

Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Education Program Educator Survey: Curriculum Implementation and Student Impact

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Survey Highlights

This report presents findings from the Educator Survey as part of an independent evaluation of the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program (OO) conducted by the Riley Institute at Furman University and funded by the Community for Education Foundation. The primary goals of the survey were: 1) to explore how and to what extent educators across the country are implementing Overcoming Obstacles and 2) to understand the perception of educators across the country of the program's impact on students and their schools.

The survey was administered during October of 2016 via email to educators who downloaded the curriculum from the Overcoming Obstacles website. Approximately 1500 educators responded to the survey. Survey respondents were directed to different survey paths based on the degree to which they implemented Overcoming Obstacles during the 2015-2016 academic year. All data were collected anonymously in order to encourage open and honest feedback.

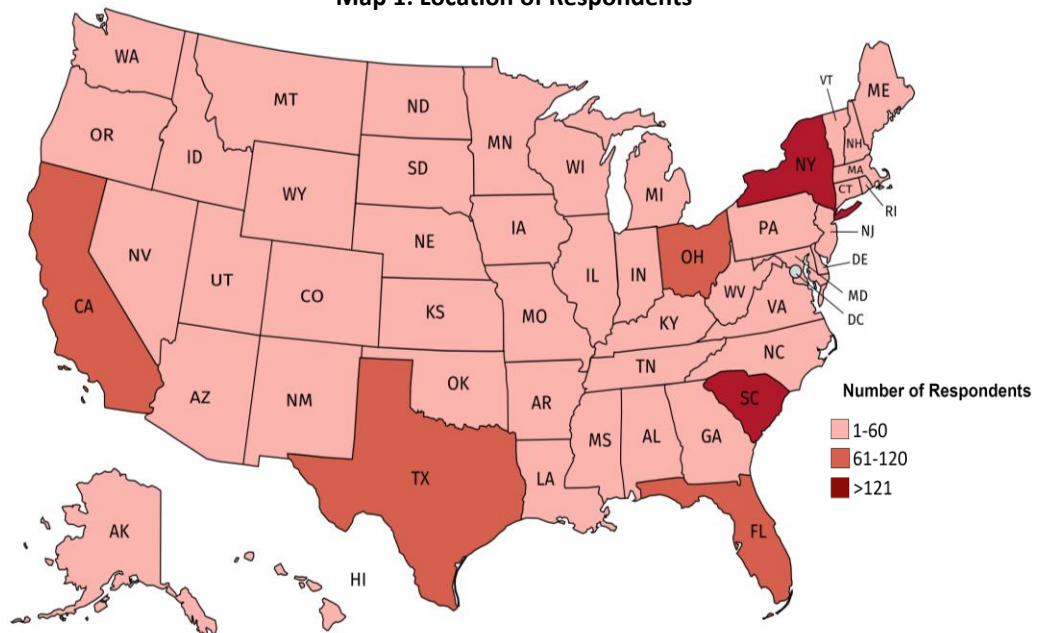
Of the survey's major highlights:

- Most survey respondents are classroom teachers, however, a significant number of guidance counselors, assistant teachers and student advisors responded to the survey.
- The states most frequently represented by the survey respondents are South Carolina, New York, Florida, California, Ohio, and Texas.
- Educators indicate that they most often deliver Overcoming Obstacles curriculum on a weekly basis during student advisory periods with the average length of each session between 30 and 45 minutes.
- The majority of educators who implemented Overcoming Obstacles during the 2015-2016 academic year report that its lessons are beneficial to students' emotional, social, and academic development and help students develop skills such as communication, problem solving, stress management, decision-making, and goal setting. Analyses showed that these results were statistically significant.
- The majority of educators who implemented Overcoming Obstacles during the 2015-2016 academic year believe that it positively impacts student outcomes such as classroom behavior, engagement, attendance, and preparation for the future. Analyses showed that these results were statistically significant.
- Overcoming Obstacles is most frequently praised for its flexibility, organization, and ability to generate discussion and keep students engaged.
- The majority of educators who implemented Overcoming Obstacles during the 2015-2016 academic year would recommend it to their colleagues.

