

Targets are terrible

Business



Targets. Predicted grades. Aiming to push people harder and harder until they get the best grade they can, these letters/numbers have been haunting students for endless years.

What a terrible idea to try and make students work to their best ability. As a year 11 student preparing to do my GCSES, all my options have predicted grades for me to hear repeatedly by teachers. The new grading system by the government has changed A*-U to 9-1 (8 being an A* and 9 being an A** if your grade is in the top 5% of the country). Well can you guess what mine, and many of my peers, target grades are? They're mainly 9's! They are suggesting that over 5% of this one school should be top 5% in the country which is simply impossible. My predicted grades are playing a big part in my life – but they aren't encouraging me to work any harder. Infact, they are increasingly decreasing my self confidence in my work and exams.

I had parent's evening recently, and was told I was under-achieving in every subject. The funny thing is, I am currently on 7's (grade A in the old system) for all of my subjects. However, this seemingly “ isn't good enough” for a 15 year old who still has a few months before their GCSES. Being told 7's/A's aren't at standards purely because your target grade is a 9 does not only devastate you but completely destroy any happiness and hope you had. Also, it creates unnecessary punishment for those who are apparently “ under achieving”. It is not only me who has experienced this but many other students too.

Interventions are heavily encouraged in my school and often made compulsory as punishments if you under achieve in exams or classwork. In a

recent physics exam, I achieved a 6 (or a B) and a fellow classmate also got the same grade as me, but a few marks below. I was made to go to an intervention as my target at the time was a 7, and I did not reach this. However, my peers target grade was a 6 and therefore did not have to re sit the exam, despite actually getting less marks than me. Don't get me wrong, I am completely for hard work and aiming to get the best possible results I can. But being put down and classed as an "under achiever" seems completely unacceptable to me and easily ruins any confidence people have in themselves.

We should be able to set our own targets or they should atleast be made to be more reasonable. Maybe this way we will be able to work harder without feeling that we have to do it in order to: not let people down, be labelled or feel worthless about ourselves.