

FROM ADMINISTRATIVE *to Creative*

Free resources from *Success at the Core* help Icicle River Middle blossom.



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I WORK in a small rural district that has very limited funds for professional development. When we discovered *Success at the Core*, we were more than excited.

Success at the Core is a free, web-based professional development toolkit for educators developed by Vulcan Productions and the Education Development Center. It was created and pilot-tested right here in Washington, and it is designed to help school leadership teams and teachers elevate classroom instruction to improve student outcomes.

Access to the high-quality 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 into 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 a springboard to look at teaching and learning. I suggest that they look at the materials and think about how they can embed them in the work they are doing. The materials are high quality. They're smart. And they're well done. If you'd like to watch my video on the subject, find it here: <http://www.cstp-wa.org/teacher-development/success-core> Ⓞ

Success at the Core includes seven modules to help leadership teams develop a shared vision of quality instruction and advocate for it in their schools, and 24 practical strategies teachers can use in the classroom. It also includes 47 documentary-style videos featuring footage from six Washington middle schools to show what quality instruction looks like and how effective leadership teams operate.

Success at the Core was piloted in 11 schools and one school district in Washington during the 2009/2010 school year. According to an independent evaluation by Inverness Research, pilot schools reported growth in leadership capacity, improved professional culture, stronger instructional focus, and increased student engagement.

AWSP partners with *Success at the Core*. Learn more at www.successatthecore.com