



# VCE essentials of effective study

*Activities and Teachers Notes*

**StudySmart**

# Teachers Notes

Although some students will have commenced VCE subjects in year 10, year 11 marks the beginning of the final stage of their secondary school study in its most intense form. Year 11, therefore, is a very important year. Nevertheless, it is also one of the most difficult years as students work towards what can seem like a very distant goal. It is the time to build and consolidate skills but it is also a time when students can feel distracted and unsure of their purpose and direction. One of the reasons for this might be that students do not realise how valuable this year can be. They will certainly understand the value of studying material for tests and exams, but much more can be gained from deliberately focusing on what they can learn about themselves and their subjects as they enter the last phase of their secondary schooling.

*VCE essentials of effective study* is designed to encourage students to see the value of establishing effective, efficient and sustainable study techniques. Students are asked to reflect on the nature of 'study' and the effectiveness of their current strategies as they take control of and develop an independent approach to their own learning.

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This module will help students focus on

- reviewing current study strategies
  - developing a study timetable
  - identifying a preferred learning style
  - investigating strategies for success
  - recognising and using available support
- .....

In support of these activities, the TalkAboutUni website offers access to material for other modules in the suite of sessions: visit <http://talkaboutuni.unimelb.edu.au/> or call 03) 83440930 / 49244 for more information.

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
<b>ONE</b>	15-20 mins	<p>ACTIVITY ONE</p> <p><b>Do you study effectively?</b> This activity has three sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the left-hand side of the page lists eleven questions relating to individual study behaviour. Students are asked to circle True or False for each of these</li> <li>• the right-hand side of the page provides an <b>Answer Key</b> with suggestions of ways in which to address problem areas</li> <li>• the final box under the heading <b>Scoring</b> translates total scores and offers advice on improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assess honestly individual attitudes and behaviour in relation to personal study habits</li> <li>• To lay the groundwork for introducing strategies to deal with these</li> <li>• To share results with others in order to consider alternative approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (developing self-awareness and self-evaluation)</li> <li>• Recognition of personal responsibility in the learning process</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills (working as part of a team)</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>1 Activity Sheet</p>
<b>TWO</b>	20-30 mins	<p>ACTIVITY TWO</p> <p><b>Chaos to Control</b> This activity has three components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why? - recognising the value of organisation</li> <li>• Where? - identifying the contribution made to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the ways in which physical surroundings can promote effective and efficient study</li> <li>• To explore personal characteristics that affect time management</li> <li>• To discuss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (developing self-awareness and self-evaluation)</li> <li>• Analytical skills (sorting personal information and applying it to other purposes)</li> <li>• Interpersonal</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>2 Activity Sheets</p>

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
		<p>successful study by controllable factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When? – investigating individual concentration times and considering how this knowledge could contribute to efficient study</li> </ul>	<p>ways in which adjustments might improve outcomes</p>	<p>skills (working as part of a team/class to reach a solution for mutual benefit)</p>	
<b>THREE</b>	15 mins	<p><b>ACTIVITY THREE</b></p> <p><b>The year that you ...</b> This activity asks students to identify the pursuits with which they fill their days. There are 3 components to this activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying the four things that are most important parts in their lives (school must be one of these) – list in order of importance</li> <li>• identifying responsibilities or roles taken—including being at school and all in entails considering what would make years 11 and 12 satisfying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognise the complexity of life and identify the important components and priorities</li> <li>• To recognise the part various responsibilities play in life</li> <li>• To reflect on goals and desired outcomes for the final two years of school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (reviewing individual priorities)</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills (class discussion)</li> <li>• Reflection skills (considering a possible mismatch between ultimate goals and current attitudes and time management)</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>1 Activity Sheet</p>

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
<b>FOUR</b>	15-20 ins	<p><b>ACTIVITY FOUR</b></p> <p><b>Managing your time</b> Drawing on the information gained about personal concentration times and the way time is spent during the week, this activity asks students to prepare a sample weekly study timetable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shade in the time at school,</li> <li>• Shade in part-time work, other activities, obligations</li> <li>• Find 15 hours of time for study</li> <li>• A further task might be to suggest the sort of task according to concentration times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a visual representation of what the week comprises</li> <li>• To recognise that 15 hours of study-related activities is achievable leaving time for other things</li> <li>• To encourage students to recognise that planning on paper can instil a sense of control and remove some of the stress involved in a busy workload</li> <li>• Finally to see the value of some study (something is always better than nothing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal skills (considering individual workloads and study time preferences)</li> <li>• Analytical skills (considering what kind of study-related tasks would be appropriate at different times of the day)</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>1 Activity Sheet</p>
<b>FIVE</b>	20-30 mins	<p><b>ACTIVITY FIVE</b></p> <p><b>Planning to study effectively</b> This activity is divided into three sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify areas for improvement</li> <li>• select four of the most pressing and suggest ways to improve</li> <li>• review achievements in a month's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the aspects of personal management that might be a barriers to success</li> <li>• To recognise that it is not enough to simply recognise the need to improve. Deciding HOW to go about it is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (an honest appraisal of personal organisation)</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills (small group discussion to decide on strategies to address areas in need of improvement)</li> <li>• Analytical skills (to review and</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>2 Activity Sheets</p>

