NC Education Corps

Professional learning overview

North Carolina Education Corps (NCEC) prioritizes the professional learning of corps members to help them thrive as high-impact tutors. Together with our public school unit (PSU) partners – including school districts and charter schools – we equip corps members with the skills and resources they need to extend the reach of teachers and accelerate student learning.

Frameworks informing NCEC's professional learning include:

Relationships first

Neurosequential model in education

Science of Reading

Concepts of foundational math

Comprehensive learning and support

After being hired by our PSU partners, new corps members participate in 20 hours of initial training led by NCEC and supported by local schools. This paid, online, asynchronous training aligns with North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) priorities and covers a variety of specific skills along with tutoring and relationship-building strategies.

Throughout the school year, corps members also have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities including monthly workshops designed by NCEC to address timely and relevant topics aligned with corps members' needs and feedback.

Tutor preparation

We prepare corps members to facilitate tutoring sessions that leverage relationships to foster academic gains. All corps members complete 20 hours of initial training focused on tutor technique and content-specific competencies. The initial training prepares corps members to support student learning and extend the reach of teachers using an NCDPI-approved curriculum and intervention.

Professional learning goals

Participation in NCEC's year-long professional learning will lead corps members to:
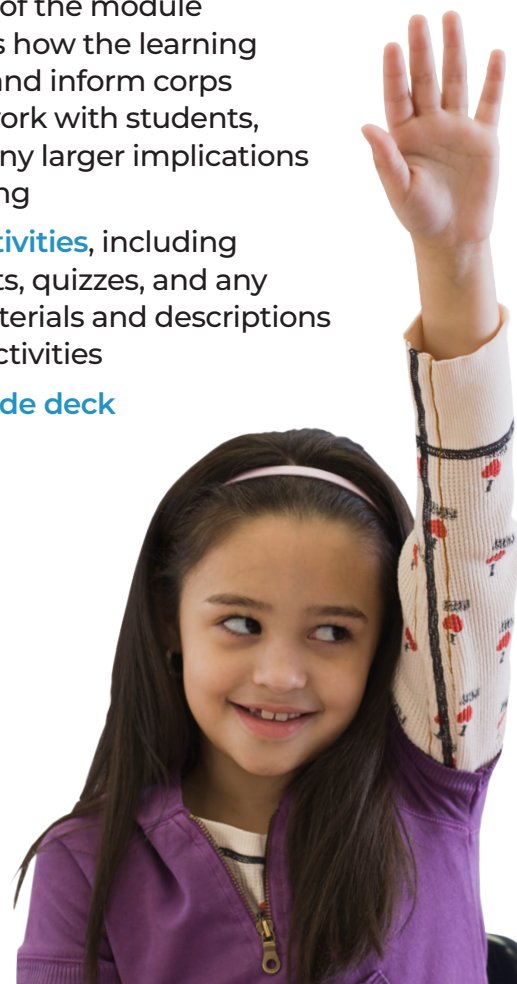
- Employ strategies that promote learning.
- Understand how brain development informs student behavior and performance.
- Understand foundational math and reading concepts and instructional delivery
- Understand key skills across all literacy pillars.
- Understand what it means to be responsive to, and restorative with, their learners.

Teaching the tutors

Corps member learning is supported and reinforced through various instructional strategies, including the use of text and context to construct meaning, the use of video and reflection to see and analyze practice, as well as collaboration among peers to expand thinking.

Each professional learning module includes the following components:

- A module overview, which is posted at the beginning of the module in Canvas and read by corps members to prime them for learning
- An objective detailing what corps members should know/be able to do after engaging with the module
- A description of the practical importance of the module that explains how the learning will impact and inform corps members' work with students, along with any larger implications of the learning
- Learning activities, including pre-post tests, quizzes, and any required materials and descriptions of module activities
- A module slide deck

Professional learning

Course descriptions

Becoming an effective tutor

The "Becoming an Effective Tutor" course covers ten modules, including foundational learning, understanding motivations, building positive relationships, and addressing diverse student needs.

Modules

1. Introduction to Professional Learning
2. Unpacking My Why
3. Asset Framing
4. Growth Mindset
5. Success at your placement site
6. Science of Learning
7. Building Relationships
8. Session Facilitation
9. Supporting the whole child
10. Responsive tutoring

K-5 foundational literacy course

The "K-5 Foundational Literacy Tutoring" course equips tutors with the expertise to support young learners in developing essential reading skills. It consists of seven modules, that cover all aspects of the science of reading and share practical approaches to teaching across the five pillars of literacy. Each module focuses on key aspects of reading development, from understanding how children learn to read to fostering a lifelong love for reading.

