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ABSTRACT

A preliminary report on an educational program "Inside/Out", dealing with life-coping skills is presented. In Part I, life-coping skills are defined as the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills useful for dealing with life's problems and whose continuing acquisition promotes individual growth. An historical perspective reviews the study and teaching of these skills, examines relevant research and theoretical positions, and presents information on the use of television and other media in teaching these skills, lastly, the complexity of a life-coping skills curriculum is cited as necessitating a series of curriculum projects as opposed to one massive effort. It is therefore recommended that a prospectus be prepared for another level of the "Inside/Out" series in life-coping skills education. In Part II, the recommendation is made for a new television series similar to "Inside/Out" and consisting of 15 programs for children aged 11 to 13. This series would stress the major individual and interpersonal concerns of early adolescence and would include the development of support material for teachers. (Author/PB)





agency for instructional television PRELIMINARY REPORT

Life-Coping Skills

Prepared by Ad Hoc Committee on Life-Coping Skills

April 1974

This Preliminary Report is provided for your reaction. Comments from you and other readers will help in the preparation of a prospectus of a major school television program project.



This report had its origin in September 1973 when the Agency for Instructional Television asked all American and Canadian chief school officers for help in the identification of needed program projects. In the following month persons from twenty-nine states and seven provinces came together at four regional meetings conducted by AIT. Participants recommended that AIT explore cooperative projects in essential learning skills, metric education and life coping skills.

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Life-Coping Skills

Prepared by Ad Hoc Committee on Life-Coping Skills

April 1974

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ABSTRACT

This preliminary report consists of two parts.

Part One defines life-coping skills, provides an historical perspective, and recommends further study of life-coping skills education and the development of a project similar to "Inside/Out" for early adolescents. Part Two provides details of such a project.

In Part One, life-coping skills are defined as those affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills that are useful in working through the many difficulties of life encountered at various developmental stages. Moreover, it is stated, the acquisition of these skills is a continuing process that promotes individual growth and at the same time deals with the difficulties.

The historical perspective reviews the study and teaching of life-coping skills over the past decade. Covered are materials from academic research and various theoretical positions in life-coping skills education. Also presented is information on the classroom use of television and other media in the teaching of life-coping skills.



The concluding section of Part One underlines the complexity of a life-coping skills curriculum and advises against one massive sequential project. It is recommended that a series of specific projects incorporating various components of the life-coping area be developed. To continue the momentum generated by "Inside/Out" in life-coping skills education, it is recommended that a prospectus be prepared for another level of this series.

In Part Two, the recommendation for a new television series similar to "Inside/Out" calls for a fifteen-program television series for eleven-to-thirteen year old children. The series would emphasize the major concerns of early adolescence in both the individual and interpersonal spheres. Support material for teachers and others would be a part of the project.



LIFE-COPING SKILLS

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PART ONE

I. IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITION

Life-coping skills can be defined as those affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills that are useful in working through the many difficulties of life encountered at various developmental stages. Moreover, the coping skills should be developed and constructed in such a way that the life problems become the impetus for individual growth and change towards maturity. Each period in life brings changes in a person's physical state, personality, and social and interpersonal relationships. Most people attempt to cope with these changes by seeking and applying new skills that will keep them in a state of balance or "dynamic equilibrium."

This definition first suggests that life-coping skills can be developed to help individuals deal with the problems brought on by changing circumstances. Second, it suggests that this development of skills is, in fact, a continuing process that promotes individual growth, while



simultaneously dealing with specific problems. As defined here, the concept of life-coping skills overlaps traditional subject matter areas and educational taxonomies, and thus defies strict categorization.

11. LIFE-COPING SKILLS -- AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Prior to the advent of modern mass education, knowledge was transmitted not by teacher-specialists within a school setting, but through family, friends, religious institutions and apprenticeships. The key to successful transmission of knowledge was a concentrated emphasis on the past and its wealth of human experiences. The industrial revolution made such an informal educational system inadequate. Schools came to serve as an introduction to the expectations and characteristics of an industrialized nation. However, the very features responsible for much of the effectiveness of mass public education as a preparatory system (regimentation, categorization of knowledge into specific disciplines, authoritarian structures, emphasis on factual information, and lack of individualization) are those that have been criticized most frequently in recent years.