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
		time	even more valuable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review how strategies have worked after a trial period of a month</li> <li>To re-think strategies that are not working</li> </ul>	address the situation a month later)	
<b>SIX</b>	20-30 mins	<b>How do you learn best?</b>  There are two pages to this activity. Both of these focus on our individuality as learners. We all have preferences when it comes to learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions 1-5 ask students to nominate their study preferences for time and place</li> <li>Question 6 asks them to nominate how often they work in their preferred environment</li> <li>Question 7 asks them to consider ways that their time could be made more productive through initiating simple changes.</li> </ul> Page 2 encourages students to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To focus on individual ways of working</li> <li>To assess whether the current measures are working or whether a change could be introduced</li> <li>To identify preferred learning styles and consider how this knowledge might be used to improve success rates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intrapersonal skills (assessment of personal habits and preferences)</li> <li>Interpersonal skills (group discussion to discover what works for others and possibly consider other options to try)</li> </ul>	1 page notes  2 Activity Sheets

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
		explore their preferred learning style and to consider ways in which they could work to take advantage of this.			
<b>SEVEN</b>	10-15 mins	<p><b>Piecing it together</b> This activity asks students to focus on the resources available to support them at school, at home and in the wider family and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next to the resource person suggest ways in which this person could provide assistance</li> <li>• Plan to pass this information on to the selected resource person</li> <li>• Groups formulate personal and group strategies for the tough times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the sense of loneliness that can accompany study in the later years of school</li> <li>• To reassure students that there are support mechanisms available in all aspects of life</li> <li>• To encourage students to consider ways in which they could ask for support</li> <li>• To develop a plan for personal support as well as for individual study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (reflecting on the support team already in place and how to use them)</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills (sharing ideas of ways to lead a balanced and supported life)</li> <li>• Communication skills (so that those in a support role are given positive suggestions about the help they could provide)</li> </ul>	<p>1 page notes</p> <p>1 Activity Sheet</p>
<b>EIGHT</b>	15-30 mins	<p><b>Notes Page</b> A very simple 'reflective' exercise to engage student thinking about themselves and their study habits.</p> <p>a) This activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To answer a range of questions concerning students' understanding of the year and of themselves.</li> <li>• To develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrapersonal skills (developing self-awareness and self-evaluation)</li> <li>• Analytical skills</li> <li>• Problem solving skills</li> </ul>	<p>1 page of notes</p> <p>2 Activity pages</p>

Activity Number	Timing (this will vary for all activities according to class and time available)	Pupil Activity Sheets	Objectives	Outcomes	Teachers Notes and Activity Sheets
		<p>could be conducted after students have finished all other activities as an assessment and reinforcement of what they have gained.</p> <p>b) The activity could be administered in a pre-test/post-test arrangement; before starting the activities to raise awareness and at the end of the activities to assess how awareness has changed.</p> <p>Whilst this activity asks each student to consider their individual responses to these questions, it would also be appropriate for students to work in small groups as a final activity to share their ideas and responses in order to broaden the possibilities they see for themselves.</p>	<p>strategies for future action in response to a series of questions drawn from their individual responses to questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (To develop further discussion and recall of the outcomes from activities in this module).</li> </ul>	<p>(responding to open questions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward thinking: using current strengths to think about future goals</li> </ul>	

## ACTIVITY ONE:

### Do you study effectively?

**AIM:** To encourage students to consider their study habits and attitudes and to honestly assess the areas that are working well and others where improvements could be made.

**OBJECTIVES:** To work individually and with a partner or small group to share strategies and develop new ones to improve study skills. To raise awareness of attitudes that might stand in the way of successful outcomes.

**TIMING:** 15-20 minutes\*

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheet

**NOTES:** This activity asks students to consider their own study habits and the success or otherwise of their chosen strategies. The format is 'magazine' style in order to encourage students to talk about something with serious implications in a less formal way. If students feel that their responses to various questions might differ according to the subjects they are studying (or the time of day, the class cohort, the topic, the teacher), they could circle across both answers and award themselves a half mark. Valuable group discussion can be undertaken into why such inconsistencies occur and what can be done to make approaching less palatable subjects/topics easier.

When students have completed the left-hand side of the page, they calculate their score from the **Answer Key** on the right-hand side of the page. (As a side issue, students could be asked which side of the page they found easier to read. Asking them to consider the effect font size and the density of the text have on their willingness to involve themselves in the content can also lead to some revelatory extended discussions).

When scoring is complete, ask students to consider what they need to improve and how they could go about doing it.

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\* The timing given for all of the activities is only a guide. You may want to do some of these in great detail and ask students to even do some research in order to complete them. Alternatively, you might prefer to do just one or two segments from them and complete them very quickly as part of other activities.

