Learning Skills

Student Name:

Many of you reading this article are involved in a sport or a creative activity such as music, art or drama. Can you imagine what your chances of success in these fields would be if you did not receive instruction on how to make changes and improvements to your performance? Sports people, musicians, writers, and actors are constantly looking at ways to make their performance better. Success in any of

these fields of activity rarely happens without making adjustments and changes to training if needed. Study is no different.

As a first step in training yourself to get better at studying, it is well worthwhile taking time out to look critically and honestly at the precise way you go about studying and rate your study performance as it now stands.



Many companies also realise the importance of this approach in business. The most successful companies and organisations spend a sizeable amount of their budget exploring ways that their workforce can be more efficient. This involves workers and managers working together and looking closely at how they go about their work. The improvement in 'work practice' that results brings benefits both to the business and to the staff.



What do you want?

The first step is to reflect on what you want to achieve in terms of your Leaving Cert. results. The goals you set should be realistic and attainable. At the same time they should be results that you would be proud to achieve. Students who have gone before you have said that writing down their goals helped them make their targets more real and easier to remember.

It is ok to change and adjust your goals, just don't abandon the process! Some students reported it was only after they set their targets for the first term, got back their scores from their teachers, and then readjusted targets for the following term that the importance of this exercise dawned on them.



Setting Targets

For the next available examination, write down what you want to achieve in the appropriate Target column for each subject. These are your target results for that period. Make sure that the target is achievable. Be realistic, take into account your abilities and past performance. At the same time your goals for each subject should reflect your potential. Your targets should be grades you would be proud to achieve.

When you get your results back from your teachers, write your scores under the Actual column for that term. Next, based on your performance to date, reset your targets for the next term. When you get your results, write them into the Actual column for that term, and so on. After each term, adjust your targets as you see fit, but never abandon the process of setting targets!

| | | October Grade | | Christmas Grade | | Summer | | | | |
|----------|-------|------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|---|--|--|
| | Level | | | | | Gra | ade | | | |
| Subjects | | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | 0.043 | | |
| English | | | | | | | | | | |
| Irish | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maths | | | | | | | | If you go to work on your | | |
| | | | | | | | | goals, your goals will go | | |
| | | | | | | | | to work on you. If you go to work on your plan, your | | |
| | | | | | | | | plan will go to work on | | |
| | | | | | | | | you. Whatever good things | | |
| | | | | | | | | we build end up building us. | | |
| | | | | | | | | Jim Rohn | | |

Exam Results 5th Year

Exam Results 6th Year

| | | October | | Christmas | | Mocks | | | Leaving Cert | | |
|----------|-------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|---|--------------|--------|--|
| | Level | Gra | ade | Grade | | Grade | | | Grade | | |
| Subjects | | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | | Target | Actual | |
| English | | | | | | | | Π | | | |
| Irish | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Study Behaviour

Look at your current study methods

Are your study habits and behaviours helping or hindering you achieving your target results? The Study Skills test that forms part of this Learning Skills guide should give you a good idea of your study performance. It is a way of getting you to look at what you do in detail when you are studying. The aim of this test is to get you to examine your 'work practice' as a student. The results of the test will rate your study performance in terms of how productive you are likely to be at the moment.

Effective studying

The Study Skills test and the accompanying handouts can help you distinguish between the things that you are doing that are helping you achieve your goals and those that may be holding you back. You will be alerted to aspects of your study behaviour that you may need to change.

Effective study is all about learning to learn as much as possible, in the shortest period of time, with the most

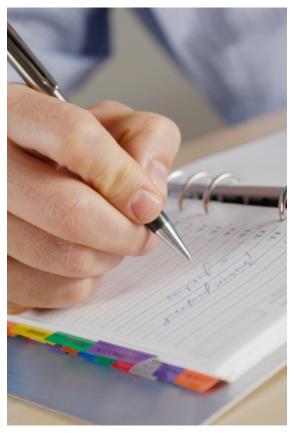
successful outcome. How you study is what matters. What exactly you do during your study time can be more important than the amount of time you give to your work.

Take the Study Skills Test online at www.careersportal.ie/studyskills

When you have completed the test, attach the results sheet to this document, or fill in your results below:

| Place of Study | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|----|------|-----------|-----------|
| Organisation | | | | | |
| Motivation and Goal Setting | | | | | |
| Reading Skills | | | | | |
| Note Taking Skills | | | | | |
| Revising and Exam Preparation | | | | | |
| Examination Performance | | | | | |
| | Poor | ΟΚ | Good | Very Good | Excellent |

Date:





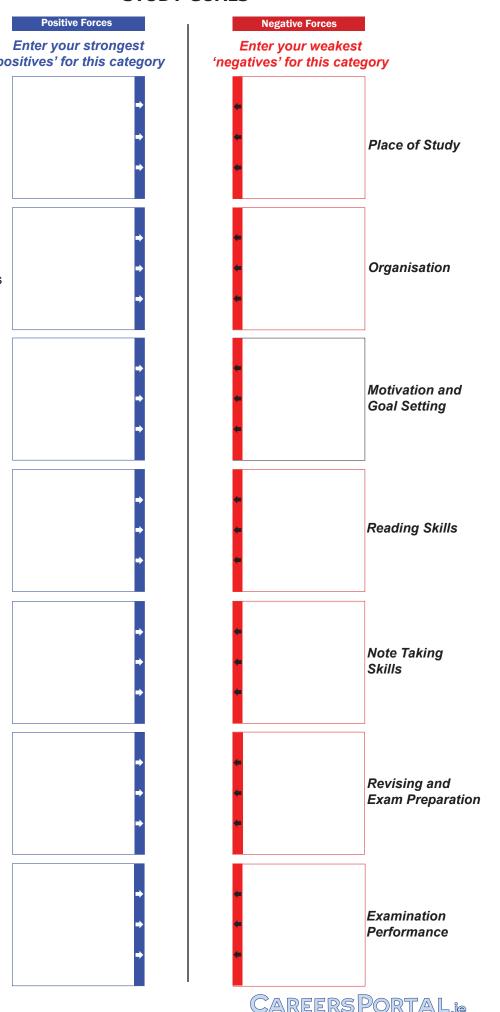
Optimising your Performance

'Force-field analysis' is a technique often used in the business world to 'positives' for this category analyse the forces acting for and against the success of a particular activity. You can apply this useful technique to your study and school life. Psychologists tell us that all our study habits and behaviours can be viewed in terms of mental forces moving you in the direction of your gaols or pulling you in the opposite direction. The exercise here will help you become more aware of the things that you are doing that are acting like forces in your school life that are resisting, preventing or constraining you reaching the target results you have set for yourself (see 'Target Results, previous page).

The study skills test has given you an good estimate of your study performance. We now invite you to read through the worksheets for each of the 7 study areas analysed by the study test you have taken (download at www.careersportal.ie/studyskills). Follow the instructions on these sheets to identify the main habits and behaviours that make up your performance as a student.

Next, place those specific study habits into the appropriate boxes (positive or negative) on this page. This will give you a good overall picture of your study performance 'force field'.

It is only by reducing, controlling or managing your negative behaviour patterns and/or finding ways of increasing and strengthening your positive behaviours that you will improve your study performance and increase the likelyhood of gaining the results you want to achieve.



STUDY GOALS