The Homework Problem and What Teachers Can Do about It

Homaira Baher
SIT Graduate Institute
The Homework Problem and What Teachers Can Do about It

Homaira Baher

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL degree at SIT Graduate Institute, Brattleboro, Vermont

June 2017

Academic Advisor: Alex Silverman

Thesis Advisor: Alex Silverman
Consent to Use of Independent Professional Project (IPP)

I hereby grant permission for World Learning to publish my Independent Professional Project (IPP) on its websites and in any of its digital/electronic collections, and to reproduce and transmit my Independent Professional Project (IPP) ELECTRONICALLY. I understand that World Learning’s websites and digital collections are publicly available via the Internet. I agree that World Learning is NOT responsible for any unauthorized use of my Independent Professional Project (IPP) by any third party who might access it on the Internet or otherwise.

Name: Homaira Baher                                      Date: June 17, 2017
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank professor Alex Silverman who advised me in writing this thesis and helped me with his rich feedback. I would also like to thank him and Marti Anderson for being my academic advisors at SIT Graduate institute and helping me to fulfill my degree. I want to give special thanks to Steve Iams, who helped me with finding sources and gave me permission to use his class material in this paper.

Special thanks to all other professors and library staff at SIT who helped me in completing this thesis.

My special thanks go to my classmates who helped me in editing this paper and let me use their ideas as examples in this paper. You all made this happen and without your help and support, I wouldn’t have finished it.

Thank you,
Abstract

In this paper, problems related to poor quality homework or not submitting homework in Afghanistan context are discussed and solutions are suggested. For solving these problems, the teacher's role is emphasized. It is hypothesized that teacher with increasing internal motivation can enhance self-esteem and self-regulation that help students stay focused and enjoy the task. Meanwhile, factors like choosing homework, setting goals for an assignment, giving instruction, having follow-ups and giving feedback can have significant role in doing a proper homework.
Table of Content

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 7

Internal factors........................................................................................................... 8

Self-perception............................................................................................................ 8

Growing social life of adolescents.............................................................................. 9

External Factors.......................................................................................................... 9

School factors ............................................................................................................. 11

Teacher’s role............................................................................................................. 11

Motivation and enjoyability of tasks.......................................................................... 11

Scores, deadlines and follow-up.................................................................................. 12

Amount of homework and its interrelation with other tasks........................................ 13

Literature review for not having homework or procrastination................................... 13

Motivation.................................................................................................................... 17

Motivation definition and its kinds............................................................................. 17

Homework and kind of motivation............................................................................. 18

Teacher’s role in motivation and ways....................................................................... 20

Vary homework and tasks......................................................................................... 21

Increase learner’s autonomy....................................................................................... 22
Creating a positive image of self in the mid of students .......................... 25

Assigning homework, giving feedback and instructions............................. 27

Assigning homework.................................................................................. 27

Giving instruction ....................................................................................... 28

Giving feedback ......................................................................................... 36

Other related factors................................................................................... 43

Reminders..................................................................................................... 43

Flexible deadline........................................................................................ 43

Big assignments........................................................................................... 44

Conclusion.................................................................................................... 44

Reference..................................................................................................... 47
Introduction

Homework is defined as a task assigned by a teacher for students to be done after school. Homework is given for students to elevate retention and understanding of covered material (Greathouse, 1998). Homework in an opposing idea viewed as a social preventer and makes students stay away from family, but it is also viewed as a means of “self-regulation skill” that leads toward academic achievement (Katz, Kaplan, & Gueta, 2010). Through time the view toward homework shifted from positive to negative and returned. For a time, the idea was toward more homework and then it was considered as a stressor in life and recently homework is again viewed in a positive way of learning (Greathouse, 1998).

In accomplishing homework, some students cannot see the benefit of what they are doing, so, they find the task useless and just something required. Therefore, some students go around it and play it off by different means to do it as fast as possible, yet there are some students who spend a lot of time on a small task and do it with much attention.

On the other hand, teachers see homework as an aid in academic achievement, and equally, a pain in the neck when collecting and checking it. As a teacher, I always had problems with collecting homework. On deadlines, just few would submit their homework. A considerable number of students had late homework, although, they knew scores will be deducted, there were always few students who tended not to submit their homework at all. Many times, the submitted homework had been partly plagiarized or in some cases the entire work was copied despite of different warnings given to them to not plagiarize. The same situation was true for reading articles or doing small tasks to be prepared for next session. In such cases, the blame is normally put on students or the situation outside the class. Here I want to investigate Why do many students not do homework, or do it poorly? There are different internal and external factors
like the growing social life of adolescents, increase in their family members and having a job, or school factors, like having large classes and lack of teacher support. The teachers’ role and motivation that will be discussed in detail. I want to discuss these issues related to Afghanistan academic context and view of homework, since I have a longer experience in that context, both as a teacher and as a student, I will add some personal experience as well.

I. **Internal Factors**

Internal factors can refer to many personality aspects of the person and the way person perceives himself or herself, his/ her beliefs, goals, amount of internal motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and going toward adolescents from childhood. Here we will briefly examine these factors:

a. **Self-perception**

The way people see themselves has a close connection with the way they behave, speak and act. Three perceptions: Self-efficacy that refers to “an individual’s beliefs in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments” (Bandura 1977, cited in Daily 2009); self-esteem, which is “confidence in one's own worth or abilities” (Oxford dictionary.com, 2017); and self-regulation, which is “the ability to act in your long-term best interest, consistent with your deepest values” Stosny (2011). These factors have influence on personal goals, the way one achieves them, and internal motivation. If a person has high self-esteem, he/ she will also have a high self-regulation and internal motivation. So, the person is internally ready to do any task individually and take risks. The problem with self-perception is because of a range of factors, some students do not gain that level of confidence or through time lose that. Therefore, this lack of self-confidence or perception can affect him/ her not believing
on his/ her abilities and affect the students even in doing homework individually. One of these factors can be the transition from elementary to secondary school.

b. Growing social life of adolescents

We always witness substantial changes in a student as he/ she is growing up. It can happen that a smart elementary student turns out to a student with poor outcome in secondary or high school, or a persevering-student changes to a hesitant one that makes both parents and teachers unhappy. This change can be the result of transition from elementary to secondary school and a change in subjects, teachers and in some cases school.

As I observed, while the person is growing up, he/ she gets less concerned about doing a task to the best of their abilities. For example, I can mention my brother who was doing very well in elementary school. His notebooks were very neat and his homework was normally done on time. He was very concerned about his hand writing and always had nice designs for homework, but in high school his grades were slowly getting lower that finally during undergraduate he turned to a student who just studied to pass the course. He was counting his scores and when he would find out that he could pass the course, he would stop studying. His study habits were mainly cram session. Some external factors can be involved as well in this change.

