

New book reveals secret of Oxbridge admissions success

A medical doctor has unveiled a new and innovative strategy to help pupils win a place at Oxbridge.

Dr Christopher See, a medic at University Hospital Aintree and himself a Cambridge graduate, has spent 5 years helping students prepare for the Oxbridge admissions process in his spare time.

Drawing on his experience and insider knowledge, he says that pupils should develop their intellectual abilities around subjects they are genuinely interested in – even those seen as “common and unimpressive” by other people.

For example, a passion for playing video games can be developed into academic study looking at the socio-cultural behaviour in online groups. Budding stand-up comedians might look at the linguistics and origin of humour or the neuro-biological mechanisms of laughter. Genuine originality, commitment and curiosity of this kind, he says, will impress Oxbridge admissions tutors much more than a faked interest in traditional subjects.

“People excel in what they are passionate about. Don’t do things for the sake of an admissions form, but for your own personal growth,” he says. “Pupils of this age are often very poor actors and are easily found-out if they pretend to be interested in something they are not.”

“The Oxbridge application is about hard work, but also passion and enthusiasm. I help pupils take a seed of interest and develop it in ways they may not have considered before. It’s this love of what they do that will sustain them when they are overworked and pushed to their limits.”

In his new book, *How to Get Into Oxbridge* (Kogan Page, May 2012), Dr See also suggests ways of dealing with pushy parents. To help handle the intense pressure, he outlines an ‘Oxbridge strategy’ for family, friends and teachers, with weekly parent-student meetings to avoid regular interrogation from parents, and codes of behaviour that guarantee glowing teacher references.

Dr See has also devised an algorithm, based on university data and informal feedback, to help pupils choose the right college. Applicants can dramatically improve their chances of success by thoroughly researching each college’s culture and matching it to an honest assessment of their own strengths and abilities compared to their peers.

His unique approach goes well beyond getting pupils through the famous Oxbridge interview – it’s also about ensuring that they thrive in a cutting-edge academic environment once they get in.

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