



# HOW TO USE SMASHING VCE

## TO SUPPORT STUDENTS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STUDY HABITS

To get their students off to a focused start for VCE, many schools provide a study camp for their students. During this time, students bond with each other as a cohort and learn different approaches to study and motivation. While these camps are valuable experiences for students, they are not the best way of teaching study skills. That's because study camps assume that giving one immersive experience at the beginning of the year will be a sufficient foundation for study success over the rest of the year. But think about it – it's like saying one lesson in Biology is enough for students to conquer the whole course.

Just like any other topic or skill, study is something that students will need to learn about and practise over time. *Smashing VCE: How to study and still have a life* helps schools to emphasise the importance of study and students to develop those study skills over the course of the year.

## HOW TO USE SMASHING VCE TO TEACH STUDY SKILLS EACH WEEK

*Smashing VCE* can be used to underpin a weekly approach to teaching study skills in form group (or home group, mentor class, pastoral or tutorial group) sessions.

Each week, teachers could:

- ✦ use the book to teach and discuss one study technique
- ✦ give students set time to use the planner for organising their week and finding time to do homework and study.

**A typical lesson explaining a study strategy from the book might include these two elements:**

### I. UNDERSTAND A STRATEGY:

- ✦ The teacher begins the lesson by emphasising why this strategy is important (using the 'In a Nutshell' section to help).
- ✦ Students read through the explanation of a strategy in *Smashing VCE*.
- ✦ Students discuss what they knew/didn't know about a strategy.

### II. PRACTISE APPLYING THE STRATEGY:

- ✦ Students discuss what subjects/topics they could use this strategy for.
- ✦ Students practise using the strategy on some funny or topical content the teacher supplies (i.e. a funny video or handout about something such as university open days).

Here is an example of what a typical 5-10-minute lesson on a study strategy might look like:



## STUDY STRATEGY FOCUS:

# HIGHLIGHTING IMPORTANT INFORMATION

(For this session, students should have been asked to bring in some reading they have for any of their classes).

### 1. Understand the strategy:

**Teacher:** Okay – today we're going to look at one of the most basic but important study strategies: highlighting important information. It's probably one you already use. Because it's such a basic strategy and you probably already use it – it's important to do it well. If you highlight information like this (teacher highlights everything on a handout and holds it up to show students) – you're not really using this strategy effectively. All of this information can't be important. Good highlighting is about being picky about the information you highlight. We're going to learn about how to do this in a minute.

*But first, let's talk about the subjects you'd use this strategy in. All of you do subjects that have textbooks where you need to read through information and understand it. Tell the person next to you the subjects where you most use the information from your textbooks.*

→ *Students discuss and share examples as a class.*

**Teacher:** Now, let's turn to page...in *Smashing VCE* and read about this strategy.

→ *Students read through the selected pages of *Smashing VCE*.*

### Practise applying the strategy:

**Teacher:** Alright. Now you're going to have a go at this strategy. First, I want you to look at the reading material you brought in with you. Let's follow the steps from *Smashing VCE*. First, skim through it to get an overview of information and work out the most important thing you're looking for. Then, read through it properly. Remember – be picky about the information you highlight: just stuff that is most relevant.

#### IN A NUTSHELL:

*You need strategies to achieve your goals.*



The outline below is a suggestion about how *Smashing VCE* could be used in Term 1 to teach students about a different aspect of study each week:



WEEK	SMASHING VCE IS USED TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOW THEIR UNDERSTANDING BY:
TERM 1: WEEK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The difference between study and homework</li> <li>* How to set effective study goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Setting their own study goals</li> <li>* Coming up with effective/ineffective study goals</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Organising their week</li> <li>* Identifying homework and study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identifying homework and study</li> <li>* Filling in their planner</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Previewing content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Using course outlines to identify an upcoming topic in one of their subjects</li> <li>* Identifying a strategy they can use to preview this upcoming topic</li> <li>* Sharing suggestions about videos/video sites that are good for previewing content</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Asking questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identifying a current topic they are studying in each of their subjects</li> <li>* Circling the topics they are least confident about</li> <li>* Brainstorming as many questions as they can about each of these topics</li> <li>* Identifying a strategy to get these questions answered</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Highlighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identifying a topic they need to read about in the coming week</li> <li>* Identifying what is important information to highlight about that topic</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Note-taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Watching through a short, topical video about motivation, mental health, GAP years, etc...and taking notes</li> <li>* Discussing with each other how they took notes</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Representing information as a flowchart or table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Representing one concept, process or idea they have learnt about in a particular class in the previous week as a flowchart or table</li> <li>* Sticking their flowcharts/tables on a wall and looking at each other's work</li> </ul>
TERM 1: WEEK 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Summarising in own words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Summarising some information from the GAT writing task 1 in their own words</li> </ul>

A similar structure could be followed each week of Term 2 to teach students about study strategies for remembering information and practising skills.