

Study Skills in Bailieborough Community School

Aims of The Study Skills Programme:

To provide students with a range of study skills strategies to help them make maximum and efficient use of their time and thereby improve academic performance.

To make learning easier and to help retain what is learned for longer.

To feel the work and effort involved is worthwhile; it 'pays dividends'.

To help reduce stress levels and enhance students belief in their academic ability.

Target Group: The whole school community

Brief Outline of The Study Skills Programme:

The Study Skills Programme was designed to provide students with the skills and information needed to deal with the academic challenges of preparing for Junior and Senior Cycle study and examinations.

The programme comprises of lessons and workshops on the various aspects of studying, as outlined below. SPHE teachers deliver practical study skills lessons to all Junior Cycle classes in SPHE. The latter sessions are taught as part of a three week Study Skills module, which is developed using the SPHE resource materials.

Ms. Monaghan and Ms Mc Namee provide presentations for students 5th and 6th year students.

Some successful senior students, deliver talks to First Years on the study skills strategies they use for the Junior Certificate.

Heads of various subject departments and individual subject teachers cover useful teaching strategies for their given subjects and provide written notes on these strategies.

During Study Skills Week, from Nov 9th to 13th, daily tips and study-related inspirational quotes were displayed in each assembly area and the main assembly area. Mr Kenny, DP, included condensed study advice in assembly notes, which were read out at student assembly each morning, during Study Skills Week.

A notice board on a free-standing stand was assembled at the office window, with details of and advice on Study Skills Week.

The school website as well as the school online library have great study skills material. Students are referred to this reference resource point as well.

A Study Skills for Success booklet has been revised and updated and contains much of the resource material covering the key aspects of Study Skills, covered during Study Skills Week (see below).

The Key Aspects of Study Skills SPHE Class-

- Goal Setting and Ambition.
- Planning Preparation and Organisation for Study.
- Time Management Skills.
- Mindful Focus and Concentration.
- Study skill Strategies including reading, note-taking and memory skills.
- Exam Techniques.
- In each case, the focus is on practical help to complement school work and home study.

The Key Aspects of the Study Skills Programme-

The following topics are covered over the three week SPHE module with a concentrated focus by all subject teachers, during Study Week:

Students begin the course by completing a **questionnaire** to help identify areas which may be holding them back from achieving to their full potential.

Getting Started At Home and in Class: Students are introduced to the importance of being organised for class and having the correct equipment and materials in class. Students are introduced to the concept of Mindful active attendance in class.

Goal Setting: Students set out their long, medium and short term goal charts, focusing on their ambitions and interests using SMART Goals and what changes are needed to achieve these goals.

Time Management: Students are shown how to construct a workable study/homework timetable to suit their personal needs.

Note Taking: By working through sample exercise sheets, students are taught the basic skills of note taking, thereby saving hours of wasted study time! They will examine different styles of note taking including keywords, bullet points, outline method, spider diagrams, mind mapping, graphic organisers, concept maps).

Memory Techniques: Simple ideas to improve one's capacity to store information.

Revision and Exam Techniques: Students are shown how to prepare for and sit their exams and how to construct their revision planners. We point out common pitfalls and explain to them what the examiner is really looking for.

The "POKER and/or SQ3R " methods of studying: Perhaps the most important aspect of the course! Most students have no idea as to how to study and to retain the information learnt. Students feel confident that by using these methods they can now do really well in school.

Bailieborough Community School

STUDY SKILLS FOR SUCCESS NOTES



Your years in Secondary School are very important. How you use those years, will have a major bearing on shaping your life - your career, your standard of living, job satisfaction, the type of car you drive and your general health and wellbeing.

Success depends on your attitude, so you must think **"I am going to do the very best I can do in school"**

I am going to:

Organise myself and my time and **make out a plan.**

Concentrate and pay attention in class.

Study every night and at the weekend.

Revise thoroughly for my tests and exams.

Do my best in my **exams.**

Get involved in **activities** in and outside school.

Eat well and sleep well.

Make time for my friends and **be kind** to myself and others.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN CLASS?

Pay attention to your teacher, and get actively involved in class.

This is vital to your success in school.

You need to attend and be attentive in all your classes. Be on time for class. Make sure you have all required equipment.

Keep away from disruptive pupils, and close friends.

Make every effort to understand the topic being taught. If you fully understand then you will easily remember.

Ask questions of your teacher if you need to.

