Nature and Feature of Homework

Homework procedure in primary classes (Grade one to three) of schools in Takahr province of Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

Homework in primary school level is an important discussion among teachers, students and parents in recent years particularly during the last two decades there has been great raise of interest to know the role of the parents as first educators of the children in improving their capacity. This research study tries to find out the point of views of the teachers about nature and feature of homework in primary classes (one to third) because majority of the students, particularly those who live in the rural areas of the country work at home or agriculture fields after school time to support their families and they have limited time to do the amount of homework that teachers want. Similarly cooperation or involvement of parents in homework process is also limited because considerable proportion of parents in remote areas of Afghanistan are uneducated and cannot effectively take part in homework process.

The study has been based on a field survey with 60 male and female teachers in Takhar province (Taloqan city and two districts, Farkhar and Dashte Qala).

The study found that most of the teachers were aware about the goal and objective of the homework in primary classes and to some extent apply in one or other way, but, lack of proper planning, follow up and feedback mechanisms, time and amount of homework as well as low level involvement of parents and students themselves are the major shortages of the homework process in primary classes which requires great attention of the education actors in school and ministry levels. Similarly the only way of involvement of the families at school issues is the homework which can play the role of bridge between home and school so designing the of homework should be in way that parents specifically uneducated parents also could participate.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I will never forget the joyful moment of my life that found myself at TEMP classroom as a master degree student in my favorite field (education). I would like to thank my very respectful and kind professors Dr. Amir Mansory and Dr. Pia Karlsson as a founder of the TEMP program in Afghanistan from depth of my heart, similarly I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Mikael Savnberg who continuously supported me with his significant feedbacks and all respected professors who facilitated our sessions at TEMP and enabled me to reach to this stage.

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ABBREVIATIONS

TEP  Teachers Education Program
INSET  In-Service Teacher Training
INTRODUCTION

Background
Homework in primary school level is an important discussion among teachers, students and parents in recent years particularly during the last two decades there has been great raise of interest to know the role of the parents as first educators of the children in improving their capacity (Rudman, 2014). Homework is a kind of assignment or task that given to students to do it out of school or lessons time which collaboration of pupil, teachers and parents are essential in this process (Landis and Voorhis, 2011). Homework can promote learners’ study skills, develop their attitudes toward school and shows that learning process also can be taken place outside of school as well, but it should be keep in mind that too much homework may negatively affect the students’ learning achievements and bring down their interest to education (ibid).

Giving homework to the students is a typical process in Afghan Education context and cover all school subjects at all levels (primary to upper secondary level). The more usual ways of giving homework is that students write the studied lessons for one or several times, answering questions or utilizing of the words in the sentence. Though this kind of homework mostly seems like a normal activity of the class, but students asked to do it at home by themselves and in case they have any educated person at home they might seek their help (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Problem Area
Due to economy problems in the country, majority of the students, particularly those who live in the rural areas, mostly work at home or agriculture fields after school time to support their families and they have limited time to do the amount of homework that teachers want. On the other hand the cooperation or involvement of parents in homework process is also limited because considerable proportion of parents in remote areas of the country are uneducated and cannot effectively take part in homework process, because the given homework is mostly in written manner which deprive the uneducated parents to involve. Moreover the big number of students in each class (normally 40 students) and variety of subjects (at least 6 subjects) in each grade hinder the teachers to check or correct the homework of each students and provide them proper feedback. According to (Ministry of Education, 2006) homework has good effect over the students’ learning achievement, so it should bring the opportunity for both active and inactive students to learn more and be able to seek the assistance from their family members in completion of their homework. So in order to know the process and strategies of the teachers’ in homework process, I would like to study the purpose of giving homework and strategies that teachers use in primary classes

Aim
To explore the feature and ways of giving homework in primary classes grade one to third in Takhar province
Research Questions

- How do school teachers perceive the homework?
- What do teachers want to achieve by giving homework?

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Homework

The discussion about homework has been continued from long ago and at the late 1800s while the students in basic classes seldom got homework, the grade five and beyond did two to three hours homework per night (Center for Public Education, 2007). The importance role of homework as a learning and teaching strategy in academic area has been under the focus at all the time and the proper utilizing of homework can increase the learning achievements of the children (Rudman, 2014). Also the learning achievements of students who are frequently given homework by teachers is more than those students that do not get any homework from the school side (Hattie, 2012).

The first researcher who examined the effect of homework on educational attainment compare to controlled learning at school, was Hagan (1927) from United State of America (cited in Center for Public Education, 2007). From the end of 19th century up to 1940s, some organizations which worked for child health programs took an opposite position against homework specifically for primary level students and claimed that homework brings depression to students and some of them even linked one of the cause of the child mortality to the homework due to its pressure over students (ibid).

With the reduction of objection to homework in the 1950s the interest for homework gradually raised again. This new attention strengthened the idea of homework and counted it an essential tool in the learning process, although not for elementary school children. Similarly in early 1960s some parents also began to show concern about their children who did not get considerable homework from school, because they thought that homework was important for improving the education quality of their children (Center for Education 2007). When a student frequently does his/her homework, he gradually directed towards independent learning and self-reliance, so homework is counted as corner stone of self-regulating and help students to involve more willingly to the learning process (Rudman, 2014).

