

Long-term students' management strategies and parental involvement in homework at the elementary level.

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This study assessed the evolution of children's homework management strategies and their parents' involvement in homework over a 3-year span, taking into account student gender and achievement, family structure and parent educational level. It also investigated the relationships between children's strategies and parental help in homework. The sample consisted of 157 parent-child dyads from geographically and economically diverse regions in Quebec. The study found no link between child gender and achievement and parent educational level and reported elementary students' homework management strategies. As children grew older, from grade 4 to grade 6, they took fewer initiatives to motivate completion of homework (monitoring motivation), to eliminate unwanted emotions, and to budget time (monitoring and controlling emotions / managing time). Parental help declined over the years, more importantly for girls than for boys. Parental help in homework seemed to foster among girls strategies in monitoring motivation and among boys, strategies in structuring their workspace at home (arranging environment), in dealing with frustration and in keeping track of the remaining available time for homework (monitoring and controlling emotions / managing time). Evidently, grade 6 students still benefit from parents being involved with their homework. Moreover, overtime findings, from grade 4 to grade 6, confirm the contribution of parental involvement in fostering desirable study habits, notably, monitoring motivation and monitoring and controlling emotion and managing time strategies. Those findings are of paramount importance in counterbalancing the observed decline in these same strategies over the 3-year span period.

Introduction

Homework refers to "tasks assigned by teachers to students that are meant to be completed during out-of-school hours" (Cooper 1989, 2001, p. 3; Patall, Cooper & Robinson 2007, p. 4). It is an inevitable connector of schools and families (Epstein 2001). The benefits associated with doing homework include among others, its contribution to develop good work habits (Epstein & Van Voorhis 2001; Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, Whetsel, & Green 2004; Xu 2004). Numerous studies have examined the benefits of homework, the links between attitudes and beliefs, homework completion and achievement, as well as parent involvement and motivation to become involved in homework (e.g., Cooper 2001; Cooper, Lindsay & Nye 2000; Cooper, Lindsay, Nye & Greathouse 1998; Corno & Xu 2004; Deslandes & Bertrand

2004, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001; Patall et al. 2007; Walker et al. 2004). For instance, studies revealed that doing homework was more strongly associated with achievement at the high school level than at the elementary level (Patall et al. 2007). Other works, mainly at the middle and high school levels, studied students' homework management strategies and family help in homework (e.g., Xu 2004; Xu & Corno 2003). Results indicated no difference across middle grades regarding students' strategies, but significant drops in certain strategies across high school grades. Gender differences in homework management strategies at the high school level were observed, in favour of the girls (Xu 2006). Family help of all socioeconomic backgrounds in middle years was positively related to some of homework management strategies (Xu 2004, 2006). To our knowledge, no attempt has yet been made in Quebec in order to examine the same variables over a period of time at the elementary level.

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Theoretical Framework

Two lines of relevant research guided our study, the first one being related to management strategies that students use while doing homework and the second one having to do with parental involvement in homework.

Students' Homework Management Strategies.

Homework can not only promote academic learning but also assist in the development of good work habits and lifelong skills (Xu 2004). Based on their previous works and other related studies, Xu and Corno (2003) have identified five categories of management strategies that students may use to help homework completion and achievement. The items for each category were derived from observations of families doing homework assigned to 3rd graders (Corno 2000; Xu & Corno 1998). These include: (1) Efforts to arrange the work environment (arranging environment); (2) Efforts to budget time to meet deadlines (managing time); (3) Efforts to discriminate task-relevant information from distractions (focusing attention); (4) Efforts to maintain or enhance homework intentions (monitoring motivation); (5) Efforts to prevent or control negative affect or emotional control (monitoring and controlling emotion). In their study conducted with a sample of 121 students including 6th, 7th and 8th graders and regarding the five categories of homework management strategies, the authors found no difference across grade levels (Xu & Corno 2003).

Moreover, their results showed no relation between homework management strategies and student achievement measured in terms of standardized tests. In another study with 426 US students from grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, they again found no grade level differences in the five categories of homework management strategies (Xu 2006). However, in a follow-up study, Xu (2004) indicated that high school students, as compared to middle school students, made fewer efforts to avoid internal distractions (focusing attention), and to engage in self-motivation and self-reward (monitoring motivation). What about when students are at the elementary level? How do their homework management strategies evolve from the fourth grade to the sixth grade? To what extent are their strategies related to their gender, their achievement, their family structure and their parent's education level?

