

LEARN NC

DISCOVER

TEACH

SHARE



PROGRESS REPORT 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“LEARN NC . . . that’s a Web site, right?”

I hear that all the time.

The short answer is yes: www.learnnc.org houses an evolving collection of Internet-based resources aimed specifically at enhancing K-12 teaching and learning.



But LEARN NC provides much more than free, sharable, pre-screened, high-quality, standards-aligned educational content. LEARN NC models the best of 21st century teaching and learning techniques, demonstrating with every article we publish, every online course we develop, and every lesson plan we present, how to integrate multimedia content and take advantage of the wealth of primary source and scholarly materials available from museums, libraries and universities.

LEARN NC’s *North Carolina History: A Digital Textbook* exemplifies these efforts. Not a print version of a traditional textbook, it is a dynamic, customizable learning tool created to help technology-savvy 8th-grade teachers challenge their “digital native” students. A similar LEARN NC project, *Mandarin Chinese*, employs an array of world-culture multimedia materials collected from a variety of LEARN NC-produced online courses.

Continuing its 13-year tradition of responding to teachers’ and students’ immediate educational needs, LEARN NC in 2008-09 focused its collection development in three areas: 21st Century Skills (e.g., lesson plans like “Laugh and Learn with Satire and Technology”); Dropout Prevention (e.g., career-connected lesson plans that relate the academic curriculum directly to job skills); and Education Reference Materials (e.g., encyclopedia-style articles devoted to formative assessment, project-based learning, scaffolding, etc.).

In the coming year, we will add resources for teachers of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, and redouble our efforts to help teachers meet what may be the most demanding education challenge of the coming decades: how to manage teaching and learning in classrooms comprising students from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

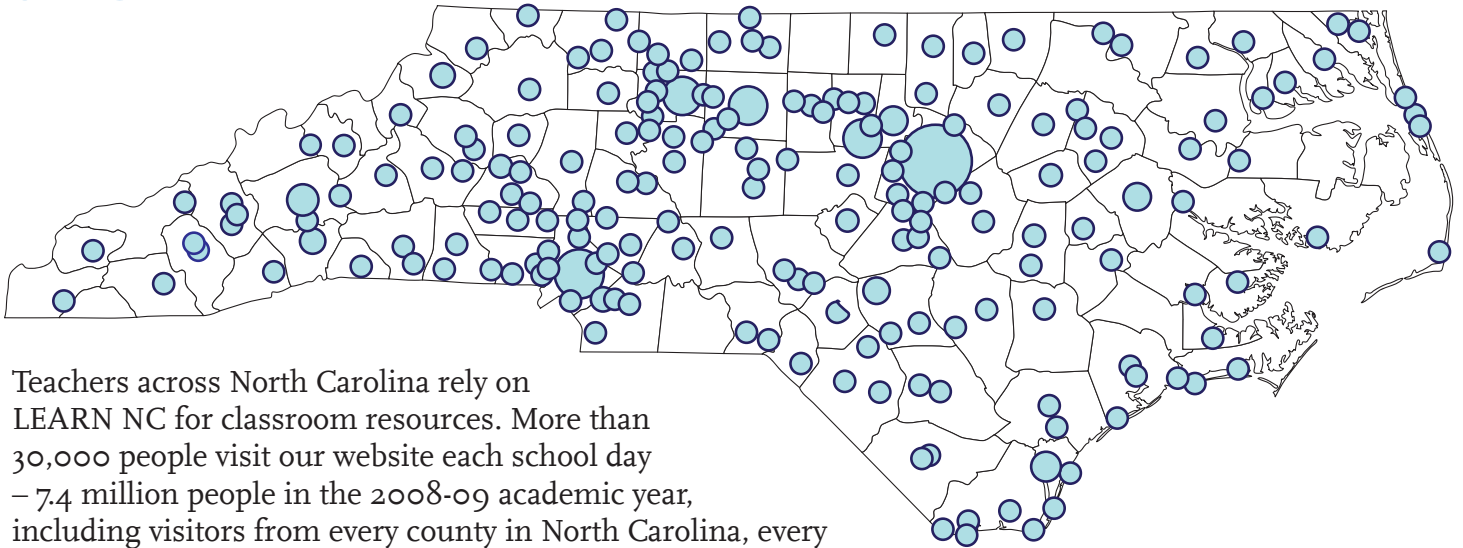
Please visit us at www.learnnc.org today, and again tomorrow, and again the next day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Thibault'.

