NCCAT AND EARLY GRADES LITERACY

NCCAT Supports North Carolina's Early Literacy Efforts

NCCAT fully supports the "goal of the state to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continue to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply texts needed for secondary education and career success."

NCCAT has historically provided strong literacy support for teachers throughout the grade span. With the passage of Session Law 2012-142 and the *North Carolina Read to Achieve Program*, NCCAT has intensified programming for teachers in the early grades to address the goal of improving K–3 literacy. (G. S. 115C-83.1)

INCREASING EARLY GRADES LITERACY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
In support of the revised teacher license renewal policy that requires "three continuing education credits related to literacy," NCCAT has expanded the number of early grades literacy programs being offered to teachers. With requirements of "license renewal every five years thereafter, until the retirement of the teacher," early grades teachers and administrators across the state will need more opportunities to participate in intensive high-quality professional development based on current empirical research in reading development.

NCCAT added to its faculty a senior literacy specialist, Amy Jo Spencer. She has an intimate understanding of the strategies and techniques essential to effectively providing high-quality professional development in literacy instruction. New programs like *Navigating the 90–Minute Literacy Block* have been added.

Early Grades Literacy Offerings from NCCAT

NCCAT is perfectly positioned to provide a bridge between university educational researchers and classroom practitioners. An example of this capability is demonstrated with the launch of *Reading, Writing, and Ready by Third Grade: Early Grades Literacy Instruction* (December 2013). This program brings together early grades reading specialists from universities and master teachers to explore best practices in literacy education as supported by the most current educational research. Another literacy program is *Navigating the 90–Minute Literacy Block*. (2015) Navigating 90 minutes of instructional time can be a daunting task. This program answers questions regarding successful implementation of the 90-minute literacy block.

The strategies I have learned at NCCAT will go well beyond my classroom. I will eagerly share with my colleagues and, in turn, they will use them in their classrooms.

Libby Young
Lebanon Road Elementary
**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools**

I am equipped with new ideas and practices for reading and writing instruction. This seminar has validated my classroom practices and encouraged me to broaden my perspectives on instruction.

Karen Dallas
Hardin Park Elementary
Watauga County Schools

I truly learned from a group of experts this week. I plan to take that expertise back to my district to strengthen our early literacy program.

Sylvia Anthony-McGeachy
Rocky Mount Schools

NCCAT AND DIGITAL LEARNING
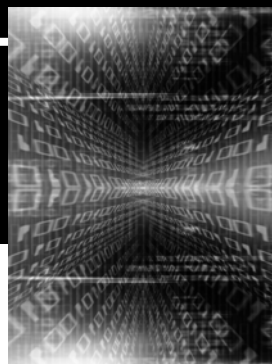
NCCAT Launches Digital Learning Initiative

Technology training has been a part of NCCAT programming since the beginning. Over the past 27 years NCCAT has partnered with corporate partners such as Intel, Microsoft, and Smart Technology to deliver training and state-of-the-art tools for the teachers of North Carolina.

Since 2010, NCCAT has made a concerted effort to help career teachers stay current with the latest tools, and, particularly, to be able to integrate interesting and useful low-cost web applications into their classroom practice. In our "**Catching Up with Your Students**," and "**Digital Learning Across the Curriculum**" seminars, teachers learn tools and methods that they can take and immediately use in the classroom. Our instructors use polling and real-time feedback throughout the seminars, so the topics are adjusted to best fit the immediate needs of the

teachers and to have the maximum effect on their classrooms.

As part of the NCCAT Digital Learning Initiative, we have integrated into all of our programs the use of **Edmodo** as a tool for extending instruction (flipping the learning) and continuing the collaborative nature of a technologically enabled learning community. We have also added **Advanced Topics in Technology Seminars**. The first advanced topics seminar was held in October of 2013 and included segments about the use of interactive tools (like **augmented reality** and learning games) to increase student engagement and completion. It also included segments about the use of data and ways to use technology as a part of an enjoyable system of feedback and critique. Working groups from this original cohort are currently supporting efforts in their schools and districts in the

transition to **digital texts, bring-your-own-device, one-to-one implementations, digital citizenship, coding for beginners, online safety**, and more.

The fall of 2015 brings advanced topics focus as either a standalone solution or as a bridge to other possible uses. NCCAT seeks public and private partners and is willing to host training related to specific solutions as a part of an integrated technology initiative on the part of a school, district, or region. Elizabeth Joyce has joined NCCAT as the Senior Digital Learning Specialist.

