IGCSE exams have recently come to an end after multiple weeks of examinations for the Y11 students.

The IGCSE curriculum is a two-year program where students take a variety of courses across many different disciplines. Nord Anglia has long been a proponent of the IGCSEs for their versatility and international recognition.

Mr. David Pringle is the Director of Learning Support at BISB has guided many IGCSE students throughout his career. He has built a career guiding students through the exciting, and occasionally labyrinthine, world of education. We sat down with him so he could share his experience about IGCSE and other exams over the years.

*As Director of Learning at BISB, how does your position relate to students' revision and exam readiness?*

In my role as Director of Learning Support here at BISB, I work with individual students, groups, classes, staff, and parents to promote a love of learning and understanding of neurodiversity at our school. I work as a resource for staff and collaborate to ensure classrooms are catering for the needs of all students who take part in lessons every day. I am also a resource for parents, and students, to offer advice and guidance to ensure they are maximizing the school day and supported throughout their revision. Students can access the Learning Center at any time to ask for advice on revision skills, time management, organization, and other essential school skills.

*What is preparing for an IGCSE exam like?*

In essence preparation for IGCSEs is all about consolidating, understanding, and testing knowledge. It’s difficult to do that so thoroughly for every topic you have learned about over the last two years. One of the study skills we learned about in our Skills lessons, that can combat this difficulty, is “metacognition,” which is learning how to learn. It’s important for students to think ahead for each subject and consider where they need to focus their time and also, think about their exam technique for each subject. Sometimes, taking the time to take a step back and considering what you really need support with can make a difference.

*Have you identified any common obstacles through your career that got in the way of students' revision?*

Procrastination is a big barrier! It’s common and something we all have to manage – everyone is different but simple strategies like creating a study timetable, having someone at home be a study mentor (you tell them your study plan at the start of the day and ask them to check in with you throughout), or putting your phone out of sight can help.

Another barrier (which is linked to procrastination) is feeling overwhelmed. Dealing with this by starting studying early, in incremental amounts, helps with the feeling of there being too much to review.

*What’s your favorite revision advice?*

My best piece of advice to students is that if you want to learn and memorise something…teach it! If you’ve ever wondered how teachers remember all of the information they do, it’s partially because once you teach something you have processed the information so many times that it really sticks!

*What resources does BISB offer to pupils when it comes to finals preparation?*

As mentioned previously, teachers have a wealth of knowledge, resources, study materials and support available to students. It’s important that students make use of these resources ahead of exams to reduce anxiety and feel prepared. Y11 students also have access to our Skills resources that we’ve looked at through teams and some paper copies (in our Skills/Study room in Steam 202).

Students also can access the Learning Center (Room 321 in the main building) to ask for support with their revision at any time. Likewise, Ms. Hernandez our school counsellor is available to students should they need any social/emotional support in their preparation for exams.

*What strategies would you recommend to anxious students for coping with the stress of exams?*

It's completely normal to be anxious about the exams because they are important. However, this doesn’t mean you need to spend every hour of free time revising. It’s equally important to look after yourself as you revise and in the exam period. Eating the right food, plenty of water, exercise, sleep and time with friends and family will help reduce stress and help you achieve your goals. It’s well known that stress has a negative impact on many aspects of our lives but it also has a significant impact on memory. The calmer you are, the more likely you are to show the best version of yourself in exams.

*Do you have any lasting memories about your experience as a student sitting your exams?*

Mostly I remember feeling the relief of them ending! I don’t mind saying that I had to work extremely hard at school to achieve good grades and I felt I had done everything I could to get the best marks possible. I also remember the preparation in the buildup and spending the majority of my time revising with friends – that helped a great deal as it helped me strike a balance between focus and down time.

We thank Mr. Pringle for taking the time to participate in the interview. We wish him the best of luck in supporting students next school year.