

Success in Sixth Form

Hit the Ground Running into A-levels

By David Satori

Introduction

Here's my chance to share academic wisdom

Welcome!

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this guide for all my devoted tutees commencing sixth form, to receive and take heed of the resources I want to share with you. This was written for you to use as a guideline, or a blueprint for maximising your academic potential now that you have come thus far, and enlightening the path through which this potential can manifest itself into the real world.

In my time at sixth form, I have witnessed first-hand the experiences of my peers and closest friends, their successes, failures, and life-lessons learned. I have watched the ones around me as their personalities morphed, developed and grew more intelligent; and have enjoyed every story that my teachers have shared from their past experiences. Of course, my own inner world was also under constant progression during my time in years 12 and 13, learning from all the personal successes and failures I've experienced myself. In that sense, I am essentially a watcher, an observer of the world around me, and I've learned much from these observations, so much so that I feel as though I would be wasting valuable information if I did not share this with you, to support those students who take their education seriously.

As you are reading this, you most likely already have chosen the subjects you would like to pursue for A-levels, however, some may still be on the fence with their choices, and some may be downright confused and regretting their choices. Either way, I will attempt to share my experiences and perspectives to help guide you on what is the right path for you. I will structure this guide in the following way: the first section will be aimed at the students who are just beginning year 12, giving an overview of this new system that they're subject to; how to progress through it with minimal resistance; and the matured mind-sets that will have to be employed if the best results are to be achieved. The final section will outline and explain tips for studying and revising effectively that have

worked the best for me and my fellows, which can apply to both year 12 and year 13 students.

Before I begin, I feel it must also be stated that although this guide was written to give you a clearer picture and a means to progress through sixth form with as little resistance as possible, this will not necessarily mean you will sail through these next couple years effortlessly, for there will always be personal obstacles, unexpected circumstances, and new goals that will need to be achieved, and so, no one can predict what troubles you may find yourself in in the future. There is no greater teacher than experience herself, and so you must be willing to learn along the way yourself. This is your life, your path, and no one is in a position to tell you what to do, only yourself. That being said, support from others, like myself, will be there to guide you when need be.

Beginning Sixth Form

Initiation & the baggage you bring into year 12

This guide is written with the intention to support you, as the student, in your initiation into a more advanced and independent system of education, namely, sixth form or college. The anecdotes and rumours you have probably heard about the major leap from GCSE-styles of learning to A-Level learning is correct – it is big, but with the right outlook upon it, the change is not unsettling, and simple to assimilate to.

This new scheme of things generally comes as a surprise awakening to the typical student, who carries with them the habits, attitude and tacit expectations they have developed from their previous years. These may include such things as doing schoolwork simply for the sake of completion; an antagonistic view towards homework and personal study; and too much dependency on the teacher to lead your progress. It is clear that some of this baggage one may bring into sixth form/college life is not beneficial, and so would hinder your learning greatly (in the initial months at least). The time has come now for you to be in the driver's seat, and be in control of what you learn, how you learn, and therefore how you progress.

The style of learning that we've all experienced in school before A-levels had a similar but different approach. In fact, isn't really that different from A-level at all, except that before, the emphasis was placed on the teacher to guide you and ensure you're doing the classwork and completing your homework to a satisfactory level. In other words, the teacher did most of the work and guidance, whilst learning was a more passive exercise for the student. Most students then expect the same system during A-levels too, and then are overwhelmed by the sudden need for a more independent learning approach.

This mental attitude a student may bring into sixth form is of course not permanent, and it naturally dissolves after a few months in almost everyone once they get their head round this new system. Some students may grasp it relatively fast, others may take several months, but a significant amount of students actually realise this after one or more

shocking failures in exams. When I was in year 12, the first set of exams were at the start of January, rather than May/June as it is nowadays, so whenever an exam was failed in January, it could be retaken in a few months' time. This essentially gave the student a second chance, an opportunity to pick themselves up if the January exams didn't go well, and so the majority of students obtained far better results in the summer. Many, many students have been caught in the situation that I have summed up below:

