Student:

Dylan

Topic:

How can exercise help improve academic performance at school?

What is your name?

What was your research question?

My name is Dylan and my research question was ‘How can exercise help improve academic performance at school?’

How did you decide that would be your question?

Well…I thought about it and I thought that I would want to do something that I would enjoy researching but it would also be relevant to me. And so I figured with exercising which is something that I did anyway, I wanted to find out how it could help me at school and so I chose a topic that would give me information that could help me do better at school. I found out that exercise helps with a lot of aspects mentally like just general wellbeing. It can help with anxiety, mood, it can also improve concentration and memory so it improves quite a variety of things that all contribute to success at school.

How did you plan to answer your question?

At first it was going to be about how exercise can help your wellbeing mentally, so it was pretty broad, and then it was how, I think at first it was how does exercise make you smarter? So I had to change that because smartness isn’t really something you can measure. So I changed it to academic performance at school so that it was pretty specific and it would also apply to me.

Where did your information mainly come from?

Mostly I went on line and looked at articles from, like, the New York Times and like research that had been done on the subject and also books, I read quite a few books and listened to podcasts and did surveys and interviews. I surveyed people at school that mostly went to Scotch and I think I ended up getting 40 responses, so from students from Year 8 to Year 12. I interviewed the school psychologist and I interviewed the Athletic Director at school to what their thoughts on the subject were. I found the most information from the books that I read and I was able to pick and choose what information I wanted and a lot of it was very relevant to my research. I found the books that I read were the most relevant.

How did you present your research outcome?

I did an essay for my outcome because I figured that that would be the best way, the most structured and logical way to present the information that I got for my Research Project. At first I used focus questions but then I sort of developed it into subtopics and so my outcome ended up being each paragraph was about a way that exercise can help you mentally and at school. I referenced quite a few experiments that had happened and, tests that had been taken, especially in the book there were quite a few tests that were taken at high schools that, where they made a certain group of students do like a mile run before school and then gave them a test to do after that and did the same test with a group that hadn’t run before school to see what the difference was and so I used quite a bit of evidence from these experiments that had happened to support my results. When I first started my folio I pretty much just got every single piece of information and put it in my folio. So when I finished researching my folio it was probably 21 pages long so I had quite a bit of information and I had to, kind of, refine that and choose the bits that were most relevant to what I needed and, the information that was going to help my outcome the most.

What challenges came up whilst undertaking the Research Project?

Like, the interviews I wanted to give were people that were at the school so I didn’t have to go, you know, to businesses and try and organise it through that so I tried to make it as easy for myself as possible in terms of the organisation of it. And so the surveys I did online, so I didn’t have to go and handout physical copies of the survey and that was a lot easier. So there weren’t too many huge challenges that I had to overcome ‘cause I tried to make everything as easy for myself as possible.

What would you say to students about to start their Research Project?

I would, say, pick a topic that interests you because you’re going to invest a lot of time in doing the project so pick something that is interesting to you but is also relevant to you so that you can use the information you learn to… for yourself in the future. And just be really thorough with it, like, try and find out everything you can and the more information you have the better.

How did your Research Project prepare you for what you are doing now?

I think time management skills have definitely improved because of the Research Project. The bulk of the project is, like, the folio especially is a lot of small bits of information that need to be put together and due dates needed to be met and so I think that’s helped me this year, especially in year 12 to stay on top of everything and make sure that I hand in those due dates and meet everything on time. I think this Research Project has sort of encouraged me to keep exercising, like, my whole life because I’ve… after researching the benefits it can have and what it can do for you mentally I don’t think I’ll ever stop exercising because of it, even if it’s just walking every day or when I’m old. I think I’ll just never stop exercising because of all the benefits it can have.