Such diverse writers as John Dewey, Margaret Meade, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, John Holt, Paul Goodman, Charles Silberman, Edgar Friedenberg, and Alvin Toffler have helped to identify and popularize shortcomings and voids in mass educational systems. Frequently the perceived limitations seem to stem from sources such as undue perpetuation of traditional ideologies and maintenance of the status quo, an over-emphasis on fragmented knowledge units, forced conformity and the stifling of creativity, and the inability to provide an education that is relevant to the individual needs of students.

In 1962, the membership of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development took notice of such concepts as individual convictions, beliefs, and values, and expressed a strong inclination to accept the ideal of self-actualization as a basic goal in education. The 1962 ASCD Yearbook was entitled Perceiving, Behaving and Becoming, and it clearly recognized that children's talents for creative growth and personal understanding frequently were left untapped.

Summarizing the positions of the Yearbook's authors, the editor noted with distress that educators have done an excellent job of transmitting information to students who,



in turn, demonstrate their level of learning by taking written examinations. There was little evidence, he contended, that this demonstration of "intellectual competence" had resulted in significant changes in behavior. To the contrary, educators were beginning to see learning as a much more pervasive process, involving not only basic cognitive skills, but the entire personality. This was not to imply, however, that factual materials were not useful in making sound value judgments or in formulating constructive social policies. Rather, it implied that an overemphasis on the scientific and purely objective served to impede self-fulfillment, since facts were of little value without a human reference point. The Yearbook noted:

It is becoming more and more clear that the key to effective behavioral change is an individual's personal discovery of meaning. It is values, belief and personal meanings which affect behavior most markedly. People without beliefs, values and convictions cannot be counted upon in a society whose very survival depends on active, responsible and trustworthy people. (p.177)

Elizabeth M. Drews, returning to the same idea in the ASCD's 1966 Yearbook, <u>Learning and Mental Health in Schools</u>, built upon the theme of self-actualization and called on public schools to devote class time to the study of "self," and on universities to prepare teachers and counselors to



help students find answers to such questions as "Who am I?" "What might I become?" and "How can I find my way?" All academic subjects, she contended, could be applied in this new context and knowledge could be seen as meaningful in terms of the developing self. Individuals achieving a true understanding of themselves would exhibit strong and clear-cut value systems and would be capable of utilizing their convictions and beliefs in solving life's daily problems. To assist teachers in meeting this challenge, Drews made specific recommendations for supporting the curriculum design.

Demonstrating - through models or films - how others come to understand themselves and take responsibility for their lives can be particularly helpful. Of course, there must be leeway (saying, in effect, there are many ways - choose one that suits you), and time (hours and days, not minutes), as well as materials that have built-in flexibility and by their very nature ask for individual adaptations and innovations. (p.112)

In the broadest sense, Drews expressed the firm conviction that to be educated is to learn to live. Such a view sees youth as being "effective," not merely reactive. To cope effectively with life's complex situations implies not only the ability to manage one's problems, but to anticipate and plan creatively.



Just three years after Drews outlined her plans for a curriculum based on self-actualization, the ASCD published its 1969 Yearbook entitled Life Skills in School and Society. The significance of developing specific skills for living clearly was gaining increased recognition among educators. One author, Edward J. Meade, Jr., emphasized the importance of preparing for a changing society by predicting that "in the years to come one's peace of mind and one's relations with his world and the people in it will be at least as important as the need to be economically productive." Meade argues that we had underestimated the obsolescence of "facts," and needed to reorganize our educational priorities by placing an emphasis upon teaching "skills" that were adapted especially to the modern situation. The five basic skills identified by Meade included "the ability to reason; the ability to readjust oneself on one's own terms to cultural flux; the ability to control and spend one's time with intelligence and rewarding purpose; the ability to achieve and sustain rewarding relationships with others; and the ability to persevere and extend one's uniqueness while participating harmoniously in the society." (p.51)



During the years when such writers as Drews and Meade were suggesting a re-evaluation of children's needs, there was growing interest and financial support for the general area of affective education, with emphasis on interpersonal skills. The Ford Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education provided financial support for an exploratory study of affective education in 1966. The findings of this initial project were reported in Toward Humanistic Education: A Curriculum of Affect. As a result of this preliminary report, The Ford Foundation supported the establishment of two centers, one at the University of Massachusetts and the second at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Numerous reports and publications were to The most well-known, perhaps, is Dr. George Brown's follow. book, Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education, which documents the ways in which affective approaches can be integrated with both academic and life-coping skills development.

