

A-B-C's of a Great Start for School! by Jody Capehart



As you anticipate the new school year, think about setting up ways to jump-start the learning. Here are some practical ideas as you set up a homework environment for your learners.

Think about forming new habits to usher in a positive start for your children. For example...as you think of *homework*, do you anticipate a good year or does your heart sink? I can almost hear a collective heavy sigh coming as you think of the potential homework hassles starting up again. Let's look at how you can turn those *homework hassles* into *healthy homework habits*?

Let's utilize your student's learning style to set up a homework environment conducive for successful study strategies! It *can* be as simple as *A-B-C!*

A: **Attitude** is everything!

Share with your child that homework is important! It isn't a punishment given by the teacher, but rather, an opportunity to enhance what is being taught in the classroom. If you are positive about homework, your attitude is contagious to the children.



B: **Believe** in your child!

You build up your child's confidence when you communicate that you believe in him and how he/she learns. It can be difficult to be a student and be in classes *all* day that may or may not be presented in the way he/she learns best. It is very draining if one feels stupid and can't "*get it*", even with a great deal of effort put forth.



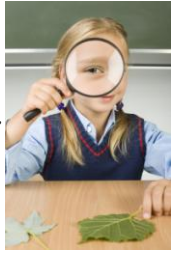
C: **Communicate** with your child.

When you say, "Let's work together to set up a homework area that helps the way you learn. Help me to understand how *you* learn so we can set this up to make it easier for you to do your homework." Try something out and if it does not help, then move on to *Plan B*.



Analytic or Global?

For starters, is your student more **analytic or global**? For example, if your child tends to process things in a sequential, logical manner, she is probably more of an **analytical** learner. These students see the details first, then the patterns and finally the whole picture. In other words, they go from part to whole. Whereas, the **global learner** sees the whole picture first, then the patterns and finally the details. If your child is more creative and *thinks outside the box*, he/ she may be more global.

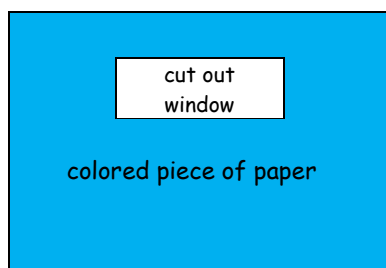


Applying to Learning

Wonder why some students do *not* get overwhelmed with doing their homework. They are usually Analytically! Yep...they go from the part to the whole, step by step. They see one problem at a time; complete it and go on to the next. They usually don't whine, they simply get it done. Why? They only saw one part at a time, focused in it, accomplished it, then went on to the next. Step by step, the work isn't as over-whelming.

Whereas the **global** students see the *whole thing*, gets overwhelmed, feels certain they can't get it *all* done, shuts down and may not finish the task. It is not a factor of IQ, it is a matter of brain functioning.

Here's the secret to helping your **global** student. For example, if your student has a whole page of math problems. Let your child select a piece of colored paper in a favorite color (except if they like black or red ...encourage them to go to their second choice) and cut out a 1" x 2" rectangle in the center towards the top of the paper. Your student puts this colored paper over the page of math problems they are doing, and then focuses in on what is in the rectangle. They do the problem in the rectangle and then move the paper. See what we are doing? We are blocking out the rest of page. It keeps them from getting overwhelmed.



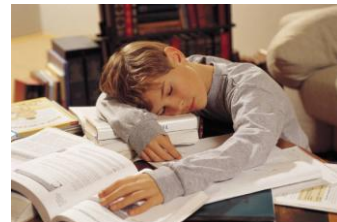
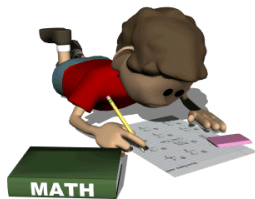
Here is another interesting difference. Usually **analytical** thinkers are more comfortable working at a desk or table, with bright light such as with windows, bright lamps or overhead lights, and they often prefer a quiet environment to do their homework. Whereas **global** thinkers usually prefer to work with everything spread out on the floor or sitting on the couch or their bed, like softer light such as a lamp and prefer a sound component such as music playing in the background.

At Home...Everyone Can Learn!

Let's face it...it may not be possible for every student to learn in their optimum learning style environment at school. But at home...every student is a good student because we can set up Homework Environments where every child can learn, and will love to learn!

Setting Up the Homework Scene at Home

On the home scene, well-meaning parents often purchase a desk, chair and lamp to set up a nice homework environment for their students. But when they go in to check on the homework status, they discover the desk has become a holding place for *stuff* and their students are on the floor or on the bed. Or asleep at the desk! Yikes! *What is a parent to do?* Translation: the parent has set up an **analytic** learning environment and the child may be more of a **global** learner.



This chart may help you to see what analytic and global learners *generally* need in terms of environmental *preferences*. Having said this, please know that every child learns differently and as such, your child may not fit into one of these neat and tidy little categories. Remember, these are just general guidelines to help you get started.

	Light Preference	Sound Preference	Seating Preference
Analytic Learners	Bright light	Quiet	Desk or table
Global Learners	Soft light	Sound component	Floor, couch or bed

You might say to your child, "We are going to try a different learning environment for you to do your homework. If it works and your grades go up, great, we will go with it. If it doesn't work for you, we will go to *plan B*."

Analytics generally prefer:



- Sit at a desk or table
- With overhead light or lamp
- More quiet learning place

Globals generally prefer:



- * working on the floor or bed
- * with soft lamps
- * with some sound

Here's Another Brain Tip For You

The goal is to find the learning environment that works for your child. For the students who need the **sound component** when they work, there is one important thing to remember. A background sound that has words forms word pictures in the brain. Your student may try to assure you that having television or loud *rock* music playing is *not a problem*. Well, it is. Well-documented research has shown that classical music is better for brain development. Most children do *not* want to hear this at first. 😊



Here's Your Best Sales Pitch

Meanwhile, be very direct and clear with your student, kids do have an antenna for truth. You may say something like, "When you study with things that distract you, the brain doesn't learn as fast or remember the information. I want you to do as well as you can in school. I know you want to spend as little time as possible on homework. Therefore, you may choose to study quietly or if you need sound, you may have classical music or some *neutral* sound such as a fan. Which do you choose?"

Your Student's Defense...

If your student begins to form his/her defense with "But I *know* I learn better with the television on" this is your answer: "Bring me the research that proves the brain works better with television and then we will discuss the possibility." Don't worry, there is nothing to substantiate this and you are on safe ground, but meanwhile it will buy you time, your student will be obeying you and learning. Package deal.



Back to the ABC's

To turn homework hassles into positive homework habits, look at your **attitude**. Are there ways for you to be more positive? Have you taken time today to tell your child that you **believe** in him or her, and you know they can do it? Encouragement energizes us and helps us in the process. **Communicate** with your child that you want to work together to set up a homework environment that works for your child's learning style. Experiment until you find what works for your student. You will see an observable difference when you find the one that works. You have taken the first step in forming *healthy homework habits*. Congratulations!

For more information on helping find your child's learning style, check out articles and books on Jody's Website and blog: capehartconnection.com