With the starting of Vietnam War the attention or focus of people reduced from educational issues particularly from importance of homework and many people looked to it as unnecessary burden to the shoulder of the students (Center for Public Education, 2007). With the release of National Commission report on Excellence in Education in 1983, created a new point of view about homework which during eighty and ninety decades many people supported the homework for its role in constructing of personality and improving educational achievements (ibid).

Though the scholars have different ideas about the importance and the quantity of homework that given to students, but many of the parents, teachers and officials support homework, and according to the data from National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in United States of America “…the majority of all students at all grade levels averaged less than 1
hour of homework nightly”( Gill and Schlossman 2004, p.180, quoted by Center for Public Educaiton,2007). Moreover the positive changes in families attitude and interest towards education of their children, increased the value of homework to be discussed more in academic arena as well as media(Queensland, 2004).

**Effect of homework in Students’ learning**

The relation between giving homework and learner attainment is not so clear among the scholars and sometimes deny each other idea, for example Kohn (2006) stated that there is not any strong indication to show that homework bring any advantage to the students (quoted by Center for Public Education,2007). In contrary Rudman referred to some important positive effects related to homework in American schools (Rudman, 2014). There are several factors that affect homework process, such as students’ understanding about goal and objective of the homework, their attitudes toward homework, learning attainment and their involvement in the design, amount and allocation of the assignment or task( Queensland, 2004).

The positive effect of homework can be classified in fast learning, long term educational prosperities and assistances to parents and families(Center for Public Education,2007) The negative or disadvantage of the homework is, reduction of the pupil interest due to tiredness, limited free time, and pressure by parents(ibid).According to Paschal et al cited in Center for Public Education,2007,p.4 “homework did have a positive effect on achievement, especially in certain grade levels…” the homework which given in daily base has positive result on student attainment in grades four and five (ibid). Similarly a study in homework and achievement in language indicated that students who were given homework scored better in vocabulary test than those who did not use to do homework. Also a research in homework and math indicated that students’ attainment were lesser in countries where homework was given based on grades and students discussed and corrected their homework in the class (ibid). For all students in general and for intelligent students in particular the amount of homework which completed will lead them to educational achievement, not the amount of homework which students assigned to do it (Rudman, 2014)

**Homework and Motivation**

When the teachers provide the desired learning situation based on students’ need and interest, then it resulted in higher motivation for learning, high achievement as well as progress in the attitude to education of the pupils. According to Hattie “students do not remain in a constant state of being motivated” (Hattie, 2012). Similarly homework also can be applied in different ways to meet the student’s favored learning styles, then it became further effective as a learning tool (Rudman, 2014).

Teacher should make available several kinds of homework instructions along with various type of homework assignments to meet specific learners’ needs. (Hong, 2009, p.139 quoted by Rudman, 2014, p.15).

The homework given to students on individual manner sometimes has low effect on their learning attainment and also create additional work for the teachers that consuming this additional
time over individual homework assignment cannot justify with the gained learning achievement through homework (Rudman, 2014).

Actually the motivation and hard work of the students toward doing homework directly depends to the teachers’ homework strategy and performance which must framed in a way that ensure the required quality with clear objective, sufficient information about ways of completing the homework, enough time, linkage between content of the homework and students’ interest, checking students’ result on their assignment and giving appropriate feedback so that students be able to get benefit from their homework and improve their learning achievements (Rudman, 2014).

**Role of Students in Homework**

In regards to importance of homework Some students found that doing homework enabled them to do better in school exams and assist them in promoting their grades (Rudman, 2014). As children get elder and receive much homework from school, they perceive both homework and school boring and their level of learning interest being considerable reduced. An important fact about the issue is lack of providing feedback by teacher to the work of students which they do at home (ibid). Another study by Hong and Lee, cited by Rudman, 2014 indicate that while students chose their homework based on their specific interest, the motivation rate is increased among the students (ibid).

Developmental differences in personal and situational variables related to effective homework performance should be taken into consideration when attempting to individualize homework. (Hong & Lee 2000 quoted by Rudman, 2014, p. 15)

One important point in the homework process is that students should have the chance to evaluate their own learning and should be persuade to expand this favorites, for example creation the sense of self-reliance that assist them in making decisions about their homework in terms of time and ways of doing the homework, similarly homework increase the sense of independence and personal responsibility and self-direction which has a positive effect in development of students’ personality (Rudman, 2014).

**Role of Parents in Homework**

For further effectiveness of the homework process the participation of parents considered very important and most of the schools believe and trying to involve parents in school issues and seek their assistance in several aspect of the school. On the other hand homework is the only mean for some parents to be in touch with school issues. Moreover the involvement of parents also appreciated by the students and they think that can do better at school if their parents help them in homework (Rudman, 2014). Parents and community participation is very important for the whole school issues particularly in supporting and monitoring of the homework process in terms of completion and its accuracy which increase learning process(Kruse and Louis, 2009).