Now, in 1974, a concern for the development of lifecoping skills is becoming more and more relevant to all segments of our society. Research has begun to uncover



existing sources that relate well to the topic of lifecoping behavior -- for example, <u>A Behavioral Sciences</u>
<u>Bibliography</u>, prepared by The National Institute of Mental
Health. Currently in press are at least two scholarly
works that focus on this subject: G.V. Coelho, D.A. Hamburg and J.E. Adams (eds.), <u>Coping and Adaptation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives</u>, and L. Murphy and A. Moriarty,
Vulnerability and Coping.

In addition, a number of scholars are engaged in long-term research projects in particular areas of life-coping skills which suggest possibilities for educational implementation. For instance, the work of Drs. David McClelland and Alfred Alschuler on achievement motivation has demonstrated that the motive to achieve and excel can be construed as a set of skills for responding to life problems, that these skills can be taught, and that children who receive training in them are more likely to excel in actual life situations. Similarly, Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg has developed a stage theory of moral development. He has been able to demonstrate in cross-cultural studies that children change the nature of their moral judgments as they grow older,



and that more sophisticated moral judgments can be effected by educational processes. In the area of creativity training, Dr. Richard Crutchfield and his associates have developed classroom techniques and print materials that train children in methods of creative problem-solving; these have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving both out-of-class problem-solving behavior and IQ.

In addition to academic studies and theoretical approaches to the understanding of life-coping skills, educational materials also have appeared with increasing frequency in the past several years. These materials have covered the gamut from pre-school to college; they are geared for teachers, for students, and for administrators.

Some, such as Philadelphia's Affective Education Development Program, have involved entire curricula; others have been more limited. There have been books for teachers and for students such as the American Guidance Service's "Coping With Series" (23 paperback books). Games and simulations have been used in classrooms to attempt to deal with the life problems faced by students (see Schild and Boocock's "Generation Gap," for example).



The newer instructional media (television, film, filmstrip, etc.) have the ability to reach large numbers of children efficiently and, by virtue of this fact, they play a major role in current efforts to teach life-coping skills. Films, such as Learning Corporation of America's "Searching for Values" series, have seen wide use in secondary classrooms. In-service courses, like Glasser's "Schools Without Failure," helped popularize the affective approach to learning.

Significant contributions have been made, also, by the Agency for Instructional Television (AIT) in preparing educational television and film material for life-coping skills. One of the first school television projects to deal with life-coping relationships was "Ripples." This is a series of thirty-six lessons for children, ages five to seven. "Ripples" presents the themes of knowledge, values, aesthetics, and change in relation to the process of growing. Through an emphasis on the interdependence of persons and things, it reveals the knowing and feeling aspects of human development. The "Ripples" series currently is being transmitted by more than 150 television facilities in North America, and has several million primary-student viewers.



A more recent AIT consortium project is "Inside/Out," a thirty-program series that takes an affective approach to the emotional health and well-being of eight-to-ten-year-olds. Involving the learner, "Inside/Out" emphasizes communication skills and social interactions as effective ways of coping with many of the problems faced by the intermediate-aged child. The series is designed to help the child develop a personally effective life style. It is a multi-disciplinary series that uses on open-end technique to elicit student involvement. "Inside/Out" deals with such topics as sibling rivalry, prejudice, desire for revenge, fear of humiliation, and parental mistreatment, real or imagined.

The "Inside/Out" series is transmitted on 206 television facilities that provide instructional materials to schools in the United States and Canada. In addition, film and video-cassette versions of the programs are reaching a wide audience of elementary students and others, including parents, pre-and in-service teachers, and mental health educators. These groups are combining "Inside/Out" with their own life-coping and emotional health activities.

Educational agencies transmitting "Inside/Out" report that the series is the most enthusiastically received of all



their classroom offerings. In various surveys it has ranked as the favorite of both students and teachers.