# Activity One: Do you study effectively?

Answer the following true/false questions to discover how well prepared you are to study effectively.

a) I tend to leave homework and assignments until the night before they're due. T / F

b) I try to study but often feel that I'm not getting anywhere. T / F

c) I use a term planner and detailed weekly diary. T / F

d) I will often make a few phone calls or check my email before starting a study session. T / F

e) I don't get much study done because I find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time. T / F

f) My notes are organised in folders and my work-space is usually tidy. T / F

g) I have trouble knowing where to start on big assignments or essays and can feel overwhelmed. T / F

h) If friends drop around or ring me up that's usually the end of study for the night. T / F

i) I've chosen subjects that I'm interested in. T / F

j) I have a lot of other commitments and just don't get much time for study. T / F

k) I know there's a lot of work to do this year but I feel confident that I'll manage to stay on top of it all. T / F

## Answer Key

a) If True – avoid the stress by working on time management. Put all deadlines on a term planner, make a study timetable and stick to it.

If False – excellent. Give yourself 1 point.

b) If True – you will improve your sense of achievement if you give yourself specific and measurable targets for each 30-40 minutes of study time.

If False – well done. Give yourself 1 point.

c) If True – excellent. Give yourself 1 point.

If False – you will find it much easier to juggle all the demands on your time this year if you use these time-management tools.

d) If True – you're procrastinating! Keep these activities as rewards after completion of study tasks.

If False – well done. Give yourself 1 point.

e) If True – this is a poor excuse. If you work best in short bursts you just need to timetable lots of short study sessions.

If false – lucky you. Give yourself 1 point.

f) If True – well done. Give yourself 1 point.

If False – organising your work-space and materials could make a big difference this year.

g) If True – seek advice from your teachers and practise breaking big projects down into smaller, achievable tasks. Remember that planning is an important stage of all large projects.

If False – your planning skills are terrific. 1 point.

h) If True – who is running your life? Make social arrangements that you can look forward to as a reward after study sessions and discourage interruptions.

If False – well done. 1 point for will-power.

i) If True – excellent. This will make it easier to study and engage with the topics. Give yourself 1 point.

If False – you'll need to work at maintaining motivation this year. Set up a reward system for yourself and join a study group if possible.

j) If True – you need to allow about 15 hours a week for private study this year which means you may need to reconsider how important those other commitments are. Time management will be the key to a successful year.

If False – excellent. Give yourself 1 point.

k) If True – well done. A positive attitude is a great asset. 1 point.

If False – talk with your teachers or parents about time management and effective study techniques NOW.

## Scoring:

9+ = Fantastic. You're well prepared for study success. 6-8 = Well done. There are a few extra things you could do to make the most of your study time but you're pretty well organised. 3-5 = Improving your study preparation and management skills will make a big difference to how you feel about your study this year and how effectively you use your study time. 0-2 = Time to put some serious thought into study preparation, time management and planning your work. Talk with your teachers today. You *can* do it!

## ACTIVITY TWO:

### Chaos to Control

**AIM:** To encourage students to recognise the importance of basic organisation of study space and time in successful outcomes. To empower students with a sense of control over their academic world.

**OBJECTIVES:** To consider individual preferences for location and time when studying and to recognise the impact that adjustments in these areas could have on effectiveness and efficiency. To share ideas and strategies in order to overcome some of the barriers to success.

**TIMING:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheets

**NOTES:** This activity asks students to reflect on how very simple adjustments to their study arrangements could have positive impacts on outcomes. The activity suggests that the more students know about themselves and their behaviour, the more empowered they are to take control and work smarter not harder.

Ask students what they believe 'being organised' in their study habits means. Consider some advantages that might arise if organisational strategies are put in place. (How might their current practices be operating as barriers to success?)

In the two columns headed 'Where do you study', ask students to nominate their preferred/habitual location for doing study-related activities. Students can tick as many as are applicable. The third column lists the many activities that might be part of individual preparation in senior years. In the fourth column, students are asked to nominate an appropriate location for doing that task. Students share their personal preferences with others and consider making adjustments of their own.<sup>1</sup>

