework teachers and parents have. I would like to give a brief survey to teachers and parents/guardians of students attending public schools using Survey Monkey. It should take less than 10 minutes to finish. You will be asked questions about your beliefs on homework, how effective it is and what its purpose is. Since this study deals with homework, there are no risks to you. However, you may also feel better after you have had the chance to express yourself about your beliefs. This study may benefit you or others by updating or changing local policies about homework.

Your confidentiality will be protected as best we can. Since we are using technology no guarantees can be made about the interception of data sent over the Internet by any third parties, just like with emails. We will make every effort to make sure that your name is not linked with your answers. Survey Monkey has security features that will be used: IP addresses will not be collected and encryption software will be used. Although your rights and privacy will be protected, the East Tennessee State University (ETSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) and people working on this research can view the study records.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to take part in this study. You can quit at any time. You can exit the online survey form if you want to stop completely.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Christy Hoeke, at 423-329-6430. I am working on this project together with my professor Dr. Virginia Foley. You may reach her at 423-439-7615. Also, you may call the chairperson of the IRB at ETSU at 423-439-6054 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone who is not with the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439-6002.

Sincerely,
Christy Hoeke

Clicking the AGREE button below indicates:

✓ I have read the above information
✓ I agree to volunteer
✓ I am a parent or guardian of a student/or I am a teacher
✓ I am at least 18 years old

Ver. 02/15/17

Approved by ETSU Campus IRB/Approval Date: February 15, 2017

1. I agree to participate in this survey.
   □ I AGREE    □ I DO NOT AGREE
**Perceptions**

*2.  It is important to assign homework to students to enhance learning.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*3.  Homework is an effective way to increase student achievement.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*4.  A primary purpose of homework is to maximize time spent on learning outside school.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*5.  Homework is an effective way to promote positive attitudes about learning.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*6.  Homework is an effective way to promote good work habits.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*7.  Students are expected to complete homework with parental assistance.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

*8.  Students are expected to complete homework independently.  
Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree  
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  

*Additional comments:_____________________________________________________________________

100
*9.  Parents want students to have homework.
   Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
   
   Additional comments: ____________________________________________

*10. The school/school system expects teachers to assign homework.
    Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
    
    Additional comments: ____________________________________________

*11. Students are not assigned work to bring home, but are expected to finish work at home when not completed in class.
    Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
    
    Additional comments: ____________________________________________

*12. Students bring work home because the teacher does not have sufficient time to cover required standards in class.
    Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
    
    Additional comments: ____________________________________________

13. Homework causes tension in homes.
    Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
    
    Additional comments: ____________________________________________

14. Typical homework assignments include (you may select more than one option):
   ☐ Reading
   ☐ Rote practice (i.e. math facts, spelling)
   ☐ Projects
   ☐ Worksheets
   ☐ Other (please specify): ____________________________________________

15. I am answering questions as a
   ☐ Teacher (Please answer items 16-19 only)
   ☐ Parent (Please answer item 20 only)
16. I feel confident designing homework assignments because I have training from college or professional development in homework design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

17. The grade band in which I teach includes (please select the choice that most closely matches your current assignment.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten-2nd Grade</th>
<th>3rd-5th Grade</th>
<th>6th-8th Grade</th>
<th>9th-12th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

18. My years of teaching experience is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11-15 Years</th>
<th>16 or More Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

19. My current position in education is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom teacher</th>
<th>Special education</th>
<th>Specialist, interventionist, academic coach</th>
<th>Administrator-principal or central office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

20. My child is in the following grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten-2nd Grade</th>
<th>3rd-5th Grade</th>
<th>6th-8th Grade</th>
<th>9th-12th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments: _______________________________________________________
Appendix B

School System Approval

Request to Conduct Survey/Research
In
Greene County Schools

Name: Christy Hoeke
Address: 
Phone Number: 
Organization: ETSU

Attach document(s) in response to each item listed.
• State the purpose of the survey/research.
• Describe in detail how the survey/research will be conducted. Include:
  - How the survey/research will be conducted
  - When the survey/research will be conducted (duration, time of day, etc.)
  - Where the survey/research will be conducted
• List names and contact information of all surveyors/researchers.
• List expected participants (i.e., principals, teachers, students & grade-level).
• Explain how results will be used.
• Explain how the results will be distributed
• Attach a copy of the parent/guardian consent, if needed.
• Attach a copy of the Internal Review Board (IRB), if the research is for a university or college.

NOTE: The director of schools reserves the right to rescind permission for the survey/research at any time.

Your signature documents that the information contained in this packet is accurate and results will not be used or distributed in any manner other than listed.

Christy Hoeke  
Signature  
2/18/17  
Date

Submit complete request to the director of schools for approval

☑ Approved  
D. M.  
Director of Schools Signature  
2/19/17  
Date

☐ Not Approved
VITA

CHRISTY HOEKE

Education:  
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, Ed.D.,  
Educational Leadership, August 2017.  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, Ed.S., Reading,  
December 2012.  
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, M.A.T.,  
Middle Grades, August 1995.  
Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC, B.A., Theatre Arts, May  

Professional Experience  
Latin Teacher, South Greene High School, Greeneville, TN, 2016- 
present  
Reading Specialist, Mosheim School, Mosheim, TN, 2011-2016  
Latin Teacher, Distance Learning, Greene County Schools,  
Greeneville, TN 2010-2011  
English and Theatre Arts Teacher, West Greene High School,  
Mosheim, TN, 2006-2010  
ELA and Social Studies Middle School Teacher, DeBusk  
Elementary, Greeneville, TN 1995-2006

Professional Affiliations:  
ASCD, 2013-present

Awards and Honors:  
Greene County 5-8 Teacher of the Year, 2004-2005  
DeBusk Elementary 5-8 Teacher of the Year, 2004-2005