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ABSTRACT

The manual is intended to help Maryland special education administrators and teachers plan and develop programs for students who will pursue a course of study leading to a high school certificate in Maryland. A life skills approach called the "Maryland Life Skills Curricular Framework" is designed to help students adapt to their environment and lead meaningful lives. The curriculum addresses both the uniqueness and similarities of learners and is organized around a set of six goals in the curricular areas of communication, socialization, daily living skills, vocational education, functional academics, and recreation and leisure. Goals and subgoals for each curriculum area are presented, and ways in which schools can incorporate the framework goals into local special education programs are addressed. A discussion of curriculum development and assessment is designed to help specialists and teachers evaluate the adequacy of existing curricula in terms of philosophy, overall goals, scope and sequence, and the classroom instructional units. (CL)

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MARYLAND LIFE SKILLS CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

In our society educational opportunity must be offered to all citizens. All of us, including those with handicaps, aspire to live and participate, to interact and exchange, and to give and receive to our full potential. The educational efforts we make during the formative years of students with disabilities will have positive and lasting effects for all citizens.

Our democratic way of life compels us to care and make adjustments to accommodate our disabled citizens. Without this spirit our nation will soon become something less than it has been.

The curricular framework set forth in this document incorporates contemporary thinking and research results on the interaction of disabled individuals with those who are not disabled and provides a set of goals and subgoals that are congruent with the demands of daily living. The framework is flexible enough to allow student movement to and from general curriculum areas when necessary.

The Maryland State Department of Education has provided leadership in developing the "Maryland Life Skills Curricular Framework." The Life Skills Task Force, teachers, parents, and others across the state have worked hard to complete the framework. To all of them, we owe a sincere "thank you."

DAVID W. HORNBECK
State Superintendent of Schools

PREFACE

Some handicapped students require only minor modifications in the regular curriculum and can realistically pursue an academic course of study leading to a Maryland high school diploma. This includes passing the competency tests in reading, math, writing, and citizenship.

Other handicapped students require a range of modifications in their instructional program including modifications of curriculum, environment, strategies, and equipment. This framework is designed to provide guidance in developing an organized course of study for these students. These students, upon completing their individual program and meeting attendance requirements, will receive a Maryland high school certificate.

We recognize the concerns of parents, teachers, and administrators who want successful programs for handicapped students. Real-life activities in the community better prepares these students for adult life than programs based solely on academic preparation and attainment of Project Basic objectives. The Maryland State Board of Education, through the State Superintendent of Schools, formed a task force to develop the life skills curricular framework, including its goals and objectives. The life skills curriculum is an alternative to the general education curriculum. The task force was made up of teachers, special educators, parents, and advocacy groups from within the state of Maryland and was coordinated by the Division of Special Education. Suggestions and comments on the framework were sought from a statewide review team of educators, parents, and community members, as well as a national panel of experts.

INTRODUCTION

A Statement of Purpose

The "Maryland Life Skills Curricular Framework" is designed to assist Maryland special education administrators and teachers in planning and developing programs for those students who will pursue a course of study leading to a Maryland high school certificate. The curricular framework provides a broad outline from which local systems will be able to construct comprehensive programs as an alternative or as a supplement to a program based on Project Basic objectives. This document will assist local school systems in:

- ° Developing a philosophy,
- ° Planning a curriculum development project,
- ° Defining a set of goals and subgoals,
- ° Developing a scope and sequence,
- ° Evaluating the extent to which existing local goals and subgoals are contained in current curricular offerings, and
- ° Identifying needed supplementary curricular offerings.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education, is available to provide technical assistance to local education agencies in selecting curricular material, identifying teaching and learning strategies, and evaluating comprehensive life skills programs.

This document is organized in five major parts:

1. Philosophy - This defines life skills within the context of the academic disciplines, society, the learner, the school curriculum, and vocational pursuits.
2. Goals and Subgoals - These bring direction and clarity to the program and are derived from the philosophy.
3. Expectancies - These are learner outcomes that further define the scope of each subgoal. They indicate a range of outcomes for different students by the time they have completed their life skills program.
4. Illustrative Objectives - These sample objectives show how an objective can be modified.
5. Curriculum Development and Assessment Process - This describes how to develop and use goals, subgoals, and objectives in the preparation of life skills curricula, including scopes, sequences, and instructional units. There are also suggestions on the evaluation of curricula.

