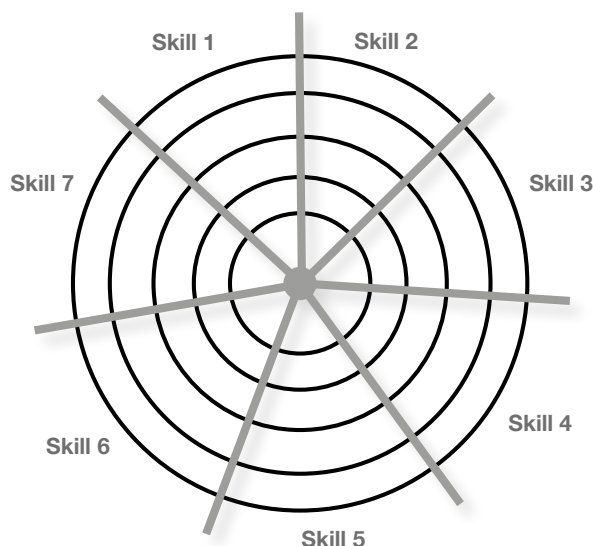


## 26. Practice Activity: Know the Skills

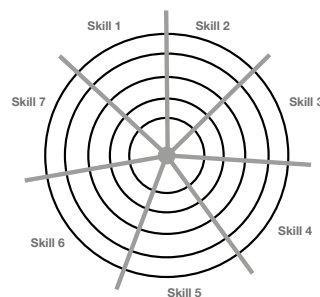
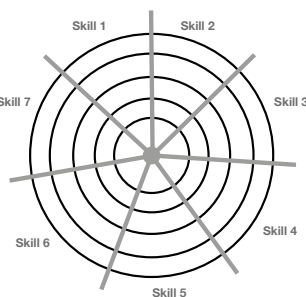
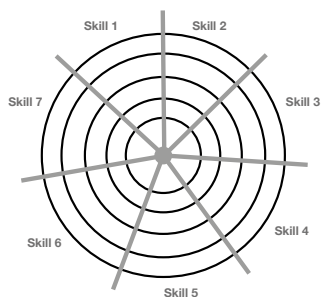
It's almost impossible to practise the component skills of a subject if you don't know what those skills are. Once you do know, you can put them into a target diagram like the one below. Target diagrams like this are used by sports psychologists when working with athletes.



The slice of the target diagram is coloured in depending on how confident and practised you feel with a particular skill – a fully coloured in slice for a skill that you feel is fully developed and a totally empty slice for a skill that needs a lot of work.

Meet your teachers and ask them, 'What are the seven skills I need to master to get an A?' Read your syllabuses and look at the assessment objectives (AOs), which are the skills the examiner is looking for. Mark schemes will offer you a description of those skills too. Examiner's reports will outline the skills students are executing well, and what they tend to do badly. Once you think you've got the skills, see if you can sum up each of them in a concise sentence to make sure you've really understood them.

Then you can use the empty target diagrams in this section to begin a regular tracking of how you are using those skills in your own work:



### Final Thoughts

Here are three things you could try, which we have seen students do to make very swift progress in a short space of time:

- 1 Ask your teachers for an example piece of work – it could be from another student – with the skills you want to improve demonstrated at grade C, for example, or B, or A; whichever grade is the one you want. Then analyse what is missing from your work. Focus on things you need to ‘do more of’ and things you need to ‘do less of’.
- 2 Find a student you know who executes a particular skill better than you do, and work alongside them, watching how they do it.
- 3 Move quickly in and out of exam conditions, practising your skills in bursts. Rather than do a complete exam paper over two hours, find a handful of questions, work out how long you’d need to complete them if they were part of an exam (twelve minutes, say, or fifteen) and take yourself into exam conditions for that amount of time. Then assess the quality of your work – or hand it to a teacher for checking.