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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Symbiotica Learning Initiative Provides New Learning for Homeschoolers**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Most people might think of their high school biology class when they hear the term “symbiotic relationship.” But Cedarville University’s School of Education and Social Work is reframing the term with its latest initiative, Symbiotica.

Set to launch Wednesday, Sept. 6, the Symbiotica teaching and learning lab gives students who are majoring in middle childhood education the opportunity to use their education by offering instruction in a classroom setting on-campus for fifth- and sixth-grade homeschool students in the local community. The goal is to provide homeschooled students with instruction from future educators who will, in turn, be provided with valuable teaching opportunities.

Teaching will include the typical classes of a middle childhood student: mathematics, science, social studies and English Language Arts. Cedarville students will provide fully planned lessons and teach with their university faculty members present in the classroom.

“What’s so important is that we use methodologies that are appropriate to the classroom and engaging for these children instead of just having the teacher stand and lecture,” said [Dr. Ruth Sylvester](#), professor of education and one of the two founders of Symbiotica. “We’re challenging them to teach in a more innovative, more engaging way.”

Dr. [Lori Ferguson](#), assistant dean of the School of Education and assistant professor of education shares Sylvester’s vision for this endeavor. In 2020, they began envisioning ways to enhance the university students’ learning while also providing classroom instruction for interested homeschooled families.

This model features the students’ implementation of learning theory and pedagogy learned in their university classrooms. Then, the university students implement their knowledge in the Symbiotica classroom.

“We chose the name Symbiotica from the idea of a symbiotic relationship,” said Ferguson. “Our fifth and sixth graders are benefitting because they’re receiving research-based instruction at the moment, and our middle childhood education students are benefitting because they immediately practice what they’ve been learning.”

Symbiotica has already met with incoming students to pre-assess each child to plan instruction.

“What’s so exciting about Symbiotica is that we get to see our students in their element early on,” Sylvester stated. “Before they’re fully teaching in their content areas, we get to plan very closely with them. We get to see how excited they are to enact one of their purposes for coming to Cedarville.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 5,082 undergraduate, graduate, and dual enrolled high school students in more than 175 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, such as the [bachelor of arts in primary education](#) and the [bachelor of arts in middle childhood education](#), high graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and the #4 national ranking by the Wall Street Journal for student engagement. For more information about the University, visit [cedarville.edu](#).

By Benjamin Konuch

Photo Captions

1. EDU 23\_4352 -- Maddie Schaffer teaches her students in an area school as part of her student teaching experience last year.
2. Dr. Lori Ferguson
3. Dr. Ruth Sylvester