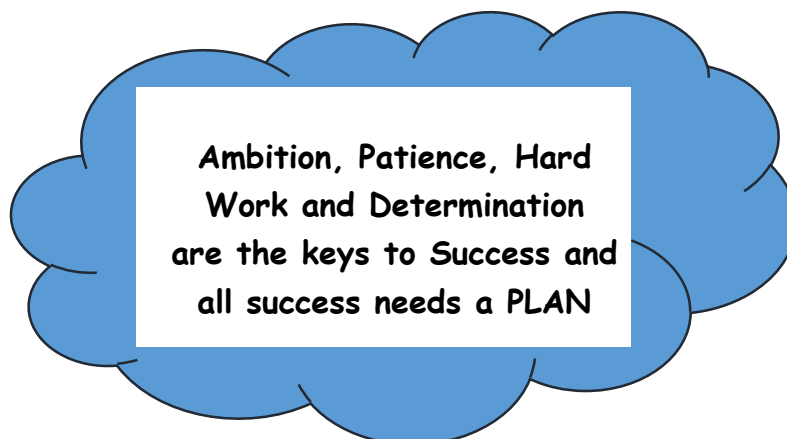
Be active in class by taking notes from the board and from the teacher, this will help you remember. Highlight keywords and facts.

Record your homework /dates of tests at the end of each class.

At night complete your homework and revise the topics taught in class.

You could also expand on notes taken in class. **Notes must be recorded in your own words.** If you are still unsure of any aspect of the topic, ask your teacher in class next day.

If you are absent from class, get homework and notes from a friend.



READ AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT
ACADEMIC GOAL SETTING

WHAT ARE MY ACADEMIC GOALS? (See page on Goals for each Subject)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE MY GOALS?

You should critically look at the way you are working and make the necessary changes or improvements. I will

Continue:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Stop:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Start:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Check out the School website <http://www.bailieborocs.ie/> for more study tips and advice. Also have a look at www.skool.ie for subject specific tips and lots more.

WORKING ON IMPROVING MY MEMORY

Our **examination** system demands that we need to **remember** facts, figures and lots of detailed information for our exams. While **hard work** is essential in helping us remember, there are many aids which can also help us.

Understand - Understanding a topic fully makes it easier to remember.

Order - It is important to study some topics in order. It is easier to remember if we can see/make a link between topics e.g. a study of volcanic activity leads to an understanding of igneous rocks and also volcanic mountains.

Revision - We lose most of what we learn in the 8-12 hour period after we learn it. Revising within that timeframe really helps us to remember.

Record - By writing down keywords, facts sentences, formulas helps us to remember them.

Notes - By making out a summary of topics/chapters really helps us to remember, especially during revision for exams. You can use mind maps diagrams, condensed notes, flash cards.

Mnemonics - You can make up a word from the first letter of a number of words of sentences to help you remember them e.g. SIM helps us to remember the three types of rocks Sedimentary, Igneous and Metamorphic. Also

By Association/Linkage - Associating or linking a topic or date with something can help you remember e.g. 1845 the year of the Famine could be remembered as a time i.e. quarter to seven.

By Rhyme/Song/Poem - You may be able to make up a rhyme/song/poem to help you remember e.g. in fourteen hundred and ninety two (1492), Columbus sailed the ocean blue, ABC song!

Interest - If you develop an interest in a subject, it really helps you focus. Check out video clips, TV programmes, podcasts, Apps

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY REVISION WORK?

Organised, regular revision enables you to recall the information necessary for your exams - You should revise topics each day after class, at the weekend and before each exam/test.

HOW TO REVISE

Make out a list of topics you have to revise for each subject (use your text book & exam papers)

Make every effort to understand fully each topic you are revising.

Make out a revision timetable - This enables you to be organised and avoid stress. (See timetable template in your journal and on the school website)

Revising with 1-2 friends can be a great help - you can explain topics to and ask question of each other.

HOW TO REVISE A TOPIC

Before you open a book - ask yourself what do you know about the topic and check questions you could be asked. Pre-test yourself on what you already know by asking the 5 W's -who, what, where, when and why. *

Make out short notes or points as you read, using your preferred note taking style * (keywords, mind maps, diagrams, flash cards, mnemonics).

When you are finished, close notes and test yourself again. Review .

Open the book, correct the mistakes you made and revise slowly.