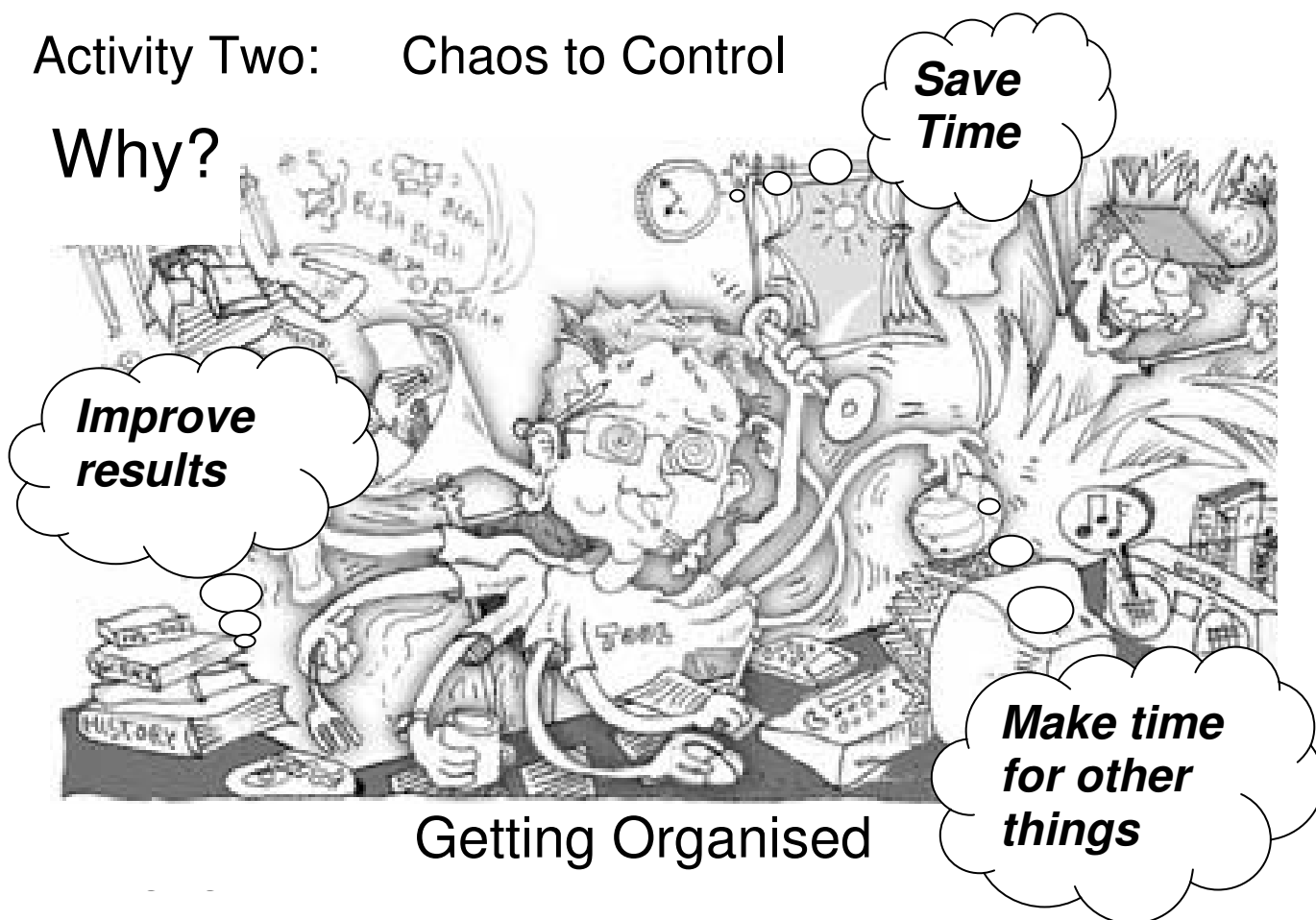
On page 2 of the Activity, students are asked about their concentration capacity. If they are not aware of the times when they are at their sharpest, they could keep a record for a few days and then fill in the graph. Students should be able to apply the pattern of their concentration to the way their day is constructed. Perhaps they need to vary times of eating. Perhaps they need to go to bed a little earlier and get up a little earlier in order not to miss important parts of the first classes of the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Varying order of subjects, length of study time and location can all increase one's concentration and interest in the subject under consideration.

## Activity Two: Chaos to Control

### Why?



Published in *The Student Age* (SAGE)

## Getting Organised

Where do you study?

(Tick as many as applicable)

Does your study location and style vary?

(Which location might best suit each of the 'study' components listed below?)

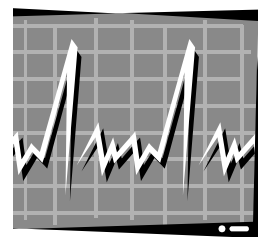
Place/environment ✓	What is 'study'?	Where? (Remember variety helps concentration)
Private room	Homework	
Sitting at a desk	Sorting/organising notes	
Lying on floor/bed	Reading newspapers or chapters from books	
Kitchen/dining-room table	Assignments	
Shared space	Doing research	
In front of television	Seeing a teacher	
Music playing	Thinking	
Library	Revision/practising tasks	
Friend's house	Joining a study group	
At school	Exam preparation	
Alone	Solving problems	
In a group	Photocopying notes	
Train/bus/tram	Proofreading	
Other		

