CAN WORKBOOKS BE AN EFFECTIVE METHODOLOGY FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS? OUR EXPERIENCE WITH 'ON TRACK' – A WORKBOOK SERIES FOR 3RD TO 9TH STANDARD STUDENTS

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T1. **Life Skills Approach in Primary, Secondary and Higher Education**

Full-length paper:

Context:

Why did we choose Life Skills and Personal Safety as a subject for school children?

The World Health Organization defines Life Skills as "Abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO 1997).
These skills have been broadly classified into five areas:

1. Self awareness and empathy,
2. Handling Emotions and Stress
3. Communication and interpersonal relationships,
4. Decision making and problem solving,
5. Creative thinking and critical thinking,

Life skills are not "new", but like any other skills, they have to be learnt.

Who is teaching our children Life Skills?

Our society, like other societies in the world, is changing rapidly thanks to quick exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences over the electronic media. This powerful electronic media has invaded our homes like no other media could in the past. Our children are being bombarded with messages - often violent and sexually explicit – over which we as parents and teachers have no control. Information and messages are being delivered through TV serials, songs, movies, posters, advertisements, magazines, news papers and the internet. Our parenting methods and education system however have not adapted rapidly enough to this changed socio- cultural environment leading to a whole gamut of problems for our children.

Parents, family and teachers – teaching life skills by default:
As parents we become the first teachers of a child. Besides what we consciously teach the child, there are the whole array of life skills that the child picks up by watching us interact with her and others on a daily basis. Over time, other family members, neighbours, family friends and teachers get added to the list of 'teachers of life skills'. Unfortunately majority of us remain unaware of this role. Vast majority of us never learnt Life Skills from experts nor do we have knowledge of child psychology. We picked up life skills from our parents and teachers and role models, who in turn picked them up from their parents and teachers! Life Skills, being skills, need to be learnt and practiced. It's like learning music. We can learn music from a music teacher or just by listening to our parents sing who may not be good at it!

We have inadvertently created a culture of fierce competition in schools and at home for our children. Tuition after school hours is a rampant practice. We hardly appreciate effort and only acknowledge results. By running our kids lives and not giving them space to manage their time and goals, we are fostering dependence and external motivation rather than self- motivation and self- discipline. We breed a lack of self worth and stress in our children by excessively emphasizing competition, by constantly comparing them with others, and by creating a culture of scarcity (by implying that there are not enough jobs, good schools or good colleges etc).
Contemporary education systems find it difficult to offer structured support to the child, though some schools are working on these issues on an individual basis.

Media and peers as teachers of life skills:

As parents and teachers we teach our children academics, athletics and the norms of social behaviour. However, when it comes to many a life skills and responsible sexual behaviour, we leave the job to the unregulated media messages and the 'wisdom' of their peers! For instance, violent computer games are teaching our children how to resolve conflicts. Models and actors are teaching them how to dress, advertisements are telling them what their skin colour should be, and dramatic script writers are teaching them about relationships and family life.

Vast majority of Indian parents and teachers find it difficult to discuss sexuality with their children. The family, however, watches television serials and advertisements blatantly dealing with sexuality and biased media messages. These messages are mostly not countered or critically analyzed by the adults in the family. In the absence of authentic input from parents or teachers, they turn to the ever-accessible Internet, magazines and friends for guidance and information - often getting misleading or incorrect information. Children are left free to pick up role models, values, attitudes and behaviours they see on television or in the movies or among peers.

Need to teach Life Skills in schools:

As gynecologists and child psychiatrist (Dr Shaibya Saldanha and I are gynaecologists while Dr Shekhar Seshadri is a child psychiatrist and co author of "On Track"), we learnt firsthand about the rising incidence of problems faced by children and young adults. These included:

Emotional abuse and psychological problems

Anxiety and stress related to academics, suicide attempts

Child sexual abuse and related psychological problems

Substance abuse

Teenage pregnancies

HIV infections among young people

Physical health problems like obesity, high cholesterol and related blood vessel disease

Broader social issues like female foeticide, girl child neglect, dowry deaths and gender based violence.

