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## Expert Offers Fairfield Students Study Tips

by Greg Canuel



Students participate in interactive study drills at one of Michelle Sagalyn's seminars.

Photo credit: *Contributed*

Thousands of Fairfield students will go through a dreaded post-holiday ritual in a few weeks—midterm exams. Had they sought the advice of Southport's Michelle Sagalyn sooner, however, late January might not have turned out as stressful.

Michelle is founder and president of Successful Study Skills 4 Students, which leads seminars for students, teachers and parents across Fairfield County. She and her staff take groups of 15 kids and teach time-management techniques, proper note-taking methods and how to make sure you understand the material you need to study.

"If they're doing everything that they need to be doing as they're learning the material, they won't spend as much preparing for a test," Michelle says. "By building up a foundation from the beginning, the material will be a lot richer and more fully understood."

Michelle offered The Daily Fairfield's readers a few tips:

- Get rid of distractions. "No TV, no Facebooking, no listening to music," Michelle says.

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- Use a planner. Although day planners are losing battles every day to online assignment boards, Michelle tells her students that keeping one is a helpful tool. For example, it can remind kids to study a little bit each night for a week before a big test, instead of holding one-night cram sessions.
- Look at your child's notes. Michelle and her staff teach the Cornell note-taking method, which places key terms on one side of the page with bulleted details on the other side. But regardless of method, she urges parents to make sure their kids take notes. "If they're not taking notes, maybe they're not understanding everything," Michelle says.
- Ask questions. Michelle says one of her biggest challenges is getting kids to feel comfortable asking teachers questions if they don't understand something. "Kids don't want to be made fun of, they don't want the teacher to think they're stupid," Michelle says. "But teachers want kids to learn."

Michelle's team will host four-and-a-half-hour sessions at St. Thomas Aquinas School on the Post Road on Thursday, Jan. 13, and Saturday, Jan. 29. It will also start a 10-week course at Roger Ludlowe Middle School on Jan. 24. To register, visit the group's [website](#).

Do your kids have trouble studying? Ask questions in the comments below or send them to [gcanuel@mainstreetconnect.us](mailto:gcanuel@mainstreetconnect.us). We'll ask the experts and get back to you.

**Filed in:** [Roger Ludlowe Middle School](#), [St. Thomas School](#), [study skills course](#), [Schools](#)