

Abstract

This study examined certain factors which may explain why some grade seven students fail to complete homework assignments and possible effects on their performance. The variables examined were completion of homework, students' perception of parental support, location (rural-urban), teachers' homework practices and students' attitude to homework.

While the main focus of the study was on the degree to which students completed homework and the effects this may have on their test scores, hypotheses were raised to address other factors which were thought relevant to this study. The hypothesis for the main focus of the study proposed that there will be a statistically significant difference between the average test scores of grade seven students who complete homework and those who do not. Four null hypotheses were raised proposing that there are no significant differences between the average test scores of grade seven students perception of parental support, school location and students' attitude to homework. The other null hypothesis proposed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' homework practices and students' completion of homework.

Testing was carried out on two groups of subjects: 72 grade seven teachers and 205 grade seven students. The student sample consisted of 122 females and 83 males selected

from five secondary public schools in Antigua. Variables were measured by means of three researcher designed instruments: two questionnaires and one interview schedule. The data were subjected to descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentages) and inferential statistics ('t' Test and Chi-square). Additionally, a document analysis of homework samples from teachers and students was done.

The main results from the 't' Tests indicate a negative significant difference in the average test scores between grade seven students who complete homework and those who do not. There was no significant difference in the average test scores of grade seven students and their perception of parental support. Chi-square results showed a significant relationship between teachers' homework practices and students' homework completion; a significant difference between average test scores and students' attitude to homework, but no significant difference between location and students' homework completion rate.

Descriptive data revealed that the majority of teachers used punitive measures rather than positive reinforcement to encourage completion of homework. The purposes for which homework was assigned were practice and preparation while the main types were textbook based questions and short essays. All of the teachers felt that homework was an important

instructional tool and should be continued in the schools. With the exception of one teacher, the remaining 71 or (98.6%) all assigned, collected and marked homework at least once per week.