

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

January 2016

Prepared by:
Dr. Brooke Culclasure, Principal Investigator
Ms. Alexis Sprogis, Research Specialist

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.

On October 15, 2015 the Educator Survey was administered via email to all individuals who downloaded the curriculum from the OO website. All data were collected anonymously in order to encourage open and honest feedback. The survey was closed to all new responses on November 5, 2015. Over 900 educators responded to the survey.

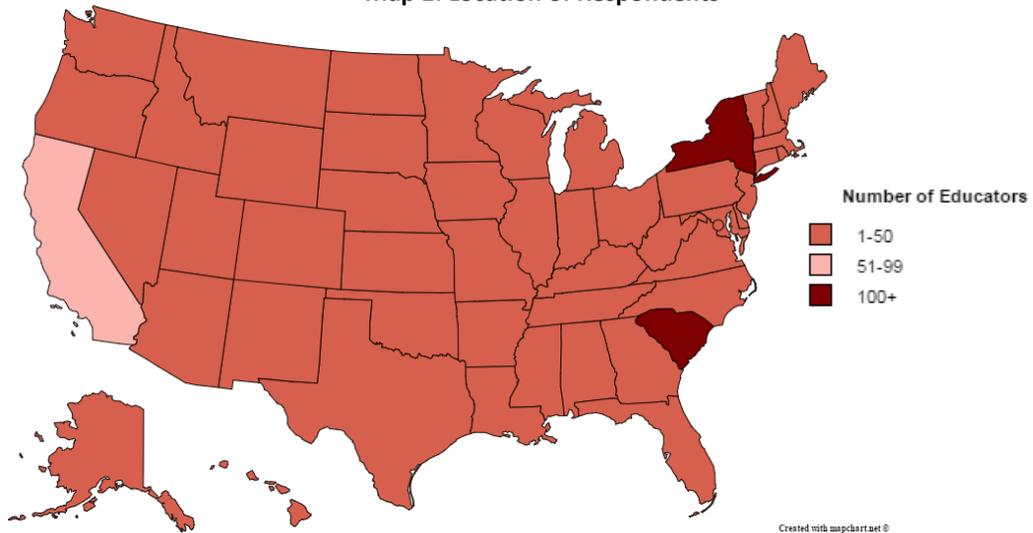
Of the survey's major highlights:

- Most respondents are classroom teachers.
- The states most frequently represented by survey respondents are South Carolina, New York, California, Ohio, and North Carolina.
- During the course of a traditional academic year, each educator delivers OO curriculum to approximately 112 students; educators deliver OO curriculum to students in grades 6 through 12.
- Educators who responded indicated that they most often deliver OO curriculum on a weekly basis during the student's advisory period.
- The majority of educators have a positive opinion of life skills instruction; the majority believe that it has a positive impact on a student's experiences, community, and general well-being.
- The majority of educators feel that the OO curriculum is beneficial to a student's emotional, social, and academic development.
- The majority of educators believe that OO helps students develop skillsets such as communication, problem solving, stress management, decision making, and goal setting.
- The majority of educators believe that OO benefits student outcomes such as classroom behavior, engagement, attendance, and preparation for the future.
- The majority of educators would recommend OO to their colleagues.
- OO is most frequently praised for its flexibility, organization, and ability to generate discussion and keep students engaged.

Respondent Demographics

- **53%** of respondents are classroom teachers; **19%** are guidance counselors or student advisors; **10%** are administrators; and **18%** hold other positions including mental healthcare providers, afterschool directors, and special education teachers
- 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

- The most frequently utilized middle school modules are Goal Setting and Decision Making; the most frequently utilized high school module is Communication Skills
- **49%** of respondents deliver curriculum weekly; **23%** deliver it monthly; **12%** deliver it daily; and **16%** responded with an answer not listed on the survey (i.e. as-needed, bi-weekly, intermittently, etc.)
- Curriculum was most often delivered during students' advisory period (see **Chart 1**)
- Delivery of OO curriculum is spread evenly across grades 6 through 12 (see **Chart 2**)

