Berea College, located in Berea, Kentucky, is a distinctive institutions of higher learning. Founded in 1855 as the first interracial and coeducational college in the South.

Berea College, charges no tuition and admits only academically promising students, primarily from Appalachia, who have limited economic resources.

**Berea College GEAR UP**

• As part of the national Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), Berea College promotes and supports college readiness for students in Eastern Kentucky.

• Our two grants provide nearly $10.7 million annually for seven years from the United States Department of Education and are among only 47 such GEAR UP partnership grants awarded nationwide and the only two in Kentucky.
Demographics of grant

- These Southeastern Kentucky counties rank in the top 50 poorest counties in the Nation.
- Owsley County was ranked as the No. 1 poorest county in the Nation (2010)
Demographics

- Many students live in households that are considered to be below the poverty line.

- High school drop-out rates are high

- Low college-going culture

- Students are not college ready
• 100% of the 8th grade cohort must receive traditional, face-to-face mentoring for 30 minutes twice a month.

• 75% of the 9th grade cohort must receive traditional, face-to-face mentoring for 30 minutes twice a month.

What is “Connecting the Dots” Skype Mentoring?

The goal of “Connecting the Dots” is to provide schools within Berea’s service region high quality mentors that are dedicated to raising the levels of college readiness and college awareness amongst the cohort of students who are being served: 8th and 9th graders.
Why “Connecting the Dots”? 

- Student Disengagement = Potential Drop Out 
- Engaged Student = Potential Success 
- Limited Resources = Possible Failure 
- Unlimited Opportunities = Key to Open the Door to Success 

Mentoring is a powerful tool ..... our students need mentoring. 

Who better to mentor these students than college students, some of which are first generation students, who have overcome the very same hardships and life challenges that our students are now facing.
Incorporating Skype Mentoring into Teacher Education Classes

3 Options for Building Student Participation Into the Syllabus

1. Required participation counting as part of a student’s final grade in your education course
2. Optional participation counting as extra credit within your course
3. Custom option designed by you

Mentoring Curriculum Options

The Connecting the Dots mentoring curriculum is available to frame and promote quality discussion between mentors and mentees. The curriculum can be used as a stand-alone product or in conjunction with mentor-developed materials. We recognize that partnering institutions may have access to other age-appropriate curriculum and welcome partners to use such resources. Partners are also encouraged to use this program as an opportunity for students to create custom-designed curriculum.
Technology Requirements

The equipment/technology required to participate in the program are minimal.

- access to a broadband Internet connection
- computer or iPad equipped with microphone, speakers, and web camera
- Skype account (free)

Any mentor with existing Skype accounts will be asked to create a new account for participation in the Connecting the Dots program.

Skype will be utilized for both mentoring sessions with 8th and 9th grade mentees as well as online mentor check-ins.

Prior experience using Skype is not necessary but is helpful.
Teacher Standards

Our mentoring program connects in meaningful ways to both the **National Educational Technology Standards (NETS)** and the **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**.

- **CTD** ties beautifully into NETS which contains standards for learning, teaching, and leading in the digital age. *(using digital age tools and resources to support student success and innovation)*.

- **Education student participation** in the Skype mentoring program also supports a core proposition of **Nation Board certification**.
CTD provides college students with a unique platform for service learning by:

- providing 8th and 9th grade students (many of which are at-risk) with meaningful direct services.

- breaking down the normal barriers of geography and travel time typically associated with community service. These are non-existent in our program.

- builds college students’ character in the areas of leadership and civic responsibility.
College For Every Student (CFES) is a nonprofit organization committed to raising the academic aspirations and performance of underserved youth so that they can prepare for, gain access to, and succeed in college.

By engaging in CFES, students have shown growth in academic performance, attendance, and behavior.

*Outcome Data for CFES Schools*

- **College-going rate for Grade 12 scholars**: 95%
- **Improved behavior**: 74%
- **Improved GPA**: 68%
- **Improved attendance**: 63%
Core Practices

The CFES approach is built around three core practices that researchers from the University of Michigan cited as “needed to empower students to make the transition to college”:

**Mentoring**—Every CFES student will have a mentor (peer, college student, and/or community leader) who will engage in mentoring at least twice monthly.

**Pathways to College**—Every CFES student will visit at least one college annually, become college and financial aid literate, and ultimately have a clear understanding of what he/she needs to do to prepare for, gain access to, and succeed in college.

