Overview

Elevate Education is Australia’s largest provider of study skills workshops to high school students, and works with over 700 schools and 175,000 students every year across the UK and Australia.

Founded in 2001, Elevate has spent more than 13 years benchmarking the habits of the country’s top students. This research has identified 17 areas where the habits and study processes of the top students differ from middle and lower performing students. Elevate workshops introduce students to these 17 skills and show them how to adopt them.

What makes us different

Young presenters students can relate to
Elevate uses university students that have recently faced and aced the final years of school themselves. By using presenters that students can relate to, schools have found the impact of the study skills message is increased. Young presenters are perceived as being credible as they have only just gone through the experience themselves.

Practical study skills students can use
Most study skills programmes fail because they are dense on theory but lack the kind of practical skills that students can use straight away. All of Elevate’s material focuses on practical study skills modelled from the top students.

Short, high impact sessions
Research shows that as the length of a study skills program increases, student implementation tends to decrease. Students are left with an overwhelming list of ‘52 skills’ which is so long that students don’t know where to begin. These short, sharp sessions maximise student retention rates and isolate a handful of skills to implement immediately, encouraging student skill adoption.

Follow-up resources
Most study skills programmes are ultimately flawed in that teachers are not provided with materials to follow-up and reinforce the skills covered in the programme. Study skills, like any skill, are developed through repetition, practice and review. This teacher implementation kit is designed to be used in conjunction with the Ace Your Exams seminar to reinforce the skills covered in the session.

How to use this document

This teacher implementation kit contains a range of modular follow-up activities for staff to run in class. The focus of this implementation kit is on getting students to use the skills while studying in a classroom subject. However, if this kit is being used in pastoral care time, the activities can still be run using work the students have done while in another class (e.g. English).
Resource Outline

This resource is built around the *Student Elevation* seminar, and is designed to reinforce the goal-setting and belief strategies covered in the workshop. Students are provided with a booklet which they will work through during these modules and can reference at home. To help with your planning, here is how you might want to structure the implementation of follow-up over a term:

**Start of term**

**Week 2**

**Activity 1 – Belief**
- Time required: 20 minutes
- Teacher kit: page 2
- Student pack: page

**Week 4**

**Activity 2 – Set Your Goal**
- Time required: 40 minutes
- Teacher kit: page 6
- Student pack: page

**End of term**
Activity 1 – Belief

Initial class time required: 10 - 20 minutes
Follow-up time: 5 minutes + marking time
Suitable subjects: All
Resources required: “Mind-Set” Worksheet
When: 2nd week of term

Research Background

Our research shows that a common thread of all successful students was a strong belief that they could do well. These students understood that with the right techniques and mindset they had capacity to improve their performance and achieve great results.

Most students can quickly pinpoint where they are sitting academically at any point of the year. That is, they know which are their most challenging or “worst” subjects, they know what mark they are expecting in each subject, and usually they know roughly where they sit compared to their peers. This forms a student’s “line in the sand”, the point at which they feel comfortable to achieve up to but not beyond.

When students set this “line in the sand” they are adopting what Carol Dweck termed a “fixed mindset” or the belief that their success is pre-determined. To contrast this, top students all had a “growth mindset”, the belief that they could and would do well.

Lesson 1 – Where am I now?

The lesson doesn’t require a huge amount of supervision and the students can largely be left to their own devices. On page # you will find a survey entitled “Mindset Workbook”, which the students will fill out in this lesson.

As a prelude to this exercise, explain to the students that there is a bit of reading throughout the book, it isn’t extensive but it is important for helping students understand the theory behind the exercises. Have the students clarify anything that they don’t understand. Alternatively, you may want to actually run through
the survey with the students. If you read out the paragraphs and expand on Growth and Fixed mindset concept that will ensure all students are on the same page with the exercise.