## Activity Two (continued)

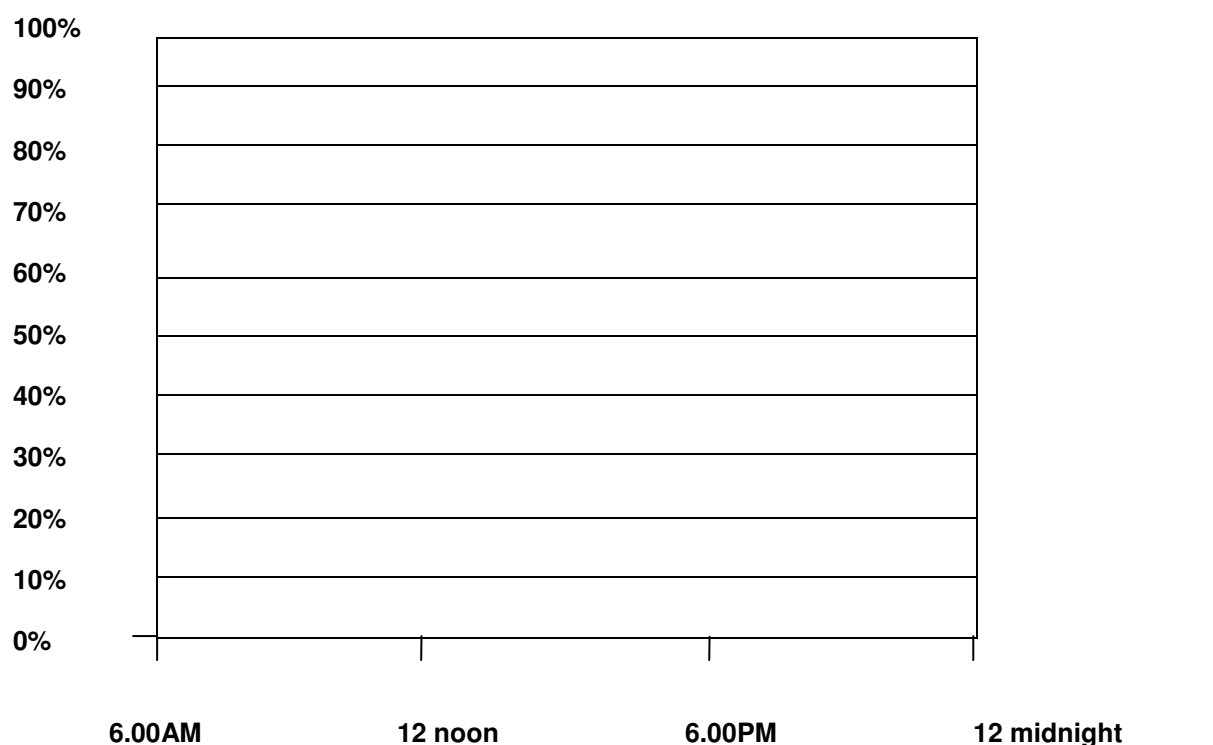


## When?

- When you are fresh and alert
- When you are free from distractions
- In short stints or longer
- Taking breaks when you need to
- Giving each subject equal time
- **3** hours per day (min) **AT LEAST 5** times per week



Check your concentration capacity



- When do you concentrate best? (There may be more than one peak during the day).
- When is your concentration at its worst? (There may be more than one trough during the day).
- Plot the graph, and then mark in when you sleep and eat.

How could you make use of this information to maximise study efficiency: to save time and effort?

## ACTIVITY THREE:

The year that you ...

**AIM:** To encourage students to recognise that life is made up of multiple components that can be organised and prioritised to achieve the best outcomes.

**OBJECTIVES:** To recognise the complexity of life and identify the important components and priorities that make up the weeks. To reflect on responsibilities and obligations that are as much a part of daily life as the activities that one chooses to do. To recognise what would make the VCE years successful.

**TIMING:** 10-15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheet

**NOTES:** This activity asks students to identify the people and pursuits with which they fill their days. In the first box, students are asked to identify the four parts of their lives that are most important to them at the moment. Because school takes up a great proportion of their time, school and things associated with school such as homework etc must be one of the four. It need not, however, be number 1. This section should be completed first by each individual/ Later students could work together in small groups and as part of a roundtable discussion with the class in order to direct thoughts to goals and priorities.

In the second box, students add any responsibilities that they might have at home, at school or in the wider community. (Some students may have nothing to fill in here, so it would be useful to ask them what takes up their time. This is a good opportunity to talk about the role of the mobile phone and the amount of sleep young people need. Ask how many turn their phones off at night and when they study).

The final task on this page asks students to imagine that they have reached the end of year 12 and that it has been a successful journey. Individually students consider what success means to them in this context. They should try to be as specific as possible, although 'finishing school' could be a legitimate response and lead to some discussion.

# Activity Three: The year that you ...

What does this year look like for you? What are the main things going on?  
Complete the questions below to create a snapshot of your year.

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1. Think about all the things in your life: friends, family, schoolwork, pets, sport, music, a part-time job and so on. Identify the 4 parts of your life that are most important to you at the moment.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF MY LIFE	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.

2. List your main responsibilities/roles this year – things you have to do or have volunteered to do.

AT HOME <i>(Eg. babysit, household chores, visit grandma)</i>	1.
	2.
AT SCHOOL <i>(Eg. play in netball team, act in school play, write for the magazine)</i>	1. VCE – attend classes, complete homework and assignments, study for SACs and exams etc.
	2.
	3.
IN THE COMMUNITY <i>(Eg. part-time job, coach team)</i>	1.
	2.

3. Imagine it is the end of the year already. You are reflecting on what a fantastic year it has been for you – everything you hoped for has worked out. Describe the highlights – what has been so satisfying?