We felt that many of these problems can be positively managed by enhancing self awareness, self respect, self confidence, and other life skills of children and young adults.

The need of the hour is to have experts teach life skills in schools where the majority of children are, to have a meaningful impact on our society.

Evolving a strategy to teach Life Skills and personal safety in schools:

Our work with school children started in 2001. We personally conducted thousands of sessions for school children with the aim of building students' self – respect and self confidence, communication, relationships and emotional management skills, decision making and problem solving skills as a means to help students be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and safe. While discussing self esteem and body image with students, we realized that by their teens, many children have already formed a negative image of themselves and it is very difficult to counteract this. We had to start earlier – as early as first standard – to have a meaningful impact.

<u>Rationale</u>

Evolving an effective methodology to teach Life Skills in School:

We were using role plays, anecdotes, props, humour, story- telling, discussions and quizzes in sessions conducted personally by us. Receiving positive feedback from students had emboldened us[1] . By this time we had interacted with over 15,000 students. We were looking at a methodology to reach school children all over India. This led us to consider effective teaching/ learning methodologies.

Choosing an effective learning methodology for Indian school students:

Learning, that is, acquiring new knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, skills and or values happens after there has been an input (information) through one of the many senses we posses.

Learning methodologies:

Learning may happen through habituation, sensitization, classical conditioning, imprinting, rote learning, observational learning (imitation), play, enculturation and dialogic learning to name a few processes.

Of these, imitation, play, enculturation, internalization and dialogic learning are most relevant when we consider how children learn life skills[2].

Observational learning or Imitation is characteristic of our infants and children. They are inherently capable of observing and copying another person's goals, actions and environmental consequences or results. In this way the child learns the cultural norms, values and appropriate behaviours. The demonstrator may be another adult or a peer and increasingly, a show on television! 'Mirror neurons' are believed to be involved in this form of learning. These neurons fire when an action is being observed, though they fire to a lesser degree than if the observer was actually performing the action.[3,4,5]

This form of learning leads to **enculturation**. The child picks up values, behaviours and rituals embedded in the culture. For instance aggression may be transmitted through imitation[6].

Effect of television on behaviour is a testimony to the effectiveness of this form of learning. Since 1950 thousands of studies explored the link between exposure to media violence and violent behaviours. All but 18 found a direct link. According to the Americnl Association of Paediatrics, "Extensive research evidence indicates that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed."[7] Watching violent shows is also linked with having less empathy toward others.[8]

Feeling overwhelmed by the powerful media we were up against, we searched for equally powerful methods of learning that would be available in majority of Indian English medium schools across the country. The methodology was not to be dependent on electricity or costly apparatuses like computers as these are not available in all schools. We zeroed in on a workbook format where in we would use reflection, internalization, dialogic learning, inquiry and play opportunities to enhance learning.

Reflection – A mental process where in students engage in critical thinking about the information or concept presented. They are asked to question its validity and draw their own conclusions based on their ideas. This results in a better, in-depth understanding and internalization of the information/ concept**.** Without reflection, learning ends "well short of the re-organization of thinking that 'deep' learning requires."[9] Students reflect on themselves and 'learn how they learn best' . Through reflection a person develops

a. Metacognition "knowing about knowing." It includes knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving, a very important skill indeed.[10]

b. Transfer of knowledge - Students can transfer what they have learnt in one context to another.[11]

c. Analogical reasoning - Students reason, compare and contrast what is known and familiar in order to find meanings and solutions applicable to the particular situation.[12]

Dialogic Learning rests on the premise that learning is not limited to the classroom. Learning happens all the time, and the more a person is encouraged to express his/ her opinions and views with others; and seek their opinions, the more he/ she will learn. Specifically, the concept of dialogic learning was developed by Flecha[13] from the investigation and observation of how people learn, when interaction and learning freely is allowed. Flecha coined the term egalitarian dialogue, where in a person's contribution to the discussion or communication is considered on its own merit rather than on the age/position or status of the person who make them. People listen to and are listened to. Children are encouraged to express their views and are listened to with respect.

