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- FOR INSTRUCTORS
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CONNECT Modules: Practical, Creative, Strategic, Informative & Reflective - CONNECT

What do you think about CONNECT's Module 1?



Erin Speer Smith, Program Coordinator for Early Childhood/ Public Service Technologies North Carolina Community College System

If you haven't had a chance to view the recently released preview of CONNECT's Module 1, you've got to check it out! I was very excited to have the opportunity to preview it and was really excited about the design of the module. CONNECT's five steps lead adults through the process of making informed, evidence-based decisions. The situations (dilemmas) were realistic to what practitioners face each day when working with children with differing abilities and their families. The modules take the learner beyond just the situation at hand and into figuring out how to form a question and providing specific resources that relate to this question and situation that can help lead to a decision. Everything from research, to policies, to the personal stories of children and their families, the learner is able to review and synthesize this information to help formulate an informed decision. Most importantly, in my mind at least, is the opportunity to reflect and assess the process and decision. Video clips, summaries, and activities make CONNECT modules easy and practical to use in a variety of professional development situations and appropriate for all sorts of different learning types.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the 58 Community Colleges in North Carolina, all of which have Early Childhood Education Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees. I certainly will be getting the word out to my fellow Early Educator faculty colleagues across the state about this resource so that they might consider embedding some of the CONNECT resources and modules within their coursework. They will likely all appreciate the CONNECT instructor guide to assist them when using these materials too!

Community Question

I would love to hear YOUR thoughts about Module 1 and how YOU might use it in your own work.

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Can't wait to embed the module

I, too, am very excited about these modules. I cannot wait to embed them in my courses. They are easy to follow, provide "real-life" examples and encourage the students to use their own knowledge and analyze situations. It is evidence-based and very current. The module design is easy to follow and very user friendly, even for those students with little computer skills. I agree with Erin, check them out.

Reply

Can't wait to embed the module

Jennifer,

Aren't you also hoping to field test CONNECT in the spring 2010?

I often think back when I was working as a teacher in the classroom and how I saw the children's need for routine and consistency. They felt empowered and confident knowing where things were, when something was going to happen, how to do things on their own without as much assistance. Granted, it took a little time when a new child entered the class or at the beginning of a school year, but that consistency was so important.

That is why I too appreciated CONNECT's step by step design and the look of the screens. Once I got the hang of how it was working, I knew how to get around, where to go and how to return to something easily. For learning in general, this is important and I too find it especially true for online learning, particularly students that may be new to technology.

ERIN :-)

Reply

Valuable materials for students

I wanted to let you know how valuable these materials will be to our students, especially those students who complete our online courses. I will be teaching a 'blended' section of our Intro to Working with Young Children with Special Needs in our next session (February, 2010) Those students come to campus one evening per week and complete online assignments in lieu of another class meeting. This will be a great opportunity to get their reactions and feedback.

99% of our students are working in childcare settings and they will love seeing 'real' people dealing with real situations.

Thank you all so much,

Anne

Reply

Valuable materials for students

Anne,

How exciting to hear that you are thinking of using these materials as part of a hybrid class. What a wonderful idea! There is so much information contained in each module, that it certainly would be "enough" to keep the students engaged and learning throughout their "out of class" week.

I too feel like that because the vidoes and scenarios are true to life and show real teachers, families and children in situations, it will not only help students relate, but also captivate them! At least they captivated me! (smile)

Reply

Great resource

I just finished previewing the CONNECT module on embedded interventions-the first of many! I really love the idea of having this "slimmed down" version of the module, and the 3-5 minute quickie tours, so that busy instructors can have a look at the key features without having to plow through every single thing. Instructors are bound to appreciate things like the use of realistic practice dilemmas to prompt learners' reflection and evidence-based decision-making. Videos, handouts, activities, FAQs-it'll all be there. I can see the module and resources being used across many different kinds of courses and other professional development delivery systems.

Reply

Great resource

Hi Marilou!

I couldn't agree more with your take on the CONNECT preview.

There was a meeting recently where I met a community college instructor here in NC that is currently teaching 8 (yes EIGHT!) courses-- oh and it gets better-- they are all DIFFERENT courses (not multiple sections of the same course). With the workloads that many faculty deal with, having a one-stop shop quality resource like CONNECT will be a true gem to them! We've got to get the word out!!

ERIN

Reply

Great resource for reflection

I too am very excited about using the modules in my courses with undergraduates in child development and family studies. We try to give our students the best field experiences we can, but the dilemmas really help to get them thinking about situations they have not encountered first hand. The CONNECT modules are fantastic for encouraging development of reflective practitioners.

Reply

Great resource for reflection

Thank for the positive feedback on the modules and the five-step learning cycle. We are excited about this approach to professional development and think it can be applied to coursework on any topic. Here is a specific request for those who have looked at the introductory video, Foundations of Early Childhood Inclusion. We have been asked to develop some activities that will scaffold learning around

these big ideas and concepts on inclusion. Do you have ideas for us?

Thanks Pam

Reply

Great resource for reflection

Margaret,

You make an excellent point about field experiences. Finding quality field placement sites with quality mentor/cooperating teachers is a difficult task in itself. It can be even more so when we add in trying to make sure students have experiences in high quality inclusive environments. I agree that these videos and activities can help fill in some of the gaps that one may not have gotten during a practical experience and still utilize those higher thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating and potentially even designing and planning!

ERIN :-)

Reply

Great learning cycle

I too love having the video clips, real-life situations, definitions, and summary of evidence all there in module 1. But more than that, this module has reminded me of the value of the evidence-based decision-making process the learning cycle exemplifies for instruction on a variety of topics. Thanks!

Heidi

Reply

Great learning cycle

Hi Heidi,

I know exactly what you mean and better yet, it helps remind our students, just by participating in this process, the importance of making sound decisions about children and families by looking at a variety of information from multiple sources and then evaluating/assessing afterwards. To be able to practice that in such an intentional way by going through this module is so very valuable!

Thanks so much for previewing and posting.

ERIN :-)

Reply

CONNECT module1

This is just the thing I need to add more life to my online courses! When I have time (which is rare) I search for videos on the educational YouTube site to include, but these are much more appropriate for our courses! They are short, evidenced based and include best practices. I can't wait to try this one out in the spring. I would love to be a part of field testing these modules. How can we help with that?

Reply

CONNECT module1

Kathy, We would love to have you be part of the pilot study this spring if you are teaching undergrads. We will send follow-up information about this as soon as we have IRB approval for the study. THANK YOU.

Reply

CONNECT module1

Thanks! I'll wait to hear from you :-)

Reply

CONNECT module1

Kathy,

So glad you were able to view the preview (and post on the blog)! It sounds like, as I am, that you are very excited about the potential use of this within community college courses! How great that you are interested in piloting this.

Thanks so much for checking it out and for working to include more information on working with children with differing abilities into your courses. It is so important!

Hugs,

ERIN :-)

Reply