

LINKS COURSE PROPOSAL

East Grand Rapids High School

February 2011

Course Description:

The Link Program is designed to integrate the students with Developmental Disabilities with their General Educations peers. As a class, the Links Program manages the integration using the help of a group of general education students called Links. The Links work with the students with Developmentally Disabilities inside and outside of the classroom to help them learn and generalize social skills, daily living Skills and to reinforce curriculum. The Link student will develop effective communication, responsibility, problem-solving, empathy and leadership skills. The class will assist each Link in becoming a lifelong learner, a knowledgeable thinker, and a productive community member. The Links Program is open to students in grades 11 and 12.

Rationale:

- To integrate students with disabilities with their general education peers.
- To increase opportunities for interaction and learning between general education and special education students.
- To develop effective communication, socialization, problem-solving, empathy and leadership skills among general education students and students with disabilities.
- To foster thoughtful community service and citizenship.
- To apply knowledge and skills acquired in other general education courses, particularly English language arts and social studies, to real-life situations.
- To promote tolerance and an understanding of diversity and the benefits it brings to our community.

LINKS CLASS SYLLABUS

Welcome to Links. We are happy that you were selected to be a part of our time for the next eighteen weeks. You will learn a great deal about your peers and yourself as you interact with others each day. Hopefully you will find your time with us eye opening and rewarding. The environment of our classroom may appear less formal than you are accustomed to, but this is because it is one highly individualized to meet the specific needs of the students. You will serve as a role-model, mentor and advocate, and as such, we have high expectations for your participation and behavior in class. We strive for to have an open and on-going dialogue with you throughout the year. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas, please feel free to talk with one of us. The expectations and requirements of this class are outlined below.

Expectations

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acting as a peer advocate and mentor to a student with a disability• Serving as a positive role model for others• Meeting one lunch time per week• Participating in one outside activity per marking period• Bringing a positive attitude and open-mind to class each day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting, encouraging, and supporting each and every person in the class• Maintaining confidentiality• Asking questions• Sharing ideas• Enjoying your time with us
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Book List

Rules by Cynthia Lord

House Rules by Jodi Picoult

A Rock and a Hard Place by Anne Sutcliffe

The Kindness of Strangers by Katrina Kittle

Daniel Isn't Talking: A Novel by Marti Leimbach

Look Me in the Eye by John Elder Robinson

Eye Contact by Cammie McGovern

Tilt by Elizabeth Burns

Confidential Sources by Barbara Fischkin

Are You Alone on Purpose? By Nancy Werlin

Assignments

- **Introduction**--create a concrete way to introduce yourself to the class
- **Participation**
 - largest part of you grade
 - It is very important to engage and participate in every class
- **Weekly Journal**
 - keep in a one subject spiral notebook
 - complete 3 journal entries per week
 - due on Friday of each week.
- **Lesson Planning**--create one lesson/activity each marking period to do with the others in class
- **Reading and Writing**
 - read a from the attached book list
 - write a compare contrast essay, comparing the book's story to your class experience
- **Essay**--one reflective essay
- **Project**--plan one outing or activity
- **Lunch time meetings**--attend one per week
- **Activity**--participate in one friends connect activity per semester

UNITS OF STUDY

Three units of study will be presented:

- Unit 1: Creative Communication and Problem Solving
- Unit 2: Leadership, Teaching, and Modeling
- Unit 3: Thoughtful, Contributing Citizenship

Student attitudes that will be promoted within these units:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ appreciation of diverse participants, experiences and outcome of both the academic and social components;
- $\frac{3}{4}$ communication and interaction with staff and peers;
- $\frac{3}{4}$ involvement in tasks with clear goals that have consequences for themselves and others;
- $\frac{3}{4}$ trustworthiness and responsibility to a commitment;
- $\frac{3}{4}$ collaboration and team building; and
- $\frac{3}{4}$ development of sound ethical principals

Each unit of study is composed of:

Key Concepts – state the major ideas students are expected to comprehend;

Benchmarks for each Key concept – state what students will know or are able to do if they are making progress towards the standards;

Assessment Tasks – suggest ways students can demonstrate the degree to which they have reached the Benchmarks;

Opportunities for Integration – connect concepts with the unit and subject matter from the related units or disciplines;

Authentic Application – describe how learning within this unit is used in the world outside of school;

Instructional Resources – list the materials that support the teaching of this unit.