Take your time - no point revising a topic on a Monday and then having to revise it again in a few days because you didn't do it fully.

"The Principle of Learning"

1. Have a go --
2. Make mistakes --
3. Correct them!

And- *You only know a topic if you can teach/explain it to a friend!*

*Use **SQ4R Method** for Learning: Survey Question, Read, Recite Rewrite & Review, or

***POKER**-Pre-test, Overview, Keywords/facts, Etch and Sketch, Review.

HOW CAN I BEST PREPARE FOR EXAMINATIONS?

Remember:

All good performers have "butterflies"

You had good results before...freak failures are rare!

Always work against the Clock, in preparation for exams!

Be ready for exams, be focused and do your best!

IMPORTANT POINTS

- ✓ Know the **format of the paper** and the sections from which you must answer questions.
- ✓ Know the **amount of time** you are going to **allocate** to each question.
- ✓ Be **on time** for the exam
- ✓ Ensure you have all you need for the exam e.g. pens, calculator, instruments etc.
- ✓ Take long deep breaths to help you to **remain calm and get focused**.
- ✓ **Read** the question slowly and **carefully** at least three times.
- ✓ Now, ask yourself - what exactly am I being asked?
- ✓ Underline key words on the paper e.g. Name and explain three features ---
- ✓ **Plan your answer** before you start - write down the points you need to make in order to answer the question on a roughwork sheet.
- ✓ Answer only **what you are asked** and **keep to the point**.
- ✓ **Develop** each point fully and **illustrate** (draw diagrams) where possible.
- ✓ Leave a **space** between each answer - you may want to include an additional point later.
- ✓ After you have finished, **read over your answers carefully and make whatever necessary corrections maybe needed**. You can pick up many extra marks doing this.
- ✓ **Never leave the exam early!**
- ✓ Once the exam is over, avoid "post mortems"! - **forget about it**.

Remember! - The examiner/teacher sets out to give you marks, not to take them from you.



A winner never quits.

A quitter never wins!

Check out the following websites, if you wish, for extra help

Examinations website (for Marking Schemes/ Examiners' Reports)

CAO points calculator

Leaving Cert Timetable 2015

Junior Cert Timetable 2015

www.careersportal.ie/studyskills

www.skool.ie

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY HOMEWORK/STUDY SKILLS?

Our examination system is quite tough, and it demands that we study/revise constantly.

Study includes - written work, graphic work, learning, reading note-taking, testing and revision and **work against the clock**.

You need to study each school night for **two hours** and also at the weekend.

Examination students need to study for a longer period.

Good study habits lead to good examination results which will enable you to reach your full potential.

Be active during study by making out notes and constantly **testing yourself** to check you understand the material and always **work against the clock**.

Revision Notebooks:

You **should have a revision notebook**. This notebook should contain a summary of each topic in that subject, in your own words. This you will do when the teacher completes a topic or a chapter in a subject.

Study tips:

Your study area must be free from noise and **distraction**.

It must be away from the TV, DVD, Radio, iPod, phone, laptop, tablet.

Music is generally seen as a distraction when studying.

Turn off your **mobile phone** and leave it in another room.

Games and **extra-curricular** activities, cannot interfere with study time.

Part-time work seriously interferes with your homework and study so needs to be reduced during school term.

Make out a **Study Timetable** and stick to it. This will benefit you greatly. It will give you a **structured** and **disciplined** approach to your study. It will also reduce stress and tension.

**FACT: THE GREATEST DISTRACTION
TO STUDY IS - TEXTING**

Study Skills 1: Setting your sights and going for goal

The Irish Times [Tue, Mar 12, 2002, 00:00](#)

This series of articles on study skills aims to provide you with practical help to meet your needs at this stage of the school year.

While it is useful to have an understanding of the learning process, what is needed at this point is not theory but practical help - tips and advice that can be implemented immediately without trying to revolutionise your entire study pattern.

Over the coming weeks, some of the key aspects of study and revision will be covered - time management, concentration, organisation, reading, note-taking and memory skills, and exam technique. In each case, the emphasis will be on practical help to complement your schoolwork and your home study. The aim is to show you how to save time and improve academic performance, thus reducing stress levels and helping you achieve your goals.

These articles are intended as signposts for your journey. They will suggest the best routes to follow so as to avoid delays and difficulties, but they won't get you there - you will have to do the travelling yourself!

