

Education NEWS & NOTES

Working Out Ways To Improve Math Scores

(NAPSA)—Strong math skills may add up to future success for students and the U.S. Yet studies show that beginning in middle school, the math proficiency of U.S. students declines in comparison with other developed countries—and by twelfth grade, those proficiencies are lower than in most developed countries.

So why are math scores falling? According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the United States lags far behind other countries in terms of time students spend on homework. Educators now say that lack of attention to homework may be causing a decline in math skills.

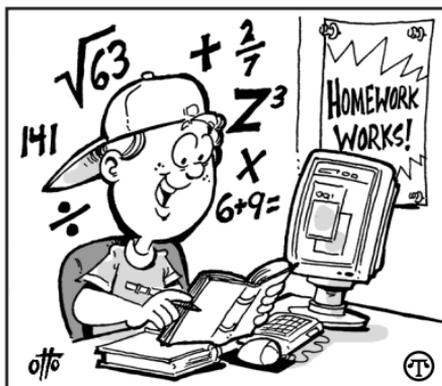
The Role Of Homework

Studies show that without homework practice, middle school and high school students cannot fully master the concepts presented in class. In addition, students who complete their homework score far higher than students who do not.

Finding Solutions

The Internet can provide students with extra homework help that specifically matches problems being assigned by their teachers. For instance, students can use sites such as aolatschool.com, encarta.com, education.yahoo.com, and hotmath.com.

Each of these Web sites provides immediate tutorial explanations for math problems. That means teachers can assign homework problems for which there are explanations (worked solutions) available on the Internet. In the case of Hotmath.com, the explana-



Homework Works—Students can find help with their math homework at a number of Web sites.

tions are correlated to the actual problems assigned from popular math textbooks.

Extra Help

Students who may have fallen behind in math might gain a particular benefit from such Web sites: The sites provide a new avenue for catching up with their assigned homework, and relieve them of the fear of peer- or supervisory-embarrassment.

Math Teacher Janet Tedesco noted that more of her students are completing homework since they began using Hotmath.com because it answers the question, “What do I do next?” so that students can continue on their own. According to Math Teacher Lisa Winer, “I love that this Web site gives step-by-step solutions to assigned homework, because students can get instant help right away, on their own. If a student says they didn’t understand the homework, my response is that they could have logged on to get help.”