

The Life-Changing Impact of Life Skills Instruction

Erin Capone

Executive Director

Overcoming Obstacles

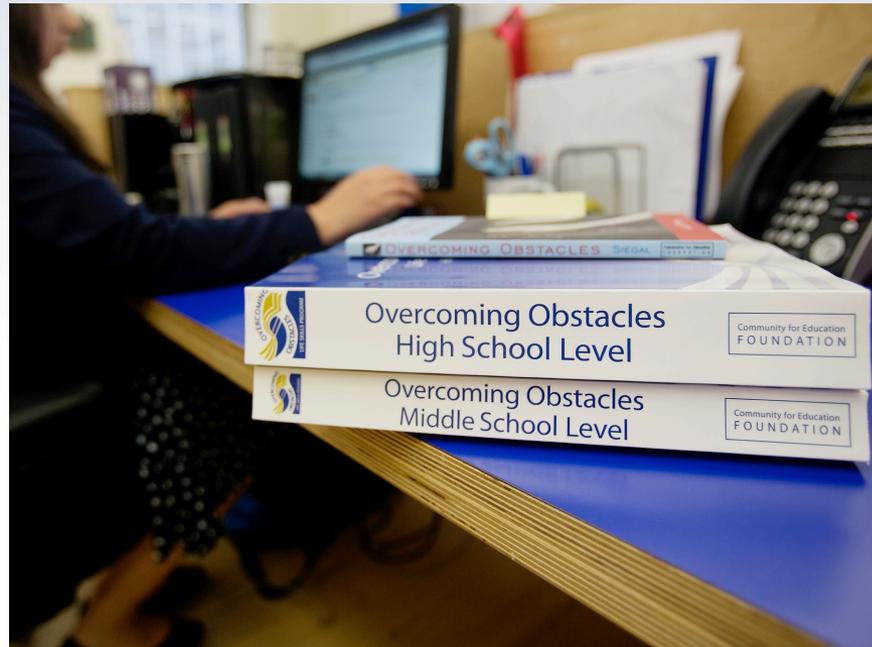
@OOLifeSkills



Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis

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



How does life skills instruction work?

KEY COMPONENTS

- Integration with academic content
- Best practices for educators
- Support 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, refine, and achieve vision for self



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

LIFE 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.”