There are some positive factors in Afghan context that support the education in general and homework in particular, for example many Afghans live in the extended families where several brothers live together in same house and their children learn from each other at home. Similarly Mosque (Religious) education which almost all Afghan children attend from third or fourth years
old and start from learning of Alphabet. Moreover the support of parents specially the Mothers that frequently persuade their children to education and provide all facilities to their children despite the economy problems that they have been faced.

**METHODS**

**The Approach**
Based on objective and research questions formulated for this study, it required a quantitative approach in order to see the perception of the teachers because quantitative research approach is used to quantify the analysis and data can be collected through proper data collection tools (Bryman, 2012). The study took place at primary levels of 14 secondary, middle, primary and community based schools which the respondents were 60 teachers 30 male and 30 female. However Takhar itself is a remote province in the northern east of Afghanistan, but in order to have the point of views of different teachers and to see whether the locality of the schools in urban and rural areas has any effect on teachers’ views and strategies in regards to homework the study has been done in two districts Farkhar, and Dashte Qala as well as center of the province Taloqan city, Farkhar located in east and Dashte Qala district located in northern west of Takhar province. The selection of the districts done according to convenience sampling because with this strategy the researcher selects the target area based on its access and availability (Bryman, 2012). For the selection of schools probability sampling method have been used and the schools selected randomly out of overall number of schools in the district.

**Data Collection**
The data collected in August 2014 for 10 days through questionnaire because it was easy and to some extent familiar for the respondents (Bryman, 2012). The questionnaire had totally 23 questions, 18 multi choice and three open ended questions which translated to local language the questionnaire formed in two parts, the first part was about the background of teachers such as gender, age, teaching experience, level of education, the class that they teach, number of students in the class, and trainings that teacher has participated. The second part was about nature and feature of homework and teachers’ perceptions about homework and the strategies that they apply in the classroom. In order to test the time duration that a respondent may need to fill the questionnaire and also to remove the possible problem which may occurred in questionnaire, a pilot questionnaire distributed to the targeted teachers which as a result some more questions added to the questionnaire. The access to schools in target districts was not so difficult and I traveled by car which to took one hour to Farkhar district and two hours to Dashte Qala district from one side. The data collected in the same shift that primary classes were in the school, after discussion and giving information about my thesis purpose and procedure, I distributed the questionnaire to the teaches and went through each questions one by one in order to be sure that teachers fully understood the aim of the questions and then they took the questionnaire to their classes and responded which took 30 to 45 minutes for completion of the questionnaire. When teachers was filing the questionnaire I went to their classes and asked if they need any clarification about the
questions which for some of them I provided the required information about questions. After the collection of data from schools I entered them in excel sheet and coded based on questionnaires and then found variations of each questions and draw the charts in excel sheet.

**Limitation**
However I was not faced any major problem during the data collection, but only few challenges such as survey and research cultures which is almost new in our educational context and sometimes created a kind of hesitation among the teachers and they thought that it might be a kind of test or appraising. So after my explanation, immediately they learnt that it is just a research and very willingly filled the questionnaire. The other limitation might be the generalization of this research because it has been done in three districts of a province so it might not be able to address the perception of the whole teachers in regards to homework issues at primary level. In responding the two open questions that was about teacher and parents role in homework process, few teachers respondent very briefly for example they thought their role is important. Apart from few limitations that mentioned above, the study conducted very successfully and warmly welcomed by the respondents and schools principals and head teachers

**FINDINGS**

**Research Participants**
As shown in table 1; the minimum age of the respondents are 20 and maximum age is 64 years, similarly the average years that they have been working as a teacher is 12 and the maximum
working years is 48. The female teachers are in younger age group comparing the male teachers, for example 11 out of 30 teachers are up to age 25 and 9 out of 30 are up to age 30. So 80% of the female teachers are younger comparing the male teachers. Moreover 28 out of 30 female teachers have graduated from teacher training institute which shows great difference comparing to male teachers that is 19 out of 30 graduated from teacher training institutes.

**Table 1: Summary of the facts about the respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Personal Information</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total teachers</td>
<td>Teachers aged up to 25 years</td>
<td>Teachers aged 25 to 30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30 1 4 9 5 1 3 2 5 0 10 19 1 8 8 5 3 3 0 0 1 2 0 10 19 1 8 8 5 3 3 0 0 1 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30 11 9 4 0 4 1 1 0 0 2 28 0 7 17 4 2 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60 12 13 13 5 5 4 3 5 0 12 47 1 15 25 9 5 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ Opinions in Detail**

**Teachers’ views on definition of homework and its goal**

In explanation of homework from teachers’ viewpoints, majority of the respondents from both side male and female respectively 87 and 83% recognized homework as a learning tool while 3% look to homework as an obligation of the students, similarly 3% of the respondents both male and female also referred to other options that they had for defining of the homework. In regards to the goal of the homework most of the respondents( male and female) respectively 87 and 90% had almost the same perception and thought that homework is necessary for promotion of children capabilities, while 13% of male teachers assumed homework as a tool for improving the sense of self-reliance among students in primary level.

