

Helping your Students get Exam Ready



Exam season is arguably the most stressful time of year for the school body. Tensions are running high for parents, students and teachers, and it's the students who are especially under a lot of pressure. Revision can not be taught as such, but you can offer guidance and steer students in the right direction. To help take the pressure off, we've outlined key ways in which you can prompt students with their studies in the form of techniques and content delivery.

Content

Blank revision books

Rest assured your students are covering all the key areas they need to when revising for their exams. Issue each student in your class with a new text book which is completely empty aside from headings and subheadings for specific exam criteria. This will act as a helpful prompt when it comes down to revision and students will know exactly which areas they need to revise and can test their retention of knowledge by filling in the gaps from memory.

Task menu

When assigning revision as homework, it can be difficult for students to know where to start. To avoid confusion and help guide them with their revision at home, plan revision activities and display them in a task menu. Task menus can also be created department-wide to even out the workload.

Create different tasks for key areas of the exam criteria - when homework is due to be set, students can choose the most relevant task for them and work through the remaining tasks, ultimately covering all key areas of the curriculum in preparation for their exam.

Put it online

To ensure handouts and resources don't get lost or misplaced, where possible put these online and make them available to students. Creating an online resource bank gives students, wherever they are, access to relevant materials to help with their revision at home. If your school haven't invested in software that supports this, creating a folder in Google Drive and sharing with students or emailing them with documents attached will ensure they have access to everything they need online.

Another way to open up a helpful line of communication outside of lesson times is to email students so if they have any questions or concerns they can contact you directly.

Knowledge organisers

The idea of knowledge organisers is to display all of the key facts you want your students to retain in a table. Create these early on in the revision period so students have them throughout the entire time span and can use them to memorise the key knowledge in time for the exam. These tables can be used when setting homework as well as in class quizzes and for students to test themselves when revising in their own time.

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Techniques

Student-centric revision lessons

By involving students in the creation of revision resources, you're not only testing their knowledge of topic areas, you're also ensuring that they're creating work that will benefit themselves and their classmates. When students know their work is going to be shared publicly, it instils a sense of ownership, motivating them to put more effort into their work, ensuring high quality content is produced. An additional benefit of this is that if students are creating revision resources for one another, the way in which they display and communicate their findings will be in a way which will resonate with their peers.

The art of notes

Note taking has, and always will be, a staple part of revision. Taking notes is one of the best ways to memorise lots of information and it's key that you encourage your students to do this. Allowing time for them to take notes in class but also asking them to show you their notes when reading or revision is assigned as homework will reiterate the importance of note taking.

In order to get the most value out of this revision technique, encourage students to re-write the same notes multiple times. Although it may seem tedious re-writing the same thing over and over again, this is one of the best ways to memorise information in the run up to exams.

Interleaving

When talking students through revision, encourage them to interleave subjects as opposed to focusing on blocked practice. Interleaving has been shown to be more effective for developing skills of categorisation and problem solving as well as long-term retention and improved ability to transfer learned knowledge.

You can help students to implement this style of study through encouraging them to create a revision timetable which focuses on multiple subjects throughout the day, as opposed to just one.

Spacing

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Testing

In the lead up to exams, introduce low stake tests into your lesson planning. Continually testing your students' knowledge will help them to improve their memory. There is a lot of anxiety surrounding tests and exams so introducing them into regular everyday activity will not only help improve their memory and make them feel more confident in their knowledge, it will also prepare them for the actual events and reduce their anxieties around it.