Modules

1. Science of Reading
2. Phonological Awareness
3. Phonemic Awareness
4. Phonics
5. Fluency
6. Oral Language and Vocabulary
7. Comprehension

K-5 foundational math course

The "K-5 Foundational Math Tutoring" course equips tutors with essential strategies for teaching math to young learners. It includes five modules that prepare tutors to deliver effective and engaging math instruction.

Modules

1. Best Practices for Math Instruction
2. The Importance of Productive Struggle
3. Representations and Manipulatives
4. Overview of the Four Math Strands
5. Bridges- Overview

Corps member hub

Housed in Canvas, this "course" serves as a resource hub and collaboration center for the entire corps member community. This hub is accessible to both new and returning corps members for as long as they serve as NCEC-trained and supported high-impact tutors.

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Becoming an effective tutor
Course overview

Course description

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Modules

1. Introduction to professional learning
2. Unpacking my why
3. Asset framing
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9. Supporting the whole child
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Module overview

Introduction to professional learning

The first module will prepare you to engage with all other course materials and will provide you with basic information about NCEC, high-impact tutoring, your role as a corps member, and the expectations for each. By the end of this module, you will understand how to navigate Canvas and how to engage with your professional learning community.

Guiding questions:

- How does NCEC support my professional development as a tutor?
- What are the components of a high-impact tutoring program?
- How will I engage with this professional learning?

Unpacking your why

Understanding your "why", or your reasons for serving as a corps member, will help ground and sustain you as you complete this professional learning and as you work with students. We know students need and deserve individualized support, and this module will help you define why you are the right person to offer that help!

Guiding questions:

- How can I help students and schools in my role as a tutor?
- Why do I want to be a tutor?
- How does tutoring align with my personal and professional goals, beliefs, and mission?

Approaching the work – asset framing

This module frames your tutoring work around assets: the knowledge, skills, and strengths you bring from your experiences. Your assets will support your professional learning and your work with students. Even if you've never worked with students or in a school setting before, you have knowledge, skills, and strengths that will support your professional learning and your work with students. Similarly, your students have assets that should be noticed, celebrated, and leveraged for their success. In this module, we invite you to develop an asset-based lens through which you view yourself and your students.

Guiding questions:

- What does it mean to have a growth mindset?
- What are the effects of having a growth mindset?
- How can I encourage my students to have a growth mindset?

Approaching the work – growth mindset

In addition to using asset-framing, we hope you will also rely on a growth mindset as you approach this professional learning and your work with students. This module provides an explanation of the distinction between fixed and growth mindsets, inviting you to cultivate a growth mindset as you engage in learning and tutoring. By the end of this module, you will be prepared to help your students develop a growth mindset by being intentional about the language you use when encouraging and praising your students. You will help students understand the relationship between effort and ability and the power of the word "yet".

Guiding questions:

- What does it mean to have a growth mindset?
- What are the effects of having a growth mindset?
- How can I encourage my students to have a growth mindset?

Success at your school site

Strong professional relationships, effective collaboration, and consistency are essential to success at your school site. In this module, you will explore several key components of successful tutoring, gaining an understanding of how to use a collaborative framework to interact professionally in the service of students.

Guiding questions:
- What can I do to build strong relationships and ensure that I have a successful tutoring experience?
- How can I demonstrate my commitment to this work?
- How can I collaborate effectively?

Approaching the work – asset framing

This module frames your tutoring work around assets: the knowledge, skills, and strengths you bring from your experiences. Your assets will support your professional learning and your work with students. Even if you've never worked with students or in a school setting before, you have knowledge, skills, and strengths that will support your professional learning and your work with students. Similarly, your students have assets that should be noticed, celebrated, and leveraged for their success. In this module, we invite you to develop an asset-based lens through which you view yourself and your students.

Guiding questions:

- What are effective ways to reinforce expected behaviors, redirect unexpected behaviors, and maintain student engagement?
- What is behavior-specific praise?

The science of learning

This module provides an overview of cognitive science relating to how students learn, unpacking six tenets of learning that will help you optimize tutoring sessions and maximize student learning.

