

Lesson One

Lesson One: The ABCs of Life is a universal, school-based intervention designed to integrate social competency skills with academics in prekindergarten through grade 6. Grounded in the theory of social and emotional competence, Lesson One prepares children with the basic life skills that they will need throughout their lives to make healthy decisions; avoid violence, bullying, and other risk-taking behaviors; and achieve personal and academic success. An additional goal of the intervention is to create a cultural change within each school, both inside and outside the classroom, so that children feel comfortable enough to learn, practice, and internalize these skills. The skills and concepts targeted by Lesson One include respect, listening, diversity, and trying one's best; self-control; stress reduction; self-confidence; responsibility; thinking and problem-solving; and cooperation.

Schoolwide implementation is carried out through a residency that involves direct-service modeling in each classroom by Lesson One staff. On the first day of the residency, teachers participate in a 1- to 2-hour workshop that introduces the targeted skills and shows teachers how to self-evaluate all aspects of their school day. Throughout the remainder of the residency, each classroom receives four half-hour visits from an educational consultant, who models how to incorporate the intervention as a regular part of the school day. The consultant shows the teachers how to use their voice and body language to effectively communicate with children so they can internalize the skills being taught. For children who may need extra help learning these skills, the consultant works with the teachers to devise individualized strategies.

Over the course of the residency, Lesson One staff work with school administrators and other staff to provide an infrastructure of best practices for successful implementation. Administrators participate in each lesson and meet with the consultants daily to ensure fidelity. Families also participate in training through evening workshops that give parents tools for helping their children use and internalize the targeted skills at home. The Lesson One book and a variety of age-appropriate books supporting the principles taught by the intervention are provided to the schools to establish a lending library for parents and teachers.

Upon completion of the residency, teachers, specialists, and administrators replicate the model, teaching the Lesson One skills throughout the school year, both in the classroom and in other school settings (in the lunchroom, hallways, recess, assemblies, etc.). Teachers follow a teacher guidebook and use the provided activity kits to engage children in games and activities specific to each skill being taught. A collection of children's literature and discussion starters is also provided to reinforce the themes discussed. In addition to participating in workshops, parents receive handouts and a set of refrigerator magnets that summarize the Lesson One skills and mirror Lesson One posters displayed in the classroom, providing consistency between home and school.

Descriptive Information

Areas of Interest	Mental health promotion
Outcomes	Review Date: April 2012 1: Social competency
Outcome Categories	Education Social functioning
Ages	0-5 (Early childhood) 6-12 (Childhood)
Genders	Male Female
Races/Ethnicities	American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American Hispanic or Latino White Race/ethnicity unspecified
Settings	School

Settings	School
Geographic Locations	Urban Suburban
Implementation History	Development of the precursor curriculum, Empowering Children to Survive and Succeed, began in 1973, and refinements to the curriculum leading to the present form of Lesson One: The ABCs of Life were introduced in the late 1980s. Over the project's lifetime, the intervention has been implemented in more than 1,000 schools in rural, urban, and suburban areas of the United States and Canada. Approximately 300,000 children have participated in the intervention.
NIH Funding/CER Studies	Partially/fully funded by National Institutes of Health: No Evaluated in comparative effectiveness research studies: No
Adaptations	Lesson One posters and parent handouts have been translated into Spanish.
Adverse Effects	No adverse effects, concerns, or unintended consequences were identified by the developer.
IOM Prevention Categories	Universal

Quality of Research

Review Date: April 2012

Documents Reviewed

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. The research point of contact can provide information regarding the studies reviewed and the availability of additional materials, including those from more recent studies that may have been conducted.

Study 1

Goodman Research Group, Inc. (2001). The Lesson One program: Results of a controlled pre and post study. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Study 2

Brennan, R. T. (1992). Project evaluation: The Empowering Children to Survive and Succeed (ECSS) beginners' curriculum. Unpublished manuscript.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Social competency	
Description of Measures	<p>In one study, a social competency rating for each student was obtained using teacher ratings of student behavior. Teachers rated the frequency with which each student displayed the following 13 skills: (1) keeps his/her hands to self, (2) raises his/her hand when appropriate rather than calling out, (3) follows verbal directions, (4) respects other children's feelings by not teasing/calling names, (5) learns from mistakes, (6) refrains from fighting verbally, (7) keeps trying when a task is difficult, (8) refrains from fighting physically, (9) transitions easily from one activity to the next, (10) refrains from bullying, (11) stays on task while working independently, (12) participates in class without disruption, and (13) calms down easily after exciting activity/event. A 6-point scale was used to rate the frequency of each behavior (from 1 = rarely to 6 = always), and the 13 ratings were averaged to calculate an overall social competency score. Data were collected before and after program implementation.</p> <p>In another study, Lesson One staff administered the 45-item Inventory of Student Attitudes and Behaviors to each student. The inventory assessed the following 6 areas: (1) self-esteem/self-concept, (2) tolerance of/attitude toward diversity, (3) attitude toward learning, (4) getting along with others/conflict resolution, (5) self-control/responsibility, and (6) learning skills/problem solving. Each item was coded dichotomously, indicating either the presence or absence of that attitude or behavior, and the items were summed to obtain an overall social competency score. Data were collected before and after program implementation.</p>
Key Findings	<p>In one study, students at eight elementary schools in California, Florida, Michigan, and Ohio who received the intervention were compared with students from other schools who received regular classroom instruction. The sample included six grade levels, from kindergarten to grade 5. After adjusting for baseline differences, overall social competency scores at posttest were significantly higher among students that had received the intervention than among those in the control group</p>

	($p < .05$). In addition, from pre- to posttest, students in intervention group showed greater improvement in all 13 skills (all p values $< .001$) compared with students in the control schools. In another study, students at two Massachusetts elementary schools (kindergarten through grade 3) who received the intervention were compared with students at the same or similar schools who received regular class instruction. From pre- to posttest, students in the intervention group showed significant improvement in social competency scores ($p = 0.000$) compared with students in the control group. Posttest scores were analyzed using ANCOVA.
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1, Study 2
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	2.4 (0.0-4.0 scale)

Study Populations

The following populations were identified in the studies reviewed for Quality of Research.