II. External Factors

Factors that influence the person’s performance, beliefs, and motivation from outside oneself are considered external factors. Most of these factors have a close connection with the family and life of the student. As an example, if a student’s parents have decided to have more children, there is an effect on the student. In most cases the student is expected to help their parents to
raise the child or if this is not the case, he/ she will receive less attention from parents as they are busy. With younger aged student, they may be affected emotionally.

In Afghanistan families are normally big, in such cases, the children, mostly girls, are expected to help their mother in home chores from an early age. In later years if they happen to get engaged or married, they will soon have one or two babies. In such families, if even children do not help parents or get married, they do not have a room or even a quiet place to study. There are always guests at home and they are expected to entertain instead of studying alone.

Low family income and need to work for money, is the next external factor that is present among most of students. Apart from studying, students, mostly boys, have a part time job in their free time. This job will either support the family or fund their own expenses and school fees. As a result, students have limited time to do homework or do it well. This factor has connection with the transition from childhood to adulthood and the ability of coping with it.

Family perception of academics and social class can also be considered as another influential external factor. Busy parents who have multiple jobs and longer work hours to afford living expenses, cannot regularly and thoroughly support children at home. In addition, families with low social class, who do not value academics or homework will influence the mind of the child. It is probable that children in this situation will have the same beliefs as their parents and do not find value in education.

Apart from these examples, parents cannot always be helpful at home in regard to helping their children with homework. In third world countries, many adults are illiterate and they cannot help at all. If they are literate, it is possible that they do not know the subject well enough to help the child. Or they simply do not know that they should help their children with their homework.
III. School Factors

Considering the context of the school, class size is a crucial factor when considering homework. Afghanistan, like many countries around the world, has large class sizes. It is normal to see class with 50 number of students. Large class sizes act as a barrier to a teaching providing quality support for all learners. Besides, there is a belief that learners are getting older and they are responsible for their own studying. In many cases, students do not know what the teacher wants from them and with this presence of ambiguity, they avoid doing the homework. Since an instructor cannot have close connections with students, he/she is usually not aware of the problem and cannot solve it.

Large classes can also cause teachers to not have enough time to properly check homework or in some cases not check it at all. In such instances, the students will soon get the idea that they can go around homework: by not doing it properly, copy it from some sources or entirely avoid it since the homework loses its value for students.

IV. Teacher’s role

The teacher also has a role in this problem, normally this is the part that is not looked over. The teacher is the one who decides on the kind of homework, amount, deadline, follow ups, score and repercussions for not having homework. Also, a teacher can add elements of enjoyment or boredom. Let’s examine each element individually.

a. Motivation and enjoyability of tasks

Normally homework is considered as a boring task that takes students leisure time. Teachers may assign either several pages of writing and research papers, or mundane activities that do not have connection with real life in high school and college or university. In lower grades, students
should write several pages of words or sentences to learn spelling, and for math they should do book exercises. Normally students cannot connect their homework with real life, or if they can, the homework in its nature sounds useless for them or boring.

These boring tasks lead to demotivation. A boring task is more likely to be postponed and it could happen that it is not completed at all. With this lack of enjoyment, one does not want to focus on the task, and the repetition of this feeling can cause loss of interest and motivation.

b. Scores, deadlines and follow-up

Scores accompanies deadlines and follow-ups. Sometimes high scores are allocated for homework which causes higher external motivation, yet it is stressful. Students may get competitive with each other, and if the teacher is not fair with scoring then students are again demotivated.

Sometimes teachers are very fixed on deadlines. However, there are students who face different problems, these may physically or mentally occupy the student. Typically, these students have trouble completing or submitting homework. The same situation applies to students that might be ill. In these cases, students are negatively impacted. If there is not a system for students to hand in homework after a deadline, they will suffer from an elevated level of stress and take a defensive role against teacher since they have real problems out of their control.

Some teachers give homework, but they do not check it, that is the main reason for students to not pay attention to homework. Or the way a teacher gives feedback is very negative and blames students for not being correct or not working hard enough. And finally, most teachers after giving feedback do not have follow-ups to see if students recognized where they had problems
and fixed them or not. This follow-up gives a sense of accomplishment and learning to students and adds to their level of motivation.

V. **Amount of homework and its interrelation with other tasks**

Some teachers tend to give a large amount of homework to students and in cases where there is lack of connection among teachers, usually two or more teachers give lots of homework or having similar deadlines. This situation is common in Afghanistan.

In lower grades, the workload consists of several pages of writing that need to be both correct and neat when finish. In high school, the workload reduces because students are busy preparing for the university entrance exam, but in university it increases again. Some teachers assign different long articles for students to read before coming to class or long research papers are expected from students in addition to everyday preparation needed for each class. These problems of motivation, lack of self-esteem, helping parents and etc. are extremely common in Afghanistan and different parts of the world. To help understanding above mentioned factors, a literature review was conducted. This review examines articles that focus on the problem of not completing or procrastinating homework.

**Literature review for not having homework or procrastination**

In an article by Katz, Kaplan, & Gueta, (2010) they focused on students phycological needs among elementary and secondary school and teacher’s role in motivating students. They found three reasons for not doing homework:

1. Doing homework demands a motivation other than the one used in class activities.
2. Homework tasks compete with life activities in student’s free time.
3. Homework is done with few clues and supports.
In this article, it has been proved that academic performance of students declines through years. They hypothesized that any changes in psychological support to students can cause loss of motivation. One of the causes of this decline is related to puberty, but this article relates the problem with teacher’s behavior with students. The behavior of teacher changes from elementary to higher levels and students receive less “autonomy and social support” as the classes get bigger. It indicates that teachers can support students in three different areas: autonomy, competence and relatedness. A teacher can show “understanding of students’ perspective, provide a relevant rationale for the task, offering choice, and allowing criticism.” The article proves that it is the level of perceived environmental support that makes the change in doing homework among elementary to high school level rather than individual differences in level of needs.

In another study by Bouffard, Boileau, & Vezeau (2001) on students transition from elementary to secondary school 336 students, 186 girls and 150 boys, were met at the end of school year, both last year elementary school and first year secondary school, students. They mention that self-efficacy, beliefs and learning goals are key elements in students transition from elementary to high school. Self-efficacy is defined as the way person perceives his/ her abilities in doing a task that can affect his/ her performance, and it relates to self- performance. A change in physical and academic environment can cause the students to question their abilities. This makes the transition from elementary to secondary to be a crucial stage that may leave a negative impact. Teachers should pay more attention to the students during the transition from elementary to secondary.

