

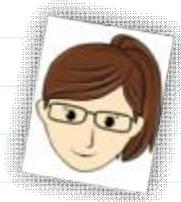
The Thinking Cap

Summer 2010

Volume 2, Issue 3

Alexandra in Tutorland

[alexandra's musings](#)



Good Vibes

The City is warming up and everywhere I look flowers are blooming and I have a hard time not looking forward to summer and spending days in short sleeves and flip flops. Before I take a long weekend at the beach, I want to take a moment and reflect on another wonderful year at Thinking Caps. I am excited about every year, but I think that the 2009-2010 school year brought a special kind of energy: Thinking Caps was featured in the New York *Times* this January, and we were given opportunities to share our tips with students and families outside the New York area. After much hard work and what seemed like endless writing and editing, our study skills manual, *Tutor in a Book*, is finished and will be available in stores in September. We have had the pleasure of working with the most amazingly gifted instructors; our office has been cheerier (and much more organized) with the addition of Ashley at home base. The best part of this year has been working with our students: we have learned so much from each and every one of you and are so proud of your dedication and accomplishments.

Have a wonderfully relaxing summer, and see you next year!

Send your questions to:

info@thinkingcapstutoring.com

Sense and Sensibility
you ask, we answer

Question: The most popular questions at this time of year are always about studying for finals, specifically how to make things stick so information doesn't fall out of the brain left and right.

Answer: Here are our favorite study strategies.

1. Make flashcards or lists of terms: the act of writing things out helps you remember them. Read them out loud, then silently, and then close your eyes and picture the flashcards. Have your parents quiz you after dinner or have your friends quiz you on the bus to lacrosse.

2. Connect the dots: understanding themes and concepts helps you make sense of the little facts. If you can make the connection, you will be more likely to remember the facts.

3. Make a picture association: draw a picture or think about what the word or fact reminds you of. You'll have an easier time remembering words and terms that have visual associations.

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Great Expectations

ü ThinkingCapsSummer programs begin in June. We will be in NYC, Long Island, and Connecticut

ü Check us out on Facebook!

ü NYS Regents
June 2010

ü ACT
June 12, 2010

ü SAT
June 5th, 2010





Much Ado About Learning

our tips and helpful hints

Not your typical reading list. Books that have inspired us.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton. I love this book about a classic battle between two groups of teenagers. It is one that I really enjoyed reading over and over again.

—Neil Kamdar

Music of Dolphins is a great book. It is about a girl who grows up with dolphins. I was also a huge fan of *Where the Red Fern Grows*. I adored this book growing up and read it several times.

—Katie Kirkinis

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott: This is hands down one of my favorite books. I grew up with the March sisters, empathizing at different times with Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy as they found themselves in various states of misfortune and happiness.

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan: I learned so much from this book about the shared experience of immigrant families, struggling to strike a balance between Eastern and Western cultures, languages, and experiences.

Bel Canto by Ann Patchett: This is poetry in the form of a novel, with a surprisingly relevant and, more importantly, touching story.

I love to read and these are a few favorites!

—Nasha Patel



A Tale of One Tutor

lessons we learned along the way

Laws of Gossip

As a teenage girl, there was nothing I wanted more than to gossip with my best friends. Anytime: during lunch, during recess, even during class. We all wanted to gossip. We all wanted to know the dirt about the new girl, or didn't you know that she broke up with *him*, and did you hear that she got *detention!*?! What no one wanted to know was what others were saying about him or herself. But we all found out.

When I was in eighth grade, my one-time "best friend forever" decided that I was committing a grave error. To this day I do not know what my huge fault was, but to her, and her fifteen other "best friends forever," it was completely apparent. I readjusted my social circle, and thought it could be all over if I ignored it. One

day, however, I was using the restroom during my lunch period when I heard my old bff walk in with another of the "mean girls," commenting on my ugly purple braces—retrospectively, truly a bad decision—and my horrendous outfit. And "doesn't she know that he will never like her back?" To actually hear the things they were saying behind my back broke my heart and sent me running and crying into the corner of the school.

By the end of high school each of us girls had found our own peace, and while we now joke about this hurtful event, it has always stayed with me and still stings. As cliché as this story may seem, *Mean Girls* and *Gossip Girl* stem from reality. It is a teenage girl's natural tendency to gossip



and not to think of the consequences. However, not only does gossip break the heart of that thirteen-year-old girl crying in the bathroom, it also effects school work and one's reputation in and out of class. Teachers know who the mean girls are and yes, they do notice who is taking time out of class to gossip. While it will never be something that can be erased from a teenage girl's story, it is important to remember that, as in Newton's Laws, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

—Molly Webster





The (academic) Odyssey

review of education news



End of the Year Wrap Up

Wrapping up the School Year

Each completed school year is basically a giant project that needs to be sorted through, purged, organized, and stored so that your child can begin the next school year with a clear desk and a clear mind. When a student learns at an early age that a project, however small, isn't complete until it's wrapped up, they will start to include this critical step, instead of considering it dispensable or a burden. By June, both you and your child are wiped out, and the last thing either of you want to do is clean out notebooks and files. This is, however, an important step in the organizing process.

Commitment

Making the commitment is sometimes the most challenging step, but if you don't make the

commitment your child is going to miss out on an extremely important lesson. As with many other organizational skills, the project wrap-up is not taught in school. Whether it's the end of a unit or the end of the year, the last piece of the puzzle is not part of the curriculum. The process of sorting and storing old projects is something that needs to be dealt with at home. You may think it would be easier to do this job *for* your child instead of *with* them. While it might be less of a hassle now, in the long run you'll both lose out.

Making Informed Decisions

There are some children who instinctively know how to make decisions and will be able to get through the wrap-up fairly easily. Most students, however, will resist the task completely and thereby fall into one of two categories: *keepers* and *tossers*. While they may appear to be

polar opposites, they're actually quite similar; neither of them wants to take the time or isn't equipped to decide whether something is worth keeping.

The Wrap Up

Your job is to guide your child and encourage them to think about what they may want to keep and why. Keep in mind that children need examples; point out a piece of poetry, an essay that was returned with praise from the teacher, or a completed term paper or project. You can address as much or as little as you want. The ability to prioritize and assign value to things lies at the core of organization. With this skill, your child will be ahead of the game in school, at home, and in life.

—Donna Goldberg

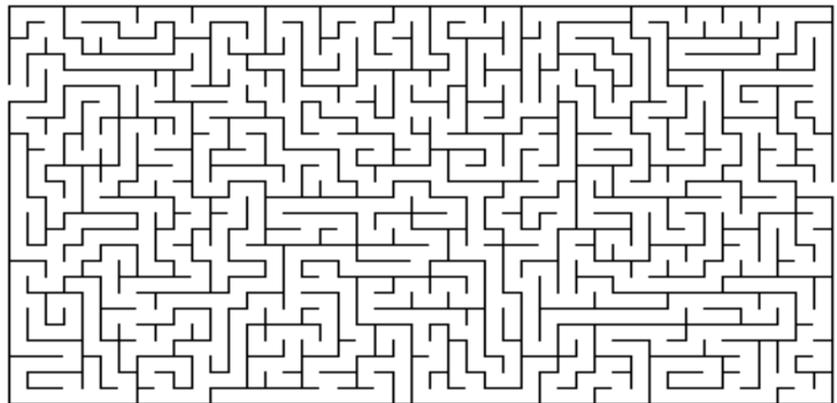
is the author of *The Organized Student: Teaching Children the Skills for Success in School and Beyond*

Cat's Cradle

tantalizing brain ticklers

Amazing maze.

Can you find your way out?



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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