

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education
Belk Center for Community College
Leadership and Research

NC Teaching & Learning Hubs



THE REACH OF THE NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING & LEARNING HUBS: AN INAUGURAL YEAR REPORT (JANUARY 2023)



Introduction

North Carolina's Teaching and Learning Hubs are a unique statewide model of providing professional learning support for community college faculty and staff aimed at increasing equitable student academic success. The Hubs provide professional learning to *"help educators learn about, adopt, test, and scale the evidence-based strategies"* and to build capacity within the state's community colleges for campus-based teaching and learning efforts.[i] These statewide supports are important for North Carolina (NC) because not all colleges have the resources nor capacity to provide professional learning opportunities on their own, and contextualized content is needed to help educators best support students. Support for instructors is also an imperative given the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research's work to support adult students of color to reach the statewide attainment goal of 2 million high-quality credentials by 2030 (up from 1.55 million in 2022) through targeted initiatives like NC Reconnect and the REACH Collaborative.[ii]

In the Hubs' inaugural academy year (AY), 2021-22, the first two (of four) planned Hubs began providing professional learning across NC. These Hubs are supported by the Belk Center, the North Carolina Student Success Center, and Achieving the Dream. The Hubs are co-hosted by NC community college campuses – the East Hub by Lenoir and Carteret Community Colleges and the West Hub by Wilkes and Catawba Valley Community Colleges – and importantly, are led by faculty Co-Directors to ensure the sessions are timely and relevant. Community colleges in the same geographic area are paired with the Hubs as affiliate campuses.

As part of the effort to support equitable student success, the learning and evaluation partner, DVP-PRAXIS LTD, is collaborating with the Belk Center to design and implement an evaluation to provide formative feedback on Hub implementation and build the evidence base for the impact of participation in professional learning offered by the Hubs on student academic outcomes.



The purpose of this report is to document the reach of the Hubs during their inaugural year to colleges, faculty, staff, and students. Data in this report serve as a baseline for subsequent analysis to explore the relationship between participation in professional learning and student educational outcomes. Results presented here represent a baseline because the data are from the first two semesters that participants engaged in professional learning, and instructors have yet to make changes to their classroom or teaching practices that would impact student success. Future reports will assess the relationship between instructor participation in Hub professional learning and equitable student success across NC, and thereby provide evidence for the impact of Hub activities across the state.

TEACHING & LEARNING HUBS BY THE NUMBERS: AY 2021-22

38
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES

522
PARTICIPANTS

In their inaugural year, the East and West Hubs had extensive outreach to faculty and staff, engaging 522 NC community college employees across 38 of the 58 NC Community Colleges. Participants included 69% of individuals who identify as faculty. A third of participants identified as staff, many of whom serve as instructors at their colleges.

279
INSTRUCTORS

2,411
COURSES

Hub-offered professional learning reached 279 faculty and staff instructors who taught 2,411 courses in AY 2021-22. These instructors taught an average of nine courses that enrolled an average of 16 students per class.

37
INSTRUCTORS
OF COLOR

312
COURSES

37 of the 279 instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning identified as instructors of color. These instructors of color taught 312 courses in AY 2021-22 that enrolled 2,888 unique students. Students taught by instructors of color are more likely to be adults, students of color, adult students of color, and Pell recipients.

20,922
STUDENTS

In AY 2021-22, the East and West Hubs reached 20,922 unique students who enrolled in the 2,411 courses taught by instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning. On average, 41% of students who enrolled in these courses are students of color, 27% are adults aged 25+, and 66% are female. In comparison to the NCCCS student population, students in courses taught by instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning are less likely to be adult students (27% vs. 56%) and more likely to be female (66% vs. 54%).^[iii] On average, 41% of students who enrolled in courses taught by instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning receive a Pell grant.