**Table 1 : Teachers views about definition and goal of homework**
In your opinion homework can be define as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>What is your goal of giving homework</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework as a learning tool</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an obligation of the students to do it</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy of the school or government</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas of the respondents in regards to importance of the homework

In responding of the question that whether teachers see any necessity for giving homework to the students of primary classes, most of the respondents 95% emphasized on necessity of giving homework to the primary level students, while five percentage of the teachers thought that there is no need for giving homework to said level students.

Figure 1: Teacher’s view on necessity of the homework

Teachers’ views about period and completion of the homework

In response to the question about the time that each student should spend at home for doing his/her homework 49% of the respondents expected that each student should spend at least 30 minutes of their free time in a day for doing their homework. Similarly 10% of the teachers expected that each student must spend 90 minutes for doing their homework. In explanation of a question that what
proportion of the students complete their homework, 63% of the respondents said that 75% of the students of their class complete the given homework in daily base.

**Table 3: Teacher's point of views about duration and completion the homework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The time that you expect a child to do his/her homework at home in a day</th>
<th>How many of the students in your class complete their homework in daily base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Differences in homework of primary classes according to teacher’s opinions**

In regards to the difference of the homework between grade one, two and three, 39% of both male and female respondents explained that homework in primary classes mostly given as practicing and repetition of the letters and basic numeracy. Similarly both parts equally 14% indicated that the improvement of the students is based on their age cycle and capacity which has a close relation with volume and way of giving homework. Moreover 25% of the female respondents said that the homework from grade one to third mostly is the same, while 7% of the male respondents indicated that. The idea that homework should be given according to plan and pupil’s capacity is a fact that indicated only by 25% of the male respondents while female have not focus on it.

**Table 4: Teachers' views about differences of homework in primary classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the differences of homework among grade one, two and three</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in grade one the homework is about practicing and repetition of the letters and basic numeracy, in grade two and three they gradually read and write some basic sentences

As the improvement of the students is different based on their age cycle and capacity so the homework in grade one, two and three are different and we give homework based on their capability like Practicing, reading and writing of short and simple words and numeracy and gradually increase it

the volume of homework in term of size and quality is increased gradually from grade one to third

The homework in grade one to three are the same, its repetition and practice with little increase in each level

Homework should be given according to plan and student's capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider the number of subjects in primary classes (grade 1 to 3) how do you manage the volume of homework for each subject</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Managing volume of the homework**

In explanation of managing the amount or volume of the homework in primary classes 41% of male respondents related the volume of the homework with capacity of students, lesson plan, content and size of the textbooks. Having or utilizing of plan in giving homework is the fact that 24% of the female respondents relied on, while from male respondents 14% indicated of teachers’ plan. Similarly 16% of female respondents give more homework in language and math which is twice more than their male colleagues also 12% of the female respondents pointed to the guidance and size of textbooks in better managing of the giving homework process. Similarly 31% of the male respondents said that the written homework is given in Language and math while in other subjects memorizing and telling as a story methods has been used.

Table 5 : Teachers' idea in regards to managing the volume of homework

| Consider the number of subjects in primary classes (grade 1 to 3) how do you manage the volume of homework for each subject | Option | Percentage | Total |
| | | Male | Female | | |
| | 39 | 39 | 39 | |
| | 14 | 14 | 14 | |
| | 14 | 21 | 18 | |
| | 7 | 25 | 16 | |
| | 25 | 0 | 13 | |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | |
In language and math, the homework is in written and according to the level of students, while in other subjects like life skills & Islamic the homework is given as memorization. According to the plan, the volume of homework in language and Math is more than other subjects. Based on textbooks guidance and size of the textbooks, based on students’ capacity, lesson plan and content or size of the textbooks. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to the plan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The volume of homework in language and Math is more than other subjects</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on textbooks guidance and size of the textbooks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on students’ capacity, lesson plan and content or size of the textbooks</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ and parents’ role in homework process of the students**

In responding to the question about teachers’ role in homework process of the children in primary classes the female respondents were pioneer compare to male in referring to cooperation and guidance role of the teachers, so majority (61%) of female respondents focused to cooperation and guidance. Similarly the female respondents are a step ahead than male respondents in motivation role of the teachers in homework process. The identifying or recognizing of the students in terms of their personality and social life as well as their capacity in giving homework focused much by male respondents that 33% relied in recognition of the students as a suitable way for completing of the homework, while female teachers have not paid much attention in knowing of the students in homework process (only 7%). The encouragement of the students to complete their homework by themselves is a shared point that both male and female respondents indicated almost the same with less different.

In regards to parents’ role in homework process of the children 50% of the male respondents talked about motivation of the children by the parents, while only 25% of the female respondents assumed so. Unlike the male teachers which 10% of them referred to inquiry and follow up role of the parents in homework process, the female respondents strongly focused in this point (36%). On the other hand 29% of the female respondents also indicated the importance of educated parents in supporting their children in homework process, while male respondents had not counted it so significant.