Respondent Demographics

- **62%** of respondents are employed in public schools; **6%** are employed in charter schools; **5%** are employed in denominational or non-denominational private schools; and **10%** are employed in other educational settings including nontraditional schools, adult education programs, and/or detention centers; **17%** of respondents are educators that work outside of the classroom in community environments
- **48%** of respondents are teachers or assistant teachers; **15%** are guidance counselors or student advisors; **11%** are social workers; **5%** are afterschool care providers; **4%** are administrators; and **17%** hold other positions including special education service providers, curriculum/instructional coaches, and vocational coordinators
- There are several international respondents, as well as at least one from every U.S. state and the District of Columbia (see **Map 1**)

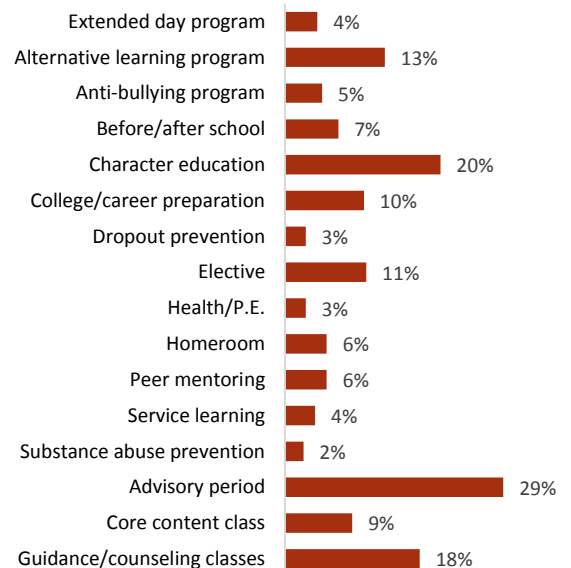
Map 1: Location of Respondents



Curriculum and Instruction

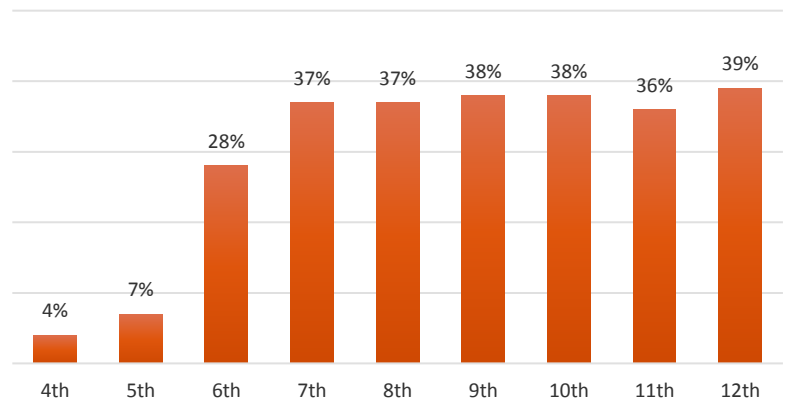
- Curriculum was most often delivered during the student’s advisory period (see **Chart 2**)
- The most frequently utilized middle school module was **Goal Setting**; **93%** of respondents found this module helpful or very helpful
- The most frequently utilized high school modules were **Communication Skills** and **Decision Making Skills**; **89%** of respondents found these modules helpful or very helpful
- **54%** of respondents delivered curriculum weekly; **16%** delivered it daily; **15%** delivered it monthly; **8%** delivered it bi-monthly; **7%** responded with an answer not listed on the survey

Chart 2: Curriculum Delivery Settings



- **43%** of respondents report that the average length of each OO session was 45 minutes; **29%** report that the average session length was 30 minutes; and **17%** report that the average session length was 1 hour; **9%** report that the average session length was less than 30 minutes; and **2%** responded with an answer not listed on the survey
- Delivery of OO curriculum is spread somewhat evenly across all middle and high school grades (see **Chart 3**)

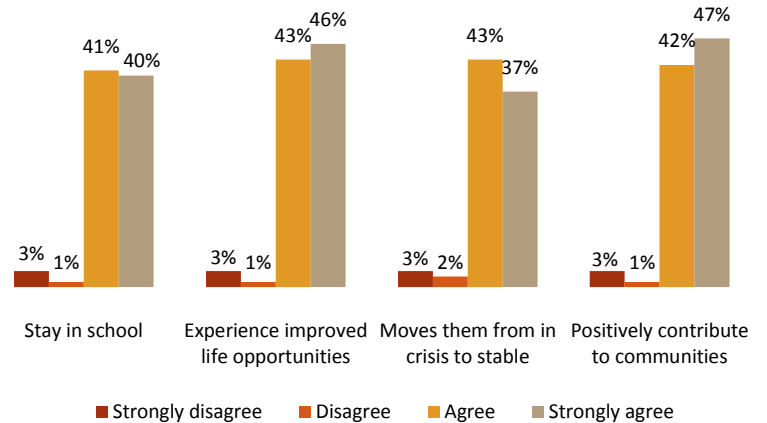
Chart 3: Curriculum Delivery by Grade Level



