

15 Effective Strategies

FACTS ON DROPOUT PREVENTION

Two decades of research conducted by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University is the basis for the center's 15 Effective Strategies^{1*} for effectively tackling dropout prevention in schools.

The strategies are grouped into four categories: basic core strategies, early interventions, school and community perspective, and making the most of instruction. Each category has a grouping of strategies that schools may use to help combat the dropout problem. The following information is adapted from the Schargel Consulting Group, which delivers strategies workshops across the country.

Basic Core Strategies

1. Mentoring/Tutoring

Mentoring is a one-to-one, caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. One-on-one tutoring focuses on academics and is an effective way to address specific needs such as reading, writing, or math.

2. Service Learning

Service learning connects mean-

ingful community service experiences with academic learning. This method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform.

3. Alternative Schooling

Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of

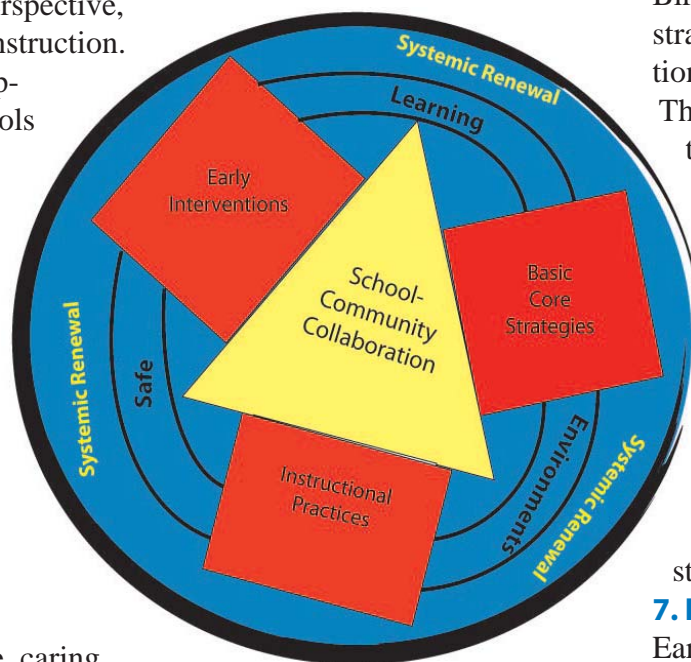


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options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the students' individual social needs and the academic requirements for a diploma.

4. After School Opportunities

Many schools provide afterschool

and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure.

Early Interventions

5. Early Childhood Education

Birth-to-three interventions demonstrate that providing a child educational enrichment can modify IQ.

The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience.

6. Family Engagement

Research consistently finds that family involvement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student's success in school.

7. Early Literacy Development

Early interventions can help low-achieving students recognize that focusing on reading and writing skills is the foundation for effective learning in all subjects.

Making the Most of Instruction

8. Professional Development

Teachers who work with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported and need to have an avenue by which they continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies.

9. Active Learning

When educators show students that there are learning methods, students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners.

10. Educational Technology

Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction that engages students in authentic learning, addresses multiple intelligences, and adapts to student's learning styles.

11. Individualized Instruction

A customized individual learning program for each student allows teachers flexibility with instruction and extracurricular activities.

School & Community Perspective

12. Systemic Renewal

Systemic renewal calls for a continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learners.

13. School-Community Collaboration

When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure sustains a caring environment where youth can thrive and achieve.

14. Career and Technical Education

A quality guidance program is essential for all students. School-to-work programs recognize that

youth need specific skills to prepare them for the larger demands of today's workplace.

15. Safe Schools

A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, must deal with potential violence as well as crisis management. Violence prevention means providing daily experiences that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills.



Photo credit: http://www.eyoneducation.com/Authors/smink_j.asp

Dr. Jay Smink

Jay Smink, Ed.D., has been the Executive Director of the National

Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) since 1988. Along with Center associates, he developed the 15 effective strategies that have been recognized by the U.S., Department of Education and the National Education Goals Panel as "the most effective strategies to help prevent school dropouts."

Over the years, NDPC/N has become a well-established national resource. Its mission is to serve as a research center and resource network for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

To view a brief video on its 15 effective strategies, visit: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ef-strat/default.htm>

5 for 15

Ways to Implement Strategies

Mentoring/Tutoring

1. Start a mentoring program. *Across the Ages* is a model mentorship program pairing elder citizens with young adults in high school.

Family Engagement

2. Implement Divorce Intervention. The *Watch Dog Dads* is a supportive, small-group designed to reduce the stress of family transitions.

Career and Technical Education

3. Establish a career academy. A *Career Academy* is a personalized small learning community within a high school, selecting a subset of at-risk students.

Professional Development

4. Fund Conference Attendance. Teachers of at-risk youth need to feel supported. Send them to one conference per year, such as the *At-Risk Youth National Forum*.

5. Use Educational Technology. *Ripple Effects* is a modular, computer-based self-directed learning tool for students to identify issues of concern.

For more information on programs to help implement the strategies, visit the "Dropout Prevention Database" at www.svrc.net