Life Skills Curriculum for Lower Middle School Students at Benton Hall Academy

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The highest priority is given to the development of sensitive, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally, through individualized instruction, to work to his or her potential and to make a successful transition into the workplace, or into a higher learning experience.

The population at Benton Hall consists primarily of young people with neurodevelopmental disorders; literature suggests that this population demonstrates decreased life skills with age (Bathje et al., 2018).

Life skills are imperative to successful and independent functioning in adulthood (Cronin, 1996).

Young adults with disabilities are at higher risk of experiencing unemployment and decreased independence (Bathje et al., 2018). The population at Benton Hall consists primarily of young people with neurodevelopmental disorders; literature suggests that this population demonstrates decreased life skills (Bathje et al., 2018).

Current literature recommends the incorporation of transition-related skills into age-appropriate curriculum earlier than the mandated age of 16 years old (Hollenbeck et al., 2015).


Conducted population survey to determine which life skills were most desired by parents and students to be included in a life skills curriculum. Top 3 results included: social and communication skills, money management and spending, and vocation planning.

Conducted literature review to determine typical barriers and supports to each life skill for this population.

Collaborated with faculty to determine barriers and supports observed in the classroom for the life skills mentioned.

Developed curriculum into 3 separate units, totaling 13 individual lessons.

Created lesson plans, activities, and all supporting materials for each lesson.

Educated and trained faculty on curriculum design and use.

Gathered feedback on usability of each unit via created survey and made changes to curriculum, as appropriate.

Created basic classroom economy to simulate real-world life skill use.

Generated and dispersed tips for incorporating developed curriculum into high school courses.

Compiled and dispersed literature, pertinent to life skills for this population, to faculty.

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