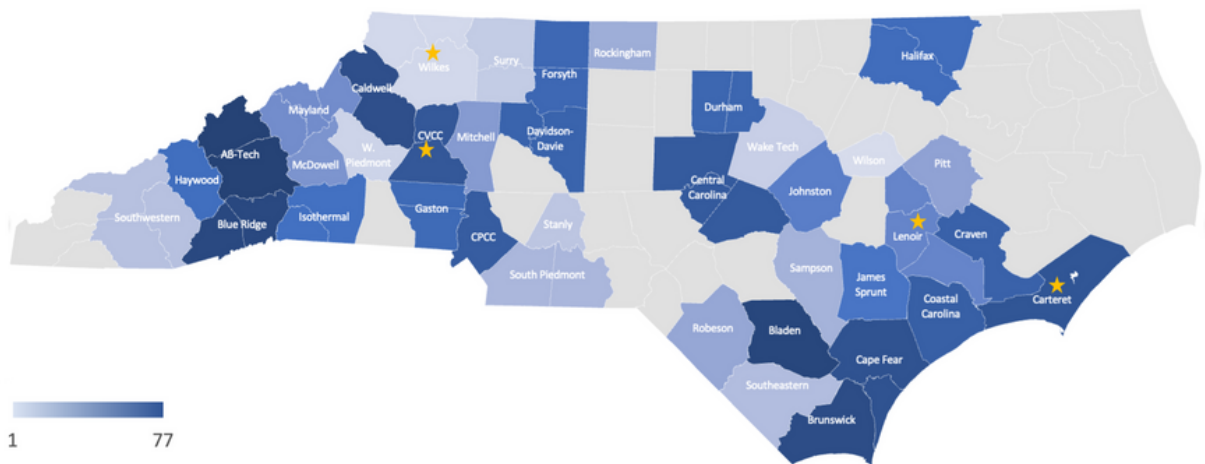
SCALE OF THE TEACHING & LEARNING HUBS

The East and West Hubs, led by faculty Co-Directors, offered 44 professional learning opportunities during their first year (AY 2021-22) that were attended by 522 faculty and staff across NC. These professional learning opportunities were typically offered as single, stand-alone events; however, Co-Directors experimented with offering professional learning as a series of synchronous and asynchronous events, as well as with repeating the same topic to accommodate participants' availability. Hub Co-Directors offered groups of professional learning sessions that focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that focused on actionable takeaways to encourage implementation in the classroom, as well as sessions specifically designed for professional learning leaders to help build campus-based capacity for professional learning.

Colleges Represented

Within these professional learning sessions, at least one individual participated from 38 of the 58 community colleges in NCCCS. Figure 1 shows a heat map by college, which ranged from one to 77 participants, primarily clustered in the western and southeastern areas of NC served by the first two Hubs, Carteret and Lenoir (East) & Catawba Valley (CVCC) and Wilkes (West). Notably, there were also participants from 13 non-affiliated colleges, an indication of widespread interest across NC.[iv]

Figure 1: Participation in Teaching and Learning Hubs by College



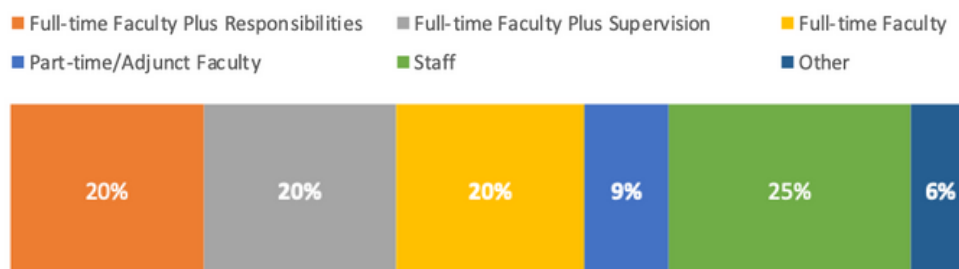
Note: For academic year 2021-22; colleges without labels had no participants; Teaching and Learning Hubs are marked with a star.