Melissa Thibault

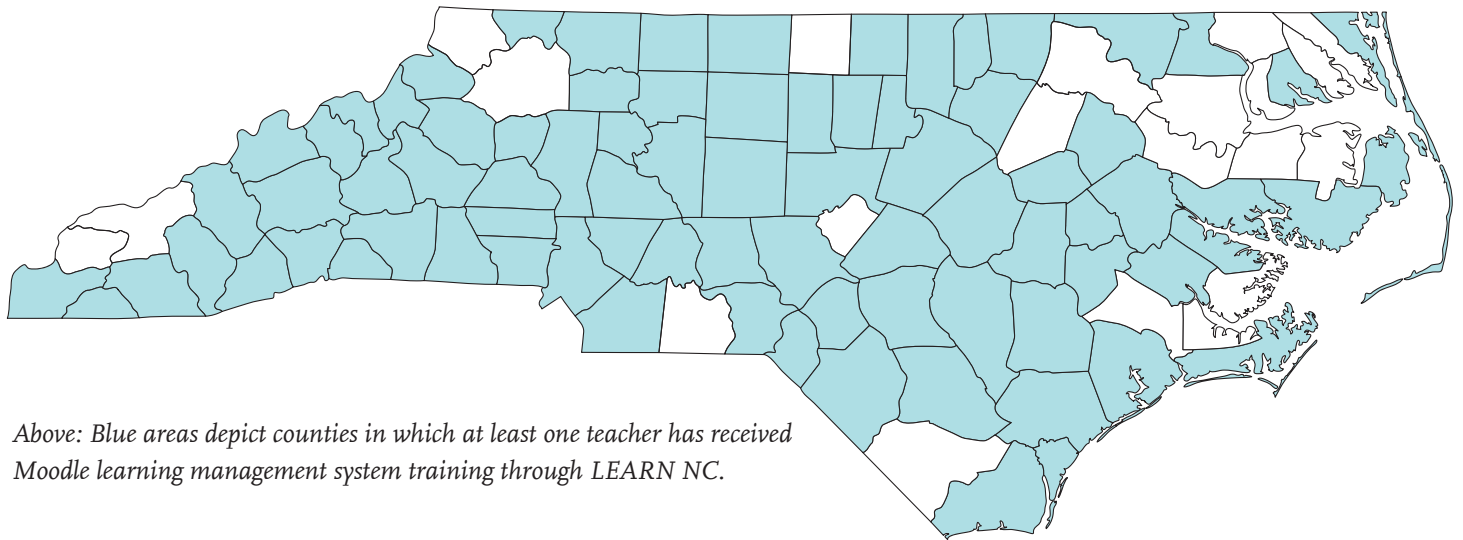
OUTREACH

SITE USAGE



Teachers across North Carolina rely on LEARN NC for classroom resources. More than 30,000 people visit our website each school day – 7.4 million people in the 2008-09 academic year, including visitors from every county in North Carolina, every state in the United States, and 220 other countries.

MOODLE: TEACHING AND LEARNING ONLINE



Above: Blue areas depict counties in which at least one teacher has received Moodle learning management system training through LEARN NC.

Last year marked the first time LEARN NC offered the Moodle learning management system – an open-source application that allows educators to create online classrooms or support face-to-face instruction with online tools – to North Carolina schools and systems. This arrangement not only saves LEAs the cost of hardware, software, and server maintenance but also allows them to access twenty LEARN NC-developed online professional development courses free of charge.

HIGHLIGHTS



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

To its collection of resources in 2008-09, LEARN NC added 100 new lesson plans aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study, 40 new articles related to teacher professional development, 500 pages of instructional content for students, and 2,000 maps, photographs, illustrations, audio recordings, videos, and other educational multimedia.

In the coming year, LEARN NC plans to update curriculum alignments and add keywords to its 1,700 published lesson plans to help teachers locate the resources they need quickly and easily.

DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS

North Carolina History (<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/projects/history/>), developed for 8th grade students, begins in prehistory, ends at the present day, and includes primary and secondary sources, commentary, a built-in glossary, “zoomable” images, audio and video clips, and a teacher’s guide containing lesson plans for each chapter.

