



Greetings!

You've got issues, don't you? Well, you're in good company. Every day, educators - be they classroom teachers, school and district administrators, or coaches and mentors - face pressing issues of practice connected to instructional improvement.

Questions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment, professional development and educator evaluation abound. To address them, schools and districts adapt and adopt various models and frameworks.

We see *Success at the Core* as a tool to help you tackle your instructional issues. At the same time, we've learned from research that our members can find it challenging to identify SaC resources most relevant to their unique improvement agendas. In this issue, we hope to help connect the dots.

Sincerely,

The *Success the Core* Team

What's New

[Using *Success at the Core* to Address Issues of Practice](#) (PDF) calls out a variety of questions you may be dealing with and suggests SaC resources to help you tackle them.

The [Research](#) page now includes [Design and Methods of Impact Study](#) (PDF), a document that details how the recent impact study was conducted.



Spread the Word

We're thankful for our partners and others who help spread the word about SaC.

Thanks to:

- **Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)** for including a piece on

Addressing Issues of Practice

Success at the Core was designed as a toolkit to help you address issues of practice crucial to advancing your school's improvement agenda. SaC's resources supplement, not replace, your current curriculum or instructional framework. Unlike a program - which you typically adopt, implement, and eventually conclude - you can utilize *Success at the Core* in whatever way is most relevant to your context.

To help you better connect SaC materials to your specific needs, we've added a new resource to the site called [Using *Success at the Core* to Address Issues of Practice](#). It calls out a variety of questions that educators face such as, "How can we use data to improve instruction at our school?" and "How can we build capacity around new educator evaluations?" For each question, we suggest SaC "Starting Points" and flag other relevant resources from the site.

For instance, if you and your colleagues are asking, "How can we differentiate and personalize learning?" we suggest taking a look at two Teacher Development strategies: [Differentiating Instruction](#) and [Using Multiple Approaches](#). If you are grappling with "How can we build a collaborative culture to improve teaching and learning?" the [Professional Development](#) and [Leadership Teams and Quality Instruction](#) Leadership Development modules are good places to start.

Check out this new resource and let us know if there are other issues of practice that you'd like us to address.

SaC in its September 21 edition of *Principal Matters*

- **The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP), Science for All, and MiddleWeb** for referring educators to our site

Help us spread the word!

Encourage colleagues to register at:

www.successatthecore.com

Keep in Touch

Comments, questions, concerns? Contact us at:

info@successatthecore.com.

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



Learning from You

Our portfolio of research has taught us a lot about how SaC is being used and what challenges users face.

We've learned that effective use happens when users connect SaC materials to their specific issues of practice. In reporting results from the SaC Impact Study, Inverness Research noted that, "users must interpret what they see in the materials, and make them fit into and work in their particular context (in all its complexity)." This finding echoes results of the Sustainability Study, also conducted by Inverness:

SaC modules and strategies can readily support enactment of many kinds of instructional improvement programs and user-identified goals. However, users do need to design ways to make the tool fit together with existing priorities and programs so that, like any tool, it can accomplish what it is intended to accomplish in a particular context.

We have also learned that users need help making these connections. A good proportion of members who completed our second online Use Survey (conducted in Spring 2011), when asked about supports that would enable more effective use of SaC materials, said that additional online support materials such as links to reform issues and stories of effective use would help them.

We hope that the new "Issues of Practice" document (referenced in the article above) responds to these lessons. Please visit our [Research](#) page to learn more about results from the recently completed Impact, Sustainability and Use Studies.

Stories of Use

John Coleman, Director of Curriculum for Toms River Regional Schools in New Jersey, describes how his district is utilizing *Success at the Core* to prepare educators for a district-wide adoption of common formative assessments.

As a district, we are looking to implement common formative assessments (CFAs) district-wide, starting next year - as a strategy to leverage our work around the Common Core State Standards. CFAs will be given at all grade levels, multiple times a year. This year, we are working to make sure that all district educators understand what CFAs are and how they can impact instruction and learning. I thought that *Success at the Core's* [Common Formative Assessments](#) Leadership Development module could help build these common understandings.

This summer, I spent a day presenting the CFA module to all administrators in the district. I walked them through the easy registration process and then together, we looked at the module's *Multimedia Presentation, Facilitator Guide, and Handouts*. We discussed how supervisors and principals could design one-day trainings for their staffs using SaC materials. These trainings took place September 2nd at our district's professional development day.

The trainings at schools went well. All of the district's 1,700 teachers were introduced to CFAs using *Success at the Core* and then began to discuss how they (as grade level or content-area teams) could begin to develop common assessments. Teams particularly liked the module's videos, which helped them see CFAs in action and what it looked like when teams evaluate CFA data together.

District-wide change can be hard. But not one department has pushed back. I credit our administrators' leadership and the grounding they received with SaC's resources for this buy-in. Everyone had a shared experience and as result, teachers really seem to understand how CFAs will improve instruction and student learning.

I love the *Success at the Core* web site. Each module's *Multimedia Presentation* and *Facilitator Guide* prepare anyone to make effective presentations. It's very user friendly. Now, I plan to explore how two additional modules - [Using Data Effectively](#) and [Professional Development](#) - can help leverage the district's instructional improvement agenda.