Staff and Faculty Participation

Among the 38 colleges represented, 522 unique faculty and staff participated in at least one Hub-offered professional learning opportunity. While professional learning is often aimed at supporting changes to instruction and classroom management, the significant portion of staff participants points to the value of Hub-offered professional learning for supporting students equitably in out-of-the classroom interactions (Figure 2).

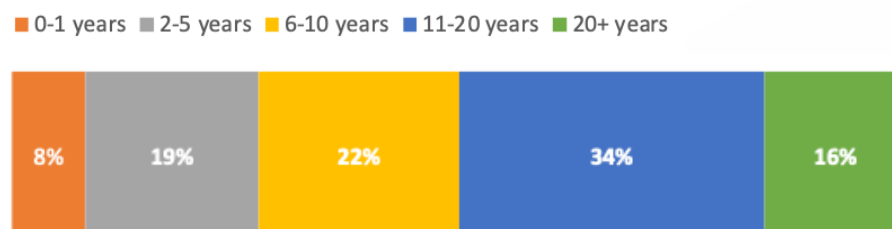
Most Hub participants identified as faculty (69%), with 20% indicating they are full-time faculty, 20% reporting they have supervisory responsibilities such as deans or department chairs, and 20% indicating they have additional responsibilities such as leading committees or organizing professional learning. Only 9% of Hub participants identified as part-time or adjunct faculty, which is significantly lower than the 48% of curriculum faculty and 98% of continuing education faculty across the NC who are part-time (Figure 2).^[v] Improving participation of part-time and adjunct faculty is an area for improvement as Hubs expand to four locations statewide.

Figure 2: Hub Participation by Role (n=522)



Faculty who participated in Hub-offered professional learning tend to have more experience teaching and represent a diverse cross-section of program areas. Greater than 70% of faculty indicate they have taught for at least six years, and half have taught 11 or more years, pointing toward opportunities for Hubs to grow their reach to newer faculty (Figure 3). Participating faculty primarily teach curriculum courses such as general education and career and technical education (84%), with a small number who teach continuing education/college and career readiness courses (15%) (not pictured).^[vi] Overall, participating faculty represent a diverse cross section of program areas with the largest number of faculty teaching in the arts and humanities, followed by math and science, career and technical education, and allied health. Our qualitative focus group data suggest that allied health faculty may be more constrained in participating in professional learning due to the number of contact hours required for teaching labs and clinicals.

Figure 3: Among Faculty Participating in the Hubs, Years of Teaching Experience (n=358)



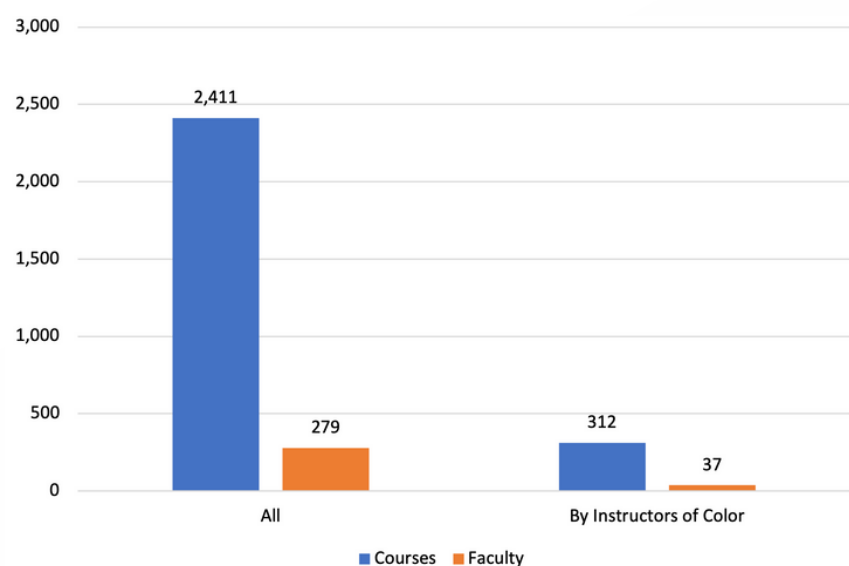
Faculty participants were unified in their primary motivation for participating in professional learning - “to help students succeed” - and the place they can fulfil this goal is the classroom. Data on Hub participants show that 74% of faculty participants identified as female and 17% identified as people of color.[vii] Compared to faculty across NCCCS, Hub participants are overrepresented by female participants (74% vs. 59% of NCCCS curriculum faculty) and underrepresented by faculty of color (17% vs. 22% of NCCCS curriculum faculty).[viii] These observations point to a need for additional, targeted support for instructors of color who, as noted in the following section, engage with more adult, minoritized, and low-income students.

