

## **Module 7: Cobe & Lil' Mikey: Second Chances and Opportunities for Youth**

**OVERVIEW:** Through a skills based approach that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and supports literacy development, this lesson explores second chances and opportunities for youth. Throughout this lesson students will analyze and respond to informational texts (i.e., written text, webisode, and videos) to build on key concepts raised concerning ex-felon re-entry programs and apply the knowledge learned by responding to informational texts, creating a documentary, and engaging in reflective activities (e.g., reflective writing assignments, drawing, and journaling).

**CONTENT FOCUS: Second Chances and Opportunities for Youth**

**NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES: 70 minutes+120 minutes for the Extended Learning Activity**

**Grade Levels:** 9-12 High School, College, can be adapted to middle school

### **Skills Based Standards:**

- **CCSS R.7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- **CCSS W.9:** Draw evidence from library or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **CCSS SL.1:** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### **Lesson Goals:**

- Increase students' understanding that our society is built on "second chances", the fundamental principle of accepting or forgiving and moving forward.
- Increase students' understandings of the challenges ex-offenders face when they re-enter society and the types of support services they need to make this transition.

### **Lesson Understandings:**

Students will understand that...

- There are opportunities for "second chances", the fundamental principle of accepting or forgiving and moving forward.
- Individuals with ex-offender status experience stigma and encounter challenges when they re-enter society.

- Comprehensive support services that promote family and social stability while providing training and education that leads to permanent full-time employment is essential for persons that have been incarcerated and are being re-entered into society.
- Job readiness, employment placement, and connecting community resources empower people to change their lives.

#### Questions for Exploration:

- What is a "second chance" and why/how is it important?
- What are some of the challenges that individuals with ex-offender status experience when they re-enter society?
- What type of support services and resources are needed to re-enter and empower individuals with ex-offender status into society?

#### Key Concepts:

- **Rehabilitation:** *The restoration of someone to a useful place in society.*
- **Second Chances:** *The fundamental principle of accepting or forgiving and moving forward.*
- **Re-entry programs:** *Comprehensive support services that include job readiness, employment placement, and connecting community resources for persons who have been incarcerated and are being re-entered into society.*
- **Life Transformation:** *The process taken to become a better individual.*

#### Instructional Resources:

- *The Interrupters* [Community Resource](#) guide
- *Cobe and Lil' Mikey* webisode from *The Interrupters*
- **Article:** CNN Money: [Out of Prison, Out of a Job, Out of Luck](#)
- **Article:** Civic Action Network: [F.O.R.C.E. Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality](#)
- **CNN Film:** [Out of Prison, Out of a Job, Out of Luck](#)
- **Civic Action Network Film:** FORCE Project
- **Graphic Organizer:** Summarizing

#### Materials:

- LCD projector or DVD player
- Paper (notebook, loose-leaf, copier paper, large-sized poster paper, construction paper)
- Journal/spiral bound notebook (optional)
- Art supplies (markers, colored pencils, scissors, glue, ruler)
- Computers
- Documentary creating software (i.e., Windows Media Player, iMovie, or even PowerPoint)

## LESSON PLAN

**1. Hook:** Begin this lesson by engaging students in a reflective discussion on the significance of “second chances”. At the end of this exercise students will gain a better understanding of what a “second chance” is, why/how it is important, and how accepting or forgiving and moving on is a fundamental principle of our society.

Ask students the following question and facilitate a discussion surrounding this question:

*What is a "second chance" and why/how is it important?*

Prior to this activity write each of the following questions on large-sized poster paper and post each question on the walls of the room:

- *Have you ever received a second chance? What were the circumstances, what happened, and how did you feel?*
- *Should people be defined by their mistakes -- even if the mistakes are great?*
- *Are some people defined by their mistakes while others are not?*
- *What would society be like if there were no second chances?*
- *Have you ever given anyone a second chance? Is there a situation where you wouldn't want to give someone a second chance?*

**Teacher's Tip:** Make sure that the posters are far apart from each other to allow for enough space for students to respond to the questions while in small groups.

Direct students to walk around the room, read each question quietly, and answer three out of the five questions written on the large-sized poster paper. Allow three-five minutes for students to respond to the questions and have them return to their seats. Go through each of the questions and responses to each question with the class highlighting the significance of “second chances” and revisiting the fundamental principle that our society is built on “second chances”.

**2. Building Background Knowledge:** Share with students that ex-offenders face challenges when they re-enter society. Have students read the article [Out of Prison, Out of a Job, Out of Luck](#). While reading the article, direct them to underline examples of challenges ex-offenders face while trying to get a job. Using a chart like the one pictured below, students should write those examples on the left side of the chart labeled “Article”. Next, have them view the embedded video clip, identify five (5) challenges ex-offenders face while trying to get a job, and write those challenges on the right side of the chart labeled “Video”. Direct students to circle the examples that are similar on both sides and share their list with an “elbow” partner (the person next to

them). Bring the whole class back and debrief this exercise by allowing a few minutes of time for a discussion on the challenges as cited in both the article and video clip.

