elevate education

Guiding Your Child ***To Excellence***

How to help your child to get motivated, manage stress and excel in exams

A Note To **Parents**

Let's start *with the important news: as a parent, you matter. In our 20+ years of research into student performance, students consistently report that their parents play a critical role and impact their results. Knowing this, the question is, what is the best way to support your child? How do you walk the fine line between supporting your child versus becoming the enemy? While all parents want to help their child succeed, knowing exactly how to do this can be downright confusing.*

This Guidebook is our attempt to help remove the confusion. Running workshops with students in over 3000 schools each year has given us the opportunity to deeply understand them. We have come to learn what motivates students, what helps them to focus, and how top students navigate the stresses and challenges of high school. In this Guidebook you will find a self-assessment tool that helps you identify your potential areas of concern, followed by a series of tips to help you overcome them. It also points you in the direction of other resources to help you guide your child to excellence.

Let's make this a conversation. We would love to hear your challenges and questions, and equally, your successes as a parent. Feel free to Tweet us at @elevateed, email us or view our parent blog and let us know about your experiences. We'll do our best to share and spread the inside secrets that have worked for families before.

Douglas Barton

Global Chairman

ELEVATE EDUCATION

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS AWARDS
2014 WINNER

How Engaged Is **Your Child?**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
Motivation					
My child is motivated to study/do homework	1	2	3	4	*Add Your Total*
My child sits down to work without my need to intervene, cajole or bribe them	1	2	3	4	
I have a firm understanding of how much work my child is set & how much they should be doing	1	2	3	4	
Technology					
I am confident that my child self-regulates their technology use to make time for school work	1	2	3	4	*Add Your Total*
My child's study environment is set up to be free from distractions such as phones, social media and other digital notifications	1	2	3	4	
My child refuses to study with TV or music on in the background	1	2	3	4	
Stress					
I have no concerns about my child's stress and anxiety levels	1	2	3	4	*Add Your Total*
My child keeps a healthy balance between school, study, extra curricular activities and social life	1	2	3	4	
My child's marks do not affect her/his self-esteem, confidence and/or motivation	1	2	3	4	

See Your Results

Tally Your Self **Assessment**

Your Totals	12 - 11	10 - 8	7 - 3
Motivation	*Keep this a secret! Your child is motivated! Don't brag, let alone discuss with other parents unless you want to be ostracised! Keep going, relax and just make sure they are taking regular breaks – see 'worry #6'.*	*Your child is an oscillator. The good news is, the majority of the time they are motivated. The bad news is that sometimes they hit a valley as well. See the next page to help them self-motivate across the year.*	*Your child is a flat liner! Don't worry! Every student can get motivated – see'worry #1'..*
Technology	*Your child has the self-discipline of a reclusive monk! Well done – take credit! Just make sure they don't take it too far. See 'worry #6'.*	*A bit of extra work and your child has the discipline of a marine. See the next 2 pages for some simple changes you can help them make to get them to the next level and improve their productivity.*	*It's no surprise. Facebook has 10,000 staff members dedicated solely to ensuring your child is distracted. The good news is that you can wean them off! See tips #3 and #4 to help wean them off distractions.*
Stress	*Where is your child? The Bahamas? They are chilled out. Maybe too chilled out? See the following page on goal setting to see if they need a kick of motivation to get them moving!*	*They are a master in training. Some small changes, and you have a self-directed study weapon on your hands. Read on and select at will the secrets to take your child to the next level.*	*Good news is your child is normal! Study isn't easy, intuitive or natural for most people. The good news is success at school is driven by adopting simple habits. They are easy and can be used by 99% of students. Read on to find out what they are.*

STUDENT COACHING

Want to know how your child's study habits compare to those of top students?

Through a FREE 70-minute diagnostic assessment, our coach identifies the habits that are holding your child back and develops a customised curriculum to help your child:

Process information
Take brilliant notes
Manage their time
Memorise information
Manage stress
Ace their exams

Claim Your FREE Diagnostic Consultation:

CALL ***01865 987 732***
EMAIL ***ukcoaching@elevateeducation.com***
VISIT ***www.elevatecoaching.info***

How To Help Your Child **Get Motivated**

Normal Responses To Motivation

Issuing rewards and punishments is the traditional approach to motivating and changing behaviour. If you want someone to continue a behaviour, reward them. If you want someone to change a behaviour, punish them. Unfortunately, when it comes to motivating students to study, this approach is only effective **in the short term**. It goes without saying that we know punishment, nagging and grounding rarely, if ever, get your child to study. What about bribery on the other hand? Rewards like a new phone or video game sound much more attractive, however research has shown that external rewards actually diminish a student's motivation over the long-term. Good news right? That should save you a bit of money!