1. The student begins sixth form, bringing all their pre-A-Level mental baggage with them
2. They are shocked at the sudden increase in difficulty of their subjects, but think that's all there is new to sixth form, and so they continue learning in the same style as in previous years (too much reliance on teachers)
3. Exams begin approaching, and so they study, perhaps a bit more than they did for GCSE
4. Lack of independence and assertive pro-action results in failure of some or all exams, and the blame is put on external circumstances
5. In time they realise that they are solely to blame for their own results, and so begin to take responsibility for their learning
6. The next exams are written with a tremendous increase in ease, and the results show major improvements
7. The student has learned a deep lesson on the importance of personal responsibility

These unexpected failures serve exceptionally well as a good kick in the backside, and so the student, realising that their success is all in their own hands, finally gets a grip with him/herself and develops a more mature attitude towards education. That is, of course, good news! Failing an exam can be a fantastic way to pave the path of one's long-term success!

Well now, I'm sure you would prefer *not* to fail any exams before coming to this realisation, but would rather employ this matured outlook as soon as possible and thus avoid terrible slip-ups along the way. So then, as a student who has lived through sixth form, I will share my perspectives and experiences in attempt to clear these muddy waters for you.

The Matured Outlook

First and foremost, I will expand upon this idea of being more 'independent' and 'mature' as I have frequently used these words without explaining what they really mean in the context of a student's character.

A refreshing sense of freedom may be felt now that you are free to wear the clothes of your choice instead of a school uniform. This is the most obvious manifestation of your independence, which basically implies the following:

Just like you are able to decide on your physical appearance and identity, you are now fully in control of the subjects you wish to pursue; the quality and quantity of studying outside of school; creating beneficial opportunities for yourself; deciding whether or not to submit homework; your relationships with the staff; your punctuation; your attendance; etc.

It may sound absurd (and even tempting for some rebellious souls), but it is true, the school will not hunt you down with pitchforks and burning torches if you don't hand in homework, don't do classwork, show up late to school or not show up at all. In lower years that was the case, but that was only done to keep the younger students on a safe path with their education, as at those ages, a young person's mind is much more easily

influenced by the external environment, making them more susceptible to being led astray into habits that may be disadvantageous in later life.

Those were the days when bunking lessons and skipping school was an exciting thing to do, but it can't last forever. A young student doesn't necessarily think of the consequences of not respecting their education, so the role of the staff is to also guide the young student on the right path until they are developed enough to see this for themselves. This is the position you find yourself in now.

Making the most important choice

Okay, so I'm ready to begin, I feel assertive and want to make these next few years a success, but I don't even know what subjects to choose!

First things first, this is one of the most important decisions that you will face in sixth form, for it will shape the opportunities and choices that will appear in the future to help shape your career. A lot of people's careers are shaped by the choices they've made at this stage, but from what I've seen around me, most people tend to pursue careers completely different from the choices they made this early in life, so don't worry if you still don't know what you want to be in the future, the pressure isn't that big and you'll have many chances to change. The good thing about making A-level choices is that it will give you an early chance to start exploring subjects that you are very curious and interested about, which will naturally lead you to finding out who you are and what you are interested about for your future career.

And here comes the biggest mistake that I see so many (*too* many) people doing when making these choices: they choose the subjects that they are good at, but don't necessarily enjoy or have any interest in. They show good potential to succeed in it, but zero personal connection with it. Well, you may ask, "*What's wrong with that? At least they'll find it easier and get better exam results...*" but that's a short-term way of looking at it. Two years of doing a subject that you don't really like is a long, time, a long, boring, uninspiring time, enough to make you sick and tired of the subject

by the end of it. It is much wiser to choose the subject that you like doing, and see yourself doing for the next two or more years.

Why am I emphasising liking the subject so much? Simply put, a student with an interest towards their subject of choice will show greater motivation, greater willingness to study in their own time (i.e. homework won't be an absolute chore), and an overall greater positive attitude towards education for the sake of personal development rather than 'to pass an exam'.