Two options available to local school systems for implementating the curricular framework include:

1. Matching current curricula to the framework and making adjustments if necessary, or
2. Developing a curriculum using the framework as a guide.

If the second option is chosen, local school districts may want to identify a committee to formulate the curriculum. It should include members from regular education, special education, content specialties, vocational education, community resources, parents, and advocacy groups. This would provide a broad-based committee to help in implementating and understanding the curriculum.

PHILOSOPHY

What Are Life Skills?

Life skills are that part of the school curriculum which uses the activities of everyday life to promote independence and responsible citizenship. Through planned, functional experiences, students learn to adapt to their environment and lead a meaningful, productive life. Competency in life skills is developed through communication, socialization, daily living, functional academics, vocational education, and leisure skills.

Life Skills and Society

Our nation's belief in democracy is based on the principle that responsible citizens must actively participate in society. Society benefits when all citizens contribute to the best of their abilities. Therefore, we must prepare all citizens, including those with disabilities, for active participation. Rational participation depends upon the individual's ability to make decisions, provide for themselves, and cooperate with others.

Life Skills and the Learner

The life skills curriculum should recognize students' strengths and differences and enable them to become as independent as possible. This should include living and working in the community.

The learner is a unique and complex individual who brings knowledge, attitudes, and skills into the classroom. Learners also share many common cultural experiences, needs, and desires.

Differences and similarities in learner characteristics and experiences should be considered when a life skills program is planned. Minimally, a program should address the learner's need for:

- ° An education compatible with personal developmental characteristics and skills,
- ° A strong set of personal and interpersonal skills,
- ° Structured and sequential educational experiences that include communication, socialization, daily living, vocational or career education, functional academics, and recreation or leisure,
- ° Concrete educational experiences, and
- ° Continued follow-up after graduation.

The Life Skills Curriculum

A life skills program should address both the uniqueness and similarities of learners. It should be organized around a comprehensive set of goals that promote skills through activities designed to meet both learner and societal needs.

The full curriculum should contain learning experiences that focus on developing personal skills such as gathering information, making choices, and carrying out decisions. Learning activities should also include cross-cultural, comparative, and direct experiences that encourage the development of common competencies and opportunities that will lead to a satisfying and productive life.

The curriculum should be adaptable to a wide range of learners with diverse needs and learning styles. Elements of the framework should be adaptable to the needs of students who may achieve Project Basic competencies, but who also need many of the skills included in this framework. It should enhance the learner's opportunity to develop a positive self-concept. It should permit instruction in all of the student's customary environments and experiences in the home, community, and school. Meaningful learning experiences are broad-based and concrete; they take into consideration the student's background and contain options that enhance individual growth in specialized areas of interest. The educational experience should promote independence, foster positive attitudes, and develop the decision-making skills and self-responsibility required of active citizens.

A life skills curriculum that meets these learner and societal needs must have an active learning environment in the classroom, home, and community.

GOALS AND SUBGOALS

The six goals which follow and their respective subgoals represent a broad guideline for K-12 (or birth through 20) life skills programs in the school systems of Maryland. The goals and subgoals represent different aspects of a program that develops student abilities for contributing to both present and future environments.

Programming for these goals should be provided whenever and wherever possible in age-appropriate, and least restrictive environments (i.e., in a setting where nondisabled persons learn). This will allow students pursuing life skills' curriculum objectives to interact with students pursuing other curriculum objectives and the community at large.

Principles to follow in reaching the goals include the following:

- ° Begin implementing the goals as early as possible in the student's program,
- ° Encourage students to develop self-management skills,
- ° Base strategies on pupil needs in his or her natural environment and deliver programs in integrated or community settings when appropriate,
- ° Focus on strategies that lead to individual program goals,
- ° Provide an opportunity for job sampling and work-study activities in the school and community,
- ° Provide realistic transition planning leading to realistic work placements or further education,
- ° Strive for employment opportunities prior to graduation, and
- ° Encourage other agencies to work with schools prior to graduation in order to coordinate support systems and maintain employment after graduation.

The goals cover the general curricular areas of:

1. Communication,
2. Socialization,
3. Daily living skills,
4. Vocational education,
5. Functional academics, and
6. Recreation and leisure.

While many activities addressing these goals can be initiated in the classroom, it is exceedingly important that these activities move from school to real-life situations. For example, goal #4 (Vocational Education activities), should begin in the classroom and progress through job sampling and work study to permanent employment.

COMMUNICATION

Goal 1.0 To develop communication skills so students can effectively function in society.