Inquiry and Dialogic inquiry: According to Gordon Wells "inquiry" is a predisposition for questioning, trying to understand situations, and collaborating with others with the objective of finding answers.[14] "Dialogic inquiry" is an attitude for acquiring knowledge through interactions between people. It enhances people's knowledge, and can transform it – allowing entire societies and cultures to transform and adapt to new situations. The more a student is able to link his daily life experiences with the question 'what can I learn from this?' or "What did this person

teach me?" or "what can this person teach me?' or 'Which skill would have helped me be more effectively in this situation?' the more he will learn.

Internalization of values, skills or beliefs is the long-term process that begins with learning about new ideas, beliefs, attitudes or values; thinking and debating about their merits and values and eventually accepting them as one's own viewpoint. The process is complete when the new values/ beliefs/ skills become embedded in one's behavior. Individuals often easily internalize norms if such norms are endorsed by a person they respect – in other words, their role models. This is called identification – and advertisers make use of this by using celebrities to endorse their products!

Play is considered to be an effective learning tool. According to renowned Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky play is pivotal for children's development, since they make meaning of their environment through play. Children interact with each other, learn to follow rules and learn about the environment through play[15].

We chose to design a workbook series incorporating many of the above learning methods to help students learn life skills. Through workbooks we could provide experiential learning which we felt was more effective and more likely to change attitudes and behaviour than just information or rote learning.

Research strategy part I:
Developing an effective workbook

We, along with Dr Shekhar Seshadri, child Psychiatrist at NIMHANS, designed "On Track" a series of 7 workbooks for students of standards 3-9 with the aim of helping students learn Life Skills and Personal Safety.

Principles behind the Workbook:

1. This workbook follows the WHO guidelines for development of life skills among children.
2. Learning strategies used are reflection, internalization, inquiry, dialogic learning and play.

3. Strategies for development of self worth are based on the accepted models of child development by Eric Erikson, J. Piaget and Daniel Goleman. The workbook therefore keeps pace with the physical, mental, emotional and social development of the child in each grade.

Broad outlines for the workbook

Subject matter -besides Life Skills we covered personal safety including health. We kept in mind the general learning objectives based on the problems faced by Indian children and young adults. Our aim was to improve student's understanding of themselves and others around them. We also wanted to provide information on health, packaged and fast foods, brain development, effect of TV and computer games, and personal safety in a student friendly manner, in an attempt to help them make healthy and safe choices.

Users: We looked at who would be using the workbook and how –Children in schools? With or without teachers' or parents' help? Will we have a series of graded workbooks of different levels? We decided to begin with std 3 and have one workbook for each year till std 9. Students will have one 45 minute session per week for the academic year, facilitated by a school teacher. Examination, tests or home work assignments were not part of the design.
These workbooks would be supplemented with Teachers' manuals and Parents'manuals.

Main themes in the workbook:
Life Skills have been brought forth while elaborating the following major themes:

1. The eight domains of self worth i.e. academics (sciences and arts, athletics, social acceptance, physical appearance, behavioural conduct, close friendships, romantic appeal and job competence. These have been addressed in an age appropriate manner.
2. Accepting feelings and managing emotions, controlling actions, taking responsibility for actions
3. Communicating effectively and building supportive relationships.

4. Building specific competences – for example how to tie bandages, splint a sprained foot, manage burns, cuts, or what to do in case of earthquake; or learn a sign language.
5. Principles of multiple intelligences for learning and development of self worth.
6. Study skills. The physiology of brain development has been discussed in detail to help children understand the impact of nutrition, sleep, television viewing, computer games, physical activities, and multiple extra- curricular activities on the brain.
7. Learning as a rewarding experience. The aim has been to develop self motivation and self discipline unshackled by external reward or punishment systems.
8. The importance of physical activities and optimal nutrition. The aim is to combat the rising incidence of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and anaemia among Indians.
9. Gender equality and non-discrimination.
10. Personal safety through self assertion and negotiation.