This positive attitude will manifest itself in brilliant ways in the classroom. Your attention will be more acute, your creativity more expansive, you will experience less resistance towards learning the information, and most importantly, you will resonate much better with your teachers and classmates, allowing for better relationships to develop so that a personal quality will be added to your education and self-development. Who cares if you might not be that good at it? What you possess are the seeds of potential that will grow slowly within you, building up your knowledge of the subject bit by bit, even if it's hard, but at least you'll have the determination to continue. Classmates may be smarter than you, get better grades than you, and you may fail sometimes, but having determination means you pick yourself up each time you fall.

Don't compare yourself to others, and keep marching onward and in time you will reach success, no matter how impossible it seemed at first. How can one have such warrior-like determination? Simple. You choose the subjects that you have an interest in and feel connected to. Something you enjoy or find fascinating. Now do you see why it's so important to do what you love?

I have my subjects, what now?

It is absolutely crucial that you realise now that tasks such as homework and independent reading are there to solidify the knowledge you've gained, practice and master exam-style questions, and also give your teacher an insight as to how you are progressing, so that the teacher can give you tailor-made suggestions to dealing with your problems.

Homework really has this deeper purpose, and it's all for your own benefit. It also serves the purpose of breaking any false ideas that education should only occur in the classroom, and what's outside the classroom is a separate outside world. This leads to a dysfunctional feeling that schoolwork is just a chore that needs to be done, and once its done, then you can do whatever you want afterwards.

The successful student must realise that the best progress occurs when education is integrated into the whole of your life, rather than living two separate lives consisting of going to school for work, then going home for relaxation and leisure, with the two being completely cut off from each other. This does not mean killing your social and leisurely life to do homework all day, but it means that you should stop seeing homework as such a negative chore to do, but approach it with curiosity, do it to see how good you are, and observe the interesting things you may learn from it in the process.

This is of course only possible if you enjoy doing your subject in the first place! You can tell by now how important it is to choose subjects that you actually have an interest for, because, after all, would you be bothered to study if you don't even give a hoot about the subject?

And in case you were wondering, reading interesting articles or watching videos online about subjects you enjoy can greatly improve your knowledge in school, and increase your passion for the subject too.

As for your attendance and punctuality, if it begins slacking over time and you begin coming in late for class - or not showing up at all - you won't get severely punished for it. Instead, you will simply realise in time just how far back you could potentially be setting yourself, as the workloads will pile up much faster than you think. Excessive poor punctuality and attendance will earn you a chat with the headteacher eventually, but you now have a lot more freedom when it comes to showing up to class.

How much does your education mean to *you*?

Here is a short list of a few other pieces of information and advice that you might find useful:

- Once the lesson is over, you will be expected to learn all the information yourself (this can include spending time with the teachers outside of lesson time) until you are satisfied with the level of understanding which you've attained. If you're comfortable with not learning all the details of the topic, consider the potential that you're giving up.
- The subject choices you've made have a purpose. They are guidelines for where you want the path of your life to lead and so your learning can be seen as more than just means to pass exams.
- Extra-curricular learning outside of school is the fuel for your passion in the subjects of your choice. When you find yourself completely lost with your studies, and asking yourself "*What's the point of this – where will I ever use this stuff anyway?*" Realise, learning about how the knowledge of your subjects is applied to everyday life can serve as a great awakener and motivator for you.
- There's only so much that can be taught about a topic in a one-hour lesson without running out of term-time, so visit your teachers during breaks, before school, after school, or during lunchtime if they're free, you'll be amazed at the extensive range of information that they have about your subject that wasn't explicitly taught in lesson. This could come in the form of question- and-answer conversations, various textbooks (including old-syllabus ones – they too can have relevant information), and online resources.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Sixth form doesn't have to be about studying all the time, there's plenty of chances for leisurely activities too. These can be of artistic, musical, religious, creative, or scientific natures. There may be groups that you can attend, or groups for younger students that you can help out in. If you're

keen on teaching, see if you can offer your teaching skills in revision sessions for the younger years in certain subjects.

