

Service-Learning Tutoring for Fall 2021

Faculty Instructions

Tutoring Programmatic Goals

- Embed students within the community to support literacy development
- Promote fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and phonics education

Learning Outcomes for Service-Learning Students

- Recognize existing community assets and gaps in resources
- Develop leadership and teamwork skills needed for effective reading tutoring

Background

The service-learning tutoring initiative is a signature program of Mercer's community engagement work and has been an institutional initiative for over ten years. Since 2016, Mercer has partnered with the [Read United team from United Way of Central Georgia](#) to deploy Mercer student tutors in the Bibb County School District (BCSD) to deliver a specialized literacy curriculum called Read2Succeed. Mercer tutors are trained to work with children in grades K-3 to deliver one-on-one or small group reading tutoring that addresses the five pillars of reading instruction: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness. In 2020, Read2Succeed shifted to a virtual format that proved to be very successful and, as a result, persists for the 2021-22 school year. Virtual formats also enable Read2Succeed to expand beyond the BCSD.

Structure

Read United employs a team of site coordinators who are embedded in the partner schools to coordinate the day-to-day operations of tutoring. The site coordinators work with the school to identify students for the program, set curriculum instructions for each tutoring session, and supervise tutoring sessions.

Mercer's Coordinator of Community Engagement, Lauren Shinholster, works with Read United and the site coordinators to establish tutoring schedules, coordinate background checks for Mercer tutors, and communicate essential information to faculty and their student tutors throughout the semester.

During the 2021-22 school year, all Read2Succeed tutors will engage with their tutees virtually using Microsoft Teams. Read United site coordinators will work in the school building to ensure children are present and timely to virtual tutoring sessions as well as provide oversight and virtual support to tutors during each session. Tutors are required to participate in approximately 5 hours of training at the beginning of the semester. Training is a combination of asynchronous Canvas material and synchronous virtual training with the Read United team. Tutors are required to log their tutoring hours in the [BearPulse](#) platform throughout the semester.

Requirements of Faculty

Although the details of service-learning tutoring are coordinated by the Center for Engaged Learning (CEL), there are a few requirements of participating faculty:

- Attendance at the tutoring faculty orientation meeting on Aug. 17 at 3:15 pm, where faculty receive details and student forms for the program and BearPulse, ask questions, and meet other participating instructors.
- Timely distribution, collection, and return of volunteer paperwork required by BCSD (paperwork and detailed instructions provided by Lauren Shinholster at the faculty orientation meeting, due back to Lauren by 9/1/21)
- Require all students to electronically sign the required Service-Learning Participation agreement in BearPulse (due 9/3/21)
- Require students to tutor for a minimum of ten hours during the semester (one hour per week for approximately ten weeks)
- Incorporate reflection on students' service-learning experiences into course assignments (see [Sample Reflection Prompts](#) for examples)
- Require students to complete the one-hour asynchronous training and 90-minute Read United training on Mercer's campus
 - Faculty are *strongly encouraged* to attend the Read United training and complete the 1-hour asynchronous training
- Require students to log tutoring and training hours in your BearPulse course (instructions available at faculty orientation meeting and support provided by Hannah Nabi)

Sample Reflection Prompts

These can be implemented through a variety of formal and informal writing assignments as well as group discussion.

- What were your expectations? How does your experience compare?
- What good things did you observe or experience during your tutoring sessions? What challenges did you encounter?
- How has your understanding of course material been affected by your tutoring experiences?
- How has your understanding of your own educational experience been affected by your tutoring experiences? What we've learned in class?
- What have you learned about leadership and teamwork as a result of your tutoring experience?
- What have you learned through this experience that you can apply in other areas of your life and learning?

Requirements of Students

In order to participate in service-learning tutoring, students must have access to a quiet place where they can meet with their tutee online, a computer or tablet with a webcam and internet capability, and the ability to access Microsoft Teams on their device (either via their internet browser or software download).

All Mercer students and employees have access and login credentials to Microsoft Teams through Mercer's IT department. Instructions for accessing Microsoft Teams are [available online](#).

In addition to the technical requirements, students are required to complete:

- All required background check forms for Bibb County School District (due 9/1/21)
- Mercer's Service-Learning Participation Agreement in BearPulse (due 9/3/21)
- 1-hour asynchronous training (due 9/7/21)
- One session of the 90-minute Read United training (a registration link will be distributed to students after the drop/add period ends)
 - 9/9/21 (virtual) from 2-3:30 pm, 4-5:30 pm, or 6-7:30 pm
 - 9/10/21 (CSC 3) from 2:30-4:00 pm or 5-6:30 pm
- A minimum of ten hours of virtual tutoring (exceptions for BCSD school cancellations permitted)

Important Dates

8/17/2021 Faculty orientation meeting
@ 3:15 pm

8/30/2021 Students added to Canvas asynchronous training course by CEL

9/1/2021 Deadline for faculty to return completed student paperwork to Lauren Shinholster

9/3/2021 Deadline for students to electronically sign Service-Learning Participation Agreement in BearPulse

9/7/2021 Deadline for students to complete asynchronous Canvas training

9/7/2021 Deadline for students to sign up for tutoring slot

9/9 or 9/10 Mandatory training with United Way for students
9/9/21 (virtual) from 2-3:30 pm, 4-5:30 pm, or 6-7:30 pm
9/10/21 (CSC 3) from 2:30-4:00 pm or 5-6:30 pm

Faculty are strongly encouraged to attend

9/13/2021 First day of tutoring

TBD Mid-semester faculty check-in with CEL (via Zoom)

12/3/2021 Last day of tutoring

12/7/2021 Deadline for students to log tutoring hours in BearPulse