Mandarin Chinese (<http://www.learnnc.org/search?area=&phrase=mandarin>). Electronic materials including video and audio clips, grammar notes, and cultural notes collected from LEARN NC-produced online courses help students learn basic, written and spoken Chinese. Level 1 and Level 2 textbooks are currently available via the North Carolina Virtual Public School.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2008-09, LEARN NC became the fiscal agent and entry portal for E-Learning for Educators in North Carolina, a partnership that includes The University of North Carolina Center for Public Television, North Carolina State University’s Friday Institute for Educational Excellence, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina Virtual Public School. This federally funded partnership, which, in turn, is part of a multistate collaborative dedicated to sharing expertise in online learning, created three, new, online courses, including “A Crash Course in ESL for Administrators.” The partnership also made available to NC educators fifteen online courses developed in Alabama, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and other states.

INVEST IN TEACHERS

Last autumn, LEARN NC asked schools and LEAs to submit proposals for creating strategies to implement online courses locally then awarded matching grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to selected applicants. More than 750 teachers benefited from a total of ten awards to elementary schools, middle schools, rural and urban LEAs, and a four-county education partnership in North Carolina. To facilitate this effort, LEARN NC created a 1-CEU online course that presents the fundamental requirements, tools, and practices of distance learning.

STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH)

To increase its resources for teachers of STEM disciplines, LEARN NC collaborated with the Kenan Fellows Program of NCSU, which pairs teachers with university faculty members and other scientists to develop curriculum based on current research. Additionally in 2008-09, LEARN NC added several new STEM-related courses to its online professional development catalog, and provided biology teachers access to its “Virtual Mentoring: Biology” course, which includes a complete curriculum library.



DROPOUT PREVENTION

In response to research findings demonstrating that career-relevant instruction improves student retention, LEARN NC, in collaboration with partners such as the College Foundation of North Carolina and the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program, has developed extensive resources to help teachers incorporate career-relevant lessons. The LEARN NC Web site also serves as the publishing platform for CareerStart, which comprises 140 lesson plans explicitly tying core curriculum objectives to career information.

INSTRUCTIFY (WWW.INSTRUCTIFY.COM)

Launched in 2007, this blog has become one of the most popular attractions at LEARN NC. Every week LEARN NC researchers post explanations of and links to cool new Web applications such as Xtranormal, EtherPad, and Lure of the Labyrinth that teachers may use to better engage their “digital native” students.

PARTNERS

CIVIC AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- Microelectronics Center of North Carolina (MCNC)
- NC Center for Public Television
- NC Department of Public Instruction
- NC Historic Sites
- NC Museum of Art
- NC Museum of History
- NC Office of Archives and History
- NC Research and Education Network (NCREN)
- NC Virtual Public School
- Piedmont Triad Council of Governments
- Shodor

STATES

Via the E-Learning for Educators Program, LEARN NC collaborates with education agencies in Alabama, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS

- CareerStart (UNC Chapel Hill)
- College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC)
- Friday Institute (NCSU)
- Kenan Fellows of North Carolina State University
- NC Health Careers Access Program (UNC Chapel Hill)
- NCSU Libraries
- NC Community College System
- New Teacher Center (University of California - Santa Cruz)
- Research Labs of Archaeology at UNC Chapel Hill
- UNC Chapel Hill Libraries
- UNC Chapel Hill School of Education
- UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work
- UNC General Administration

TEACHERS

- Since 2007, nearly 4,000 North Carolina teachers have attended LEARN NC presentations at conferences and workshops across the state.
- More than 900 North Carolina teachers have received training in online instruction via LEARN NC.
- North Carolina's teachers have taken advantage of more than 17,000 professional development sessions via online courses hosted by LEARN NC since 2004.
- Educators from 203 countries including the U.S. and Canada have accessed resources via the LEARN NC Web site.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs)

- A network of coordinators – one volunteer in each LEA – facilitates LEARN NC efforts locally.
- More than two-thirds of North Carolina's LEAs provide professional development for their teachers and administrators via LEARN NC's online professional development courses.

STUDENTS

Although it's impossible to say how many students are among the many visitors who access the more than 14,000 education materials available at www.learnnc.org every day, we at LEARN NC are confident that students around the globe not only peruse the many and varied electronic resources we provide but also employ them in their own creative publishing efforts.

SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATORS

Expanding its already extensive outreach to school administrators, LEARN NC this year offered a new online course, "Data-Based School Reform." Within seven days of the initial announcement of course availability, more than fifty North Carolina principals and assistant principals applied for registration.

CLIENTS



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

LEARN NC

DISCOVER • TEACH • SHARE
VISIT US AT WWW.LEARNNC.ORG