

The Thinking Cap

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Alexandra in Tutorland

alexandra's musings



Running and learning

Always an enthusiastic athlete, I had set my sights on running a marathon. Beginning last May and all through our hot New York summer, I trained for a long 26 mile and 385 yard run. The tough process challenged my discipline (and my quads). And because I'm a pretty average runner (my speed is somewhere between the tortoise and the hare), my daily workouts gave me extra time to think about some important lessons.

1. Set goals. Small ones and big ones. When I decided to run the marathon, the idea of running 26 miles seemed unrealistic to me. I made a plan and started running 5 miles, then 10, then 15, and before I knew it, 26 didn't seem so unfathomable. Similarly, when you have a big project to tackle, break it up and set small goals. As you work through the goals, you'll get closer and closer to completing the big project.
2. Stay on track. But make a back-up plan. Mostly, I stuck to my schedule during my training. However, there was a week or two when things came up and suddenly I couldn't stay on track. I realized how important it was to have back-up plans so that one small bump in the road didn't turn into scrapping the big goal all together. When you're creating a schedule for yourself, remember to plan for "flex time." If you're on track, you can use your flex time for an extra break; otherwise, you can use the time to stay on schedule.
3. Get a pep talk. About halfway through my training I hit a mental wall. My legs were fine, but my head was telling me "no more running." I was almost ready to quit. I just didn't believe I had it in me. I went over to the running store in my neighborhood and described my situation. My fellow runners gave me a great pep talk, helped me reset my goals, and before I knew it, I

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Send your questions to:

info@thinkingcapstutoring.com

Sense and Sensibility
you ask, we answer

Q: I am overwhelmed with amount of vocabulary in my foreign language class. How do I tackle all of the words and actually remember them?

A: There are so many fun ways to learn foreign language vocabulary. Flash cards are an easy and portable method. Write the English meaning on one side and the foreign language on the opposite side. You can use these to make memory games, practice with a friend or family member, and more! Other ways to study vocabulary include drawing a picture associated with the word, creating a song or rap with a list of words, writing the words in a story, or inventing mnemonic devices. Make learning fun and before you know it, the words will stick!

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Great Expectations

ü ThinkingCapsSummer Registration begins in May! We'll be in the Hamptons, New York, Austin, and Houston.

ü ACT DeMYSTiFieD (McGraw-Hill) out this Spring.

ü Trying to make sense of the public high school application process? Allow us to introduce Joyce Szuflita of NYC School Help! Check her out at:
www.nycschoolhelp.com/



Have questions?

Let's chat!

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Much Ado About Learning

our tips and helpful hints

Useful ideas on how to keep your tech gadgets from becoming a distraction

We use technology as a reward. We plan out study sessions and every time we've completed a task, we treat ourselves with "tech time." The reward of checking texts, Facebook, etc. serves as a short break from studying.

—Christina Ludovici & Alex Caulfield

For me, technology can sometimes become a burden. During a period of heavy workload in school, I like to take a 'tech-vacation' from the notifications popping up on each of my various devices. After getting organized with my study materials (including anything needed from the internet), I turn off anything containing a microchip--technology vacations not only make me a more productive student, but can be extremely liberating!

—James Farre

The key to reducing technological distractions while studying is incorporating conditioning tactics that cause me difficulty in utilizing such technology. For example, I leave my phone out of reach until I am finished studying or at a set break point. I use Leech-Block which is a program that allows me to block distracting sites for preselected time frames and if elected by the user, an additional feature requires users to input a self-generated password to unlock. Following such protocol makes me more cognitive of my actions, therefore keeping me on track and allowing for a more effective study session.

—Andy Arismendi

My laptop is closed, my cell phone is muffled, my earbuds are in, and the playlist is shuffled.

—Max Savage

I occasionally find peace in deleting my Facebook page for a few days - sometimes even a whole week - at a time. I am not only more productive, but I have time to enjoy the world outside my computer.

—Anthony Nicolaysen



The (academic) Odyssey

review of education news

Parent Guide to the Differences Between a Psychoeducational and Neuropsychological Evaluation

Parents must often decide which type of evaluation will best meet the needs of their child. This decision is important in that it has the potential to impact the extent to which a child is supplied with the support that will provide the greatest potential for success.

