



*growth through effort!*

## Introducing Effort Tracking

Education isn't black and white, but one thing on which teachers, parents and students can all agree, is the desire for all students to do their best. However, the systemic measures available to determine students' progress are exam results and academic grades, which indicate relative levels of achievement rather than whether a student is trying his or her best.

*"The great work being done by Effort Tracking goes straight to the heart of focusing on kids' effort and focusing on kids' growth at the same time. It's made a real difference to our students."*

*Michael Parker, Head of Oxley College, Bowral, (2014-2018), current Headmaster of Newington College, Sydney*

The problem with this approach, is that some students are naturally high academic fliers but expend relatively little effort, while some are low achievers despite putting in their best efforts. Neither group is fairly assessed or rewarded by school systems, in terms of their respective endeavours to do their best. This approach is potentially damaging to *all* students, and:

- reinforces fixed-mindsets in students *and* teachers about student ability
- stereotypes high achievers as 'smart' and 'gifted and talented'
- labels low achievers as 'slow' and 'low ability'
- advantages some students over others (those with supportive families)
- disadvantages students without such support networks

Only a small number of lower achieving students are able to use negative academic results as a motivating factor. To do so involves possessing innate resilience, a growth mindset and 'academic buoyancy'. Yet these characteristics rarely develop through persistent systemic failure. Most give up on the dream of translating long-term efforts into higher academic achievement. Those few, remarkable students who persist, are rarely rewarded within school systems, despite fulfilling their potential.

Why are we not measuring and reporting on reliable indicators of student effort? Rewarding effort, in addition to achievement, not only highlights which students are doing their best, but encourages *all* students to value and invest in the processes of learning, developing growth-mindsets about their own academic ability and subsequent achievement. Focusing on effort, also reduces the stress and anxiety felt by many students from the pressures of high-stakes tests and examinations and decreases the 'don't try, can't fail' mentality, prevalent in many students' thinking.

*"Effort tracking is important as it acknowledges those students who try very hard but do not achieve a high academic result"*

*Teacher/ Year 10 Pastoral Tutor*

## But how do you measure effort?

Effort Tracking is a ground-breaking system, developed to measure and track student effort. Evolving over the past decade in two Sydney schools, Effort Tracking as a methodology, has been progressively refined, breaking-up student effort into three components: Diligence, Engagement and Behaviour, each with its own rubric and grading levels. Importantly, Effort Tracking includes both teacher and student perspectives in the grading process, using the results to look forwards, not backwards, with 'formative reporting' rather than the traditional summative reporting. By aggregating the individual grades across all subjects, a higher-order Effort Score is established for each student, showing to what extent a student is 'doing their best' or 'pushing down on the gas pedal' at a particular time.

*"It has given me the ability to reflect on my efforts during the school year. I think that the results make you think about changing your attitude to learning"*

Year 10 Boy

## Data-driven conversations

Importantly, Effort Scores are used to frame forward-looking, student-led, goal-setting conversations between students and teachers, at the beginning of each new school Term, creating a motivational impetus to improve in areas of potential growth. These coaching conversations, allow students to reflect on differences in student and teacher perceptions of effort, and help to align shared expectations of observable classroom behaviours. They allow for a meaningful goal-setting activity, based on measurable targets, highlighting explicit strategies for improving effort in specific areas or more broadly across subjects.

*"The effort tracking data has been really useful in understanding how students are progressing, in terms of dispositions which we know will best set them up for the future. Having a student self-reflection piece in conjunction with their teachers' rating, is a powerful tool for forward-looking, data-driven coaching conversations."*

Sean Corcoran, Head of Secondary School, SCECGS Redlands, Sydney, NSW

## The positive effects of Effort Tracking include:

- Development of growth mindsets in all students
- Alignment of teacher and student expectations
- Helping teachers develop growth mindsets about all students' abilities
- Highlighting students who are doing their best, irrespective of their current achievement level
- Allowing effortful low achievers to experience systemic success and hence build confidence
- Highlighting 'high ability' students who are not trying their best
- Highlighting students in need of intervention (academically and/or pastorally)
- Tracking student effort to ensure all students fulfil their potential
- Creating a systemic focus on the processes of learning
- Enabling parents, teachers and schools to celebrate students who try their best
- Reducing student stress and anxiety about examinations
- Building students' confidence in their ability to grow through effort
- Giving teachers a powerful lens through which to 'know each student'
- Allowing students to view their education as a long-term, rather than short-term, journey
- Develop lifelong learning in all students
- Building positive educational values and wellbeing