In another study by Katz, Eilot & Nevo (2013), they explored the role of motivation relating to self-efficacy and procrastination. They distributed seventy- one questionnaires among fifth-grade
students. In questionnaire, they asked about kind of motivation students had for doing homework. They define procrastination as a tendency to do work in last minute. They found that there is a tendency among higher grade students to postpone their homework. It is also common among university students and has no connection with transition from elementary to secondary school. Self- efficacy is considered to have a close relation with procrastination which is also connected to low self-esteem and lack of self- regulation. It is also related with intrinsic/ autonomous motivation; an elevated level of this motivation can lower procrastination. Therefore, programs should be developed to increase self- efficacy and help students internalize autonomous motivation.

Normally it is considered that students do homework because of extrinsic motivations like passing the course, having higher scores, not being ashamed or punished. This can be a reason for not enjoying the task and possibly skip doing homework at any possible chance.

Watkins & Stevens (2013) observed a rural high school that conducted a No Excuses homework expectation. After applying this reform three themes emerged: first students and in some cases teachers become more accountable. Second, the homework quality improved as a result of giving appropriate and honest feedback to students. And Third is a change in teachers’ empowerment as the administration would support them with offering change in assignments’ standards done outside the class. Meanwhile, Students felt the positive effect of these initiatives on their school work and after graduation. Teachers reported that students feel more responsibility for doing their homework and no need teachers’ observation. In this reform all stakeholders, teachers, parents and students were involved. The results found revealed that before this reform there were more Fs and Ds in score range and most of students didn’t turn in their homework or submitted a
low-quality work. The reason was supposed to be students’ realization for not being accountable on giving homework.

I believe that even with the presence of all or most of the above-mentioned factors and problems, a homework can be enjoyable and educational. One of the factors that can make a big difference is the teachers themselves. A teacher can give flexible homework, vary its nature, amount, and deadline. He/ she can bring enough motivation to inspire students doing their assigned tasks, lead students to be autonomous learners. Therefore, in this article, I want to find out specifically the role of teacher in student’s doing or not doing homework; the role of motivation on doing homework; the nature of homework, and how a teacher can use motivation to make students do their homework.

The hypotheses are:

1. Regardless of all external and internal distractions, with presence of motivation students will do their homework on time.
2. The homework in its nature must be interesting, enjoyable and varied enough to motivate students.
3. The way teachers give instruction, feedback and follow the homework is crucial in motivating students.
4. Teachers can add motivation and enjoyment to the task.

For finding the answer, I will look at what motivation is, its effect on doing a task, specifically homework, and ways a teacher can bring it. Then I will find out how to lead students toward autonomous learner and teach them how to be persistent, and finally I will discuss the role of teachers in making the process of homework easy.
Motivation

One of my assumptions is that regardless of problems associated with students’ life and school, with presence of motivation students will do their homework on time, Teacher can create motivation among students and make them enjoy the task. With presence of motivation problems created from intrinsic and extrinsic factors can have less influence on the person. Students will have the will to continue and be successful in the task assigned. Here I want to go further and see what motivation is, its different branches, how it relates to homework completion and what a teacher can do.

Motivation definition and its kinds

Dornyei. & Otto, (1998) defined motivation as:

Dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. (P. 64)

Bong Gee Jang, Conradi, Michael, McKenna & Jill S. Jones (2015) in an answer to the question of “What does it mean to be motivated?” have written:

The Latin term movere means “to move.” When we refer to motivation to read, then, we are referring to what moves students to pick up a book (or a magazine or a device) and what moves students to persist in reading that text, even when it might become challenging or boring. (P. 240)
Dornyei (2009: 17, cited in Daily, 2009: 4) “connects motivation with the ‘possible selves,’ which represents what a student imagines himself to be in the future.”

Motivation is normally divided into extrinsic and intrinsic or integrative and instrumental motivations. Intrinsic motivation is when person is doing a task because of personal enjoyment and there is no external factor. Extrinsic motivation is when a person should do a task not because of enjoyment, but for the sake of external factors (Dailey, 2009). The best motivation is intrinsic motivation since when motivation is extrinsic with the absence of external factor, the person has no more enthusiasm to continue.

Heckhausen and Kuhl (sited in Dornyei & Otto 1998: 46) added two other kinds of motivations: choice motivation, or “initial decision to pursue the goal”, and executive motivation, or “action during goal implementation”. The article says that it is normally easier to set goals but difficult to have persistence and implement the goals. Different factors may influence executive motivation and prevent the person from going ahead, yet people sometimes despite other attractive varied goals or factors persist on their older beliefs. Despite the importance of executive motivation, in researches, much attention is given to choice motivation.

This article discusses that two sets of memories, motivation memory and action memory, are necessary for an action to be accomplished. The former is content-independent and when it is activated in turn all other current dominant structures in memory system will be activated, and the latter is related to behavioral programs to take specific actions.

**Homework and Kind of Motivation**

Doing homework is different from class activity; In a class teacher is present and all students do the same activity. They are there to study and are motivated by their teachers and class fellows.
At home, there are various distractions that make them lose their concentration and follow other more tempting activities. A diverse set of motivation is needed to evoke action memory and make students focus on homework.

In assigning homework, less attention is given to create intrinsic motivation. Typically, in Afghanistan homework is given with extrinsic motivations of having higher score and passing a course. When students don’t do their homework apart from losing their marks, they may face different kinds of punishments including corporal punishment and embarrassment in front of the class. Students may also receive a harsh punishment from parents if their mark is lower than the expectations.

Meanwhile, most of the time, students would take a course without understanding its benefits and its connection with real life. The subject is either assigned as school requirement or desired by parents for their kids. Unfortunately, in most cases, teachers do not show the benefits or interconnection of courses. This makes students not to be intrinsically interested; instead their motivation mostly comes from extrinsic kind which “does have short-term motivational characteristics” (Daily, 2009: 10).

Students report low intrinsic motivation and negative experience doing activity in class or doing homework feeling of boredom, detached, lonely, sad, passive and constrained are associated with them. Most students find the class activities boring and unenjoyable that all and all leads to distractions (Dornyei & Otto, 1998).

In assigning homework, choice motivation is already decided by teacher. Teacher sets the goal, so teacher should create and increase executive motivation. A student needs executive motivation and activation of motivation memory to accomplish a task.
Teacher’s role in motivation and ways

As mentioned in the introduction, there are some family problems that may prevent students from doing homework. Some of these are:

- Parents need help of the child at home;
- Parents are not supportive of students in doing their homework;
- Student has a job to provide for his/her family or his/her expenses.

But, what a teacher can do in such cases and when parents are not helpful?

