



Assessing Online Student Performance via participation, and Examinations as Alternative Measures

Professor George. O. Tasie

Visiting Professor of Business Administration and Management at Virtual University
Nexus International University, Uganda and Director of Postgraduate Programmes at School of
Management and Economics, Department of Business and Management, University of Kurdistan
Hewler, Erbil

ABSTRACT

Online homework is a relatively new instruction and evaluation technique. While it appears to be an effective tool, empirical studies of its efficacy suggests they have not been done. This paper analyzes correlations among systematic class participation scores, online homework scores and test results from two sections of Effective People Management and two sections of Advanced Human Resource Management taught at a Middle Eastern University – University of Kurdistan Hewler in fall semester 2017. Collection of data were made in four classes of two modules with the outcomes and implications suggesting students were expected to attempt to work on each homework problem three times and were allowed as many attempts as they wished within time limits set by the instructor. Homework problems were made available for extra credit immediately after a new chapter was introduced

Keywords: Student performance, class participation, online homework, examination, alternative measure

INTRODUCTION TO BLENDED EDUCATION

Education is one of the areas that are experiencing phenomenal changes as a results of the advancement and use of information technology. Mobile and e-learning are already facilitating the teaching and learning experience with the use of latest channels and technologies. Blended learning is a potential outcome of advanced technology based learning system. The charm of blended learning approach lies in the adaptation of technology aided learning methods in addition to the existing traditional based learning. With the introduction of technology, the overall learning as well as teaching experience is considerably enhanced by covering negative aspects of traditional approach.

Blended learning requires immediate feedback to the students for their performance which can be achieved by combining assessment techniques with the use of latest technological advancement. Assessment is a very vital tool for determining the student's knowledge for the subject they enrolled at any levels of education. Assessment determines how the teacher teaches the course

and how student understood the course. Assessment is no doubt one of the major tools in teaching and learning process.

Homework Manager is a teaching tool introduced by McGraw-Hill in the late 1990s to support faculty using McGraw-Hill textbooks. The Homework Manager Program includes a large number of algorithmic questions (i.e. questions for which the numbers change but the wording does not each time a student accesses the program). Homework Manager has three distinct benefits over paper and pencil homework. 1) The student gets immediate feedback on their performance. 2) The instructor can monitor homework completion and keep track of how well a class is succeeding at completing the homework. and, 3) the effort expended in grading is significantly reduced. The usefulness of any teaching tool must ultimately be measured against learning outcomes. Unfortunately learning outcomes are not observable directly. This paper uses test scores as proxies for learning outcomes and also reports correlations with class participation, which may be viewed as a learning input or outcome depending on one's perspective as demonstrated under the review of literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The value of learning process should be judged by employing various assessment methods, tools and techniques so as to buttress and improve blended learning. Ma Xiufang and Ke Qingchao (2008) proposed a framework of assessment design from the prospective of assessment principles, factors, process, method and tools of blended learning and provide the corresponding design templates

Students' views on blended learning

Banchi and Soren (2008) believed level of education quality can be improved when combined two approaches in an organized and balanced manner, and it should not be considered as creating a new education method by combining different education. The results of their study conducted on 64 students showed that the students enjoyed taking part in the blended learning environment. Students' achievement levels and their frequency of participation to forum affected their views about blended learning environment. Face-to-face interaction in blended learning application had the highest score. This result demonstrated for the importance of interaction and communication for the success of on-line learning.

Academic achievement in a blended learning

Betul Yilmaz and Feza Orhan (2011) conducted an extensive survey to find student academic achievement by introducing blended learning technique in the Instructional Technologies and material Development course. The results showed that, blended learning environments has a positive effect on academic achievements, using Web-based learning environments regularly and attendance to learning environments for both deep and surface learners. Based on the study results, Betul Yilmaz and Feza Orhan (2011) recommended blend face to face course with Web based learning to achieve efficient learning environment. Clark and Meyer (2003) see blended learning as all education models which have capabilities of having best features from every sort of technology. To know the effectiveness in terms of student motivation and achievement Unsal (2007) compared blended and face-to-face learning environments. In the experiment both environments were set up, results showed e-learning environment played a vital role in access individual studies, supplement learning and progressing at one's own pace, while there was no

major difference in blended and face-to-face learning approaches in terms of academic achievement and students' motivation scores.

