

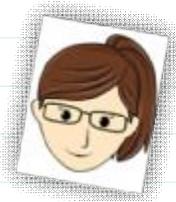
The Thinking Cap

Winter 2009

Volume 1, Issue 1

Alexandra in Tutorland

[alexandra's musings](#)



How and why to talk to your teachers, even if you really don't want to

My 6th grade teacher, Mrs. B (name changed to protect the not-so-innocent), seemed to hate kids and dragged her nails across the chalkboard to get the class to quiet down. My 12th grade psychology teacher, Mr. P, was one of the most interesting people I've ever met and usually inspired half of his class to at least dabble in the study of psychology in college. Though I undoubtedly preferred one, I learned plenty from both. The most important lesson was that teachers, no matter how funny they look, how oddly they are dressed, or how ridiculous the amount of homework they assign, are people from whom we can learn a great deal. So go talk to your Mrs. Bs and Mr. Ps. and keep the following in mind:

- Show an interest in the teacher's subject. Even if this isn't your favorite subject, let the teacher know that you want to do your best. See the teacher throughout the course and not just before tests.
- Come prepared to the meetings. Show the teacher that you were paying attention in class by having clear notes. If you are really confused and feel like you can't arrive with specific questions, make sure that you have re-read the notes and the text and are able to illustrate that you've put in the legwork and are not just showing up because you "don't get it."
- You aren't going to like and feel comfortable with every teacher you encounter. Don't escalate negative feelings by avoiding a teacher you don't like. Instead, think of two things that you have already learned from the teacher and then schedule a meeting with these positive thoughts in mind.

Send your questions to:
info@thinkingcapstutoring.com

Sense and Sensibility

you ask, we answer

Q: I get really nervous taking tests. I feel like I know everything before the test but when I get there I blank. What can I do to feel less nervous on tests?

A: 1) Take practice tests in a test-like environment. Ask your teacher to make up a mock test or use an old test to simulate a practice exam.

2) Tell yourself, "I'm ready for this test," take a deep breath, and then look at the questions.

3) Make yourself a "cheat sheet" when you get to the test by writing all the tricky info at the top of the test page so that you don't have to worry about forgetting it.

Inside this Issue

- A Tale of One Tutor
- Great Expectations
- Sense and Sensibility
- The (academic) Odyssey
- Much Ado About Learning
- Cat's Cradle

Great Expectations

- ü TCT New Website Launch
January 2009
- ü ThinkingCaps Summer Registration
May 2009
- ü Dyslexia Association Conference
March 16 & 17, 2009
- ü NYS Regents
June 2009
- ü ACT
April 4, 2009
June 13, 2009
- ü SAT
January 24, 2009
March 14, 2009
May 2nd, 2009
June 6th, 2009



Much Ado About Learning

our tips and helpful hints

Useful ideas on ways to get back into the swing of things after the winter (or summer) break.

The beginning of the semester is a great time to take a self inventory. Reflect on how you think you have been doing, where you have shown improvement and what areas you would like to work on during this next semester.
-Marie Hess

In order to reignite your study and activity schedule make a list of the things you need to get done and set a due date for yourself. As you complete a task you can check it off and then move on to the next thing on your list.
-Kate Krontiris

Start your early morning routine the day before school actually begins. Wake up early and begin your morning, pre-class ritual, including eating healthy brain food. Late in the day do something fun, then make sure you get a good night's sleep to recharge yourself for the next day.
-Amrita Bhattacharyya

A way to ease back into material after a break is by playing educational computer games. Check out some of my favorites:

- www.math-drills.com
- www.mathplayground.com
- www.coolmath-games.com

-Soledad Fernandez



The (academic) Odyssey

review of education news

SAT: Score Choice ... is there a choice after all?

Beginning in March, 2009 students sitting for the SAT will be able to utilize a new score-reporting system called Score Choice. Score Choice, which is optional and free of charge, allows students to pick which scores he or she would like the College Board to send out to colleges. This will allow students to take the test multiple times and pick his or her best score. So, if a student takes the test three times, she can choose to report her best score and only that score. But scores must come from a complete test. Therefore, she can not pick and choose individual sections from multiple tests.

Although on the surface this seems like a great option, the true value of Score Choice is up for debate. College Board's reason for implementing Score Choice was to alleviate students' anxiety; since any given test can be excluded the stakes are not as high. But by encouraging students to retake the test multiple times Score Choice can actually cause more anxiety. Even if students know the score will not necessarily be seen by colleges, sitting for the SAT is always a grueling and stressful experience. Taking it multiple times means multiple such experiences. And, there is a major loophole: individual

colleges can choose to opt out of Score Choice. Thus a student may choose to report only results from one exam, but the college will want score reports from all of the testing dates. And they can do that. Stanford, Cornell, Pomona, UPenn and USC have already stated they will opt out and many others are still considering their policy. **So be warned:** check with each college or university you are applying to before you get excited about Score Choice. You may actually have no choice.

Finally, it might be helpful to know that in previous years admissions offices used the best scored section from multiple test reports to create a student's official record. According to Dartmouth College's Dean of Admissions, a fairly large number of schools, including Dartmouth, used this process. Unfortunately when using College Boards' Score Choice a student takes this option away from themselves. In the end, "students may be doing themselves a disservice by suppressing scores that could be beneficial," says Steve Thomas, admissions director at Colby College. So take heed and think carefully before making a decision on whether or not to use Score Choice.
-Gretchen Kail



A Tale of One Tutor

lessons we learned along the way

**1 Great Teacher
+ 12 Pies**

Math Confidence

For as long as I can remember, math has been a subject that both intimidated and overwhelmed me. Complicated by signs and symbols, solving even the most basic problems seemed like the most daunting of tasks. Paralyzed by fear, from a very young age I had characterized math as a subject impossible to master. It wasn't until the third grade that my trepidations began to dissipate thanks to the wonderful Mrs. Larson.

Walking into her classroom the first day of school I thought that I was in for a nerve-wracking experience. But Mrs. Larson

proved to be anything but scary.

Rather than singling anyone out, she taught the class to work together. Every day our class was divided into five small groups with a rotating leader whose responsibility it was to teach the material to her group in a creative manner. We were encouraged to learn and work together. If any one person in the group struggled, we would all struggle. This motivated us to help each other to learn and understand. Consequently, we discovered that each team member brought a unique understanding of the material to the plate. What may have come naturally and easily to one person may have been more difficult for another team member and so we learned to play off on each other's strengths.



Mrs. Larson encouraged us to be as creative as possible in learning and teaching math. I still remember teaching a unit on fractions and bringing in twelve different pies to demonstrate the concept. I bet nobody in my group will ever forget about fractions!

Thanks to Mrs. Larson's class, I was able to overcome my fears and challenge my preconceived notions about math as a subject that could not be mastered. This mentality has afforded me the opportunity to confront many of my fears and to embrace the belief that no challenge is insurmountable. *-Rebecca Putter*

Cat's Cradle

tantalizing brain ticklers

Palindromes are words that read the same forwards and backwards. So the name Bob is a palindrome.

Try to figure out the palindrome that fits our clues.

Check your answers in the next newsletter!



1. Midday
2. A young dog
3. A type of canoe
4. Pieces of music for one person to perform
5. Degree or position on a scale
6. A type of automobile
7. A system for detecting aircrafts, speeds, etc

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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