

Issue Date: November 14, 2023

FAQs About Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success and Learning Management System Pepper

Purpose

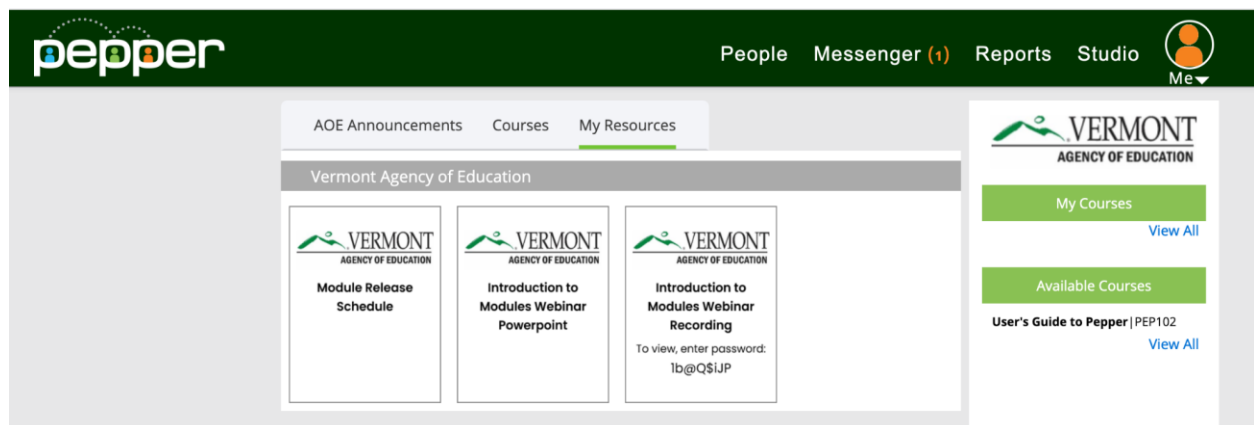
This FAQ is a follow up to the introductory webinar about the launch of the new Professional Learning Series “Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success” in the new Learning Management System, Pepper. This series and Pepper are both available through an AOE contract with Public Consulting Group, LLC (PCG) announced in a [Memorandum to Superintendents](#).

FAQs

Will we get a copy of this slide deck?

You can find the slide deck and access Pepper on the Agency of Education’s (AOE) [English Language Arts \(ELA\)](#) webpage.

The PowerPoint presentation and webinar recording are also available in the Resources section on the Pepper dashboard. Once you create a Pepper account and login you can access these and other resources.



The screenshot shows the Pepper dashboard interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'pepper' logo on the left and 'People', 'Messenger (1)', 'Reports', and 'Studio' on the right. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'AOE Announcements', 'Courses', and 'My Resources'. The main content area displays three resource cards from the Vermont Agency of Education: 'Module Release Schedule', 'Introduction to Modules Webinar Powerpoint', and 'Introduction to Modules Webinar Recording'. The recording card includes a password: 'To view, enter password: 1b@Q\$1JP'. On the right side, there are two green buttons: 'My Courses' with a 'View All' link, and 'Available Courses' with a 'User's Guide to Pepper | PEP102' link and a 'View All' link.

The Resources section is also where you’ll find additional information about ongoing work happening within the state as well as additional research and information to support your work.



How do we register?

You can access information about Pepper and the modules in the Literacy Professional Learning Series Launched section of the [AOE ELA](#) webpage. Please create an account and get started with Module 1 of the Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success today.

Who can register for this course?

The series is open to all educators in Vermont serving public elementary, middle, and secondary students, including students in career technical education and those seeking secondary credentials through our Adult Education and Literacy system. The series is also relevant for PK educators. Teachers of non-literacy related classes are also encouraged to engage in the course work, as they will find many instructional resources relevant to support literacy development within their specific content area.

Is Graduate Credit available?

VT AOE is exploring whether for-credit options might be possible. At this time, all participants will be able to download certificates of completion after completing each module that can be applied for re-licensure. Learn more about [Vermont re-licensure](#) on the AOE website.

Are resources for tier-three intervention groups included in any modules?

The series and modules focus on tier one instruction and practices for the general education classroom. While intervention is addressed as a strategy, particularly in the 4-12th grade modules, the modules focus on building baseline knowledge and practices for the general education classroom.