At this juncture, it is necessary to incorporate into the literature Bloom Taxonomy in students' assessments. Bloom's taxonomy is a tool that can help human services educator broaden the depth of their students' learning. The challenge with the taxonomy is developing assessments that measure each of the six levels. The use of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Engelhart, Fürst, Hiss, & Krathwohl, 1956) has been shown to enhance student mastery of skills and concepts and critical thinking (Bissell & Lemons, 2006). The challenge has been developing assessments to measure student learning and critical thinking within the six stages of the taxonomy. Crooks (1998) suggests that most college testing simply involves recalling memorized facts. Such tests only address the first level of learning. Because Bloom's taxonomy is based on higher order thinking and facilitates academic rigor, it becomes important to assess how well students are able to master the information within the other five areas in the taxonomy.

Before the topic of assessment based on Bloom's taxonomy can be addressed, it is imperative to examine the use of the taxonomy within the classroom. In one light, it makes sense that most college testing involves recalling facts. Instructors most frequently conduct classroom instruction at lower levels of cognition (Whittington and Newcomb, 1993). In this context, therefore, any assessment aimed at measuring student learning across the higher levels of cognition becomes invalid (Airasian & Miranda, 2002; Wiggins, 1990). This is due to the fact that if students are not given an opportunity to learn within the higher levels of cognition, it does not make sense to test them in that area. It would be similar to giving a physics test in a chemistry class. Therefore, we will have a brief discussion about the use of Bloom's taxonomy in the classroom. A more in-depth presentation is available elsewhere (see Anderson, 1999)

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy (1956) consists of six levels of abstractions that occur in education settings. The graduated levels are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Later, the levels were renamed remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Anderson, 1999).

Remember. This level involves retrieving information from memory, known as rote memory. Learning at this level builds a foundation for the remaining levels of cognition. It involves learning facts, knowledge of major ideas, and memorizing. In the field of human services, an example might be an instructor lecturing on 26 different micro skills throughout the semester. Students would be required to memorize the definition of each.

Understand. When incoming knowledge is integrated with existing cognitive frameworks, this level has been achieved. Cognitive processes in this level include interpreting, illustrating, classifying, summarizing, and comparing. Continuing with the micro skills example, students would describe, differentiate, and discuss their knowledge of each skill.

Apply. This level consists of two cognitive processes. The first is executing, which is when the task is an exercise familiar to the learner. The second is implementation, which occurs when there is unfamiliar with the problem. In our experience it is important for students to experience the first

process followed by the second. For example, students would role play the various micro skills. For the second process, students would be given a detailed vignette and must choose which micro skills are appropriate for the example and then role play them.

Analyze. This level involves breaking material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts are related to each other and to an overall structure. This level includes debating, organizing, and attributing.

In the micro skills example, students would analyze and debate skills such as reflection of feeling vs. reflection of meaning. They would state when one skill would be more appropriate to use than the other.

Evaluate. In order to master this level, students must make judgments based on criteria and standards. This phase includes monitoring, testing, judging, pointing out consistencies, and utilizing critical thinking. In the classroom, a student observer would critically evaluate a fellow student in his or her role playing of micro skills. Students would be given specifics to evaluate, such as attending skills (visual/eye contact patterns, body language, movement harmonics, and vocal qualities).

Create. This final level requires students to put together elements to form a coherent or functional whole. Students produce a product by implementing three parts: 1) Students understand the task and generate solutions; 2) The student devises a workable plan; 3) The student carries out the plan. Using the micro skills example, students would be given various client vignettes and would be instructed to understand what the client needs, generate solutions on what they can do to assist the client, and devise a plan of what micro skills are needed and demonstrate an ability to carry out this plan. The third part of this level is generally the most difficult to implement within a classroom setting. Internship, however, is one class in which this entire level can be mastered. Bloom's Taxonomy and cognitive development. In order for students to gain more from their education, it is important to also consider where students are in terms of cognitive development. The use of Bloom's Taxonomy fits well into theories of cognitive development. For many models of cognitive development (e.g., Erikson (1968), Kohlberg (1969), and Perry (1970)), in order for a student to reach a higher level of development, a moderate level of discomfort must be felt with his or her current level of functioning (Evans, 1996). Marra and Pahnner (2004) examined graduating students with both high and low levels of cognitive development based on Perry's (1970) model. Students at both levels valued learning experiences that departed from the traditional instructor lecture. Such experiences included the ability to think independently and challenges to think through the material, not just memorizing. These experiences are built in to Bloom's Taxonomy and help the student to progress through higher levels of cognitive development.