Unit 1

Creative Communication and Problem-Solving

Key Concepts:

- ◆ Good communication skills are essential in helping to achieve community improvement and reform.
- ◆ The use of effective problem-solving skills by both LINK students and students with disabilities facilitate the learning processes for all students.

Benchmarks

LINK Students will:

1. Formulate and express ideas effectively in a variety of situations including student/teacher, student/class, student/parent, and student/community (this will be achieved through communication during class, parent/student meetings, and monthly case conferences).
2. Read and write fluently, speak confidently, listen and interact appropriately, view critically, and represent creatively.
3. Provide reflective listening for the student with a disability who is expressing difficulties dealing with educational personal situations.
4. Acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect themselves and others.
5. Consistently and comfortably use appropriate vocabulary in all situations.
6. Reinforce with positive feedback and appropriate use of constructive criticism with peers, teachers, and the community.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of communication charts and supported communication.
8. Successfully participate in a case conference.
9. Write effective behavioral descriptive statements.
10. Demonstrate effective group process skills such as providing feedback and process summaries, and seeking support.
11. Apply the elements of a problem-solving model.
12. Journal on a regular basis.

Assessment Tasks

A variety of methods can be used to demonstrate student progress or to measure knowledge and skills acquired. Evidence can be noted by quality of participation in class activities. Written assignments can be assessed against a rubric, as can class participation. Required journal reflections of the student's activities will further provide depth of understanding in a real world context.

(Examples):

- ◆ Written papers including:
 1. A daily log summarizing and reflecting on the daily activities of the student with disabilities.
 2. A weekly journal that reflects LINK student's learning/insights/growth during that week.
 3. Summative paper at the end of the semester, reflecting the larger perspective of growth/learning that has taken place over the semester including a summary of how that learning will affect the LINK student in the future.
- ◆ Additional documentation will include progress reports, A-B-C charts, interval charts, assessment scales, and other data collection and charting procedures.

- ◆ Group Presentations – Daily/weekly conferences with classmates and caseload teachers, monthly case conference including group problem solving, and IEP attendance/participation.

Integration Opportunities (Examples):

- ◆ English Language – Students will keep daily, weekly logs, and participate in monthly case conferences. Students will use oral communication with the classroom teacher, caseload teacher, and student with a disability. Students will write a summative paper at the end of the semester.
- ◆ Social Studies – Students will apply the principles of psychology and social skills in their interactions with teachers and with students who have disabilities.
- ◆ Math – Students will use daily, weekly and monthly documentation, including charts, graphs, and other data collection systems, to analyze behavior/academic patterns.
- ◆ Science – Students will apply the scientific method and problem solving strategies in order to formulate appropriate programming for individual students with disabilities.

Authentic Applications (Examples):

- ◆ Communication skills and problem solving skills are fundamental and embedded in many careers, among them teaching, social work, counseling, and other professions.
- ◆ Data collection is used by realtors, pollsters, business, research and development, the media, government, scientists and engineers.

Resources:

Council for Exceptional Children

Durand, V.M. & Crimmins, D.B. *The Motivation Assessment Scale: An Administrative Manual*. Topeka, KS. (1990).

Goldstein, Arnold, *The Prepared Curriculum, Teaching Prosocial Competencies*, Research Press. (1999).

Jensen, William, *The Tough Kid Tool Kit*. Sopris West.

Lovett, Herbert, *Cognitive Counseling and Persons with Special Needs*. Praeger Publishers, New York. (1985).

Shinski, John, E., *Resource Guide for Teachers*, Shinski Seminars, Inc. Lansing, MI.

Michigan Department of Education. Michigan Curriculum Framework. Link at web address: www.michigan.gov

Unit 2

Leadership, Teaching, and Modeling

Key Concepts:

- ◆ A general understanding of various disabilities is foundational to successful working relationships with students who have disabilities.
- ◆ Successful school participation for students with disabilities requires flexibility and individualization.
- ◆ The acquisition of basic teaching skills can significantly improve the academic outcomes for peer tutoring.
- ◆ Modeling is a powerful strategy to teach appropriate academic and social skills.
- ◆ The collaborative involvement of students, parents, and school personnel is critical to successful planning of a student program that meets his/her needs.