Parental Help in Homework.

According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001)'s review of literature, parents get involved in their child's homework mainly in (1) establishing physical and psychological structures for the child's homework achievement; (2) monitoring the homework process; (3) responding to the student's homework achievement; (4) doing homework with the child; (5) using strategies to shape homework demands to child capabilities in order to help the child understand; (6) engaging in interactive strategies such as modeling, discussion, etc., and (7) engaging in activities that will help the child to develop appropriate managing learning skills and strategies.

The first and the last categories of parents' homework involvement strategies are of particular interest in this study (see also Walker et al. 2004). Those two categories correspond to two of the six types of involvement in Epstein's typology of parental involvement: type 1 or parents' basic obligations in children's education and type 4, involvement in learning activities at home (Epstein 2001; Epstein et al. 2001). These parents' homework behaviours have been associated with a number of student outcomes such as student attitudes toward homework and homework behaviours (Cooper et al. 2000; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001).

Somewhat mixed findings are reported in the literature regarding the relation between parental involvement and student achievement. According to some researchers, parents will be more involved in response to low achievement while others suggest that children who are achieving better obtain more help from their parents (Cooper et al. 2000; Eccles & Harold 1993; Grolnick & Slowiaczek 1994; Patall et al. 2007). Nevertheless, there seems to be consensus related to the fact that parental homework involvement is higher when the child is younger and when families are traditional as opposed to non traditional (Dauber & Epstein 1993; Deslandes 2003, 2005; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey 2001). Likewise, some studies reported more parental direct involvement in homework with female adolescents (e.g., Cooper et al. 2000).

Relationship between Parental Help in Homework and Students' Management Strategies.

In Xu and Corno's (2003) first study with middle school year students, parental help showed positive links with efforts arranging the environment and monitoring / controlling emotion, two strategies for managing homework. However, in their follow-up study, parental help was related to all five of homework management strategies: arranging environment, managing time; focusing attention, monitoring motivation and monitoring / controlling emotion. For instance, high school students who had help from their parents reported making more efforts to secure a quiet place (arranging environment), to eliminate internal and external distractions (arranging environment and monitoring/controlling emotion), to manage their time (managing time) and to use self-rewarding strategies (monitoring motivation). Even though there were differences between their research results, the authors concluded that family homework help is related to at least some student strategies for managing homework (Xu 2004).

Quite interestingly, parents' educational level was not related to any students' homework management strategies, meaning that children from different socioeconomic backgrounds can be induced to learning work habits.

In light of the research reviewed here, the major purpose of the present study was to build mainly upon Xu's and Hoover-Dempsey's works in order to provide further enlightenment for the field regarding both students' homework management strategies and parental involvement in homework at the elementary level. Grade 4 was chosen as the starting point for collecting data because of the important decline in parent involvement reported in the literature at that particular grade level (e.g., Epstein 2001).

Research questions

We addressed the following questions: (1a) How do students' homework management strategies and their parents' involvement in homework evolve from 4th grade to 6th grade? (1b) How do they evolve when taking into consideration student gender and achievement, family structure and parent education level? (2a) What is the relation between students' homework management strategies and their parents' involvement in the 4th and the 6th grades? (2b) What is the relation when taking into account student gender and achievement? (3) To what extent does parental involvement in the 4th grade contribute to 6th graders' homework management strategies?

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<i>Variables</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>
Participant Gender		
Female -Male	(87.3) – (12.7)	(137) – (20)
Family Structure		
Traditional	(66.7)	(104)
Non traditional	(33.3)	(52)
Participant Education Level		
High school or less	(36.1)	(56)
College	(34.2)	(53)
University	(29.7)	(46)
Child Gender		
Female - Male	(45.9) – (54.1)	(72) – (85)
Child Achievement Level		
Learning Difficulties	(32.3)	(50)
Succeeds well	(34.8)	(54)
Succeeds very well	(32.9)	(51)

Method

Participants.

