



TM Curricula

Tier I/Tier II Curricula to Accompany the Terrace Metrics System

Terrace Metrics, Inc., 2024

Introduction: Solving the WHY and the HOW

How will you know that your students can succeed as adults? What skills would you want to make sure they have to navigate through life's challenges?

In our work with school districts over the past 30 years, we often start off by asking the audience these same questions. By far the most common responses have to do with ensuring that students acquire larger life skills: *to work through adversity, to be critical thinkers, to accept responsibility for their own actions, to get along with others, and to see their place in the world and how to make their world a better place.* Many facilitators have stated that it is the opportunity to teach these life skills that drew them teaching in the first place and it is based on these skills that their ultimate success will be judged.

The conversation often then turns to more pragmatic questions: *why* is it important to target life skills, particularly in this era of high stakes accountability? Does the time to do so detract from learning? And just *how* do we do teach these skills? Such questions are not new; schools historically have struggled with defining and incorporating life skills within a standard curriculum without taking time away from teaching subject matter. A quick review of report cards from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s illustrates how schools took the first steps to evaluate life skills, and like most new approaches the effort outstripped implementation. Skills were often poorly defined and difficult to assess (e.g., "is courteous", "is prepared", "shares interesting experiences") and progress was determined simply by checking off a box.¹ Ongoing education reform efforts have further reinforced the notion that teaching life skills, while worthwhile, are secondary to the larger goal of meeting federal and state academic standards. It is thus not surprising that while facilitators embrace the value of life skills development in all students,²⁻³ many school districts report that they do not have a program, process, or curriculum that is designed to do so.⁴

However, research in education and developmental science has shown that life skills are necessary precursors to optimal academic, interpersonal, and psychological functioning.⁵⁻⁷ Indeed, almost 50% of the variance that predicts academic performance is due to non-academic "soft skills" such as global satisfaction, hope, grit, and others. Moreover, studies conclusively show that regardless of age, school location, and community demographics, students with more developed soft skills report better academic outcomes, more favorable social connections, and more positive mental health than peers with comparatively poorer soft skills.⁸⁻¹⁰ Finally, students who report higher levels of soft skills are able to overcome current and future adversity, fully attend to their schoolwork, and practice and exhibit the skills they need to become healthy, productive, and satisfied adults.¹¹ Collectively, these findings offer strong evidence that for learning to truly be effective, the development of life skills is paramount for student success.

Identifying and promoting life skills extends beyond education to include health, quality of life, and even mortality. While every generation can be defined by technological milestones, today's "wired" generation (i.e., those born in 2000 and after)

differ from preceding generations in numerous ways. These youth have access to more diverse sources of information, they have more opportunities to connect with others (through social media platforms) and they are more facile at using these technologies than most facilitators and parents. There are clear advantages to having almost instantaneous access to information; today's youth appear to be more willing to understand themselves, their larger world, and their place in it than previous generations. Nevertheless, this access, in addition to other sociodemographic changes in America that directly affect youth¹², may come at a cost to their well-being. These youth report significantly higher levels of distress, loneliness, and poorer emotional health than previous generations,¹³ and depression and suicide rates among teens are the highest on record.¹⁴ If there ever was a group who could benefit from life skills development, today's youth would be high on the list.¹⁵

While there is enough evidence to answer the *why* side of the equation for facilitators, the *how* side remains an ongoing concern. Simply put, there are far too many life skills that can be targeted for school- or classroom-wide assessment and intervention, leaving facilitators confused as to what exactly should be the focus for students. Further, many curricula that target life skills development are not based on evidence-based practices and only provide facilitators with general information rather than step-by-step exercises that are easy to implement at the classroom level. Finally, many available lesson plans require resources and time that are beyond the comfort level of many facilitators.

Terrace Metrics was founded on the oft-cited principle that *what gets measured gets accomplished*. This curriculum is a direct extension of that guiding principle, giving schools an empirically informed tool to measure and improve targeted attributes that are the foundation of life skills development. The curriculum contains multiple evidence-based, step-by-step exercises that are easy to implement and flexible enough to use within the course of the school day. It is hoped that this curriculum provides a meaningful tool to help facilitators reach what many consider their ultimate standard of success.

Notes About the Tier I/Tier II Curricula

1. The curricula was designed for Tier I (school-wide prevention efforts) or Tier 2 (targeted group) delivery. The exercises contained within each curriculum module are adopted from evidence-informed practices *at the group or classroom level*. Thus, the curriculum should never be used as a tool for individual therapy or to target a specific student. Terrace Metrics offers a Tier III curriculum for this level of service, and those interested can contact Terrace Metrics for further information.
2. All modules in the curricula are directly tied to results found in the comprehensive Terrace Metrics school report. Each grade-level module was designed as a stand-alone component. Thus, schools simply select and implement the modules that were identified as in need of school-wide remediation.
3. Facilitators do not need to strictly adhere to materials within a module; given that the indicators offered by Terrace Metrics are interrelated, the facilitator can mix-and-match exercises within a lesson plan that they feel best addresses their students' needs.
4. Each Tier I module follows a predictable structure. There are three lesson plans with each module (Launch, Learn, and Live), which extend over 4-6 weeks' time and each lesson is designed to last 20-30 minutes. A short video accompanies each lesson plan, which guides the facilitator on what will be covered, and the materials that will be used. Virtually all materials come in the form of free videos and handouts that are easily accessible. In addition, each lesson plan is scripted and there is an accompanying slide deck. The facilitator merely follows the script and slides. At the end of each lesson plan is 1-2 activities that will be assigned to the students for a specified period. The facilitator checks in with students as the students complete their activities until the next lesson plan.
5. Each Tier II module also follows a predictable structure. There are separate modules for grades 3-8, all of which contain a "playbook" and specific lessons. Students will understand and practice building their targeted skill from the lessons and record their growth in their playbooks. In grades 9-12, the lessons are designed as independent lessons; therefore, the facilitator can choose which lesson to complete as there is no specific order to the lessons (however, the lessons are listed in *suggested* order). In contrast to the Tier I modules, the Tier II modules have more lesson plans, which are designed to be implemented weekly. Thus, the Tier II is more focused and the content is delivered more frequently.
6. The curriculum is intentionally designed to be as flexible as possible and to add little work to facilitators. There is no set timeframe to implement the modules and the choice of which module lesson(s) to use is at the discretion of the facilitator. Nonetheless, facilitators should adhere to lesson plans after they are initiated. As with any skill development, meaningful improvements occur when exercises are practiced consistently over an extended time period.