Assessment Using Bloom's Taxonomy

Although teaching using Bloom's taxonomy requires careful planning, developing the assessments can be a straightforward process. This is particularly true when the instructor uses Bloom's taxonomy in the classroom. The assessment can flow naturally from what the instructor has done in class. To discuss creating assessments based on Bloom's taxonomy, we will be using the framework provided by Eber (2007). By using this language, the assessment is measuring at the

associated level. On paper-based assessments using Bloom's taxonomy, items can take a variety of formats including multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, and essay. It is important to note that assessments can take multiple forms from paper-based assessments to group work to final papers. In order to ensure accurate measurement of student achievement, it is important to assess the student across each of the six levels at some point within the framework of the curriculum. In part, this can be accomplished while measuring the higher levels. Frequently, operating at the higher levels requires the use of principles from the lower levels. Designing and implementing an assessment is only the first step of measuring student mastery. Developing a scoring rubric is also a key. Rubrics can improve student performance and can help students become thoughtful judges of the quality of their own and other's work (Andrade, 2005). When assessments are based on Bloom's taxonomy, rubrics become of particular importance. While the lower two levels, remember and understand, generally produce right or wrong answers (e.g., multiple choice or true/false), the remaining levels produce degrees of proficiency. It is possible, however, at all levels to assess using degrees of proficiency. When measuring students on the higher levels, as we mentioned previously, it is possible that the assessment is not paper and pencil based. When developing a rubric at these levels, it is important for the instructor to consider key areas in which to measure students. In this activity, two students practice the micro skills while one observes. When working with students, it is of little benefit to tell them that they are simply right or wrong on an assessment. What is important is to let them know where they fall on the continuum in order to know where they are and where they need to be. Designing assessments and rubrics to measure degrees of proficiency provides this type of feedback to students. While rubrics may be time consuming to develop, they are well worth the investment in benefits to students. Additionally, for the instructor, rubrics can reduce the time spent on evaluating student work (Andrade, 2005) and facilitates objectivity (Bmaldi, 1998).

The two principal sources of information on Homework Manager are the Homework Manager Instructors' Guide (Brownstone Learning 1999-2003) and McGraw-Hill's Homework Manager website, <http://www.mhhe.com/business/homework/>. To date there do not appear to be any empirical studies on the effectiveness of Homework Manager as a teaching tool.

METHODOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY

Data were collected in four classes, two sections of effective people management and two sections of advanced human resource management, taught by the author. Sections were segregated by sex with both a male and a female section in both courses. All sections were held at a Middle Eastern University during fall semester 2017.

Although there have been insufficient studies in the area of homework manager, several studies have focused on measuring the impact of teaching using computers on various variables, the most important of which is achievement. Nuno (2005) answered the question "Is computer-aided teaching an effective tool in the teaching of reading and writing in the classroom," by preparing and testing a software program comprising 42 English audio 2 Education Research International clips that taught English phonetics to 60 kindergarteners. The results of the study supported the value and effectiveness of teaching assisted by a computer in a modern classroom. Lal and Jundi's study (2010) aimed at detecting the trend toward e-learning among 462 male and female secondary school teachers in Jeddah, focusing on gender, specialization, and work experience, among others. The results showed a trend where teachers of scientific specialization with less

than five years of work experience who had attended educational seminars in the field of e-learning were more engaging.

Pajtek (2002) compared computer-aided teaching with paper-based instruction in terms of efficiency and motivation, determining the effects of internal motivation in a computer program that used graphic forms and other programs that did not use these forms on the achievement, trends, and deep participation of 65 underachieving students. The study was conducted at the site of a normal school over the course of semester. Data related to three groups were collected: the control group (33 students); the alternative treatment group in which the students received computer-aided teaching without graphics formats; and the experimental group where the students received computer-aided instruction with a graphic shapes extension for 20 minutes three times a week. The results did not show any statistically significant difference in academic achievement, trends, or attendance among the three groups. However, the increase in academic achievement reached the level of statistical significance. The measurements of the time of job reached the level of statistical significance, indicating the emergence of a wider participation for those who used graphics formats. The study concluded that the use of computer-aided teaching accompanied by or without graphics formats does not lead to a statistically significant improvement in the achievement, trends, or attendance of underachieving students compared with the improvement achieved by other therapeutic teaching materials.

Study Sample covered first semester of the 2016/2017 academic year. The participants were selected purposefully from two classes and then divided into experimental (16 students) and control (18 students) groups, which studied English via BL and traditional methods, respectively. The course they were taking was a core course and the subject was, Special Focus: Advanced HRM. Ethics approval was obtained before conducting the study and a written informed consent was also sought from each participant.

