

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP *Skills That Last A Lifetime* A Rigorous & Relevant Curriculum

While it goes without saying that this curriculum is relevant to a child's life, most students describe the lesson plans as rigorous and demanding. With detailed lesson plans for up to 90 minutes a day for 18 weeks, this curriculum is often used as a course. As such, students are expected to read, write and use advanced thinking skills on a daily basis. When focusing these skills in the content area of character education, it is not surprising to find so many facets of a student's life significantly improving.

Ways to Implement Curriculum

This curriculum is currently used in high, alternative and middle schools in more than 40 states. Many schools use this curriculum as a stand-alone course for their freshman academy, their student government class or as an elective leadership/mentoring course. Others integrate it into English, Social Studies, Career Development, Business or place it in their homeroom/advisor-advisee period. The following is a list of ways some schools have decided to use this curriculum:

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| ▪ Rice Lake (WI) & Lovejoy (TX) | Freshmen Academy |
| ▪ Hogan Prep (MO) & Chapin (SC) | Elective Leadership Course |
| ▪ E Hampton (NY) & Clayton Ridge (IA) | 8th Grade Mentor/Mentee |
| ▪ Yadkin (NC) & Hartford (WI) | Alternative Schools |
| ▪ Grand Ledge (MI) & Riverside (SC) | Student Government Course |
| ▪ Murray Co (MN) & McMichael (NC) | Class for At-Risk Students |
| ▪ Ashbrook (NC) & Clarksville (TN) | Integrated Throughout the Curriculum |
| ▪ Gaylord (MI) & Potomac Falls (VA) | Homeroom or Channel 1 |

Research Findings

This class was implemented and empirically evaluated in 2001 – 2003. Now that the surveys are taken on-line, this project has become the largest study on character education at the secondary level in America (600 + schools). At the end of each year, we provide research reports that document the progress of the students. Here are some of the variables that change as a result of this curriculum:

- Tardies, absences & suspensions decreased ↓
- Drug use, cheating on exams & bullying decreased ↓
- GPA & E.O.C. test scores improved ↑
- More confidence that student will graduate and attend college ↑

Consistent Format of Curriculum

A consistent weekly format utilizing ethical dilemmas, lectures, textbook readings, character movies, basic skills, weekly writing assignments and successful community leaders is used to provide a framework for stable learning. Students and teachers come to rely on this consistent format:

- *Ethical Monday*
- *Character Movie Tuesday*
- *Role Model Wednesday*
- *Basic Skill Thursday*
- *Assignment Friday*

Weekly Topics

Orientation & Expectations
Developing Goals & Priorities
The Importance of Education
Showing Respect for Authority
Building a Positive Reputation
Developing Personal Values
Handling Peer Pressure
The Importance of Role Models
Managing Anger & Aggression
Positive Communication Skills
Expressing Gratitude to Parents
Cultural Competence
Citizenship in the Community
Making Marriage Last
Employability & Workplace Skills
Confronting Bullies & Violence
Becoming a Strong Leader
Being a Strong Role Model

Character Traits

Attitude
Preparation
Perseverance
Respect
Honesty
Integrity
Courage
Appreciation
Self-Control
Empathy
Gratitude
Tolerance
Duty
Loyalty
Responsibility
Compassion
Leadership
Character

Role Models

Mattie Stepanek
Chelsey “Sully” Sullenberger
Booker T. Washington
Dwight Eisenhower
Sherron Watkins
Jesse Ventura
Amelia Earhart
Christopher Reeve
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Helen Keller
Bob Hope
Arthur Ashe
Pat Tillman
Nancy Reagan
Cal Ripken, Jr.
Oprah Winfrey
Mike Krzyzewski
What They Had in Common

Textbook Focuses on Role Models

Kids need positive role models to look up to and emulate. Unfortunately, many kids today report they do not have role models. Other times, their role model is, at best, a curious choice. The textbook for this course, *Role Models: Examples of Character and Leadership*, highlights 17 individuals who exemplify the different character traits covered in the curriculum. This book offers a mix of historical figures who have stood the test of time like Amelia Earhart, Booker T. Washington and Helen Keller, as well as contemporary figures who are worthy of our admiration, such as Coach Mike Krzyzewski, Pat Tillman and Oprah Winfrey. Quizzes and vocabulary lists accompany each chapter.

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