

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

VISION & FRAMEWORK

AN OVERVIEW OF NCE'S FOUNDATIONAL
ELEMENTS AND ASPIRATIONS



INTRODUCTION

This document articulates the vision and aspirations of the National College of Education. Our vision starts with the premise that every child deserves a great teacher. We believe that all aspects of NCE, whether in teacher preparation, research, or leadership, is focused on the students in classrooms that our graduates serve, whether directly or indirectly. In this respect, we care about “the students of our students,” the young people in education systems across Chicagoland and beyond, where NCE’s graduates work. This document articulates a framework for NCE’s current work, as well as an aspiration for the contributions NCE hopes to make in the future. In that respect, it represents our identity, past, present and future.

We begin by briefly articulating the evolving context of the field of education and teacher preparation. This context is rapidly evolving and creates the need for an approach in the education space that is nimble, nuanced and responsive to it. We describe the work of NCE, and how NCE does exactly this; drawing upon a set of foundational elements which allow NCE’s work to be effective in the field, positioning us as a leader in work across the career trajectory of a teacher: in preparation, advancement, and leadership.

THE CALLING: TRAINING AND EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND LEADERS TO SUCCEED

NCE’s work in education is responsive to needs in the field to contribute to strengthening schools, teachers, and ultimately student outcomes. High quality teaching matters for all students, but especially so for underserved students. Gaps in student achievement and college attainment by race and income similarly demonstrate that there is still work to be done. And the context around teacher preparation is increasingly complex, with teacher shortages, high stakes accountability, and emergent understandings in the field of how best to prepare teachers, serve students and improve schools. With a deep understanding of the context, teaching and learning, and excellence in teaching honed across more than 130 years of experience in preparing teachers, NCE’s distinctive approach leads the field.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING MATTERS

At NCE, our goal is to improve schools and student outcomes with our work. This requires a deep understanding of the context around teachers, teaching and learning and the design and implementation of a set of programs that are immediately responsive to the needs of students, teachers and schools.

We know from research that teaching matters. There is evidence that teachers have a direct influence on student outcomes, defining the path that young people take to and through school, careers and life. The quality of teaching and learning is especially influential on the outcomes of underserved young people, low income students of color. While scholars have demonstrated that underserved youth benefit most from high quality teachers, research demonstrates that these same students are least likely to have high quality teachers consistently.

The most powerful evidence that there is still work to be done in the education space are the gaps that exist between the outcomes of middle-class Caucasian students and low-income students of color. This includes the opportunity gap, which leads to consistent differences between students of color and their White counterparts on standardized tests, in high school graduation rates, college enrollment, the proportion of students enrolling in Advanced Placement coursework and assessments, and college attainment.

NCE's work across programs aims to prepare teachers and leaders in all stages of their career to teach, reach and nurture students of diverse backgrounds. Course content and experiences are aimed directly at acknowledging the gaps in achievement and attainment and directly equipping teachers and leaders to close them.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE WORK

NCE sits in an education context that is evolving and changing. Since the mid-1990s, the field of education has increasingly focused on evaluation and measurement. This has resulted in numerous changes in the field that influence the work of being a teacher. Standardized tests have increasingly been used as the measure of quality, at the state, district, school, teacher, principal, and student levels. The increased accountability was critical for schools, as for many years there were limited measures of school quality, and students were not well-served as a result. At the same time, the overreliance on standardized tests has had consequences for the field and school contexts for teachers and students.

Expanded measurement is evident and comes in many forms. Evidence-based teacher evaluation approaches have emerged on the field, which has created opportunities for teachers to improve their practice. At the same time, expanded teacher evaluation practices has changed the nature of the work of the teacher, which influences the way teachers think about practice.

The field's increasing sophistication in measurement has also extended to the assessment and technology domains. Teachers must be prepared to individualize instruction using a variety of formative assessment information and to draw upon technology to differentiate learning to meet student needs.

NCE's work is both to prepare teachers and leaders to understand, interpret and be successful in this new context, which has promises and potential pitfalls.

