

ADVERTORIAL

## Vogue Does...Straight A's

### *A REALITY BITES Authored Pop-Doc fronted by Vogue Williams for RTE Two*

Mid August. Every year. You can't miss them. Plastered on the front page of the Irish Times, beaming out on the Six One News. The young faces of the 600 Points Club. These are the Leaving Cert's Straight A students, the cream of the crop. All we get is a quick sound bite, a smile, a close-up of a results sheet... And they're gone.

But what happens to the 0.3% of Leaving Cert Students who ace the perfect Leaving Cert? Do six A1s automatically equal success, happiness and a bulging bank account? And how do those Straight A students steal a march on their peers? Are they natural superbrains, or is there strategy involved?

Fresh from The South American Rainforest where she was the winner of ITV's Bear Grylls 'Mission Survive' series, Vogue Williams recalls her own underwhelming 300 Point Exam Results 11 years ago.

She was far from a Straight A student, yet so far she's successfully achieved all her goals. In light of her relative success in life she reckons she had the smarts to do a better Leaving Cert, she just didn't have the focus. She de-

cidates to prove that she could've done better, and sets off on a journey to discover how.

En route she meets a selection of 600 Point scorers, as well as people who never got a Leaving Cert and ended up successful, and a Downs Syndrome Girl who passed the Leaving cert against all the odds.

She'll meet Educational Experts who have varying theories on how to maximise Leaving Cert Performance and have equally varying opinions on whether the Leaving Cert as it stands is worthwhile.

She 'Goes Back to School' at Ashfield College; experiencing the atmosphere of a school that focuses on students to get ensure they get top academic results. She then re-sits a mock Irish Leaving Cert Paper - nowadays 40% of the marks are gleaned from the Oral and, since talking is what she's good at, she aims to trump her original ordinary level C grade by acing the oral. Can she do it?

She goes to a Centre For Exceptionally Talented kids to meet future 'Straight A' prodigies. Is the secret of academic success in 'Tiger



Parenting' and hoarding kids from birth...or does that breed precocious little monsters?

Some say the fault in the Leaving Cert is that it's all about retaining information and not applying it. So Vogue receives coaching in Memory Techniques - and then takes a memory challenge against a former finalist in The World Memory Championships. Questioning her basic 'smarts' she sits an Entrance Exam for MENSEA - The Organisation for the 'Super Bright'. Does she get in?

She also visits Ireland's biggest secondary school, Gorey Community School. Vogue also meets a family that's been home schooled outside of the exam system, resulting in a jail term for their mother - who's vehemently anti formal education.

Straight A's aims to be an entertainingly look at an exam that's now sat by 90% of Irish Students. For the 57,000 of them facing the Leaving in June it'll be a taste of things to come, for the rest of us.....the stuff of annual nightmares!



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