Sections within the workbook: We divided the topic into three major learning objectives. These became the major sections of the workbook.

1. Building self esteem and a positive body image,

2. Feelings, emotions, communication and relationships. Decision making and problem solving were also included in this section.

3. Safety – including foods, posture, prosthesis, safety in private and public places, personal safety including safe and unsafe touch and how to resist and report abuse.

Making a grid

We made a detailed grid outlining what will be covered in each workbook and in the series. The teaching modules increase in complexity within the book and through the series.

	Youngest age group	Older	Oldest age group
Topic 1	Familiar, simple		
Topic 2			
Topic			Unfamiliar, most complex

Increasing Complexity

Increasing Complexity

Detailed design of the workbooks based on chosen learning strategies:

1. On Track is an **activity based workbook**: The themes address serious issues in a non threatening manner and the child is invited to explore his or her potential through strategic activities in the workbook. The fundamentals in concepts have been elaborated with increasing complexity as one advances in the series. Concepts such as body image, handling failure, handling bullying, physical well being and personal safety have been clarified.
2. We assessed the **reading habits** of children. Children read from left to right and up to down. They may get confused if the material is arranged in a circular manner or as diagonals.
3. We kept the **vocabulary and sentence length** simple and age appropriate.
4. Children often require **clear instructions** to do the suggested activities. Activities and text had to be vetted so that there is no **ambiguity and the message is clear.** This ensured that there would be no unpredictable outcomes or confused messages.
5. **Internalization.**

   Following strategies were used to help internalization.

Experiential learning - such opportunities were created by asking students to do role plays, drama, analysis of pictures, discussions, debates, interviews, surveys, questionnaires; writing personal experiences, stories and songs, drawing pictures, doing reference and research work etc. Students were asked to imagine themselves in various given situations and think about how they would feel and respond. They were asked to give examples from their life experiences.

First person narrative – We chose to address the reader as 'I' rather than as 'they' or 'one', to increase the sense of involvement with the book and internalization of the concepts.

Role models -Knowing that the values of role models are more easily internalized, we incorporated stories of contemporary role models from different fields of life. These stories were presented in an attractive manner with pictures, blubs and interesting facts.

6. **Inquiry**: We chose activities, statements and open-ended questions that enhanced dialogic inquiry and learning. We encouraged **lateral thinking, questioning** and analysis rather than rote learning. We used this method to question students' attitudes towards learning, studies, gender, conflicts, responsibility, discipline and goal setting.
7. **Reflection and Self awareness**: students were asked to think about and distinguish for themselves their feelings, qualities, skills, capabilities, attitudes, beliefs and values. Activities and modules that enhanced awareness of one's methods of communication were introduced. Interaction with peers was encouraged to extend this reflection and awareness to other's behaviour, communication and attitudes. Activities have been structured to be highly reflective, but with a flow to constantly engage the child in an emerging story of the Self.
8. To encourage **dialogic learning**, many activities were introduced where in the student was asked to interact and seek the opinion of their parents, family members and community members. Respect for other's opinions and giving space for others to express their views were part of the design of the activities. Role plays enhanced empathy. Students were also asked to undertake community based projects.
9. **Circle games and play** were made an integral part of the workbooks. Circle games enhance cognitive development, social interactions, motor skills, creativity, feeling of community and belonging, language skills and encourage a variety of developmentally appropriate behaviours. Play and games emphasised participation, challenge and fun rather than competition and alienation.