Scale Reliability. To check for reliability, the scale was administered and readministered after 10 days to 10 students (4 males, 6 females) who were not a part of the study sample. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.88. The homogeneity coefficient, which was calculated using the KR-20, was 0.95

Study Procedures. The study was applied according to the following procedures:

- (1) Application of the achievement test and motivation to learn the subject scale before starting to teach the experimental group via a computer.
- (2) In the experimental group, students were taught the subject using computerized educational materials and traditional methods during the first semester (fourteen weeks) of 2016/2017.
- (3) In the control group, students were taught the course using the regular educational materials (i.e., textbook) and traditional methods.
- (4) After the completion of the teaching process in both groups, the achievement test was administered. The scale measuring motivation to learn English was also administered to students in the experimental group.

Study Variables. The study included the following variables:

- a) Independent variable, two types of teaching methods:
 - 1) Blended learning
 - 2) Traditional method
- b) Independent variables:
 - 1) Achievement
 - 2) Motivation to learn English.

Statistical Analysis. To answer the research questions and determine the level of significance of the effect of using BL on students' achievement and motivation to learn the course, the means, standard deviations, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were employed

Study Design. Because of the inability of the researcher to appoint members randomly to the study sample, as would be consistent with the fully randomized, experimental method, distributing the students randomly to experimental and control groups, was not feasible because of the reality of the practitioner field in universities. Therefore, the study design was a quasi-experimental, with two nonequivalent groups. _is design was expressed as follows:

Experimental Group: $G1 : O1 \times O2$,

Control Group: $G2 : O1_O2, (1)$

where $O1$ is the pretest, $O2$ is the posttest, and X is the treatment to experimental group.

Grades in all sections were based on: In accreditation, grades are not considered direct measure of quality of education??? Justify, by validating your choice???

Class Participation	10%
Homework online	15%
In-class Exam One	20%
In-class Exam Two	25%
Final Exam	30%

Class participation was graded daily on the following scale:

- 0 - Absent.
- 1 - Tardy, sleeping, or otherwise not paying attention in class.
- 2 - Present and attentive for the entire class.
- 3 - Make a contribution to the discussion, which demonstrates preparation for class.
- 4 - Engage in an interactive discussion with other class members or make a contribution that leads to clearer elaboration of a problem or possible solution.

Class participation marks were recorded daily immediately after class. Homework consisted of ten to fifteen Homework Manager problems assigned for each chapter of the textbook. These were case related problems based on the end of chapter problems in the textbook. Homework scores were recorded on McGraw-Hill's Homework Manager servers and downloaded by the instructor. The in-class and final exams consisted of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer essay questions. Students' access to answers were also made available online.

Students were expected to attempt to work on each homework problem three times and were allowed as many attempts as they wished within time limits set by the instructor. Homework problems were made available for extra credit immediately after a new chapter was introduced. The instructor refused to assist students with extra credit homework. At the second meeting on new material the instructor would provide assistance with homework problems and thereafter be available outside of class to help with homework. The instructor also set up a number of practical classes to assist students in completing homework. The students were given 50% of their homework grade on problems they solved in the two-week period after new material was introduced. They were given an additional 50% for completing homework in the two weeks immediately preceding exams. Sometimes these two-week periods overlapped.

There were forty-eight students in total for both classes. One student in the effective people management class did not take either of the in-class exams. Eight students in the advanced human resource management class did not take the second midterm exam. The weights for these students' in-class exam grades were applied to the final exam so they were not penalized for failing to take the missed exams. However, the ten missing exams do affect the correlations of the in-class exams with the other measures.

The Overall % grade is the weighted average of the scores earned on the grading criteria. Because the weighted average is a function of the grading criteria it is not independent of the criteria and may be regarded as suspect for this reason. Nevertheless, the overall % grade is useful for comparison purpose for the homework manager because doing so establishes the reliability of independent measurement of students' knowledge and ability.

RESULTS

Correlation matrices for the EPM and AHRM sections are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The correlations of the grading criteria with Overall % run from 0.32 for Exam One for the AHRM Class to 0.91 for the Final Exam for the EPM Class. The highest correlation for Overall % for the AHRM Class is with the Homework score (0.87) but the same correlation is only 0.71 for the EPM Class.

The 0.87 correlation between the homework score and the overall score in the AHRM Class is probably what most teachers would want (i.e. the students who do the homework are the ones who earn the high marks). There are however a number of intervening factors that influence the connection between homework performance and course grades. Notable among these factors for the classes analyzed here are innate intelligence, the ability to comprehend written and spoken English and the method of preparing students for examinations. These factors are discussed in detail below.