The following comments are typical of many that have come from teachers working with the series:

- -- I cannot praise "Inside/Out" highly enough. The kids get so involved both in discussion and observation. Wednesday is their favorite day.
- -- Everyone should benefit from this telecast; it is an extremely enjoyable program -- and thought provoking. Excellent.
- -- "Inside/Out" is a terrific program. The students both listen and relate to it.
- -- "Inside/Out" is a very valuable program for health education. The class enjoys it and gets much out of it. It promotes good discussion.
- -- My class and I really enjoy the new show "Inside/Out." Every program has a worthwhile lesson in life to teach.
- -- Have nothing but compliments for "Inside/Out" -- excellent values and children simply love it. We use it for complete unit discussions.
- -- "Inside/Out" receives a superior rating from my class -- excellent show -- wish it was longer.

Although "Inside/Out" is only now completing its first full year of use, it has already begun to establish itself as the standard by which other school television series are judged.



III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing, it appears that there would be value in developing a variety of instructional television materials that deal with life-coping skills. The very nature of this educational area advises against the planning of a single, massive sequential project. Rather, it may be more fruitful to plan several specific projects that could be evaluated separately by educators. Life-coping skills can be organized in specific categories based on a variety of criteria. These categories or components of life-coping skills can then be treated in separate television projects, no one of which can cover the entire curriculum.

With these thoughts as background, the following recommendations are made:

- I. AIT should continue study of life-coping skills education with the intent of developing prospectuses for several television series. These prospectuses would be presented to educational agencies in the United States and Canada for their consideration. In preparation for the development of the prospectuses the continued study should:
 - a. Survey North American educational agencies to reconfirm their interest in further exploration of the development of life-coping skills materials for classroom use.
 - b. Review existing materials and identify additional people knowledgeable in the area of life-coping skills.



- c. Bring these people together to develop recommendations for specific series.
- d. Provide a second, more comprehensive report on life-coping skills in the spring of 1975 to educational agencies in North America.
- II. AIT should build on the success and momentum of its previous life-coping series by extending the "Inside/Out" concept to another age group. It is recognized that additional materials such as another "Inside/Out" series would be but part of a comprehensive life-coping skills project. As a first step, it is recommended that AIT develop a prospectus for a series that would include:
 - a. Television programs for the eleven-to-thirteenyear-old that emphasize the major concerns of this period of human development in both the personal and interpersonal spheres.
 - b. Related print material for classroom teachers, parents, and guidance counselors, as well as promotional, in-service, and informational materials and programs.
- Because of the value of the existing "Inside/Out" series and the predicted utility of a further series, the second part of this preliminary report is devoted to a consideration of such a series.



PART TWO

I. BACKGROUND

Adolescence is a time of great change, a time when a major physiological revolution is working synergistically with sociological and psychological conflicts to produce inner turmoil. The adolescent is struggling to understand his own body as well as his relationships with parents and peers. The adolescent is testing the problem-solving techniques and coping mechanisms that he or she has been using during the middle years. Will these remain effective as he or she grows into adulthood? At this time of emotional and physical stress, a young person needs to develop ways to adjust to a changing world, to make efficient and effective decisions, and to deal with newly developing concepts of self.

Poets and novelists often have provided sensitive insights into the frustrations and egoism of adolescence. The professional literature also is quite massive, though less inspired. The experts write of endocrine revolution and of the search for identity, of peer relationships and of risk-taking, of sexual conflict and of rebellion.



When the professional jargon is distilled, it appears that the adolescent is attempting to answer the basic question "Who am I?" Corollaries immediately arise: "Am I normal?" "What do others think of me?" "Will I ever be independent?" The early adolescent seeks to answer these questions through action and living, experimenting, and testing, rather than through the intellectual processes.

II. RATIONALE

An existing consortium project for pre-adolescent children has addressed itself to the conflicts and concerns that arise during the intermediate years. "Inside/Out" is a widely-used and effective series in emotional health education for eight-to-ten-year-olds. Its aim is to help children understand and cope with their emotions, and thus achieve and maintain well-being.

The approach of "Inside/Out" is open-ended; it seeks student involvement by fostering social communications.