In such cases, having *intrinsic motivation* may help the student to make a schedule and locate time for studying and completing their assigned tasks. Teacher can play an active role in promoting *intrinsic motivation*; in fact, it should be teacher’s main responsibility to improve students’ motivation.

As discussed before, *choice motivation* is already taken by teacher in assigning homework, but what a teacher can do for increasing *executive motivation*, activation of *motivational memory* and *action memory* to make students stay focused and ease the process of learning. I suggest three factors:

a. Varying homework and task to meet students’ demands, need, and multiple intelligences; include students in choices taken for assignments or increase *choice motivation*;

b. Increasing learners’ *autonomy* and believing in their self to enhance *persistence*;

c. Creating a positive image of self in the mid of students.
a. Vary homework and tasks

It is teacher’s responsibility to elevate level of *intrinsic motivation*, *executive motivation* and *motivational memory*. In presence of integrative motivation students enjoy learning, or vice versa with presence of enjoyment students will be motivated in their learning process. Teachers can do it by creating materials that are interesting to students (Dailey, 2009). Bringing material relevant to students’ interest in the class can increase the level of intrinsic motivation. Instead of a mundane homework, teacher can give an interactional activity for student to feel relaxed and fun doing that. For example, in a language class, instead of telling them to memorize a conversation in the book, tell them to find an English speaker friend on Facebook, chat with and bring it to the class. The topic of chat can be specified by teacher. An alternative for this assignment can be going to a grocery shop, take picture of different vegetables and fruits and then find their English equivalents if it is not an English-speaking society.

Ushioda (2003, cited in Van lier, 2007) says that self-initiated actions, rather than the ones commanded by the teacher or the system, are stronger since elements of *intrinsic motivation* and *autonomy* are added. For adding *intrinsic motivation*, teacher should educate students on the subject s/he is teaching: Showing the benefits of the subject, its connection with other knowledge, its relation to different majors and jobs, and the way its learning can benefit students in their real life, kind of jobs associated with that and so on.

Teacher should bring variation to homework and involve students in choosing goals (Bailey & Otto, 1998). Normally teachers give one kind of homework for everyone. Since students have different abilities, interests, and learning styles, this one homework cannot appeal everyone in the class. Teacher can bring different homework which have relatively the same outcome and ask students to choose the one they are more interested in or meet their abilities. For example, in a
language class for practicing a grammatical point like ‘present simple’, teacher can ask students to choose among following activities as their homework:

1. read a newspaper article of their interest in English and find all ‘present simple’ verbs and describe why it is used
2. search the internet and find about daily life of a famous actor or athlete and write down sentences about them using this tense
3. have an interview with the person of their interest and write about his/ her daily life
4. Or, go to a place they often go, like restaurant, park, store, and notice the things that are normally the same every time they go.

You can see all these activities ends with practicing simple present but they are different types. Students can choose the one fit their ability and interest most. The involvement in decision making will make them feel more responsible and involved. It also makes them feel that their teacher is considerate.

b. Increase learner’ autonomy

Motivation and learner’s autonomy goes hand in hand. If we increase motivation we help student to take responsibility for doing an action (Dornyei & Otto, 1998). Teacher can clean the mind of students from external pressures by encouraging learner’s autonomy. To do so teacher must show strategies to form student’s habits, create activities that develop analytical abilities (Dailey, 2009). Let’s first see what autonomy is and then what strategies teacher can use to lead students toward autonomous learners.

Autonomy is defined as an “action that is chosen; action for which one is responsible” (Deci & Ryan 1987: 1025, cited in Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Truner, 2004: 98). In an article
Stefanou & et. al. (2004) presented following ideas about autonomy: There are three kinds of autonomy in the classroom: organizational autonomy, which refers to the way students decide for rules and regulation in classroom; procedural autonomy, in which students decide on ways of doing a task; and cognitive autonomy, which students develop their own way of thinking about a task. Among these three, the last one is considered more influential on learner than the others since it has a longer effect on a person’s mind or way of thinking.

DeCharms (1968, cited in Stefanou & et al., 2004) presents the term “perceived control” as the result of how a person see him/herself; it can be either ‘origin’ or ‘pawn’. ‘origin’ refers to the person who determines her goals based on his own choice; and ‘pawn’ refers to the person who think her goals are determined by external factor and it is beyond his control - this is exactly the way most students in Afghanistan see themselves. They believe that everything should be determined by academics and teachers, where students have no control over decisions.

By providing choice and removal of external factors, like punishments and praises, autonomy can be achieved and supported. It means that positive feedback must be present. In a democratic teaching style, students’ motivation, participation and completion of tasks, even in absence of leader, increases; while in an authoritarian teaching style, anxiety and tension heightens. The positive outcomes of autonomy include: increasing intrinsic motivation, having preference for optimally difficult work, striving for conceptual understanding, having a sense of enjoyment and vitality, and perceived competence. (Stefanou & et al., 2004)

If we connect three kinds of autonomy to homework, we can say that in organizational autonomy, teacher can ask students for the rules they think should be implemented on homework. It can be a decision on deadline, score (if school permits variation), or consequences of not submitting homework on time. These decision making can take up to 40 minutes of time
in the class, but have a very powerful result on students’ autonomy and force them to obey the regulations since they had a part in setting them.

For *procedural autonomy*, teacher can ask students for how they want to do their homework. For example, do they want to include social media or not. Ask them diverse ways of doing the homework and see the possible limitations and then put a list of alternate ways of doing a task to be chosen among.

Finally, *cognitive autonomy* is encouraging students to do the task the way they feel is correct and not imposing ideas on them. It means that teacher appreciate the way students did their homework and their ideas in their homework, even when the ideas and the way it is accomplished are different from what teacher taught before.

In Afghanistan, most students see themselves as a ‘pawn’. They are normally encouraged to behave exactly the way teacher wants. If they bring changes to any part, they are faced with negative consequences instead of encouragement. So, it causes students to lose interest and always do their tasks under external factors or motivations. Yet, if teacher give them room to have decision for their own way of thinking, they will move toward ‘origin’, and gain interest in learning and doing tasks.