HITTING THE TARGET

What exactly constitutes good study and how can you maximise its effectiveness? If study is "the systematic pursuit of understanding", then this gives us some clues as to how best to approach the task of learning. Throughout this series, reference will be made to the key characteristics of effective study as they apply to the various aspects of the job. To be effective, study must be . . .

ACTIVE

Always work with a pen and paper, look for key points, test yourself. Never just sit down and read for a set period. Focus on tasks, not time.

ORGANISED

Always ask yourself at the start of a study session "what do I want to have completed in this session?" Have a plan for what you want to cover this week and this month. Have an overview of the priority areas in each subject.

AIMED AT UNDERSTANDING

Always look to build material into patterns and associations that make sense to you. Link new information with your existing knowledge of a subject. Make use of graphic examples and illustrations. When you understand something, you will have little difficulty in remembering it.

GETTING SMART

If a goal is "a dream with a deadline", then it is time to wake up to the realities of exam preparation. As a Leaving Cert student, your dream may be a college place or career opportunity next autumn, but the deadline is June.

All your training should be geared towards being properly prepared on the day. But this large goal will be achieved only by meeting a number of smaller goals along the way. As the Chinese proverb says: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Be sure the bigger goals are your own such as the choice of college course you are targeting. Do what means most to you. Goals that you set for yourself are better motivators than those imposed by others.

For the shorter term goals, remember that to be effective they must be **SMART**.

SPECIFIC: Don't have as your target: "Read up on physical geography." Do have as your target: "Revise physical geography - rivers, and sketch a model answer to the question on last year's paper."

MEASURABLE: Measure your progress towards your goal. Use a revision planner for each subject and tick off each topic as you study/revise it. In this way, you'll literally see your progress.

ACTION-RELATED: Break down your study goal into a set of specific tasks: e.g. do background reading of research material, draw up essay plan, complete writing of essay. Base each study session on tasks, not time.

REALISTIC: Don't set goals you are unlikely to achieve. Make realistic demands on yourself, in consultation with teachers and guidance counsellors. Otherwise, you will quickly lose heart and lose interest.

TIME-BASED: Avoid panic before a deadline. Always time your study tasks, working back from the deadline. If you have a test in three weeks time, set blocks of revision work for each of the three weeks.

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Using Revision Planners

The old football cliché is to "take each game as it comes", i.e. successful managers aim to keep their players focused on getting the points from the next match without being distracted by what may lie ahead in the next round of competition.

In your study, it also helps to break the job into smaller pieces. You'll get more done if you can do it piece by piece.

Each subject that you are studying can be broken down into its constituent parts, with main sections, sub-topics and supporting details.

A very useful start is to list out all the topics on the course according to this hierarchy and use this framework as a revision planner for the subject.

Revision checklists for all major subjects may be downloaded free from www.skool.ie simply by registering on the site and choosing your subjects.

You can tick off the boxes as you cover the topics in class and as you revise them in your study sessions. It is a useful device that has the effect of giving you an overview of the subject and a means of monitoring your progress relative to the time available.

•*"Study Skills" is written by Keith Rowe.*

A former secondary school teacher and principal and an expert on study skills, he is a partner in PUC.net Ltd, an educational consultancy and web publishing company working in association with skool.ie to produce the website's Exam Centre.

Always work against the Clock

Each time you study, clearly specify the work you intend to complete and set yourself a given period of time in which to complete it.

Don't become a "clockwatcher" - they sit in the room quite happily, just so long as they spend sufficient time "at the books"

You must learn to work against the clock. By specifying clearly what work is to be completed, and by what time, you should provide the necessary motivation to complete a worthwhile session.

Goal Setting

Keep a notebook and write down just a few things that you feel you could achieve this week - something important but not too difficult. Perhaps there is a verb or two that could be learnt; perhaps you could watch a video of the novel you are studying; or maybe something as simple as learning four French words a night (you will be amazed at how quickly it can build up!) Never set yourself things that you feel you can't do.

Goals must be very specific. Don't set goals like "I'm going to improve at Maths". It could be "I'm going to improve my Maths mark by 4% by the next test." Don't say, "I'm going to do more study" - be specific - how much? and when exactly?

By writing down simple tasks, and by setting a completion date, you will be amazed at how you stop just drifting from one day to the next. There is also a real sense of achievement when you work your way down the list.