Guiding questions:

- How do students learn?
- How can I use the Science of Learning to create meaningful learning experiences?
- What is explicit, multisensory, and systematic instruction?

Building and maintaining relationships

This module foregrounds strong tutor-student relationships as the foundation of successful tutoring sessions. Students who feel a genuine connection with their tutor are more likely to fully engage in learning. Relationship-building can happen throughout your session and in dedicated moments of connection at the beginning and end of every session.

Guiding questions:

- Why is it important to intentionally develop strong relationships with students?
- What are the components of strong tutor-student relationships?
- What are effective ways to build and maintain relationships with students?

Tutoring session facilitation

Effective tutoring session facilitation begins with building strong relationships. When students feel a sense of belonging and trust, they are more likely to be academically engaged, exhibit positive behaviors, and respond well to redirection. In this module, we will explore strategies and considerations for leading productive sessions and fostering student engagement. We'll discuss how procedures and routines add predictability and structure, and how clearly defined expectations set students up for success. You will also learn how behavior-specific praise reinforces positive behaviors and contributes to a respectful, supportive learning environment.

Guiding questions:

- How does NCEC support my professional development as a tutor?
- What are the components of a high-impact tutoring program?
- How will I engage with this professional learning?

Supporting the whole child

A student's academic achievement is tied to their social-emotional development, mental health, identity development, and more. In this module, you will learn how to take a whole child approach to tutoring, learning to identify and respond to opportunities to support students' growth and development, beyond academics.

This concept of supporting the whole child will be parsed into two modules. The first will focus on social and emotional development of students. The second will focus on being responsive to the students you encounter in tutoring.

Guiding questions:

- How does NCEC support my professional development as a tutor?
- What are the components of a high-impact tutoring program?
- How will I engage with this professional learning?

K-5 foundational literacy tutoring
Course overview

Course description

The "K-5 Foundational Literacy Tutoring" course equips tutors with the expertise to support young learners in developing essential reading skills. It consists of seven modules, that cover all aspects of the science of reading and share practical approaches to teaching across the five pillars of literacy. Each module focuses on key aspects of reading development, from understanding how children learn to read to fostering a lifelong love for reading.

Modules

1. Science of Reading
2. Phonological awareness
3. Phonemic awareness
4. Phonics
5. Fluency
6. Oral language and vocabulary
7. Comprehension

Module overview

Science of Reading

The science of reading is a body of research derived from thousands of studies about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research tells us how people learn to read, defining what to teach, and when and how to teach it. In this module, you will gain an understanding of how students learn to read and of the evidence-based strategies that support this learning. You will become familiar with the foundational "simple view of reading" and Scarborough's Reading Rope.

In subsequent modules, you will take a deeper dive into each of the five pillars, or key components, of reading instruction. These five pillars are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Guiding questions:

· How do students learn to read?
· What is explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction?

Phonological awareness

Did you know you can help students learn how to read without showing them a single letter? Phonological awareness, a skillset that includes identifying and manipulating parts of spoken language like syllables and sounds, is a vital component of word recognition. In this module and the following, you will explore the skills and strategies associated with phonological awareness. You will learn how to teach the following phonological awareness skills: word awareness, syllable awareness, onset-rime, rhyme, alliteration and phonemic awareness.

Guiding questions:

- What is phonological awareness?
- Why is phonological awareness important?
- How can I integrate phonological awareness support into my tutoring sessions?

Phonemic awareness

Words can be broken down into individual sounds, or phonemes. The word cat is comprised of three phonemes. The word chick is also comprised of three phonemes. Can you hear them? Since learning to read in English requires matching the sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words to printed letters and combinations of letters, students must become consciously aware of phonemes. In this module, you will explore the skills and strategies associated with phonemic awareness, including phoneme isolation, segmentation, blending, and manipulation.

Guiding questions:

- What is phonemic awareness?
- Why is phonemic awareness important?
- How can I integrate phonemic awareness support into my tutoring sessions?

Phonics

Phonics, one of the five key components of reading, connects letters, (graphemes), to sounds, (phonemes), to make meaningful words. It's how we write/spell the words we say. Effective phonics instruction explicitly and systematically teaches these letter-sound relationships, also called the alphabetic principle. In this module, you will explore the alphabetic principle and the skills and strategies associated with teaching phonics.