With the presence of a democratic environment, teacher do not need to be present for a task to be accomplished. This is exactly the opposite of the situation in Afghanistan. When students see the power of teacher, they are obedient and do their task. But they are always ready to find an opportunity for not doing the task or add elements of cheating of some sort. It is because Afghanistan’s society is more of an authoritarian than a democratic one. At first, teacher may face with possible problems of students feeling strange, not knowing what to do or not taking the
teacher seriously, but teacher must be tolerant and supportive, but strict on decisions being taken to make students feel responsible.

c. Creating a positive image of self in the mind of students

Dailey (2009) believes in creation of a positive self-image in the mind of students. He mentions the concept of possible selves in which students explore “… what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming” (p. 12-13) With this theory, students can see their possible selves; It can also be used as a motivational factor. Teacher can work with students to find what kind of person the student imagine him/herself in the future and then help the student to go towards that. Making goals together can enhance motivation. In the light of such idea, teachers are encouraged to involve students in designing syllabus. If we build a connection with homework it is helpful to involve student in choosing homework or the way the person wants to accomplish that. So, again we come to the idea of including students in decision making and having variation in homework.

Van Lier (2007) in an article motivates teachers to use action-based teaching that “…put human agency in the center of attention.” In action-based teaching a person’s right is crucial. It means that in a class, learner should have the right to express him/her self freely. In light of new ideas presented by teacher they should develop their own new ideas. This initiation of idea will help them to have strong intrinsic motivation and autonomy. Teacher prepares resources and provide guidance whenever a need arises or an activity is presented to help learner furthers his/her goals. He also mentions that autobiography or history of the person should be explored considering what the person is in present and what he imagines himself in the future. Three sorts of questions can be looked through:
Past: where have you been, who have you become?

Present: what are you doing now and why?

Future: where do you want to be in the future? Why? How do you plan to get there?

Following is an example of a homework given to students in SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont, USA in Four Skills Class by Professor Elizabeth Tannebaume, fall 2016, this homework instruction is for reading skill.

In this example, you can see how teacher wants students to write about their past reading memories, then during the course she wanted to show students how it can help them realize who they are now as a reader and what influences them on reading. Adding such elements to our classes, can increase the idea of self-perception and lead the person toward autonomy and increases self-efficacy and self-esteem.

---

**Overview and Assignments – Reading Module**

**For Monday Oct. 10**

**Reading Module – Influences on Learning to Read**

Purpose: To identify influences on learning to read; to connect the influences with your own learning to read in L1.

1. Look back at your notes/visual from class on 10/3. Add to your notes. *Who or what influenced your own reading? What are your earliest memories of reading? Can you recall a favorite book that you read and reread when you were a child? Why was it your favorite? What was it about? Who were the characters? Who read it to you (or did you read it yourself)? What is the role of reading in your life now? Do you read ‘traditional’ books or do you get your information in other forms?*
Teacher can use this model in most of classes: in a history class, it can be what was the way students lived or believed in the past and which kind of changes happened, and then see the changes in system and their effect on what they are now and then help them to find an ideal government for the future. Similar examples can be used in different areas. It is important to keep in mind that teachers cannot always motivate all students, but this shouldn’t prevent teacher from motivating (Dailey, 2009).

**Assigning homework, giving feedback and instructions**

The final assumption is that giving enough instruction, proper feedback and follow-ups, are crucial and directly related to homework accomplishment and level of interest. Before exploring each element individually let’s see how a homework should be assigned.

**a. Assigning homework**

If we go back to our motivation theory, *choice motivation* is the beginning phase and mostly related to teacher. We already discussed how a teacher can involve students in it, yet there are some considerations teacher should care about.

A teacher should know how to set goals. Since in assigning homework it is the teacher who sets the goals and students have less control over it, teacher should consider elements of goal setting. The big picture that teacher should have in mind is that goals must be *achievable* and *relevant*. Some teachers ask for a big amount of homework from students that leads to frustration and stress. Some teachers in Afghanistan assign up to five pages of rewriting a word or words for a
first-grade child to learn spelling of newly taught words and numbers. I saw children crying and
telling that they had pain on their hands and didn’t want to continue. It is also true in higher
levels as well. In university, some teachers assign a big amount of homework and do not
consider the overall amount of study or task students are supposed to do regarding other subjects.

In a language class, the relevant homework can be something to further students’ knowledge
about the language. For example, translating a text in which the focus is on editing the translated
text rather than the language is not an appropriate task. Again, if the homework is not very
relevant, students won’t be interested and motivated in the task and find it useless.

Dornyei & Otto (1998) set “three different level of goal- specific values” happens in student’s
behavior or beliefs:

- **Action**, the inner value of an ongoing activity

- **Outcome**, the inherently valuable characteristics with reference to one’s basic personal
  values and needs

- **Consequences**, what changes, which can be created from an achieved outcome

In *action* level, teachers should consider the value of homework based on student’s learning. It
should further their knowledge. In Afghanistan, sometimes teachers give homework with less
learning value related to the subject matter and level of students; it is given just for the sake of
assigning homework. When students find homework not practical and educational, they lose
their motivation.

In *outcome* level, teachers should plan what he/she wants from students to come up with. Apart
from setting a rubric of what should be present in final homework, the length and other
associated structures, and scoring should be planned ahead. Teachers should encourage personal
ideas and approaches toward the homework. If students see that their innovation, beliefs and initiations are praised they become more interested and motivated. Usually in Afghanistan, teachers do not encourage personal innovation. The students should write or do what teacher thinks to be true and what he/she wants. In Afghanistan if students write something a little different than what the teacher expects on their exam paper or homework; the knowledge more or less presented the same idea, yet teacher cuts their scores.

This is one of the reasons that students gradually become rote learners and education changes to a boring task for them, this stage can be called consequence level. As a teacher, what do you want your students turn into? For reaching that aim, you should be careful of how you behave in outcome part and the way you give feedback.

b. Giving instruction

One reason for poor or late assignment is the way teacher introduces it to students. In Afghanistan, a homework is given to students with little instructions on how to do it. Normally the instructions are oral and teacher repeats it one or two times. Teachers expectations from homework is not clear for students, so it causes confusion that ends with high level of stress and dissatisfaction from teacher. This is the reason that students try to reach teachers individually to solve their problems. This is the time when teacher gets frustrated because He/ she is receiving repeated questions from students and frequent distractions at home or work.

When homework or its elements are not clear for students, they feel confused, bored, not interested and less motivated to do the task. It sounds for them a very difficult obligation, so they try to postpone it to a later time, or do it poorly. For solving this problem, Suskie (2009) suggests giving a clear instruction of assigned task, she suggests using prompts, that is set of statements or
questions tell students what should they include in their assignment and how. She mentions two kinds of prompts: *restricted response* prompts and *extended response* prompts. Restricted response leads all students to a similar response and good to be used in math and science classes or laboratories. Extended response leads to showing students how to complete the assignment. Completed assignment may vary greatly in the way it is organized, level of information and results. The *Extended response* prompts is our aim in this paper, since it leads students toward autonomy.