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# ACTIVITY FOUR:

## Managing your time

**AIM:** To encourage students to become organised and in control of their study and the time spent on school work through the creation of a weekly study timetable.

**OBJECTIVES:** To create a visual representation of what the week comprises. To recognise that 15 hours of study-related activities is achievable leaving time for other things. To encourage students to recognise that planning on paper can instil a sense of control and remove some of the stress involved in a busy workload.

**TIMING:** 15-20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheet

**NOTES:** Many students feel overwhelmed by the quantity of work they are faced with daily and the small amount of time available to complete it. Organising a timetable might seem time consuming, but acknowledging how time is spent and putting this down on paper can reduce anxiety and lead to a more realistic assessment of the situation.

This activity builds on the individual knowledge gained in the previous two activities. 'Study' is made up of a number of components, some of which can be done at school or in a less concentrated fashion, and some that require dedicated time and space. Using information about concentration levels and lifestyle components and the blank weekly timetable sheet, students shade in their time at school, including the journey to and from and any after-school activities. Leave unshaded any free periods during the school day.

Students then shade in time spent on things like part-time work, activities such as sport, music and various obligations and/or family commitments and other leisure activities.

The final, and most important step, is for students to find a minimum 15 hours for study. This should include time at school and should take into consideration their optimum concentration times. A further task might be to earmark what sort of task could be accomplished at different times.

**NB:** If it seems impossible to find time for 15 hours of study, this is not a reason to do none at all. Even an hour or two might be a 200% improvement on what has been achieved in the past. It is also important to realise that if a student were to commit to 15 hours of study time from day one of a year and was systematic in their approach, there might not need to be very much more even at busy times of the year.

# Activity Four: Managing your time

Week beginning \_\_\_\_\_

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							
9pm							

## WEEKLY STUDY TASKS:

- Revise class notes
- Read newspapers
- Discuss texts/problems with friends
- Plan next week's study

## ASSIGNMENTS DUE THIS WEEK:

## SPECIAL EVENTS:

## NOTES:

# ACTIVITY FIVE:

## Planning to study effectively

**AIM:** To encourage students to recognise that study is not just about the material to be learned but about the way one manages the process. To promote honest self-appraisal and raise awareness of the barriers that might hinder success. To develop strategies for improvement and to review these in order to measure success and adjust where necessary.

**OBJECTIVES:** To consider aspects of personal management and assess commitment to these aspects. To recognise that it is not enough to simply identify areas for improvement. Deciding how to implement improvement is even more valuable. To review how strategies have worked after a trial period of a month. To re-think strategies that are not working.

**TIMING:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheets

**NOTES:** All students recognise the need to absorb details from the content of their subjects in order to apply these to the requirements of assessment tasks including exams. Many, however, do not realise that 'study' is about much more. Mismanaging workload, tasks and time, to say nothing of losing motivation and focus, can have a far greater impact on the desired outcome, yet these are some of the easiest aspects to address. This activity raises awareness of the skills required to support successful preparation and revision of study materials as well encouraging students to reflect on their own habits and think about how to improve.

1. Identify what you need to improve  
Students tick the appropriate box indicating how well they manage the basic components underpinning efficient and effective study.
2. Plan to improve  
Students select four (4) areas that they believe are most in need of improvement. They then suggest steps they might take to address the issues. For instance, a student who feels their life is too busy for study, would be advised to use their diary, a yearly/term planner, and a weekly timetable sheet along with daily to-do lists. Group discussion could be particularly helpful here as students share their strategies and attempt to help each other.
3. Review you achievements  
Students commit to implementing some of their suggested improvements. One week later, the small group meets to assess any improvements made. At the end of one month, students meet again to review their individual success. If changes are not noted or are not significant, the group might discuss the reasons behind this and consider alternative approaches.

# Activity Five: Planning to study effectively

Are you prepared to study effectively? Complete the following activities to identify and improve areas of your study planning that may have been neglected.

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## 1. Identify what you need to improve

The following checklist will help you to identify the aspects of your study planning that need improvement.

*Rate how well you are doing on each item in the following areas.*

The why, where, when, what and how of effective study	How well do I do this?			
	0 not at all	1 sometimes	2 often	3 always
<b>Why – motivation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You know why you are studying this year and what you hope to achieve</li> <li>You are prepared to work hard in order to do well in your studies</li> <li>You are interested in your subjects and feel you have chosen ones that suit you</li> </ul>				
<b>Where – your workstation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>study space is well organised: notes are in folders, necessary books and materials are at hand</li> <li>chair is comfortable, even after several hours</li> <li>distractions and noise are minimal</li> </ul>				
<b>When – time management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>semester/term planner and detailed weekly timetable current and complete</li> <li>best concentration times identified and utilized</li> <li>adequate study time allocated (at least 15 hrs per week)</li> </ul>				
<b>What – workload management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tasks are prioritised: most important and/or most difficult done first</li> <li>equal amounts of time are allocated to each subject</li> <li>time is allocated each week to revision of notes and exam/assessment preparation</li> </ul>				
<b>How – task management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tasks and assignments broken down into manageable sections</li> <li>targets set for each 30 minutes of study</li> <li>rewards for completion of targets identified</li> </ul>				

## Activity Five: Planning to study effectively (cont'd)

### 2. Plan to improve

- In the left hand column below, list the 4 points you identified as needing most improvement.
- Brainstorm strategies – what can you do that will make a difference? If you have time, discuss and exchange ideas with classmates. Try to develop at least 2 strategies for each item.
- In the right hand column, record what you intend to do.

