

Psych Ed

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Practice of Academic Skills after School – Homework Debate

Some points to consider:

1. Lack of practice of a skill does not result in improvement in that skill.

If a child has weaknesses in reading, writing and/or mathematical skills, then these weaknesses will have to be addressed. The classroom teacher can point them out – a mark of C or Level 2 on the EQAO test show that the child’s skills fall a year below expected grade level – but does not have the time to provide the necessary individual instruction.

If the school does not provide a well regarded remedial program e.g. Reading Recover, Empower Reading, Jump Math – then the child needs after-school teaching of reading, writing and mathematical skills. See handouts for specific teaching recommendations.

2. Once a child has fallen behind in these basic skills, teachers in higher grades not only do not have the time to address these gaps, they often don’t realize they exist.

Therefore, a teacher may note that the student has difficulties understanding mathematics word problems not realizing that e.g. deficits in word reading and in understanding of divisions are the causes of these difficulties.

3. Practice of academic skills, at the level appropriate for the student, will develop intelligence. Higher intelligence predicts better academic and health outcomes.

For reference, read: “Intelligence and How to Get it: Why Schools and Cultures Count” by Richard E. Nisbett, Distinguished University Professor, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; published by W.W. Norton & Co., 2009