Is there an approach to reading that is focused on?

This series of literacy learning modules was informed by National Reading Panel recommendations paired with over 40+ years of scientific research, evidence-based instructional strategies and techniques, and evolving research-based literature focused on developing literacy in all learners.

Who is the author(s) of these two courses (professional learning series)?

The AOE, through a competitive bid process, secured the services of Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to develop a Professional Learning series focused on the neuroscience of reading. Members of the PCG Science of Learning and Literacy team include former state and district curriculum experts, special and gifted and talented experts, multi-lingual learner experts, certified language therapists and dyslexia experts,

as well as national authors of structured literacy products, and educators. In addition, national experts contributed to the writing and review of the course, including Doctors Susan Ebbers, William VanCleve, Danielle Thompson, and Kelly Cartwright. Research experts in the field of the science of reading informed the course development and are referenced throughout the modules.

AOE staff have dedicated considerable time and are providing extensive review of modules and associated content and materials. The AOE staff are providing background about state specific resources and context within the modules. In addition, the AOE introduced national experts who have worked with Vermont educators, such as Dr. Kelly Cartwright, to the PCG team. As a result, Dr. Cartwright is actively reviewing and contributing to module content.

Is there a plan to add additional courses?

Yes, the Pepper Learning Management System will support the AOE's professional learning network and additional professional learning opportunities for the length of the contract with PCG (through to 2028). Currently, the focus is on a successful launch of the entire Literacy PD module series prior to engaging in additional course development.

Do the modules include culturally sustaining pedagogy? Do the modules contain research and instruction on teaching multilingual learners?

The principles addressed in the literacy modules are in concert with culturally sustaining pedagogy. Additionally, throughout the modules there are citations of research and considerations to support multilingual learners. Emphasis is placed throughout the modules regarding considerations for multilingual learners.

How long will these modules be available?

They will be available for Vermont educators through 2028 (the life of the contract).

How will we be notified when the next module is ready?

The AOE will send frequent communication through their various communication channels ([Weekly Field Memo](#), Coffee and Conversations, role-specific listservs, newsletters, and through Associations, etc.) with announcements of each module. Make sure you sign up for these listservs and newsletters.

If I complete one of the [literacy modules] could I go back and register for the other?

There are six modules within the series "Building Foundational Skills for Lifelong Literacy Success." The first module is designed for K-12; modules 6-12 have two grade bands available, one for K-3 and another for 4-12. Once you are signed up for the

literacy learning series, the modules will show up on your Learning Plan Dashboard and Courses in Progress as they become available. If you are interested in receiving modules for an additional grade band (i.e., K-3 or 4-12) please email peppersupport@pcgus.com.

What is the total number of hours to complete each module?

The 6-module series is a total of 45 hours of PD content. Each module is approximately 6-8 hours and contains 6-8 lessons. Each lesson is approximately 45 min to 1 hour.

Will the AOE track educator's course progress and performance?

The AOE will track Pepper usage and course participation metrics at the population level to support reporting requirements related to ESSER investments and Act 28 literacy legislation. This information will help inform how the AOE could improve the course and the effectiveness of current and future investments. The AOE will not be tracking or reporting individual usage or performance.

What types of issues do I contact the Pepper help desk for?

If you are having trouble creating an account, navigating within Pepper (the LMS), or accessing learning content, please email peppersupport@pcgus.com.

Can we create groups within our school or district if we want to participate in a course together? Can I assign courses or content to my staff? What else can pepper do?

The best way to take a course together with your colleagues is to form a Subcommunity within the larger Vermont Community. Within the Subcommunity, a group of learners can communicate with each other, ask questions, and discuss course topics. Please reach out to VTAOE or directly to the Pepper team.

Can I hold a meeting in Pepper with others who have Pepper accounts?

Hosting a meeting is not currently a feature in Pepper.

How can I learn more about Pepper features?

If you want to learn more about Pepper's functionality, please visit the "Help" document in the top right corner under "Me" in your Pepper profile. You can also access it directly here. In addition, you can find a recording of the introductory webinar and PowerPoint slides about Pepper in the My Resources section. Click on the "Introduction to Modules Webinar Recording" and "Introduction to Modules Webinar Recording PowerPoint" tiles to access each.