<b>What I need to improve:</b>	<b>How I am going to improve:</b>
1.	1. 2.
2.	1. 2.
3.	1. 2.
4.	1. 2.

### 3. Review your achievements

One week and one month from today, reflect on how much progress you have made by putting the above strategies in place. If necessary, revise your strategies.

<b>What I have tried to improve</b>	<b>One week review: amount of improvement</b>				<b>One month review: amount of improvement</b>			
	<b>0 none</b>	<b>1 a bit</b>	<b>2 a lot</b>	<b>3 major</b>	<b>0 none</b>	<b>1 a bit</b>	<b>2 a lot</b>	<b>3 major</b>
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								

# ACTIVITY SIX:

## How do you learn best?

**AIM:** To raise students' awareness of their current study habits and the possible choices that are open to them. To build on previous activities to consider the impact that logistical decisions might have on the work completed. To raise awareness of individual learning styles and consider ways in which these can be used to advantage.

**OBJECTIVES:** To focus on individual ways of working. To assess whether the current measures are working or whether a change could be introduced. To identify preferred learning styles and consider how this knowledge might be used to improve success rates.

**TIMING:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of 2 Activity Sheets

**NOTES:** Students have already considered the logistics of study in general ways in previous activities. This activity asks them to personalise this information even further by considering their actual habits and practices. If their preferred location or time is not covered in the suggestions they should add their own. Note that this is an excellent time to initiate discussion about the mobile phone and its impact on the time available for study. It is also worthwhile to discuss the amount of sleep needed by teenagers and how the electronic appurtenances to life can compromise this. (If the mobile is left on for its alarm capabilities, it might be time to purchase a clock).

When students have responded to questions 1-4, they should consider their 'ideal' study session. What would this look like (question 5) and how often do they achieve this (question 6)? Students might nominate different set-ups for different subjects or for different tasks. The main focus here is to recognise once again that study is not just about the material to be learned but about the way study is managed. Question 7 makes this link explicit.

Page 2 of the Activity provides descriptions of the seven most recognised learning style preferences or intelligences. It asks students to list the seven in order from the one that best represents them to the one least representative. In the final section, students are asked to read a number of helpful strategies and are asked to consider which of these would work best when considering their learning style preferences. Group discussion here could be useful as students share their own preferences and consider others' suggestions.

# Activity Six: How do you learn best?

Develop your understanding of how you learn best by answering the following questions. You may check more than one answer for each question.

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1. What sort of learning environment do you prefer?

- Quiet, with no interruptions
- Radio or music providing a background sound
- Working with other people around
- Mobile phone off

\* Do you turn your mobile phone off at night? Yes/No

2. Where do you work best?

- Library – either school or local
- At home. Specify (eg. At desk, kitchen table) \_\_\_\_\_
- At a friend's place
- At school, in class

3. What time of day do you work best?

- Early morning
- Mid-morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
- Late at night

4. What is your concentration like?

- Best after 'warming up' to the task for 20 minutes or more
- Good at first but start to get distracted after 30 to 45 minutes
- I'm most productive if I have 3 to 4 hours to do a whole project in one sitting
- I'm most productive if I vary the tasks and subjects I work on in a study session

5. Given your answers above, define your 'ideal' study session:

Location:  
Environment:  
Time of day:  
Length of session:  
Mix of tasks:

6. How many times per week do you work in your 'ideal' circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How can you change your working conditions to make your study time more productive?  
(Describe)

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# Activity Six: How do you learn best? (cont'd)

## Multiple Intelligences



### Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Those who prefer this learning style understand the underlying principles of some kind of causal system; enjoy working with numbers and abstract patterns.



### Visual/Spatial Intelligence

This intelligence relies on the sense of sight and being able to visualise an object. It includes the ability to create internal/mental images/pictures.



### Body/kinaesthetic Intelligence

This intelligence is related to physical movement and the knowing/wisdom of the body, including the brain's motor cortex which controls bodily motion.



### Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

This intelligence is based on the recognition of tonal patterns, including various environmental sounds, and on sensitivity to rhythm and beat.



### Intrapersonal Intelligence

This intelligence relates to inner states of being, self-reflection, metacognition and awareness of spiritual realities.

### Interpersonal Intelligence

This intelligence operates primarily through person-to-person relationships and communication.



### Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

This intelligence, which is related to words and language – written and spoken – dominates most Western educational systems.

1. What are your strongest intelligences? Order the 7 Ways of Knowing, above:

Best describes me	
Least describes me	

2. Give examples or evidence for your ranking.

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3. Given your strongest intelligences, which of the following will help you learn?

