

Accelerate Workshop

Dear Wonderful Parent,

Today, your son or daughter attended a workshop called Accelerate. It is designed to teach them a mixture of practical skills and life skills to support their learning and development. We know that kids very often don't talk much about their day, so we thought we'd give you a little insight into what was covered and, more importantly, what you can do to support and encourage the continued use of these tools and techniques.

KEY TOPICS

Mind-Mapping

We started the session by blowing their minds with a mind-map all about Muhammad Ali. In just five minutes they were able to memorise all of the key facts from a page of over 500 words! And, without looking at the mind-map again they could still recall the details when tested at the end of the session.

Puzzle Me Happy

Self-reflection is an exceptionally important life skill and one that helps to build confidence and resilience in young people.

Did you know that laughing and being happy has lots of benefits. For example, happy people get sick less often or, if they are sick, they get better faster. It doesn't just improve our physical health though, it also improves our mental health. It helps us to worry less if we focus on things that make us happy.

Happiness also relaxes our brain. When the human brain is relaxed we produce chemicals that make it work more efficiently and this means that we can actually learn faster (or in a work environment, we become more productive – hence the importance of good mental wellbeing). Who knew that a good mood could help maths get easier!!

In this exercise we asked the students to reflect on four main areas of their life – school, family, friends and hobbies – and to answer two simple questions about each:

1. What makes you happiest at school? (or family, friends etc.)
2. How does this make you feel?

We then asked them to make a plan to ensure that these 'happy' things happened within the next week.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Ask them to tell you everything they know about Muhammad Ali
 - Have a look at Tony Buzan's website (the creator of mind-maps) <https://www.tonybuzan.edu.sg/about/mind-maps/>
 - Encourage your child to use mind-maps when they are practising for tests
 - Provide coloured pens and encourage the use of colour in everything they do
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- Ask them to show you their worksheet and celebrate their answers with them
 - Help to ensure that they achieve their written plans
 - Encourage regular reflection. It doesn't always have to be positive. They could reflect on what they don't enjoy and work out a plan to make it better.

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KEY TOPICS

Numbers = Letters

Have you ever struggled to remember important dates or numbers? Well, after today, your child can remember Pi to 9 decimal places with this very simple technique!!

The premise is simple: you make up a memorable phrase that reflects the date/number you are trying to remember. For example, The Great Fire of London was in 1666. So, I need a 1 letter word, followed by 3 x 6 letter words. I want to make it easy to remember so I'll make it relevant to the event.... A London Bakery Burned.

World War 2 started in 1939 – A miserable war beginning

World War 2 ended in 1945 – A miserable feud ended

Pi 3.141592653 – Pie. A dish I think everybody in France likes too

So simple and yet, so effective!

Self-Belief

One of the biggest obstacles to success in school is not academic ability, it is actually self-belief. Beliefs are very powerful motivators or inhibitors.

In this section we spoke about limiting beliefs and glass ceilings and encouraged the students to believe in themselves and their ability to achieve their goals.

Stories = Spelling

This technique uses short stories or a set of pictures to help students to remember how to spell words e.g.

There was a donkey called Emba. Her handler was very mean to her and would often shout "Emba, you are, you are an ass". This short story helps to spell Embarrass. Emba, you R, you R an ASS.

The Great Gatsby

So, apart from being a film, what is The Great Gatsby? It's a story of love and hate.

But isn't that true about a lot of things in life? There are things we love and there are things we hate. Sometimes we love doing something like riding horses, but we hate having to shovel up their poop or walking dogs – same problem with poop.

This section is about understanding that even when we don't enjoy things, there is usually still a very good reason why we should do them. It lends context to subjects like maths by looking at how maths will help us in life, not just in school.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Help them to practise this technique to remember important dates – like YOUR birthday!
- Remind them of this technique any time they are asked to memorise key dates or numbers
- Easy! Praise them whenever they achieve anything
- If something doesn't go their way, encourage them to work out why and then to take action to correct it. Do not allow them to indulge in self-pity!
- Remind them that no-one who succeeds in life gets everything right the first (or second, or third) time.
- Encourage them to set goals and to work towards them
- Ask your child to explain how this technique works (and learn it)
- Whenever your child is struggling with spelling, sit down with them and help them to create a story that will help them to remember
- Encourage your child to think about the subjects they are studying and how what they are learning could be of use to them outside of school e.g. languages will open up opportunities all over the world for them
- Please resist the temptation to say things like "yeah, I can't really see why you have to do maths either". I know that I wanted to say this to my kids at times but it doesn't help them with managing their feelings

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KEY TOPICS

The Bucket List

A bucket list is “A list of things that someone would like to have or achieve during their lifetime”.

This section is really introducing the students to goal setting which is a vital life skill.

Here we encourage them to think about things, in their current year, that they'd like to try, things they'd like to achieve and we also introduce the concept of self-reflection by getting them to reflect on things they have already achieved.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Ask them to show you their bucket list
- Help them to put dates (deadlines) by their 'goals'
- Provide any resources/support they need to achieve their goals
- Help them to reflect on their progress – when it is positive, praise them; when it is negative help them to reflect on why it's not going to plan and how they can change that

“Just because you can't do something straight away – doesn't mean you can't do it!”



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STRENGTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING