



Student exercises based on Elevate Education's Senior School Seminar Programme.

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Student Elevation Implementation Guide

Student Workbook



ordinary students achieving
extraordinary results

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Student Elevation Student Implementation Guide

One of the critical things to realise about school is that it isn't always the smartest student with the highest IQ who tops the year. The ***Student Elevation*** seminar introduced you to a range of skills that are **essential** to doing well in school and exams, all of which have absolutely no relationship to IQ. For example, the discussion of belief showed that the students who do well are normally those who believe they can. There are many smart students who don't believe they can do well, and who as a result, often don't. The amount that we believe in our own abilities has nothing to do with our IQ levels. Similarly, your presenter discussed the importance of goals, and especially their impact upon motivation. But does it take a genius to set a goal? Obviously not. Finally, a goal is nothing without an action plan but again, do you have to be Einstein to break your goals into smaller pieces? Again, the answer is no.

At the end of the day a high IQ student, who is unmotivated, does no work, and lacks belief is unlikely to do well. Would a lower IQ student, with a goal, high levels of motivation and self-belief beat them? Obviously, in such a hypothetical it is impossible to say, but our money would be on the lower IQ student.

So, doing well in school isn't just about intelligence. It is about non-study and non-IQ related skills as well. But as with anything, it isn't enough to talk about goals. If you want to get motivated you have to actually set one. Similarly, it isn't enough to say, "I can see how an action plan would help" and then not use it. You have to actually do it.

That's what this booklet is all about. It has been designed to help you implement the techniques from the ***Student Elevation*** seminar and make some minor changes to the way you work across the year. Changing one or two things may not seem like much, but remember, the tiniest of changes can make all the difference.

The ***Student Elevation*** seminar introduced you to 4 characteristics of the top students:

- Belief
- Short-term planning
- Goal-setting
- Deliberate practice

In the following pages we will show you how to implement these techniques. We encourage you to work through the booklet, technique by technique. We guarantee that if you start using these techniques as a roadmap for the next few weeks, months, or years you will see a massive improvement in your grades.

Best of luck implementing the skills.

The Elevate Team

Belief:

Let's get a few things out of the way early on, so that we are all on the same page. Do we think you can do whatever you believe you can? No. If you sit around and say over and over again, "I believe I can get a scholarship to Harvard". Will you? Probably not. Secondly, can talking about belief sound clichéd and simplistic? Do clichés like "If you can believe it, you can achieve it" sound corny? 100% yes. Does that mean that it is irrelevant? Research would suggest that the answer is no.

Before we go on, let's do a quick quiz. Circle the answer that you agree with most:

Question 1: You have a certain amount of intelligence and you can't do anything to change it.

Strongly agree	Agree	Mostly agree
1	2	3
Mostly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	5	6

Question 2: You can learn new things but you can't really change your basic intelligence.

Strongly agree	Agree	Mostly agree
1	2	3
Mostly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	5	6

OK, now take a moment, and calculate your score. Write it down here_____.

What's 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 belief.

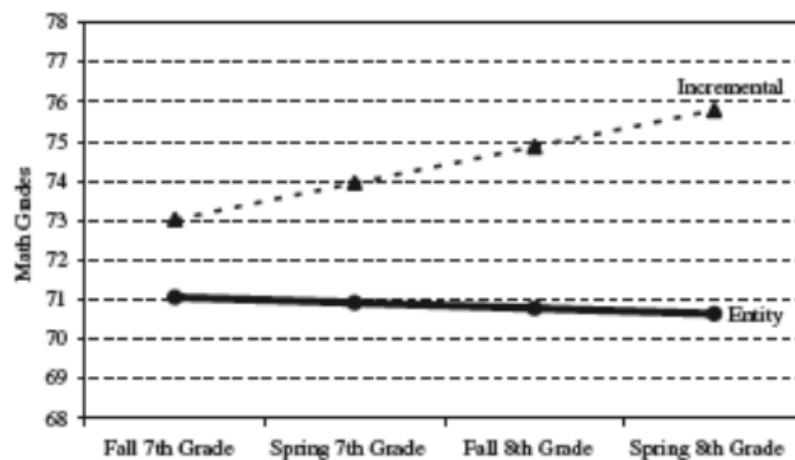
Dweck found that students whose grades tended to go up over a number of years, had a certain set of beliefs that she referred to as a "**growth mindset**". If you have a high score, Dweck would predict that you have a growth mindset. Dweck found that students with a growth mindset believe:

- Success is based on hard work not talent or IQ.
- The harder you work, the better you become at something.
- Problems can be corrected, just because you didn't do well once doesn't mean you will never do well. Instead, they believe doing badly just means you need to make changes.

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**". If you have a low score, it may be that you have a fixed mindset. Dweck found that students with a fixed mindset tend to think:

- Success is based on IQ;
- There is little you can do to change IQ.

First things first, don't freak out if it looks like you have a fixed mindset. The good news is that it can be changed. Before we talk about how to do it, look at what Dweck found the difference was between the 2 mindsets. The chart below shows what happened over a 2 year period to a group of students she tracked in Maths. The growth mindset students are the dotted line and the fixed students are represented by the thick black line. Have a look at what happens to their marks over the 2 years:



Difference in grades in Maths between growth and fixed mindset students.

As you can see, the grades of the students with a growth mindset went up, whereas the grades of the students with the fixed mindset, actually decreased.

Why? Dweck found that students with a growth mindset tended to work harder than other students because they believed that hard work was the basis of doing well, whereas other students didn't do as much work because they believed that it was irrelevant, that they couldn't change how well they had done. It goes without saying that someone who works harder will probably have an advantage. Secondly, Dweck found that students with a growth mindset didn't give up when they had a problem. Instead, they were more likely to find a solution to a problem, as they believed that the problem could be overcome, if they looked to find a way.

So, the question is then: what do you believe? Do you believe you can impact your grades, or that you can do well, or do you believe that your ability is limited? Answer these questions:

Question 1: What do you think are the highest grades you could finish the year with in each of your subjects? _____

Question 2: Why don't you believe you could achieve higher? Write down the reasons you don't think you could get higher grades than what you wrote down?

Did your answer go something like this: "I haven't done well in the past" or "I am not that smart" or, "I am not as smart as other people in my class." If it did, it is time to rethink this:

- **Why we often don't do well in a subject:** The fact that you may not have done well in a subject, often has nothing to do with ability or IQ. Ask yourself these questions:

Do you think you prepare the same way for an exam in your worst subject as someone who is top?	Yes / No
Do you think you spend as much time preparing for an exam as the top student, or someone who does better?	Yes / No
Do you prepare the same way for an exam each exam block?	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 are stupid, 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.

- **I am not smart enough:** The reality is that your ability levels aren't fixed. **You can become smarter.** Our brain is like a muscle. The harder it works, the more it grows. Each time you learn something new, brain cells develop new neural connections, in effect growing and making you smarter. The level of "smartness" that you develop then isn't based so much on your IQ, but rather, the amount of time you put into learning. Can you

become smarter within each of your subjects? Definitely, you just need to spend more time on the subject, and change your approach.

Can you achieve higher than the grades you wrote down for Question 1? The answer is clearly yes. But to do it, we just need to increase the amount we work, and work smarter by changing and improving what we are currently doing. Take 60 seconds and list 10 things you could do or change, if you want to increase your grades over the next 12 months. For example, possible actions might include: work harder; regularly complete my homework; start preparing for an exam early; do more practice. Write down 10 things you could do right now to lift your grades if you needed to:

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Question 3: If you were to make the 10 changes listed above do you think you could achieve higher grades than the ones you wrote down in Question 1: Yes / No

Goal-setting

The second skill that your presenter discussed with you in the ***Student Elevation*** seminar was goal-setting. Again, much like belief, goal-setting can sound very simplistic. Often people make it sound like setting a goal will somehow activate a mysterious power that makes your goal come true. Obviously, goal-setting doesn't work like this.

The explanation of why goal-setting works is much simpler. When you get home from school in the afternoon, you have 2 basic choices: study or do something fun. When we think about what we should do, our brain basically has a default setting that is set to fun, and as a result 9 times out of 10, we pick fun over study. However, 1 time out of 10, we pick study. Why? Normally, the reason is that something has changed that makes study a higher priority than watching 'Neighbours'. The something that changes is normally the fact that we have an exam or an assignment due the next day. Whatever it is though, the urgency increases the priority of study, and we choose study. This is exactly what goal-setting does: it lifts the importance of study, so it becomes more important and more urgent than most of the little time wasting activities we have in our normal schedules. Goal setting has one major impact then: when you get home from school, and have a decision to make between some kind of fun activity and study, our brain doesn't automatically go to the default and pick fun. Instead, the brain calculates "if we do the fun activity, we might miss out on the goal. The goal is more important, let's pick study".

That's it. Nice and simple. No magic. The goal simply provides you with the reason to work. And the amount of work we actually do, will in turn be determined by how strong that reason is. Which leads us onto an important point. A goal is often compared to a target. But it's not. **A goal is not a target.** A target implies something that we would like to do or hit. It is a little like a wish. However, to be compelling enough to get you sit down and work, a goal needs to be more than this. We need to have an emotional connection to it. It needs to be something we really, really want. The following exercise will walk you through how to set a goal, but more importantly, how to create a strong emotional connection to that goal.

