



The 7 Deadly Mistakes Students Make & How To Avoid Them!



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Deadly Mistake #1

Failure to Have Clearly Defined Written Goals.



Of all the mistakes that students make the failure to regularly set clearly defined, written goals is by far the most common. Would you try to drive around in a new town without a street directory, or would you attempt to sail the globe without a compass, and when you get in a plane do you hear the captain say “O.K folks we have a full tank of petrol, we will be taking off shortly, and I can only pray that we find a runway somewhere before we run out of fuel!”?

Of course not! So why would you leave the journey called your life to chance?

There are many reasons why students fail to write down their life goals.

Firstly, most students are simply not taught at school how to set and achieve goals. No matter how much you may desire to be in control of your life, if you have never been taken, step by step, through the process of exactly how to do it, your chances of success are dramatically reduced.

So why have you not been taught how to write goals at school?

Well like so many of the adult population, most teachers don't know how to set and achieve goals themselves. In fact, some teachers and parents have become jaded broken down by the daily grind of merely *existing* that they have stopped *living* with purpose.

Studies reveal that at best only about 5% of the population takes the time to regularly write down their goals. In fact, in a famous Harvard Business School Study, a class of graduates, were asked “who has a clearly defined written goal for your life after graduation”. Only 3% had taken the time to complete this task.



In a follow up, 20 years later, the researchers discovered an amazing fact. The 3% of graduates who had mastered the art of writing down their goals **each** controlled more wealth than **the other 97% of the students combined**.

Secondly, many people think that they are either too busy to bother with writing down their goals, or that goal setting



is not important enough, for them to commit the time for goal setting and life planning activities.

Unfortunately, it is often these people who end up being caught up in busy work, wasting time & effort or forever running around, attending to the urgent but ultimately unimportant tasks.

They do this because they have not yet identified what is truly important to them.

In fact, converse to what these “busy” people think, investing the time to clearly write down your goals and action steps on a regular basis will save you time and greatly enhance your life success.

What could you do with all the time you save? Perhaps you would rather spend the time doing all the things you love in life like hanging out with friends, going to the beach, or partying for example.

Thirdly, many people believe that setting goals is just about getting things done. This is simply not the case. The following quote in my opinion best sums up what goal setting is all about.

“Goals are what we set in order to become the person we wish to be.”

Jim Rohn

Goal setting then is a process which allows us to focus on the sort of person we dream of becoming, and the quality of life we wish to live. It is far more than just writing out a list of tasks that we feel needs to be done. Goals are also different to dreams or wishes. They are real, concrete, action orientated steps which clearly define how we can reach the potential we were born to express.

Clearly, the best way to ensure your VCE, and life, success is to learn and master the art of goal achieving. You will find information on how to begin this process on our website <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/category/goals/> or , for an advanced goal setting experience, by attending our Roadmap to VCE Success program <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/roadmap-to-vce-success-january-2012-1626/> . For more details can be found on our latest seminars and programs at <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/category/vce-seminars/>

Deadly Mistake #2

Failure to Cultivate the Energy Required For Your Ultimate VCE Success.

Once you have mastered the art of goal achieving you will quickly realize that in order to complete everything you want in life you will probably need to increase your energy levels considerably. It is not uncommon to need 200%, 300% or even 500% more energy that you currently have.



So how do we achieve these levels of energy and vibrancy? Well most of you will love what I am about to tell you.

In order to get more energy we have to spend more.

But before you grab your purses (or wallets) and head out for the nearest shopping centre let me explain what I mean by **S.P.E.N.D M.O.R.E.**



This is an acronym for the following activities:

Sleep
Purpose
Exercise
Nervous System
Diet

Meditation
Oxygen
Recreation
Enjoyment

Sleep: Sleep is a highly complex, and often misunderstood, process controlled by your nervous system. Sleep is needed for proper physiological, neurological, & psychological rest, repair, and regeneration.

Sleep is also critical in transforming and consolidating short term memory into long term memory.