TEACHER SHORTAGE

There have also been substantial changes in the forces around teacher preparation and placement. In recent years, there has been a substantial decrease in applicants to teacher preparation. Some estimate as high as a 30% decrease in applicants to all forms of teacher preparation, across traditional and alternate teacher preparation programs. This has led to shortages of teachers, where there are more positions than there are teacher applicants. Exacerbating this problem is the fact that teacher shortage is not distributed evenly across the field. Teacher shortages are concentrated in schools, classrooms and subject areas that are more difficult to staff, which disproportionately affects underserved students. The shortage calls for both creative ways to think about how to prepare more teacher as well as ways to ensure that the most disadvantaged students do not suffer the consequences of teacher shortage disproportionately.

NCE aims to contribute to eliminating teacher shortage through our relentless efforts to train teachers and leaders at significant scale and to partner with high needs schools and school districts in our work across programs.

EMERGENT LEARNINGS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

At the same time, there have been curricular and instructional advances in the field of education in the past twenty years. These have come as a result of emergent understandings of how students learn, how we measure and diagnose student learning needs, how to better organize classrooms to differentiate to meet individual student needs, and ways to draw upon and enhance other non-academic skills, such as socio emotional and noncognitive factors. Teacher preparation approaches have started to evolve to prepare teachers to be successful given these advances in teaching and learning.

NCE's programs draw upon and lead the advances in the field of education and teaching and learning. We bring the very best and advanced pedagogical approaches to our work.

NCE'S PROGRAMS AND APPROACH WERE DESIGNED TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THIS EVOLVING CONTEXT

This is the context in the education space today, and we are responsive to it. We have created a set of programs that train and support teachers across their entire career path. At the same time, our diverse programs are grounded in a set of foundational elements which both represent our values and beliefs about what teachers and leaders need to be successful as well as what the field demands to produce practitioners who have the skills they need to persist and lead.

NCE'S PROGRAMS: PREPARE, ADVANCE, LEAD TO INFLUENCE

We know that excellence in teaching matters, especially for underserved students. We also see that opportunity gaps are still evident, further evidence that there is still work to be done to improving schooling and teaching and learning in schools. At the same time, there are shifting contextual factors; around data and measurement, teacher shortages as well in terms of what we know about strong practices in instruction and assessment. Colleges and schools of education must embrace new practices and approaches to prepare teachers, researchers, school leaders, and teacher leaders who are poised to be successful in and contribute in this evolving space.

At the National College of Education at National Louis University we stand ready to continue to be a leader in education, as we have since 1886. At NCE we train talented professionals in a high-quality set of offerings called Prepare. Advance. Lead. We **Prepare** talented, mission driven individuals to be teachers through numerous possible pathways. We provide enhanced, specialized training to enable teachers to **Advance** in their careers. We offer leadership programs to allow teachers and school leaders to deepen their capacity to **Lead**. We see each of our programs as having a broader mission to **Influence** the field of education. As such, at NCE we Prepare, Advance, Lead and Influence.

NCE'S APPROACH: THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

NCE's diverse offerings in Prepare, Advance, Lead span teacher preparation, advanced study and leadership; as well as practice and research. NCE aims to contribute to the field by providing high quality training options to educators and education leaders at all stages in their careers.

The programs within Prepare, Advance, Lead share a set of foundational elements. These elements represent a shared orientation toward excellence in education, that it is: 1) Clinically-focused; 2)

Technology-enhanced; 3) Context-specific, Learner-focused; and 4) Evidence-informed. In the section that follows, we describe each of the four elements and elaborate on the elements, applying them to NCE's programmatic areas in Prepare. Advance. Lead.

- **A Clinically-Focused** approach centers all aspects of teacher preparation, enhanced training, leadership training, and research in practice. In teacher preparation, being practice-centered and clinically-based is evident in the use of *the adaptive cycles of teaching model* that leverages technology to allow aspiring teachers to analyze the impact of their instruction on students, robust observations of student teachers in clinical settings, and strategic alignment of clinical experiences to academic ones. In the enhanced training and leadership training represented in Advance and Lead, student experiences are rooted in case study and school-based work to increase the usefulness and applicability of the educational experiences. Research in NCE's centers focuses on creating knowledge to improve practice.