Classes	Students	Biology Year 12 2 - Effort Tracking
Biology Year 11 1	Boyce, Zoya	DILIGENCE ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR
Biology Year 12 2	Dominguez, Indigo	<b>DILIGENCE</b> Conscientiousness in class and at home, completion and quality of work to best ability of
Science Year 10 3	Haines, Kameron	<b>Boyce, Zoya</b>
Science Year 7_2	Leon, Coby	1 - UNSATISFACTORY 2 - FAIR 3 - GOOD
Science Year 7_7	Mac, Roseanne	<b>Dominguez, Indigo</b>
Tutor Year 8 DQ	Medina, Arian	1 - UNSATISFACTORY 2 - FAIR 3 - GOOD
	Meyer, Kaya	<b>Haines, Kameron</b>
	Quintana, Favour	1 - UNSATISFACTORY 2 - FAIR 3 - GOOD
	Sanchez, Lamar	
	Walker, Izabella	
	Whitney, Gurveer	

*"Effort tracking puts into perspective how hard I try in class, and makes me realise I can do even better"*  
Year 11 Girl

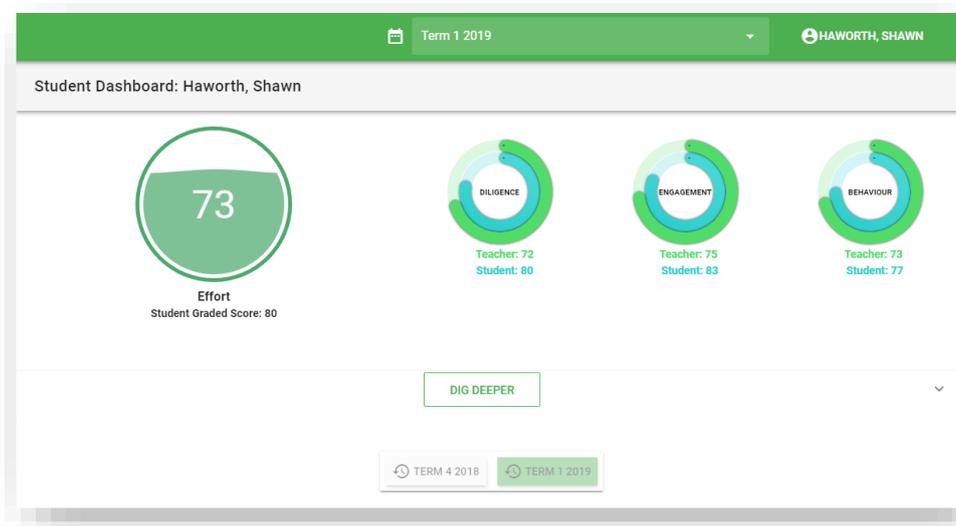
## Research-based methodology

Effort Tracking is a research-based approach to improving intrinsic motivation in students, helping to develop lifelong learning habits in a positive educational framework. Building on the important work of Dweck, Duckworth, Hattie, Seligman and others, Effort Tracking is focused on shifting schools' cultural 'success-focus' from academic achievement alone, towards more nurturing indicators of long-term attainment. For more information about the research behind Effort Tracking, see [efforttracking.com/research](http://efforttracking.com/research).

*"The Effort tracking interviews were particularly helpful in bonding with the Tutor group, and for students to see my value in their school lives for the upcoming year"*  
New Teacher/ Year 12 Pastoral Tutor

## Effort Tracking App

Effort Tracking has developed an extensive school-customisable App, to facilitate collection of student and teacher effort grading. It also provides a mechanism for students and teachers to track and display data dynamically on student dashboards, increasing student engagement in their learning progress. In order to ensure security and confidentiality, every school has a dedicated database on our locally-hosted secure server.



*"I feel like effort tracking is great as it shows you how far you have come and can serve as either a reward (which feels great) or a reminder to focus and concentrate more in school"*  
Year 8 Boy

## Further information

For further information, including demonstration access to the Effort Tracking App and an example licence agreement, please contact Robin Nagy at [robin.nagy@efforttracking.com](mailto:robin.nagy@efforttracking.com). Additional information can also be found on our website at [www.efforttracking.com](http://www.efforttracking.com).

*"It gives me confidence and reassurance ... to make sure I understand how to improve and be on the same page as my teachers"*  
Year 9 Girl