Suskie (2009) describes a good prompt as an inspirational push that make students enthusiastic to do the task, in contrast, a poor prompt may lead students not learning what teacher wants students to learn from assignment. She saw prompt as an inspiration push because she believes that when students know the task and what teacher expects from them, they feel confident in their work. Also, based on my experience, for homework that I had good prompts, I felt relaxed and hundred percent sure of what teacher wanted me to do. while my path was clear, I was trying my best to include what teacher asked and have a well-done final task.

Suskie also mentions that first a teacher should set goals of what he/ she wants from the students to learn from assignment and then leads students toward those goals. A good assignment must be a little challenging for student, but it must be realistic and achievable, add elements of thinking, analyzing, evaluating and creativity.

Apart from prompt, teacher needs to bring more help in the process of homework. Since students have little choice on prerational activities and goal seating, we can say choice motivation is weak, teacher needs to bring scaffolding during the action phase, also various “motivational influences” are needed to fuel the “actional sequence” (Dornyei & Otto, 1998)
Blik, Harskamp and Kuiper-Bakker (n.d.) suggest direct-instruction (DI) for helping students in their homework and moving them toward autonomy in doing assignment. They mention five models that are true for DI, which are as following:

1. Short orientation.
2. Explanation and demonstration.
3. Practice stage in which one or more students practice the task accompanied by the teacher.
4. Autonomous processing in which the student works on a task independently.
5. Conclusion in which the assignment is reviewed (p. 5)

In this model teacher start with a brief introduction of task that is followed by explanation which can be a prompt, a demonstration of previous assignments of the same, or any other kind of explanation or demonstration related to that task. The practice stage can be production of a short version or preparing an outline in pairs or groups in the class while teacher is present to answer possible questions. And the fourth stage is the part that student can do it individually. In this stage student is well-oriented and confident of what he/she should do next and finish the assignment.

Blik, Harskamp and Kuiper-Bakker (n.d.) in a research on how to teach students to become autonomous in doing a task, demonstrated that DI (direct instruction) to group improved students’ independence toward doing the task. Thirty-eight teachers from 21 schools of practical education in the North of Netherlands were given similar materials and assignments to give their students while the students and teachers were under observation. Some of these teachers gave individual instruction on how to do homework. As a result, they faced with students’ confusion and lots of questions were asked from them. On the other hand, some of them gave group instruction. These teachers explained how to do the assignments and other procedures
beforehand that led to fewer questions and confusions from students. So, we can come to this conclusion that giving appropriate instruction, guidance, and scaffolding the homework can lower the level of confusion and stress among students and increase autonomy.

Here I want to present a homework that was given to students in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) class at SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont, USA, for graduate students of TESOL by Professor Steve Iams, fall 2016. The homework is about writing language learning biography of one of classmates. Teacher after a short explanation of what the assignment is and what students were expected to do, asked students to find a partner. Then he gave a well-explained prompt in which he described the assignment, format, what should be included and how. The prompt is as following:
SLA Biography Assignment
Due Date: Tuesday, September 20th

In this assignment your task is to learn as much as possible about your partner’s language learning history and to tell this story through the lens of SLA theory in a 3-5 page paper. Double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 pt. font.

There are two parts to this assignment:

1) Interview your partner. You will have time to interview your partner during the first week and a half of SLA. If you find that you need more time, you are free to meet outside of class as well. Below are some possible questions you might ask your partner, but you are not limited to these questions.

2) Analyze your partner’s language learning history through an SLA lens. Over the first few weeks of SLA, you will explore various theories, concepts, and processes of second language acquisition. Your task in part two is to use what you have learned about SLA to better understand the language learning experiences of your partner. Were these experiences positive? Negative? Successful? Unsuccessful? What factors of SLA influence your answer to these questions?

In your paper you will:

- Tell the story of your partner’s experience with language learning
- Connect this experience with SLA concepts, with attention to the what, how, and why questions of our course.

When you write your paper, you could:

- tell the story in the first half of the paper and analyze this story through an SLA lens in the second part.
- interweave story and analysis throughout

Citing Sources

I will assume that any references you make to SLA theory come from our assigned readings. If you use any direct quotations from our readings these should be placed in quotations and cited using APA. If you use any sources that were not assigned, please cite them using APA. Here are two good APA sources:

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/
Sample Questions & Key Terms

1. How many languages/dialects do you speak? Which?
2. What language(s) did you speak at home as a child? How did this influence you? Was there any other influential aspect of the linguistic environment?
3. At what age did you begin studying/learning a “foreign” language, i.e., one that was not spoken at home? What do you think was the effect of this age, if any?
4. If you had a choice, why did you choose this particular language? What were your attitudes towards the language and speakers of the language? Did they change during your study?
5. Was it/them learned through instruction or through exposure/immersion? Can you characterize the teaching approach that was used if you learned the language in a classroom?
6. How long did you study the language(s)?
7. Did you want to learn it/them? What was your motivation? Did it change? Why?
8. What strategies did you use to learn? How would you characterize your language learning process?
9. What level of proficiency did you achieve? If you have learned/studied more than one foreign language, how has your study of one language affected the study of (another)(s)?
10. How was your knowledge of another language helpful or unhelpful in your learning?

11. Consider how the following factors are related to the L1/L2 learning of your partner. You do not need to cover everything:
   - L1 transfer/interference
   - Interlanguage
   - Avoidance
   - Fossilization
   - Motivation
   - Learning styles
   - Age
   - Aptitude / Intelligence
   - Instruction & Learner Beliefs
   - Personality
   - Identity
   - Comprehensible input
   - ZPD
   - scaffolding
   - Affective filter
   - Noticing / gap-noticing
   - Negotiation of meaning
   - Output
   - Interaction
   - Attention
   - Practice
   - Declarative/Procedural knowledge
   - Hypothesis-testing
   - Semantic/syntactic processing
   - Controlled/automatic processing
   - Working/Long-term memory

You may use the above questions or concepts to stimulate your thinking; however, the point is to produce an expository paper, not a list of answers to the questions. You do not have to answer all the questions if some are irrelevant. It is fine to choose from among them, and you do not have to answer them in any particular order.
You can see these explanations are very clear and enough for a student to understand what is expected and lead him/ her toward learning goals teacher set for that assignment. These are the positive helping elements present in this prompt.

1. The purpose of the assignment is clearly defined at first
2. The homework is divided into two parts and each part is well-explained in element of what should be included in.
3. It is mentioned that time will be given in the class for interview
4. Two sorts of possible classifications are given that student can choose among
5. Some sample questions are given to students to use in their interviews, but they are not restricted to them.
6. A list of topics covered in the class, is presented to help students have summary of titles and connect them with their findings from interview.