How You Can Avoid It

Research has shown that we need to identify the 'intrinsic' or internal motivators of the child. That is to say, motivation is not an input - it is a consequence. We need to help students pursue a genuine long-term goal. There are 3 ways you can create meaningful rewards:

SHORT TERM GOALS
Almost all studies around goal-setting show short-term goals give students a sense of purpose, and a reason to do the work. Discuss with your child what mark they are aiming for on the next assignment or exam. Even better put it on the wall or somewhere visible.

LEVELLING-UP
Levelling-up: This is how computer game designers keep your kids glued to their devices; the sense of getting better at something, and moving onto the next level. Once you have set the short-term goal once, set it again – this time make it higher!

LONG TERM GOALS
Long-term goals: These will ultimately be career based. These conversations typically go like this: what are you passionate about > what qualifications do you need for this career > where do you get them > what are the entrance requirements.

For more information on goal setting, click here to read our blog post:

IS YOUR CHILD MOTIVATED?

Getting Your Child To Actually **Sit Down And Work**

Normal Responses To Time Management

This is probably all too common: you attend an event at the school where they talk about the increased workload and exams coming up for your child. You get home and walk into the living room only to find your child sitting there watching TV.

You ask what they are doing, only to be told: "I don't have any work!".

Your immediate thought is "that's not what I've been told", and an argument ensues.

The odds are that you are correct and they do indeed have work. However, there is also the possibility that they were just on an innocent study break. In moments like these the natural response is to argue, prod, nag or fight.

We all know what happens next; they don't end up doing any work, and you become enemy #1.

Our Recommendation:

Develop a shared understanding of when your child is meant to be working and when they are setting aside time to take a break.

Do this by creating a study timetable cooperatively. This is such a critical exercise that in our private work with families, our study coaches spend approximately 55 minutes with the student co-designing a customised study planner and timetable to suit the child's lifestyle. This document then becomes central to helping parents understand their child's study plans and volume.

For more information on how to make a study timetable with your child, check out our ***TEDx TALK*** *or head to our blog post on* ***MAKING A STUDY TIMETABLE WITH YOUR CHILD***

Example **Timetable**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4pm					
5pm					
6pm					
7pm					
8pm					
9pm					
10pm					
11pm					
12am					

	Saturday	Sunday
8am		
9am		
10am		
11am		
12pm		
1pm		
2pm		
3pm		
4pm		
5pm		
6pm		
7pm		
8pm		
9pm		
10pm		
11pm		

For a digital and editable version of the timetable that you can fill in online, ***CLICK HERE***

Using Technology To Beat **Technological Distractions**

Normal Responses To Avoiding Technological Distractions

Let's just start by saying that everything you have thought is correct. Your instincts are right. Digital distractions drain productivity and severely impact the ability to memorise information. Put simply, any drain on attention is a drain on marks.

Understandably, most parents feel powerless to control the allure of social media, smart phone apps, games, and everything in between. In our experience, parents adopt 1 of 2 polarised reactions: fight or flight.

The first approach is to demonise technology and banish its use. We've seen everything from removing SIM cards, locking phones away in drawers or instituting blanket complete technology bans.

In contrast, many parents surrender and simply ignore the problem, which leaves their child with unrestricted access to a world of distraction. The problem here is the lack of balance. On the one hand the parent severely restricts the child's window to the world and connection to other kids, and on the other, they leave the flood gates wide open meaning that their child has very little chance of getting any work done.

Our Recommendation

Empower your child to self-regulate. Rather than creating blanket bans on smartphone use, it can be helpful create a separation between 'high powered' and 'low powered' work.

We define high powered as the type of study that relates directly to exam preparation; memorising information for a test or completing past exam papers/practise essays. This is the type of work that should be distraction free so that technological interruptions do not disrupt the learning process. Low powered work on the other hand, may be regular homework tasks or reviewing their notes from the day. This work is still important, but is less vulnerable to being ruined by the sound of a notification or A buzzing phone.

If all else fails, there are some great apps that help a student to block our distracting social media or websites such as YouTube for designated study periods.

