

SURVEY YOUR EXAM INTELLIGENCE

Great preparation is the key to a great exam performance. This is why the emphasis on students gaining a better understanding and application of learning how to learn knowledge and performance psychology is useful. With this understanding, students are more likely to improve their revision techniques and ultimately their results.

Yet, as a parent or teacher, how in-depth is your understanding? Are you able to effectively translate these key concepts to your students? Survey your own exam intelligence and see how you score.

On a scale of 1-5, how would you score your knowledge and use of the following topics? There are twenty items to consider and should take you no more than five minutes. Your total possible score is 100.

- 1= No understanding. Never used in exam revision.
- 2 =A little understanding. Occasionally used in exam revision.
- 3= A fair understanding. Sometimes used in exam revision.
- 4= A good understanding. Often used in exam revision.
- 5= Comprehensive understanding. Fully integrated into exam revision.

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Neuroplasticity: The idea that our brain development is incredibly adaptable and that academic 'intelligence' is not fixed. With an understanding of how neural pathways are formed and enhanced, students could learn anything they put their mind to.

SCORE ____

Brain-cell Development: Learning and memory occur as neural pathways are attached to previous pathways (former knowledge) and astrocytes work to automate abilities and store information. This process works through an electrical / chemical process. When the brain is deprived of nutrients, water or oxygen, it is far less effective and your students' attention and concentration will wane. There are simple ways to improve this process.

SCORE ____

Brain-waves: The brain operates electrically and can be measured in cycles per second. When brain-waves slow down to what could be described as a relaxed/alertness, the brain becomes a lot more receptive to receiving information. It is useful to relax prior to revision.

SCORE ____

Whole Brain Learning: Different styles of thinking and learning occur in different areas of the brain. According to the Hermann's Whole Brain model, students can learn practical exercises to enhance the functioning between hemispheres so that they can literally use more of their brain to think in ways that new subjects require.

SCORE ____

Learning Styles: It was believed that it is useful for students to understand the best way their brain, receives, processes and communicates information. Knowing their learning styles

means they can match their revision techniques to the way they are 'wired' to learn best. This is now considered a myth. SCORE ____

Sensory Selective Process: The brain has a way to screen out information that the student deems unimportant or of no value. Their attitudes to learning determine how much information is screened out. 'No value – no get through.'

SCORE ____

Exam Performance Mindset:

An exam performance mindset enables students to know the importance of preparation and focusing on extending their personal best. The performance mindset helps instigate an attitude analysis which will enable them to explore where they may be holding themselves back.

SCORE ____

Mind Works: Understanding that the human mind has a conscious and non-conscious aspect is important because our non-conscious is basically our memory working to keep us, being the same. There is a direct correlation between our self-beliefs and performance which can be enhanced through the use of cognitive tools that imprint our memory to believe we are better than we currently are. When we do this, our performance improves.

SCORE ____

Aiming for Excellence: Excellence is a habit that can be learned, yet there is a four-stage process that occurs. Non-conscious incompetence - Conscious Incompetence - Conscious Competence – Non-conscious Competence. This process is a natural part of learning, but when students see themselves not doing so well at the beginning (conscious incompetence) the frustration and embarrassment causes them to make a decision that this is how they are. If they do not see the value to push through to conscious competence, their performance and results will plateau at this level.

SCORE ____

Power of Self-talk: How we talk to ourselves imprints our memory so keeping it positive is the key to improving performance. Through the deliberate use of positive self-talk (affirmations) we can greatly enhance our ability to create the excellence habit.

SCORE ____

Academic Goal Setting: Goal setting essentially tells our brain what is important – it gets information through the brain's screening out process. Setting a goal before every revision session helps switch on the brain. Goal setting for every academic subject also improves, motivation, concentration and keeps us on track.

SCORE ____

Motivation / Procrastination: Creating value in the subject improves motivation because it builds a sense of 'wanting to' do it – as opposed to 'having to' do it. The feeling of being coerced sets up a non-conscious push-back that creates avoidant behaviour such as procrastination. There are ways of thinking that enable any 'have-to' thoughts to become a 'want-to' and motivation is dramatically enhanced.

SCORE ____

Maintaining Concentration: Concentration is maintained through good dietary and water / air intake. Having clear-set goals and working in places free of distractions also helps.
SCORE ____

Reading Techniques: The human brain can not comprehend something it does not recognise. Skim reading before any study reading stimulates former knowledge and enhances the building of neural pathways. Study reading engages the analytical thinking needed to further strengthen the pathways. Revision is the repeated exposure to the class material which again, strengthens the pathways and enables astrocytes to upgrade content to long-term memories.
SCORE ____

Rewriting Class Notes: Class notes need to be revised with the intention to condense into new revision notes. These new notes need to be much more visual in format. Mind maps, Thinking Maps and Essay Route Maps are important here.
SCORE ____

Enhancing Memory: There are six principles students should know to make better use of their memory and learning. Intention, Pictures, Emotion, Movement, Location, Repetition. Taking keywords from condensed revision notes enables them to use these principles in creative ways to enhance their memory.
SCORE ____

Pictures and Patterns: Simple mnemonics that use pictures and patterns are useful. Students can work with their dominant learning styles and match their memory retention techniques to the way their brain is wired best. For example, a student who is strongly analytical / sequential would be able to easily memorise a spreadsheet of keywords.
SCORE ____

Recall Rehearsal: As repetition is the most common way to enhance memory, time spent in the days leading up to the exam should be spent rehearsing recall. Students should match the way they rehearse recall with their dominant learning styles while also paying attention to least dominant styles to engage more whole brain learning.
SCORE ____

Performance Rehearsal: Using visualisation to rehearse both the process of revising and the end result is useful. Taken from sports performance, this technique helps condition the body/mind to respond in more resourceful ways leading up to and undertaking a performance like an exam.
SCORE ____

Exam Anxiety: There are many simple ways of implementing anxiety-coping strategies if a student suffers form this. Breathing techniques, positive affirmations and visualisation are all useful.
SCORE ____

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SCORE YOUR EXAM INTELLIGENCE

Tally up your scores and measure your total against the scale below.

Grade	Score	Your Tally
A+	90 – 100	___
A	80 – 89	___
A-	70 – 79	___
B+	60 – 69	___
B	50 – 59	___
B-	40 – 49	___
C+	30 – 39	___
C	20 – 29	___

If you scored in the B range, you have a fair overall understanding of meta-cognitive knowledge and performance psychology. You are hopefully able to translate some of this knowledge to your students to help them improve their revision techniques. However, there is room for improvement especially if your score is below the B range.

Your ideal position is obviously the A range scores which with a good understanding of these principles, enables you to effectively translate them to your students. This is what is increasingly needed so that students can make the best use of the time they spend revising and gain the results they want.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO ME:

Thank you for taking a moment to score your exam intelligence. If you noticed any areas with low scores that you would like more information about, feel free to browse my website or contact me at: patrick@passingexams.co.nz.

I have a range of resources and on-line courses on the subject and am regularly travelling to secondary schools to run seminars and workshops.

I am continually researching best exam practices, so if you would like to be kept in touch with hot tips to pass on to your students, please keep in touch.