

The purpose of school is to receive instruction, to practice and reinforce the learning with output (in-class work and homework) and to demonstrate “mastery” of the material - usually, with tests and ultimately, by grades. Obviously a concussion will affect mental efficiency, speed of input AND output, memory of material and will impact all 3 areas:

instruction, work output and tests/grades.

For tips in all these areas, be sure to also read *GetSchooledOnConcussions*:

**What To Do About ... Tests? Issue #17**

**What To Do About ... Missed Instruction? Issue #18**

**Student is newly concussed and is physically absent or cognitively unavailable to benefit from instruction**

Student was not exposed to the instruction: Consider giving the “gift” of little to no in-class work and homework. Consider exempting work and forgiving grade

**Student has been newly/recently concussed, has missed some instruction but is now physically present and more cognitively available to learn**

Teacher and student will need to determine what instruction was missed and what now needs to be taught or re-learned. Some in-class work and homework can now be expected but should still be reduced. Consider focusing primarily on what is essential to reinforce the new learning and not requiring much make-up work unless it is *essential* for learning. Grade only on work done, do not penalize for work missed

**Student has been concussed newly/recently with some, but minimal, cognitive impact or was concussed weeks to months ago with some, but minimal, school or instruction missed and/or has now been back to school and available (physically and cognitively) to instruction**

Teacher and student will need to determine what instruction was missed and what now needs to be taught or re-learned. As mental energy increases and symptoms subside, amount of in-class and homework can be increased. Priority needs to be on keeping up with current material. Consider the “gift” of only requiring a reasonable amount of make-up work; only work that is *essential* for mastery of learning. Grade only on work done; do not penalize for work missed. Since extracurricular activities may not have been added back yet, there should still be time afterschool available for teachers and students to meet to learn material missed during recovery. This process requires *meeting time* to determine *written plans* for

*For example: If you teach math - consider the “gift” of having student do only “even” problems!  
If you teach science/social studies - consider the “gift” of having student’s grades based only on group work!*

As the concussion heals over 3 to 4 weeks, it is OK for the teacher to expect more in-class work and more homework, in spite of parent and doctor notes to the contrary. The common MD suggestion of “NO in-class work or NO homework” often goes into effect early in the concussion and is not applicable as the student recovers. Moreover, as the student gets better each day/week, it is the prerogative (indeed the obligation) of the teacher to allow the student to attempt more and more academics daily. However, before deciding if a student should increase in-class and homework expectations, the student and teacher should determine:

- Has the student been adequately exposed to the material? If the student has not been exposed to the material, the purpose of reinforcement of learning via in-class work and homework is a moot point. No in-class/homework practice is helpful if the concept has not been taught. So teachers: ask yourself first:
- ✓ Was the student *physically* present in class? Was the student *cognitively* present in class?
- ✓ Was missed instruction caught up and taught via supplemental office hours?
- ✓ Does the student feel reasonably confident they know the material?
- ✓ Is the student minimally symptomatic?

*Parents and Students  
if you want your teachers to provide these “gifts”, read “What To Do About Missed Instruction” Issue #18*

If the answer is YES to all questions above, consider allowing the student to increase in-class work and homework

**But keep in mind, with mental fatigue and slowed processing speed (even though improving) - It is NOT possible to make up all missed work!**

**Making student responsible for ALL missed work causes significant anxiety!**

Consider: allowing the student to back down on in-class or homework if symptoms significantly flare again

AND/OR

providing periods of work followed by periods of rest (i.e. 30 minutes testing, 10 minutes rest)

AND/OR

providing extended time

AND/OR

allowing for a “do-over” if the grade on in-class work and homework suggests that, despite the best intentions, the student did not in fact have enough instruction on the material☺

**Student was concussed, is now fully healed, but missed some in-class and homework during the recovery**

Ease back to full academics - Focus on keeping up on current learning; do NOT require all past work. Adjust grades accordingly to reflect work completed, do NOT penalize for work not done