The school also offers a wide variety of sports that have been organised into after-school or lunchtime clubs that you could join. Some may not even require a club, ask the P.E. department for what they can offer you, and what equipment you can borrow. If there's a sport that you want to do regularly but there's no club, ask if you can create one!

It's a fantastic chance for self-development because you will be growing in many directions rather than just one (from your subjects), and you can offer yourself and your talents to the people around you in order to create a fun, dynamic experience for everyone. It's great to expand your sphere of interests into things that are completely unrelated to your subjects.

This can benefit you also with your ambitions for the future too. Universities and employers love it when students do more than what they are expected to do, especially when those things involve simple leisurely activities; it shows that you actually have a life beyond your studying. But of course, this should not be a reason why you do extra-curricular activities, because then it won't be coming from a place of sincerity.

Do it because it's fun, enjoy your time, and there may be bonuses to it too.

Summary

So, to conclude, starting sixth form isn't really such an overwhelming process as some may think. In fact, the newfound freedom you have can be a lot more exciting if you're a responsible student, so you can flow through sixth form with minimal resistance. All that's required of you is that you drop any disadvantageous attitudes that may have developed in previous years, and approach with a matured, independent outlook. It won't happen overnight, this is clearly something you develop and master over time, but there's a plethora of staff around to help you on your way if ever you feel like you need help or advice.

With all this emphasis being placed on being more independent, don't forget, the teachers are still there to teach, help, and guide you with anything academic, and any issues you may come across. You're not on your own here. Just make sure that you don't waste your opportunities to constantly progress and become a better individual rather than wasting away the months thinking that everything will sort itself out, or be sorted out by someone else. It's time to get a grip and become fully in control of where your academic life will lead.

Revision & Study Advice

Making the most of your independent learning time

In this section, I will reveal a handful of tips and pieces of advice that I have learned during my sixth form years, some of them given by teachers/friends/other mentors, and some of them coming from my own personal experiences and ideas. Feel free to implement these into your life, starting as soon as possible, as some of this advice requires new habits to be formed which of course, take time (they say a new habit takes around 40 days to be made...). Furthermore, do not reject or disregard any pieces of advice until you have given it a shot, for some of it may sound quite unconventional and strange, but from my experience they have proven to be very beneficial, so there's nothing to say it won't be for you! As the saying goes: don't knock it 'till you've tried it.

Pure Study Time



My first piece of advice is so fundamental that you would have probably known it was coming. The number one habit you must implement into your life is setting aside some time during the day in order to give your fullest

attention and awareness to pure study. It must be emphasised that showing up to lessons, doing classwork and finishing all your homework is actually not enough anymore if you are to master your chosen subjects and achieve top exam results. The information you will be taught will be of a much higher difficulty, a much higher volume, and will be taught in a much smaller time frame, so you will need private study time to ensure all that knowledge simply didn't go in one ear and out the other. The purpose of private study is to digest and assimilate all this new information at your own pace and mentally organise it in ways that makes sense to you, so that it really sticks.

As a bonus, it will also aid in highlighting any weak areas you may have which could have been overlooked in the classroom, allowing you to find

help from your teacher in your own time. As for the amount of time that should be given, I would personally recommend one hour of studying (not including homework) per one-hour lesson as a bare minimum, and try fitting the study time in during the same week as the lesson you've had, while the information is still fresh and unforgotten (don't be too troubled though, in university we're required to do 2-3 times as much!). This of course, doesn't apply for the revision you will be doing in the last few weeks of term time, but this is what you should be striving for during the bulk of your term time whilst you're still learning new things. Consider this analogy that I like to use:

Think of the lesson time as means to gather building materials for a house you want to build. The teacher shares valuable materials such as the bricks, cement, timber, etc. and gives you outlines of how to use them. Your task is to then take these materials (the knowledge learned) and construct a magnificent house, brick by brick, as best as you can (your repertoire of understanding) and make it as strong as possible. The teachers have pretty incredible houses of their own, and so would like you to regularly send them updates of the progress of your house (homework) so that they know everything is being built smoothly. It's hard to say whether this house will ever be finished, as our potential knowledge has no bounds, but the purpose is to keep on building!