Because tests are a sampling of a student's mastery of course learning objectives and because students are often intensely focused on grades, tests become arenas for strategic student behavior. As buttressed by the literature. The student's strategic calculation may take the form of, "what is the least amount of effort that must be put forth in order to obtain an A, pass, etc." The focus then shifts from mastering the learning objectives to making a satisficing course grade, which, in away may be considered to be bias.

While recognizing that students are unique individuals, it is useful for purposes of the present discussion to categorize them into three overlapping groups. Based on the empirical data emanating from the overall information, for the first group, called scholars here, they are in the class to master the subject matter. Scholars may want and usually do receive high grades but grades are not their principal motivation. They seek knowledge, wisdom and/or competence. The second group we will call limited. Limited students may be challenged by the intellectual demands of a course or they may have other constraints such as family obligations, poverty that forces them to earn income while taking classes, etc. The third category, strategic management students, are simply looking for the easiest way through. Individual students may fall more or less into one of these groups for one course and into another group for another course or their classification may change over time.

Instructors' latitude in teaching these disparate groups is limited due to the Institutional policy. Perhaps in some highly elite educational institutions or classes there may be only scholar students. For the most part however, college and university level instructors face all three types of students in any given class. A simple solution would be to pass all the scholars and fail all the limited and strategic students. The simple solution is not available to most instructors however. This was certainly the case in the classes examined here. The instructor's objective was to give every student the opportunity to develop as far as they possibly could be given their personal and social limitations.

Table 1: HRM course outcomes

Advanced Human Resource Management							
(n = 48, except In-class Exam 1 n = 47 and In-class Exam 2 n = 40)							
	In-class Exam 1	Home work	Participati on	In-class Exam 2	Final Exam Multipl e Choice	Final Exam Fill- in- Blank	Final Exam
In-class Exam 1	1.00						
Homework	0.61	1.00					
Participation	0.25	0.58	1.00				
In-class Exam 2	0.35	0.49	0.57	1.00			
Final Exam Multiple Choice	0.33	0.34	0.29	0.52	1.00		
Final Exam Fill-in-Blank	0.62	0.50	0.39	0.52	0.69	1.00	
Final Exam	0.59	0.49	0.38	0.55	0.81	0.98	1.00
Overall %	0.75	0.71	0.58	0.72	0.72	0.90	0.91

Table 2: Effective People Management outcomes
Effective People Management
(n = 14)

	Participation	Homework	In-class Exam 1	In-class Exam 2	Final Exam Multiple Choice	Final Exam Fill-Blank	Final Exam
Participation	1.00						
Homework	0.67	1.00					
In-class Exam 1	0.65	0.43	1.00				
In-class Exam 2	0.24	0.65	0.05	1.00			
Final Exam Multiple choice	-0.11	0.16	-0.34	0.47	1.00		
Final Exam Fill-in-Blank	0.46	0.56	-0.02	0.52	0.48	1.00	
Final Exam	0.33	0.50	-0.13	0.57	0.71	0.96	1.00
Overall %	0.69	0.87	0.32	0.75	0.44	0.84	0.82

The instructor has many tools available to effect these goals, grades, engaging classes, conversations formally in the office and casually in the halls and breezeways of the university, a handwritten comment on an exam, etc. These devices work with varying degrees of effectiveness with the strategic students usually being the most difficult to motivate. In the classes analyzed here there was a real tension that pitted the strategists against the limited. The instructor's capacity to fail students was extremely limited. Some of the strategists realized this and they also knew that their abilities would make it possible for them to outperform the limited with very little effort. Cases of students rarely attending class and studying only in the day or two before exams were common. In the most extreme case one student attended only one in-class exam and the final exam apparently on the expectation that he could score high enough to pass.

In all four of the classes analyzed here the students requested and were provided with a summary sheet/practice test. Such a device largely undercuts the usefulness of an examination as a sampling tool. It reduces the scope of learning to the content of the summary. This is exactly what the strategic students want. The limited students also may appreciate the focus it gives them. The scholars may even support the use of such devices even though they probably reduce the capacity of evaluators (read potential employers) to distinguish between strategists and scholars.

The effects of providing practice tests are most noticeable in the low correlation between the first in-class exam score and the Overall % score in the Effective People Management Class (0.32). Indeed, the correlations between the first in-class exam scores in the EPM Class and the Final Exam scores are negative. This is because the first in-class exam in the EPM Class was a replica of the practice test. The strategic students took full advantage of the opportunity to study a handful of questions without immersing themselves in the material at all.