- Planning time to think quietly about the material I am studying
- Working in a study group, discussing ideas and problem solving
- Looking for patterns in information and thinking about practical applications
- Finding visual representations of ideas and information – graphs, diagrams, photos etc.
- Watching other people perform experiments, solve problems etc
- Doing, or imagining what it would feel like to perform, actions described in books
- Finding concrete examples of abstract concepts and complex procedures
- Explaining material to others and listening to their explanations
- Repetition: practising problem solving and essay writing; rehearsing for performances
- Writing summaries of class notes and readings

# ACTIVITY SEVEN

## Piecing it together

**AIM:** To recognise that there will be times when extra help is needed. To appreciate the advisability of having a strategy in place and knowing who to turn to. To consider practical ways in which nominated people could offer support and to communicate this to the 'team'.

**OBJECTIVES:** To reduce the sense of loneliness that can accompany study in the later years of school. To reassure students that there are support mechanisms available in all aspects of life. To encourage students to consider specific people they could ask for support. To develop a plan for personal assistance as well as for individual study.

**TIMING:** 10-15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of Activity Sheet

**NOTES:** In small groups, students discuss some of the challenges they might face as they approach the end of their studies. Together they consider the people who could support them during difficult times. There is a list of suggestions in the first column on the sheet. Some of these people might only have influence in one sphere – such as the part-time job, but others might have input into a number of areas eg. parents could drive students to their part-time job, or they could reduce the number of chores for the student to do at home.

Once students have nominated those whom they believe make up their support team, they need to brainstorm with their group examples of practical suggestions they could make. Generally family and friends want to be supportive but they don't always know how. Even very simple ideas can remove some of the pressure from the student and reinforce the message that everyone is on the same side. These can be written in the final three columns.

Working in a small group can help students recognise the importance of being part of a team of peers. A group of students with a common goal or goals and concern for the individuals within the group will provide the best outcomes for everybody.

## Activity Seven: Piecing it together



# Your Support Team

You do not have to go through the VCE alone. Indeed you should not.

Think of all those around you who could be of support if things become difficult as the year/s progresses. Whilst we tend to think that academic problems will be of paramount concern, we cannot afford to overlook other areas of our lives. What resources do you have and how will you use them.

In the boxes below, list those who will be part of your support team and consider ways in which you might ask them to help you.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Work</b>
Family		Eg: Providing quiet study area	
School Counsellor			
Year Level Co-ordinator			
Subject Teachers			
Friends			
Careers Counsellor	Eg: selecting subjects & courses		
Classmates			
Librarian			
Your boss			
Other			

# ACTIVITY EIGHT:

## Notes page

- AIM:** To reflect on the components and expectations of year 11. To develop self-awareness in the lead up to the final years of secondary schooling.
- OBJECTIVES:** To respond to questions related to each activity in the module. To consider ways in which students might use their personal insights to develop individual plans for making the most of year 10.
- TIMING:** 15-20 minutes
- MATERIALS:** 1 copy per student of the Notes Pages
- NOTES:** There are 3 main sections to these pages with a series of questions attached to each one. Depending on whether this activity is used as an introduction or after all the others have been completed, students could work individually, in pairs or in a group.
- Students consider each question and place a tick or a cross in the box beside it. If it is something they do sometimes, they might like to consider what makes the difference to their behaviour. For instance, if they take notes for some classes but not for others, they might like to consider whether that is about the subject, the class or maybe even the people they go to class with (or without). This knowledge could be used to help students identify ways in which they can maximise their opportunities for successful times at school.
- At the end of the page, a series of 'Keys to Success' is included. These would provide a useful jumping off point for further discussions focussed on student well-being.

# Activity Eight: Notes Page

## VCE ESSENTIALS OF EFFECTIVE STUDY

### 1. Getting organised to study effectively.

- Do I know what I want to achieve this year?
- Am I studying as effectively and systematically as I could?
- Does my study environment contribute to the effectiveness of my study time?
- Do I have a study timetable that reflects my optimum concentration times?
- Am I committed to allowing equal time for each of my subjects?

**How can I improve my study organisation in my VCE years?**

### 2. Improving Understanding.

- Do I have an overview of the elements and requirements of each of my subjects?
- Do I take useful, legible notes?
- Do I keep my notes well-organised and safe?
- Do I know how I learn and remember information best?
- Do I use study strategies that suit my learning style?

**How can I improve my general understanding and recall of subject material?**

## Activity Eight: Notes Page (cont'd)

### 3. Avoiding Study Fatigue.

- ❑ Do I maintain a range of activities?
- ❑ Have I set myself realistic goals for the year?
- ❑ Does my 'support team' know what I want them to do

**How can I avoid study fatigue whilst working to my potential and achieving my goals?**

### Keys to Success

- ❖ Maintain balance - keep up a range of activities
- ❖ Stay healthy - eat well, sleep well, laugh often
- ❖ Set achievable goals for yourself
- ❖ Focus on your achievements (in all areas)
- ❖ Make a study timetable and stick to it
- ❖ Set study targets and achieve them
- ❖ Reassess when necessary
- ❖ Remind yourself of the bigger picture: what do you want to achieve in the future?