Preface the survey by explaining that students need to be extremely honest with themselves during this process and that no one else will read their responses. What we are trying to achieve is honest self-reflection, where students identify if they are adopting a mindset that is conducive for success. Here are the elements of the survey:

1) The first 3 questions are designed to test a student’s belief in the importance of IQ. Those students who perceive IQ to be the key driver of academic success tend to have the lowest likelihood of seeking out changes and improvements, and the highest tendency to give up and settle for the status quo. Changing these beliefs is obviously a priority.

2) We then want to identify where students are currently setting their “line in the sand”. That is, what they feel is the limit to their success.

3) Finally, to overcome these limiting self-beliefs, we want students to brainstorm their own solutions. On the final page of the workbook is a table with 10 rectangles. As a “speed-thinking” exercise, ask students to think of 10 different ways they could improve their results straightaway. This could really be anything from “better stationary” to “do more practice questions”, whatever a students response, the key idea if generate as many solutions as possible.

Once students have completed the speed-thinking exercise, take some of the best answers from the group. Write these up on the board so that students can collaborate and share ideas. The more possible changes a student could make, the better. It is worth discussing those that are likely to have a significant impact for students. Finally, get a commitment from the group that they will implement 3 of these techniques and test the results.

**Follow Up Lessons**

The idea is to get students adopting a growth mindset and constantly thinking about how they can shift their “line in the sand”. The speed thinking activity is something that can be revisited at any point across the year. A great idea is to start lessons after assessments with a discussion about how every went. Asking hands up questions like “who was happy with their results?” is a great way to get some honesty. Follow up by asking if those who were unhappy have anything that they would do differently in retrospect. Students can then add these examples to “changes” bank we’ve been building. Similarly, ask those students who did well, what they would repeat again, and add these ideas to the “changes” bank

Having these types of conversations after exam results are distributed, can help students see that their performance and results is based upon the things that they do in the lead up to exams, as opposed to any personal traits such as intelligence or talent that cannot be changed.
Outcomes

The aim of this exercise is get students questioning their own limitations. If students question the importance of intelligence and natural talent, they are more likely to experiment with new techniques that may help them improve. The key to improving results is to start with the belief that it actually is possible to do better!
Example 1 – Mind-Set Workbook

Start with this simple quiz

You have a certain amount of intelligence and that will determine how successful you will be at school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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Your intelligence is something that you can’t change very much.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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You can learn new things but you can’t really change your basic intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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Add up the numbers that correspond with your answer.

How did you go?

1 + 2 + 3 = 6

What does my score mean?

3 – 6

Fixed

In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that’s that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb.

7 – 12

Partially Fixed

Both mindsets are widely held. Generally we find about 40% of people, students and adults, endorse the growth mindset, 40% the fixed and the remainder are in the middle – they can’t make up their minds.

13 – 18

Growth

In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don’t necessarily think everyone’s the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.

What is the point of all this?

Dr Carol Dweck of Stanford University, one of the world’s leading experts on student performance has found that the number 1 predictor for how well a student performs over a number of years is not IQ, or talent, but your mindset.

Dweck found that students whose grades tended to go up over a number of years, had a certain set of beliefs that she referred to as a “growth mindset”. On the other hand, Dweck found that students whose grades tended to remain static or even decrease had a set of beliefs that she referred to as a “fixed mindset”.

Don’t worry if it looks like you have a fixed mindset

The good news is that it can be changed!

Answer these questions:

What do you think is the highest OP/ATAR you could get right now?

80

Why do you believe that this is the highest result you could get?

For example, why don’t you believe that you could beat this result?

I find it really hard to get and stay motivated. I struggle with writing essays and English is obviously a really important subject. I feel like when I work harder I still get the same results. Even if I put more time in to the work, I don’t really improve. I know a bunch of people who are smarter than me, so I don’t really think I’ll ever be able to beat those people.
Example 1 – Mind-Set Workbook (Continued)

Do you think you prepare and study the same way for exams and assignments as the students who are top of the class?  
Yes  No

Do you think you spend as much time preparing or studying for exams and assignments as the top students in your class?  
Yes  No

Do you always prepare the same way for an exam?  
Yes  No

Have you spent time trying to correct your past mistakes?  
Yes  No

We would normally guess that your answers to these questions were No, No, Yes, Yes. In this case, the reason that you might not have done so well is not because you lack intelligence, but rather because there is something wrong with the way you work through the subject.

