

Tips to eliminate cramming before tests

Cramming for tests is highly stressful, yet far too many students have not learned how to prepare or prioritize their activities by leaving enough time for homework and study. Education experts agree that cramming and poor time-management can be a major hindrance to overall results.

In a survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid for Kumon Math and Reading Centres, 68 per cent of university students said they start studying for exams no more than a week in advance, with a quarter saying they start as little as three days before. As many as 62 per cent define themselves as last-minute crammers, and 40 per cent say they experience high exam stress. No students said they are free of exam stress.

The survey asked students what they would bring into an exam to relieve stress. Twenty per cent said they would listen to music during exams if they could, while another 21 per cent said they would bring something to eat or drink.

“Students accept that they can’t bring food or music to exams – but what they can bring is their confidence,” says Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond, educational specialist with Kumon. “Developing more self-assurance in learning never begins too early – and indeed, parents can play a big part.” Here are a few of Dr. McGhie-Richmond’s tips to help your child get better prepared:

- Encourage a review of daily lessons when the material is still fresh.
- Mark test days on the calendar and check it at the beginning of every week.
- Talk about the upcoming test with your child so he or she will think and talk about the content.
- Support your child in learning the big ideas first, and then learning the details.
- Develop a study schedule where the material is spread over several days and allows for daily review. This helps to commit the information to long-term memory, so it can be recalled even if under stress.
- Organize and study the most important and challenging information first and review regularly.

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep the night before the test, eats a good breakfast and arrives at school on time.

Source: Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond, Educational Specialist, Kumon Math and Reading Centres

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