

You Can Do It!

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For the past several years, I have been teaching the Social Studies 23 and 33 High School program and have found that the student's were very frustrated with their performance in the course. The student's frustration and low performance were not new problems but ones that have been going on for a number of years. I was mainly working with grade 12 students and did not want them to leave high school without helping them to figure out what they could do to help themselves to be successful in their education once they left high school.



A number of the students were tested and were found to have some learning problems. The question that they most frequently asked was "Why has it taken so long for me to find out that I needed some help?" This question has haunted me, so I have been searching for ways that the average classroom teacher would be able to help the at-risk students to be successful. While searching, I came across some materials that led me to a two-day workshop entitled "You Can Do It". I would like to share with you some of what I learned and give you the address so that if you are interested, you can order the materials.

The aim of the "You Can Do It!" Education is to encourage students to examine and improve their attitudes toward school and provide them with the attitudes and motivational skills (tools for success) essential for (1) sound academic achievement and (2) interpersonal effectiveness. (p. 6 Leader's Guide)

A basic premise for the "You Can Do It!" Education is that before the students can learn new attitudes and ways of thinking, they have to be made aware of and challenge their pre-existing negative attitudes and thoughts that are blocking their motivation and confidence and, therefore, largely contributing to their under-performance.

The "You Can Do It!" curriculum consists of the following:

1. Two "You Can Do It!" video tapes (total of just under 1 hour of viewing)
2. "You Can Do It!" leader's guide A Motivational and Personal Development Curriculum to Increase Student Achievement and Happiness in School and Life
3. "You Can Do It!" student guide tips, Ideas and Activities for Every Student to Become Successful and Happy in School Life
4. "You Can Do It!" overheads and handouts for Student with Special Learning Needs (p. Leader's Guide)

The program can be run independently under the supervision of the teacher, or it can be taught as a whole

class for a few lessons or once a week over the semester. It has been offered successfully as a short, intensive 4-8 hour course conducted over one to four consecutive days. However, it has achieved its greatest success when introduced to students during a 9-18 week course with follow-up and refresher sessions. It is available for students from grades 1-12; however, the program which I purchased is for ages 12-18.

Aims of the program:

The overall aims of the program is for students to achieve better academic results, to be motivated to study, to be more self-confident and to develop good relationships.

The goals for student:

- Students will develop self-confidence and optimism about their ability to be successful in their schoolwork, recreational/sporting activities and relationships. They will be more accepting of mistakes and will work on being the best they can be without the need for perfection; they will know how to reduce their level of achievement anxiety.
- Students will increase their academic and intrinsic motivation. They will increase self-motivation (effort and persistence) for work they find boring, irrelevant and difficult and which they do not feel like doing. They will recognize that their effort produces results. They will develop the ability to tolerate high amount of frustration and delay gratification until after work is done. They will learn a variety of self-motivational techniques to overcome procrastination.
- Students will develop greater personal responsibility for their feelings and action by developing an awareness of how their attitudes influence their action and feelings. They will apply methods for eliminating negative, irrational attitudes which lead to under-achievement and poor motivation.
- Students will be able to maintain a stable sense of positive self-esteem by developing the attitude of self-acceptance, which they can apply during difficult situations (e.g., failure, rejection).
- Students will learn to set and achieve goals (long-term, short-term and daily) which are big, realistic and specific. They will realize the importance of commitment and being fully committed to goal achievement.
- Students will use time management skills including monthly, weekly and daily time planning and task analysis which involves the breaking down of complex projects and assignments into simpler steps.
- Students will manage exam anxiety and use a variety of strategies to calm down. They will learn what to do and how to do it when preparing for exams.

Students will develop more positive relationships with others by developing the tolerance necessary for anger and conflict management. Students will employ non-approval seeking attitudes to cope with peer pressure and making friends. (pp. 7&8 Leader's Guide)

I was really impressed with the program and plan on conducting an in-service with my staff so that we can implement the program with our students. There is no greater satisfaction for me as a teacher than having students who are working to his/her potential and seeing that they are achieving the goals that they set out to do. The power of positive thinking can not be stressed enough and the setting up of manageable and attainable goals. That the students see and feel success is extremely important. I hope that some of you reading this article will find the program something that you could use in your classroom. The "You Can Do It!" program is written by Michael E. Bernard, Ph.D. and is published by You Can Do It!

Education, Inc., P.O. Box 16830, Tampa, Florida 33687.

References:

- "You Can Do It!" Leader's Guide. 1994 You Can Do It! Education, Inc.