In short, at NCE we intentionally center all of our work on practice all domains of education, from classroom, school, and districts. Integrating practice into our training results in teachers who are better prepared to succeed, lead and persist; practitioners who have the hands-on skills to use their specialized skills from advanced training to better serve students; and leaders who have direct experiences to bring to their leadership.

- A **Technology-Enhanced** approach improves teaching, learning, and research by to improving learning and teacher outcomes and training teachers to use technology in their own practice for the future. Technology enables teacher preparation models to monitor student learning more consistently, to focus on development of competence in high leverage practices and to scale to address teacher shortage. NCE sees technology as providing an opportunity to lead in improving outcomes because we now have tools that were not at our disposal in the past. NCE's goal and aspiration is to innovate with these tools to improve teacher and leader training with the ultimate goal to improve student and school outcomes. In addition, harnessing the power of online coaching for aspiring teachers and technology-based training for teacher mentors allows us to intensively work with students enrolled in NCE programs while reaching the scale of training needed to serve district and school needs. We similarly draw on technology in our research and work within our centers.

In summary, at NCE we see technology as a tool that can enhance coursework and training to embed clinical experiences into online coursework and to mentor and train aspiring teachers and their mentors intensively, at-scale. This is grounded in preparing teachers and leaders to use the most innovative and useful technologies to assess and support student learning and improve student outcomes, but goes far beyond this to innovative practices that lead the field such as the use of technology-based coaching to increase mentoring touchpoints.

- A **Context-Specific/Learner-Focused** approach assumes that education occurs in a community and school context. As such, our work is K-12 learner centered as well as our particular students being served. Context and focus at NCE is grounded in our community partnerships, which span numerous organizations for a variety of purposes. Some of these organizations are partners in placing our aspiring teachers in clinical placements; some of

our partners provide supports to our students as they make their way through their programs at NLU; others are our partners in serving the broader teacher and student populations in the communities our teachers serve. Context is a focus of teacher preparation, as we vary our approach to prepare teachers to serve students in different settings.

In essence, we see a context-specific and student-focused approach as a cornerstone to excellence in teaching, leadership, and research. A context-specific approach leads to teachers and leaders who are culturally competent and poised for success in the schools in which they work. A student-focused approach equips teachers and leaders to individualize and differentiate their practice and to be successful in closing the achievement gap.

- An **Evidence-Informed** approach advances knowledge and best practices around teacher preparation that leads to strong student learning and outcomes. In important respects, it builds upon the other elements of being clinically-focused, context-specific and technology-enhanced. These elements are rooted in evidence about what matters most for creating excellence in education and schooling.

In effect, we aim to advance the field by creating and disseminating knowledge about how to train teachers and leaders to succeed, persist and excel in the field of education.

CONCLUSION

Collectively, NCE's work in Prepare-Advance-Lead spans the education space, touching the entire education continuum from **preparing** new teachers, to **advancing** and enhancing teacher learning, to train teachers and principals as they are **leading**.

Importantly, while our goal is to achieve excellence across each of the individual programs within Prepare, Advance and Lead, we also aim to influence the field of education more broadly with our work. If we look across NCE's work in Prepare, Advance, Lead, we believe the work collectively is capable of influence the field. We understand there to be three potential areas of broad influence.

First, we see the elements of clinically focused, context specific, technology-enhanced, and evidence-informed, as influencing the definition of excellence for the work of schools and college of education.

Second, while our work is clinically focused and context specific, it is also happening at scale, with our programs serving hundreds of teacher candidates and principals each year. This is highly unusual in the field of education, where most models with significant clinical and context focus serve a relatively small numbers of students per year. We are making the argument with our programs that this intensive clinical and context specific approach is possible at scale and can be used as a model for colleges of education across the country. At the same time, it is poised to address teacher needs nationally.

Finally, we see our model as influencing the way the field of education conceptualizes the role of the teacher in the training of other teachers. This occurs as we intentionally draw on the best of the teachers we prepare to engage in the training and coaching of the novice teachers who follow them. This conceptualization of training teachers to teach students but also to support the training of the next generation we see as having the potential to influence the field in significant ways.