Courses Taught by Participants

We matched data from participants who registered for Hub-offered professional learning with course-level data provided by the NCCCS, which resulted in 279 individuals who taught at least one course in AY 2021-22. Although most individuals who taught at least one course indicated their role was “faculty,” some indicated they were “staff;” therefore, we refer to participants who teach as “instructors.”

Instructors who participated in professional learning through the Hubs collectively taught 2,411 courses in AY 2021-22 and 312 of these courses were taught by instructors of color (Figure 4). On average, each instructor taught about nine courses, ranging from a low of one course to a high of 28 courses.[ix] Most courses taught were general education courses (56%), followed by career and technical education courses (40%), and a small percentage of courses were developmental education (4%). On average, there were 16 students per class. Interestingly, 49% of the courses taught by instructors who participated in professional learning were 100% online.

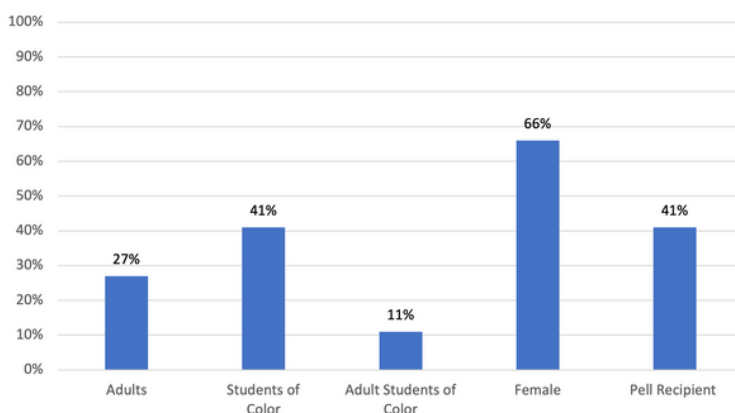
Figure 4:
Instructors and
Courses Taught
among Hub
participants
who matched
with NCCCS,
AY 2021-22



Students in Courses Taught by Hub Participants

As noted previously, almost 21,000 students enrolled in the 2,411 courses taught by instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning. In these courses, the average age of students is 23 and 27% of the students on average are adult learners ages 25+. Students of color, defined as all races/ethnicities except white, represent 41% of students on average and 11% are adult students of color who enrolled in these courses. On average, 41% of students in these classes receive the Pell grant and two-thirds are female.

Figure 5: Average Percent Enrollment for Students, by Select Demographics, in Courses Taught by Instructors who Participated in the Hubs (n=20,922)



Compared to students across NCCCS, students in courses taught by instructors who participated in Hub-offered professional learning are less likely to be adult students (27% vs. 56%), more likely to be female students (66% vs. 54%), and a similar percentage are students of color. Looking more closely at the 312 courses taught by instructors of color (n=37): among the 2,888 students enrolled in these courses, on average a higher proportion are adults aged 25+, students of color, adult students of color, and Pell recipients. Instructors teaching these courses tend to have fewer years of teaching experience, teach in continuing education/college and career readiness, and in career and technical education courses.