Study	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Study 1	0-5 (Early childhood) 6-12 (Childhood)	52% Male 48% Female	64% White 16% Black or African American 16% Hispanic or Latino 4% Asian 1% Race/ethnicity unspecified
Study 2	0-5 (Early childhood) 6-12 (Childhood)	Data not reported/available	39% White 30% Hispanic or Latino 26% Black or African American 3% Asian 2% Race/ethnicity unspecified 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native

Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention’s reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Quality of Research](#).

Outcome	Reliability of Measures	Validity of Measures	Fidelity	Missing Data/Attrition	Confounding Variables	Data Analysis	Overall Rating
1: Social competency	1.9	2.1	1.8	3.3	2.4	2.9	2.4

Study Strengths

Both measures used to assess social competency have face validity and high internal consistency and interrater reliability. For both studies, pre-and posttest data were presented as evidence that there was no attrition or missing data needing adjustment. One study included a large sample size, and the other study used a nonequivalent control group design to address the problem of student maturation. An analysis of covariance was used for each study, which was appropriate to control for preintervention differences.

Study Weaknesses

No evidence was presented to show that the psychometrics of the measures have been systematically assessed and reported by independent investigators. Standardized fidelity measures were not used for either study. For both studies, there was minimal discussion of how treatment and control schools were selected for comparability. In one study, measurement of the outcome relied solely on teacher observations and ratings of individual students, which could have been supplemented by a more objective measure of the outcome. Neither study included

teachers' observation and rating of student behavior, which could be a source of bias in favor of the intervention. Neither study provided additional analysis to account for the nesting of students and teachers within classrooms and within schools.

Readiness for Dissemination

Review Date: April 2012

Materials Reviewed

The materials below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. The implementation point of contact can provide information regarding implementation of the intervention and the availability of additional, updated, or new materials.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life teacher guidebook. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, fifth grade: Part one. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, fifth grade: Part two. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, fifth grade: Pledge for success, self-control, self-control time, self-confidence, responsibility & consequences, thinking & problem solving, cooperation. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, first grade: Part one. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, first grade: Part two. Boston, MA: Author.

Lesson One Company, Inc. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life workbook for adults and kids, first grade: Pledge for success, self-control, self-control time, self-confidence, responsibility & consequences, thinking & problem solving, cooperation. Boston, MA: Author.

Oliver, J., & Ryan, M. (2004). Lesson One: The ABCs of Life: The skills we all need but were never taught. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Other materials:

- Activity Kits
- Administrative Follow-Up and Support (Administration Checklist)
- Children's literature collection and other materials for lending library
- Lesson One Study Session for Oxnard School Board [PowerPoint slides]

Program Web site, <http://www.lessonone.org/index.html>

Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0–4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Readiness for Dissemination](#).

Implementation Materials	Training and Support Resources	Quality Assurance Procedures	Overall Rating
3.6	4.0	3.5	3.7

Dissemination Strengths

The teacher guidebook and student workbooks are thorough, easy to understand, and creative in their approach to the content. Activity kits and supplemental books that reinforce lessons and skills are provided as part of the program materials. For initial implementation, a thorough 1-week residency training program is provided that incorporates teacher training plus in-class modeling and oversight and feedback from Lesson One consultants. The consultants also work with school administrators during that time on planning, implementation strategies, and gaining parental support and involvement. The developer offers customized training and consultation as well as phone and email support. The teacher guidebook includes checklists at the end of each lesson to help ensure that all of the correct materials are used and each lesson is being taught as intended. Process measures are addressed with a checklist for

administrators to reinforce overarching issues such as teaching style, use of positive reinforcement, and adherence to the program's key practices.

Dissemination Weaknesses

Although school administrators receive copies of all teacher materials during the on-site residency, the only implementation material provided specifically for administrators is a 4-page checklist, which may not provide enough written guidance given the high level of administrative involvement and coordination necessary to implement and maintain this schoolwide intervention. Standardized data already collected by schools, such as test scores and suspensions, are typically used to measure outcomes, and prior evaluations of the intervention provide some examples of outcome measures. However, there are no written guidelines recommending how schools should use these measures to determine the program's impact on students and overall school climate.

Costs

The cost information below was provided by the developer. Although this cost information may have been updated by the developer since the time of review, it may not reflect the current costs or availability of items (including newly developed or discontinued items). The implementation point of contact can provide current information and discuss implementation requirements.

Item Description	Cost	Required by Developer
1-week, on-site consultation that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1- to 2-hour introductory workshop for teachers• Four half-hour visits to each classroom to model the intervention• Administrative meetings• Evening parent workshop• All implementation materials (teacher guidebook, Lesson One: The ABCs of Life book, activity kits, children's literature collection, children's workbooks, parent supplies, administration checklist, and posters)	\$7,500 per six classrooms	Yes (one option required)
1-day, on-site introductory workshop only (includes all implementation materials)	\$6,000 per school	Yes (one option required)
Telephone and online support	Free	No

Replications

No replications were identified by the developer.

Contact Information

To learn more about implementation, contact:

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To learn more about research, contact:

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Consider these [Questions to Ask](#) (PDF, 54KB) as you explore the possible use of this intervention.

Web Site(s):

- <http://www.lessonone.org>