PREPARE: The NCE Framework Elements and Teacher Preparation

Since pioneering the kindergarten movement in the 1880s, NLU has been at the forefront of efforts to prepare teachers to be successful in the classroom. NCE's goal is to implement a transformative model of teacher preparation to impact teaching and learning in diverse PK-12 settings. This aspect of NCE's work occurs within the School of Teacher Preparation. In this School, we have seven programs focusing in: early childhood education; elementary education; middle grades education; secondary education; special education; residency and alternative programs; and a shared undergraduate program with the Undergraduate College (UGC) at National Louis.

NCE's diverse offerings in Prepare, Advance, Lead span teacher preparation, advanced study and leadership; as well as practice and research. NCE aims to contribute to the field by providing high quality training options to educators and education leaders at all stages in their careers. The programs within Prepare, Advance, Lead share a set of foundational elements. These elements represent a shared orientation toward excellence in education, that it is: 1) Clinically-focused; 2) Technology-enhanced; 3) Context-specific, learner-focused; and 4) Evidence-informed.

Here, we focus intentionally on the PREPARE programs within NCE, describing our approach to preparing teachers. To do so, we discuss how the foundational elements are apparent in our work to prepare teachers.

PREPARE as Clinically-Focused

- **Practice-Based Teaching.** NCE's Teacher Preparation programs have embarked on a significant redesign to focus on a core set of teaching practices and intentionally designed field-learning opportunities that allow candidates to examine and adapt core practices to the demands of different teaching/learning contexts. One example of this is NCE's ***Adaptive Cycles of Teaching (ACT)***: a unique cyclical approach requiring candidates to analyze the impact of their instruction and student learning and to use coach feedback combined with their self-reflections to continually improve and adapt their own teaching. In effect, this model uses a medical model of intensive coaching which ties learning to practice. From restructuring our courses to shifting the role of our supervisors and developing supports for mentor teachers, NLU is excited about our innovative efforts in improving the preparation of future teachers.
- **Strategic clinical preparation.** NCE students engage in extended, strategic, intentional clinical placements which ensure that aspiring teachers are gaining the experiences they need to be successful in the classroom. As a part of these clinical experiences, observations of practice starting at the beginning of the year, a semester before they begin their formal student teaching. This provides aspiring teachers with extended experiences in the classroom context, first as an observer and learner, and then engaging in instructional practice.
- **Mentor training.** Critical to the success of NCE aspiring teachers are the supports they receive in their clinical experiences. NCE faculty have created a framework of key practices to support candidate learning which guides faculty mentoring of candidates, providing core components, learning outcomes, and guiding questions. At the same time, NCE is in the process of developing and piloting a model for faculty to coach student teachers and for NCE graduates to provide embedded, evidence-based coaching to improve performance and retention of NCE graduates.

PREPARE as Technology-Enhanced

- **Improving online/blended learning efficiencies.** The infusion of online modules in both academic coursework and clinical experiences of teacher preparation allows for the integration of expanded forms of learning for students, such as classroom observations, videos of instruction, etc. At the same time, the use of technology increases efficiencies to be able to engage in rigorous clinical preparation at scale, with hundreds of candidates.
- **Technology based coaching.** NCE provides online coaching to allow supervisors to provide real time, online feedback on student teacher's teaching. We aspire to deepen the use of technology such that candidates have opportunity to reflect on their practice and receive real time, online feedback to support continuous improvement. Currently, online coaching allows supervisors to provide real time feedback to student teachers.
- **Mentor coaching.** NCE is in the early stages of designing a technology-based approach to coach mentor teachers to increase quality and coherence of clinical preparation.

PREPARE as Context-Specific, Learner-Focused

- **Core curriculum.** NCE teacher preparation is grounded in a coherent approach to academic and clinical preparation that centers on what is core to student learning, to teacher education, and what is at the heart of schools. NCE is in the process of creating a foundations course for all teacher preparation strands, which is based on knowledge of effective teaching.

- **Context specific.** NCE teachers largely work in the Chicago context as well as in the surrounding suburbs. We understand each context in which NCE teachers work to have particular characteristics and to have students with particular needs. As such, NCE's approach, in both academic and clinical preparation, is grounded in those contexts.
- **Partnerships.** NCE partners with multiple organizations to ensure that we are providing context-specific and student-focused education.