Benchmarks

LINK Students will:

1. Understand some of the characteristics of various disabilities and the effect such disabilities have on a person's life functions.
2. Increase vocabulary and terminology regarding successful work with students with disabilities.
3. Explain the "rules" which guide the LINK learning relationship.
4. Acquire basic teaching skills to support the peer tutoring process.
5. Demonstrate the appropriate application of accommodations and modifications.
6. Model age-appropriate, responsible behavior.
7. Explain how a behavior management plan works.
8. Consult with parents, teachers, administrators, student services, and community agencies regarding strategies to help students.
9. Analyze and evaluate the ability, interests, skills and achievement of students with special education needs.
10. Help determine which resources are most appropriate and readily available for helping students with disabilities.
11. Understand the relationship between assessment information and the process for assisting students to develop immediate and long-range plans.
12. Work with the student who has a disability, using personal, social, and educational information in planning goals.
13. Make decisions, set goals for self, involve the student with disabilities in setting goals, and take appropriate action to achieve these goals. Students will specify goals and constraints, generate alternative, consider risks, and choose the best options for action.
14. Evaluate and use resources that are most appropriate and readily available for supporting the student with a disability.
15. Provide model and feedback by editing assignments with student who has a disability
16. Reflect upon the LINK program and how it relates to classroom studies.
17. Evaluate progress of self and student before, during, and after the bulk of LINK activities occur.
18. Celebrate the learning experience.

Assessment Tasks

A variety of methods can be used to demonstrate student progress or measure knowledge and skills acquired. Evidence can be noted by quality of participation in class activities. Written assignments can be assessed against a rubric, as can class participation. Required journal reflections of the student's activities will further provide depth of understanding in a real world context.

- ◆ Class participation – Documentation of advocating for students who have a disability through teacher-to-teacher report, input into case conference, attendance and participation in the IEP. The LINK student will be able to identify the components of the various systems (data collection and manipulation, positive behavioral support, modifications and accommodations) necessary to support the student who has a disability.

Integration Opportunities (Example):

- ◆ Social Studies – Students will apply the principles of psychology to social interactions.
- ◆ English Language – Students will use written and oral communication with all students and staff in order to teach, model and model appropriate positive programming for students with disabilities.
- ◆ Math – LINK Students will collect data to analyze past student behavior and predict future outcomes.

Authentic Application (Examples):

- ◆ The enrichment and support that is available when working together in a diverse environment is supported as individuals come together in service opportunities.
- ◆ Hospitals and other service oriented professions.
- ◆ Lawyers, politicians, special interest groups, lobbyists.
- ◆ Advertising, public relations.

Resources:

Council for Exceptional Children

Goldstein, Arnold, *The Prepare Curriculum, Teaching Prosocial Competencies*, Research Press. (1999).

Jensen, William, *The Tough Kid Tool Kit*.

Lovett, Herbert, *Cognitive Counseling and Persons with Special needs*. Praeger Publishers, New York. (1985).

Shinkski, John, E., *Resource Guide for Teachers*, Shinski Seminars, Inc. Lansing, MI.

Unit 3

Thoughtful, Contributing Citizenship

Key Concepts:

- ◆ Service and Responsible Citizenship are valued in our society today and have been throughout our history.
- ◆ Understanding the cause and effect relationship between one's behaviors and the outcomes is essential to ethical living.
- ◆ Successful individuals choose to act as Responsible Citizens.

Benchmarks

LINK Students will:

1. Give examples of various incidences in which intolerance has contributed to social disintegration.
2. Describe the procedures for and importance of sensitivity to people with whom the LINK student is working.
3. Discuss the concept of stereotyping and judgmental behavior through identification of various groups who benefit from service.
4. Contribute to and work cooperatively in diverse groups to achieve common goals.
5. Recognize and build on individual and team limitations and strengths.
6. Identify and utilize the skills needed to work cooperatively and recognize the importance of these skills in the home, school, and workplace.
7. Write a personal mission statement citing his/her charitable outlook and goals as a Responsible Citizen.
8. Consider the effects of an individual's actions on other people, how one acts in accordance with the rule of law, and how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as a member of society.
9. Explain how an individual or group can act for the common good.
10. Consider how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as a member of society.
11. Identify and explain how individuals in history demonstrated good character and personal virtue.

Assessment Tasks

A variety of methods can be used to demonstrate student progress or measure knowledge and skills acquired. Evidence can be noted by quality of participation in class activities. Written assignments can be assessed against a rubric, as can class participation. Required journal reflections of the student's activities will further provide depth of understanding in a real world context.

(Examples):

- ◆ Writing – Students will write a paper defending youth involvement in service and will support their statements by citing contributions made by young people noting their impact on society.
- ◆ Speaking – Students will advocate for individuals with disabilities with classroom teachers and peer students.
- ◆ Teacher-to-Teacher reports.
- ◆ Research – LINK Students will collect and analyze data to find effective ways to

accommodate, modify, advocate and include the student with disabilities in the everyday mainstream.