The participants were 157 parent-child dyads (mothers: 87.3%, fathers: 12.7%; traditional families: 66.7%; non-traditional families: 33.3%) of elementary level students attending 18 public schools located in different regions of the Province of Quebec. Exactly 36.1% of the parents had a high school education or less, 34.2% attended college (one or two years after high school) and 29.7%, completed university. Nearly 32.3% of the parents said their child experiences "minor" or "major" problems in school whereas 34.8% reported their child is doing "well" or "very well" (32.9%).

Instruments.

Demographic Characteristics. Parents were asked information regarding their own gender and their child gender, their level of education, and their family structure (see description above).

Perception of School Achievement. The measure assesses the parent's perception of school achievement: My child is [...] (a) having big problems in school; (b) having small problems; (c) succeeding well; (d) succeeding very well (see description above). For the analyses reported here, the responses were recoded as follows: learning difficulties, succeeds well, succeeds very well.

Parental Involvement in Homework (Adaptation of the *Parent Perceptions of Parent's Structuring and Activities Related to Homework from Thinking About Helping My Child with Homework*, Hoover-Dempsey et al. 1995, 1999; 16 items; $\alpha = 0,86$) The measure relies on parent's report of his/her structuring and other activities related to the child's homework.

Homework Management Strategies (Adaptation of the *Features of Homework Strategies*, Xu & Corno 2003). This instrument is based on the child's perception. Construct validity was investigated using a Principal components analysis, followed by Varimax rotation. Results revealed 4 factors organized in the following way: (1) Monitoring Motivation (5 items; $\alpha = .85$); Arranging Environment (5 items, $\alpha = .67$); Focusing attention (7 items; $\alpha = .60$), and Monitoring and Controlling Emotion (6 items; $\alpha = .63$). All of the above measures employ a four-point Likert scale: 0 = never, 3 = always.

Procedures.

The design of this study was approved by the University du Québec à Trois-Rivières ethical review committee (Certificat #: CER-04-91-08). Data that are used in this paper are part of a larger longitudinal study on homework at the elementary and secondary levels. They were collected in May 2005, for Time 1 (Grade 4), and in May 2007, for Time 2 (Grade 6). Distribution of the questionnaires was left to the discretion of the 18 elementary school principals. In this study, we examine only the elementary level parent-child dyads who participated at both times of the study.

Results

Evolution of Students' Homework Management Strategies and Parent Involvement in Homework from Grade 4 to Grade 6.

Repeated measures ANOVAs were computed to verify the evolution of students' homework strategies and their parents' help in homework from grade 4 to grade 6 (Time 2). The means and standard deviations for each measure of student homework management strategies and parental help in homework are illustrated in Table 2.

Results indicate that students in grade 6, as compared to when they were in grade 4, make fewer efforts to monitor their motivation, $F(1, 155) = 4.543, p < .035$; effect size = .028) and to monitor and control their emotions/ manage their time $F(1, 155) = 5.241; p < .023$; effect size = .033). However, the values of the effect sizes were rather low. No change was observed in terms of arranging environment and focusing attention. During the same period, their parents diminished significantly their involvement in homework $F(1, 155) = 54.630; (p < .000; effect size: .259)$, the value of the effect size being much more important for this variable than for the previous ones.

Evolution of Homework Strategies and Parental Involvement in Function of Student Gender and Student Achievement, Family structure and Parent Education Level

Students' homework management strategies show no difference according to student gender and student achievement. Only one strategy varies in function of family structure, arranging environment in non traditional families (only one biological parent being present) being significantly lower for 6th grade students, as

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Homework Management Strategies and Parental Involvement in Homework

