



# Literacy, Life Skills, & Character Education Curriculum for Middle School Students



# Hi, I'm Summer!

And I am excited to introduce you to this powerful, proven program that I created out of painful life lessons and amazing victories. It is changing mindsets and transforming lives starting with two words— SO WHAT!.

The S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education curriculum is a unique, trauma-informed, comprehensive curriculum and workbook that is making a big impact with educators, youth leaders, students, and even parents across the country.

Maybe you see a new approach is needed to reach the youth you serve. I encourage to review this overview, check out my website, analyze the data, and watch and read the testimonials to see how the impact yourself.

If you think this might be a solution to meet your goals or address your challenges, let's explore how this curriculum can help you get greater results for your organization by empowering your youth to see that they can achieve S.O. What! Success too.







## Literacy, Life Skills, & Character Education Curriculum for Middle School Students

**The S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Curriculum** helps students face their challenges, overcome obstacles, and set themselves up for success while improving literacy and academic performance. It is a unique, **trauma-informed** curriculum that integrates academics and literacy with **social and emotional learning initiatives** to help schools and students excel in spite of any of the challenging circumstances students often face. The curriculum uses a compelling, relatable non-fiction text and workbooks to teach important **life skills and character education** topics crucial for success in life and careers.

Students examine the author's journey of overcoming tremendous obstacles, and they engage in activities to face their own obstacles and focus on their own futures. The curriculum **builds literacy skills** by incorporating higher learning standards for English Language Arts - Citing evidence, Informational text, Sequence, Vocabulary, Writing and Active discussions.

**It is a comprehensive, engaging, inspiring, and effective solution for educating and inspiring hope and resiliency in youth.**

**"I've been a firm believer in the impact of the book/curriculum for students since its' conception. I know from experience with students that it impacts their belief, hope, and social and emotional well-being, especially our at-risk students."**

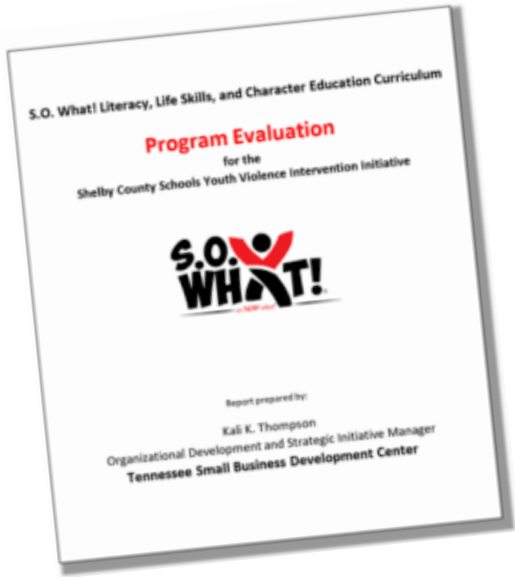
**-Ebony Suggs,  
Adolescent Parenting Program  
Professional School Counselor**



## Outcomes of the S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Curriculum

- Improves academic performance, standardized test scores, school attendance rates, graduation rates, and post-secondary attendance rates
- Builds digital literacy and STEM skills to support learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
- Develops college and career goals and workforce readiness
- Develops reading comprehension and writing skills
- Promotes literacy, academic excellence, health-related and financial education
- Builds self-esteem and help students value themselves and their futures
- Reduces bullying and violence and decrease discipline referrals
- Encourages leadership, teamwork, and community involvement
- Develops character and teach life skills to help students succeed in school and beyond
- Improves emotional learning initiatives
- Reduces teen pregnancy, poverty, and welfare dependence and promotes independence





## Backed By Data

“Students had a strong positive reaction to the program. Along with teaching important life skills, the S.O. What! Program encouraged positive behavioral changes. Additionally, students understanding of how their actions impact others increased. This behavioral change suggests that the program encourages students to think about the outcomes of their actions and could potentially prevent violent actions. Students were also more motivated to work hard in school and had a higher interest in reading after the program.”

*-Kali Thompson, Organizational Development and Strategic Initiative Manager, Small Business Development Center*

## Middle School Teacher Testimonial



## Curriculum Topics

- The importance of education
- Goal-setting, planning and thinking ahead
- Money management
- Accountability/Responsibility
- Decision-making
- The value of hard work
- Prioritizing & Delayed gratification
- Self-esteem and self-awareness
- Bullying
- Understanding emotions
- Cause and effect
- Relationships and the influence of friends
- Sex, STD's, and teen pregnancy
- Leadership and involvement
- Making a good impression
- Handling disappointments
- Career Exploration
- And MORE!



## What's included with the S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Curriculum for Middle School Students?

Whether used as a main text for building literacy skills in an English Language Arts class, in small groups focused on social and emotional development, an afterschool program, or a group focused on life skills and decision-making, the S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Curriculum is an all-inclusive resource for reaching and teaching your youth to achieve success.

Much more than a curriculum, the S.O. What! Literacy Life Skills and Character Education Curriculum workbooks provide you with everything you need to implement an engaging, impactful program to improve literacy and life outcomes for your students.

### For Facilitators

- **A facilitator license for the S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education** for access to the online library with additional resources to implement the curriculum



- **The S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Instructor Implementation Training**
- **The S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Instructor Guide**
- **The textbook, Life After Birth - A Memoir of Survival and Success as a Teenage Mother**
- **S.O. What! t-shirt** to reinforce the S.O. What! message of resilience

### For Students

- **The S.O. What! Literacy, Life Skills, and Character Education Student Workbook and Journal**
- **The textbook, Life After Birth- A Memoir of Survival and Success as a Teenage Mother**
- **S.O. What! t-shirt** which helps to reiterate the S.O. What! message of resilience and the lessons in the curriculum. T-shirts are typically worn on the days students engage with the curriculum



Contact Summer Owens to discuss pricing and implementation options for your school or program.



