



Spectrum Podcasts

Dr. Jane Bluestein
Instructional Support Services, Inc.

Ending the Homework Wars: Making Homework Fun and Effective

Guest: Susan Fitzell, M.Ed., C.S.P.

Recorded: August 22, 2012

Background and Bio: Susan Fitzell, M.Ed., CSP, specializes in transforming teaching from whole class instruction, which teaches to the middle, to instruction that structures and enhances lessons to reach every student, whether gifted or struggling. She is a dynamic, nationally recognized presenter, author of nine books for teachers and parents, and an educational consultant. Susan speaks from experience in the classroom! Her work focuses on building caring school communities and helping students and teachers succeed in the inclusive classroom.

Program Description: Making homework work! Dr. Jane Bluestein talks with Susan Fitzell about the value of practicing developing skills at home to anchor new learning in working memory and how emphasizing quality over quantity can make a big difference in a child's ability to retain work covered in class. They discuss the value of play and movement, giving kids a break from sitting and studying; allowing for family time, social needs, or job responsibilities; and differentiating or adapting assignments according to learning needs, modality preferences, environmental requirements (lighting, seating, etc.) or temperament (including whether kids learn better getting homework out of the way, taking a break before starting in on the assignments, or spreading it out over the evening). They also address "less-is-more" solutions for teachers and offer parents suggestions for supporting their children and, if necessary, approaching teachers to adapt assignments to their children's learning needs.

Additional Resources:

Susan Fitzell's Web site. Available at <http://susanfitzell.com>

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The Homework Guru Web site: Susan Fitzell's site with homework and study strategies for educators and parents. Available at <http://www.thehomeworkguru.com>

Please Help Me with my Homework. Susan Fitzell's free homework book online. Available at <http://share.snacktools.com/5CEE9A7EFB5/fe62fa66444328c6b09aa13ed2q628558>

Cogent Catalyst Publications Web site: Books, posters, and educational products from Susan Fitzell. Available at <http://www.cogentcatalyst.com>

Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.
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Susan Fitzell's Pinterest Page with loads of links to resources, articles, Web sites, and tips related to homework. Available at <http://pinterest.com/susanfitzell/the-homework-guru/>

"Homework and Study Tips for Parents." A 5-page PDF by Susan Fitzell available at http://susanfitzell.com/promo/homework-series/study-tips-for-parents_susan-fitzell.pdf

"Mandala Coloring Pages," by Susan Fitzell. A 10-page PDF to help increase creativity and focus. Available at <http://susanfitzell.com/promo/homework-series/mandala-pages.pdf>

"The Power of Color," by Susan Fitzell. A 1-page PDF explaining the effects of color on the brain. Available at <http://susanfitzell.com/promo/homework-series/powerofcolor.pdf>

"Susan's Tips for Teachers" Magazine. A 20-page PDF containing doable homework and test-taking tips. Available at <http://susanfitzell.com/downloads/susanfitzell-magalog-2012a.pdf>

"Is Your Child's Homework Worth Doing?" article by Chick Moorman and Thomas Haller. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/is-your-childs-homework-worth-doing/>

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“What About Homework?” Research and article by Dr. Jane Bluestein. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/what-about-homework/>

“Making Homework WORK: Building Flexibility into Your Homework Policy,” article by Dr. Jane Bluestein. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/making-homework-work/>

“Take a Stand Against Homework,” article by Chick Moorman and Thomas Haller sharing what some teachers are doing about homework and why. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/take-a-stand-against-homework/>

“Synthesis of Research Findings on Homework,” by Chick Moorman and Thomas Haller. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/wp/2012/synthesis-of-research-findings-on-homework/>

“Color-coded Research Paper Tips,” article by Grace Fleming. This page also contains links to articles on taking notes, organizing with text boxes, and researching timelines. Available at <http://homeworktips.about.com>

“The Homework Revolt,” article by Andrea Bennett. Available at <http://bit.ly/PQQI6S>

“Homework: A Guide for Parents,” article by Peg Dawson, EdD, NCSP. Available at the National Association for School Psychologists Web site at http://www.nasponline.org/resources/home_school/homework.aspx

Education World Web site Homework Articles, with links by various educators about effective homework practices and ideas. Available at http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/homework.shtml

Education World Web site Homework Resources, with links to research and online resources (specialized encyclopedias, reference portals, online libraries, and more). Available at <http://www.educationworld.com/students/study/>

The Case Against Homework: How Homework is Hurting Our Children and What We Can Do About It, by Sara Bennett and Nancy Kalish. (New York: Crown Publishers: 2006). Available on Amazon at http://www.amazon.com/Case-Against-Homework-Hurting-Children/dp/030734018X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1346609775&sr=1-1&keywords=the+case+against+homework

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The Homework Trap: How to Save the Sanity of Parents, Students and Teachers, by Dr. Kenneth Goldberg. This page offers a link to purchase this book from Amazon along with a number of links to related blog posts. Available at <http://www.thehomeworktrap.com>

iTunes U. Ways educators can design their own courses, offering audio, video, and other content designed by educators on a wide variety of topics. Available at <http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/>

Resources for Students: A handful from the many sites and resources available online:

Khan Academy. A library of over 3000 videos (as of early September 2012) on a wide variety of content area topics. Available at <http://www.khanacademy.org>. Khan Academy iPad app is available at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/khan-academy/id469863705?mt=8>

iTunes U app for students. With access to the world's largest online catalog of free education content from leading institutions. Available at <http://www.apple.com/apps/itunes-u/index.html>

Homework Hub, from Scholastic, at <http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/>

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