Getting the Most Out of the Time Spent at School

Many students make the fatal mistake of daydreaming or tuning out in the classroom, not realising that whatever they miss out on in school could actually take more of their own personal time to cover. Even if there is only 1 hour in total of new content presented in a school day – not paying attention could create an additional 5 hours of homework – which is a complete waste of personal time.

Students spend the greater majority of their learning time at school and should be maximising these opportunities so as to cut down on after school study commitments. The more you learn and/or complete at school, the less work that you will need to engage in your own personal time.

Here are some suggestions regarding how you can maximise the learning you do at school:

- **Taking large quantities of notes whilst you are listening to a teacher and trying to follow/understand the materials being covered is not recommended.** You are likely to miss vital concepts or confuse issues; which will subsequently lead to frustration and stress, and invariably impose additional study requirements outside school hours.

  To maximise learning, you should spend class time just listening and absorbing the information being imparted from your teachers.

  Therefore, **only copy examples after the teacher has finished explaining concepts.** This will ensure that you have maximised your understanding of the materials being covered, which will subsequently reduce confusion, stress and study time.

- **Attempt to keep ahead of the classroom with respect to the material being covered at school.** Know what topic is to be covered during the next class and read through the relevant chapter in your text book. You may even like to attempt some of the exercises in advance (you will have to complete the exercises eventually – so it will not hurt if you try a few problems before they are assigned for homework). If you take the time to peruse your textbook, you will become aware of what notes may need to be written down as the teacher delivers their class. You will probably find that the majority of what he/she relays in class is already in your text book! This strategy will enable you to concentrate and pay more attention in class, improving knowledge and understanding of course materials, therefore decreasing out of school study commitments!

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“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty”. Winston Churchill
• **Complete all homework as it is issued.** Homework is usually assigned to provide students with the opportunity to strengthen newly taught skills so that they are better able to cope with the next section/topic being addressed at school. Students who consistently fail to complete their homework are more likely to struggle with the materials being covered in class, requiring that they give up more of their personal time to complete homework and prepare for tests and examinations.

• **If you have trouble concentrating in class, sit at the front so that you are removed from as many distractions as possible.** Don’t worry about being labelled a ‘goody two shoes’ – improving your concentration will allow you to absorb the information delivered more clearly, so you will inevitably spend less time trying to recall the lesson whilst completing your homework tasks.

• **Listen to your teachers very carefully.** This means that you must stay focused and pay attention at all times.

  Do **NOT** day dream.

  If you do experience difficulties concentrating in class: Remind yourself that if you do not pay attention now, you will need to spend at least 5 times the amount of time to cover the same amount of work on your own. Then think of all the pressure this will add to your workload and the amount of personal time you will end up forfeiting.

• **Do not tune out even when you think that you know the material being covered.** You may just learn something new, pick up some new examination strategies, and at worst, you will have reviewed and further consolidated the knowledge being covered into your long term memory. And this means that you will have less study and revision to complete in the lead up to tests and examinations!

Hope your studies are progressing well.

Regards,
The Team at TSFX.