Variables	Time	Global Score	Student Gender		Student Achievement				Family Structure			Education Level		
			Female	Male	Difficulties	Succeeds well	Succeeds Very well	Traditional	Non-tradition.	Secondary or lower	College	University		
Monitoring Motivation	T1	1.81 (.83)	1.82 (.78)	1.80 (.86)	1.85 (.86)	1.75 (.84)	1.89 (.79)	1.85 (.83)	1.73 (.82)	1.83 (.78)	1.85 (.91)	1.73 (.80)		
	T2	1.64 (.88)	1.66 (.89)	1.62 (.89)	1.71 (.91)	1.53 (.83)	1.74 (.93)	1.67 (.89)	1.55 (.86)	1.57 (.86)	1.76 (.86)	1.58 (.96)		
Arranging Environment	T1	1.93 (.71)	1.86 (.71)	1.98 (.72)	2.04 (.66)	1.87 (.73)	1.89 (.73)	1.90 (.71)	1.99 (.72)	1.87 (.72)	1.93 (.70)	2.00 (.73)		
	T2	1.85 (.71)	1.82 (.74)	1.88 (.69)	1.84 (.75)	1.85 (.69)	1.87 (.72)	1.91 (.72)	1.74 (.69)	1.81 (.79)	1.77 (.68)	2.01 (.63)		
Focusing attention	T1	0.79 (.46)	0.74 (.47)	0.83 (.46)	0.85 (.52)	0.81 (.46)	0.69 (.40)	0.78 (.45)	0.82 (.49)	0.83 (.47)	0.77 (.48)	0.76 (.45)		
	T2	0.81 (.45)	0.81 (.49)	0.82 (.42)	0.78 (.49)	0.89 (.43)	0.74 (.44)	0.82 (.45)	0.82 (.46)	0.77 (.51)	0.85 (.37)	0.83 (.46)		
Monitoring and Controlling Emotion and Managing Time	T1	1.51 (.43)	1.56 (.56)	1.47 (.63)	1.67 (.66)	1.45 (.57)	1.44 (.57)	1.51 (.61)	1.51 (.58)	1.56 (.62)	1.46 (.60)	1.51 (.58)		
	T2	1.38 (.50)	1.38 (.53)	1.38 (.57)	1.41 (.56)	1.44 (.52)	1.27 (.57)	1.43 (.58)	1.29 (.47)	1.32 (.55)	1.42 (.57)	1.42 (.54)		
Parental Involvement in Homework	T1	2.08 (.43)	2.06 (.42)	2.09 (.44)	2.14 (.40)	2.05 (.41)	2.05 (.48)	2.11 (.43)	2.00 (.43)	2.11 (.41)	1.99 (.45)	2.13 (.42)		
	T2	1.84 (.50)	1.75 (.50)	1.92 (.48)	1.94 (.45)	1.82 (.51)	1.76 (.51)	1.85 (.50)	1.81 (.49)	1.88 (.50)	1.76 (.48)	1.88 (.51)		

Table 3. Correlations Between Students' Homework Strategies and Parental Involvement in Homework

Students' Homework Strategies	Parental Involvement With Homework																			
	Global Score				Student Gender				Student Achievement											
	T1	T2	T1	T2	Female	T1	T2	Male	T1	T2	Difficulties	T1	T2	Succeeds well	T1	T2	Succeeds Very well	T1	T2	
Monitoring Motivation	.061	.223*	.078	.293*	.050	.175	-.143	.273	.058	.031	.434*	.217	.031	.058	.281*	.003	.374*	.217	.031	.434*
Arranging Environment	.286*	.129	.230	.117	.328*	.131	.127	.029	.281*	.003	.397*	.374*	.003	.281*	.003	.374*	.374*	.374*	.003	.397*
Focusing attention	-.041	-.120	-.155	-.191	.046	-.052	.017	-.137	-.023	-.214	-.007	-.195	-.214	-.023	-.214	-.195	-.195	-.195	-.214	-.007
Monitoring and Controlling Emotion and Managing Time	.210*	.200*	.169	.168	.245*	.236*	.058	.044	.175	.149	.363*	.371*	.149	.175	.149	.371*	.371*	.371*	.149	.363*

compared to what it was when they were in the 4th grade $F(1, 153) = 4.24; p < .041$; effect size: .027). Regarding parents, results demonstrate that the parental involvement in homework/child gender interaction effect is significant, the decrease in parent involvement being greater for girls than for boys $F(1, 154) = 4.576, p < .034$; effect size = .029). It is important to point out that the effect size values being small, it is not surprising to obtain low interaction effect size values. We found no reliable difference in parent involvement in function of family structure, parent's education level and student achievement.

