

Revision for the Exam A Case Study

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1.Introduction:

The present study is necessitated by the fact that most teachers concentrate on how to convey subject matter to their students and do not advise them about the proper way of revision. Besides, most of our students, we assume, do not know how to revise properly. Yorkey, R.C. (1970:210) points out that revision does not mean to reread the textbook or to memorize facts and formulas at the last minute. He recommends that the best way of preparation is to review briefly the material that we have reviewed during the preceding days. He advises the students to relax, preferably by going to bed early.

Hashim (1975:3) states that our students forget a lot of what they have studied and he says, "the failure of many students in the exams or getting low marks is not due to poor intelligence or weak mental power but it is due to improper revision habits." He also shows that students do not know how to revise for the exam and they usually have a feeling of worry and fear of failure. It has also been noticed that some students work hard before the exam but they didn't achieve well. He, therefore, recommends the best time and method of revision.

Najati (1988) emphasizes concentration which can be achieved by assigning the proper place and time for revision. He recommends training, interest in review, positive participation, understanding and proper way of reading. Deek (1980:14) emphasizes recall and reorganization of knowledge in students' revision because these are the general activities required in the examination. He also emphasizes discussion and says: "It is valuable to work in a revision syndicate rather than in solitary confinement." (p.139)

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It is, therefore, necessary to develop this skill in our students and hope that we will be aware of their problems in revision and in the exams so as to provide some recommendations to them.

2.The Aim of the Work:

The present study tries to investigate some certain aspects of revision skill and preparation for the exam like the time,place ,materials asnd methods of revision.It also deals with types of distractions and the problems faced by students when they revise for the exam.We also want to see the attitudes of our students towards the skill of revision in an attempt to develop this important skill in our students.

3.The Procedure:

To achieve our purpose, a questuinnaire of 41 items is distributed to (39) 3rd year students of English Department,College of Basic Education,University of Mosul.The sample constitutes the whole population(100%).It consists of 12 males and 27 females.The answers to the questions will be useful,we hope ,for students ,teachers and administration.On the basis of the questionnaire, recommendations can be provided to develop the skill of revision and students performance in the exam.Questions about time ,place ,materials and methods of revision are raised.The questionnaire also includes questions about difficulties in the skill of revision.The answers may also vary from boys to girls and according to time of revision whether it is a day or night and the environment whether it is quiet ,noisy or hot.

Some of the questions need Yes -No answers,others need more than one alternative.We have provided some answers to the questions but they were left open for the students to add more unexpected alternatives.In this way we have formulated a final form of the questionnaire.We have also depended on books on study skills and on our experience as teachers of English.The answers to the questions have been statistically tabulated,analysed and interpreted using figures and percentages.

4. Analysis of Results:

In this section we shall briefly deal with the results of our work and their interpretations. The appendix includes the questions and answers along with figures and percentages.

The answers to question 1 show that 75% of the male students and all the females start revision only one day or two before the exam. 25% of the males state that they do not revise at all. Question 2 shows that most of the males (42%) find revision interesting when they test themselves while 44% of the females find it interesting to discuss the examination material with their friends. On the other hand, all the students state that they study harder only when the examination is announced (Q.3). 66% of the males and 44% of the females find evening the most suitable time for revision. Very few students stay late at night or till the early hours of the morning. This leads to tension and physical tiredness (Q.4). It is also obvious from Q.5 that most of the males (67%) and the females (59%) do not plan for revision in a time table. Most of the males (83%) and the females (48%) usually revise in their private rooms especially those who do not live in the hostels. Very few of them study in the college library because the library closes at one o'clock in the afternoon and most of the students live away from the college (Q.6). 33% of the females state that they study in their hostels and 29% of them find the place of their study cold and noisy. However, there are few students who live in a pleasant atmosphere and nice surroundings. Yet, it is not necessarily that their achievement is good (Q.7).

As for the material of study, all the males and 78% of the females try to improve their notes when they revise. This shows that females might be better note-takers than males (Q.8). 50% of the males are distracted by visitors, 33% are distracted by noise while 50% of the females are distracted by noise in the hostels or even at home (Q.9). Some students are distracted by personal things on their tables. 42% of the males and 15% of the females put radios and tape-recorders on their tables. 58% of the males and 40% of the females state that there are other things on their study tables but they do not

specify what they are. Yet, three females say that they do not have tables. They study on the floor and find it interesting (Q.10). All the males and 96% of the females do not revise with anyone (Q.11). All the males and 85% of the females read the whole material and try to memorize it, 15% of the females only turn the pages over and read the most points (Q.12). All the males and 89% of the females use the method of oral recall when they revise (Q.13). 67% of the males and 59% of the females say that their notes are sufficient for revision, while the rest say that their notes need some improvement and they have to refer to their texts. It has also been found that students who write notes remember information better than those who do not (Q.14). 58% of the male students and 51% of the females usually revise in their textbooks (Q.15). Most of the males (58%) use the same notes from the beginning to the end of the course while 59% of the females try to improve their notes (Q.16). 58% of the males and 63% of the females read the most important points quickly when they are short of time while the rest leave the material unrevised (Q.17). 56% of the females revise the whole material while 58% of the males focus on particular important points. (Q.18). The answers to Q.19 show that 67 of the males and 59% of the females have understood the material they have not already understood. Moreover, all the males and most of the females (78%) revise the material they have not already understood. Few females have left the material unrevised (Q.20). Most of the females (63%) and (42%) of the males summarize their notes (Q.21).

4.Recommendations:

On the basis of the above results, we can recommend the following:

1.Students are advised to plan their time in several review sessions.If

students fail in the exam, its their fault in preparation or in the

examination technique.Revision must,therefore, be a regular part of

students study routine right from the beginning of the course because

early revision will make later material easier to learn. It must be

timetabled very seriously.

