

HOW BLENDED LEARNING CLOSES OPPORTUNITY GAPS

FOR NORTH CAROLINA'S MILITARY, MIGRANT AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS

North Carolina is home to the 4th largest military population in the United States. Students from military families experience more transitions because they move more frequently due to deployment. These transitions include, for example, moving states, switching schools, meeting new teachers, or being introduced to new content and more.

With more than 45,000 farm operations in North Carolina, agriculture is the state's leading economic driver and a cornerstone of our statewide competitiveness.

Migrant students whose caregivers work in agricultural production or fishing also move frequently due to economic necessity and crop rotations.



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Blended learning models, which can be used in-person or virtually, enable educators to bring out the best in every student, including military, migrant and multilingual learners, who may experience more transitions during the course of their education/schooling than other students.

Blended learning helps educators pivot instruction, so students have a seamless school experience wherever they are learning, and regardless of transitions.

To improve blended and virtual learning, implementation support for educators and content for students in grades K-8, Rethink Education partners with districts and schools across North Carolina. Rethink Education is an initiative of the Office of Virtual Instruction Services Virtual Instruction Support Services Division at North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and is supported by a grant from the US Department of Education.

BLENDED LEARNING IS AGILE

For students who may experience learning interruptions from frequent moves, blended learning helps students stay connected to, and on track with, their work.

“If you have been moving quite a lot, [like] with the migrant education program and the military, being able to sit down and listen to something more than once [is a benefit],” describes LuAnne Llewellyn, Director of Federal Programs in Surry County Schools, in conversation with the Rethink Education team. “When we’re doing close reading with nonfiction text or instructions... we keep going back to it and going back to it because we need to slow it down and look at it. That’s the reason why I think blended learning works.”



When students can access learning online and on-the-go, they have a seamless school experience wherever they are learning.

Blended learning also helps students who move frequently keep consistency across learning locations.

“What happens if they’re taking the credit that’s required of, say, pre-calc, and then they move mid-semester?” ponders Kristine Barberio, a Virtual Instruction Consultant for the NCDPI Office of Virtual Instruction Services. “That’s a really profound impact.”

When students can access learning online and on-the-go, they have a seamless school experience wherever they are learning. “It’s not about what they don’t know, it’s about what they do know. When we look at that, then we can see how we can appropriately support them,” shares Llewellyn.

BLENDING LEARNING REACHES ENTIRE FAMILIES



When learning happens both in the classroom and at home, families can become an active part of the learning experience. Using technology, such as embedded screencasts, parents can see rotation stations and playlists, and learning becomes a family engagement activity. Caregivers can learn alongside their students through blended learning. Now, they have the opportunity to share “in-classroom experiences” that they may not have had the opportunity to access earlier in their lives.

“Many of our parents, because they’ve had to work early on, haven’t had the ability to have further education, so maybe they’ve never even been in the classroom. Now, [through blended learning,]... you’re teaching the child, but the parent is learning how to work with the child,” says Llewellyn. “You empower them so that they feel a part of the schooling community.”



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BLENDING LEARNING EMPOWERS STUDENTS

For Multilingual learners, layering on technology with instruction can empower students to take ownership of their learning. Teachers and students can partner together to make learning more accessible in a student’s first language. Llewellyn describes this approach as focusing on “techquity,” or using technology in a culturally relevant way that meets the learning needs of all students.

“If you’re working with middle schoolers, there is a wonderful add-on feature called Translate My Site. [Teachers can] make a copy of the slide deck, duplicate that slide, and then they [students can] go translate my slide. They use that technology to give them equity of access,” Llewellyn shares. “Then they can choose from 64 different languages if that’s what they want to do, and they can translate it to the language that they need. So now [students] can use their native language for comprehension.”



Teachers and students can partner together to make learning more accessible in a student’s first language.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RETHINK EDUCATION

Rethink Education partners with districts and schools across the state to create a resilient future for North Carolina school communities where all K-8 students have access to seamless, effective blended and virtual learning.

To help meet the needs of all students, whether they are learning in-person, at one of North Carolina's virtual academies or in a blended learning environment, Rethink Education provides educator training that goes above and beyond the average professional development.

These professional learning programs not only impart best practices for using the statewide blended learning models, but enable the educators to train their peers on how to use blended learning.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Educators can [learn more about Rethink Education programs online at dpi.nc.gov](https://dpi.nc.gov).
- [Hear more from LuAnne Llewellyn on Episode 5.3](#) of the The Education Empowered Podcast, hosted by the Office of Virtual Support at NCDPI and Rethink Education NC.
- Or, reach out to rethink@ncpublicschools.gov for more.



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North Carolina Department of Public Instruction



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