Table 6: Ideas of the teachers about their and the parents' role in homework of the students
Type of homework and feedback
As shown in table 7; there is less contrast between male and female respondents in regards to the type of the homework and majority of teachers respectively 73 and 77% has been given homework to primary classes in a written manner, while 7% of the male respondents also used memorization method as a tool for doing homework and 10% of the female teachers considered storytelling methods for proceeding the homework process. About the kinds of feedback that teachers provided to students in correction of their homework, verbal feedback mostly used by both male and female respondents 47 and 43%. Female teachers were a step ahead than male in providing written feedback to students (40%). Also some proportion of the respondents have been given both written and verbal feedback to students.
Table 7: Teachers' opinion in regards to type and homework and way of their feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of homework do you usually given to students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>What kind of feedback do you provide to the students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In written</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In reading</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling as story</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideal circumstance for the students to complete the homework and ways of rewarding

In response to the question about the ideal situation for primary level students to complete their homework 36% of the respondents pointed out to the condition that homework is short and according to students' interest. Similarly 24% of the respondents indicated to the given lesson that student learnt and then be able to complete his/her homework. The rewarding of students after completion of their homework is also an important point that respondents reflected on, for example 53% of the teachers referred to verbal encouragement that they apply for students in responding of the completion of homework. Written encouraging words also applied by 28% of the respondents for rewarding of the students, while 5% of the teachers considered as a supporting tool in test or exam time

Table 8: teachers' view about condition and way of rewarding the students who complete homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under which condition the students of your class enjoy doing homework and complete it</th>
<th>How do you reward the students who complete homework regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the goal of the homework is explained well</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When students learned the given lesson</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the homework is short and based on pupil's desire</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When students do the homework jointly</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Background of the respondents
The high percentage of the young female teachers (80%) as shown in Table 1 indicates improvement in education level of people and their positive opinion towards education in general and girls education in particular, as well as the hard work of Afghan ministry of education in facilitating and extending the education access to remote areas of the country in last decade. Almost 98% of female teachers have graduated from teacher training institute which shows great difference comparing to male teachers. In terms of teaching experience obviously male teachers are ahead because most of the female teachers recruited in last decade. Though there is some difference in background and knowledge of the respondents but these distinguishes has not influenced their point of views about the homework.

Teachers’ Views on Homework
The explanation of the homework as a learning tool which indicated by most of the respondents (85%) as shown in Table 2; says that the teachers are theoretically aware about the importance of the homework in primary grades and they applied in one or other way in teaching process. Similarly many of the respondents had clear view about the goal of the homework which most of them referred to promotion of the children’s capacity in related subject. On the other hand the time duration that each respondent expect from a child to do homework at home is vary from teacher to teacher, for example almost half of the respondents said that each child should spend at least 30 minutes of his/her free time at doing homework which indicates their understanding about the nature of children and importance of leisure time that a child need. In contrary some proportion of the respondents also stated 90 minutes with reasoning the homework as a necessary tool for repetition of the lessons so students should do it at home. So considering the above findings half of the teachers give the homework without any lesson plan and it seems that they want to keep the student just busy. The lesson plan is a kind of teacher’s document that he/she schedules or allocates time for each activity that taking place in the classroom during the lesson which in Afghan educational context each lesson time is almost 40 to 45 minutes. The lesson plan is made by each teacher and prior to starting of the lessons the plan attest by headmaster so giving homework to students is also an educational activity that should be addressed on lesson plan, while the time which allocated for the homework should be responsive and according to age of the their development cycle, because much or big amount of homework reduce the interest of children towards learning process and the idea that more homework is better for the students is also rejected by earlier research (Queensland, 2004).

The completion of the homework is also a significant point that most of the respondents said that around 75% of their students complete the homework and few respondents indicated that even 100% of the students complete their homework in daily base, the reason of not completing the homework by all students in primary classes can be refer to disarrangement of the homework amount or balance between each subject and type of homework (written, memorizing or telling) as well as low attention to the involvement or preference of the students, because the former research which addressed in literature review propose that students should be part of the homework process it means the type and amount of homework should be discussed with them in order to have positive effect on their learning achievements.
However there is not a clear guidance except some little information which provided at each lesson of the text books about the size of the homework in primary classes (grade one, two and three) as well as the lesson plan that a teacher make for presenting of his/her lesson which sometimes the given homework also addressed in this plan. In managing and keeping the balance between these subjects teachers use various strategies, for example in grade one the focus is mostly in ascertaining, reading and practicing of letters, short and simple sentences and very basic numeracy. While in grades two and three it increase to writing of small sentences and primary mathematic exercise. According to Landis (2011) homework in the primary grades should be quite attractive and should improve positive attitude of the children and ensure the parents’ cooperation as well (Landis& voorhis, 2011).

Also 41% of the male respondents linked improvement of the students to their age cycle and capacity which has a direct relation with volume and way of giving homework. As read in table 5; considerable proportion of the female respondents (24%) indicated the usage of the plan in giving homework which is a good point. Similarly some of the respondents said that the written homework is given in Language and math subjects in order to improve the reading and writing skills of the students, while in other subjects such as life skill and religious, students given homework in memorizing or telling as a story methods to strengthen their communication abilities.