Article	Video

**3. Webisode Viewing:** Preface the webisode, *Cobe and Lil’ Mikey*, with this profile of Cobe from *The Interrupters* [Community Resource Guide](#):

*Scarred by his father’s murder, Cobe was in and out of prison, until he had had enough. His family – particularly a young son – helped him find his footing. Like the other Interrupters, he gets deeply involved in the lives of those he encounters, including a teenaged boy just out of prison. During the course of filming Cobe mediated 50 conflicts, more than any other interrupter had ever accomplished.*

Have students view webisode *Cobe and Lil’ Mikey* and complete the following:

1. Create a Life Transformation pictograph (a pictorial symbol for words and phrases) for Lil’ Mikey that depicts his “transformation” journey.
2. In the last scene of this segment Lil’ Mikey responds to the following question, “What type of influence has Cobe been for you?” by answering, “Cobe’s been a bad and good influence.” What does Mikey mean by his response? Provide specific examples from the webisode to support your points raised.

Allow time for students to share their Life Transformation pictograph with an “elbow” partner (the person next to them) and review question #2 with the whole class.

**4. Informational Text Reading:** Begin this activity by reading the following statements:

- *Every year in Illinois, about 35,000 people are released from prison. Within three years, more than half will return.*
- *People with felony convictions who attain [achieve] 30 days of employment are 67% less likely to return to prison.*

After reading the statements above, ask students to respond to the following questions:

1. What statement was most surprising to you? Why?
2. Why do you think employment decreases the likelihood that people with felony convictions return to prison?

Allow time to debrief the questions with the class.

Share with students that they will learn about a community renewal project created by Eddie Bocanegra, an Interrupter, and led by people with records, their families, and faith allies that aim to create change and justice for people with records called FORCE (Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality). Direct students to read the article *F.O.R.C.E. Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality* and complete a chart like the one pictured below on loose-leaf paper or in a notebook:

What Is FORCE?	Who is FORCE?	What does FORCE do?	What is the organization currently working on?

Show the video clip that is embedded in the article, *Force Project*. While viewing the video clip, have students answer the following question in a journal or notebook:

*What do the various individuals featured in the film mean by the statement, “I am not my record”?*

Engage the class in a discussion surrounding this question and based on students’ responses.

**5. Interview:** For this activity, students will learn more about companies that hire ex-offenders. Have students review a list of companies that hire ex-offenders (to access a list of companies go to: <http://www.ranker.com/list/list-of-companies-that-hire-felons/business-and-company-info>). Students should be encouraged to choose one of the organizations and directed to contact and interview a representative from the human resources department. Using the interview questions below, have them inquire about the types of support services the company offers to individuals with ex-offender status, why they offer these types of services, and how effective the support services are in the re-entry process.

**Interview Questions**

<p>What types of support services does (fill in the name of the company/organization) offer to individuals with ex-offender status?</p>	
<p>Why does (fill in the name of the company/organization) offer these types of services?</p>	
<p>How effective are the support services offered in the re-entry process?</p>	

**6. Extended Learning Activity: Documentary-**As a culminating activity for this lesson, students will research support services for ex-offenders and create a documentary about an organization that assist persons with ex-offender status with re-entering society. Divide students up into small groups (3-4 students per group). While in small groups, students will conduct research using the [Summarizing](#) graphic organizer.

**Teacher's Tip:** For a printable version of the Summarizing graphic organizer, go to the following web address: [http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/sr\\_allgo.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/sr_allgo.pdf).

Direct students to use the data gathered from researching to create a documentary. Using Windows Media Player, iMovie, or even PowerPoint. Students will create a documentary that should include the following:

- Content Components: overview, mission statement/vision, discussion of the types of service(s) the organization provides (job training facilities, education, employment placements, community support), and the effectiveness of these services in “life transformation” for individuals with ex-felon status.
- Interview responses (optional)
- Storyboard
- Scripts
- Related visuals w/a shot log (photos, charts, graphs)
- Audio

Allow time for each group to present their documentary to the whole class.

**Teacher's Tip:** For tips on how to make a documentary consult the following resources:

1. <http://www.slideshare.net/acarvin/documentary-making-101>: A PowerPoint slide show that provides instructions on how to create a documentary
2. [http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/teachers/historyday/documents/guide\\_documentary.pdf](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/teachers/historyday/documents/guide_documentary.pdf): A documentary “how-to” guide for students
3. <http://www.freechild.org/YouthMediaOrgs.htm>: A list of youth media organizations locally and nationally that may be willing to offer additional support

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The Interrupters Educational Curriculum was created by Monica Swope - Independent Curriculum Consultant/Developer. To contact Monica Swope, please email [learningdimensionschicago@gmail.com](mailto:learningdimensionschicago@gmail.com). For more information on this educational guide or other Kartemquin films and related educational materials, please contact [info@kartemquin.com](mailto:info@kartemquin.com).