For more information on helpful apps and programs, check out our blog post on: ***18 APPS THAT HELP STUDENTS***

Blocking Distractions By **Controlling The Environment**

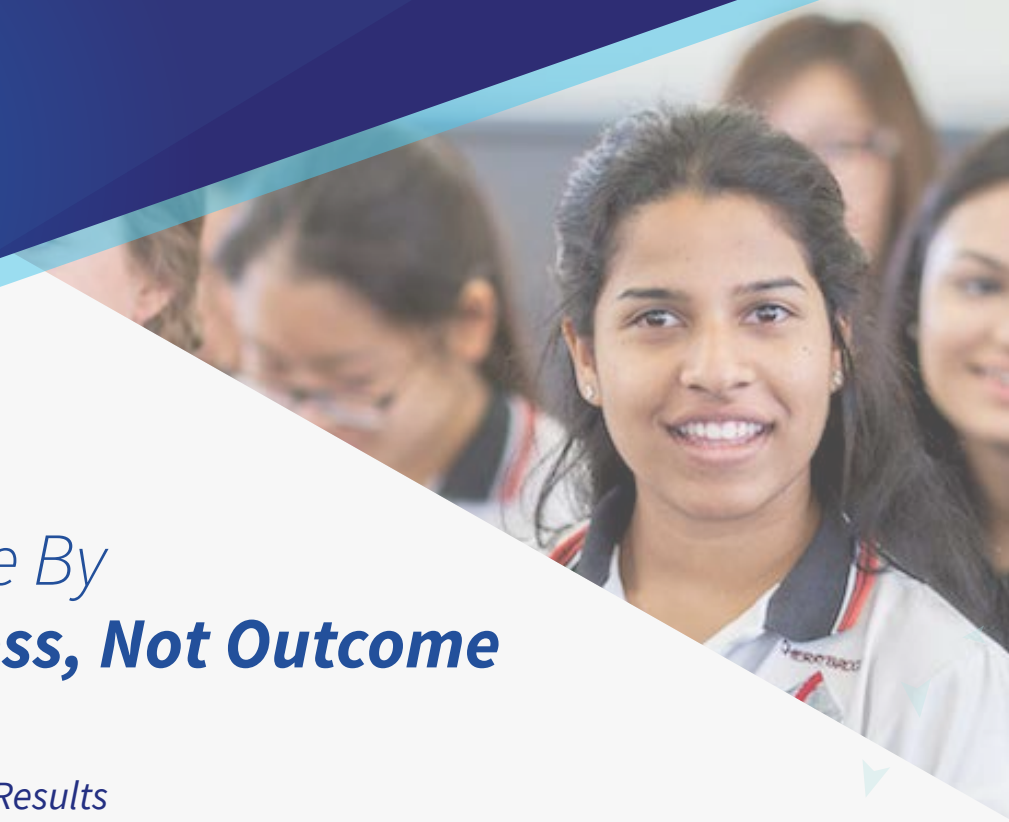
Normal Response To Study Environment

Parents share a common desire to encourage their child to work at the dinner table or in a common space where they can be seen and helped. There's a tendency to get your child to study under any circumstances and therefore it's convenient to encourage them to bring their notes to the TV and sit on the couch revising. The problem is that none of the scenarios mentioned above are conducive to focus. They all involve some form of distraction or the capacity to lose focus.

Our Recommendation:

We encourage parents to set up a space that maximises attention. The research shows that it is much more effective to separate study from the rest of life. The first thing you should do is find a space in which studying is removed from the hustle and bustle of life at home. It might be your child's bedroom, a separate study if you have one, or simply a room as far away from the TV and noisy siblings as possible.

Set up a space for your child that has a desk, is quiet, and is removed from others in the home. This simple change will ritualise the study process and help to keep your child focused and on task. In fact, our coaching client 'Ivy' reported that after shifting her study environment from the living room to her bedroom desk, she was able to work for an extra 2 hours per night due to her increased focus and lack of distraction from siblings. Small changes like this can lead to a sharp increase in productivity.



Build Resilience By **Praising Process, Not Outcome**

Normal Responses To Test Results

"Mum I got 95% on my last test!" This is obviously great news. The obvious response is to tell them "well done" and congratulate them, possibly using the opportunity to reinforce just how smart your child is.

Research by educational psychologist, Carol Dweck, has identified that praising outcomes (the grades) instead of the process (what we did to achieve those grades) can lead to students adopting a fixed mindset.

"Fixed mindset" students come to believe that their success is caused by personal characteristics such as IQ. This both limits the amount of work they put in (after all, their IQ assures them of a good result) but even worse limits their resilience when they do badly, because in these cases their lack of success is rationalised by their IQ – i.e. I didn't do well because I simply am not smart enough.

Working with over a million students every year, we've noticed that a core limitation to their success has been their adoption of a fixed mindset.

What We Recommend

As a parent, it is more productive for you to praise process, rather than outcome. The process or approach used by your child is something that they can change and refine with feedback. Once they receive a test score, they cannot go back and change the test result – it's done. The test result is a product of the work they have put in and the process they have adopted.

Therefore, while you can still praise your child for receiving a good result on their exams, relating the praise back to the process they adopted will be more productive and will reinforce the right behaviour; the preparation. Praise the hard work. "You deserved that result, because you worked so hard", or "that's great work because I know you changed the way you prepared for the exam. It's so great to see all the effort paying off."