PREPARE as Evidence-Informed

- **Using EDTPA to focus improvement efforts.** EdTPA provides nuanced information about the strengths and areas in need of development for NCE teachers. These data can be used for individual coaching and at the program level to improve preparation practices. NCE draws upon these data systematically to make program enhancements.
- **Employer and alumni surveys.** Principals who employ NCE's graduates and the alumni themselves have useful insights about the level of preparation of NCE's teachers. Administering such surveys annually, as well as phone interviews as a follow up with a subset of principals and alumni, inform ongoing program improvements.
- **Advisory boards and stakeholder input.** The Advisory Boards around NCE's work provide critical input on the design and effectiveness of NCE programs. The advisory groups include district leadership, distinguished experts in teacher preparation, researchers, and teacher leadership experts. We see this ongoing feedback as critical to NCE staying current and maintaining quality.
- **Research informed.** We stay current in the research in teacher preparation, improvement science, mentoring, teacher leadership, and other relevant fields to inform our work.
- **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) approved.** NCE is approved by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

PREPARE: Our Aspiration

- Our aspiration in PREPARE is both local and national. Locally, in Chicagoland, we aspire to be seen as THE leader in teacher preparation for the state of Illinois. This leadership will be based on the elements of preparation; the deep clinical and context-specific focus, our use of technology and our use of rigorous evidence to consistently improve our programs. This leadership will also be based in having a clear grasp on the number of teachers we have prepared in Chicago's schools and the high levels of retention we demonstrate at scale. We aim to have an NCE teacher in every school in Chicago Public Schools and to be able to demonstrate stronger outcomes, as measured on the REACH teacher evaluation and student growth outcomes, than teachers from other programs.
- Our national aspiration in PREPARE is to be seen as a leader in providing meaningful clinically-based and context-specific experiences in teacher preparation at scale. We believe this model is unique and that there will be great interest in it across the country. We aim to enhance, codify, and disseminate this model through multiple dissemination vehicles including research journals, practitioner journals, blogs, social media, hosting site visits, and lectures.

PREPARE Spotlight: The Residency Model

As part of its commitment to preparing transformational educators, NLU has pioneered residency programs that provide teacher candidates with in-school employment alongside experienced educators while they pursue the coursework for licensure and edTPA passage. Our residency programs model tight collaboration between classroom teacher, school and district with the university to ensure the teacher preparation program is rigorous and relevant.

The residency experience spans two years. In the first year, the resident is in the classroom under the supervision of the mentor teacher four days per week, and in university classes one day per week. Gradual release allows residents to gain confidence and skill in the classroom. At the end of the first year, the resident completes initial licensure requirements. In the second year, the resident moves into a teaching position and completes his/her Master's degree and additional coursework in Special Education or English as a Second Language/Bilingual Education coursework.

With its partners, NLU has developed the residency model with particular attention to providing opportunities for paraprofessionals and teaching assistants, and others currently employed in schools and districts, to pursue initial teacher licensure in the schools in which they already serve. We have also focused the launch of the program on Bilingual educators, to help meet a significant need in our schools for teachers who are certified in Bilingual Education.

NLU currently offers three residency program opportunities: with the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) in AUSL-operated schools; with Chicago Public Schools; and with East St. Louis School District 189. While residency models are fairly common across the United States today, there are four aspects of NLU's approach that are distinctive:

1. **Doing residency models at scale.** Residency programs tended to be “boutique” programs that serve a small number of students, 20-30 per year. NLU's work to train 150 aspiring teachers a year through residency models demonstrating the potential for scale and broader impact.
2. **Implementing multiple residency models simultaneously.** NLU is engaging in implementing three different residency models with three different partners. This allows for NLU to learn from the natural variations that occur, in order to determine the best types of residency models for different contexts to inform the field. These learnings allow for enhancements in NLU's residency models, and can be shared with the field as a whole.
3. **Deepening intersections with community stakeholders.** One of the cornerstones of the residency approach is the opportunity to build deeper relationships with communities around schools. We see the residency model as being context-embedded, which means they are community-embedded. We work to build strong and collaborative partnerships in communities and schools through the work.
4. **Creating a teacher leadership pipeline.** Residency models lead to deep knowledge and relationships between training teachers and residency faculty and program directors. This allows us to identify the strongest aspiring teachers in the residency pathway to become teachers who host aspiring teachers in their classrooms. The ultimate goal is to have the clinical experiences in the residency programs occur in the classrooms of our own alumni, building a powerful teacher leadership pipeline.



