



Greetings!

Doesn't the start of a school year feel a little like New Year's Day? Each year, educators return to school with ambitious goals and renewed energy. We hope that among your new-year resolutions is use of *Success at the Core*.

Like any tool for improving practice, SaC's resources need to be effectively used to achieve their intended impact. In this issue, we share some ideas about scaffolding use of the Leadership Development modules; lessons learned from research around the effective implementation of the Teacher Development strategies; and the story of how one school has benefitted from SaC.

Happy new (school) year! Let's raise a glass to instructional improvement that helps all students achieve.

Sincerely,

The *Success at the Core* Team

What's New

The [Research](#) page now includes summaries of our latest research: [Results of Impact Study](#) (PDF) and [Second Use Survey Executive Summary](#) (PDF).

Also, take a look at our latest [success story video](#), which highlights how Icicle River Middle School has used SaC to transform teaching and learning. Also, take our new [web tour](#) by clicking the button on SaC's home page.



Spread the Word

Thanks for helping us spread the word.

SaC now has members in 48 states and 25 countries!

Scaffolding Leadership Development Module Use

The seven [Leadership Development](#) modules provide teams with focused, team-learning experiences guided by online facilitator guides, handouts, and multimedia presentations. Setting your team up to take action on ideas presented in the modules is crucial to their effectual use.

Some leadership teams have the authority to take direct action on instructional issues. Others advise those in the school who have this authority. Clarifying what your team can and cannot do before it engages in a module will allow your team to focus on how it can be most effective in improving instruction. To do so, we suggest taking the following steps:

Meet with your principal and/or school leaders to discuss:

- How engaging with a module can deepen or extend your school's instructional goals.
- How your team will apply what it learns to improve instruction at your school.
- What your team communicates about a module with others at the school.
- What support your team can get in the way of time and space to undertake a module's learning experience.

Engage key stakeholders: Identify others at the school who have expertise or do work related to a module's content. Meet with them to provide information about the module's content and how your team will apply what they have learned. Discuss how you can support each other's work.

For more ideas on preparing your team for an effective module learning experience that can help improve instruction in your school, check out the [Facilitator Overview](#) (PDF).

In the month of August:

* Over 200 new members registered

* Educators in four new countries - Netherlands, Estonia, New Zealand, and China - became members.

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

Inverness Research conducted a study during the 2010-11 school year to examine the impact of SaC's [Teacher Development strategies](#) on classroom teachers and students. The study concluded that **when teachers made effective use of the SaC materials, they were able to make changes in their teaching that had multiple positive impacts on students** including: increased student engagement, motivation, learning of subject concepts and skills, confidence, and mastery of school learning targets.

Positive impacts on students were found among teachers who engaged in purposeful, focused, consistent and reflective usage of carefully chosen SaC strategies. For example, one teacher - after experimenting with a few SaC strategies - decided to focus solely on facilitating learning through inquiry in his 8th grade algebra classes and chose the [Posing a Challenge](#) and [Promoting Inquiry](#) strategies. He sustained this purpose and focus through the rest of the year. Inquiry lessons in small group contexts engaged and motivated students who had been struggling as well as those who were already high achievers. The teacher found that inquiry created new opportunities for students that increased both their confidence and comprehension of core concepts.

Visit our [Research](#) page to read "Results of Impact Study" and what we're learning about effective use from our ongoing research efforts.

Stories of Use

This month's use story comes from Kenny Renner-Singer, principal of Icicle River Middle School in Leavenworth, Washington. As you read it, consider how Kenny has scaffolded effective use of SaC at his school. View this [Success Story video](#) for more on Icicle River's experience with SaC.

I work in a small rural district that has very limited funds for professional development. So, access to *Success at the Core's* high-quality, free materials - which can be embedded right away into what we're already working on - has been huge. My school has used *Success at the Core* in two different ways: to facilitate our building leadership team's work and as professional development for teachers.

The work of our building leadership team has shifted in the last few years. In the past, the team was really focused on administrative issues. I wanted to focus our team time on teaching and learning. *Success at the Core's* Leadership Development modules helped move us forward in that work.

We used the [Using Data Effectively](#) module and had some good discussion about data walls and how we use data to inform instruction. After exploring the module, team members shared module content with their grade-level and department teams. We then discussed data as a whole school. In one staff meeting, teachers shared what they're doing with assessment data and how it's informing their instruction.

I've also introduced my staff to the Teacher Development strategies. These strategies allow teachers to reflect on and think about quality teaching and learning. The materials provide clear examples that teachers can see, talk about, reflect on, and then, embed in their own work. Research tells us that when teachers see and reflect on quality teaching and learning, it can change practice.

One newer teacher on my staff watched all of the Teacher Development strategy videos. This transformed her practice and was an incredible professional development experience. When I was doing an observation of her, she used a differentiation strategy that she learned from the "[Guided Groups](#)" video. It was just brilliant!

I've shared with other principals that *Success at the Core* can be used as springboard to look at teaching and learning. I suggest that they look at the materials and think about how they can imbed them in the work they are doing. The materials are high quality. They're smart. And they're well done.

Kenny Renner-Singer
Icicle River, WA