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

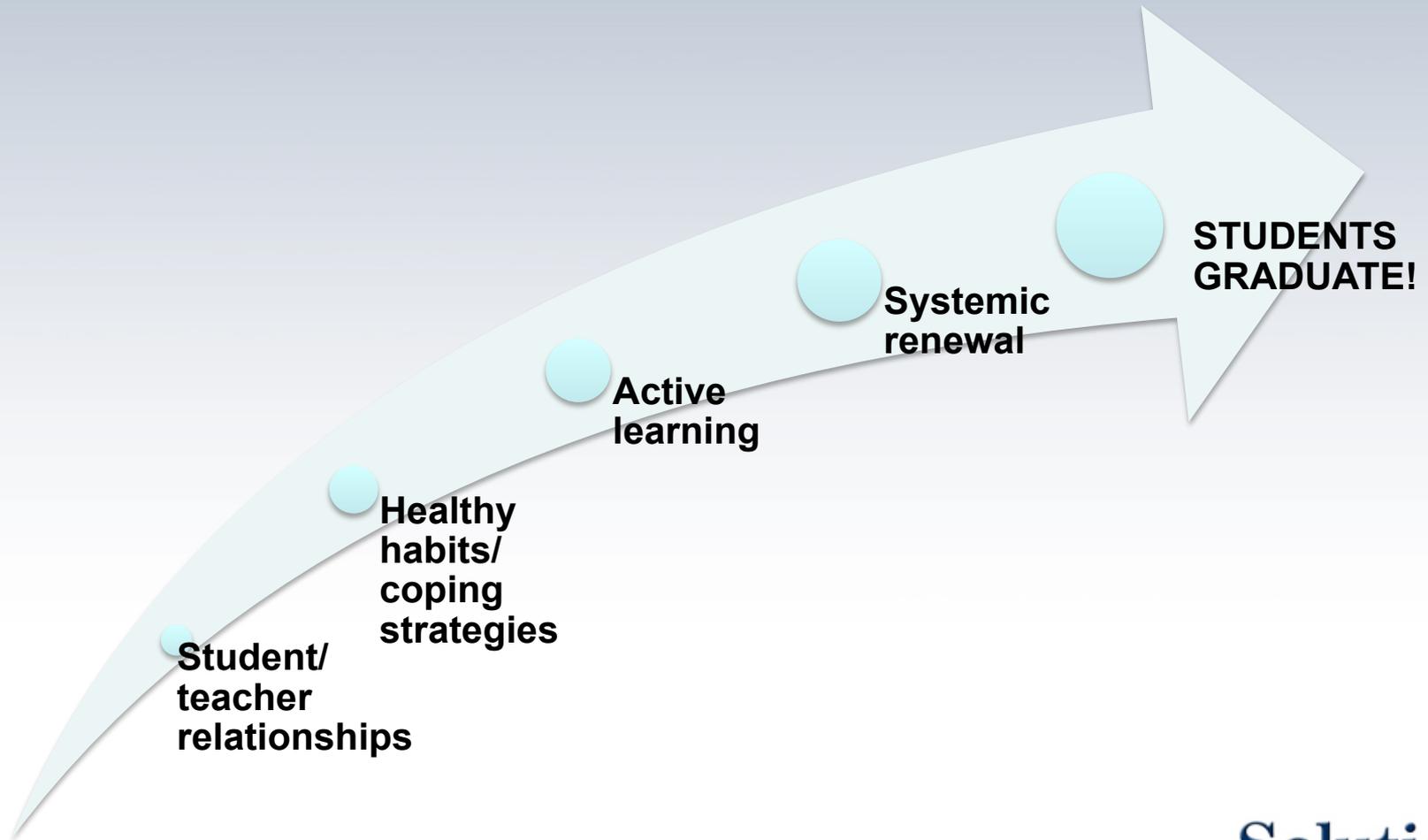
Better behavior

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

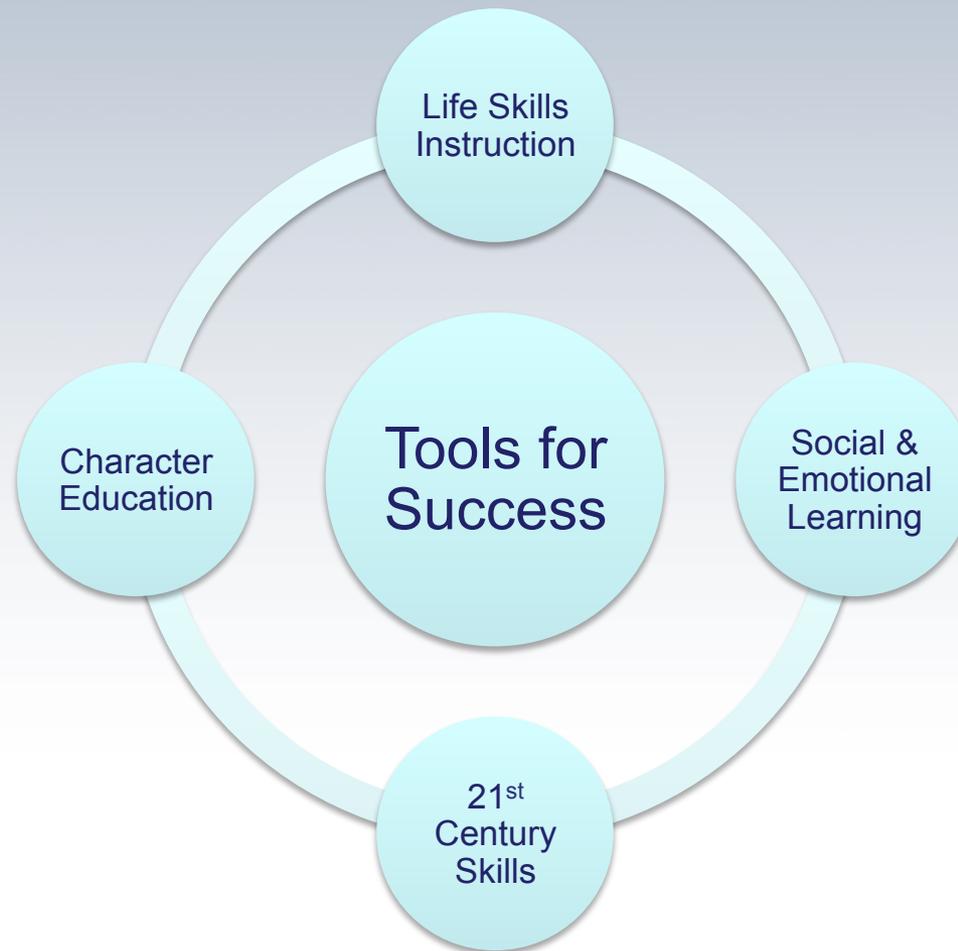
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Decision making
- Time management
- Critical thinking