Chart 1: Curriculum Delivery Settings

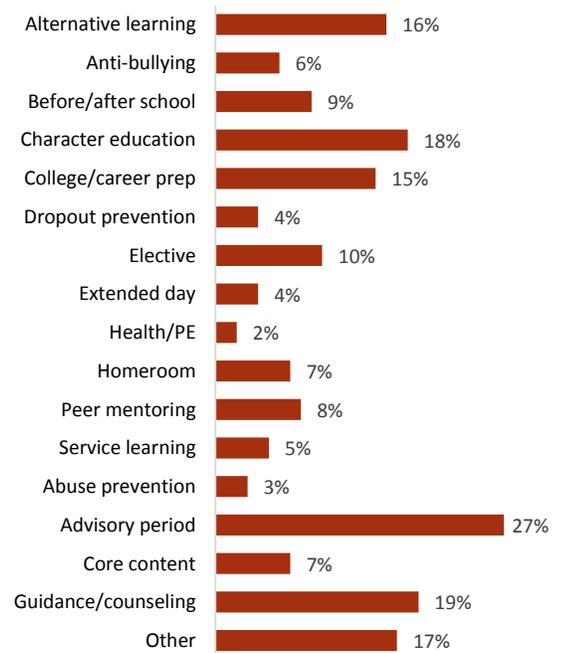
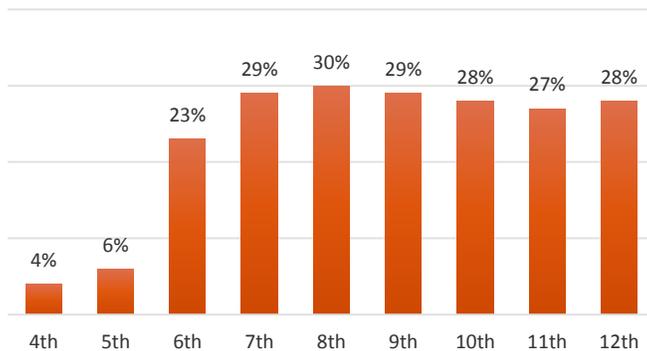
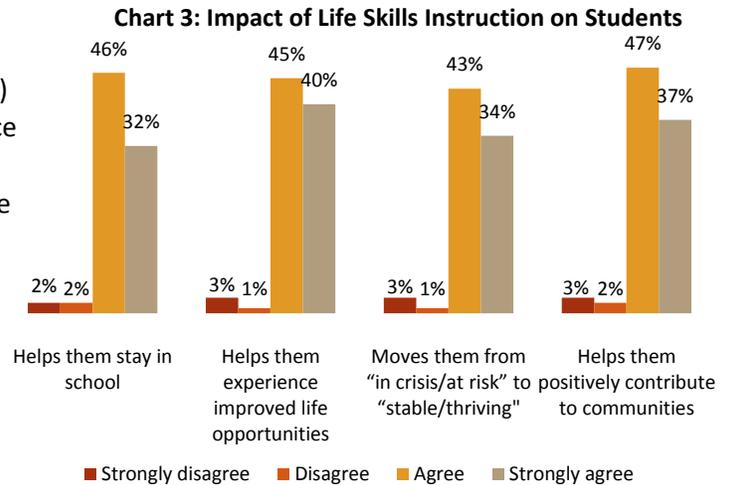


Chart 2: Curriculum Delivery by Grade Level



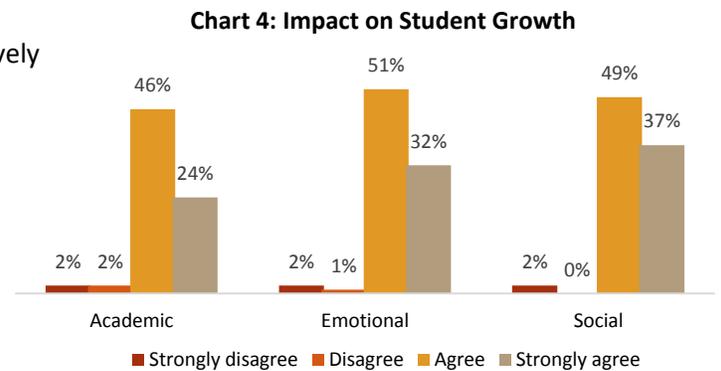
Impact of Life Skills Curriculum on Students

