The Life-Changing Impact of Life Skills Instruction

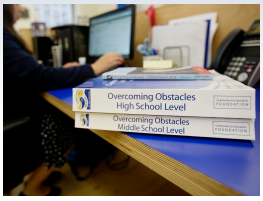
Erin Capone
Executive Director
Overcoming Obstacles
@OOLifeSkills

Solutions to the Dropout Crisis

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University

Overcoming Obstacles

- NDPC **2013 Crystal Star Award** recipient
- 22-year-old education reform organization
- Ensuring **ALL** children learn life skills



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Today's Objectives

We will…

- Define life skills and their importance
- Examine ways of teaching life skills and how these skills reduce drop out
- Identify key elements of successful life skills programs
- Review next steps for teaching life skills

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What are life skills?

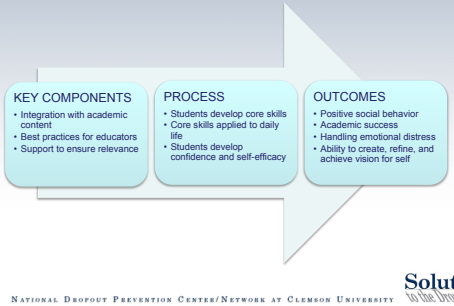
Life skills are the competencies that all people need to fully participate in life.

Examples

- Time management
- Conflict resolution
- Critical thinking
- Collaboration
- Financial management

Foundation Skills

How does life skills instruction work?

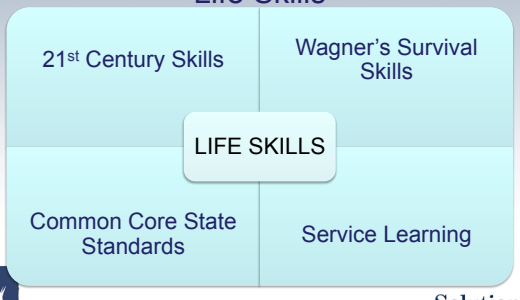


How do we know life skills instruction works?

- Current research
- Examples from Overcoming Obstacles' 22-year track record
- Key points for educators assessing their own effectiveness

Gus's Story

Initiatives in Support of Life Skills



Why do life skills matter?

"These skills are the foundation of social interaction in all contexts, and shortcomings in these areas diminish potential accomplishments in academic and other areas."

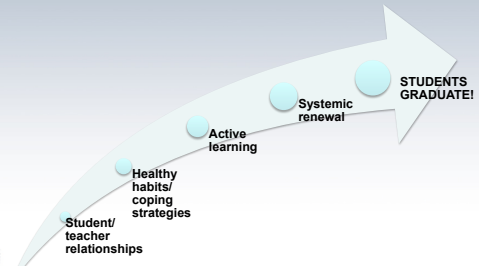
Source: Elias, Maurice, et al. "Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators." Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1997.

The Power of Life Skills

- Improved academics
- More commitment to school
- Better behavior
- Less emotional distress

Source: Durlak, Joseph, et al. "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions." *Child Development* 82.1 (2011): 475-501.

How does life skills instruction prevent dropout?



Who thinks life skills are important?

- Educators
- Parents
- Employers
- Community leaders
- Researchers
- Students
- YOU!

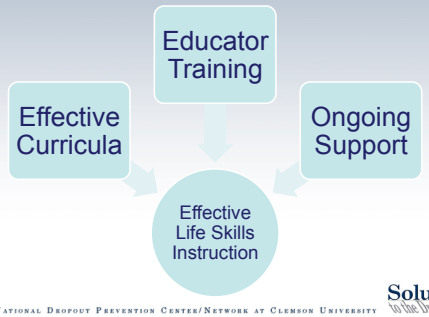
Skills Employers Value

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Decision making
- Time management
- Critical thinking

Source: "The Candidate Skills/Qualities Employers Want." National Association of Colleges and Employers, 10 Oct. 2013. Web.

Apples to Apples

Components of Effective Life Skills Instruction



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How are schools implementing life skills instruction?

- Advisory
- Bullying prevention
- Core content classes
- Service learning
- Guidance sessions
- Peer mentoring
- College & career planning

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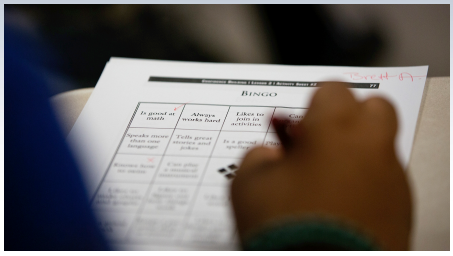
What does life skills instruction look like?



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Bringing Life Skills to Your Students

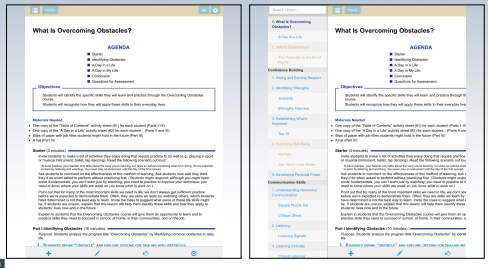
- Find a strong life skills program.
- Set SMART goals.
- Identify roles and expectations.
- Get everyone on board.
- Regularly review successes and challenges.

Congratulations! You've completed Step 1.

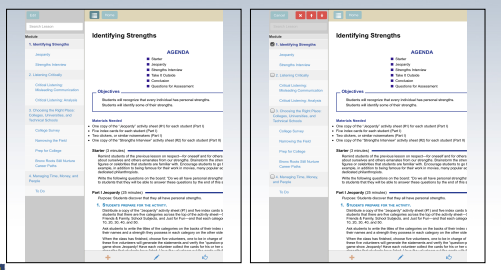
Overcoming Obstacles is free to any educator.

- Free curriculum online or through iTunes
- On-demand training videos and webinars
- Pacing plans and implementation support

Overcoming Obstacles App



Overcoming Obstacles App



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How will tomorrow be different from today?

- You now have all the resources you need to bring life skills instruction to your students.
- Decide when you will implement life skills instruction and then begin.
- Watch students reap the benefits and build brighter futures for themselves!

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Thank you!

For more information, call **(877) 840-9606**, visit **www.overcomingobstacles.org**, or download the iPad app on **iTunes**.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

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