As a teenager your need for sleep is greater than at any time since birth.

However, no formula exists for making up on the time you lose through oversleeping. As much as 30% of all visits to General Practitioners are related to insomnia or sleep dysfunction. Learning how to wake refreshed, recharged and ready for action is a trainable skill.

Purpose: It is essential that we have a reason for building high levels of energy. To know what our purpose for gracing this earth is an essential ingredient in building massive levels of energy. For example if your reason for completing the VCE is only that mum or dad wanted you too, it is unlikely that you will have much motivation, enthusiasm or energy for the task.

However, as an example, do you think you might have more energy if your reason for completing the VCE was to get you into an engineering degree so that you could dedicate the rest of your life to designing affordable, environmentally sustainable housing for the poor? What is your purpose?





Exercise: Common sense dictates that we should all exercise regularly. However, in life common sense is rarely common practice. Movement is a critical process for life. At a cellular level if there is no movement there is no life.

In regards to energy production it may be helpful to think of your body like a rechargeable battery. To get the longest life and maximum energy production from a rechargeable battery it is important that you **drain it fully before recharging**.

Your body is the same, in order to train your body to continually recharge with abundant energy you need to use up your energy stores on a daily basis.

Nervous System: The role of your nervous system is **to control and co-ordinate the function of every cell, tissue and organ in your body**. Therefore, this vital system needs to be maintained in peak working order, throughout our life, for us to have vibrant health and energy. Due to its intimate connection to the nervous system, good spinal function is a crucial ingredient for optimal health.

Unfortunately, many school aged children suffer from spinal damage due to poorly fitted, overweight or incorrectly worn backpacks, from poor sitting habits, bad ergonomics, sports injuries and many other common activities performed every day. We strongly urge you to visit a Chiropractor, who specialize in restoring & maintaining proper spine and nervous system function, on a regular basis to maintain peak health. Go to <http://www.peakpotential.com.au> for more details.

Diet: As much as 80% of disease on the planet today may be linked to poor nutrition. Additionally, in order to have the focus and concentration to excel in the VCE the food choices you make will either help or hinder your chances of success.

It is not only the type of food you consume but the quantity as well when you consume that food, that allows you to control your levels of energy throughout the day. Understanding the way in which eating influences your hormonal, energy, and concentration levels is a key ingredient in your VCE success.



Meditation: The state of meditation is one of the most powerful mind tools on the planet today. Western science is beginning to unravel some of the mysteries of the human brain but the art of meditation has been practiced, in many forms, for thousands of years to develop increased focus, concentration, and health. By learning how to access the alpha brain wave states found in the state of meditation we are opening up an untapped source of power, focus, clarity and energy.



For detailed information about meditation and how it can benefit you visit the VCE students health section of the website.

Oxygen: Oxygen is required for optimal brain function. In fact when you start to get tired, or lose concentration, this is often a signal from your brain to provide it with more oxygen. There are many ways that you can increase the oxygen supply to the brain. Again more of these ways can be found on our website www.vcehelp.com.au

Recreation: To have high levels of energy on a consistent basis it is important to spend some of your time in recreational activities. Have a round of golf, watch a movie, visit a friend or participate in activities that give your mind, body & spirit a break on a regular basis.

Taking a holiday, or just chilling out for a weekend, not only gives you a break from the hectic schedule of the VCE but can also often help you gain a new perspective on the work you have been focused on.



Enjoyment: In order to really have abundant levels of energy it is important that you enjoy what you do. Let's face it, if you really don't enjoy a particular task your motivation to complete it is going to be very low.

Lack of enjoyment and low motivation are not exactly associated with success. For most people the process of studying is not much fun, especially when you could be off doing other things like surfing, hanging out with mates or watching TV.

Many strategies exist for making study more fun. In a classic Simpson's episode Principal Skinner is trapped beneath a pile of old newspapers with only one hand free. Finding a basketball he started dribbling the basketball and made a game of the activity by seeing how many times he could bounce the ball in one hour and then he would try to beat it the next hour.