- Respondents have a favorable opinion of life skills instruction and its impact on students (see **Chart 3**)
- **85%** report that it helps students experience improved life opportunities (n=775)
- **84%** report that it helps students contribute positively to the community (n=766)
- **78%** report that it helps students remain in school(n=761)
- **77%** report that it helps students move from an “in crisis or at risk” status to a “stable, safe, and thriving” status (n=755)



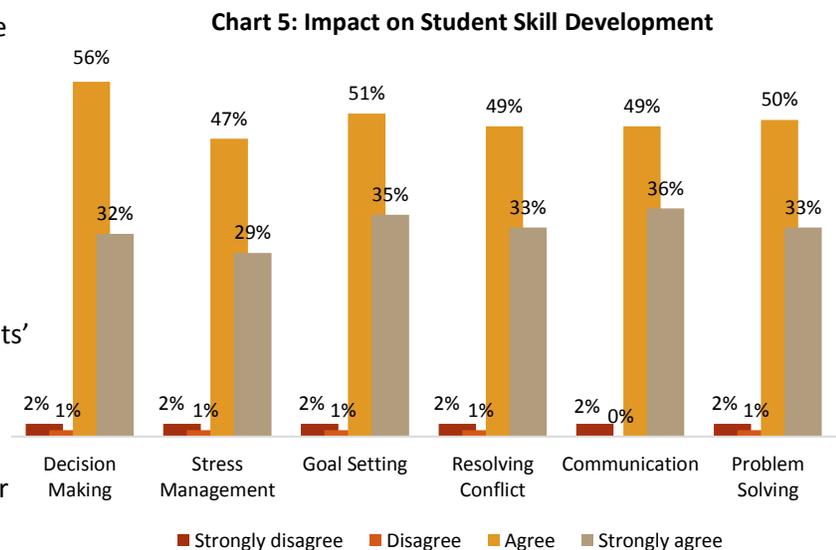
Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Growth

- Respondents report that OO contributes positively to their students’ growth (see **Chart 4**)
- **87%** report that it helps students develop socially (n=707)
- **84%** report that it helps students develop emotionally (n=698)
- **70%** report that it helps students develop academically (n=682)



Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Skill Development

- Respondents believe that OO helps their students with skillset development (see **Chart 5**)
- **88%** report that it helps students with decision making skills (n=680)
- **86%** report that it helps students with goal setting (n=680)
- **85%** report that it helps students with communication skills (n=689)
- **83%** report that it improves students’ problem solving skills (n=682)
- **82%** report that it helps students resolve conflict (n=675)
- **76%** report that students are better able to manage stress (n=662)

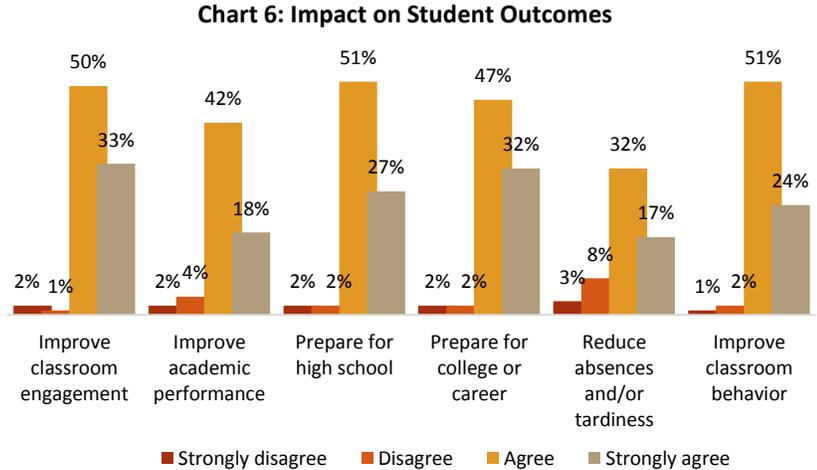


*n= total number of responses to survey question

Impact of Overcoming Obstacles on Student Outcomes

- Respondents report that OO has a positive impact on student outcomes (see **Chart 6**)

- **83%** report that it helps engage their students in the classroom (n=668)
- **79%** report that it adequately prepares students for college or a career (n=325)
- **78%** report that it adequately prepares students for high school (n=317)
- **75%** report that it improves their students' behavior (n=670)
- **60%** report that it improves their students' academic performance (n=637)
- **49%** report that it improves student attendance and reduces tardiness (n=625)



*n= total number of responses to survey question