In courses taught by Hub participants, most students are academically successful: on average, 64% of students earned an A, B, or pass, and 75% earned an A, B, C, or pass. These pass rates are comparable to those across the NCCCS.[x] Digging deeper into these pass rates reveals some nuance. For instance, pass rates are higher when the course is taught in-person or hybrid compared to exclusively online, and when the course is taught in Spring (vs. Fall). In addition, pass rates are highest for career and technical courses, followed by general education; developmental education courses have the lowest pass rates.

Conclusion

This report provides a baseline understanding of the scale reached by the Teaching and Learning Hubs in their inaugural year (AY 2021-22) of operation, in terms of colleges, faculty, staff, and students. Baseline data point to three key takeaways:

- **In this first year, the scale of the East and West Hubs is significant. These Hubs supported more than half of NC's community colleges, nearly 300 instructors, more than 2,400 courses, and almost 21,000 students through high-quality, evidence-based professional learning opportunities.**
- **The scale of Hub participation can be improved by increasing outreach and engagement of participants who are underrepresented in current, Hub-offered professional learning including: newer faculty, part-time and adjunct faculty, continuing education faculty, and staff educators.**
- **In line with their mission of increasing equitable student success, Hubs should provide targeted support and outreach to faculty of color who are more likely to teach adult, minoritized, and low-income students, and who tend to be newer faculty, teaching continuing education, college and career readiness, and career and technical courses.**

Looking to academic year 2022-23, the remaining two Hubs (Central Hub hosted by Central Carolina and Durham Tech & Piedmont Hub hosted by Forsyth Tech and Davidson-Davie) will be established and together, the 4 Hubs will serve all 58 NC community colleges. As the Hubs expand and gain traction, and more instructors and colleges engage, we can examine changes instructors made in their classroom and teaching practices, and how those changes impacted student outcomes.

In future reporting, we will continue documenting the types of professional learning opportunities offered by the Hubs (i.e., DEI, action-oriented, offered in a series), the characteristics of participants, the courses taught by participants, and the relationship between participating in Hub professional learning opportunities and equitable student success.

For more information about North Carolina's Teaching and Learning Hubs, please visit: <https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/leadership-and-learning/teaching-and-learning-hubs/>.



Report Title

The Reach of the North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs: An Inaugural Year Report

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Endnotes

[i] Teaching and Learning Hubs' mission <https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/leadership-and-learning/teaching-and-learning-hubs/>

[ii] MyFutureNC North Carolina Attainment Goal: <https://www.myfuturenc.org/the-goal/>; NC Reconnect: <https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/partnerships-and-convenings/nc-reconnect/>; REACH Collaborative: <https://reachcollab.org>

[iii] NCCCS Dashboard data for fall 2021 total headcount <https://www.ncccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics/dashboards/curriculum-program-enrollments>

[iv] For a complete list of Hubs and affiliate colleges, see: <https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/leadership-and-learning/teaching-and-learning-hubs/>

[v] NCCCS Dashboard data for October 2021 employee headcount overtime <https://www.ncccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics/dashboards/employee-headcount>

[vi] A small number of faculty did not indicate their teaching area and some faculty indicated they teach in both curriculum and continuing education or college and career readiness.

[vii] For both gender and race/ethnicity, a portion of faculty indicated "prefer not to answer."

[viii] NCCCS Dashboard data for October 2021 employee headcount overtime <https://www.ncccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics/dashboards/employee-headcount>

[ix] The high number of courses taught reflect developmental education courses offered in 4- or 8-week formats, which allows more courses to be taught in a year.

[x] NCCCS Dashboard data for 2021-22 curriculum grade distribution over time <https://www.ncccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics/dashboards/curriculum-grade-distributions>

[ACCESS HUB EVENTS HERE](#)