**Leadership through Service**—Every CFES student will receive ongoing leadership training and participate in two service projects annually; each school will create a student leadership team.
Mentoring Requirements

- Must be a current college student
- Must be able to dedicate a minimum of 30 minutes a week to mentoring program
- Complete background clearance
- Serve as a role model
- Interview with CTD Program Coordinator via Skype
- Complete Mentor Training (must view 50 minute E-Mentor Training Video provided by College For Every Student (CFES). Complete periodic on-line surveys regarding student's progress
- Must not provide email address to mentee
- Must not friend mentee on their Facebook account
- Only contact mentor during the specified mentoring time during school day
Mentor Training

Consistency

Communication

Confidentiality

Mandatory Reporting
Measurable Gains Through Mentoring

Signs of Successful Mentoring

• Improved academic performance
• Improved attendance
• Increased communication
• Increased participation and attentiveness in class
• Greater enthusiasm
• Fewer discipline referrals
• Improved self-esteem
• Fewer detentions
• Improved attitude
• Planning for the future
“I have really enjoyed participating in the mentoring program. As a junior with an Elementary Education and Spanish double major there is a lot expected of me. I am expected to be a role model for my peers, students that I will teach in my future classroom, and my mentee. Through the Skype Mentoring Program I have been introduced into a world of leadership, where I have been able to influence a students study habits and attitudes about school in a positive way. My suggestions matter. I now have a mentee who looks up to me and hears what I have to say. She listens just as I listen to her. She is a hard worker. College is a place for her and this program is helping me deliver that message to her.”
“To inspire and mentor students to be great is one of biggest reasons why I chose to participate in the Virtual Mentorship Program. It helps that I remember what it was like to be in middle school, and to have all the insecurities and challenges that comes with it. But helping someone realize that they can attend college and become a successful individual is an important opportunity I would not trade for anything. Students are very perceptive, and the opportunity to interact with a student as a mentor is both as helpful as it is beneficial. I am not only assisting a someone in pursuing their goals, but I am also learning more about myself as I share why I am motivated to pursue the goals I have in life.”
Ernesto Umana / Harvard University / Cambridge, Mass.

“I serve because I know the power of mentors. Growing up I had few role models that I could relate to, so I learned from the mistakes of those around me. Exceeding the low expectations that the education system had for me was a lonely experience. The Skype sessions allow us to draft goals and plans to realize them. My mentee and I work on short-term objectives like time management and long-term aims such as college readiness. Programs like these are necessary because today’s admissions are over before the student even applies. I believe the right people at the right time can make a difference.
“Connecting the Dots” Skype Mentoring Students

Visit

Hanover College
For additional information on the “Connecting the Dots” Skype Mentoring Program

Contact:

Terry Wilson
Berea College GEAR UP
Phone: (606) 568-0484
Berea College GEAR UP

“Connecting the Dots”

Skype Mentoring Program

GEAR UP
Partners for Education
Berea College
As a Service Coordinator for Berea College GEAR UP Promise Neighborhood, I see daily the need for mentoring support for the students in our middle schools. The schools that I service are part of the "Promise Neighborhood" targeted schools. The schools are located in high poverty counties in Southeastern Kentucky, a few of which can be found on the Top 50 "poorest counties in the nation" listing, one of which is #1 and another ranked #4.

Although many students don't officially drop out of school until high school, the students’ disengagement with their schoolwork can almost always be traced back to an earlier age. If the problem isn't addressed prior to attending high school, those students will almost surely be overwhelmed once they enter high school and are very likely to give up and drop out. Connecting 8th and 9th graders who have little exposure to adults with college education with pre-service teachers has potential on many fronts. Adding Skype to the relationship makes it all the more exciting for 8th and 9th graders and all the more challenging for pre-service teachers.

To prevent this we want to engage these targeted 8th and 9th grade students with college/university teacher education student mentors, volunteer students, who will provide young people with positive role models since they who have stayed in school and are now fully engaged in college. This can be accomplished through a 45 minute "Skyping sessions" twice monthly with the 8th grade students. Mentors and mentees are typically paired in a 1:1 ratio.

Not only do the 8th and 9th grade students benefit greatly from this mentorship experience, but it also provides those college students who are seeking a career in education a rewarding experience that they will never forget. This also serves as a great community service project / service leadership project for your educational majors.

Last year, college students from Wabash College, Hanover College, Eastern Michigan University, Ohio University, Eastern Kentucky University, and Harvard University participated in our pilot of this program. After reviewing this program overview, I hope your institution is interested in taking part in this ambitious program. Please contact me for additional information. I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Thank you.