ISSUES GENERATED BY NCCAT TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

- *With 1-1 implementations, how will the state maintain equal access for the devices to the Internet when not in school?*

- *As digital textbooks are adopted, what is the place of teachers as publishers and the place of open-access digital textbooks vs. paid-access?*

- *True learning will only take place in an environment where all tools (digital and otherwise) are integrated into the curriculum in meaningful ways. How do we get teachers to see that technology is not just another thing to be added, but is an integral part of the education process?*

- *How do we award teachers for mastering the use of technology? Traditional methods tend to take them out of the classroom or make them responsible for tech support for their less eager peers.*

NCCAT SOLUTION AND PLANNING TEAMS

Helping School and District-Based Teams Focus on Specific Issues

NCCAT remains focused upon making connections and sharing best-practices with teachers across the state.

NCCAT's Solution and Planning Teams serve as **an opportunity to focus local efforts and attention on the specific and immediate needs** of our school and district partners.

The S&P Team opportunities allow teacher experts, administrators, support personnel, and other interested parties to spend time together working on specific projects like improving literacy at the K3 level or engaging parents to improve literacy. The teams are supported during their time at our facility by our expert faculty and staff and given the time and space to create new and lasting interventions, tools, and methods that they can take and immediately implement.

Partner Schools:

Apex High, Wake County

Braxton Craven Middle School, Randolph County

Ephesus Road Elementary, Chapel-Hill/Carrboro City

New Dimensions Charter School, Burke County

Providence Spring Elementary, Charlotte Mecklenburg

Reedy Creek Elementary School, Wake County

American Renaissance Charter, Iredell-Statesville

Artspace Charter, Buncombe County

Chatham Middle School, Chatham County

Evergreen Community Charter, Buncombe County

Jacobs Fork Middle, Catawba County

Sugarloaf Elementary, Henderson County

Harry M. Arndt Middle, Catawba County

Hickory High School, Hickory City Schools

Harnett Middle School, Harnett County

Districts

Mooresville

Jackson

Newton-Conover
Pender
Caldwell

We continue to invite and accept partners in the time and space available.

TESTIMONIAL

*The research and development team from **Harnett Central Middle School** in Harnett County came to NCCAT to review the Learning-Focused methodology and to develop engaging and activating, strategies at our school. We also designed a lesson plan template, created lesson plans for math content lessons, graphic organizers for students, and set up an online system so that we could keep innovating when we returned home.*

Linwood Smith, *principal*

The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching

EDUCATORS ABOUT NCCAT

"I have learned so much over the past couple of days that I can bring back to my school. I feel like the program on Bridging the Digital Gap will help my students to achieve. I am truly thankful for NCCAT being there and I hope that others get the chance to attend in the future."

Richard Allen Weir,
Teacher
Bear Grass Charter School

"NCCAT has provided me with the most in-depth and informative professional development that I have ever attended. It not only educated me as a teacher, but also inspired me to go above and beyond to create quality learning experiences for all my students."

Miranda Saul,
Teacher
Murrayville Elementary School

"We absolutely credit NCCAT with helping our school progress from one of the lowest performing schools in North Carolina to being recognized this year (2013) as a Reward School for consistently performing in the top ten percent of Tier One Schools."

Heddie Alston-Sommerville,
Principal
Pinkston Elementary School

NCCAT provides relevant training for public and charter school teachers at every career level.

Increasing teacher effectiveness is fundamental to improving public education in North Carolina. That is NCCAT's core function.

During 2014–15, NCCAT served a total of 3,556 educators and more than 100 school districts in professional development events. In its almost 30 year history NCCAT has proudly served every county and every school district in the state of North Carolina.

A three-year longitudinal study for 2009–2012 revealed that 89% of the teachers who participated in NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Programs remained in teaching—as compared to 78% statewide and 67% nationally for the same time period.

NCCAT reports a 95.3% average annual retention rate, as compared to 90.3% statewide, for participants attending NCCAT professional development seminars and programs from 2009–2012.

NCCAT enhances the effect of other educational partners including state agencies, non-profits, and foundations.

94% of participants self-reported that NCCAT programs had a direct impact on classroom practice when they returned.

78% of principals reported observable improvement in instructional practice upon return from NCCAT programming.

NCCAT works to enhance and supplement the vital state appropriation through partnerships with school systems, educational agencies, and public and private funders to create essential instructional programming that responds to state initiatives.

NCCAT serves public school educators from all 100 counties, including all 115 school systems, charter schools, and 2 federal school systems.

NCCAT focuses on state initiatives including Early Grades Literacy and Digital Learning.

www.nccat.org

Dr. M. Brock Womble
NCCAT Executive Director

Ms. Linda Daves
Chair, NCCAT Board of Trustees