The teachers’ role in proceeding the children’ homework in primary classes are quite important as indicated in table 6; majority of the respondents (60%) pointed to importance of cooperation and guidance of the teachers in proceeding of the homework which might stem from their understanding about active learning that studied in teacher training institutes or short term trainings. Similarly the respondents also relied on motivation of the students by the parents as a significant point because students spent 3rd out of fourth part of their time at home, so the parents have important role in persuading of the children in completing of their homework. The identification of the students and understanding about their current capacity in giving homework is also a vital point that expressed by 33% of the male respondents as a suitable way for completing of the homework. But referring to the several factors that affect homework process, such as students’ understanding about goal and objective of the homework, their attitudes toward homework, learning attainment and their involvement in the design, amount and allocation of the assignment or task( Queensland, 2004). Challenging the teachers’ point of views

In regards to parents’ role in homework process, half of the male respondents (50%) talked about motivation of the children by the parents, while female teachers did not think so, instead the considerable proportion of the female respondents (36%) paid much attention to the role of follow up that parents can do towards education of their children in general, and in homework process in particular. Similarly 29% of the female respondents also indicated the importance of educated parents in supporting their children in homework process, while male teachers did not assume it important. But none of the respondents considered the student’s involvement and their preference in homework process while considering the pupil learning interest in homework is very important in order to become as more effective learning tool (Paul and Rudman, 2014). Thought the importance of parents involvement in homework process is recognized by former research but in our context a considerable proportion of the parents is uneducated and even if they want they cannot be useful because most of the homework given to students in written type, so the teachers and policy makers should manage the homework in way that ensure the involvement of the uneducated parents too, for example memorizing, multiplication and telling as story or reciting of the lessons may be the best way to involve uneducated parents in homework process and make
them aware of the progression of their child, moreover it would be a kind of encouragement to student also when he see that his/her parents can help him

As shown in table 7; majority of the teachers (75%) has been given homework to primary classes in a written manner, while memorization reading and storytelling (explanation) methods also has been used in giving homework because the initial aim of homework as discussed in above, is to maximize the pupils reading and writing skills so teachers usually prefer to give homework written manner. As written homework in the same time reduce the role of uneducated parents to homework process so the teachers need to think about it carefully and apply the above suggested

In regards to feedback it’s worth mentioning that most of the respondents thought correction of the homework errors as a feedback which most of the male and female respondents respectively 47 and 43 % used verbally feedback, but most of the female teachers (40%) also provided written feedback to the students which indicates their specific abilities in working with students. Also some of the respondent provided both verbal and written feedback in the same time. The respondents had different perceptions from the feedback, for example some teachers just made a thick mark or signed the notebook, some of them just look to notebooks and thick it and had some verbal reflection and some were corrected the homework of the students and wrote in their notebook some encouraging words like very good or well-done. But almost all of the respondents were not completely aware about the feedback process and have not used it as a proper tool in learning process. The reason might be shortages in curriculum of teacher training collages where most of the teachers complete two years in studying the educational issues so that be a good teacher

The ideal situation for primary level students for completion of their homework was short and interesting homework that students felt them happy and completed and in compensating the completion of homework the teachers mostly rewarded the student’s verbal encouragement statements and some teachers did in written

To conclude, the study contributed to some interesting findings about the nature and feature of homework in primary schools as analyzed in discussion part. The perception of the teachers’ about homework in primary classes that took out from the findings indicates that most of the teachers were aware about the importance of homework in primary classes, and implemented with different strategies in implementing of homework in their classes, which lack of proper time frequency in giving homework particularly in primary classes which based on earlier research’s result it should not exceed more than 30-40 minutes for grade 3rd (Landis and Voorhis,2011). Lack of the teachers’ lesson plan and addressing the details of homework on it, follow up and feedback process as well as suitable approaches for involving of uneducated parents to homework of students is the major shortfalls of the homework process in primary classes that policy makers in both, school level and in top level might think about, this was also explained in ‘Problem area’ and supported by other similar studies in other parts of the world as discussed in the ‘Literature Review’.

The study has been able to find the expected answers to the research questions along with illustrative and trustworthy data collected from the field. The study conducted in 14 primary, secondary and Community Based Schools in two district and Taloqan city so due to the similarities among schools and educational context it can be generalized in same province.
REFERENCES


Ministry of Education. (2006) *Teacher Education Program*: Kabul


ANNEXES
Questionnaire

**Background of the Teacher**

Sex:  □ Male  □ Female  Age: _________ years.

Education level:
   a) Less than 12 grade  b) 12 grade  c) 14 grade  d) Bachelor  e) Master

Teaching Experience: …………….years. Which class do you teach right now…………

Number of students in your class:
   a) less than 20  b) 20-29  c) 30-40  d) 40 or more

Have you participated at any training or workshop (short or long term) in regards to teaching where homework issues also addressed?
   a) Yes  b) No

If YES, how many days or months? Please specify………………………………………………

____________________________________________________________________________

1. In your opinion, homework can be define as:
   a) Homework is a learning tool
   b) Homework is an obligation of the students to do it,
   c) Homework is the policy of the school or government?
   d) Other? Please specify …………………………………………………………..