Relation between Students' Homework Management Strategies and Their Parents' Involvement in the 4th and the 6th Grades

Pearson correlations were computed between each of the five categories of homework management strategies and parental involvement at both times of the study. In the fourth grade, the more parents are involved in homework, the more their child makes efforts at arranging his/her workplaces, $r = 0.286, p < .05$, and in monitoring and controlling his/her emotions / managing his/her time, $r = 0.210, p < .05$ (see Table 3).

Likewise, in grade 6, the more parents are involved, the more that their child puts in some efforts to monitor his/her motivation, $r = 0.223, p < .05$ and controlling his/her emotions and managing his/her time, $r = 0.200, p < .05$. Parental involvement in homework was not related to the focusing attention strategy at any time of the study.

Relation between Students' Homework Management Strategies and Their Parents' Involvement in Function of Student Gender and Achievement

Child Gender. The correlations between girls' monitoring motivation and parental involvement in homework are positive in grade 6, $r = 0.293, p < .05$. As for boys, the correlations are significantly positive between parental involvement and arranging environment, $r = 0.328, p < .05$, in grade 4, and between parental involvement and monitoring and controlling emotions / managing time, $r = 0.236, p < .05$, in grade 6 (see Table 3)

Student Achievement. In grade 4, correlations are significantly positive between parental help in homework and high achievers' use of arranging environment and monitoring and controlling emotion / managing time strategies, $r = 0.281, p < .05, r = 0.374, p < .05$. In grade 6, high achievers' efforts in monitoring motivation, $r = 0.434, p < .05$, arranging environment, $r = 0.397, p < .05$, and monitoring and controlling emotion / managing time strategies, $r = 0.363, p < .05$ are significantly associated with parent involvement in homework (see Table 3).

Parental Involvement as Contributor to Students' Homework Managing Strategies

Path analysis was used to analyse the fit of a two-wave cross-lagged models (Finkel 1995). The model tested is shown by the figure 1. The two cross-lagged coefficient (ab' and ba') are the most important path in this model since they

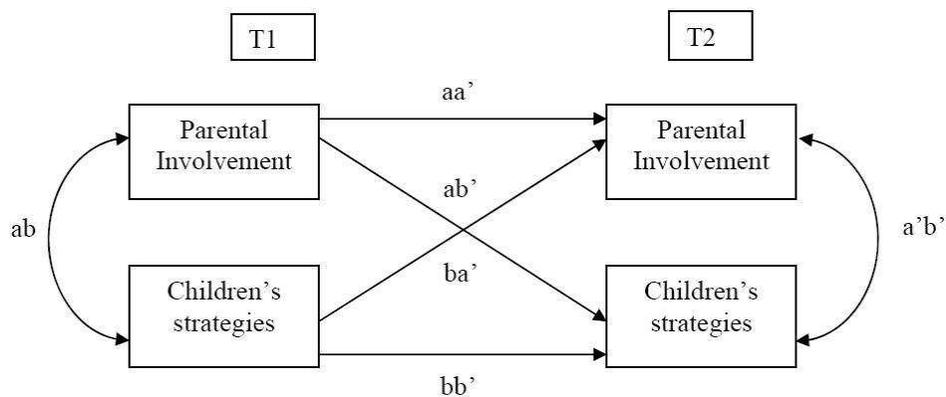


Figure 1. Two-wave cross-lagged models.

Note: Coefficients ab' et ba' (cross-lagged coefficients) illustrate the direction of influence between parental involvement and children's homework management strategies.

represent the influence of the parent involvement in wave 1 on the student's homework managing strategies in wave 2 (path ab') and the influence of student's homework managing strategies in wave 1 on the parental involvement in wave 2 (path ba'). Exactly four models were tested. Each model included parental involvement in relation to each of the four children's homework management strategies. Adequacy of model fit was determined by the following indexes: (a) Normed Fit Index (NFI), (b) Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), (c) Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI) and (d) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990).

All four models presented very good fit indices. These results are not surprising since the models were completely saturated. We were mostly interested by the values of the cross-lagged coefficients. In that respect, two models retained our attention. Findings indicate that high level of parental involvement with homework in grade 4 leads to high level of students' monitoring motivation strategies ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) and high level of students' monitoring and controlling emotion and managing time strategies ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) in grade 6.