Buy yourself a "goals notebook" and use each page for one week. Set a small number of goals for the first few weeks so that you get the satisfaction of completing them, you can always increase the number as you go on. Every Sunday, check what you have achieved. You are not limited to school topics. You could set personal fitness goals, skills goals, behaviour goals - anything at all! Once you do this you stop drifting and start achieving!

All goals should be **"SMART"**

Specific (not something vague)

Measurable

Achievable

Recorded (written down)

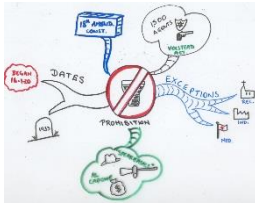
Timed (have a time limit)

Note Taking

Whenever you study you should get into the habit of taking notes. You cannot "study" by just reading, or highlighting, a book. I know that many students believe that taking notes is wasting time, but there is really no other way if you want to remember the information!

Don't spend ages writing summaries. Notes are just the key points. Make a list of the main points only - don't write sentences, or include "little words" like 'the', 'and', 'or' and so on. Use

abbreviations and even start to develop your own shorthand - it will save you hours and hours! Always number the points in the list you construct. The brain can recall a numbered list better than a list with no numbers. Also, have plenty of "white space" on the page (blank space). It should almost look like a shopping list when you have finished.



Some students prefer to draw mind maps or spider diagrams. They use different colours and symbols and spread their ideas over the page. Each student may find that different styles suit them. The main thing to remember is to avoid just writing the book out again in a shortened version! Try to decide which are the key points and put these on paper in such a way as you will find it easy to study. Different styles may suit different topics.

We would also advise you not to copy diagrams into your notes - some students waste a great deal of time copying out the book. If you come to an important diagram - close the book, have a quick attempt (on scrap paper), correct your mistakes and throw away the attempt. Now, make a note of the diagram and its page number in the margin of your notes. Each time you return to these notes, you will see the reference and quickly practise the diagram once more, before referring to the page in the text.

The presentation of your notes is very important - keep them neat and use a little *colour* - but don't overdo it!

Some examples taken from our seminar

[Outline Method/ Mapping Method/ Mind Mapping](#)

Home Work

Don't waste time copying your homework answers out of the textbook - you learn little by copying. Read the information required to answer the question. Jot down on a piece of paper the briefest of points (a date, a formulae, a name). Now move onto some other task and then come back to it a few minutes later, and attempt to do your homework with the book closed. If you get stuck, refer to the paper with your brief notes. If you still can't do it, refer back to the textbook.

Never Be Afraid To Make Mistakes!

Always remember, you learn by making mistakes.

Class Work

You can achieve an awful lot in class - however, for a lot of students, it is almost a waste of their time! Where do you sit in the room and why? If you moved place, would your marks improve?

Don't go to the back of the room, don't sit beside the window, get away from the "messers"!

Jot down a few notes in every lesson, don't wait for the teacher to tell you to take something down. You have no idea what a great impact it makes on a teacher to see a student working in

class. Force yourself to ask the occasional question of the teacher. Don't just sit there - do something!

Every time the bell goes in school, ask yourself , " what did I learn in that lesson ? "

Time Management

Don't waste your valuable time! Construct a plan before you start. You can work off a weekly or a daily timetable - whichever suits you the best. Click on the link to view a short PowerPoint presentation on "How best to use your time". [Time Man](#)

Whenever you are studying, always refer to "[The Principle of Learning](#)"

1. Have a go -- 2. Make mistakes -- 3. Correct them!

Exam Techniques

Keep in mind that it's a timed exam and remember to practise answers in the set time limit. You must know, and stick to, the timing of the paper. This is the most important aspect of Exam Techniques! So many students spend too much time on questions they know a lot about and then cannot finish (or even attempt) other questions on the paper. Generally speaking, you are better off to do two half answered questions than one complete answer in a given amount of time.

Know clearly the format of the paper you are going to sit in each subject. Check Marking Schemes and Examiners' Reports, they are full of really valuable information.

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Studying for Leaving Cert. or Junior Cert exams?

Visit our [Study & Revision Material](#) page and get access to a wide range of educational websites that will really help you to succeed in your exams! Just click on the icon.

Other links that may prove helpful:

[Examinations website](#) (for Marking Schemes/ Examiners' Reports)

[CAO points calculator](#)

[Leaving Cert Timetable 2015](#)

[Junior Cert Timetable 2015](#)

www.careersportal.ie/studyskills

