The Homework Gap Must End
By Emmery Llewellyn

A Google search can be done in less than thirty seconds. The weather report can be accessed at our fingertips. Messages can be sent on Facebook to friends and family members on the other side of the planet at any time for any reason. Simply put, it is hard to imagine a world without the Internet anymore. Given today's technological advances, an information-packed, global community runs and defines the world around us. Then, how much easier would it be to have all our work done on our computers, phones, tablets, etc.?

This question has been on my mind for a while. But then, I happened upon an interesting statistic from a YouTube video: "70 percent of teachers assign homework requiring access to the Internet, and yet 5 million households with school-aged children do not have high-speed Internet access at home" (Soul Pancake, 2017). This video sheds light on a fundamental issue regarding education at all levels. How can a student learn and succeed in this WiFi-wasted world when they lack the valuable resources of technology? Unfortunately for many, this deficit is a reality. This phenomenon is known as the 'homework gap;' over 5 million students nationwide are at a clear disadvantage compared to those who are privileged enough to have computers and Internet access available in their homes. The ultimate question regarding this issue centers around how we as educators can set up students for success while also teaching the ever-changing norms of our tech-crazed society.

Of course, there are many benefits that come with Internet and computer-related homework. It saves paper which not only cuts some costs for schools, but it also reduces the need to cut down trees. Paper waste makes up about a third of the total waste production in a day of an average California public school (CalRecycle, 2016). If the Internet becomes a staple for homework assigning and completion, it will clearly reduce the amount of waste a school produces. Internet-related homework can also broaden the scope of learning. There is a plethora of supplemental tools that students can use from the Internet. The infinite amount of perspectives the Internet provides through videos, news media, tweets, etc. can encourage students to bring new knowledge in the classroom when completing homework assignments engaged in this technology.

The homework gap is a difficult gap to close because teachers and administrators cannot simply snap their fingers and make computers with Internet access appear in their students' homes. What they can provide, however, is more access to the Internet in the schools themselves. Most schools offer their students access to school computers in the libraries and computer labs, but only for a limited amount of time. What schools need are more computers and more hours for these computers to be available. Perhaps schools can offer their computer labs on the weekends as well and hire a team to be there and watch over the students. This is just one idea in pursuing a solution to this major issue. However, there are still countless factors to take into account when approaching this issue. What if the bus schedule does not accommodate to this plan? How are students able to get to school on the weekend? What if they have a job? These plans also require money.

Overall, Internet access in the home continues to be the preferable option; it is called *home*work after all. Although computers and the Internet are amazing tools for learning, there are still millions that must manage without it, forcing them to do the bare minimum in today's standards. That is why we need to push for more technology in the classroom itself. School, ideally, should be a place for people of all ages to seek equal opportunity in pursuing an education that will help them prosper in our current society. It is time to hold our schools accountable.

<div align="center">Works Cited</div>

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