Also, apart from giving this well-explained paper, he scaffolded the process by giving time for students, during class hours to sit together and work on their assignment. And finally, they were left alone to write their biography and for sure each biography was different from the other one because teacher encouraged them in analyzing their findings.

We can see that in this assignment, apart from what we discussed, two conditions that Dornyei & Otto (1998) suggested for issuing an action-launching impulse are present. These conditions are: the availability of the necessary means and resources and the start condition. Resources, in this assignment, are students themselves who interview with each other, and start condition is the time he provided during class hours to speak and interview. This start condition can function as first push for students as well.
He could simply tell students to write a language learning biography of a person and then leave students alone on who they want to choose, kind of question they want to ask, format they prefer and time they conduct interview.

To sum up, a teacher should present clear instruction and guidance for students to do their homework. Give students prompt, demonstrate or explain the task, put them in groups or pairs to start the work, or demonstrate a short version of that task in the class, and finally let students alone to do their part.

**c. Giving feedback**

In this part, we reach to the importance of giving feedback for homework and the consequences on self, motivation and level of interest.

To go back to our context in Afghanistan, feedback on homework is given directly on the work of the student with a pen that is red or green. The feedback on homework is marked with a color of a pen that is different than the one the students use. Normally there is a focus on mistakes and it can be the immediate correction of error or just a line and a symbol to show student the kind of error they made. In higher grades like the university, it is possible that the teacher collects the homework, gives the score, but do not return the homework to students at all.

As a teacher, I sometimes faced the problem of giving feedback to my students. The complaints came from students being offended by seeing their mistakes and wanting to prove that they are right. Some of them didn’t like to see lots of signs and crossing on their homework and it made them feel sad, which I could perceive from their eyes and expressions.

During my graduate studies, I found out that teachers’ way of giving feedback was very different there. I noticed that teachers emphasized the strengths of my assignment and there was no
negative feedback, or rejection of my idea. Instead, they wanted me to explore further on some ideas I presented. They would then ask me some clarification questions to consider or answer. On the other hand, teachers normally wrote the feedback on a separated sheet of paper or email.

I also noticed that as a teacher, I wanted my students to have more or less the same answer. The unity of responses was important for me as well, yet at my graduate school teachers would appreciate all sorts of interpretations. I found this method of giving feedback very different and effective from what I practiced in Afghanistan. Here are the benefits that I noticed and as a student I experienced them firsthand.

1. Seeing the positive feedback and teacher’s mentioning the solid points in my homework gave me a sense of pride and interest.
2. I felt less of the need to be competitive as I was praised enough and my ideas were accepted.
3. It decreased my stress levels and I was more motivated to do more assignment for that teacher.
4. I did not take the defensive role against my teacher since there was no negative feedback or complete rejection of my ideas.
5. Since feedback was written on a separate sheet of paper, I wasn’t feeling hopeless by the first look on my homework.
6. Teachers asking questions from what I had written helped me further my knowledge and go deeper with the ideas that I had.
7. It helped me organize my thoughts and analyze them more because of the gained sense of appreciation.
In Afghanistan, we provide feedback on errors but not ideas. For example, if the homework is to write an essay, teachers tend to mention language problems. The idea that is used in the essay is not normally monitored. My focus and concern is how to add this kind of feedback to our system in Afghanistan.

Answering this question Ovando (1994) recommends constructive feedback for having a solid feedback that leads students toward learning. In Constructive feedback, the teacher gives positive feedback without attacking the personality or idea of the feedback receiver. She indicated different feedback processes, but here I present the ones that should be mentioned while giving feedback to students. In Constructive feedback, the teacher should consider these points while giving homework:

- acknowledge accomplishments and students' strengths;
- identify areas which need further study or additional practice;
- recognize students' efforts towards achievement of goals and objectives;
- suggest learning activities, learning tools and study techniques for additional study;
- encourage students to increase efforts. (p. 21)

For clarification of these ideas, I want to present some examples of Dialogue Journals uploaded on SIT Graduate Institute Moodle website in English Applied Linguistics class, spring 2017. The teacher, Steve Iams, wrote feedbacks for each. In this assignment, all students were supposed to read one article about teaching metalanguage in the class and its benefits. The teacher then asked the students to give their opinions about this idea.

**Student 1:**

I am one of those who believe in teaching Grammar. In my idea, teaching grammar can speed
up the process of learning and lead students toward becoming a self-learner. On the other hand, I don’t want to stuff my students’ head with difficult names of grammatical terms (like subordinate clause, relative clause or dependent clause). It is important that they know how to form a sentence, but no need to learn all the terms. There are lots of more important things in this world that they should learn; why should we waste students’ time in terms that have no use in life. If they want to be a linguist or a language teacher it is another story.

Teacher’s feedback:
I appreciate how your response differentiates and prioritizes what is important for the learner, the teacher, and the linguist. It is through these three lenses that I think language teachers can make the best pedagogical decisions for students; in this case, the teacher can decide when/if to use grammatical terminology depending on the needs (or requests!) of her/his students.

Student 2: My Honest opinion
I agree with Hu that metalanguage should be incorporated in L2 teaching. Adults learn differently than children and, usually, they want to know the "whys" and "whats" of a language. I think Hu makes a wonderful point that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can't stand alone. Language isn't about mimicking what another person says but rather producing your own words and sentences. Of course, in the conclusion, Hu said that metalanguage can't be the only means of instruction, and I completely agree.

Teacher’s feedback:
you raise a very important point about adults wanting to know the whys and whats. My own argument for a teacher's base knowledge of metalanguage is to serve student curiosities about language. Given the complexity of language, we won't always have satisfactory answers but,
in line with your final point, metalinguistic explanations might complement communicative instruction. I wonder how much you used/benefited from metalanguage when you studied Japanese? Feel free to respond here or to shout your answer out your dorm window. I have big ears

_Student responded back:_

I benefited greatly from my metalanguage knowledge in Japanese, both within the language and then in Linguistics classes. Having this L2 knowledge to bounce off from really solidified the complexity of language and the varieties available there. I wish I could study Japanese Linguistics to help me further understand the language (but unfortunately, my undergrad only provided the class in Japanese and I wasn't cut out for that!)

It was funny to try and ask for Japanese help from an L1 speaker and realize that he, much like me with English, didn't understand the metalanguage I was using. It wasn't until later that those concepts came together

_Student 3:_

I agree with Hu and the comments posted in this forum thus far, that the use of metalanguage can be useful in L2 instruction, albeit most effective when integrated with communicative language instruction. I know from my own experience, having meta knowledge of the patterns of the applications Spanish verbs is really helpful. It's like having a chart in my head, a reference point, that I can reference when I come into contact with new words.