10. We chose activities that brought into use **multiple intelligences**. This helped in reaching out to more children.
11. We **avoided moralization, stories of excessive heroism, judgmental and didactic statements** as these do not necessarily lead to internalization. Some children may feel overwhelmed, belittled or guilty when reading about such stories.
12. **Summarizing**: At the end of each learning module, we wrote the intended learning objective in a concise statement. We highlighted this, drew a special motif around this and repeated the same motif throughout the workbook to reinforcing the learning.
13. **Reviewing** and strengthening of concepts: More often this happened in the workbook, the deeper the impact would be. Statements like "we saw on the previous page how…." "On page …. we learnt that …" were used to strengthen a concept. We used 2-6 pages to impart a central idea or concept. Each page strengthened the concepts stated earlier.
14. **Cumulative learning** pages (a summary) at the end of each of the three sections of the workbook and at the end of the workbook were introduced to reinforce the core concepts.
15. **Subliminal messages**: The colour schemes, the pictures, the titles on the pages carried subliminal messages. So did the fun activities inserted in the workbook. For examples on a section dealing with communication, the fun activity could be about the Morse code or the Semaphore code. The titles on each page dealing with communication could be "What's in a word?" "The power of words" " Words and meanings". Fun activity could be "Origin of alphabet".
    All fun activities and suggested group and individual assignments were linked to the central learning module.
16. Each module in the workbook can be worked out on a **stand-alone basis** by the child or with facilitator (teacher / parent) participation. Student can engage with the workbook from any module. It offers flexibility.

Attention grabbing Strategies:

We consciously paid a lot of attention to this. The strategies were:

1. Using full colour: Visual sensory input tends to overshadow all other senses. We decided to make the workbook colourful – using full color pictures

2. Using lots of pictures, joyous illustrations and child friendly drawings.
3. Using a two page layout which allowed more creative designs. Using a variety of activities – in this way the reader's attention was held.
4. Introducing fun activities after every learning module - to ensure that the child does not feel constantly extended or pressurized.
5. Text formats were deliberately avoided. In this way we avoided any resemblance to a text book!

Outline of a page: We had 2 facing pages available at a time, except for the first page. We had an objective for each page. Each page had to be organized with adequate space for the main activity, illustrations, box for suggested group activities and a box for the summary statements.

Outline of a section: We determined how many pages will be allotted to each topic. We left pages for fun activities and for the summary page.

Reviewed often. Edited without hesitation!

Feedback on completed draft:

We obtain feedback on the completed work from

1. **End users** – each module and each fun page from the completed workbook draft was given to 7-8 students of that class. Feed back was collected, analyzed and appropriate changes made in the draft. In fact large sections of the 8th std workbook were altered and brought in line with the feedback. Feedback was taken again on the revised draft which was approving! The activities in the workbooks have thus been vetted to ensure that they are unambiguous and that there are no unpredictable outcomes or confused messages.

2. **Teachers** already working in the field. We incorporate their suggestions in the workbook.

Supporting manuals:

We designed manuals for teachers and parents keeping in mind the fact that most parents and teachers have not had formal training in child psychology, Life Skills or personal safety. We wanted teachers and parents to reinforce their children's' learning

and support them in practicing and mastering life skills. Certain aspects of child psychology and life skills were included in these manuals.

During our myriad sessions on life skills, sexuality and personal safety in schools since 2001, we had heard a common refrain from older students – "Ma'am take sessions for our parents!" We decided to include sexuality in our manuals for parents. Since a child may disclose sexual abuse to a teacher, we included an entire section on dynamics of child sexual abuse and how to respond if a child reports sexual abuse in both manuals.

Parents Manual contains:

- Parenting styles and their effect on child development
- Need for boundaries, self- discipline and self - motivation
- Skills and multiple intelligences
- Expressing feelings, role of appreciation
- Anger management
- Personal safety: How to handle child sexual abuse without instilling fear of adults in the child's mind
- Health and nutritional information
- Impact of television and video/computer games on the developing brain

In addition, **Teachers manual** contains:

- Motivational strategies
- How to conduct the lessons: Aim, Concept, Facilitation Hints,

Teacher's and parent's manuals that covered aspects of child psychology, emotional world of the child and child safety, completed the series.