In other words, maybe it isn’t you, maybe it is just your approach. The good thing is that your approach can easily be changed. Change your approach and you almost certainly will change your results.

Can you achieve higher than the OP/ATAR you wrote at the beginning?  
The answer is clearly YES  
But how do we do it?

Write down 10 things you could do right now to lift your grades

- Create a study timetable
- Prepare for exams earlier
- Set goals
- Use mind maps
- Use more effectively

- Regularly complete my homework
- More practice questions
- Use an assessment planner
- Create a study group
- Talk to my teachers

If you were to make the 10 changes listed above do you think you could achieve higher grades?  
YES  NO
Activity 2 – Set Your Goal

Initial class time required: 30 – 40 minutes
Follow-up time: 15 minutes (start of each term)
Suitable subjects: All
Resources required: “Goal Setting” Workbook
When: Week 4

Research Background

The key to sustaining motivation is to have a clearly defined goal. Elevate’s research shows that majority of top students had a compelling goal that they were working towards. Whilst these goals varied from student to student, the goals tended to have two universal commonalities: firstly they were very precise, specifying an exact ATAR as opposed to more general statements such as aiming to “do well” or get in the “eighties”. Secondly, the goals top students set tended to be written down.

Whilst goal setting is often covered in a school’s study skills programmes, most goal-setting programmes fail to actually get to the emotional core of why a student actually sets a goal in the first place. This module is designed in order to take students beyond simply “identifying a target” to instead identifying a compelling, emotional reason to work across the year.

Lesson 1 – Building Your Goal

The best place to start goal-setting is with the “macro-goal” or ultimate end point and then work backwards, identifying the key action steps for getting to the goal, and the emotional core for setting the goal in the first place.

On page # you will find a 3 page work book or flow chart that gets students on this path. Whilst this is an entirely individual task, there are a few trickier steps that are likely to prompt questions. As such, here is a breakdown of the elements of the work book.

1. What do you want to do after high school?
   If students have a few options they are considering, and are yet to make a decision, they should write them all down. If they have absolutely no idea start by identifying the student’s interests or passions. For example, if a student is passionate about music you may begin to examine different careers in the music industry, in order to identify potential jobs that may be of interest to a student. From there you can reverse engineer your way back to a university course, and ATAR.
**Do I need an ATAR/OP?**

If YES – students need to know what that ATAR is and write it down. If there are other requirements such as portfolio, they can also write this down.

If NO – students need to create their own personal reasons for completing Year 12. For example, finishing Year 12 will demonstrate your commitment and your ability to work in a disciplined fashion, qualities that any employer would value and which may help you get a job when you finish.

2. **Why am I working towards this goal?**
   It sounds obvious, but the more we want a goal, the more work we are likely to put into it and the more motivated we are likely to be. Therefore we need students to develop their own reasons for working toward this goal. For example, if you have picked Veterinary Science as your goal, you might list reasons such as: love animals, want to live on a farm, want to work with race-horses etc.

3. **What are you willing to give up to get the goal?**
   A real goal will represent some kind of challenge. If the goal can be achieved without much effort, it won’t be particularly inspiring or motivating. Most goals involve some level of sacrifice, and it is worth students considering what to give up in pursuit of their goals. Whilst students obviously don’t need to sacrifice their entire lives, having some idea of what they commit to giving up (2 hours of study an evening, not watching every show on TV, or reducing time on Facebook) allows them to mentally adjust to the journey ahead.

4. **What obstacles am I likely to face?**
   All good goals have their challenges and obstacles, things that will stop the student achieving the goal straight away. To overcome these challenges, it is a lot easier if students have identified some of the challenges in advance. Even better, we can identify some of the solutions in advance as well, so that they can avoid the problem altogether or have a quick solution prepared and ready to go.

