

Exam season is arguably the most stressful time of year for any school. Tensions are running high for parents, students and teachers, and it's the students who are especially under a lot of pressure. With the ever increasing pressure on the Mock exam season, it can sometimes feel like there is no release. To help take the pressure off, outlined below are ways in which we can prompt students with their studies in the form of techniques and content delivery.

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.

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.

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.

Clearly there are many other ways in which we may help to prepare our students but one thing we can do to help them that is more often than not overlooked is just to be there for them. I know it sounds a little twee, but I believe this year more than ever it is especially true, even more so for the many students who don't maybe get the support at home we would hope for. I always make a point of emphasising to my exam classes that we are a team, something as a PE teacher I have always believed whole-heartedly in.

One of my heroes growing up in the late seventies and early eighties was Kevin Keegan (don't judge me!). When he became a reasonably successful manager in the nineties with Newcastle, Man City and England he built his teams around the philosophy of " We win as a team, we lose as a team." Now, I know this seems like a world away from the Year 11 classroom but I believe that ethos is as important there as it ever was in a Premier League dressing room. The cooperation and interaction of the pupil and the teacher working as a cohesive unit is essential in achieving the long term goals we both want. So being there for them may sound twee, but now more than ever it seems like a vital part of our job.