Research Strategy part II:

Collecting and analyzing feedback from users of the workbook

After a year of 'On Track" use, a qualitative feedback was taken from 217 students from standards 3-9.

Materials and methods:

Two coeducational private English medium schools in Indore, Madhya Pradesh were chosen to obtain feedback from students. Students had used On Track for one academic year. The teachers had not received any special training in Life Skills prior to conducting these sessions. They used Teacher's manual for guidance. Parents had received parent's manuals.

Students were given a questionnaire stating that they had used On Track for a year. The aim of this workbook was to develop life skills and the authors of On Track would like their honest feedback to make these workbooks more effective.

Questions asked were:

1. Did you find the workbook interesting?
2. What did you learn about yourself after working through this workbook?
3. Does the workbook help you understand and deal with your emotions better than before? Yes/ No/ partly. Please give a few examples
4. Did this workbook affect your relationship with your parents/ siblings/ friends/teachers? Yes/ No/ partly. Please give a few examples
5. Did you learn something that would keep help you be safe? Yes/ No/ partly. Please give a few examples
6. There were many activities for you to do in the workbook. Which activities did you enjoy doing?
7. Which activities did you dislike or find boring or childish?
8. Would you like to use this series next year?
9. Your overall comment on the workbook

Feedback was collated under these headings:

(Nm = not mentioned)

	Std …..	3rd 4th 5th	6th 7th	8th 9th	Total
Number of respondents		**98**	**71**	**48**	**217**
Did you find the workbook interesting?	Yes No Partly	96 0 2	70 0 1	48	214 = 97% 0 3

What did you learn about yourself? Responses classified into:					
Increased self awareness		93	66	48	207 = 94%
Increased self confidence and respect		70 28 Nm	70 1Nm	48	188 = 86%
Does the workbook help you understand and deal with your emotions better than before?	Yes Partly No Nm	58 32 1 7	56 12 0 3	36 10 2 0	150 = 69% 54 = 25% 3 = 1.3% 10
Did this workbook affect your relationship with parents/ siblings	Yes Partly No Nm	90 02 6 0	64 1 3 3	42 0 5 1	196 = 90% 3 14 = 6% 4
Did this workbook affect your relationship with friends/ community members	Yes Partly No Nm	94 2 0 2	63 5 2 1	46 1 0 1	203 = 94% 8 2 4
Did you learn something that would help you be safe?	Yes Partly No Nm	68 20 8 2	62 8 1 0	40 6 2	170 = 78% 34 = 15% 11 2
Would you like to use this series next year?	Yes No	97 1	71	48	216 = 99% 1

There were many activities for you to do in the workbook. Which activities did you enjoy doing?

Drawing, creative thinking, problem solving, Writing paragraphs, stories in my own words, Body tricks, Making cough syrup, Growing coriander, Guessing to which culture the child belongs, Making articles, Dinosaurs and entomologist – guessing names of insects, Memory tricks, Sign language,Watch this tree, Spotting animals,

snake and ladder of good habits

Art of dance, Keeping track of foods I eat, making a puppet, stick, write or draw our hobbies, brain matter, tangram, optical illusion, light and dark, power of words, code breakers, anagrams, lemon painting, writing with your other hand, wishing well, skill tree, making figures out of numbers, cloud watching, tough jobs, feeling puzzled, writing friend's qualities, jumble and juggle, body signs, invent, what's in my name, reading faces, rainbow people, my talents, safety, crosswords, body language, cuppets. 24% of the children liked all activities.

Which activities did you dislike or find boring or childish?

110 students out of 217 did not find any activity boring. Others mentioned activities like Recapitulating pages 'In previous pages I learnt….was boring', making a family tree, lookout!, invent, whose job is it anyway, circle games, how to be healthy, girls and boys, projects, tangrams, cuppets, thunderclouds, making paper cut outs, drawing, finding out the opinions of parents, turban making, cartoon drawing

Your overall comment on the workbook:

3rd, 4th 5th 6th std

I learnt I am special.