A **psychoeducational evaluation** includes a brief review of a child's social and psychological history and an abbreviated assessment of a child's intellectual and general academic skills. A psychological screening is also included. A psychoeducational evaluation usually provides

adequate information to identify DSM-IV-based intellectual or specific learning "disabilities" as well as clear psychological distress that may be affecting a child's academic or social functioning. This type of evaluation will provide recommendations for very general learning and counseling support.

A **neuropsychological evaluation** includes a detailed description of a child's developmental, medical, social, and psychological history, as well as an extensive, individualized testing battery that examines a child's intellectual, academic, attention, executive functioning, language,

memory, and fine motor skills. A comprehensive evaluation of the child's current psychological functioning is obtained via parent/child clinical interview(s) and standardized questionnaires. The results of a neuropsychological evaluation are intended to identify and describe intellectual/learning differences as well as other areas of (even subtle) cognitive or psychological difficulty. Data obtained in a neuropsychological evaluation provides the information needed to generate a comprehensive description of a child's needs with regard to learning/cognitive and/or psychological support.

—Lindsay Whitman, Ph.D.

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A Tale of One Tutor

lessons we learned along the way

Rethinking the road not taken

When I was in high school, my dad used to take my younger siblings and I camping for a week or so in northern Minnesota, where I grew up. My brother and I were ambivalent about camping, and my sister absolutely hated it. But it was the only week of the year that my dad got to spend with us in its entirety, so we all put up with it and had a decent time. One summer my dad took us up to this cabin his friend had in the boundary waters, a string of backcountry lakes on the Minnesota/ Canada border.

I might have taken a hint from the storeowner's smirk as we tried in vain to tie the canoe onto the hood of our Honda, when he heard we'd be "in" for five days. By the time we canoed in to our cabin on the shore of a remote lake and unpacked our stuff it was late afternoon. My younger brother was

trying to fish and my dad and sister were arguing. I decided that I needed to be alone for a while, so I went outside and started walking around in the "backyard." I found a trail demarcated by brightly colored bands that looked well-trodden, so I followed it. The neon bands stopped eventually, and I ended up in a clearing surrounded by ancient looking pines. I rested, closing my eyes for a second, and listened to birds chirping and water running in the distance. After a moment I headed back in the direction of the setting sun.

I didn't realize that walking in the direction of the sun was wrong even after I had been lost for hours. I became fully convinced of my path's correctness, caught up in the physical act of walking towards the low, orange sun in the West. I lost the

ability to rationalize my behavior or put it in any context; I had walked the one direction for so long that I forgot I didn't have to. It took a night spent soaking wet on a rock for me to consider changing my path. In the morning I did change it, and I found my way back to the cabin on the lake.

It is difficult to turn back on a path you have been on for so long that you've defined it a certainty. But sometimes when you feel lost, that's just what is called for. There isn't a point at which things become absolute, and that's ok. The process of redefinition and reevaluation can flip you around completely, which is always uncomfortable and frequently leaves you feeling helpless; but it is worth avoiding a path that only leads deeper into the forest.

—Sawyer Huff

Running and learning

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I was on my way past my mental block. When you're working and you feel yourself getting stuck, remember that you don't have to go at it alone. Talk to a teacher, a parent, a friend, or your tutor. A small pep talk can go a long way.

4. Finish for yourself. Whatever you're training for – a marathon, a swim meet, a big test in science class – remember that you're going in there for yourself. There might be expectations placed on you by others, but at the end of the day, you're working hard to get yourself to your personal goals.

I was thrilled to have finished the marathon. But what was really amazing was to look over the four-month training schedule and realize that I had started with 5 miles and ended at 26. Now when I'm feeling stuck, I go back to that schedule and remind myself that with planning and determination, there's a lot that can be accomplished.

Thinking Caps Tutoring is an innovative, after-school educational company that helps students acquire the skills and confidence needed to succeed in school, college, and beyond. TCT, through an individualized, descriptive screening process, matches students with student tutors best capable of overcoming a child's weak points and emphasizing strengths. Services provided at TCT include subject tutoring, skills coaching, homework support, standardized test prep and more.

For more information about TCT or any of the programs, please call us at 917.779.8183 or send an email to info@thinkingcapstutoring.com.

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