Another important factor for these students learning is their ability to comprehend written and spoken English. Students with a high level of competence in English have many advantages particularly in a situation where English is a second language for virtually all the students. It appears that in the classes examined here the strategic students had distinct linguistic advantages over the limited students and to some extent over the scholars as they are considered as obstacles to learning

The effect of these factors can be seen in correlations reported in the tables. The first thing to note is the high correlations between Final Exam Fill-in-Blank scores and Overall % (0.90 and 0.84 respectively). The Fill-in-Blank scores were for the most part taken verbatim from the practice test, only the figures in the questions differed. By learning a limited set of problem solution techniques the students could get very high scores on questions of this type.

By contrast the correlations between Final Exam Multiple Choice and Overall % were quite a bit lower, particularly in the EPM classes (0.72 and 0.44). The practice tests could not legitimately give the students exact formulations, which they could routinely apply to problems. For the multiple choice questions the students had to reason from their knowledge to other situations. Their ability to do such reasoning was undoubtedly strongly influenced by their competence in written English. Students with high Fill-in-Blank scores and low multiple-choice scores might be said to be exhibiting an extremely mind form of idiot's savant syndrome. In routine jobs these limitations may not be too important; however, in jobs characterized by rapidly changing circumstances the inability reason to new conclusions would be devastating.

The correlations between participation scores and Overall % were in the middle range (0.58 and 0.69). Perhaps this could be expected because the participation grading scheme gave advantage to loquacious students over serious but quiet students. The participation scoring system is characterized by some subjectivity on the part of the instructor. It was also a reward for students who came to class regularly. A more objective means for class participation marking such as a computerized classroom management system might be more effective.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A fundamental question is what are we trying to accomplish in the classroom. Ultimately we want students who are able to make better decisions for themselves and for their families, employers, and communities. It is questionable whether examinations taken alone are good predictors of effective decision-making ability. As demonstrated in one of the levels of (evaluation) assessment by Bloom, monitoring, testing, judging, pointing out consistencies, and utilizing critical thinking in the classroom, helps a student to critically evaluate a fellow student in his or her role playing of micro skills

While Homework Manager is an exciting new teaching tool, it is not without limitations. It is easy to produce Excel sheets that will solve homework problems. Once such Excel sheets are passed around among students the effectiveness of the problems will be greatly reduced. The scholars will probably always be able to learn regardless of the technology instructors used. Scholars will always be on the lookout for new and better ways to learn. In a community of scholars grades may well be irrelevant. The tools we employ in teaching, tests, homework, papers, etc. are devices to motivate and assist the strategic and limited students. Inspiring these students will always be the fundamental challenge for teachers.

Having said the above, although little, if any, of the human services literature addresses Bloom's taxonomy, it is of particular importance to this field. When our students are working with clients, it is imperative that they be able to quickly analyze, create, and apply what they have learned. In many of the situations our students will encounter, remembering facts and definitions will be of little use. It is the responsibility of the instructor to not only introduce higher order thinking, but to integrate it into their personal and professional philosophy and perspective. Bloom's taxonomy offers a framework for instructor to do this.

Obviously, Homework has the potential to be an extremely valuable part of students' learning experience. The increasing frequency of inclusive classroom settings, however, makes designing and implementing effective homework a challenge for teachers. Fortunately, research has provided teachers with valuable tools and knowledge to meet this challenge successfully. It is the teacher's responsibility to create effective homework assignments and to provide students and parents with the tools necessary for the process to be as successful as possible. If teachers make a concerted effort to utilize classroom strategies to assist students, design homework in a manner research suggests is most effective, provide opportunities for positive parent involvement, and actively teach self-regulation, they will create a homework program that sets all students up for success. Creating assignments that meet the five hallmarks of effective homework (purpose, efficiency, ownership, competence, and aesthetic appeal) will facilitate student interest in homework and promote the belief among students and parents that homework is meaningful and important (Vatterot, 2010). Educators can set students up for success by communicating with parents about homework expectations and student needs, taking into account varying exceptionalities in homework design, and teaching students self-regulation techniques through homework assignments. By taking a community approach, educators can create an atmosphere in their schools where teachers, parents, and students work together as partners in the educational journey of students. When teachers believe in the importance of their homework enough to apply research-based strategies and truly facilitate effective homework practice, they will create a classroom of learners who also believe in the importance of the work and, ultimately, of themselves.

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