Step 1: Work out what you want to do after school. Write below what you would like to do after school. Do you want to go to university, college, do an apprenticeship or do you want to go straight into the workforce? If you know what you want to do – write it down. If you have a few options that you are considering, and are yet to make a decision, write all of the options down. Finally, if you have no idea what you want to do, your MUST DO activity is to jump on the following websites and have a look at what you might be interested in. What jobs or areas interest you, find a few options and then start looking at what kind of qualification you need to get into a certain job and where you can study for the qualification. Two great websites to look at are: <http://www.ucas.com/> and <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>.

Once you have your preferred options, list them below. If you know where you would like to study the option, put the name of the institution down (i.e. Durham University). Remember, if you know exactly what you would like to do, only fill in 1 option.

- Option 1: _____ at _____
- Option 2: _____ at _____
- Option 3: _____ at _____

Step 2: Identify what is required to achieve your goal. Once you have your preferences listed, work out what you need to do to get into each of them. If it is a university course, the goal will obviously be certain grades. If you don't care which university you go to, look at the entry requirements at all universities, and write down the highest. Other courses may not require grades, but may instead require a portfolio, or an interview. If this is the case, write down what is required. If you want to get a job straight away you might require a qualification or work experience. If you had a number of preferences, write down the entrance requirement for each option. If there are no requirements to get into any of your preferences, jump down to step 2 (iii).

Option	Course Name	Entry Requirement
1.		
2.		
3.		

Step 5: What obstacles are you likely to face? The story lines of most movies go like this: the hero or central character wants something - to become a famous musician; to find their parents; to return a ring to be destroyed; to fall in love. But somewhere along the line they face a series of challenges that prevent them from achieving their goal straight away. After all, the “Lord of the Rings” would be a pretty boring movie if Frodo walked to Mordor to destroy the ring, encountered no problems, threw the ring in the fire, and then just walked home again. All good goals have their challenges and obstacles, and the task of achieving them is made a lot easier if you have identified some of the challenges in advance. Even better, you could identify some of the solutions in advance as well, so that you can avoid the problem altogether. Go through and list the challenges that you might face, solutions for avoiding the problem and back-up solutions in case the problem still comes up. For example you might identify running out of motivation as a challenge. Once you have, brainstorm as many solutions as possible. You might include: getting a goal; working with friends; going to the university one week per month to look around and get pumped up. Alternatively, you might identify poor grades as being a problem. How would you solve this? Solutions might include: getting a tutor; starting a study group with your friends; speaking to the teacher more regularly to see where you could improve within the subject. Again, go through and try and list 5 challenges that you might face, and try and identify at least 3 solutions to each problem.

Problem	Solution
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Step 6: Create your support team. School and exams are not a solo event. Most top students have a support team behind them who help them across the year, especially when they face challenges. Who would you put in your support team? For example, if you aren't great at Maths, you might put a mate who is good at Maths into the team, or your Maths teacher, or a tutor. Who would you speak to if you were stressed or struggling for motivation? List 5 people below who you think could help you on your way to the goal and the role they could play:

Support Member	Role
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Step 7: Identify contingencies. The questions we are always asked at Elevate is, "what if I don't achieve my goal?" It is a good question, because most worthwhile goals involve a challenge or a stretch, which means that it is never certain that we will achieve the goal. Often, the chance of missing out on the goal freaks us out so much that we decide it is better not to try at all. When you think about this it is quite crazy because we are in effect saying, "there is a chance I won't get my goal, so I won't try, and make it 100% certain that I won't get it". What scares us in this situation is the fear of failure. But this is a false fear. Just because you don't get into the course straight away doesn't mean that it is impossible to ever get into the course. For almost every course, there are a range of different ways to get in, even if you miss out first time around. Some of these options include:

- Studying the same course at a different university;
- Studying a different course at the same university and attempting to transfer in;
- Studying the same course as a post-graduate option. For example, if you don't get into Law first time around, you could always study it after you have finished your undergraduate degree.

Usually, when we have a back-up plan, we tend to become less scared of the possibility of not achieving your goal. Obviously, we want to try and get the goal first time around, but missing out isn't the end of the world and it isn't something to worry about. Speak to a careers adviser, teacher or older students and write down the best back-up plan that you will use in the worst case scenario that you don't achieve your goal straight away.