5. **Create your support team**
   Most top students have a support team behind them who help them across the year, especially when they face challenges. For example, if a student isn’t great at Maths, they might put a friend who is good at Maths into the team, or a Maths teacher, or a tutor.

6. **What if don’t get my first option?**
   Most worthwhile goals involve a challenge or a stretch, which means that it is never certain that the goal will be achieved. Obviously, we want to try and get the goal first time around, but missing out isn’t the end of the world. Students who have an alternative way to work to the goal, will not put all of their eggs in one basketball, thereby reducing their stress and anxiety across the year. As such, students should write down alternative paths to the goal. They may also may wish to speak to the Careers Advisor to build out this step.

7. **Make the goal real**
   One of the core problems with goal-setting is that can often feel abstract. The more real a student can make the goal, the more emotional connection they will have. In this section students are asked to find photos, or visual representations of their goal and stick these into their booklets.
The work sheet is intuitive, but will require support from teaching staff. It could also help to open the floor up at certain sections to facilitate conversation. Ultimately, every student should complete this exercise honestly and earnestly. This will help to lay the foundations for their motivation over the rest of the year!
Example 1 – Goal Setting Workbook

Goal Setting - Workbook

What do I want to do after high school?

Option 1: Commerce at Melbourne University
Option 2: Commerce at UQ
Option 3: Business at Monash

Do I need an ATAR/OP?

YES

NO

ATAR/OP: 95 (op 3)

Other Requirements:

How will Year 12 help me achieve my goal?

Why am I working towards this goal?

Economics is my favourite subject. I did work experience at the bank. My parents are both in finance. I want to run my own business one day.

What am I willing to give up to achieve my goal?

Late night TV
Some shifts at work
Instagram
1/2 hour on Facebook
Going to the movies
Some parties
Playing computer games

What is really important to me?

Time with friends
Playing piano
Playing soccer
Modern family
Exercise

What obstacles am I likely to face?

1. Lacking motivation
2. Receiving poor results
3. No time to study
4. Don’t like maths
5. Feeling overwhelmed

Problem| Solution
---|---
UNI open days| Talk to careers advisor
Speak to teacher| Do practice questions
Make study timetable| Cut Facebook use
Work with friends| Create incentives
Create a plan| Break down tasks

Create your support team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Member</th>
<th>Role</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIKE</td>
<td>Good at Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAD / MUM</td>
<td>Very good friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JESS</td>
<td>Proof-read essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRUCE</td>
<td>Keep me motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR JOHNSTON</td>
<td>Sister - just finished Year 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTOR GROUP TEACHER</td>
<td>Tutor group teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHES MATHS / PHYSICS</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What if I don’t get my first option?

DIFFERENT UNI
Diploma of Business Bachelor of Arts

MAKE THE GOAL REAL
Follow Up Lessons

It is important that students revisit their goals regularly. There are a few ways to follow up on this exercise.

Regular communication – once the goal has been set, conversations now can revolve around the goal. That is, negative or disciplinary conversations can now relate to stumbling blocks in achieving the goal. I.e. not completing your assessment will make it harder to get into university. This is a basic example, but it forces the student to draw links between study and homework and what they are striving towards.

Re-visiting the exercise – this process is naturally Year 12 focused, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be done as early as Year 10. Even if students drastically change their goals over the years, those goals set in Year 10 help establish the connection that secondary school is a path that leads to a destination, not just something they “have to do”. As such, re-visit the full goal setting exercise at the start of a new semester or school year. In the shorter term, re-visit the goals at the start of the term. That provides a reminder of what the term brings and what they are working towards.

Outcomes

The purpose of this exercise is two-fold. Firstly, students have made a written commitment to their goal which develops a clear level of accountability.

Secondly, students now have a constant motivator. By sticking the pages of this work book on their wall at home or having them somewhere that can be easily re-visited, students will be far more likely to self-motivate across the year.