Discussion

This study examined the relation between students' homework management strategies and parental involvement in homework and their evolution from grade 4 to grade 6 taking into account student gender and achievement, family structure and parent education level. It also verified to what extent parental involvement in homework contributes to the development of students' homework management strategies over a 3-year span period.

Evolution of Students' Homework Management Strategies.

The results of this study indicate that compared to when they were 9 years old, 11-year old students reported less frequently praising themselves for good effort and good work (monitoring motivation), calming themselves down and asking for help and keeping track of what remains to be done and telling themselves to work more quickly (monitoring and controlling emotions / managing time). At the age of 11, students seemed to keep up with efforts to arrange the work environment like finding a quiet

place and removing thins from the table. There was no change in task focusing. Obviously, learning to eliminate internal distractions (focusing attention) by telling oneself to avoid daydreaming, to start conversations, to play around, seems to develop later, the scores being very low in both elementary grades.

At this point, it is hard to compare with other study results because the ones employing the same measures have been conducted either at the middle school or the high school levels. For instance, in Xu and Corno's (2003) work with middle-year students, there was no reliable difference across grade levels on the strategies for homework management. On the other hand, in Deslandes and Rousseau's study (2008) conducted during the transition from middle school to high school (grade 7 to grade 9), students declared making fewer initiatives to remove external distractions (arranging environment) and to cope with negative emotions (monitoring emotions), but more initiatives to concentrate on homework (focusing attention).

Whether elementary students are males or females, whether they are achieving well or having learning difficulties, and whether their parents are highly educated or less educated, their homework management strategies are not different and that holds true at both grades 4 and 6.

Our findings are partly in contradiction with Deslandes and Rousseau's (2008) indicating a diminution in efforts to work to manage their workspace from grade 7 to grade 9, and more importantly for boys than for girls. In Xu's (2006) study, high school girls, as compared to boys, scored higher on most homework management strategies. It may be that gender disparities develop as the child gets older. However, our results are in line with Xu's (2004) showing that parents' educational level is unrelated to management strategies for homework. They also corroborate Xu and Corno's (2003) findings which revealed no link between middle school student achievement and the use of good work habits. Interestingly, when the family is composed of single parents or of parents in law, data reveal that children are less likely, as they grow older (from grade 4 to grade 6), to eliminate external distractions such as TV being on, receiving phone calls and having a lot of things on the work table (arranging environment). One explanation could be associated with elements of life contexts of non traditional families (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005).

Even though their involvement level in this particular study does not differ from traditional families', it is possible that they have less energy or less time or that they are just not available to remove external distractions when the child starts doing homework.

Evolution of Parental Involvement in Homework.

The finding that parental involvement in homework decreases as the child gets older is consistent with other study results showing the influence of the child's need for more independence (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burrow 1995). In fact, parents constantly have to balance the development of their child's autonomy and self-responsibility in homework with their ideas about what they should do and how they should be involved (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005).

Our data put in evidence a more important decline in parent involvement in homework among girls than among boys. Research has clearly shown that girls, as opposed to boys, are more likely to complete their homework and to be more autonomous (Deslandes 2003, 2005; Deslandes & Cloutier 2002; Xu 2006). It is thus logical that parents respond to girls' press for independence and higher sense of responsibility by decreasing their direct involvement in homework.

In opposition to numerous studies which demonstrate that non-traditional families, compared to traditional families (two biological parents), that parents with less schooling versus highly educated parents, and that parents of children who are having learning difficulties compared to parents whose children are succeeding well, tend to be less involved in their child schooling (e.g., Deslandes 2005; Grolnick & Slowiaczek 1994, Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005), our findings clearly show that elementary level parents are involved in homework to the same degree across diverse family structures, levels of schooling and child achievement levels.

Relation between Students' Homework Management Strategies and Parental Involvement.

Results suggest that parental involvement in homework is related to students' use of management strategies in homework. In both grades, 4 and 6, students seem to particularly benefit from parents' help in developing coping and calming strategies and in time management strategies (monitor and control their emotions / manage their time). Likewise, in grade 4, students appear to learn from their parents, skills in removing external distractions (arranging

environment). In grade 6, when they receive homework help, they also make more efforts to engage in self-motivation and in self-reward strategies (monitoring motivation).