ADVANCE: The NCE Framework Elements and Teacher Advancement

As educators progress in their careers, they often need enhanced training in specified areas, to deepen their knowledge in specialized areas and to move forward into higher level positions. NCE's goal is to provide advancement opportunities for educators at all levels to deepen instructional practice, achieve professional development outcomes and accomplish career advancement goals. This aspect of NCE's work sits within the School of Advanced Professional Programs in the Advanced Programs unit. In this unit, we have seven programs focusing in: curriculum and instruction; ESL/bilingual education; reading and literacy; mathematics; learning sciences education; school psychology; and teaching and learning.

NCE's diverse offerings in Prepare, Advance, Lead span teacher preparation, advanced study and leadership; as well as practice and research. NCE aims to contribute to the field by providing high quality training options to educators and education leaders at all stages in their careers.

The programs within Prepare, Advance, Lead share a set of foundational elements. These elements represent a shared orientation toward excellence in education, that it is: 1) Clinically-focused; 2) Technology-enhanced; 3) Context-specific, Learner-focused; and 4) Evidence-informed.

Here, we focus intentionally on the ADVANCE programs within NCE, describing our approach to provide teachers with advanced training in specialized areas. To do so, we discuss how the foundational elements are apparent in our work to enhance and deepen teacher's skills.

ADVANCE as Clinically-focused

- **Theory intertwined with practice.** ADVANCE courses intentionally combine theory and practice, offering experiences embedded in the classroom.
- **Drawing from expertise in the field.** The instructional model that NCE uses draws upon expertise from the field, as co-teachers and adjuncts engage in the work of teaching and leading. As such, the instructional model is created iteratively, drawing upon theoretical expertise and scholarship and shaped and influenced by the practice expertise of clinical faculty.
- **Disciplinary expertise informs the work.** Course and clinical experience design is informed by a broad base of disciplinary experts from across NCE's faculty and research- and practice-focused centers.

ADVANCE as Technology-Enhanced

- **Digital tools for teachers.** NCE ADVANCE programs include access to a range of digital tools for teachers. As such, the benefit of the use of technology goes beyond the approach to teaching and learning in ADVANCE coursework to tools that teachers can learn about and then use in their own classrooms.
- **Online programs.** Multiple endorsements are offered fully online to benefit working teachers/increase access.
- **Learning Sciences.** NCE created a learning sciences education program which includes digital learning majors. In this way, NCE intends to train experts in digital learning with a strong foundation in the scholarship of Learning Sciences.

ADVANCE as Context-Specific, Learner-Focused

- **Offerings aligned with needs of the context.** The ADVANCE offerings are reflective of the needs of the context, for instance special education, reading, bilingual education.
- **District or multi-district cohorts.** NCE offers opportunities for district teachers and leaders to enter ADVANCE programs as a cohort. This enables increased knowledge and collaboration on subject areas of critical importance to district and school improvement.
- **Diverse, flexible offerings.** NCE provides multiple avenues for working educators to develop skills, deepen expertise, and enhance their craft via endorsements and stackable credentials.

ADVANCE as Evidence-Informed

- **Informed by multiple sources of evidence.** NCE ADVANCE programs draw upon multiple sources of evidence in program design, evaluation and improvement. This includes scholarship, the needs of the field, evolving policy in areas such as special education and bilingual education.
- **Awards and recognition from the field.** The Reading programs received national recognition.
- **Strategic use of assessments.** Key assessments utilized in ADVANCE programs yield evidence of learning. At the same time, tasks are grounded in the field and clinical work.
- **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) approved.** NCE is approved by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

ADVANCE: Our Aspiration

Our aspiration is offer the most rigorous, highest quality, clinically-focused, evidence-informed, online endorsements across the Advance offerings. This will include a mechanism for ongoing updates, revisions and enhancements to ensure that technical knowledge within these endorsements is up to date relative to the requirements of the law and the need of the field. We see this aspect of the Advance work as being a mechanism for scale of NCE programs, both locally and nationally.

