

LYNETTE LAW

My Story



Hi everyone, and welcome to what will be for many of you the last and possibly the most memorable year of your high school lives. Your attendance here today already reflects upon your work ethic; that you are determined to maximise your potential. And if this isn't true, I hope that this session will serve to motivate you and set you on the path to VCE success.

My VCE story can be condensed to three sections:

'F' for family and friends,
'A' for attitude, and
'T' for teachers and TSFX,

which spells FAT. That has nothing to do with what I'm here to talk about, but I just wanted to put it in a word.

The first part highlights how essential it is that you continue to keep in contact with your friends and your family, because it is from them that you will receive great support. Your friends can be both your study buddies and competitors, your lifeline and the person you're fighting FOR the lifeline – although that metaphor may be a bit too intense. Your family is there to make sure that you make it through VCE completely – or mostly – sane. Both parties are there for you to confide in, so whenever you are feeling down or anxious about anything, they will be there to listen. During my year I found a balance between work and play; I would complete my work and study as necessary, but also set aside time for both catching up with friends and spending time with family. These breaks away from writing an essay or practicing calculus were quintessential to make sure I didn't stress too much.

The second part regards your attitude; that is, your approach towards the obstacles you will encounter during the year. A great quote to remember here comes from a lecturer that I once had:

'Have motivation as your mistress, but be sure to marry discipline.'

I think this quote is good because it shows that motivation only lasts so long; eventually you'll be distracted by Facebook, Youtube, or just can't be bothered. Discipline, however, is so much more important, because it is not only long-term but also because it is the building block for your success in VCE as well as in your future endeavours. If you are able to develop a sharp focus and

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determination to overcome the hurdle of VCE, then you are already on the path to achieving your dreams. Although I admittedly strayed off the path of discipline more than a few times in my year, it was often my teachers who pointed me back in the right direction. Consistency is key; don't stuff all your work in a drawer in the holidays, but do some work and study most days so that you have an edge when the term begins.

Which brings me to the last section of FAT, the teachers.

The most important thing here: Be friends with your teacher, not because you can bribe them later to give you an A+ on your SAC but because they are treasure troves of information. USE THEM. They will not only provide you with extra resources and practice questions but also give you the invaluable feedback you need to continuously improve on your scores. Attending TSFX classes are fantastic because you not only receive tons of extra material but the teacher also provides alternative explanations to concepts and/or questions that you might have covered in school. Seeing things in a different way like this helps deepen your understanding, which is important particularly when tackling the longer application questions on your exams. So be nice to your teachers and reap the benefits when it comes to your study and your understanding.

Now I'm supposed to provide a snapshot into how I managed my life during VCE.

In an average day, I would study for around 5 hours; an hour during the morning or at lunchtime at school, and the rest when I got home. I didn't have a particular day where I took a break, but if I did they would usually be at night on weekends. Of course I didn't do this rigorously for the whole year; I also participated in sport and outings with friends and family.

Here's where TSFX comes in once again. Without the notes and advice both provided by teachers and in emails, I probably would not have achieved the scores that I did. I averaged A-A+'s in all of my subjects. It's also important that you are proactive in your study. What I mean is, never be satisfied with the amount of material that you have. Keep looking online, ask others, use TSFX notes, read library books even; every bit of extra information counts. For me, I kept looking online for resources, particularly for English. I also attended some TSFX lectures. In many cases, they helped me understand concepts that I didn't quite get in school.

I also learned how to structure my time so that I could achieve the most. For example, this lecture (the Mastering the VCE one) told me that summarising notes is an ineffective way of studying; instead, I hoarded questions and did as many as possible. And if I finished them, I redid the more difficult ones. So please, use the advice given to you in this lecture from the moment you get home, it's gold. Your future self in about 8 months' time will definitely thank you for it.

I'd like to touch on how I prepared for the exams.

I began practicing whole exams in around July or August, where previously I was doing just questions in preparation for SACs etc. Of course I realise that everyone has their own way of studying; so find the way that suits you and stick with it. One thing I found was that it wasn't the number of practise exams that I completed but the quality of the exam paper. I feel that it is far more important to consolidate the knowledge as best as possible and to use practice exam papers for developing skills like time management and to understand how best to approach completing an exam.

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Try not to give up on your co-curricular activities, tempting as it may be. Additionally, there are some who might think that their school does not provide enough exam papers for practice. TSFX is fantastic because they provide you with booklets and booklets of exams, so you can do as many as you want!

Finally, I want you all to realise that when the exams are over, you'll look back on your Year 12 and remember not the exams as your greatest memories, but the friendships you've made along the way. Don't study a lot, but study effectively. And when your exams are over, party responsibly.

Good luck!