This approach also seems uniquely appropriate for helping early adolescents develop coping skills. The emotional well-being of early adolescence can perhaps be best achieved



by emphasizing processes rather than rules, by stressing affective materials while not excluding the cognitive, by seeking the students' involvement in the problem rather than letting an authority provide their answers.

In addition to the seemingly ideal model offered by the "Inside/Out" project, the motivation to develop a similar television series for the early adolescent is heightened by the timing of the effort. The success and wide approval of "Inside/Out" have created momentum among the professionals in health, guidance, and education. Parents, church groups, school administrators, and teachers have expressed their satisfaction and are requesting other materials that stimulate interaction between adult and child and among the child and his peers. Many educational agencies have introduced emotional health programs that incorporate "Inside/Out" as a basic element. Others have used "Inside/ Out" to modify curriculum and introduce life-coping skills into the classroom. In almost every instance, "Inside/Out" has been viewed with enthusiasm by parents, teachers, and students.

Approaches to the diffusion and implementation of the "Inside/Out" series have been developed by health educators



and school television utilization personnel. Significant promotional activities have been carried out by state and local education and broadcasting agencies on behalf of this series, as well as by Exxon Corporation. Articles in major publications have also contributed to "Inside/Out's" popularity outside the classroom. In-service projects and utilization workshops have become the norm for this series. Teachers are learning not only about the "Inside/Out" series, but also about affective education and the use of discussion techniques in the classroom. The mechanism is in place for additional television materials to flow through the same system and, thus, more easily move into the classrooms of North America.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERIES

The proposed series would consist of fifteen television programs and related materials. These programs would present dramatic situations, problems, and issues of interest to eleven-to-thirteen-year-olds, and would use an open-ended format whenever possible, emphasizing the emotional and adjustment difficulties of early adolescence. The programs would serve as a stimulus for students to begin responding



to and coping with their problems of self-identity and interpersonal relationships. The project would encourage teachers to be more tolerant and supportive of student efforts to implement newly-learned coping skills.

The questions raised by these open-ended presentations would require the student to develop certain selectionoriented skills.

Programs in the proposed series will emphasize such basic processes as

Growing and developing Interacting Decision-making.

These processes would be applied to such issues as free-dom and responsibility, separation from parents, consolidation of sexual roles, anxieties about the future, and the reorganization of peer groups.

Like "Inside/Out," this series would provide instructional guides to teachers so that they might plan learning activities to follow the television programs. The suggested activities within the guide would be designed to help teachers and students deal with affective issues, and also



help the students learn skills for coping with the questions raised by the open-ended television presentation.

Perhaps the approach is best illustrated by the following brief descriptions of two programs that might be included in the proposed series and by suggestions for classroom activities that follow the programs.



PROCESS: INTERACTING

Theme: One of the critical problems of the eleven-tothirteen-age group is cliques.

Program: Diane is an attractive, energetic twelve-year-old blessed with a good mind and the ability to use it. Not surprisingly, she does well at school. She gets along with her teachers and her report cards are exemplary. Unfortunately, the girls she likes best feel envious of and threatened by her success. They let her know these feelings by cutting comments and by excluding her from group social events. Diane is hurt by their behavior and tries to ignore their actions. As a result they feel she is a snob.

How does Diane feel? How does the group feel? What can be done to resolve the misunderstanding? Are there processes or skills that can be learned to help Diane and the group interact successfully?

Classroom Follow-Up: The teacher's guide will propose activities for discussion of feelings and for development of alternative solutions. The guide also will suggest activities that will help viewers add to the skills they already have available for use in such situations.

PROCESS: GROWING AND DEVELOPING

Theme: Growing means change, though that may be hard to see at thirteen.

Program: Billy is in the seventh grade and busy with school activities. He's doing all right in his classwork, and plays ball for the neighborhood team. He doesn't date, but he's interested in girls and even goes to "Teentime" at his junior high school. Usually he ends up shooting baskets or just messing around with the other boys. Tonight, though, he is going to try to dance. The only trouble is that all the girls are a head taller than he, and, somehow, girls just seem to know how to dance. He feels small and clumsy. "Gosh," he thinks, "Will I ever grow up? Am I all right? How can I ask her to dance when I'm such a shrimp?"

