

Critical Numeracy Teaching Activity

Are students failing to do enough homework?



What does it mean to be a successful student?

Grade: 8/9 Stage: 10/11

with emphasis on:

Maths Concepts: Number, surveying, average

Context: Society, Personal Wellbeing

Critical Numeracy: De-coding, Meaning-making, Using

Date of Article: 24/10/08, pg 17

[Printer version of article](#)

[Student Worksheet](#)

Teacher Guidelines:

This article reports on a national study on the amount of homework grade 8 students do per week in maths and science. There are quite a few figures that can be confusing and the substance of the article actually contradicts the headline, giving misleading signals about what it means to be a successful student.

Orienting Questions

What does it mean to be a successful student?

What is the role of homework in helping students be successful students?
What can we learn from the article?

Decoding / Meaning-making

The worksheet requires students to extract the data from the article into a table and then create a pie chart to give it greater meaning.

Using and Analysing

The article gives confusing signals about the value and preferred amount of homework which may need to be teased out through discussion in small groups or whole class. Discussion questions could include:

- What is the purpose of the maths in this article and how might it have been used to position you?
- How will this information be used and who will benefit from it?
- What questions would you ask the investigator and/or the reporter about the article?

- How relevant is the information in the article?

This then could be a springboard for students to investigate the role of homework in contributing to their success as a student. How much time do students in the class spend on homework? How does this compare to the Australian average? Is there an appropriate amount of homework for all, or is it dependent on individual learning needs?

Debriefing

What did you learn? How has your thinking on this topic changed? What new maths skills have you developed? What thinking strategies have you found useful?

What investigation would you like to consider now?

Extension

If students wish to focus on the issue of homework they could develop a study to find out the amount of homework they do for their different subjects, choosing appropriate time intervals (the ones in the article are limited), and appropriate ways of representing the data graphically and through an average. How might they relate this to being a successful student?

What other studies might they come up with to examine what it means to be a successful student?

Students could compare their own classes with data they retrieve from Census@School.