- Subgoals
- 1.1 Demonstrate the ability to communicate needs.
 - 1.2 Demonstrate the ability to interpret verbal and nonverbal communications.
 - 1.3 Demonstrate the ability to effectively apply communication skills in the home, school, work, and community environments.

SOCIALIZATION

Goal 2.0 To develop effective interpersonal and behavioral skills so that students can succeed in interactions with a variety of individuals and environments.

- Subgoals
- 2.1 Demonstrate positive self-concept.
 - 2.2 Identify and express feelings appropriately.
 - 2.3 Control and maintain suitable behavior.
 - 2.4 Demonstrate the ability to perceive and interpret the feelings of others.
 - 2.5 Demonstrate the ability to be an effective self-advocate.

DAILY LIVING

Goal 3.0 To perform independently and productively in a variety of environments.

- Subgoals
- 3.1 Demonstrate personal care skills.
 - 3.2 Respond appropriately to safety, health, and self-protection needs.
 - 3.3 Demonstrate the ability to travel safely, and if possible, independently, around home, school, work, and community.
 - 3.4 Develop self-management skills and strategies.

VOCATIONAL/CAREER EDUCATION

Goal 4.0 To develop career-related skills that will facilitate employment in the least restrictive environment.

Subgoals 4.1 Identify a variety of career options suited to the student's interests, abilities, and aptitudes.

4.2 Develop job skills and maintain those skills which are necessary for competitive or supported employment.*

4.3 Develop social behaviors necessary for competitive or supported employment.*

4.4 Develop job-seeking skills leading to competitive or supported employment.*

4.5 Develop acceptable productivity, speed, and accuracy skills during community-based job site training to gain and maintain a variety of competitive or supported jobs upon graduation.

* These would most effectively be accomplished while involved in community-based site training.

FUNCTIONAL ACADEMICS

Goal 5.0 To develop and apply the academic skills necessary to become an interacting, contributing member of home, school, work and community environments.

Subgoals 5.1 Develop task-completion skills.

5.2 Locate and use information needed to solve problems and make appropriate decisions in a variety of situations and environments.

5.3 Use qualitative and quantitative information in order to successfully interact with the environment.

5.4 Integrate academic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic) taught in natural environments and independently use these skills in home, school, work, and community environments.

RECREATION/LEISURE

Goal 6.0 To plan and effectively utilize recreational and leisure options.

Subgoals 6.1 Acquire a range of individual and group leisure and recreational skills that include using community recreation facilities.

6.2 Make effective choices among a range of available activities.

6.3 Acquire social skills needed for enjoyable participation in group leisure and recreational activities.

6.4 Develop motor and physical skills for improved performance in leisure, recreational, and work activities.

EXPECTANCIES

This section further defines the scope of each subgoal. For example, goal #4.0 ("To develop career-related skills that will facilitate employment in the least restrictive environment"), and its subgoals 4.1 through 4.6 have the following expectancies:

4.1 Identify a variety of career options suited to the student's interests, abilities, and aptitudes.

The Learner:

4.1.1 Identifies specific interests in the world of work.

4.1.2 Participates in a wide range of career awareness activities.

1.3 Evaluates and identifies personal strengths and needs in relation to work available within the community.

4.1.4 Identifies preferred work environments.

4.1.5 Identifies work sites that are geographically available.

4.1.6 Identifies a variety of means of transportation.

4.1.7 Participates in job samples in school and in the community.

4.1.8 Identifies realistic career options.

4.2 Develop job skills necessary for competitive or supported employment.

The Learner:

4.2.1 Displays acceptable attitudes and behaviors towards work.

4.2.2 Demonstrates necessary job tolerances.

4.2.3 Demonstrates general and specific work skills.

4.2.4 Displays appropriate work safety habits.

4.2.5 Applies basic skills in work setting.

4.3 Develop social behaviors necessary for competitive or supported employment.

The Learner:

4.3.1 Accepts and complies with authority.

4.3.2 Accepts changes in routine.

4.3.3 Adjusts behavior to meet expectations in various situations.

4.3.4 Accepts praise and criticism with an appropriate response.

4.3.5 Establishes peer relationships.

4.4 Develop job-seeking skills leading to competitive or supported employment.

The Learner:

4.4.1 Identifies the resources available through home, school, and community that will assist in locating appropriate job openings.

