

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Larkspur, California

Course of Study
Strategic Peer Mentoring

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

This course focuses on teaching upperclassmen to support freshmen and new students' success with the philosophical intent of "students helping students find academic and social success." This course is intended as a student support program in terms of students both giving and receiving academic and social support to help freshmen and transfer students make a smooth transition to high school (or to a new high school) and will provide upperclassmen with the opportunity to build leadership skills including goal setting, time management, organization, peer mentoring, role playing, team building, consensus building, climate building, communication and listening skills.

Students are intensively trained in the fall, with continued training throughout the year, in how to execute ongoing support activities, both academic and social, with freshmen and transfer students. Organizational skills include goal setting, project planning, agenda development, and prioritization of tasks. The model of this course is designed around specific leadership skills, which include a concept of leadership vs. management, leadership characteristics, leadership styles, levels of leadership, mission statements, situational leadership, group development, skill tracking (pre-assessment, goal setting, focus), and problem solving. Communication skills will include: interpersonal, intrapersonal, speaking, listening, writing, persuasive, phone, multi-media/technology, and non-verbal techniques. Academic follow up skills include small and large group presentations, discussion leading techniques, storytelling, classroom management, non-verbal communication, and coaching/process observing. Finally, personal development is taught to provide students with reflection skills in order to help maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle for both mentors and mentees.

B. Course Goals

This course addresses the TAM 2000 Mission statement by helping students "*take responsibility for self and community.*" It encourages students to "*realize their individual potential, develop strong moral and ethical values, and participate in our democratic system.*" Students will "*develop respect and understanding for the diversity of our community*" in order to help "*provide an environment of mutual respect, caring and acceptance of diversity.*"

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 Strategic Peer Mentoring class further supports TAM 2000, helping students 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.*” This class teaches students the importance of “*model[ing] and maintain[ing] high standards of behavior and personal integrity.*”

Embedded into this course are District outcomes around individual responsibility, skill development, community building, and peer support. Students take responsibility for their own learning, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, demonstrate pride in their work, enjoy and value learning, practice and implement effective teamwork, and develop skills in order to support freshmen and other students new to the high school communities.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Outcomes

1. Students will know and be able to articulate various skills around reading, organization, time-management, goal-setting, etc.
2. Students will effectively deliver classroom lessons and facilitate group discussions
3. Students will develop listening, communication, and teambuilding skills that will allow them to effectively mentor targeted students
4. Students will identify and utilize skills around public speaking, time management, interpersonal relationships, and program evaluation in order to plan and implement effective events that support student academic and social success in the school community
5. Students will identify and embody the characteristics needed to be an effective role model and student leader
6. Students will use goal setting, time management, and activity planning skills to create a long term positive impact on school culture
7. Students will effectively facilitate small groups throughout the school year and direct activities for these groups
8. Students will differentiate among and effectively utilize a wide variety of leadership styles
9. Students will reflect on and evaluate activities and events to learn from their experiences
10. Students will have knowledge of various support services and be able to refer their peers to the appropriate resources

B. Student Roles

1. Academic mentor
2. Liaison to feeder schools

3. Social/Emotional support/mentor

III. Assessment

A. Means of Student Assessment

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

- Reflective journal of their Strategic Peer Mentoring service activities
- Student log of amount of time contributed to Strategic Peer Mentoring service
- Active participation in all activities
- Personal self-evaluation
- Demonstration of specified skills (exams, role plays, etc.)
- Culminating project/paper on an agreed upon topic which demonstrates knowledge and skills of Strategic Peer Mentoring values and skills
- Feedback from “receiver” of Strategic Peer Mentoring 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 Strategic Peer Mentoring services, using both survey and oral debriefing interviews
- Formative evaluation data – documentation and records of number of peer resource students, amount of training, amount of types of services provided
- Quality of services provided, e.g. presentations, projects, tutoring, etc.
- Academic success will be monitored and resources will be provided accordingly via guidance from the Peer Mentor.

IV. Methods and Materials

- A. **Methods** – The course will provide students multiple units of study throughout the year, including team and climate building, organization, leadership, communication, facilitation/teaching and personal development. The units will be organized by concept and there are a number of lessons that will focus on each particular concept while working on skill and knowledge development. Through these activities students will develop an increased sense of community within the class, improved school climate and successful support in the transition of new students. Each unit will have specific goals and skills driving the curriculum. Both semesters will focus on 1) assessing challenges and setting goals, 2) planning and implementing support activities, and 3) skill and knowledge development.

The instructor will be responsible for providing direction for the units of study in addition to advising students on service goals and implementation. Additionally, the instructor will monitor and evaluate student mentors in accomplishing the agreed upon goals.

The activities will vary year to year depending on the number of students new to each school site but will be generated in conjunction with teachers, parents, counselors and administrators.

Strategic Peer Mentoring aims to assist the schools' efforts to provide a stable and systematic academic and social support structure. As the school sites implement and build their PLC models, the Strategic Peer Mentoring curriculum will be modified to adapt to the schools' newly emerging needs.

B. Materials

The materials for this course will include the published Strategic Peer Mentoring curriculum as well as materials chosen to meet the specific needs of each specific class. As the course develops, each site will develop a list of essential readings and activities that will enhance and support the program.

V. GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a year long course and may be repeated as desired. This course does not fulfill any specific graduation or college entrance requirement. Though it does not satisfy a UC "a-g" requirement, this course provides an extensive opportunity for students who are interested in developing the skills necessary for a social service or advocacy-oriented career. 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 as well as demonstrate initiative in developing leadership skills.

This course will meet the typical 145 hours of course time each year, even though they will be implemented in a way that will meet the specific needs of the students, staff, and community of each site. This program could be offered as

- a zero or eighth period, or can be integrated into the regular school day
- either a full five credit course or a variable credit course
- a service work program requiring out of class service project time

The course can include programs such as:

- peer tutoring
- middle school outreach
- academic lessons including general success strategies at school, like reading, organizational, study strategies (taught in freshmen classes, advisory, etc.)
- one-on-one mentoring
- freshmen advisory assistance
- activity planning with a focus on student support

- academic and social student interventions
- student referrals as needed on campus or community resources
- new student welcome
- systematic student recognition

Date	Activity	Hours
May	May Development Day	2 hours
August	Orientation and Training	15 hours
August	First Day of School	1 hour
August	Back To School Dance	3 hours
August	Overnight Retreat	24 hours
August – October	Team Building Workshops	4 hours
August – June	Class Meetings 2 hours/week for 36 weeks i.e. One hour per week – Teacher & Peer Mentor and another hour per week – Peer Mentor & Freshman or Transfer Student	72 hours
November	Presentations in Freshmen Classes	2 hours
November	Strategic Peer Mentoring Student Leader Conference	8 hours
August – December	Social Events in Fall Semester	6 hours
January	All Day Retreat	8 hours
January – June	Social Events in Spring Semester	6 hours
March	Presentations in Freshmen Classes	2 hours
TOTAL		153 hours

*Goal – 140-150 hours

BOT Approved 4/22/08

I:\COS\Miscellaneous\Strategic Peer Mentoring Course of Study.doc