I should not eat junk food, should not fight with each other, to eat fruits and vegetables, to understand others' feelings

A very good book

Increases workload on parents

Learnt to use my time correctly, value others, feelings; motivated me to take part in everything, self awareness about my behaviour and feelings, help others, improved my behaviour, I am special, to respect others, I don't cry for everything now, I don't answer back my parents for everything after this book, Helped to develop good relations,

It helped me improve my knowledge. Earlier I used to think negative but now I have started thinking positive.

Have learnt to help others, have given clothes to the poor people, to keep our body safe, have learnt to say no to things that can hurt me, Now I can express my feelings to my parents, am more confident, help people, I learnt that if we think and say, we can succeed, Improved my personality, I am more calm and composed, learnt to share

things, learnt to encourage myself, to set a goal, work hard to achieve it, can tackle adverse situations in a better way

Helped him develop overall personality development and to work in a deternined and an honest way.
I do not quarrel with friends anymore, I have become more capable, am able to express feelings, understand people, I talk softly even when I am angry

I learnt o keep our bodies fit, learnt about healthy and unhealthy touch and about keeping safe, Before I was afraid of darkness, now I am not.I learnt that my body is precious. Earlier I was scared to say no but now after reading 'On Track', I am not afraid to say no. Helped him develop meaningful and enriching relationships, to keep himself healthy and keep his body safe. learnt about telling our feelings, what we should do when we are lost or somebody troubles us. I can write in this book what has happened to me.

I can understand lessons on my own, I can work on my own
The book is nice and interesting, learnt that we should talk in a nice manner, should not talk rudely, to share problems with our family, to not talk or take toffees from strangers. Earlier when someone was not watching my favourite serial on TV, I would go to the room but now I have learnt that we should be there with everyone.
great book to improve your thinking skills. Earlier I when people told me things I used to panic and cry but now I have become stronger and have stopped getting angry at small things. I learnt that I am good in myself. I have stopped fighting with my siblings and friends and my tone of speaking has changed. I have stopped trying to impress others and doing stunts that can hurt me.
I learnt that I should be confident about myself, be brave, to tell my feelings to my parents and friends, have made new friends
If someone irritates me, I know how I have to react. Now I can talk to my friends using good words and proper language
brilliant, interesting, enjoyable book.learnt how to eat at proper timings, help others, not to tease anybody, how to take care of injuries in emergency. If my friends are angry with and is abusing my other friend, I will change it to praising so that they become friends again. I talk more softly to parents, siblings, friends.

7th 8th and 9th Std:

learnt many success principles of life, increased awareness,

strengthened my values, gender based chapters were very helpful

realised my own self worth and value

better understanding and problem solvimg skills, positive thinking, can communicate better, feel mentally strong

this workbook is like a key to all my curiosities which help me relate to myself and others better

Helped to learn about myself, about gender bias, made me link with the outside world, improved my self esteem, study skills and strengthened my ability to cope with stress, improved my communication skills

We get to know our capabilities, our favourite things, hidden talents, to deal with anger, to see others' point of view also, learnt many new things about ourselves which we did not know

I learnt that I am unique, to become eco-friendly, learnt about other people like Louis Braille and Jacky Chan, about personal safety. I behave with my relatives and friends in a more good manner, now I first listen to others, I think about others' emotions also. Now my relationship with my relatives has become strong.It is a good book through which we can know about ourself and our surroundings but only in a few cases, I did not like it.

learnt about my qualities which I thought I didn't have before, learnt to respect my elders, learnt about good habits, to understand my friends better. After working out this book, I understand much better how a parent thinks about their children, about his future. I learnt how to understand myself, friends, and am now much more polite to everyone.

Found this book good. It is a guide for us, it is good fun, Learnt many things about ourselves which we don't get to realise but come to know when we go through this book.