Similarly, if your child receives a low mark on an exam, the same approach should be adopted. Asking them about their process, both in preparation and in the exam room will depersonalise the results and remove the emotional sting. A poor result is a product of poor preparation – nothing more, nothing less. By instilling this message, it focuses the student to think about how they can change their approach, rather than blaming any internal or innate characteristics.

Beating Stress
Through Balance

Typical Responses To Stress

One of the messages that your child will most likely hear over and over again this year is that this is one of the most important years in their life. This comes with daunting expectations. It means that your child will need to put in more effort than ever before and that the demands on their time and energy will be higher.

The natural next step is to consider which parts of your child's hobbies and activities should be shelved or deprioritised. While compromise is expected, quite often we find that parents' expectations about what should be removed often go too far and are out of step with commitments that top students maintain.

Our Recommendation:

In our work with top performing students, most of them carried out rich and varied lifestyles where they had social, sporting and other commitments. It became clear from our research that the top students were happy students who devoted a sizeable proportion of their time to non-study tasks.

In these cases the time taken out from study was critical in helping students rejuvenate and to get back to their study. This means that letting them commit to playing a sport a few times a week, seeing friends on weekends and having other hobbies will be good for their mental health and their focus.

In fact, we've found that when students have less time to study, they become more organised out of necessity.

For more information head to our blog post on ***HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE STRESS***

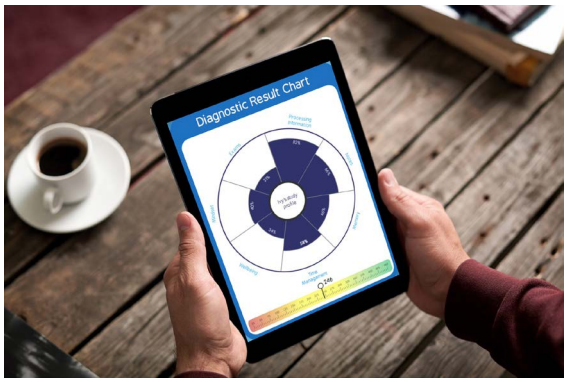
What's Next?

Where You Can Get More

Information To Help Your Child

Private Study Coaching

Have an Elevate coach work 1 on 1 with your child in the comfort of your own home over 12 weeks.



ENQUIRE

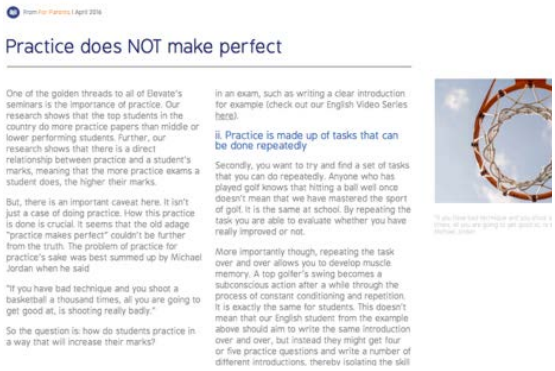
Parent Resources

Visit our knowledge base for more detailed information and research on how you can help your child.

VISIT

Parent Webinars

Receive up to date tips when you need them. Exam preparation packs, time management hacks and more.



Practice does NOT make perfect

One of the golden threads to all of Elevate's seminars is the importance of practice. Our research shows that the top students in the country do more practice papers than middle or lower performing students. Further, our research shows that there is a direct relationship between practice and a student's marks, meaning that the more practice exams a student does, the higher their marks.

But, there is an important caveat here. It isn't just a case of doing practice. How this practice is done is crucial. It seems that the old adage "practice makes perfect" couldn't be further from the truth. The problem of practice for practice's sake was best summed up by Michael Jordan when he said

"If you have bad technique and you shoot a basketball a thousand times, all you are going to get good at, is shooting really badly."

So the question is: how do students practice in a way that will increase their marks?

in an exam, such as writing a clear introduction for example (check out our English Video Series here).

ii. Practice is made up of tasks that can be done repeatedly

Secondly, you want to try and find a set of tasks that you can do repeatedly. Anyone who has played golf knows that hitting a ball well once doesn't mean that we have mastered the sport of golf. It is the same at school. By repeating the task you are able to evaluate whether you have really improved or not.

More importantly though, repeating the task over and over allows you to develop muscle memory. A top golfer's swing becomes a subconscious action after a while through the process of constant conditioning and repetition. It is exactly the same for students. This doesn't mean that our English student from the example above should aim to write the same introduction over and over, but instead they might get four or five practice questions and write a number of different introductions, thereby isolating the skill

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