These results clearly suggest the significance of parents help in developing positive homework habits at both elementary grade levels. This finding agrees with that of Xu and Corno's (2003) case study with six third-grade children in which they demonstrated that elementary school parents can help their children to develop self-regulation skills in homework.

Most interesting are the gender and the achievement level differences in the links between parent help in homework and children's use of homework management strategies. Results indicate that when parents help, girls tend to use more frequently strategies such as praising themselves for effort or good work, dealing with frustration and reassuring themselves that they are able to do homework when they feel it is too hard (monitoring motivation). On the other hand, 9-year old boys (grade 4) who receive parental homework pay more attention to preparing a quiet place for doing homework (arranging environment). When they get to be about 11 years of age (grade 6) and if parental help is still available, the same boys are then more inclined to make efforts to prevent or control negative affect by telling themselves to pay attention to what needs to be done, and by reminding themselves of the remaining available time and that they must work more quickly (monitoring and controlling emotions / managing time). Likewise, when there is parent homework assistance, particularly in grade 6, high achievers make more efforts to maintain or enhance homework intentions (monitoring motivation), to make sure they have a quiet workspace (arranging environment), and to control interfering emotions and to manage time (monitoring and controlling emotion / managing time).

Parental Involvement as Contributor to Students' Homework Managing Strategies.

Findings show no reliable contribution of parental involvement to students' efforts to focus attention and to find an appropriate environment for doing homework over time, that's, two years later. However, when parents are involved in homework in grade 4, (e.g., check their child's homework, help their child with homework when necessary, tell their child to correct mistakes while doing homework, etc.) then, these same children, when in grade 6, exhibit more initiative in

maintaining homework intentions (monitoring motivation) and in budgeting time and controlling negative affect, like praising themselves for the good work (monitoring and controlling emotion / managing time).

Conclusion

Specific findings deserve to be put into exergue. First, there was no link between child gender and achievement and parent educational level and reported elementary student homework management strategies. Second, as children get older, they took fewer initiatives to motivate completion of homework, to eliminate unwanted emotions, and to budget time. Third, there was no relation between the degree of parental help in homework and family structure, parent education and child achievement. Fourth, parental assistance in homework decreased as the child got older, the decline being more important for girls than for boys. Fifth, parental help in homework seemed to foster among girls strategies in monitoring motivation and among boys, strategies in structuring their workspace at home (arranging environment), in dealing with frustration and in keeping track of the remaining available time for homework (monitoring and controlling emotions/ managing time). Evidently, grade 6 students still benefit from parents being involved with their homework. Girls can learn from their parents how to offer themselves positive reinforcements to motivate completion of homework (monitoring motivation strategies). On their part, boys can learn how to avoid or overcome internal and external distractions, how to set priorities and how to keep track of the time (monitoring and controlling emotions/ managing time). The fact that high achievers seem to benefit from assistance from parents more than low achievers, may be explained by more specific requests addressed to parents. Skills in managing, organizing, coping, persistence, and self-responsibility represent sets of desirable lifelong skills that appear more likely to develop when parents offer homework help and provide support. Overtime findings confirm the contribution of parental involvement in fostering desirable study habits, notably, monitoring motivation and monitoring and controlling emotion and managing time strategies. Those findings are of paramount importance in counterbalancing the observed decline in these same strategies from grade 4 to grade 6.

Three important limitations of this study warrant consideration: the characteristics of the participants, and the use of self-report and correlational analysis. The recruitment of children and of their parents was done on a voluntary basis. Even though they came from different regions, they may not be representative of the general population of fourth and six grade children and of their parents. Data presented here are all derived from self-report surveys either from children's perspective (homework strategies) or from their parents' perspective (demographic characteristics and involvement in homework). Although reverse causality cannot be ruled out completely, we find it hard to think that parents tend to respond to children's frequent use of homework management strategies. The reverse account (i.e., that parental assistance in homework contributes to increased used of desirable skills) is in fact demonstrated in the overtime analyses. From a practical standpoint, our findings underscore the important role of parental involvement in homework in modeling and promoting effective self-regulatory skills associated not only with homework completion but also with lifelong learning skills.

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