Step 8: Make the goal real. Remember, the more connection we have to our goal, the more it will motivate us and get us to actually do the work. There are a few steps you can take to make the goal more real:

- Write your full goal (i.e. dream job, course, institution, grades if required) onto a piece of paper and put it above your desk. If you want to go really crazy, put the goal in as many places as possible. Put it above your bed, in your wallet, laminate it and put it in the shower! Try and find 5 creative places to put the goal that you will see it regularly. As clichéd as it sounds, the more regularly you see the goal, the more real it becomes, and the more achievable it becomes. Sometimes we may set a goal that seems impossible the first time you write it down, but then, the more you see it, the less freaky it becomes.
- Stick up photos of the goal as well. Remember the old cliché “I will believe it when I see it?” The ability to see or visualize a goal often turns it from an abstract idea to a tangible reality. As such, we recommend that you find as many images or visual reminders as possible and stick them up next to your goal. For example, if you want to do Law at University, you might:
 - Stick up photos of the college you want to go to at University;
 - Photoshop yourself holding a gavel in a courtroom;
 - Stick up a photo of your dream car you will (hopefully) be able to buy!

Even better, go to the university or institution you want to study at and get photos of yourself. For example, you might take a photo of yourself in front of the Quadrangle. Whatever you do, try and get at least 5 images. Stick copies of them on your wall next to your goal.

Creating an action plan

“How am I ever going to get that?” That has to be one of the most common questions we get from students at the end of a goal-setting exercise. They say, “I’ve written down grades that just seem impossible to get. What do I do?” Break it into small pieces is the answer.

Whenever we set a goal, especially a real stretch goal that will challenge us, we normally get daunted by the challenge ahead. Often, the challenge can seem so great that we decide to give up before we start. However, when we start to break the goal down into a series of smaller steps, we find that it usually isn’t as difficult as we originally thought. So, once we have our goal, we want to divert our attention from the actual grades we need and instead concentrate on the small steps that we need to take on the way.

Step 1: Write your goal down and stick it up on the wall. .

For example, if your goal was to get into Physiotherapy at Birmingham University you would put up:

<p style="text-align: center;">Physiotherapy University of Birmingham AAB</p>

Step 2: Set a goal for each subject. Work out what grades you need to get into your preferred course. In this scenario you might aim for an A in Biology and PE, and a B in Maths.

Step 3: Insert assessments. Work out how many assessments you have for each subject and insert them into a term planner like the example below. Once you have done that, set a goal for each assessment as you go during term. Once we start to do this for each subject our goal becomes far less intimidating. Getting an A in our next 10% Biology assignment may still seem challenging, but nowhere near as daunting as sitting there thinking “in 12 months time I have to finish with an A in Biology”.

A **term planner** allows you to manage your time proactively as you can see when you have assessments coming up in the term. It lets you set specific goals for every assessment and makes you focus on short-term tasks to achieve them.

Write down the assessments you have coming up in chronological order. Write down when they are and set a goal for each assessment. Write a to do list of what you need to do before that assessment in order to get that grade, and finally put in the grade you received when you get it back.

Term Assessment Planner

Subject	Assessment	Due	Goal	To Do	Grade
History	Essay	Thurs 19/9	A	- Research, borrow books, speak to teacher, submit draft, ask History prodigy to read it	A
Biology	Case Study	Wed 25/9	B	- Finish notes on specification, finish practice questions from chapters 1-4, find articles, write draft, proof.	
French	Oral	Fri 27/9	A*	- Practise speech in front of mirror, ask teacher for feedback, record speech onto iPod, practice speech to parents.	
Maths	Quiz	Mon 30/9	7/10	- Practice questions from textbook, make formula sheet.	
Maths	Assignment	Tues 8/10			

Step 4: Work out what you need to do to achieve your assessment goal. Once you have the short-term goals for your subjects, you can continue to break these down as you go. Continue to ask yourself, “what do I need to do in order to achieve this goal?”

Each of these actions can then be added into the term planner as well. **Make sure you include a deadline with the action, as this will increase your level of motivation, by making the actions urgent as well.**

As we go through the term we tick off the actions. All of a sudden when you are focusing on finding 3 articles on stem cell research, you find that you aren't as stressed as you were originally when you were focusing on getting an A in that subject. But the big thing is that each of these little actions adds up, and if you get the process right the result will take care of itself.

Step 5: Update the action plan as you work through the year. Finally, make sure you update the action plan as you work through the year. So, for example, if we set ourselves a goal to get 90 in our case study for Business Studies, but only ended up getting 86, we know that we can't keep the same goals in the other 3 assessments, because if we achieve our goals, we will be 4 marks out from our overall goal. As such, we might upgrade our goal for the 3 later assessments by 1.33% per exam, so that we can win back the 4% that we lost.

Where to from here?

- 1) Follow us on twitter **@ukelevate** for tips across the year
- 2) Go to our student website www.elevateeducation.com for free resources such as practice questions, presenter tips and video interviews.
- 3) Use your seminar workbook from the session and start putting the skills into practice!