Learnt that we can be friendly with nature, learnt that parents are not just a type of bank that we say buy this and they will buy. It is a simple book, easy to understand.

This book topics are good, they help us by telling us things we can do in any situation. We learn about ourselves and our brains, what are the things we can do, what are our qualities, etc., with whom we have to express our thoughts, how to behave with

elders, friends, teachers. This is the best station to know ourselves, best source to get knowledge, how to behave if someone passes a comment, how to be safe from outer problems, to learn about our behaviour, about great people, about our imagination. learnt about qualities which I posses but did not know about it before. Learnt how to face and tackle competitive world ahead of us, to make my place in society, learnt how to handle a situation when someone criticises me
learnt that I have to be confident, to bring up the qualities hidden inside me, how to behave when a quarrel occurs, helps to know myself, how to handle various situations. It is very interesting
Where I had a weak point I came to know about it. I learnt many new things. I learnt to deal in a better way, got a chance to express our views. Earlier I used to get annoyed very fast but now I understand the situation and act on the basis of it. Learnt how to give importance to priorities. I used to have issues with father earlier but now I know that he has a denser ego than me. Best medium for expressing views
now know how to solve conflicts, decision making, that our body needs respect, helped to understand eachother's feelings, very good book.

Qualitative feedback where in students gave examples or shared incidents from their lives were captured separately. A sample is attached of a collage made from these responses.

Analysis:

Students were asked if they learnt anything new about themselves, whether it helped them deal with their emotions, did it affect their relationships with family, friends, teachers, whether the workbook would help them in being safe, what they liked and disliked about the workbook and their general comments. Students were asked to give examples from their life.

Findings:

94% of students reported improved self awareness,
86% reported increased self confidence and self respect.
92% reported improved communication and relationships,

90% reported improved relationships with parents and siblings and other family members.
94% reported improved communication and relationship with friends / neighbours or teachers.
69% reported improvement in handling emotions and 25% reported partial improvement.
78% reported increased personal safety awareness including healthy habits. 15% reported partial benefit in this area.
97% of the students found the workbooks interesting.
99% of all students from std 3 to 9 expressed the wish to have the workbooks in the next academic year as well.
We have refrained from analysing the results with breakup of gender and further class wise analysis as the number of respondents was not large enough to warrant this.
Since the teachers had not undergone any special training in Life Skills prior to conducting sessions from On Track, it appears that teacher's manual offers adequate supporting material.

Conclusion: "On Track' is effective in helping students develop Life Skills. It helps students choose healthier life styles and be safe. Even though used for just one year, the workbooks brought about a change in student's behaviour and attitude.
A well designed workbook can be an effective tool in helping students learn life skills in an Indian school setting.
A long term study is needed to assess On Track's impact on the quality of life, skills, values and qualities of growing children.

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On Track

Feedback from students

School: Chaitram school, north campus City/Town

Class: III A Female /Male

What did you learn about yourself after working through this workbook? I learnt that my body is precious,

I learned that "I am special", If we try something we can do it and we can learn everything.

ie I am good and special

I repolished my past and I enjoyed this workbook.

I have deserved that I talk to my parents respectfully and I don't give them back answers.

After I ~~not~~ read this book my teachers stared to love my behaveier.

I learned that I am very emotional person.

1) I have developed greater sense of responsibilities and respect when working with elders.

2) I enjoy more when playing with my freinds.

4. Does the workbook help you understand and deal with your emotions better than before? Yes /No / partly

Please give a few examples: It helped to understand my parents and my teaches more properly. It helped me to overcome my problem. I become a good student.

5. Did this workbook affect your relationship with your parents/ siblings/cousin/friends/teachers? Yes /No / Partially

Please give a few examples:

(1) I learnt to accpet my mistakes saying sorry, listening and doing things as they like.

workbook?

After working through this book, I learnt self awareness and develope our own S.O. level.