

Pack a tutor in your holiday luggage

By Chris Hill

When I first stumbled upon the idea of becoming an academic tutor, I never envisaged teaching maths tutorials against a backdrop of the fjords of Norway, or passing on exam techniques in the ski resort of Verbier, two of my recent destinations as a residential tutor.

I began my life as a tutor on the Circle Line, battling disgruntled commuters for breathing space on the tube and finding addresses on Google maps in the rain. It was the typical experience of a London-based tutor, crossing town for after-school appointments.

I found the work rewarding, especially when students passed their 11-plus and gained entry to the independent school they had aspired to attend, but the brevity of an hour or two a week made it hard to quantify where my particular help had scored marks. So I turned to a new option – residential tutoring stints, where I would spend a week or two as an in-house tutor for a family.

Residential tutoring can be the life raft parents crave when faced with the ominous proposition of managing revision amounting to upwards of 30 hours a week (as advised by some independent schools). In my experience having a tutor in the house, or holiday home, doesn't necessarily get the student out of bed any earlier, but when the work does begin, it begins in earnest.

While nothing can quite replace the sober environment of the classroom to acquire knowledge of the syllabus, working one-on-one with a tutor can be the missing link students are desperately searching for when trying to apply that learning to exam questions.

Teachers are experts at imparting course content and devising methods to do so, but tutors are veterans of the very same exams the students will be taking later that year. Stories and experience of the recently-introduced AS Level and IGCSE from a tutor who has been in the trenches is invaluable.

Taking a tutor away on holiday with you, or having them in your home for a school vacation, might seem like a strange undertaking at first but the rewards reaped by your son or daughter will soon far outweigh the initial nervousness. Most likely, such residential tutoring is going to fall on a holiday such as the Easter break. Easter is the last chance to really get your ammunition together before setting out on the exam campaign that lurks over that nearby hill. These breaks are great times



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themselves for a two- or three-hour study period (with the requisite tea breaks, of course) if it's asked of by a tutor instead of a pushy parent. What this also means is that time, since it is being paid for, is precious.

While it might seem a costly extravagance to take a tutor away on holiday, it can actually be less expensive and time consuming than sending your child off to an intensive revision course that is school in all but name. Did I also mention that taking a tutor along to the French Riviera gives you a chance to actually have a break yourself without worrying that your child is giving enough attention to their studies? **PS**

for a tutor to feel like they can make that crucial difference for the student as he or she is gearing up to exam time.

It doesn't hurt that tutors are also motivators in disguise. As a legion of individuals most likely in their twenties, they are going to be looked up to by teenagers in a way that parents can only dream of. The tutor is also a parent's friend; an authoritative voice the parent might have lost over their child through those difficult teenage years. It's amazing how quickly a teenager will sit down and apply

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