Terry Wilson, Service Coordinator
GEAR UP Promise Neighborhood
Incorporating Skype Mentoring into Teacher Education Classes

3 Options for Building Student Participation Into the Syllabus

Connecting the Dots is intended to be tailored to fit the unique needs of students attending each institution of higher learning. This includes offering three options for building student participation.

1. Required participation counting as part of a student’s final grade in your education course

2. Optional participation counting as extra credit within your course

3. Custom option designed by you

Mentoring Curriculum Options

The Connecting the Dots mentoring curriculum is available to frame and promote quality discussion between mentors and mentees. The curriculum can be used as a stand-alone product or in conjunction with mentor-developed materials. We recognize that partnering institutions may have access to other age-appropriate curriculum and welcome partners to use such resources. Partners are also encouraged to use this program as an opportunity for students to create custom-designed curriculum.

Technology Requirements

The equipment/technology required to participate in the program are minimal. In order to Skype, mentors need access to a broadband Internet connection, a computer or iPad equipped with microphone, speakers, and web camera, and a Skype account. Any mentor with existing Skype accounts will be asked to create a new account for participation in the Connecting the Dots program. Skype will be utilized for both mentoring sessions with 8th and 9th grade mentees as well as online mentor check-ins. Prior experience using Skype is not necessary but is helpful.
The *Connecting the Dots* Skype Mentoring Program connects in meaningful ways to both the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Our program ties beautifully into NETS which contains standards for learning, teaching, and leading in the digital age. Education student mentors model digital age work and learning as they collaborate with GEAR UP staff and student mentees using digital tools and resources to support student success and innovation. As they mentor via Skype, college education students also promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility by promoting and modeling digital etiquette and responsible social interaction using technology. Mentors also develop and model cultural understanding as they engage with students in schools located in high poverty counties in Southeastern Kentucky.

Education student participation in the Skype mentoring program also supports a core proposition of National Board certification. Mentors are encouraged and have flexibility to adjust the content of their sessions based on observation and knowledge of their mentees’ interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships. Mentors serve as positive role models, fostering self-esteem, character, and motivation while encouraging students to have high aspirations for the future.

**Service Learning**

*Connecting the Dots* provides college students with a unique platform for service learning. Mentoring in a virtual environment, college students provide meaningful direct service to 8th and 9th graders, many of whom are at-risk. Normal barriers of geography and travel time typically associated with community service are non-existent in this program.

Additionally, while the program benefits young mentees, it also concentrates on building college students’ character in the areas of leadership and civic responsibility. *Connecting the Dots* combines collegiate-level coursework with service leadership engagement to help students develop as leaders, role models, and successful mentors. As mentors reflect on mentoring, it enriches their learning experience and teaches them the importance of civic responsibility. Many college students learn the direct impact of service as they see their mentees begin to change and grow as a result of their positive guidance and support.

Institutions interested in youth development and providing quality service learning opportunities are encouraged to join us in *Connecting the Dots*. 
Comments From Skype Mentors

Tara McMahon / Hanover College / Hanover, Indiana
“I have really enjoyed participating in the mentoring program. As a junior with an Elementary Education and Spanish double major, there is a lot expected of me. I am expected to be a role model for my peers, students that I will teach in my future classroom, and my mentee. Through the Skype Mentoring Program, I have been introduced into a world of leadership where I have been able to influence a student’s study habits and attitudes about school in a positive way. My suggestions matter. I now have a mentee who looks up to me and hears what I have to say. She listens just as I listen to her. She is a hard worker. College is a place for her, and this program is helping me deliver that message to her.”

Fabian House / Wabash College / Crawfordsville, Indiana
“To inspire and mentor students to be great is one of biggest reasons why I chose to participate in the Virtual Mentorship Program. It helps that I remember what it was like to be in middle school, and to have all the insecurities and challenges that comes with it. But helping someone realize that they can attend college and become a successful individual is an important opportunity I would not trade for anything. Young students are very perceptive, and the opportunity to interact with a student as a mentor is both as helpful as it is beneficial. I am not only assisting a someone in pursuing their goals, but I am also learning more about myself as I share why I am motivated to pursue the goals I have in life.”

Ernesto Umana / Harvard University / Cambridge, Massachusetts
“I serve because I understand the power of mentors. Growing up I had few role models that I could relate to, so I learned from the mistakes of those around me. Exceeding the low expectations that the education system had for me was a lonely experience. I promised myself that if I succeeded I would help others along the way. The Skype sessions allow us to draft goals and plans to realize them. My mentee and I work on short-term objectives like time management and long-term aims such as college readiness. Programs like these are necessary because today’s admissions competitions are over before students even apply. I believe that the right people at the right time can make a difference.”