So with that being said, never underestimate the value of silent study. You'll be greatly satisfied at how everything falls into place during study, and how many little details you can learn to keep you well ahead of the game.

Work as Play



Next up, I have what I believe is one of the most profound pieces of wisdom in the world. This goes back to my advice that you should choose the subjects that you love doing rather than just any old subjects that you

have no connection with. When you love what you do, you simply forget that it may be very difficult, or very long, or whatever, because you do it for the simple reason that you enjoy it, and not to reach some sort of ideal end goal. The distinction between work and play dissolves. Just like a musician plays an instrument for the sake of playing it, and a listener listens to the music just to enjoy it, without giving any attention to any final destinations and end goals, so should your activities be. Wouldn't it be a crying shame if all songs were made in order to be played the quickest? Or rush to reach some other mundane destination and finish? Rushing is a sign that you're not that bothered about what you're doing, and you probably don't like doing it either. So why choose it if you won't like doing it?

Another reason people don't like work is because of the pressures it may impose on you. Once you stop focusing on how **SERIOUS** and **STRESSFUL** your tasks and deadlines may be, you can flow through them with minimum resistance because you're doing it simply to do it. With this mindset, things become a lot less stressful, you can work more fluently, and you'll approach your work with sincerity rather than seriousness. Don't fall into the trap of doing what you don't enjoy, when the option to do more enjoyable things is always open to you.

A distinguished psychologist, Karl Pribram once said that if you want to learn a new language as fast as possible, fall in love with a person who speaks that language. This statement has been backed up by many studies (about loving what you do, not necessarily falling in love with a person), and beautifully captures the idea that we progress much better when the activity we're doing is in accord with what we deeply enjoy. Now, that's not to say you have to fall in love with one of your teachers (!!!), but the moral of the story is to approach your studies with a positive air, and learning will come smoothly.

The Yin & Yang of Learning



With all this talk of studying and constantly doing stuff, it can easily get into your head that the more you do, the more you'll

achieve, right? Well, not quite. What most people don't realise is that there's two sides to every

coin, so that actively learning all the time is completely futile if not coupled with good quality rest time. Yes, it's true, if you want to achieve more in life, there's times when you should do nothing at all. The world doesn't progress in a linear fashion, but goes through cycles of light-dark, night-day, on-off, systole-diastole perpetually. Your mind requires some rest time so it can essentially digest everything that you have fed it during the day, and then be fully refreshed and regenerated by the next morning.

So getting plenty of good sleep, and having times during the day when you take a lovely break from school-related endeavours and just let go works wonders for your knowledge and health. When you feel as though your brain can't handle another sentence, or equation, just close the book and cut it off. It's not worth cramming in information when you're burned out, for that will never effectively stick with you. Don't be afraid that you might lose study time, because after a highly productive day, you deserve to kick back and relax.

A good majority of hard-working students may have experienced this total burn-out, where after a long day of studying, your mind feels sick and tired of the material, and you can't push any further. This is not a very fruitful place to end up, because in the long-run, that feeling will just become more and more frequent to the point where you risk being in a burnt-out state during exam week! This is something I personally experienced myself, but I realised I needed that well-deserved break before it was too late.

Other situations involve losing sleep because of studying. It's not worth staying up until 2am relentlessly trying to suck up information from your books or computer when you know you feel tired and deserve rest. Listen to your body, and push yourself hard, but not past the breaking-point. In the long run, the energy and vitality gained through rest will outweigh the time lost to 'pointless' studying.

Movement



Quick, sound the alarms of controversy, because I'm about to go into what most of our Western civilisation is totally ignorant of! Since when did mankind come to this ridiculous notion that somehow the brain and the

body are two completely separate things? All the time, we treat our bodies like it has no effect on our brains, and vice versa, thinking that the two are mutually exclusive, when it is blatant that the brain is part of our body too.

What I'm getting at is people think they can get away with eating poor food, not getting enough exercise, not enough sleep, etc. without the slightest effects on your ability to learn, be stress-free, and be happy individuals. Not looking after your body doesn't just affect your ability to be a good sportsman, or have a good physique, but it also affects the mind, because after all, there is no mind without a body.