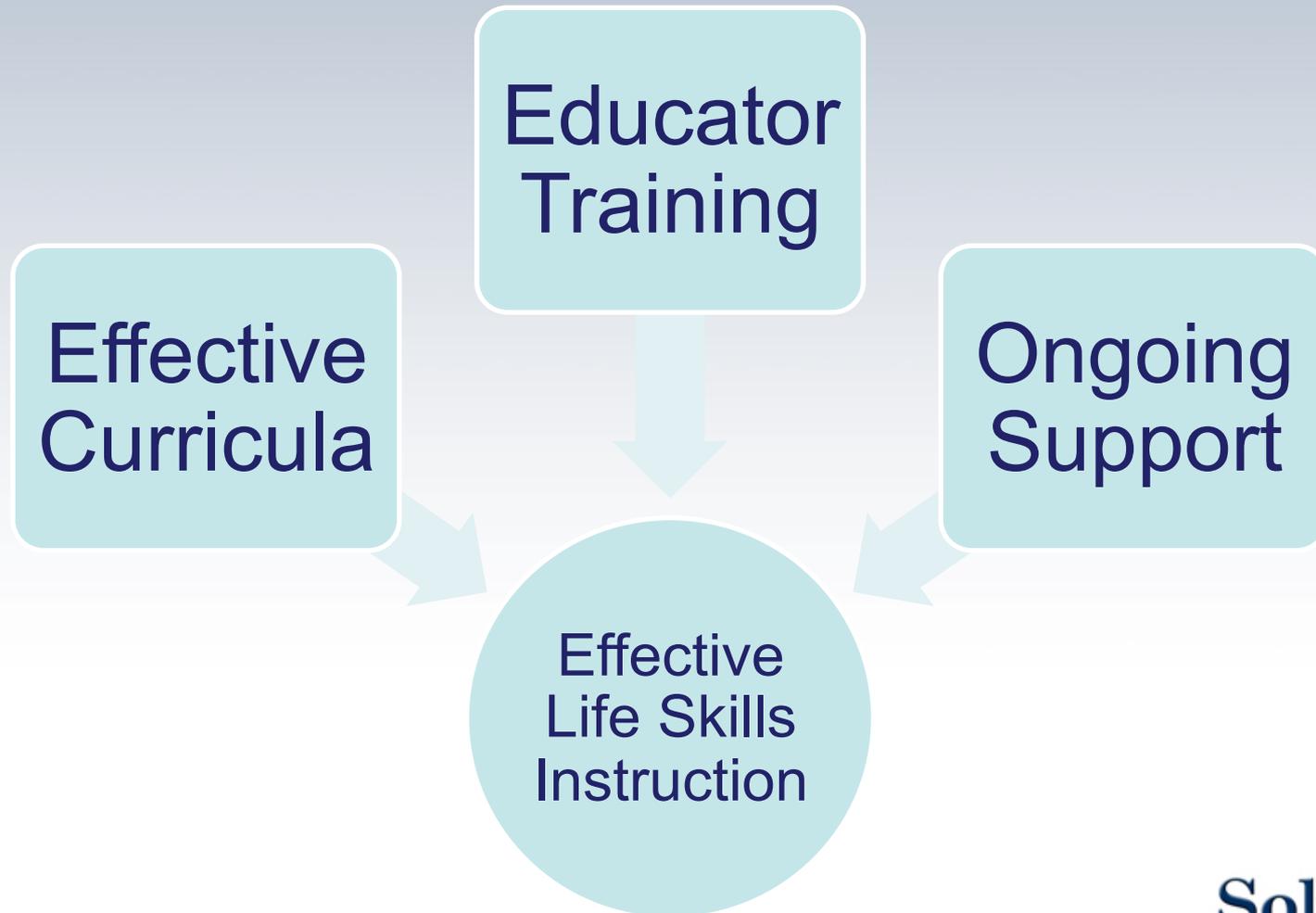
Source: “The Candidate Skills/Qualities Employers Want.” National Association of Colleges and Employers, 10 Oct. 2013. Web.