Madeline Ashby / Hanover College / Hanover, Indiana
“When my teacher brought up the possibility of participating in a mentoring program I was very excited. I believe coming to college has been the best decision of my life and I wish to help others reach that goal. I understand that it is difficult to strive for something that seems out of reach, and one person telling you it is possible can make all the difference. I am so glad I can be that difference in a students life. Thank you for this opportunity.”
**Comments From Mentees**

“I like the Skype Mentoring Program because it is fun. I can get tutoring from my mentor if I need it. My mentor said he will help me and that I should work hard in school to prepare for college. It seems like I am making new friends every day.” - Jesse

“The Skype Mentoring program is better than I thought it could possibly be. I enjoy getting to know my mentor, and she has really encouraged me to work hard in school. I enjoy learning about college and how I need to prepare.” - Emalee

“I really enjoy doing the Skype Mentoring program. My mentor has taught me so much and has encouraged me to be the best in school that I can be. I would love to meet her in person.” - Cassidy

“Skype Mentoring is a great experience! It’s amazing to be able to learn how to cope with high school and college from someone who has actually experienced it. I look forward to each mentoring session.” - Brice

“It’s a great program. I’m extremely glad that my teacher chose me for this program. What an awesome opportunity it has been! My mentor has been studying abroad in New Zealand this semester and has not missed a mentoring opportunity with me even though he has to connect with me at 1:00 AM in the morning his time. That’s what I call dedication.” - John

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**EXPLORING COLLEGE PATHWAYS**

**BUILDING ACADEMIC ASPIRATIONS**

**ACHIEVING LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE**
For more information about the *Connecting the Dots* program, contact:

*Terry Wilson, Service Coordinator*

*GEAR UP Promise Neighborhood*

terry_wilson@berea.edu

606.568.0484
“GEAR UP” and Make a Difference in a Young Student’s Life!

WHO: You as a mentor to young students from middle and high schools located in high poverty counties in Southeastern Kentucky, a few of which can be found on the Top 50 “poorest counties in the nation.”

WHAT: “GEAR UP,” a college readiness program in association with Berea College in Kentucky, is recruiting teacher education students to serve as mentors.

WHEN: Starting in September, the mentoring sessions will occur through 45-minute Skype sessions twice monthly with students from the following schools:

- Clay County Middle and High School
  Manchester, Kentucky

- Owsley County Middle and High School
  Booneville, Kentucky

- Jackson County Middle and High School
  McKee, Kentucky

WHY: By matching 8th and 9th grade students with college mentors, GEAR UP is providing young people with positive role models who have stayed in school and are now fully engaged in college.

GEAR UP GOALS:

- Raise 8th and 9th graders’ aspirations
- Build their skills (goal setting, study skills, time management skills, financial literacy, etc.)
- Create a college-going culture in their schools and with peers.

Not only would the 8th and/or 9th grade students benefit greatly from this mentorship experience, but it would also provide those students who are seeking a career in education a rewarding experience that they will never forget. This would also look great on their future resume and a great service leadership project for educational majors.

For more information on this program contact:

terry_wilson@berea.edu

or

sylvia_brennan@berea.edu

Who Benefits from Mentoring Programs?

College Student Mentors:

- Gain personal satisfaction
- Develop patience, insight, and understanding
- Learn lessons in citizenship through work with the students
- May experience a cultural, social, or economic background different from their own
- Improve leadership and communication skills
- Gain experience for future careers in public service and teaching.

Younger Partners:

- Receive academic help
- Learn study skills
- Improve social skills
- Have the attention of another caring adult
- Discover new options and opportunities
- Set goals for the future

Colleges and Universities:

- Form stronger ties with their communities
- Build better citizens through responsibility and service
- Term potential school dropouts into potential college students
- Support cross-cultural learning
- Retain students by providing meaningful involvement

Schools:

- Report improvements in student-teacher relations
- See progress in school performance and in academic and social skills
- Forge stronger ties with colleges, community groups, and parents
“I have really enjoyed participating in the mentoring program. As a junior with an Elementary Education and Spanish double major there is a lot expected of me. I am expected to be a role model for my peers, students that I will teach in my future classroom, and my mentee. Through the Skype Mentoring Program I have been introduced into a world of leadership, where I have been able to influence a student’s study habits and attitudes about school in a positive way. My suggestions matter. I now have a mentee who looks up to me and listens to what I have to say. She listens just as I listen to her. She is a hard worker. College is a place for her and this program is helping me deliver that message to her.”

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You can make a Difference!