

Horizons



Timing it right

With CAT only two months away, get an effective daily study routine in place, advises **GARIMA SHARMA**

DAILY DIARY

Engineering students: Since these students have the highest workload with classes generally stretching from 11 in the morning to 4.30 in the afternoon, they need to make sure that they get ample rest while they put in at least four hours of study every day.

Science students: An average day for them stretches from 9.30 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon. However, with a few 'free' classes come their way in a day, they need to put together at least five hours a day.

Non-Science students: Since their classes generally get over by 1 in the afternoon, there is ample scope for coaching and additional study. They can manage at least six hours a day and utilise whatever free time they get at college.

With CAT 2008 around the corner, what is important is utilising your daily and monthly study routine as effectively as possible. Even the toughest exam is easy to crack if you are well prepared.

Expert speak

Says Ulhas Vairagkar, Head, T.I.M.E, an MBA coaching institute in Delhi, "We need to recognise that three types of students take the exam. These are those

who are pursuing engineering, science courses and non-science courses." Since all three have a different college schedule and knowledge reservoir, their preparation timetable needs to differ accordingly.

Monthly matters

"A student's daily schedule from now on must be planned in a manner to help cover the entire preparation before November 16,"

says Vairagkar. In general, if one looks at the college system (except engineering), house exams only take place in January while final exams are planned for April-May. Therefore, non-engineering students must focus all their attention on CAT right now, he advises.

However, missing college is not the answer, Vairagkar warns, unless commuting takes you more time than attending college.

Once that is sorted out, you

need to plan for the next two months diligently. Here is the key:

First month (September 17 - October 17): Ensure that you have a fairly strong grounding in all areas. This means that you do not have any obvious weaknesses or sections that you are willing to 'skip'. You should not find yourself struggling with any section. Spend this month ensuring that there is no area left which you won't be able to tackle in the exam. Remem-

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ber: obtaining marks is a combination of your competency as well as the difficulty of the exam.

Second month (October 18 to November 11): By now if you still feel uncomfortable with certain areas, forget them. Focus only on improving your strengths.

The most important bit is to do a thorough analysis of your mock papers. Ensure that you focus on testing the application of your knowledge as you will be tested on a similar level during the CAT.

However, a week before your CAT, stop all studies.

Student speak

Though Vairagkar summarises the plan effectively, some students still find it difficult to put things together. Says Aakash Aggrawal, a final year student of English Literature at Ramjas College, University of Delhi, "Just because you are studying humanities does not mean that things become easy. We have four papers this year, with a lot of reference material to read, comprehend and analyse. Also, with the new tutorial system in place, we find it really difficult to balance things. In my perspective, preparations must begin at least a year in advance if one seriously wishes to bell the CAT and avoid trauma."

Mental measure

Trauma, which Aggrawal talks about, does become a problem as CAT approaches. However, Dr. Samir Parikh, Consultant Psychiatrist, Max Healthcare Hospital, has some quick and seasoned suggestions to offer. He says, "The number of hours that you put in have no meaning. What matters is how effectively you study." He advises the following:

- Study in spurts and take multiple breaks.
- Do not study late into the night.
- Do not overwork yourself.
- Go out to relax.

The ideal way to prepare, he says, is to study in batches of 45 minutes followed by a three- to four-minute break. This way, students can easily put in seven to eight hours of study.

Also, adds Parikh, "Do not study much during the last week and not at all on the last day. Give your mind ample space."

Proper preparation will help you tackle the exam with ease and not stress you out. ■

garima.sharma@hindustantimes.com



ULHAS VAIRAGKAR, Head, T.I.M.E Delhi

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AAKASH AGRAWAL, student, Ramjas College

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