

Help your child prepare for examinations

Using twenty-first century technology and already providing Skype education for pupils in Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore will reinvent education in the UAE.

Michael Edwards, gives ten reasons why you should consider Skype tuition for your child.

1) Think of a tutor as a diagnostic educational consultant. Within hours the tutor will have built an academic profile of your child, acquired an understanding of your child's preferred learning style and personality. Identifying your child's strengths and weaknesses, they will develop a mini-course specifically designed your child. An experienced tutor will soon assess whether your child can successfully interpret questions, effectively plan answers, apply mark-scoring techniques and then check rigorously to eliminate those careless errors that cost grades.

2) Parenting teenagers can be challenging, particularly when the exam season ramps up the pressure. Tensions can be alleviated if parents can largely keep to the role of parent. Delegating some responsibility to a tutor or two for academic progress tends to reduce emotional conflicts.

Parents, should see themselves as study facilitators, providing somewhere comfortable and quiet to study, maintaining a steady flow of drinks and meals, as well as acting as taxi drivers to give much needed breaks with friends.

3) At the very moment when your child needs the support of their teachers, schools close for a long Easter break, often followed by a period of Study Leave. Asking a pupil to manage their own work programme for three or four weeks, sometimes longer, challenges even the most organised and brightest of pupils. Now is the time to select an "academic personal trainer" to guide your child through this most pressured of times, converting Ds into Cs, Bs into As.

4) For teenagers, the revision desk can be one of the loneliest places on Planet Earth. Schools encourage pupils to create revision planners. But when you are a teenager, faced with several weeks of revision, there can be few threats more intimidating than a two-hour slot of "Chemistry" or "French" or "Geography." Schedule some slots with a tutor, the ultimate "study buddy", to provide support and welcome social interaction.

5) Peer pressure, not wanting to look foolish in lessons, often prevents adolescents from asking the questions, in class, that need answering. As adults, we have forgotten that looking cool in front of contemporaries is more important to teenagers than receiving a good grade. Developing a trusting relationship with a tutor, builds the confidence to ask the "silly" questions.

6) When a pupil is set a task by a tutor there is a powerful motivation to complete it to the best of their ability. Tutors have the time to mark carefully, without being confronted by a set of 25 or 30 exercise books, so that they can spend the first five minutes of the next lesson discussing the completed task with the pupil.

7) With schooldays long gone, parents have forgotten the pressure of revising for seven, eight or even nine subjects at GCSE or four at A Level, or for IB subjects. Even the brightest child sometimes struggles to remember topics they covered back in Year 10 or Year 12.

Illnesses and school trips often leave gaps that need filling. When school life is busy with expeditions, rehearsals and sporting fixtures, French irregular verbs and the Periodic Table can sometimes take a back seat.

Ex-pat pupils often arrive in an international school having covered differing curriculums. Teachers simply do not have the time to plug holes in a class where pupils arrive from different educational systems in far-flung continents. It is another International Rescue mission for the tutor.

8) An hour of tuition, providing a range of directed exercises, looking to reinforce memory, and develop examination technique, is usually far more productive than individual revision.

Left to their own devices pupils tend to lie on their bed, put on their headphones and listlessly flick through a text-book. With individual tuition a pupil will achieve more in less time, freeing time for more enjoyable activities.

9) Introducing a fresh set of eyes and a second opinion for the final sprint towards the examination finish line benefits many pupils. After two years of a course preparing for a GCSE or A Level or IB, the pupil and teacher may take each other for granted.

An individual Skype lesson makes the pupil the centre of attention which is hugely motivating. They can receive this boost to their confidence from the comfort of their own home without having to waste valuable time battling through traffic to get to a tutor.

10) After they have taught your child for a batch of lessons, usually eight, a tutor will write a detailed report on your child's progress. They will make recommendations for skills or topics to be worked on in future lessons. If you, as a parent, have urgent concerns you can always arrange a Skype catch-up section, frequently at the beginning or end of a lesson.

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