## Components of the Lessons

### VOCABULARY

Students will create “real world” definitions for each vocabulary word identified from the text. “Real world” definitions are created by the student’s own vocabulary, using words that they are familiar with to describe something new. These definitions can be fragments or sentences.

### GROUP CHAT

Allow students to discuss each of these questions developed from the text content in groups, then have each group answer a question aloud sharing and supporting the details behind their argument.

### LET’S MAP IT OUT

Students will create plans, diagrams, plays and more identifying steps for addressing the questions posed based on the reading assignment.

### A CLOSER LOOK

Students will use technology to research information on various topics related to the key ideas identified for each lesson.

### ON YOUR OWN

Students will write answers to the questions to the questions formed from text content citing evidence from the text to support their answers. (Citing evidence)

### JOURNAL

The journal allows students to reflect on the reading as well as the class discussion and express their views based on the journal prompts related to the lesson objectives.

# Workbook Table of Contents, Capstone Project, S.O. What! and S.O. NOW What? Statements

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## My S.O. What! Statement

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

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My name is \_\_\_\_\_

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## My S.O. *NOW* What! Statement

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

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and

So what I \_\_\_\_\_

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So *NOW* I \_\_\_\_\_

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## My S.O. *NOW* What! Statement

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

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and

So what I \_\_\_\_\_

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So *NOW* I \_\_\_\_\_

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### Capstone

### Bringing it All Together

The capstone project is a culminating activity that provides a way for you to demonstrate what you have learned over the course of engaging with this text and help you to begin to discover your career path. Understanding who you are, what you want to be and do in the future, and what it takes to get there are crucial to your success. These factors guide your daily decisions both inside and outside of school. Investing your best effort in this project is purely for your benefit as it will be a key element to directing the choices you make from this point forward.

The capstone project includes three major elements.

1. Career Exploration
2. The Paper
3. The Presentation

**1. Career Exploration**

Identify the career you desire to enter as an adult. Research to find out what it takes to work in that particular field of study—college, type of degree, technical skill, apprenticeship. Also identify the type of personality and character traits best suited for your career choices.

**2. The Paper**

Using the KEY IDEAS identified in each lesson, write a three-page paper explaining why these are important for becoming a successful adult and being successful on a career path that you choose. Use the research done in previous lessons as well as new research to explore linkages to the profession or career you choose and the important character and life skills identified in the lessons. Feel free to include additional character traits and life skills not directly mentioned in the lessons.

**3. The Presentation**

Using technology, present a three-minute demonstration of the information in the paper as well as the career exploration. The presentation should also include a plan for moving forward in pursuit of the career path. The focus for the project is to help you understand what career you would like to pursue, how to create a path to get to the profession, and the character traits and life skills needed to be successful doing it.

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# Sample Lesson

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## Me, Myself, & I

pp. 1-12

**OBJECTIVE:** I will understand how to value and appreciate who I am and others while I go through physical changes.

**KEY IDEAS:** <sup>1</sup>self-esteem <sup>2</sup>puberty <sup>3</sup>bullying

**Words to Know**

Based on the context of the reading for this lesson, create a "real world" definition for each of the following words with a partner. Write your definitions below.

- commitment \_\_\_\_\_
- deduct \_\_\_\_\_
- initiative \_\_\_\_\_
- esteem \_\_\_\_\_
- isolate \_\_\_\_\_
- memorabilia \_\_\_\_\_
- proclaim \_\_\_\_\_
- gratification \_\_\_\_\_
- reluctant \_\_\_\_\_

**GROUP CHAT**

Read the text and discuss the following questions in a small group.

- What are some physical changes Summer experienced? How did that affect how she felt about herself? (Support your answer with sentences from the text.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What are some physical changes people in your group have or are experiencing? Why is it necessary for our bodies to change as we get closer to adulthood?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did isolation play a role in Summer being bullied? Why is it important to friend people that are often alone? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**A CLOSER LOOK**

With a partner, create a T-chart. Place Male on left and Female on right. Using Internet, research physical & hormonal changes the human body goes through as it ages from infant to adult.

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**ON YOUR OWN LESSON 1**

**Puberty**  
1: the condition of being or the period of becoming first capable of reproducing sexually marked by maturing of the genital organs, development of secondary sex characteristics, and in the human and in higher primates by the first occurrence of menstruation in the female  
2: the age at which puberty occurs often construed legally as 14 in boys and 12 in girls

- Due to Summer going through puberty, what physical changes did she experience?
  - A. Started a period
  - B. Developed stretch marks
  - C. Exercised more
  - D. Grew larger
- Based on the text, what could be a reason Summer's mother all of the time in the summer?
  - A. They didn't pay very much.
  - B. The work was fun and exciting.
  - C. She wasn't receiving any pay.
  - D. She and her mother didn't get along.
- What evidence from the text suggests that Summer's mother meant she was now mature? Use supporting details to support your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Consider all of the things Summer experienced about herself or did she have low esteem? (Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What events led to Summer's class gaining a reputation during the Gulf War? (Use supporting details to support your answer.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**JOURNAL LESSON 1**

*Your thoughts....*

Summer didn't like a lot of things about how she looked and demonstrated she had low self-esteem. How did having low self-esteem affect her? How do you feel about yourself? What would you tell Summer, yourself, or others dealing with low self-esteem or bullying to help them feel better about themselves?

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**HANDOUT LESSON 1**

**"Who am I?"**

How do I see myself?	Me	How do others see me?

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With



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