2. What is your goal of giving homework?
   a) To promote children capabilities in related subject
   b) To keep them busy at home
   c) To improve their self-reliance
   d) Other? Please specify …………………………………………………………..

3. Do you think giving homework to the primary level students are necessary?
   Yes  No

4. What type of homework do you usually give to students?
   a) In written,  b) in reading  c) memorizing  d) telling as story
   e) Other? Please specify …………………………………………………………..

5. Does the homework of primary classes (grade one, two and three) are different?
6. What are the differences of the homework among grade one, two and three?
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

7. The homework should be linked with the past lesson and help the students with the future lesson?
   □ Strongly agree □ Agree □ I do not know □ Disagree □ Strongly disagree

8. In your opinion what is the teacher role in doing the homework of the students?
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

9. The time that you expect a child to do his/her homework at home in a day?
   a) 30 minutes               b) 60 minutes              c) 90 minutes                            d) more

10. Are there students with different capacity (intelligent and less capable) and students with special need in your class?
    Yes                                                                                     No

11. Considering the formation of the class, the same homework should be not given to all students, it means homework should be given based on each pupil capabilities?
    □ Strongly agree □ Agree □ I do not know □ Disagree □ Strongly disagree

12. How many of the students in your class complete their homework in daily base?
    a) 100%                 b) 75%               c) 50%                   d) 25%        e) less than 20%

13. Do you share the homework plan and its method with other teachers in your school?
    Yes                                                                      No

14. Considering the number of subjects in primary classes (grade 1 to 3rd) how do you consider the volume of homework for each subject?
    ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

15. Considering the number of students in the class, how often do you check the homework of the students?
    a) Every day             b) every other day     c) once per week           d) none
16. Do you provide students with feedback about their homework? Yes  No

17. What kind of feedback do you provide to students?
   a) Written your feedback to the notebook of the student
   b) Verbal feedback to the students
   c) Other type? Please specify…………………………………………………………

18. What do you think about the parents’ role in regards to the homework of the students?
   …………………………………………………………………………………

19. How do you reward the student who complete homework regularly?
   a) Verbal encouragement
   b) With writing in the students’ notebook
   c) Supporting in the test or exam
   d) Other? Please specify……………………………………………………

20. In your opinion doing homework has any relation with improving of the students’ competence?
    Yes  No

21. What competence of the students will be improved mostly by doing homework?
    a) Reading competence
    b) Writing competence
    c) Communication skill
    d) Analyzing and reflecting skills
    e) All of the above
    f) None of the above

22. Does any given homework to the students follow the specific educational goal?
23. Under which condition the students of your class enjoy doing homework and complete it?
   a) When the students are happy,
   b) When the goal of the homework is explained well,
   c) When students jointly do the homework,
   d) When students have learned the given lesson,
   e) When the homework is short and based on pupil’s desire
   f) Other? Please specify………………………………………………………………

Table 1: Teachers views about definition and goal of homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion homework can be define as</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>What is your goal of giving homework</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework as a learning tool</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>To promote children capabilities in related subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an obligation of the students to do it</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To keep them busy at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy of the school or government</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>To improve their self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Teacher's point of views about duration and completion the homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The time that you expect a child to do his/her homework at home in a day</th>
<th>How many of the students in your class complete their homework in daily base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Teachers' view about differences of homework in primary classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the differences of the homework among grade one, two and three</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in grade one the homework is about practicing and repetition of the letters and basic numeracy, in grade two and three they gradually read and write some basic sentences</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As the improvement of the students is different based on their age cycle and capacity so the homework in grade one, two and three are different and we give homework based on their capability like practicing, reading and writing of short and simple words and numeracy and gradually increase it</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the volume of homework in term of size and quality is increased gradually from grade one to third</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The homework in grade one to three are the same, its repetition and practice with little increase in each level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework should be given according to plan and student's capacity</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Teachers' idea in regards to managing the volume of homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considering the number of subjects in primary classes</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In language and math the homework is in written and according to level of students, while in other subjects like life skills &amp; Islamic the homework is given as memorization</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>According to the plan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The volume of homework in language and Math is more than other subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count 1</th>
<th>Count 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on textbooks guidance and size of the textbooks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on students’ capacity, lesson plan and content or size of the textbooks</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
سوال سوم
آیا شما سیردن کار خانگی را برای شاگردان اصول صنفی ضروری میدانید؟
بلی نخیر

سوال چهارم
کدام نوع کارخانگی را معمولا به شاگردان تان میهدید؟
الف - شکل تحریری یا نوشتن درس ارایه شده ب - بشکل خواندن
ج - از یاد کردن د - بیان کردن کار خانگی به شکل قصه
ص - از کدام نوع دیگر

سوال پنجم
آیا کارخانگی شاگردان اصول صنفی (صنف اول، دوم و سوم) از هم متفاوت اند؟
بلی نخیر

سوال ششم
کدام تفاوت ها در کارخانگی صنف اول، دوم و سوم موجود است؟

سوال هفتم
کار خانگی شاگردان باید با درس بعدی یا بند داده شود و آنان را در یادگیری درس آینده کمک کند؟
کاملا موافق موافق من  نمیدانم مخالف کاملا مخالف