We also aspire to ensure that each of NCE's graduates from programs within Prepare have a clear pathway into the programs within Advance. Ideally, each of our graduates from Prepare programs would leave teacher preparation with an enhanced specialty from Advance. Our ultimate aspiration is that ALL students who go through a program in the Prepare aspect of NCE will also complete at least one program in Advance.

ADVANCE Spotlight: Centering on a Foundational Core

Advanced coursework and certifications for teachers is generally characterized in the field by its focus on discrete areas of knowledge, such as Bilingual Education, Special Education, or a specific discipline such as math education. NCE ADVANCE programs center and build upon a foundational core, which provides a set of core courses that all program enrollees take before moving into specialty areas. This distinctive way of providing advanced training gives teachers a stronger set of base knowledge on which to understand their chosen specialty area.

This use of a set of foundational courses is evident in both NCE's recent reconceptualization of the Curriculum and Instruction program and in the nearly created Learning Sciences in Education program.

Curriculum and Instruction. The idea of redesigned Curriculum and Instruction program is to provide the teachers enrolled with a common set of foundational core courses followed by a branching into multiple specialties based on discipline. The core courses provide teachers with deep foundational knowledge followed by very customized pathways to advancing their professional interests.

Learning Sciences. The creation of a Learning Sciences education program at NCE is putting a stake in ground that it is critical for advanced studies, such as the studies of the use of learning technologies, to be grounded in theoretical and applied understandings of how people learn. The four-course sequence for Learning Sciences provides enrolled students with broad perspectives on how individuals develop and build knowledge. Similar to the Curriculum and Instruction program, following those foundational courses, learners will have the opportunity to branch into multiple specialty areas. While advanced programming is available in colleges of education across the United States today, there are three specific aspects of NCE's approach that are distinctive:

1. Theoretical foundations. Endorsement, certification, and other types of advanced training for teachers and school leaders tends to focus on discrete skills in isolation from broader theoretical and applied frameworks. While these courses are useful, we believe that providing an embedded approach of starting with a set of core courses extends the usefulness and applicability of ADVANCE options.
2. Cross-disciplinary perspectives. NCE foundational core courses in Curriculum and Instruction and Learning Sciences bring together teachers and leaders with diverse experiences and broad disciplinary expertise. As such, core courses are rich as those enrolled learn from one another.
3. Shared experiences. Graduates of NCE ADVANCE programs have in common a set of shared theoretical coursework and experiences that they bring to their practice, classrooms, school and district settings. We believe this has the potential to influence the contexts in which they work in meaningful ways.



LEAD: The NCE Framework Elements and Teacher and Principal Leadership Training

NCE offers comprehensive and innovative leadership programs for educators with a passion for creating leaders who can drive school district and school success and improvement. We set the stage for teachers, principals, superintendents and other leaders to reimagine teaching and learning to guide student success and build high-performing education systems. This aspect of NCE's work occurs within the School of Advanced Professional Programs in the Educational Leadership Studies unit. In this unit, we have five programs focusing in: teacher leadership; school leadership; district leadership; general education leadership; and teaching, learning, and assessment.

NCE's diverse offerings in Prepare, Advance, Lead span teacher preparation, advanced study and leadership; as well as practice and research. NCE aims to contribute to the field by providing high quality training options to educators and education leaders at all stages in their careers.

The programs within Prepare, Advance, Lead share a set of foundational elements. These elements represent a shared orientation toward excellence in education, that it is: 1) Clinically-focused; 2) Technology-enhanced; 3) Context specific, learner-focused; and 4) Evidence-informed.

Here, we focus intentionally on the LEAD programs within NCE, describing our approach to enhancing leadership skills for teachers and principals. To do so, we discuss how the foundational elements are apparent in our work to train teachers and principals in leadership.

