

UALR STUDENT LITERACY CORPS

SPONSORED BY THE
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
AND
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK



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LITERACY CORPS HISTORY

Seeking a means of linking students with their communities so that they could use their skills with language, the UALR English Department began the Student Literacy Corps in 1988. Very quickly, we learned that students from all majors, with proper training and supervision, could participate in this important endeavor to spread the gift of literacy. With the help of a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, the Corps made its first beachhead at McClellan High School in southwest Little Rock, where we worked in the reading program and became the first service-learning course at UALR. We learned in just one semester that it was difficult to make an impact on high school students who had suffered along with poor reading skills for a number of years, so we determined to turn our attention to younger children.

With help from the Time-Warner corporation, we began to work in targeted elementary schools in Little Rock. We continue with this work today, at the middle school level. Our purpose is to work with the schools in helping students who were having trouble with reading and therefore with their other subjects as well. We try to catch these students before they fall, steadying them on their first steps into literacy, and hopefully providing a firm foundation for their future scholastic endeavors.

Several years ago, Literacy Corps veterans wrote a grant proposal that was funded by Share America, a non-profit organization that works with at-risk students and children living in poverty. That endeavor has grown and strengthened over the years here on campus. The English Department in partnership with the Little Rock School District now provides staff and training for students enrolled in the Student Literacy Corps (SLC).

LITERACY CORP REQUIREMENTS

Literacy Internship, English 4390.03

The three-hour UALR Literacy Internship (UALR Student Literacy Corps) is offered by the Department of English. UALR students will tutor middle school students enrolled in reading assistance programs in the public schools.

STEP 1 Eligibility

We use the following factors in considering your eligibility to participate:

- Tutoring is a semester long commitment at minimum. Do you have time in your schedule to commit to four hours per week of tutoring?
- Tutoring occurs during the school day from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Does your schedule allow you to tutor during these times?
- Training is important. Does your schedule allow you to attend a three-hour training session during the first week of class?
- Have you ever been the subject of any complaints or arrest for any criminal conduct, including but not limited to crimes against children?

If you must answer yes, the Student Literacy Corps may not be appropriate for you at this time. Speak with Cheryl Chapman, Instructor, at 837-8472, if you have questions.

STEP 2 Complete the online application at:

<http://ualr.edu/english/index.php/student-literacy-corps-application/>

Your Availability- A commitment of four hours per week is required. You will tutor one student for each hour.

STEP 3 Interview & Site Placement

After you submit the Application we will contact you by email within 24 hours to schedule an appointment. After the interview, eligible students will be approved to register for ENGL 4390.03.

STEP 4 Training – Student Literacy Corps tutor training requires two steps:

1. Basic Tutor Training (2 1/2 hrs)

Mandatory training is at the school site. You will be notified via email of the specific date and time. Call 837-8472 if you have questions. Our training session will include the following areas:

- Your role and responsibilities as a tutor
- Strategies and tips when working with middle school students
- Basic tutoring skills, with practice exercises
- Basic writing skills, with practice exercises
- Diversity in the Little Rock School District – profile of students
- Safety
- Course Requirements & Reporting

2. On-site Tutor Training (varies)

We will schedule and accompany you on your first visit to the middle school site. At that time you will meet your student, check out the space where you will tutor, tour the school, and learn about site-specific school procedures, signing in and out, and other issues.

STEP 5 Tutoring

Once you have completed the training, start tutoring! We'll check in with you periodically to ensure that your placement is working well for you. We've got some resources to help you tutor more effectively. We'll want you to think about the impact you're making, and what your experience means to you. We will propose weekly discussion questions based on the required text *Savage Inequalities*. At the end of the semester you will complete a final report (the training will cover the guidelines for your paper). This report will provide us with feedback and ideas to improve the Student Literacy Corps.

EXPERIENCES OF FORMER LITERACY CORPS

STUDENTS:

"I decided that I could make a difference. I thought of it as almost my duty as a man to do so. Working at Bale taught me many things but most of all it helped me to open my eyes. Now I can see that if a few hours a week with the kids can help like that just think if I worked six to eight hours five days a week." John K. Blackmon

"I can honestly say the joy and sense of satisfaction I felt now that the semester was unimaginable when I first started. It's just a wonderful experience when students receive report cards and you see improvement in subjects where you have been tutoring." Jeremy B. Allen

"I know that I will be tutoring again very soon, and I want others to know that it won't be for the three hours credit but for the dedication any motivation that the student at Bale Elementary and other school have shown by asking why is this? Why is that? That one simple word has changed my life and you ask WHY!!!!!" Sharon Crumpton

"Literacy Corps is the best thing that ever happened to me. Which is strange because, when I first heard the name I thought, "No way, I'm not joining any Corps." I am so glad I did. This class has made all the time I have spent at this University worth it!" Kimberley Eason

"They made me feel like I accomplished something by the way that they reacted to me when they saw me. I knew that I had touched their lives, if even in just a small way, I felt important to them. I never left the school not feeling happy." Betsey Cooley

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