سوال هشتم
بنظر شما چه کمک کننده کارخانگی شاگردان چیست؟

سوال نهم
بنظر شما یک کارخانگی اصول صنفی چقدر وقت خود را باید در خانه صرف انجام کارخانگی نماید؟
الف) 30 دقیقه
ب) 60 دقیقه
ج) 90 دقیقه
(د) وقت زیادتر
سوال دهم

آیا در صنف شما شاگردان با سویه‌های مختلف (لایق و ضعیف) و همچنان شاگردان خاصی دارای معلولیت وجود دارند؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بلی</th>
<th>نه</th>
<th>ناگرای</th>
<th>موارد دیگر</th>
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سوال یازدهم

با توجه به ترکیب صنف، کارخانجی برای شاگردان در یک صنف نیاز به چک؟

یکسان باشد یعنی برای هر شاگرد مطابق برداشت و تواناییاش داده شود؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>موافق</th>
<th>مخالف</th>
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سوال چهاردهم

با توجه به تعداد مضامین در صنوف اصول صنفی، حجم یا اندامه کارخانجی در هر مضمون را چگونه در نظر می‌گیرید؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الف: هر روز</th>
<th>ب: یک روز در میان</th>
<th>ج: هفته یکبار</th>
<th>د: هیچ‌گاه</th>
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سوال هفدهم

چه نوع توصیه‌های اصلاحی را برای شاگردان ارایه می‌کنید؟

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سوال پانزدهم

با در نظر داشت تعداد شاگردان در صنف، کارخانجی شاگردان را چگونه بیان می‌کنید؟

الف) هر روز

ب) هفته یکبار

ج) هیچ‌گاه

سوال شانزدهم

اگر کارخانجی شاگردان توصیه‌هایی لازم اصلاحی را برای اتان ارایه می‌کنید؟

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<th>بلی</th>
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سوال یازدهم

چند فیصد از صنف شما کارخانجی خویش روز انجام می‌دهند؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الف: 100%</th>
<th>ب: 75%</th>
<th>ج: 50%</th>
<th>د: 25%</th>
<th>هـ: کمتر از 20%</th>
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<tbody>
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سوال دوازدهم

آیا پلان و طرح‌های کارخانجی برای شاگردان را با سایر معلمان شرکت می‌کنید؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بلی</th>
<th>نه</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

سوال پانزدهم

با در نظر داشت تعداد شاگردان در صنف، کارخانجی شاگردان را چگونه بیان می‌کنید؟

الف) هر روز

ب) هفته یکبار

ج) هیچ‌گاه

سوال پانزدهم

اگر کارخانجی شاگردان توصیه‌هایی لازم اصلاحی را برای اتان ارایه می‌کنید؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بلی</th>
<th>نه</th>
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</table>
## سوال هفتم
شاغردن که بصورت منظم و دایم کارخانگی خوش‌های انجام میدهند چگونه تشیوی می‌شوند؟

| الف | بخش شفاهی
|----|----------------|
| ب  | بخش تحریری
| ج  | کمک در وقت امتحان
| د  | یا بخش دیگر

## سوال هجدهم
نقش والدین را در اجرای کار خانگی شاغردن چگونه ارزیابی می‌کنید؟

## سوال نوزدهم
شاگردن که بصورت منظم و دایم کارخانگی خوش‌های انجام میدهند چگونه تشیوی می‌شوند؟

| الف | بخش شفاهی
|----|----------------|
| ب  | بخش تحریری
| ج  | کمک در وقت امتحان
| د  | یا بخش دیگر

## سوال بیستم
بنظر شما اجرای کارخانگی با دست آورد های آموزشی یا انکشاف قابلیت های شاغردن ارتباط دارد؟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بلی</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نخیر</td>
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## سوال بیست و یکم
اجرای کارخانگی کدام قابلیت های شاغردن را بیشتر انکشاف می‌دهد؟

| الف | قابلیت های خواندن
|----|----------------|
| ب  | قابلیت های نوشتن
| ج  | قابلیت های افهام و تفهیم
| د  | همه موارد فوق الذکر
| ه  | هیچکدام

## سوال بیست و دوم
آیا هر کارخانگی که به شاغردن میدهید هدف مشخص آموزشی دارد؟

<table>
<thead>
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<td>نخیر</td>
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</table>

## سوال بیست و سوم
تحت کدام شرایط شاغردن صنف شما از اجرای کار خانگی لذت می‌برید؟

| الف | وقتیکه هدف کار خانگی بصورت واضح و درست برای شاغردن بیان شود
|----|----------------|
| ب  | وقتیکه هدف کار خانگی بصورت واضح و درست برای شاغردن بیان شود
ج: وقتی‌که شاگردان درس‌ ارایه شده را خوب یاد گیرند
د: وقتی‌که مقدار کار خانگی کم و مطابق میل شاگردان باشد
ه: وقتی‌که شاگردان کار خانگی را بصورت دسته‌جمعی انجام بدهند
و: کدام حالات دیگر..........................................................