You see his happiness and enjoyment was not determined by the situation he was in. How could you make a game, or create a challenge for yourself, or of your study experience? It is important to remember that enjoyment is a choice you make just as is a lack of enjoyment. Try and also link your study to your higher purpose or ultimate goals, whatever they may be.



Deadly Mistake #3.

Taking Notes, Not Making Notes.



What is the difference between simply taking notes and making notes? Studies have shown us that the brains ability to retain what we hear is about 7%.

If we take notes our retention jumps to around 50%. However, by learning and applying the most effective Note Making Techniques known today your ability to retain and remember the information you have just learnt can jump to as high as 98%.

But what is happening in schools around Australia is ...

- “Lecture” learning is still prominently used in school and university.
- Students will spend about 80% of class time listening to their teachers and trying to take notes. (Armbruster, 2000)
- Students are making *incomplete notes for study*. Most students only record 20-40% of the most important class ideas (O'Donnell & Dansereau, 1993).
- In addition, approximately *80% of what is not recorded is forgotten after two weeks*. (Boon, 1989).
- Writing/recording speed was too slow compared to speed of the class/lecture. (Ladas,1980)

Most students...

- ✗ try to copy everything verbatim and waste valuable understanding time.
- ✗ lack a personalised system to record, revise and summarise.
- ✗ when revising, will just read over the entire document without actively summarising and preparing their notes.
- ✗ prepare summaries that are inadequate, too large or too wordy.
- ✗ do not have a meaningful purpose for taking the notes.
- ✗ have difficulty determining what the most important information is that needs to be recorded.

Have you ever had the experience where you were copying down notes so quickly that you had no idea what you were recording?

Some basic strategies are:

1. Get active: ask questions of the teacher, draw analogies from the information, read over the information on the board first and record the most important information, definitions and examples.
2. Review and recall soon after learning in a timely fashion (see next deadly mistake)
3. Review and reduce the size of your notes as summaries
4. Make your notes memorable: add colour, use acronyms, mnemonics and stories.

Another important thing to remember is that the most effective note making strategies all start with success physiology.



What is success physiology?

Well what you need to know is that your body, and your learning are largely fueled by emotion and your body is hardwired to your emotions. Let's look at an example. I want you to begin by closing your eyes, in a moment, and I want you to sit as though you were powerful and unstoppable. Furthermore, how would you breathe if you were powerful and unstoppable?

Close your eyes and do it now for 1 minute.

.....

.....

How did you go?

Did you find yourself sitting up straighter, pulling your shoulders back, head up and breathing deeply through your nose? I bet you felt pretty good too.

How did I know that you sat like that? Remember that I didn't ask you to sit or breathe in a certain way, what I asked was to sit and breathe with a particular emotional state. I know because our physiology is hard wired to our emotional state, much like if you were depressed you would usually roll the shoulders forward, put your head down and breathe in a shallow fashion. It is universal.

All around the world human beings adopt a similar physiology dependent on their emotional state. If I was to go further and tell you that memory is all about emotion would it make sense that if we were to get the most out of our learning we had better learn to master our emotions & our physiology?

Unfortunately, in the past it has been possible to go through the entire school system by just learning three R's. These three R's stand for Read, Remember and Regurgitate.

When it comes to long term learning though, this strategy is fatally flawed. You see examiners, and more importantly employers, today are looking more and more at not what you know, & not even what you understand but how you apply what you know and how quickly you can learn a new skill.

In other words they are looking for your ability to get results in a dynamic new world.

You could know more facts than an encyclopedia but unless you can take some of those facts and put them to work for you, you will become obsolete in the modern world.