Integration Opportunities (Examples):

- ◆ Language Arts – Students will advocate for individuals with disabilities through written and spoken communication as well as other media.
- ◆ Math – Students will collect and analyze data, in order to facilitate positive programming for students with disabilities and to facilitate social awareness, understanding and acceptance of all students in the general community.
- ◆ Social Studies – LINK Students will apply the principles of communication and social skills to affect positive change for the individual with disabilities.

Authentic Applications (Examples):

- ◆ It is understood that service to one's community will always be an ongoing responsibility as a Responsible Citizen.
- ◆ Many levels of government – from avenues of reform, to the support during election campaigns – rely on volunteer efforts.
- ◆ Many consumer/advocacy/special interest groups, from cancer or HIV/AIDS research to environmental groups rely on volunteer efforts.

Resources:

Council for Exceptional Children

Goldstein, Arnold, *The Prepare Curriculum, Teaching Prosocial Competencies*, Research Press. (1999).

Jensen, William, *The Tough Kid Tool Kit*.

Lovett, Herbert, *Cognitive Counseling and Persons with Special needs*. Praeger Publishers, New York. (1985).

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CONTENT STANDARDS FOR THE LINK PROGRAM

K-12 EDUCATION IN PHILANTHROPY CONTENT STANDARDS

(Taken from *Council of Michigan Foundations K-12 Education in Philanthropy Project*)

Theme I: **Philanthropy and Civil Society**

Students will be able to describe the relationship between private voluntary action intended for the common good and democracy, community, and civil society.

Theme II: **Philanthropy and the Individual**

Students will be able to analyze and describe the benefits to individuals from participating in the nonprofit sector.

Theme III: **Volunteering and Service**

Students will be able to demonstrate skills in volunteerism and will have authentic learning experiences in service.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CONTENT STANDARDS

(Taken from *Michigan Curriculum Framework*)

Meaning and Communication

Content Standard 1: All students will read and comprehend general and technical material.

Content Standard 2: All students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and composition.

Content Standard 3: All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational and civic contexts.

Depth of Understanding

Content Standard 9: All students will demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts.

Ideas in Action

Content Standard 10: All students will apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from texts to their lives and to the lives of others.

Inquiry and Research

Content Standard 11: All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONTENT STANDARDS

(from *Michigan Curriculum Framework*)

Historical Perspective

- Content Standard 1: All students will sequence chronologically the eras of American history and key events with these eras in order to examine relationships and to explain cause and effect.
- Content Standard 2: All students will understand narratives about major eras of American history and world history by identifying the people involved, describing the setting, and sequencing the events.

Civil Perspective

- Content Standard 2: All students will explain the meaning and origin of the ideas, including the core democratic values expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other foundational documents of the United States.

Inquiry

- Content Standard 1: All students will acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets and other sources, organize and present the information in maps, graphs, charts and timelines, interpret the meaning and significance of information, and use a variety of electronic technologies to assist in accessing and managing information.

Citizen Involvement

- Content Standard 1: All students will consider the effects of an individual's actions on other people, how one acts in accordance with the rule or law, and how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as a member of society.

Links Student Application

Student Name: _____

Grade level next fall: _____

Why do you want to be a member of the Links Class?

What can you contribute to the Links Class?

What do you believe could be difficult about being involved with the Links Class?

Are you willing to commit to **one** lunch period per week and **one** after school activity per semester.

What is your experience (if any) working with people with disabilities?

Please rank yourself on the below categories with ten being the highest.

Responsibility:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Creativity:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Communication skills:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Motivation:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Commitment:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Respect for Differences:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Flexibility:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Integrity:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Commitment:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Providing Positive Leadership:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Handling Stress:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Student Signature _____

Links

Teacher Recommendation

(Teacher: Please return completed recommendation to Sandy Brooks)

Student Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Name of course in which student was taught:

Student's final grade in your class: _____ Honors: Yes or No

Please rank the student on the below categories with ten being the highest.

Responsibility:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Creativity:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Communication skills:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Motivation:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Commitment:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Respect for Differences:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Flexibility:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Integrity:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Commitment:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Providing Positive Leadership:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Handling Stress:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

Links
Teacher Recommendation continued

Please record your overall recommendation below and any additional information below:

Teacher Signature and date: _____