The Life-Changing Impact of Life Skills Instruction

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Overcoming Obstacles

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

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
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

Communication

Decision Making

Goal Setting

KEY COMPONENTS
• Program with outcomes
• Evidence for educators
• Supports to ensure relevance

PROCESS
• Students develop core skills
• Core skills applied to daily life
• Students develop confidence and self-efficacy

OUTCOMES
• Positive social behavior
• Academic success
• Handling emotional distress
• Ability to create, manage, and achieve visions for self

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

- 21st Century Skills
- Wagner’s Survival Skills
- Common Core State Standards
- Service Learning
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.”


The Power of Life Skills

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


How does life skills instruction prevent dropout?

- Healthy habits/coping strategies
- Student/teacher relationships
- Systemic renewal
- Active learning
- Students GRADUATE!
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


Apples to Apples

21st Century Skills
Social & Emotional Learning
Character Education
Tools for Success
Life Skills Instruction

Source: National Student Preparation Center/Network at Clemson University, 2008.
Components of Effective Life Skills Instruction

Effective Life Skills Instruction
- Educator Training
- Effective Curricula
- Ongoing Support

How are schools implementing life skills instruction?

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

What does life skills instruction look like?
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

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!

Thank you!

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