So I believe the mathematician should look after his body just as much as the athlete, because a brain can't function well without the rest of the body being on point. Realise that every physical action that you do will somehow affect your mind, and also that your mental outlook will be reflected in the physical state of your body. Eating rubbish foods every day for lunch and living a lazy lifestyle will soon show up in the decreased efficiency of your cognitive functions. The brain can't function at its best if you don't provide it with adequate nutrition.

It's absolutely fine to enjoy fast-food once in a while, but visiting the chicken shops every day at lunch time (and I know some of you love them cheap chicken shops!) will have negative effects in time. Having a horrible mental outlook upon the things you do, and even life in general will be reflected in a sick, weak body over time, so make sure to manage your stress issues if any arise. Think about it, can you really have a healthy body when the majority of the week is spent doing things you detest?

With my rant now over, I will highly recommend that you all lead active lifestyles, drink plenty of clean water, eat lots of high quality foods and be full of vitality so that your mind can reap the benefits of having a healthy body, and vice versa. There's no need to become health freaks or anything like that. Enjoy whatever foods you want to enjoy, but spare a thought to

the benefits that occasional exercise and good nutrition may bring to you. The tree can't grow tall if it is rooted in poor soil.

Your Best Time of the Day



We're all different from one another, so we can't expect the same methods of studying to work the same way for all of us. I know people that get up early every day to do their daily tasks and work because that's when they

feel they're at their best to do it. Conversely, I know people who only begin to do their work long after the Sun's gone down! Become sensitive and aware of those times in the day when you feel keen and pumped to do stuff, and those times when you are totally not-in-the-mood for any work.

Rather than following a work schedule that's been arbitrarily created, work according to when you feel best to work, and your studies will become much more effective.

Specific Revision Methods



When it comes down to the nitty-gritty of revision there have been several techniques that have worked fantastically. I have described a few methods below that have been pretty helpful for me. They are numbered, but only to organise the text in a simple way rather than referring to some order of importance. Their significance will depend upon the individual.

1) The usual private study can be complemented dearly by revision sessions with a friend or a small group. These sessions can be beneficial as they allow for the active sharing of ideas, where you share your strongest areas of knowledge, and your peers do the same, so that you develop a more complete outlook on your subject and can visualise the interconnectedness of different topics to a much greater extent. Taking part

in active dialogue can serve as a means of identifying weak areas of knowledge which your peers – perhaps simply by chance – have mentioned and you've realised that you don't know much about that particular topic. In that respect, there is a teaching element involved in the dialogue as you explicate the areas that your peers find trouble in, and being able to explain and teach a certain topic with fluidity is the greatest indicator that you have grasped the key fundamentals of the subject.

2) Have you ever been in a situation where you are reading a textbook, or looking over revision notes and your mind gradually begins to wander away from the text without 'you' realising, so that your eyes are still scanning, but your mind is elsewhere? Then you suddenly snap back into the present moment and realise that you haven't really absorbed anything that you have read for perhaps several chapters! This tendency for the mind to wander away while the eyes skim over the text is one of the worst ways to deviate from real learning, and is probably the most common problem. The way to eradicate this problem is through a method that I like to call 'chewing the paragraphs' whereby the reader reads at a steady pace, absorbing every single fact that is being presented whilst consciously keeping all pure focus in the act of understanding what is being read. Take slow mental bites out of the text, and if you come across a key point, or a profound statement, pause for a few seconds just to think about what you've just read, chew it with your mind, and really absorb that piece of information.

You may find that your mind still manages to wander occasionally, after all, you can't expect to have it perfect all the time, so just re-read the paragraph properly rather than continuing with the next one. Taking 10 minutes to read one page when chewing every tasty morsel of information will clearly give you a better understanding than blindly reading a whole chapter in 10 minutes with your mind up in the Milky Way.

