



Life Skills Program Now Offered for Free

by Jillian Blacksmith-Reed | February 02, 2012

Through a new “Gifting Initiative” the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program, a program designed to help students gain crucial life skills, will now be available free of charge to any school willing to implement the program into their curriculum.

Already implemented into schools in New York City, Charleston, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Jersey City, and Los Angeles, the program has helped over 2.5 million students.

The program offers lesson plans and curriculum materials to help students in the following areas that are not only critical to life beyond school, but also toward preparation for college: confidence, responsibility, respect for self and others, teamwork, assertive behavior, time management, stress management, maintaining a positive attitude, study and test-taking techniques, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

However, Erin Capone, executive director of Community for Education Foundation, the nonprofit organization that oversees the program, explained that many schools have lacked the funding and resources to implement the program into their curriculum.

“With the program now available to schools at no cost through the Gifting Initiative,” Capone said in a statement, “Community for Education Foundation is tirelessly working with educators across the country to bring Overcoming Obstacles to their districts, and we will continue until every school has access to this successful life skills program.”

According to a statement by Community for Education, these skills represent relevant skills that students need to survive in the outside world. The term “relevant skills” has been a buzz word in many attempts to reform education. However, many have different ideas on what skills should be taught.

Harold G. Levine, president of the board of directors of West Sacramento Early College Prep school and dean of the University of California, Davis, school of education explains in a piece for The Sacramento Bee:

“What should educators in our public schools focus on? Depending upon whom you ask, you'll get widely different answers. Reading and math is one typical response. A return to the "old days" when California had a broad curriculum that included science, the arts, and shop is another. College-going skills. Skills to succeed in the world of work. 21st-century thinking skills has also found its place as a frequent answer. And, of course, high performance on the state's standardized tests is often an explicit or implicit response.”

This program hopes to provide additional options for schools to help students in choosing their career paths.

Additionally, the program will also provide professional training courses for teachers as well. These courses are designed to introduce teachers to the methodology and structure of the program, give them hands on experience with the course materials and give assistance in implementing the materials.

In order for schools to qualify to obtain this program for their school as a part of the Gifting Initiative, the following criteria needs to be met:

- Commit to using the program in at least one class period per week
- Create a detailed implementation plan outlining how the program will be used
- Complete teacher and student surveys that measure the program's impact
- Participate in teacher training workshops

Jillian Blacksmith-Reed is a writer for 360 Education Solutions