

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Larkspur, California

Course of Study

PEER RESOURCE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

This course is intended to give students the opportunity to develop communication skills, basic “helping” skills and attitudes and to utilize their knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of settings. Selected students are intensely trained for one quarter, with continued training the second quarter and the opportunity to participate in peer resource activities.

Peer Resource Activities may include utilizing students to work with others in a variety of ways and settings, e.g., group discussion leaders, new student orientation, peer tutoring, cross-age mentoring, classroom presentations, conflict mediators, peer helpers/counselors, etc.

Skills students are expected to develop include the following: social skills, refusal skills, active listening, identifying and observing non-verbal behaviors, decision-making and problem-solving, identifying personal values, sending effective messages, self-awareness, starting and ending a helping relationship, appropriate referrals to school counselor, effective presentations, teaching strategies, etc.

This class provides students with the integration of academic knowledge and helping skills, and a possible link to post-secondary opportunities.

B. Course Goals

This course addresses the TAM 2000 Mission statement by helping students “*realize their individual potential, develop strong moral and ethical values, and succeed in our complex, rapidly changing, multi-cultural world.*” Additionally, the course contributes to the TAM 2000 long term goal of “*Student Success – preparing our students for lives of personal, academic, and professional growth, achievement and fulfillment.*”

The Peer Resource Class further supports TAM 2000 by helping students “*acknowledge and appreciate the ethnic, religious, racial, social economic, and cultural diversity of our students, staff and community;*” by “*providing support services needed by students to ensure their success in school;*” and by “*providing opportunities for and encouraging students to demonstrate individual and collective*

responsibility, creativity, productivity, and initiative through class, school, and community projects and experiences.”

In addition, the course provides students with the opportunities to achieve other learning outcomes such as #1 – effective communication; #2 – reading and analyzing; #13 – social, civic or cultural services; and #14 – achieving and maintaining physical and emotional well-being.

Finally, the district’s systems outcomes are clearly embedded in the nature of this course. Students take responsibility for their own learning, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, demonstrate pride in their work, enjoy and value learning, foster reliance on a strong sense of personal integrity and ethics, learn to get along with other people, and develop an awareness of the impact of their behavior on self and others.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Student Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will:

- Demonstrate basic communication and helping skills and attitudes in order to effectively participate in peer resource activities.
- Select an area of “focus” in which they will develop in-depth knowledge and skills as documented by teacher feedback and objective measures such as papers, tests, presentations, etc. Areas include, but are not limited to HIV, STDs, stress, relationships, suicide, alcohol and other drug prevention, grief and loss, dealing with peer pressure, communication skills, tobacco use prevention, etc.
- Complete specific training in their service area of interest and apply it in appropriate related activities, e.g., classroom presentations, cross-age mentoring, conflict mediation, peer counseling, peer tutoring and new student orientation.

Students will:

- Develop and practice active listening and communication skills
- Demonstrate the appropriate use of various problem-solving and decision-making strategies
- Identify and observe non-verbal behavior
- Practice giving and receiving positive and constructive feedback
- Demonstrate an increase in self-awareness
- Demonstrate how to ask questions effectively
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and limitations of confidentiality
- Participate in well-planned activities using a variety of meaningful facilitating roles, with emphasis in their “focus” area

- Explore, study and research issues of importance to today's teens, including HIV, STDs, sexuality, grief and loss, suicide, relationships, etc.
- Demonstrate an effective classroom presentation
- Demonstrate an understanding of the following basic concepts of human behavior: principles of psycho-social development; motivation and reinforcement theories; socio-cultural influences and differences; individual and group dynamics; co-dependent and enabling behaviors
- Serve as positive role models
- Demonstrate their ability to perform effectively in their "focus" areas
- Demonstrate the skills of teamwork, flexibility, priority setting, time management, initiative, stress management, mediation and negotiation

III. ASSESSMENT

A. Means of Student Assessment

Student work will be assessed using a variety of indicators including, but not limited to the following:

- Reflective journal of their peer resource service activities
- Student log of amount of time contributed to peer resource service
- Active participation in all activities
- Personal self-evaluation
- Demonstration of peer resource skills (exams, role plays, etc.)
- Culminating project/paper on an agreed upon topic which demonstrates knowledge and skills of peer resource service
- Feedback from "receiver" of peer resource service

Students will be fully informed of the assessment criteria at the beginning of the semester.