Don't fall under the illusion that just because you've read the chapter, you have completely understood the text and ticked all the boxes on your list. Question yourself, have you really understood everything that was written? If not, re-read it and chew properly! In university, I stumbled upon a course-mate one day and he told me he had just spend 4 hours doing constant revision from a textbook, but he felt that he learned

absolutely nothing out of it. Well, obviously he wasn't chewing his paragraphs well in that case!

3) In basically every subject, we're given a main textbook that encompasses information from every syllabus point that we are expected to know by the exam board. This textbook usually constitutes 100% of your sources of information other than your teachers, which can of course limit your fields of understanding. I find that reading multiple sources of information can expand my understanding more than I expect. Even if I'm reading the same topic, but in a different book, maybe the wording of one book resonates with me much deeper than the wording of the standard textbook that everyone reads, and the understanding suddenly just 'clicks' with me. Try finding new sources of information so you can approach your subjects from as many different angles as possible, giving you a much greater domain of understanding than you would get from a single textbook. Ask your teachers if they have any alternative textbooks, even if they are from an old syllabus. Over the years, a syllabus won't change drastically, so there's usually a massive overlap of topics which can still apply to what you need to learn.

On top of that, see if your teacher can recommend you any websites or videos online that cover the material well. Perhaps the linear style of presenting knowledge from a textbook doesn't work well with you, and a more interactive approach from a website is your way to go. Don't hesitate to experiment with different methods!

4) Your teachers have gone through the same process as you are right now, at some earlier stage in their lives, so they can definitely be helpful in guiding you through their own past experiences. They have also taught perhaps hundreds of students over the course of their careers, so they have deeply observed the patterns of behaviour and learning techniques of all ranges of student. Ask your teachers for advice if you need it, ask them for tips that they've learned, and ask for any other resources of information that you could find useful. If you have a deep fascination for your subject and want to expand your understanding beyond the boundaries of the syllabus, perhaps your teacher might have some good books or magazines that they wouldn't mind sharing with you. Going beyond what you're expected to know will strengthen everything that you have learned up to

that point. Seek the perspectives of the experienced to broaden your understanding.

5) Too many students throughout the world have fallen under the illusion that learning = memorising, and since more learning = more understanding so that more memorising will lead to greater understanding. No! That's the silliest assumption. Memorising will just lead you to knowing a certain number of facts, and being able to regurgitate them onto a piece of paper. And that's all. You won't be able to adapt your knowledge to new situations, or find links between them because your knowledge will just be composed of a rigid collection of unrelated facts that you've memorised. Examiners like to ask similar questions but in wildly unfamiliar contexts, so knowing a one-dimensional fact will just leave you completely baffled and lost, with no idea how to proceed.

So what's the superior, alternative method? Invest your time in actually understanding the fundamental ideas behind your studies. Create diagrams of how systems are connected, of how ideas unfold and develop. Seek the background information that lies behind superficial facts. Immerse yourself in as many different points of view as you can (for the humanities subjects). Look for new ways of reaching certain end-points instead of following the same route all the time (this helps in the more mathematical subjects).

There are many ways of reaching an understanding of a topic, and I'm sure you're your own ways too. Memorising some facts may help of course, but don't rely on it solely.

Conclusion

I really hope that you managed to attain some fruitful ideas to improve your studying efficiency from what I've shared with you. I know that I haven't covered every single tip and piece of advice I know, but all the rest is the usual stuff that you have probably already come across from other sources. That's not to say that it's not as helpful of course! Embrace every piece of advice, you never know what might miraculously work for you that you did not expect.

I have tried to explain some of the more abstract and unconventional techniques that typically do not get spoken of. These are more like lifestyle choices to implement into your whole life rather than quick tips for quick solutions. The best success comes from who you are on a daily basis, which consists of your lifestyle and attitude, so if that is on point, then everything else can fall into place automatically, and you will not need some sort of ‘magic potion’ type of help that will solve all your problems instantly.

Superficial tips may give short-term gratification, but it’s down to your lifestyle that determines how well you proceed in the long-term situations. Start creating healthy habits early on, so that by the time you reach whatever you were building up for (say, exams) then you won’t need to cram in little tips before your final task, everything you need will already be within you.

I wish you the best of luck during your studies!

~ David Satori