Dropout Prevention: Nowhere to Go: Teacher’s Guide

Program Description

Dropout Prevention: Nowhere to Go — Every year, some twenty-eight percent of American high school students truncate their academic careers by dropping out of school. This in-depth look at reasons for dropping out and the future that awaits these students also provides encouragement for teens to remain in school or return to finish their education. Empowering students to recognize their potential and take control of their lives is a central concept of the program. Topics such as peer pressure, problem solving, goal setting, and anger and stress management are explored, along with practical steps to take in seeking assistance.

Discussion Questions

• According to the video, the process of dropping out begins with mentally dropping out while you’re still in school. What does this mean? How does this lead to actually leaving school?

• What factors at school or at home might contribute to or initiate the decision to drop out of school?

• Out in the real world, what personal and financial problems face the individual without a high school diploma?

• Based on what you have learned, how could you help a friend who is thinking of dropping out of school? What advice would you give him or her?

• Once someone has dropped out, what options are available for returning to school or earning a diploma?

Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

• Recognize the reasons some teens choose to drop out of school.

• Understand the short-term and long-term consequences of dropping out.

• Identify resources – people and organizations – offering assistance to school dropouts or anyone considering dropping out. Create and publish a Dropout Prevention booklet regarding such resources.
• Discuss strategies for successfully dealing with the stress and pressure associated with school attendance.

Materials

• *Dropout Prevention: Nowhere to Go* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player, or access to the program in downloadable or streaming format online

• Computer with Internet access

Procedures

1. Prior to viewing the program, establish students’ current knowledge of and attitude toward the topic by asking the following questions: Do you know anyone who has dropped out of school? Have you ever considered dropping out? In your opinion, what might be a justifiable reason for dropping out of school? What might be a good argument for staying in school?

2. After viewing the program, review how dropping out of school impacts an individual emotionally, socially, financially, and often legally, as presented in the video. List responses on the board. Ask students to add their own thoughts to the list.

3. Have the class brainstorm a list of advantages associated with staying in school. Examples may include:
   • School is a place for meeting people and forming friendships
   • School offers opportunities to join clubs or get involved in sports
   • Some schools provide opportunities for hands-on experience in different jobs
   • What you learn in school lasts a lifetime; no one can take it away from you
   • Rising to the challenge and staying in school builds self-esteem
   • Staying in school and graduating improves your chances of success in life
   • By staying in school, you are taking charge of your life and your future
   • The higher your education, the more you earn in the real world

4. Most schools and/or communities offer support or mentoring services for young people struggling with the issue of staying in school or returning to school. Have students research such groups or organizations on campus or in their community. The Internet is a good place to start. Have students investigate at least three such groups or organizations, then create a fact sheet summarizing information on each. Information should include such information as the name, location, contact information, date founded, specific focus of/issues addressed by the group or organization, approach to helping teens, and success rate.

5. As a class project, have students organize and compile the information gathered in the above activity into a “Dropout Prevention” booklet. For extra credit, allow students to add additional information, including facts about dropping out of school such as those presented in this program. Make the booklet available for distribution on campus.
6. Invite a representative from one of the dropout support groups or mentoring programs in the community to give a presentation about their organization and related dropout prevention issues. Allow time for follow-up questions and discussion.

7. Outreach Program: Discuss ways to reach out to students on campus who may be at risk for dropping out. Ideas may include: start a poster campaign; organize an on-campus group offering information and a place to talk; develop a school newsletter or Web site on the subject; establish a mentoring program to assist at-risk students; create a tutoring program for students struggling to keep up with their classes; provide information and/or mentoring to students who have dropped out and wish to return. If feasible, have students select one or more programs to implement.

**Assessment**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were attentive and highly engaged in class discussions; completed the research project and produced a complete fact sheet, including all of the requested information; were fully involved and made practical contributions to both the “Dropout Prevention” booklet and the Outreach Program project.

- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; conducted sufficient research and produced a satisfactory fact sheet, including most of the requested information; adequately contributed to both the “Dropout Prevention” booklet and the Outreach Program project.

- 1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; conducted inadequate research and created an incomplete fact sheet with little or none of the requested information; offered few contributions to the “Dropout Prevention” booklet and the Outreach Program project.

**Vocabulary**

**alternative school**
*Definition*: A specialized school that is nontraditional, especially in methods of teaching or curriculum

*Context*: Some students who have dropped out of high school may choose to complete their education and earn a diploma at an alternative school.

**counselor**
*Definition*: Someone who gives advice about problems; an advisor

*Context*: Students who are having problems with school may find it helpful to speak with a school counselor, teacher, or parent.

**diploma**
*Definition*: A document certifying the successful completion of a course of study

*Context*: Without a high school diploma, obtaining a job that offers good pay and future advancement is nearly impossible.
GED tests

Definition: General Education Development tests

Context: GED tests measure the major academic skills associated with four years of regular high school instruction. Individuals who have not graduated from high school may earn a high school equivalency diploma by studying and passing these tests.

peer pressure

Definition: A attempt by people in the same age or social group to convince an individual to do certain things, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted

Context: For some students, the decision to drop out of high school begins with negative peer pressure.

self-esteem

Definition: Confidence or pride in oneself; self-respect

Context: Young people who drop out of school usually experience a great loss of self-esteem.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL’s Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit http://www.mcrel.org/.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Behavioral Studies: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
- Behavioral Studies: Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
- Behavioral Studies: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions
- Health: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
- Health: Knows the availability and effective use of health services, products, and information

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to http://www.socialstudies.org

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Individual Development and Identity
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
Support Materials
Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- [http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html](http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html)

Credit
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