

Effective Exam Preparation

Class of 2017

Extract from Chapter 2: Simpler ways to use your time wisely


J.W Goethe once said “One has always enough time, if one applies it well”. As a student, I’m sure your teachers have spoken to you in relation to the need to have a balance between study, exercise, socialising, meeting your friends and relaxing. All of these are important and your teachers are correct to speak to you about balancing them properly. However, it is important, no matter what, to prioritise your study during your final year in school. It must rise from the bottom of the list of your priorities to the top. The length of time you spend studying is not as important as how you study. The key to studying is quality not quantity. I would like you to approach studying as a journey, finding out new and interesting facts along the way. Vary your time with the many different ways

that you can study, which I spoken to you about in Chapter 1.

In general, the most important thing you can do with your time in sixth year is attend school. If you feel unwell in yourself on a given day, try everything you can to drag yourself into school. Obviously, if you need to rest or recover from some illness, you will need to stay at home. However, I would advise you not to use every little excuse to avoid school. In my opinion, presence in school is more important than being clever with your time at home. The more often you see your teachers, the more information and advice you can get off them, the more good quality notes you will have and the more you will keep up to date with exam information for each subject.

Firstly as a teacher, I hear of many students getting a part time job while in school and sometimes during their exam year. This, in my opinion, is very poor use of time. Do keep in mind that you can

work in posts for the rest of your life and that there is only one leaving cert year. Call me a “kill joy” or whatever but I don’t think you can function well and study properly if you are working long hours over the weekend or during the week. You may get away with it in fifth year but definitely not in third or sixth year. Why do I say this? Well I have seen many of my students try it over the years. They get a taste for “going out money” and the books are fired there. If you are working at the weekend and you feel it is affecting your study or you are tired in class, it may be worth parking it until July. It is up to yourself obviously, but do consider it if you are reading this and it resonates with you.

Secondly, every day you live by timetables; bus timetables, class timetables, gym timetables for example. I want you think about what these timetables do? I am sure you would agree that they bring an order and a definite certainty to your life. You know you have to be there at a certain time for that bus  or be ready when

the bell rings for class. If you create what I'm going to call a "lifestyle timetable", you will develop the discipline to follow through on what you actually write on it. What I am referring to here is different to a "study timetable". On a lifestyle timetable you will enter other elements of your life outside your study and exam preparation. Putting this type of timetable on paper will make you feel better as you will become more focused on what needs to be done and more aware of balance also. Putting a "lifestyle timetable" together is the first step in taking control of the "exam situation" and it will make you feel so much better when written and when you begin to implement it.

Book to be released in September 2017

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