Apples to Apples



Components of Effective Life Skills Instruction

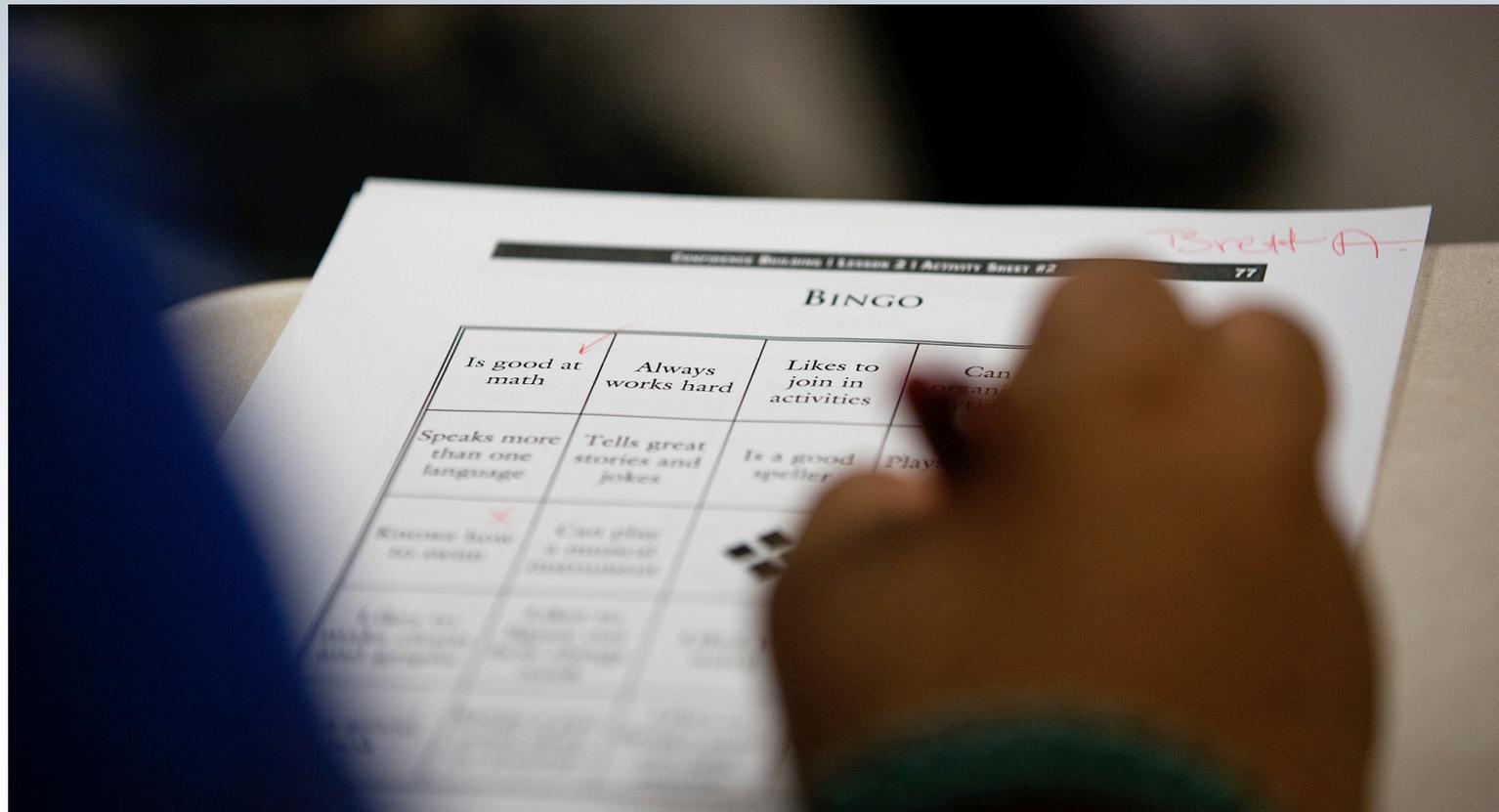


How are schools implementing life skills instruction?