2. Students should not waste their time revising material they have not

fully understood. Trying to learn new things would block out things

that students have learned previously

3. Students should be taught and practice how to summarize the main

points of their notes. They should also try improve their notes while

they revise.

4. The best time for revision is the night before the exam. Students are

asked not to stay up late at night because this makes it difficult for

them to concentrate. They should pay attention to their physical health

and food. They are advised to come early to the exam relaxed and

confident that they can answer the questions.

5. They should try to get rid of all types of distraction by choosing the

right place to and time of study. They can, for example, remove from

their tables or rooms anything which might distract them from

revision.

6. Students should know that it is not a matter of how much they study, but

how well they study. They have to follow the method which makes

revision interesting to them like discussions with their friends because

within a group student's performance is likely to be better as a result

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of differences of interests and opinions which make a student find

himself teaching the others, and this also lessens anxiety.

7. Daily preparation is important. So, students should study hard during the

whole semester and not only before the exam.

8. They should try to turn the pages over and read the most important

points. It is a waste of time to spend too much time revising the material

they haven't fully understood.

9. They should make sure they have all the requirements they will need

next day.

10. They should read the exam paper carefully, look at the instructions,

the number of questions and the marks they carry. Every question

should be considered. They can plan the answers in their minds and

answer the questions they feel more confident. They should plan their

answers and write them within the time of the exam. They can

concentrate on one question and organize an outline of the answer

in their mind. Time can be divided according to the marks allotted to

each question. Writing too much does not mean that students will get

high marks. They should write legibly and pay attention to spelling

and grammar.

Appendix

Females		Males		
NO	%	NO	% 100	
1.When do you start revision for the exam				
a.a day before the exam		9	75	27
b.I do not revise		3	25	-
2.When do you find revision interesting?				
a.test myself		5	42	8
b.writing		3	25	7
c.discussion with my friends		4	33	12
3.When do you study harder ?				
Only when the examination is announced		12	100	27
4.What times are most suitable for revision?				
a.evening			66	12
b.during the day		2	17	10
c.late at night		2	17	5
5.Have you planned for revision in a time				
Schedule?				

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a.Yes		4	33	11
				41
b.No		8	67	16
				59
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6.Where do you revise?				
a.in a private room		10	83	13
				48
b.in the library		2	17	5
				19
c. in the hostel		-	-	9
				33
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7.Is the environment				
a.cold in winter?				
b.noisy			2	17
			6	22
c.nice			6	50
			7	25
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8.Have you tried to improve your notes				
when you revise?				
a.Yes		12	100	21
				78
b.No			-	-
			6	22
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9.What distracts you from revision?				
a.visitors			6	50
8 30				
b.noise			4	33
14 52				
c.others			2	17
5 18				
<hr/>				
10.What is there on your table when you				
revise?				
a.radio ,recorder			5	42
4 15				

	b.personal photographs	-	-
5	19		
	c.papers and copybooks for revision	-	-
4	15		
	d.others	7	58
11	40		
	e.I don't have a table	-	-
3	11		
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11	Who revises with you?		
	a.no one	12	100
26	96		
	b.a friend	-	-
1	4		
	c.I do not revise	-	-
1	4		
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12	How do you revise?		
	a.I read the whole material carefully	12	100
23	85		
	b.I only turn over the pages and read	-	-
4	15		
	the most important points.		
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13	Do you use oral recall when you revise?		
	a.Yes	12	100
24	89		
	b.No		
-	-	3	11
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14	Are your notes sufficient for revision?		
	a.Yes	8	67
16	59		
	b.No	4	33
11	41		
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15	Do you revise in the textbook?		
	a.Yes	7	58
14	51		
	b.No	5	42
8	29		
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16	Do you use the same notes from the beginning to the end of the course?		

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	a.Yes	7	58
11	41		
	b.I improve them	5	42
16	59		
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	17.When you are short of time,what do you do to the material you couldn't revise?		
	a.I leave it	5	42
10	37		
	b.I read the most important points quickly?	7	58
12	44		
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	18.Do you revise the whole material or you focus on particular points?		
	a.I revise the whole material	5	42
15	56		
	b.I focus on particular points	7	56
12	44		
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	19.Have you understood the material which you haven't already understood?		
	a.Yes	8	67
16	59		
	b.No	4	33
11	41		

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	20.Do you revise or leave the material you haven't understood?		
	a.I revise it	12	100
21	78		
	b.I leave it	-	-
6	22		
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	21.Do you summarize your notes?		
	a.Yes	7	42
17	63		
	b.No	5	58
10	37		

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المراجعة للامتحان

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مستخلص

يحاول هذا البحث دراسة بعض جوانب مهارة المراجعة والتحضير للامتحان لغرض تطوير هذه المهارة المهمة عند طلبتنا حيث أن معظم الطلبة لا يعرفون كيف يراجعوا للامتحان وينسون كثيرا مما درسوه. ويعود الفشل في الامتحان إلى عادات المراجعة الخاطئة. ويوصي هذا البحث بالوقت والطريقة المناسبة للمراجعة. وقد أكد بعض الباحثين على التركيز وأكد آخرون على التذكر. وقد تم لهذا الغرض توزيع استبيان من 41 فقرة على 39 طالب وطالبة من كلية التربية الأساسية، قسم اللغة الانكليزية، وتم تحليل النتائج وعلى أساس هذه النتائج تم تقديم بعض التوصيات للطلبة.

(*) قسم اللغة الإنكليزية/ كلية التربية الأساسية/ جامعة الموصل.