Guiding questions:

- What is phonics?
- Why is phonics important?
- How can I integrate phonics support into my tutoring sessions?

Fluency

Fluency, one of the five components of reading, is the ability to read with accuracy, appropriate speed, and expression. Fluency develops gradually over time, with guided practice and specific feedback. In this module, you will learn how fluency supports skilled reading and you'll explore how to help students become fluent readers.

Guiding questions:

- What is fluency?
- Why is fluency important?
- How can I provide opportunities for students to develop fluency?

Oral language and vocabulary

To comprehend texts, students must understand the meaning of the words they read. A reader makes sense of the words they read by connecting them to words in their oral vocabulary. Many word meanings are learned indirectly, through daily experiences with oral (spoken) and written language. Some words are learned through explicit, intentional vocabulary instruction. In this module, you will learn about the importance of explicitly teaching vocabulary and building students' oral and written language skills during tutoring.

Guiding questions:

- Why teach vocabulary?
- How can I provide opportunities for students to develop their vocabulary?

Comprehension

Reading comprehension, which is the product of word recognition and language comprehension, is the ultimate goal of reading. Skilled readers are active readers, and they understand that reading is thinking. They employ strategies for constructing and revising meaning as they read, such as making predictions, inferring, and asking questions about the text. In this module, you will explore strategies to support students' reading comprehension skills during tutoring.

Guiding questions:

- What is comprehension?
- Why is comprehension important?
- How do you include comprehension support in your sessions?

NC Education Corps

K-5 Foundational math tutoring
Course overview

Course description

The "K-5 Foundational Math Tutoring" course equips tutors with essential strategies for teaching math to young learners. It includes five modules that prepare tutors to deliver effective and engaging math instruction.

Modules

1. Best Practices for math instruction
2. The Importance of productive struggle
3. Representations and manipulatives
4. Overview of the four math strands
5. Bridges Intervention curiculum

Module Overview

Best practices for math instruction

In this module, we invite you to explore the role of math in your life and in your students' lives, considering the importance of helping students develop strong identities as curious and capable mathematicians and problem-solvers. We will introduce the body of research that informs best practices for teaching math and present some key foundational aspects of quality math instruction.

Guiding questions:

- How does math anxiety impact achievement?
- What are some components of mathematical proficiency?
- Why is it important to promote both conceptual and procedural understandings?
- How do I engage students in evidence-based math instruction?

The importance of productive struggle

Although it sounds counter-intuitive, productive struggle is essential for students to develop deep conceptual understanding and be successful in mathematics. Students engaging in productive struggle are able to work through progressively more challenging problems and apply their skills to unfamiliar problem situations. In fact, research shows that the highest achievers are those who can make connections between concepts and creatively apply what they have learned as opposed to those who are good memorizers.

Guiding questions:

- What is meant by "productive struggle" and why is it so important in the math classroom?
- What are some "dos and don'ts" to encourage productive struggle with my students?
- How can I structure my questions to keep the cognitive lift on the students I serve?

Representations and manipulatives for math Instruction

Representations and manipulatives, such as hundreds charts, number lines, and cubes, add a multisensory element to math instruction, and can help students solve problems, explain their thinking, and deepen conceptual understandings. In this module, we'll explore how you can help students strategically select and use representations and manipulatives and explore some commonly used tools.

Guiding Questions:

- What are mathematical representations?
- How can I use manipulatives to support student learning?

Overview of the four math strands

Math topics covered at the elementary level can be sorted into four broad strands, or domains, which overlap and reinforce one another.

1. Number Sense, Properties, and Operations
2. Measurement
3. Geometry and Spatial Sense
4. Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability

Guiding questions:

- What is number sense and why is it important?
- What knowledge and skills are associated with number sense?
- How can I support my students in developing skills across math strands?

Bridges Intervention curriculum: overview

The Bridges Intervention curriculum is the curriculum that you will implement with your students this year. The curriculum is broken down into nine volumes, each filled with corresponding modules and sessions. In this module, we will take a deep dive into the structure of a Bridges volume and unpack the valuable resources you will find within. We will also walk through how to approach a Bridges module and choose the instructional activities that will have the greatest impact on our students.

Guiding questions:

- What is the difference between a volume, module, and session?
- What valuable resources can I find in a Bridges volume?
- What is progress monitoring and how does it help inform instruction?
- How do I implement a session with students?