- 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

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What Is Overcoming Obstacles?

AGENDA

- Starter
- Identifying Obstacles
- A Day in a Life
- A Day in My Life
- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the specific skills they will learn and practice through the Overcoming Obstacles course.

Students will recognize how they will apply these skills to their everyday lives.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the "Table of Contents" activity sheet (#1) for each student (Parts I-III)
- One copy of the "A Day in a Life" activity sheet (#2) for each student (Parts II and III)
- Slips of paper with job titles students might hold in the future (Part III)
- A hat (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Invite students to make a list of activities they enjoy doing that require practice to do well (e.g., playing a sport or musical instrument, ballet, tap dancing). Read the following scenario out loud:

At band practice, your teacher only talks about the song you're learning, but does so without explaining what he is doing. You're expected to learn by listening and watching. You never play an instrument until the day of the first concert.

Ask students to comment on the effectiveness of this method of learning. Ask students how well they think they'd do when asked to perform without practicing first. *(Students might respond: although you might learn some fundamentals, you can't learn just by watching; you need to practice to improve your technique; you need to know where your skills are weak so you know what to work on.)*

Point out that for many of the most important skills we need in life, we don't always get sufficient practice before we're expected to demonstrate them. Often, they are skills we learn by watching others, which students have determined is not the best way to learn. Invite the class to suggest what some of these life skills might be. If students are unsure, explain that this lesson will help them identify these skills and how they apply to students' lives now and in the future.

Explain to students that the Overcoming Obstacles course will give them an opportunity to learn and to practice skills they need to succeed in school, at home, in their communities, and on the job.

Part I Identifying Obstacles (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students analyze the program title "Overcoming Obstacles" by identifying common obstacles in daily life.

1. STUDENTS DEFINE "OBSTACLE" AND EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH OBSTACLES.

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1. What Is Overcoming Obstacles?

A Day In a Life

2. Setting Expectations

The Preamble to the Bill of Rights

Confidence Building

1. Giving and Earning Respect

2. Identifying Strengths

Jeopardy

Strengths Interview

3. Establishing What's Important

Top 10

4. Improving Well-Being

MyPlate

Say Yes to Less Stress

5. Developing Personal Power

Communication Skills

1. Understanding Nonverbal Communication

Square Puzzle Set

Critique Sheet

2. Listening

Listening Signals

3. Listening Critically

Critical Listening:

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Overcoming Obstacles App

Edit
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Module

1. Identifying Strengths

- Jeopardy
- Strengths Interview

2. Listening Critically

- Critical Listening: Misleading Communication
- Critical Listening: Analysis

3. Choosing the Right Place: Colleges, Universities, and Technical Schools

- College Survey
- Narrowing the Field
- Prep for College
- Bronx Roots Still Nurture Career Paths

4. Managing Time, Money, and People

- To Do

Identifying Strengths

AGENDA

- Starter
- Jeopardy
- Strengths Interview
- Take It Outside
- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize that every individual has personal strengths.
Students will identify some of their strengths.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the "Jeopardy" activity sheet (#1) for each student (Part I)
- Five index cards for each student (Part I)
- Two clickers, or similar noisemakers (Part I)
- One copy of the "Strengths Interview" activity sheet (#2) for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Remind students of the previous lesson on respect—for oneself and for others about ourselves and others emanates from our strengths. Brainstorm the strong figures or celebrities that students are familiar with. Encourage students to go 1 example, in addition to being famous for their work in movies, many popular and dedicated philanthropists.

Write the following questions on the board: "Do we all have personal strengths" to students that they will be able to answer these questions by the end of this s

Part I Jeopardy (25 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover that they all have personal strengths.

1. STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THE ACTIVITY.

Distribute a copy of the "Jeopardy" activity sheet (#1) and five index cards to students that there are five categories across the top of the activity sheet—Friends & Family, School Subjects, and Just for Fun—and that each category 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50.

Ask students to write the titles of the categories on the backs of their index cards their names and a strength they possess in each category on the other side

When the class has finished, choose five volunteers, one to be in charge of these five volunteers will generate the statements and verify the "question-p game show Jeopardy! Have each volunteer collect the cards for his or her category that students have listed. Have the volunteers ask the questions at the

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NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER/NETWORK AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

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.