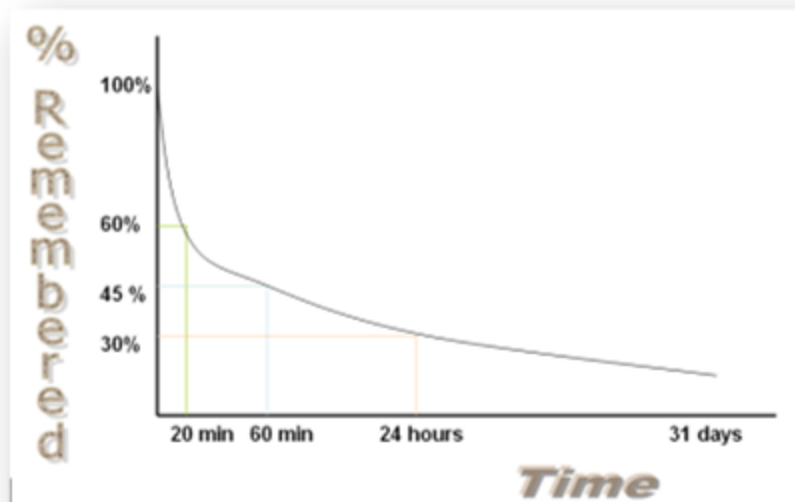
One of the best ways to stay on top of the VCE is to determine how you best learn...that's right Learning How To Learn. It seems bizarre but that's exactly what we do at our VCE seminars.

We help you to identify how you best learn and then give you strategies that are tailored to suit your unique learning styles. Additionally we also show you (and let you practice) accelerated learning techniques which will help to fast-track your VCE and learning. More details can be found on our latest seminars and programs at <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/category/vce-seminars/>

Deadly Mistake #4.

Failing to Review Work in a Timely Fashion.

A German researcher by the name of Hermann Ebbinghaus provided us with a valuable contribution to the field of learning and psychology when he discovered a concept and coined the phrase the **Curve of Forgetting**.



One of the biggest mistakes students make is the failure to review their work in a timely fashion. Many students simply take class note (see Mistake #3) and then do not look at them again until the next assessment task or SAC or worse still preparing for the exam.

When we look at the curve of forgetting what we will see is that if we don't regularly review our notes our ability to retain any of the information is next to zero and far more time is spent in *re-learning the information*.

**Have you ever been perplexed when reading over your school notes and said
"I don't ever remember learning this"?**



Most students get caught up having to re-learn the required curriculum right before the exam when they have limited available time. A far better strategy is to review your work as soon as is practically possible. For highly effective students, that will mean each evening. A short review of 5 minutes per subject will dramatically increase your retention and understanding. Furthermore, it gives you the opportunity to immediately address anything you do not understand with your teacher or support group and permits you to complete any notes that are incomplete.

Deadly Mistake #5.

Failing To Create And Use An Effective Study Planner.

Failing to create and use an effective study planner is actually a symptom of ineffective time management strategies.

We are all given 86400 seconds every day. How we choose to use those seconds is what differentiates VCE success and VCE failure. Nothing helps us to maintain our focus on success better than a well constructed study planner.

For instructions on how to use this planner effectively please turn over the page.

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For more information on managing your time and for over 150 free VCE resources visit: www.vcehelp.com.au

However, very few students are able to effectively plan out their study calendar so that it takes into consideration their social life, family life and work commitments.

So what does it take to become a master at time management?

Clearly identify your highest values – ie what are the most important things in your life.

Learn to prioritize your tasks – put those important things into your life first.

Plan your work then work your plan.

Study planners and calendars are available for free at:

<http://www.vcehelp.com.au/studyplanner>



Deadly Mistake #6. Poor Exam Technique.



You have worked hard, you have studied effectively and you know the work. You are on track to blitz the VCE but you make a series of mistakes in the exam and your world comes crashing down.

Think it can't happen to you?
Think again!

Examiners estimate that as much as 30% of all mistakes in exams and assessment tasks are not a result of a lack of knowledge but from simple, avoidable mistakes as a result of poor examination technique.

Poor technique includes, but is not limited to:

- failing to answer the question asked
- failing to understand the marking scheme
- copying data incorrectly
- and in some cases simply failing to answer all the questions

I created a 10 minute video on the top 5 VCE exam mistakes and how to avoid them.