How can Billy work through his problem? How does the mature girl deal with her immature boy friends?

In this case, the program itself might model lifecoping skills that would be appropriate for Billy's situation. For instance, a "flash-forward" might show the
"catastrophic expectations" that have Billy in such knots.
He might be seen in a fantasy of a college dance where all

(Process: Growing and Developing continued)

his friends have blossomed and matured but he remains a "shrimp," frozen at his adolescent developmental stage.

Classroom Follow-Up: The teacher's guide might suggest that the students take a "guided fantasy trip" to imagine what their own parents, whom they know as mature adults, were like in junior high. Later, students could check these fantasies against their parents' recollections. In this way, fantasy would be taught as a skill that can be used unconsciously or consciously to move backward and forward in time, creating problems if the fantasy is unconsciously "catastrophic" or untested, but providing insight and options it it is used consciously with an understanding of its limitations.

The purpose of the proposed fifteen-program television series is to help eleven-to-thirteen-year-olds
become more effective in the processes of decision-making,
interacting, and growing and developing. The series would
stimulate the students' discussion of feelings, leading to
a better understanding of themselves and others. Such
classroom interaction would encourage the consideration of
alternative ways of coping with the critical issues of early
adolescence, and the addition of life-coping skills to the
emotional and intellectual repertoire of the students.

As with previous AIT consortium projects, a strong inservice and utilization effort would be made for teachers and administrators. Additional components could be directed at parents and the general public.

An evaluation effort would seek to incorporate both formative and summative elements. Programs would be examined for effectiveness prior to release and the budget would permit changes in the project's materials based on evaluation findings.

The proposed series would further self-discovery and awareness, helping students cope with the bewildering events of the early adolescent period. The series would



augment the traditional physiological approach to adjustment currently presented to students of this age. Now we tell students about the physiological changes they are undergoing; in the future we should help them understand and cope with their bodies and emotions.

Two sets of reaction forms are attached to the inside back cover. Please return one completed set to the Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, Indiana 47401



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REACTION FORM

LIFE-COPING SKILLS

Please respond to these questions as comprehensively as possible, using additional sheets as required. Your reactions will be considered as AIT continues the study of life-coping skills and prepares prospectuses in this area. Two sets of reaction forms have been provided. Please return one completed set to: Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Name:	Title:
Agency:	
Address:	

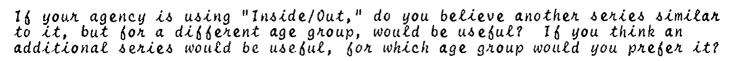
From your vantage point, what is the essential nature and concern of life-coping skills education?



Should life-coping skills be stressed at a particular educational level(s) (primary, intermediate, junior high, senior high)?

Are life-coping skills, as defined by this report, a major concern of your agency? At the policy level? At the operational level?





Can you suggest publications and instructional materials that ought to be reviewed in a continued exploration of the life-coping skills area?

Can you suggest people who should be consulted in a continued exploration of life-coping skills?



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We would like to send this preliminary report to people you think ought to receive copies. Please list their names and addresses.



REACTION FORM

LIFE-COPING SKILLS

Please respond to these questions as comprehensively as possible, using additional sheets as required. Your reactions will be considered as AlT continues the study of life-coping skills and prepares prospectuses in this area. Two sets of reaction forms have been provided. Please return one completed set to: Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Name:	Title:
Agency:	
Address:	

From your vantage point, what is the essential nature and concern of life-coping skills education?

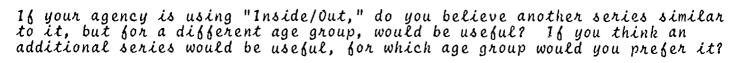


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Should life-coping skills be stressed at a particular educational level(s) (primary, intermediate, junior high, senior high)?

Are life-coping skills, as defined by this report, a major concern of your agency? At the policy level? At the operational level?





Can you suggest publications and instructional materials that ought to be reviewed in a continued exploration of the life-coping skills area?

Can you suggest people who should be consulted in a continued exploration of life-coping skills?



We would value any additional comments or reactions you may have to this pr liminary report and to the specific project suggested in it. How do you really feel about life-coping skills education and projects similar to "Inside/Out?"
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