LEAD as Clinically-Focused

- **Faculty experiences.** Faculty members are current leaders in districts; they are highly experienced and currently working in the field. They bring with them deep lenses on practice as well as realistic and engaging problems of practice for students to engage and learn.
- **Internships.** Internships are designed to mirror the work of school and district leaders.
- **Programs rooted in practice.** Programs are designed to be very practitioner oriented. For instance, EDL students write their dissertation as a program evaluation. Similarly, key program assignments and projects are rooted in the field.
- **Disciplinary expertise.** Instructional model draws disciplinary experts from the field as co-teachers/co-designers/adjuncts. This brings an interdisciplinary lens to the leadership programs.

LEAD as Technology-Enhanced

- **Blended model.** LEAD programs offer a blended model of in-person and online experiences, with extensive engagement and work going on between the face-to-face meetings of courses. At the same time, the programs are a weekend model. This increases access to programs for non-traditional students as well as diversifies learning modalities to meet learner needs.
- **Digital tools and platforms.** LEAD programs require discussion boards and the use of a variety of digital tools and platforms to cultivate students' technology capacities. The faculty members and staff leading these program are versed in those tools, online platforms and in leading active online engagement.
- **ISTE standards.** LEAD programs introduces candidates to ISTE standards (for students, teachers/leaders, and schools) to support use of technology and design of learning environments.

LEAD as Context-Specific, Learner-Focused

- **District or multi-district cohorts.** NCE offers opportunities for district teachers and leaders to enter ADVANCE programs as a cohort. This enables increased knowledge and collaboration on subject areas of critical importance to district and school improvement.
- **Schools-community partnership lens.** Every program has a schools/community partnerships course, that engages candidates in thinking about the question "What is community?" Candidates explore their local community in terms of demographics, and key activities to facilitate learning about multiple aspects of community.
- **Alumni network.** Our extensive alumni network helps us to engage communities that NCE is partnering with. This leads to reciprocal learning and support, engaging them in a powerful learning experience that formally engages alumni and communities.

LEAD as Evidence-Informed

- **EDL design.** The new EDL design has been stakeholder vetted; principals, leadership voices to get the design right.
- **ISBE and National Standards.** In principal and superintendent licensure and teacher leadership programs, NCE reflects both ISBE and national standards, ensuring the highest quality of work.
- **Advisory Board and Partners.** Across LEAD programs, Advisory boards and partners inform, shape and motivate the work, serving as an ongoing lens for the relevance, quality, direction and influence of the work within LEAD.

LEAD: Our Aspiration

- We aspire for NCE to be seen as the place where leaders in K12 and higher education come for advanced leadership training. We will continue to distinguish our work by recruiting renowned, exemplary leaders in districts and schools in Chicagoland to serve as adjunct faculty and advisors within the program. We will also strive to recruit leadership talent from across Chicagoland to enter LEAD programs through targeted recruitment efforts to create cohorts that will attract other leaders.
- We also aspire to codify and disseminate online leadership models and templates for clinically-based leadership enhancement locally and nationally to create revenue and prestige for NCE.

LEAD Spotlight: The Chicago Leadership Collaborative

NLU's Chicago Leadership Collaborative seeks to recruit and train high quality principal candidates for Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

In November 2011, Mayor Emanuel announced the Chicago Leadership Collaborative (CLC), in order to create a pipeline of highly qualified leaders to meet the District's needs well into the future.

The CLC is a unique partnership between the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and leading principal development programs. It provides the District with an unprecedented capacity to develop, attract, and retain high-performing principals from internal and external sources, making Chicago a "destination of choice" for aspiring urban school leaders.

This unique collaboration is a partnership between CPS, the Chicago Public Education Fund, and the following partners: DePaul University, Loyola University Chicago, National Louis University, New Leaders, Northern Illinois University, Teach for America (in conjunction with Harvard University), University of Illinois Chicago, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

One of the distinctive accomplishments of this unique partnership is the creation of an early career principal toolkit. The toolkit includes:

- Leadership development materials
- Guidelines for budgetary management and development
- Templates for effective data usage and application
- Tools for evaluating school effectiveness
- Case studies in leadership

The distinctive contribution of the CLC is:

- Creating a model for collaborative higher education engagement in principal development
- Development and implementation of an early career principal toolkit, which can serve as a model to other districts
- Creating an intentional and strategic approach to a principal pipeline
- Modeling and defining strong practices in training and retaining early career principals.



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