You can view this video at: <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/the-top-5-vce-exam-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them-92/>

(either click on the link or select the "VCE exams" topic on the website <http://www.vcehelp.com.au>)



Deadly Mistake #7. **Failing to Ask For Help.**



In the adult world, fear of failure, and fear of rejection, are two of the biggest fears which stop people from achieving the success they deserve. Unfortunately, these fears are often learnt at school. Some students are afraid of asking questions for fear of looking like a royal turkey.

In the past they, or someone else, may have voiced a question and have been ridiculed or made fun of as a result. Unfortunately, these fears can often cripple students from achieving the VCE success they are capable of.

Courage does not lie in the absence of fear, but in taking action in spite of fear.

It is in the process of enquiring and making mistakes that the greatest potential for learning occurs.

Learning to ask for help is one of the best strategies you can adopt for your VCE success. You have at your disposal people who genuinely want to see you succeed and are willing to help you get there. Making a list of all the people who are in your corner may include people like your teachers, parents, other family members, friends, librarians, tutors and of course the good folk at www.VCEhelp.com.au 😊

All of these people love to help students who want to help themselves.

Even the best amongst them, though, are incapable of knowing what you don't know if you cannot learn to ask for help. Is it challenging? Yes! But it is far more challenging trying to dig yourself out of the learning void you create when you have stuck your head in the sand.

Learning how to ask for help is also a skill which is trainable. For example, not everybody learns in the same way. Unfortunately with limited resources, time pressures and large class sizes teachers are often limited in their ability to meet your unique learning style.

This does not mean that you are dumb!



It just means that you need to find a different, or better, learning strategy. Asking teachers to describe the material in a way that suits your learning style different way may just allow you to comprehend the lesson they are trying to explain.

If you are more of a Visual learner and therefore want a response that is Visual – try using words like.

- Can you show me?
- Can you draw a diagram?
- Are there any images/mind maps that help to show the relationship?
- Etc

If you are more of an Auditory learner and therefore want a response that is Auditory – try using words like.

- Can you explain/describe to me?
- What's another example?
- It is similar to XYZ?
- What does it sound like?

If you are more of a Physical (Kinaesthetic learner) and therefore want a response that is Physical – try using words like.

- Can you watch me doing it and give me feedback?
- What does it feel like to?

There you have it, the Top 7 Deadly Mistakes Students' Make. So How Do You Avoid these Deadly Mistakes?

Well the first step is awareness which you now have. The second step is to make a commitment to improving in all of the key areas student's commonly fall down in, as highlighted above.

The good news is that www.vcehelp.com.au has done all the hard work for you. We have researched and found the cutting edge strategies known for successful student performance in the VCE and in preparation for Life beyond the VCE and have produced a seminar program to get you motivation, focuses, confident and achieving great results in your VCE.

The Roadmap to VCE Success is that program - more details can be found on our latest seminars and programs at <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/category/vce-seminars/>

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Throughout this year VCEhelp will be providing a number of seminars that help you make the most of your VCE and prepare you for life beyond the VCE. Our upcoming seminars and their details can be found at the VCE help website.

To get a Roadmap to VCE Success you should check out this leading VCE seminar –details can found at our website at <http://www.vcehelp.com.au/category/vce-seminars/>

If you haven't already done so listen to the powerful "7 deadly mistakes students make and how to avoid them" presentation given at the packed out 2008 VCE expo. Go to: www.vcehelp.com.au/7deadlymistakespodcast to listen or download.

Thanks again for joining the VCE help community. I hope to hear your comments, questions and suggestions on the website on this report and many other free resources on the VCEhelp website.

I wish you every success as you work towards your chosen VCE and life goals and aspirations. Remember that success is not a destination but a journey so make the most of your VCE as it will fly by in the blink of an eye.

Cheers,

Heath McGregor
www.VCEhelp.com.au