4.4.2 Develops an effective plan that will help to secure a job.

4.4.3 Demonstrates mobility skills needed for employment.

4.4.4 Completes a personal data sheet for employment.

4.4.5 Demonstrates various application procedures.

4.4.6 Demonstrates a variety of job interview behavior (grooming, follow-up etc.).

4.5 Develop skills necessary to maintain competitive or supported employment.

The Learner:

4.5.1 Maintains acceptable record of attendance and punctuality.

4.5.2 Practices established safety procedures.

4.5.3 Performs all required work tasks independently and consistently.

4.5.4 Maintains reasonable work speed.

4.5.5 Interacts appropriately with peers and persons of authority.

4.6 Develop acceptable productivity, speed, and accuracy skills during community-based job site training to gain and maintain a variety of competitive or supported jobs upon graduation.

The Learner:

4.6.1 Demonstrates mastery of work skills.

4.6.2 Displays a willingness to learn new skills.

4.6.3 Demonstrates initiative on the job.

4.6.4 Expresses interest in career advancement.

4.6.5 Initiates appropriate job-advancement activities.

ILLUSTRATIVE OBJECTIVES

This section illustrates how a local education agency or school can incorporate the framework goals into local special education programs. It shows sample objectives for three degrees of modification: minimum, moderate, and extensive. The degree of specificity may vary among local school systems, student developmental level, age, and/or grade.

For expectancy 4.23. ("Demonstrates general and specific work skills"), one specific objective may be "Task Completion." The following are three examples of task-completion modification.

Minimum Modifications	Moderate Modifications	Extensive Modifications
<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Begins work without prompting.</p> <p>Completes assigned task in required time.</p> <p>Completes assigned task before beginning a new one.</p> <p>Completes assigned task within standards of job.</p> <p>Seeks redirection when task is complete.</p> <p>Seeks new work on his/her own after completion of task.</p>	<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Begins task when directed to do so.</p> <p>Completes task within reasonable time.</p> <p>Follows daily routine independently.</p> <p>Performs new activity with some supervision.</p> <p>Seeks help when needed.</p> <p>Participates in cleanup when task is completed.</p>	<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Pays attention to adults speaking or ongoing events in the environment.</p> <p>Holds or places objects in designated areas.</p> <p>Completes ____ step commands.</p> <p>Repeats newly taught tasks.</p> <p>Operates simple environmental devices.</p> <p>Completes ____ step assembly or disassembly task.</p>

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

This section is designed as a guide for curriculum specialists and teachers to assess the adequacy of existing curricula and, if necessary, develop new curricula. The material is organized around the four essential components of the written school curriculum: an underlying philosophy, the overall goals of the program, the scope and sequence, and the classroom instructional units. Each component is described in terms of its purpose, its specific elements, and how it can be assessed and developed. In addition, an example from an existing Maryland curriculum guide is given for each component.

PHILOSOPHY

A philosophy is an explicit statement of the beliefs that should direct all aspects of a school system's curriculum. Developing a statement of philosophy allows educators in a system to reach consensus about the nature of the subject matter as it relates to the instructional program. A clear statement of philosophy, therefore, can aid the school system in developing goals, specifying instructional strategies, and assessing programs.

THE SUBJECT MATTER

This section should describe subject matter which is to be taught and the disciplines from which the curriculum should be drawn. It should address the underlying premises and values as well as the investigative strategies and processes inherent in these disciplines.

SOCIETY

Society's needs in relation to the subject matter should be of primary importance when planning a program. This section of the philosophy should describe these needs and how they can be met by a comprehensive curriculum.

THE LEARNER

This section contains the system's set of beliefs about the needs of students. In particular, the school system must examine its philosophy concerning the delivery of individualized instruction. The delivery system may include the following:

1. Providing a means for assessing the entry skills of pupils,
2. Finding the starting point for each pupil in the sequence of learning goals,
3. Providing material and media geared to the learning styles and needs of the learners,
4. Enabling pupils to learn at their own rates, and
5. Providing frequent means for evaluating learner outcomes.

DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY

When developing a program philosophy, it may be useful to review the philosophies already in existence at the local, state, and national levels for learners with disabilities.

The local system may want to consider the following concepts in the development of its philosophy:

1. Learning should facilitate growth that leads towards maximum independence in future years,
2. Learning experiences should take place in the least restrictive environment possible,
3. Learning should be functional and lead to the development of everyday living skills,

4. Learning activities should be at an age-appropriate level, and
5. Learning should take place in normalized (community, shopping and/or workplace) environments whenever possible, whether full or partial participation can take place.