Impact of Life Skills Curriculum on Students

- All respondents have a favorable opinion of life skills instruction and its impact on students (see **Chart 4**)
 - **89%** report that it helps students experience improved life opportunities (n=742)
 - **89%** report that it helps students contribute positively to the community (n=733)
 - **81%** report that it helps students remain in school (n=729)
 - **80%** report that it helps students move from an in crisis status to a stable status (n=722)

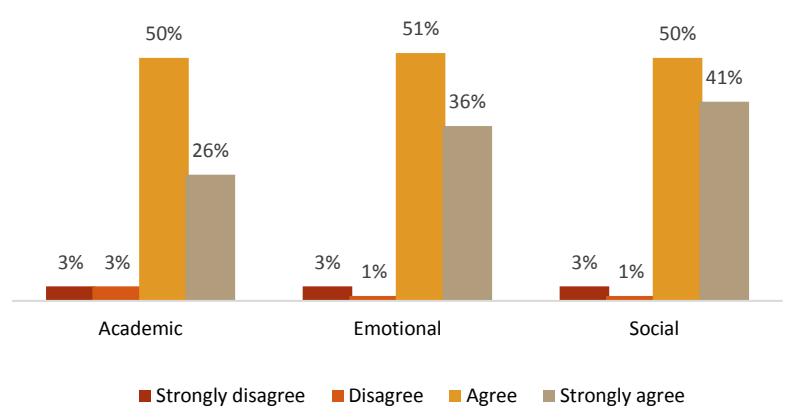
Chart 4: Impact of Life Skills Instruction on Students



Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Growth

- Of the respondents who implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year, the majority report that OO contributed positively to their students' growth (see **Chart 5**)
 - **91%** report that it helped students develop socially (n=367)
 - **87%** report that it helped students develop emotionally (n=363)
 - **76%** report that it helped students develop academically (n=358)

Chart 5: Impact on Student Growth

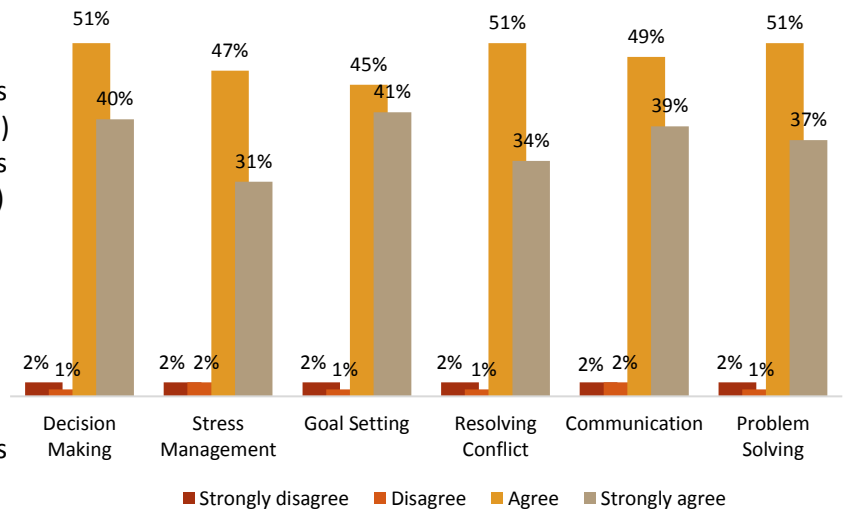


*n= total number of responses to survey question

Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Skill Development

- Of the respondents who implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year, the majority believe that OO helped their students with skill development (see **Chart 6**)
 - 90%** report that it helped students with decision making skills (n=360)
 - 88%** report that it helped students with communication skills (n=360)
 - 88%** report that it improved students' problem solving skills (n=356)
 - 86%** report that it helped students with goal setting (n=344)
 - 84%** report that it helped students resolve conflict (n=352)
 - 78%** report that students were better able to manage stress (n=344)

Chart 6: Impact on Student Skill Development



Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Outcomes

- Of the respondents who implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year, the majority report that OO had a positive impact on student outcomes (see **Chart 7**)
 - 85%** report that it helped engage their students in the classroom (n=358)
 - 79%** of respondents who delivered OO curriculum to students in grades 9 through 12 report that it adequately prepared students for college or a career (n=204)
 - 78%** of respondents who delivered OO curriculum to students in grades 6 through 8 report that it adequately prepared students for high school (n=183)
 - 75%** report that it improved their students' behavior (n=353)
 - 60%** report that it improved their students' academic performance (n=342)
 - 49%** report that it improved student attendance and reduces tardiness (n=325)

Chart 7: Impact on Student Outcomes