B. Means of Course Assessment

The effectiveness of this course will be regularly assessed using a variety of indicators including, but not limited to, the following:

- Feedback from participating students and "receivers" of peer resource services, using both survey and oral debriefing interviews
- Formative evaluation data – documentation and records of number of peer resource students, amount of training, amount and types of services provided
- Quality of services provided, e.g., presentations, projects, tutoring, etc.
- 4th R criteria

IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Methods

The key to this course is the extensive training conducted during the first half of the class and the utilization of those skills during the second quarter. In order to be effective, this course must be taught in a support, safe, growth promoting, active learning environment. Students must be engaged in learning information and skills. They will choose focus areas of knowledge and service in which they will receive in-depth training and practice.

After the students have acquired the necessary skills and information, they will be available to participate in their chose focus service area. The student and the teacher will meet to discuss the student's "placement" in the service area, the requirements and criteria for successful participation and the method of evaluation. These focus service activities may take place on-campus or off-campus and may involve students working without the continuous, direct supervision of a certificated teacher.

The activities may utilize community resources along with teachers, parents, counselors or administrators. Students will work with an identified "teacher/mentor" to discuss progress, plan for meeting learning outcomes, and resolve problems. One-to-one conferencing will be utilized.

B. Materials

This course is not a textbook driven course. No uniform texts will be used. Instead, a list of critical skills and information needed by peer resource students will be developed. A compendium of successful, related learning activities will be created and a suggested bibliography of training manual and reference materials will be utilized.

V. GENERAL INFORMATION

This course does not meet any one specific graduation requirement, but earns elective credit for graduation. It does not satisfy an "a-f" requirement. However, students can use this course to enhance their post secondary applications as many institutions and employers look favorably upon such in-depth work.

This course will initially be offered as a 5 unit semester course. Students will be expected to participate in 1-3 hours of "facilitating" or training outside of class. The goal of peer resource programs is to provide extensive initial and supplemental training during the first semester and to utilize the trained students during the following semesters or years. The availability of experienced peer resource students strengthens the program and the services provided. Therefore, this course may be repeated for up to a total of 20 units.

After the initial semester, students may arrange with the teacher for a variable credit option as appropriate and as it relates to the peer resource service activities. Any agreement for other than 5 units per semester must be established before the semester begins. Students may also consider enrolling in Workplace Learning, Inside Work

Experience or Senior Projects as an alternative to variable credit for continued service activities. This also provides a natural link to the health/human services career cluster.

Students repeating the course will be expected to meet increasingly higher standards on the student learning outcomes and will be expected to assume greater responsibility and initiative in developing in-depth skills and service activities. They will be expected to attend advanced training workshops and retreats to strengthen and support their skill levels. These advanced students will be required to develop individual contracts with the instructor, based on their skill level and area of interest. Students may be involved in school or community based activities including, but not limited to the following:

- orientation/transition assistance to new students and freshman
- peer education – available for classroom presentations on a variety of topics
- peer connections to feeder schools
- support groups
- tutoring

Prerequisite:

Sophomore standing or above
Successful completion of Social Issues
Completion of application process

Application & Selection Process:

Complete written application (format to be provided)
Oral interview (format to be provided)
Letters of Recommendation

The selection process will incorporate a well-planned system that assures a balanced, heterogeneous membership. Use of the recruitment and application system will assure equal access to the application process. Sites will determine maximum enrollment number for class.

Desirable characteristics/behaviors of peer resource students include, but are not limited to the following:

- caring, accepting, genuine, trustworthy, respectful of diversity
- ability to assure confidentiality and exercise good judgment when referral is necessary and/or required
- demonstration of healthy life-style choices (e.g., drug-free)

BOT Approved: 3/14/95