GOALS

Goals are broad, generalized statements which are derived from the philosophy and which determine the curriculum. They set the direction of the program by identifying those learner outcomes which are to be achieved through the program.

Since program goals are so broad, subgoals should be used to define the major areas covered by each goal. Additional levels of behavior statements will further specify the expected behaviors within each subgoal.

DEVELOPING GOALS

Goals should be developed from an investigation of student needs. Careful consideration of these needs will result in goals appropriate for the special education students and their relationship to the community.

DEFINING RESOURCES

The resources available to meet curriculum goals must be carefully considered and defined. It is the availability of resources that will ultimately determine the program implementation. For the life skills curriculum, minimum goals and subgoals have been identified.

CURRICULUM-BASED ASSESSMENT

Since curriculum requirements in education vary, it is meaningless to assess a student's instructional needs in terms of the standardized performance of all students everywhere (Jenkins & Pany, 1978; Ysseldyke &

Algozzine, 1982). Many educators are concluding that the best way to assess the needs of a student is in terms of the curricular requirements of their school setting (Durkin, 1984; Hargis, 1982; Samuels, 1984; Thompson, 1981). Thus, a general form of assessment is emerging that has become known as curriculum-based assessment. Curriculum-based assessment holds that each student's needs are best defined in terms of the context of his or her local educational program.

Expectancies, as used in this document, relate to results or impacts of a prescribed set of sequential activities. Special education curriculum outcomes occur over an extended time period and at rates unique to each individual. The expectancies refer to specific results or impacts which occur in prescribed sets of sequential activities (e.g., achievement of specific curriculum goals and objectives). In the final analysis, the evaluation of the curriculum can best be summarized by the number of students who have been successful in the various forms of employment and community independence.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

APPENDIX I

A scope and sequence is a description of the entire curriculum from the school system level. It provides a broad overview of the content of the curriculum and illustrates the sequencing of the material from kindergarten through the twelfth grade or age 20.

In any scope and sequence certain key elements should be presented for each unit of course: the title or topic, a narrative describing the content, the goals and subgoals to be addressed, and the placement of the unit of course within the school program.

Developing and Assessing a Scope and Sequence

The first step in developing a new scope and sequence or modifying an existing one is to review what is currently being taught. It may be helpful to answer the following series of questions about the current scope and sequence.

1. Are the topics covered adequate to meet the desired scope of the program?
2. Is the content and its placement appropriate for the developmental levels of the various types of learners?
3. Are each of the system's goals incorporated into the current scope?
4. Does the sequence follow a logical order and allow for recycling of material when appropriate?

The answers to these questions should be examined and recommendations made for needed changes in the scope and sequence. Once this needs assessment has been completed, the scope and sequence should be revised to reflect the newly developed philosophy and goals.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

APPENDIX II

McNeil identifies four criterion for judging learning activities including the following:

1. Intrinsic qualities include respect for the integrity of the student, an understanding that the learner is important as an individual, that his or her well being is vital, and that the student is an end rather than a means.
2. Instrumental values include the principles of task analysis, appropriate practice (including knowledge, comprehension, and application), and attending to relevant cues (including organization, questions, objectives, prompts, contiguity, and feedback).
3. Individualization includes an indication that the learner has the background necessary for successful participation in the activity and that the learner will find the activity successful or rewarding.
4. Efficiency includes the principles of economy, variation, and simplicity.

Objectives for students should be derived from data on the students themselves and/or from persons knowledgeable about the students from the community, as well as from subject matter specialists.

Selecting from a number of educational objectives can be made easier through a cruciality formula:

$$\text{Cruciality} = \frac{\text{probability of learner need (1-5)} \times \text{probability of achievement (1-5)}}{\text{probability that it will be learned out of school (1-5)}}$$

It can also be made easier through determining the selection feasibility of objectives, including: knowledge of what is involved in the learning task itself, the capacity of the learner (maturation), and knowledge of the instructional sequence.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and objectives includes reviewing goals; educational and instructional objectives; criterion and normed reference measurements; and student test performances. The student test performance should be beyond using paper and pencil and should include alternatives such as a review of learner products; observation of a learner in a specific situation; or through learner self-reports, attitudes, and feelings determined through oral interviewers. Summative evaluations should be completed to determine if the learning activities in a given course or program accomplish the desired outcomes and formative evaluations should be completed for those aspects that need revision.

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