Exam Day Machinations

The Night Before Each Examination

- Check which examination(s) are being held the next day (including the times and venues) and ask someone else to verify the information so that you can have peace of mind.

- Make sure that everything is packed in your bag.

Sample Checklist:

- Student card/number
- Examination timetable
- 2 or more ball point pens
- 2 or more pencils (sharpened)
- Highlighters or coloured pens
- 2 sharpeners
- 2 rulers
- Calculator(s)
- Spare batteries for calculators
- Mathematical equipment (where allowed) eg. Compass, protractor, set square
- A drink (and lunch)
- Power snacks (high protein, high complex carbohydrates, low in processed sugars)
- Your brain

- Do not overstudy on the night before each examination. Make sure you have plenty of time to relax and unwind.

- You should not be learning new theory the night before the examination. Use this time to re-read summaries, review challenging concepts and to practise difficult questions (that you have fully worked solutions for).

**Why?** Because you want to build confidence by reinforcing what you do know rather than running the risk of scaring yourself by discovering something you do not know.

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“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school”. Albert Einstein
• Do not cram learn before exams. For most of us, it is an ineffective way of learning. Furthermore, cramming stupefies long term memory (where well learned memory lives), and it can set you up for panic attacks and mind blanks in the exam. If you must, however, cram, do so in 5 – 10 minute blocks by reading materials out loud and then rephrasing what you are learning in your own words. Then take a 1 to 3 minute break so as to allow the information you are learning to be processed in your brain. Then repeat what you have just tried to learn. Once panic begins to subside, increase the length of your cramming sessions to no more than 30 minutes at a time, with a 5 – 10 minute break in between 30 minute sessions.

• Try to get as much sleep as possible before each exam. Saying that, if you cannot fall sleep, do not be too concerned as the adrenalin that will be coursing through your body the next day will be more than sufficient to get you through each exam. Just make sure that you catch up on any missed sleep the next day, so as to keep concentration levels and performance at optimum levels.

On the Morning of Each Examination

• Eat a solid healthy breakfast keeping processed carbohydrates to a minimum. If your stomach feels upset, eat some plain toast and some fruit.

Note: To prevent “foggy brain syndrome”, do NOT eat a meal high in simple carbohydrates. Avoid high quantities of processed sugar (lemonade, fizzy drinks, lollies, ice-cream, chocolate, donuts etc). Opt for a high protein and complex carbohydrate breakfast instead. Examples include: Unprocessed cereals (Weetbix, porridge, Cornflakes, Rice Bubbles etc), bacon, eggs and wholemeal/grain bread, baked beans.

• Arrive early, but keep away from other students. The last thing that you need to hear 15 minutes before an examination is: “Did you learn this? It’s going to be on the exam”.

• Spend the minutes immediately before each exam relaxing and thinking positively and/or balancing the brain.

Simultaneous balancing of the left and right brain maximises learning as well as retention and recall of information. This can be accomplished by listening to certain Baroque pieces, such as Mozart's Sonata for Two Piano's in D Major.

The effectiveness of this sonata was investigated by analysing the results from an IQ test performed on three groups of college students. The first group listened to the above mentioned sonata before taking the test. The second group listened to a relaxation tape before their test. The third group did not listen to anything before the test.

The third group obtained the lowest score with an average of 110.

The second group ended up with an average of 111, whereas the first group – the one that listened to Mozart’s sonata received the highest score, with an average of 119. That equates to an 8.2% increase in results!

Not only does the action of balancing the brain by listening to Baroque style music increase recall and decrease the likelihood of making errors, it also causes the release of neurotransmitters in the brain which help the body to relax, which results in obvious advantages in the exam.

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After Each Examination

- When you finish each examination paper, leave immediately. Do not compare your answers with other students – you may become flustered, upset, de-motivated and even depressed. Go home, and along the way, reward yourself for completing one exam.

- There will always be at least one exam which is a great spirit breaker. If you do not perform well in any examination, accept the fact that you did poorly, put the experience behind you and move on. Do not let a poor performance destroy your confidence or determination – just do the best that you can. The reality is that if you did know your work and struggled, it is likely that the majority of the students across the state found the paper difficult as well. So there is a good chance that you probably did better than them anyway, and the normalisation and ranking processes will correct your score. If you let a tough exam affect you, you will only decrease your performance in subsequent exams.

- Finally, once you have finished all the exams, relax and reward yourself! You’ll definitely deserve it. Put the exams out of your mind and enjoy the time before the results are released.

Wishing students all the best in their examinations.
The Team at The School For Excellence.