



Morning Comment

Academic Assembly – Friday 14 February 2025

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In an ever-unpredictable school year, there's one time when you know exactly what's going to happen: Academic Assembly. You know there will be a million awards, a continuous parade of recipients across the stage, and people blabbing on and on about the importance of studying. Masha, James and I know all the stuff you've heard in previous academic assemblies, and we do want to reinforce those important ideas. But we also want to incorporate a new way of looking at academics. Our idea? The importance of shopping. Now, we know what you're thinking, "going to the supermarket isn't exactly going to get me into university" however, how you plan ahead, pack your "trolley" and read your receipt while shopping will shape how you "check out" of 2025.

Before going into your exams or "going to shop" you need to plan ahead. This starts before you enter the supermarket or the exam room. It starts with what you know already, your goals. When writing a shopping list, we look into our fridge or pantry and think about what we need. You may ask yourself questions like: will this milk really last me until next week, or is it quickly becoming the disgusting smell in my fridge? When buying groceries our goal is to buy the stuff that will fuel us for the coming days. Academically, our goal is to get the marks we need, for the jobs we want. If you're wanting to get into a course or particular university, it doesn't look particularly good if you're taking six subjects and only passing one – even if you're passing that one with high



marks. Similarly, when you're writing a shopping list, you need to buy all the ingredients for the meals you want. Although we enjoy bags of chips and sugar-filled sweets, we can't live off Pringles alone. Balancing your study diet by focusing on the subjects you know you need to focus on versus the ones you're already good at, allows you to have a well-rounded skillset and achieve the goals you've set for yourself.

So we've got our shopping list in hand and we are packing our trolley at New World. The advertising and the bright colours are designed to draw your attention. This can be extremely daunting and overwhelming if it's your first time, just as is the case for many of you starting NCEA Level 1 or 2. And it is hard. And you will struggle. It is okay to struggle. If it were easy what would be the point? If it were easy, you would never have a chance to grow and develop and take on challenging opportunities. So let's add that to our trolley, it's going to be difficult.

The great philosopher Confucious said, "It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop." The secret key to your academics is consistency and focus rather than intelligence or pure talent. Showing up and utilising your opportunities are all it takes to succeed. So use your time wisely and make your shopping trip as efficient as possible, but do not try and take shortcuts or else you might knock over that tower of baked bean cans in aisle four.

A supermarket trip is faster with more people, your tall friends can help you reach the top shelves and your short friends, well, I suppose they can bend less to get those bottom shelves?! Your study is no different, tall people are better to study around. There are people around you who can help. The worst thing you can do is assume you can't ask. Ask questions and communicate.

Sometimes communication is the difference between a Not Achieved and a Merit, which in my case it was. We have wonderful teachers who are here to help you and if you'd like more one-on-one help, our student tutors are here to help you.

Every day we make choices. You have a choice whether to take opportunities and be consistent, or chase distractions. The beauty is that they are your choices, and you have power over them. So you decide what you put in your shopping trolley.



I think all of us have walked into a supermarket hoping to buy just one thing, but instead leave with half a trolley of unnecessary items. This should apply for your academic goals. If we walk into 2025 with a goal of getting Excellence, of course it will be difficult. Of course you will be tempted to procrastinate and walk down the other aisles, scroll on TikTok, and fill your trolley with things you don't need. At the time, you think your procrastination isn't that big of a deal. You think, "I will finish my work later" or "I'll be more efficient next time." But we all know that our receipts – our NCEA results in January – show our endeavours. Our receipts show who decided to fight the procrastination habit. They show who walked out of the supermarket and chose Excellence.

In conclusion, let's remember school is just like a trip to the supermarket. You choose how you plan, what you put in your trolley, and ultimately what your receipt looks like. The question is, how will you check out of 2025?