I wonder about the use of metalanguage in terms of teaching/learning meaning and use as well as form. Don't we use it all the time when we are trying to explain the meaning of words
and/or phrases and how they are used? Along with teaching the forms of the English language, (which I never really learned and am playing catch up with now) I do not feel very skilled at using metalanguage in the teaching of lexicon.

This article also makes me think about the interplay of implicit versus explicit teaching methods. I had a classmate in my certificate program who felt very strongly that grammar should only be taught implicitly, without the use of metalanguage; she had had very good experiences with this type of teaching in the past. I can respect that opinion, but I personally want as many tools in my teaching toolkit as possible, and metalanguages is certainly one.

Teacher’s feedback:
I ditto/heart/second the final statement: "I personally want as many tools in my teaching toolkit as possible, and metalanguages is certainly one." It may well be that teachers and students prefer implicit grammar lessons but we are also likely to have students who want to organize their learning with the help of metalanguage, and this is where I see its benefit. Great point too about metalanguage being a big part of learning vocabulary. Most textbooks and vocabulary activities I've seen make an attempt to pre-sort words/phrases into metalinguistic categories as a short-cut for student learning.

In these examples, you can see that the idea of the first student is opposite the idea of two other students. Despite the opposing ideas, the teacher still gave positive feedback and encouraged all of them in their thoughts by mentioning that their opinions were important. Also the teacher clarified that why they are important. The teacher also connected the idea with his personal experience that in turn made student feel connected with the teacher therefore leading the student
to think that they had a very solid idea that could relate to life of a person. Also for the second student the teacher had a question that student felt the need to respond.

In general, the main idea is that being positive with students along with acknowledging their efforts on their homework, is effective. Mentioning and appreciating their innovation and opinions that they have presented goes a long way and challenges them to go deeper with their ideas. The overall idea is not to be judgmental and to criticize the person. Yet, it does not mean not to correct their mistakes or not mentioning the problems. One way that I mentioned before is referring students to some ideas and ask them to investigate further on the idea, or it can simply be the usual correction of mistakes. But in this time student is ready to take them because he/she is seeing the positive feedbacks and do not feel very negative of not doing anything useful or what he/she did is a waste of time.

Related to effectiveness of giving feedback is giving a *timely feedback*. Normally, I found students interested to see the feedback as soon as possible. Tas, Sungur and Ozteskin (2016) state that since students have set goals for their learning, it is proper to give them a timely feedback because they are still in the middle of the course, it helps them see where they are. If students are given feedback in a timely manner, the students can work on their weak points for improvement. It also helps students to become self-regulated in their doing assignment and studies.

In conclusion, I can say that a proper feedback contains positive views towards the student’s ideas and innovations without being judgmental, and present the weak points in a way to help students understand their mistake and dive further to solve it. For the student to have time for solving the problem or investigating more on an idea, the feedback must be timely. Such kind of feedback giving can increase self-esteem and self-efficacy among students and make them
motivated and interested enough to write their homework for the teacher or investigate the ways for solving his/her problems.

**Other Related Factors**

**Reminders**

We have discussed earlier that students may have some internal or external problems that prevent them from being on time and exact, moreover, there are always distractions in the environment that affects their *executive motivation*. It can be having different assignments or task from other subjects, having job, or being busy. A reminder or reminders can help students stay focused. The reminder can be in the class. At the beginning of the class is preferred because students can focus more about what the teacher is saying. The reminder can also be via email or social media, if it is possible for both the teacher and all students. It can be as simple as mentioning the homework and the deadline and offering support in case of confusion about the task.

**Flexible Deadlines**

Some problems can come up that may cause the students not to work on their assignment. If the teacher is not flexible on the deadline, it is most probable that they turn in a poor assignment or do not submit it at all. The teacher, while planning, should keep it in mind to plan accordingly. When the students see that their teacher understands them, they feel less stress and more motivated to do their work with quality.

On the other hand, the flexibility may create the idea among students that deadline is not strict, in such a case teacher must inform students that it is not the case. Teacher may tell them that they should explain the reason for deadline extension. With children parents should approve of their
problem. Teachers can decide what to do according to the dynamic and personality of the class if such an idea emerges.

**Big assignments**

In some cases, normally in higher-grades, what happens is that the teacher gives an assignment that takes a lot of time and effort for students to accomplish. Normally such kind of assignments are confusing enough for students to understand. The best idea is that teacher explains the homework in its entirety, and then tells the students the plan of breaking it down to various parts and set a deadline for each. Another idea would be to give a written timetable for them. Then part by part, give prompts, scaffold the process, have reminders and give feedback. A good example is teaching researching and writing a long research paper at the end. So, teacher can divide the paper into introduction, literature review, result and discussion and sets a different deadline for each.

**Conclusion**

In this research, we mentioned some problems in four categories about the reason for some students not assigning homework on time or assigning low-quality homework. The reasons may be that there are internal factors, external factors, school related factors and teacher’s related ones. We have also raised three hypotheses:

1. Regardless of all students may have, with presence of motivation, students will do their homework on time.
2. The homework in its nature must be interesting, enjoyable and varied enough to motivate students.
2. The way the teacher give instruction, feedback and follow the homework is crucial for motivating students.

3. Teachers can add motivation and enjoyment to the task.

Through this paper we come to this idea that a teacher can intrinsically motivate students enough through giving their time and effort on doing their homework or assignment. Related to this we discovered that with motivation the teacher can increase level of self-esteem and self-efficacy among students and lead them toward self-regulation. This prevents them from procrastination, or decrease it to some extent.

Also, a teacher can motivate students by facilitating the homework process through giving instructions, prompts, reminders, and feedback; breaking down a longer assignment to smaller one, and have flexible deadlines.

We can see that with considering these facts the students may find the assignment stress free, easy to follow and doable regardless of other barriers.

We should also mention that these solutions do not work for everyone all the time. Individuals are different with various problems and teachers cannot realize or address all of them. As mentioned, there are some school related problems that can prevent a teacher from implementing all these elements. Despite these factors a teacher should still do their best for motivating and facilitating the process.

The sources used in this research are mostly journal articles from people famous in the field or who have done field researches. I used them for backing up my hypothesis and helped me prove my ideas. Unfortunately, I could not conduct field research. Those who are interested in this topic can go to schools and ask teachers to bring changes according to what have been discussed
here and observe the results on different students with different problems and outcomes. Further studies can be conducted on teacher dealing with each student and addressing their problems in large classes.
Reference


https://www.aletta.nl/aletta/images/File/PrO/01aTeaching%20in%20Practical%20Educating%20towards%20Autonomy.pdf, retrieved on 6/14/2017


