

# Success AT THE Core

How Teams and Teachers Transform Instruction

A free field-tested professional development toolkit designed to help leadership teams and teachers elevate classroom instruction and improve student outcomes.

[www.successatthecore.com](http://www.successatthecore.com)



## Greetings!

Fall seems to be the season of coaches. College football coaches flash across our television screens and volunteer soccer coaches corral budding elementary school players. Coaches play a crucial role in our schools as well, working hand-in-hand with teachers and administrators to improve instruction.

We've heard from many coaches that *Success at the Core* is a valuable resource. In fact, around 15% of SaC's over 6,600 members are coaches.

In this month's newsletter, we highlight SaC resources focused on how coaches, and others committed to supporting the growth of colleagues, are using the toolkit. Also, if you're heading to the Learning Forward Annual Conference in Anaheim next month, check out our session focused on coaching (see "Spread the Word" for more information).

Sincerely,

The *Success the Core* Team

## What's New

Did you know that *Success at the Core* has won numerous awards, for both professional development and filmmaking? Visit our [Awards](#) page for a list of accolades.

Have you taken the [Web Tour](#) yet? It's a great tool for introducing SaC to colleagues.

Wondering how SaC connects to issues that you're working on? Check out a new online resource: [Using Success at the Core to Address Issues of Practice](#).

## Using Coaches to Improve Instruction

*Success at the Core*'s [Leadership Development](#) modules and [Teacher Development](#) strategies offer multiple tools for instructional coaches and the leadership teams that support them.

For instance, the [Instructional Expertise](#) module examines how leadership teams can utilize coaches (and others with instructional expertise) to address teachers' instructional needs. Two of the module's embedded videos - "Learning Among Teachers" and "Effective Coaching Systems" - illustrate how coaches at two Washington state middle schools address particular instructional issues.

Another module, [Implementing New Programs](#), offers examples of how coaches can help guide teachers through the implementation process. One of the module's videos, "Implementing a New Curriculum" spotlights the role of a literacy coach in the curriculum adoption process. The "Implementing New Instructional Strategies" video shows a math coach supporting her content team as they learn new accessibility strategies.



Coaches, and the teachers and/or teams they work with, can also make use of the Teacher Development materials, which explore 24 best-practice instructional strategies. The [User Guide](#) offers suggestions for how coaches can take up these strategies in one-on-one and small-group settings.

Let us know how you are using the materials in your teams. Send us your stories at [info@successatthecore.com](mailto:info@successatthecore.com).

## Spread the Word

*Success at the Core* is a proud sponsor of Learning Forward's upcoming Annual Conference in Anaheim (December 3-7, 2011).

If you're at the conference, please stop by our exhibit booths to say "hello" and attend one of our sessions:

*Build Capacity and Collaboration to Improve Instructional Quality (C25)*

Monday, December 5  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Video as a Transformational Coaching Tool (K07)*

Tuesday, December 6  
2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Help us spread the word. Encourage colleagues to register at:

<http://www.successatthecore.com>

## Keep in Touch

Comments, questions, concerns? Contact us at:

[info@successatthecore.com](mailto:info@successatthecore.com)

Also, dialogue with other members on our *Success at the Core* Facebook page.



## Learning from You

Two pieces of research from the past year particularly speak to the value of SaC materials for coaches.

In reporting the results of the fall 2010 Sustainability Study, Inverness Research relayed the following story about one coach's use of SaC:

SaC has become a core resource in her [the coach's] leadership repertoire. A veteran math coach with many professional contacts, she describes SaC as "a powerful tool for me as a professional" and has promoted the use of SaC to many people. She has used SaC materials to model best practices with novice teachers; to create data cards for each math student targeted for extra math assistance; and to model best practices for the teachers she coaches.

Inverness also conducted two user surveys on *Success at the Core*. According to results from the second survey (spring 2011), 25% of SaC user respondents report utilizing Leadership Development modules to coach/mentor a teacher and 44% report using the Teacher Development materials for this purpose. The videos were the most used resource. Users report numerous benefits from SaC use, touching on the kinds of outcomes desired from a coaching-focused experience. Sixty-eight percent gained greater knowledge of effective teaching practice while 58% report experiencing dialogue among teachers that is more focused on teaching and learning. Finally, 35% of users report changes in the classroom practices of other teachers.

Please visit our [Research](#) page to read summaries of the Sustainability Study, the Second User Survey, and all other SaC research efforts.

## Stories of Use

This month's story comes from Corrie Freiwaldt, an instructional facilitator and district science specialist from the Renton School District in Washington.

I learned about *Success at the Core* from a workshop focused on professional development in struggling economic times. My school district had developed a Vision of Instruction, which identifies exemplary instructional practices. As an instructional facilitator at my school, I used *Success at the Core* to develop several after school trainings to help teachers attend to this vision.

One training focused on SaC's [Using Rubrics](#) Teacher Development strategy. During the first session, we read articles referenced in the strategy's Additional Resources, watched and discussed the Featured Video, "Quality Evidence Rubrics," and reflected on rubrics (that teachers brought to the session and that I printed from the site). Grade-level teams then planned how to incorporate rubrics into their practice. For the follow-up session, teacher participants each prepared a rubric. Teachers were engaged and learned from each other as they discussed how rubrics impacted student learning and teaching, the challenges of transforming practice, and next steps in their classrooms.

Another training focused on the [Guiding Self-Assessment](#) strategy. The day after the training session, one teacher commented, "I tried the strategy in my class with amazing results. I haven't seen students take learning into their own hands like that. They were engaged with the activity 100%." Another teacher said, "This was the strategy that really made a difference with me. I had students taking control of their own education. They are asking more questions and choosing to get help. It puts them in the driver's seat of their learning. Isn't that what it's all about?"

As an instructional facilitator, using *Success at the Core* has proven to be relevant and engaging, and has benefitted teachers. They appreciate the videos the most. Hearing or reading about a strategy is one thing. Seeing that strategy in action makes a larger impact.

Corrie Freiwaldt, NBCT  
Instructional Facilitator and Science Teacher on Special Assignment  
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