How to Use the Modules

Communicating to Students its Importance to Academic and Personal Growth

The Terrace Metrics curricula is based on *skills development*. Any skill to be mastered depends on the amount of time and effort invested by the student. It is strongly emphasized that students complete all assignments, and facilitators can use various incentive systems (a point card, tokens, etc.) to maintain student motivation. For some students, working on non-academic soft skills will be quite new and therefore may not give their full attention to the lessons. We have found that facilitators who treat these lessons no differently than having students learn and master a new academic skill garner greater buy-in and better results.

When communicating to students for the first time, the following script can be modified by facilitators according to preference; the script reinforces how seriously this curriculum is to be taken by students.

Let me emphasize how important it is that you participate in class discussions and complete assigned exercises. Some exercises can be done here at school, so it will be easier for you to complete them. However, some will ask you to do your exercises outside of school. This may be a challenge for some of you but I know that you can do this. Remember, we are doing these exercises to help you succeed not only as a student, but as a person.

There are 168 hours in a week. If you practice these new skills only briefly and continue to practice your old ways of thinking or resort to old habits, these exercises will not work. Be committed and take your growth seriously; we certainly do.

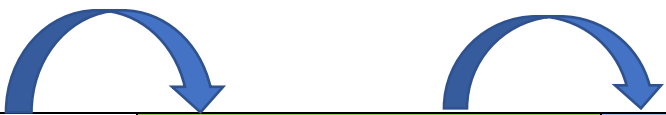
It will be important for you to take what you are learning and apply it to your everyday life. We will have important class discussions throughout our time together. I expect that you will be prepared. Also, I will not do your work for you. I will guide, support, and encourage you, but you will take responsibility for your progress. Any questions?

It also may be helpful to first ask students what they are good at/most proud of. Whether it is a personal quality (“a good listener”), skill (e.g., shooting a basketball, playing the trumpet) or ability (e.g., solving math problems), most students will acknowledge that they are more advanced now than when they first began. The facilitator can remind the student that the path to mastering these new skills are no different. Giving the commitment they gave to their identified skill, the facilitator students reframe their work together as a coach-pupil relationship.

Selecting Modules


While each module in the curriculum is designed as an independent resource, all indicators assessed by Terrace Metrics are interrelated. In addition to targeting the main indicator identified in the school report, facilitators also may consider targeting modules that are close companions to the targeted indicator. Table 1 lists these companion modules for each targeted indicator, based on results of over 10,000 students from grades 3-12 representing urban, suburban and rural school districts. The table is separated into grades 3-5 (elementary), grades 6-8 (middle school) and grades 9-12 (high school). Companion module 1 is the indicator that is most predictive of the targeted indicator, and Companion Module 2 is the second highest predictor. Including one or both companion modules may enhance the impact of the targeted module.

Grades 3-5




<i>If....</i>	Companion Module 1	Companion Module 2
Global Satisfaction	Positive Peer Experiences	Hope
Positive School Experiences	Hope	Positive Peer Experiences
Hope	Positive Peer Experiences	Global Satisfaction
Positive Peer Experiences	Global Satisfaction	Hope

Grades 6-8



<i>If....</i>	Companion Module 1	Companion Module 2
Global Satisfaction	Resiliency	Hope
Positive School Experiences	Positive Peer Experiences	Global Satisfaction
Hope	Grit	Leadership
Grit	Standards	Hope
Leadership	Standards	Grit
Standards	Leadership	Hope
Positive Peer Experiences	Grit	Positive School Experiences

Grades 9-12



<i>If....</i>	Companion Module 1	Companion Module 2
Global Satisfaction	Hope	Positive Peer Experiences
Positive School Experiences	Positive Peer Experiences	Hope
Hope	Grit	Resiliency
Grit	Standards	Hope
Leadership	Resiliency	Standards
Standards	Leadership	Grit
Positive Peer Experiences	Resiliency	Global Satisfaction

Footnote

Examples across decades can be retrieved from

- <http://www.duryeapa.com/1960s/PA%20Duryea%201960%2061%20Moran%20Ron%20Report%20Card%20Wilson%20School.jpg>
- https://www.google.com/search?q=example+of+a+1950s+learning+curriculum&rlz=1C10KWM_enUS777US777&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=2oPXDHJMQ3q9uM%253A%252C5mL8UZ6NyRJM-M%252C_&vet=1&usq=AI4 - kRkikiKcYILA9h1lJa_lcQzqntw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiCop3orJ7jAhXTUsOKHaBV8QQ9QEwBH0ECAYQCq#imgdii=vnDSQZQsUQap-M:&imgrc=qi-wy_093p12yM:&vet=1
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/170644273361176132/?!p=true>
- <https://psalmbboxkey.com/shs-1965-remembrances/>

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