



## Strategies for **STUDENT SUCCESS**

Engaging Educators • Improving Student Learning •  
Aligned to Evaluation Rubrics



Professional  
Learning





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## **OUR MISSION**

The AFT is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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Welcome to the AFT's Strategies for Student Success. This high-quality, research-based professional development program consists of three-hour and fifteen-minute long modules that create a manageable way to connect with educators. The modules address teaching and learning in a way that benefits both new and veteran teachers. The content in the modules can be tailored to benefit individuals, groups and the whole school, and can be offered in a virtual setting as well.

SSS approaches professional development and learning from an issues-based perspective. Whether the need is created by policy, mandates, feedback on evaluations or professional inquiry, SSS responds. Content is taught with activities that require reflection on daily practice, debate over research and current practices, utilizing modeling and experiential learning approaches. Engaged discussions augment the relevance of the research-based classroom strategies, and instruction is designed to facilitate immediate use.

## What People Are Saying About Strategies for Student Success

- Throughout my learning experience and alongside fellow educators I obtained a refreshed perspective on strategies for student success and felt rejuvenated in my passionate pursuit of becoming a stronger educator. Thank you SSS.
- The SSS sessions were inspiring and informative. The presentations were fabulous and interactive. I truly want to thank the entire training team for providing me an opportunity to gain knowledge and a skill set to help me move forward in my teaching career.
- Completing Strategies for Student Success has helped me to rethink the way my curriculum is set up and also how my students learn. It also helped me to rethink how I use technology in my classroom and how to use all the different types of technology to help my students be successful.
- After completing this AFT Professional Development course, Strategies for Student Success, I have many new tools, resources, insights and strategies.

*"I cannot teach anybody anything.  
I can only teach them to think."*

—Socrates



I am excited about bringing this engaging course back to educators in my school to share everything I have learned. I know students in my district will only benefit from the strategies I have taken away from this course.

- I had no idea of what to expect, but was pleasantly surprised to engage in greatly needed and appreciated training in a collaborative and engaging format. The trainers were extremely knowledgeable, and they presented the course materials and training using a variety of virtual tools. I look forward to having the opportunity to participate in future courses.
- This was an eye-opener for me because many of the modules were a refresher for me, but learning never stops, even for educators. Sometimes we need these constant reminders

to continue to work harder to empower our students. I can now go back to my school and provide research-based education strategies to support what we need to do as educators.

- I would like to thank all of the wonderful trainers who were involved in this virtual experience. I learned a lot from checking my own bias to helping students be intentional about the choices they make. Much of what I learned can be transplanted into my social activism in my union. Thanks again for such an eye-opening experience.
- The SSS modules challenged my beliefs and instructional practices. The learning environment was very supportive, and I felt very comfortable sharing information, which increased my confidence for presenting. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend this training.

## The Benefits of the SSS Program

- SSS is a research-based program designed to meet the immediate needs of educators as it relates to their instructional processes and the indicators on the evaluation rubrics. As a result, a student-centered model of instruction emerges, which enhances student learning.
- The program's structure promotes engagement and the immediate application of the knowledge gained in the classroom.
- Local unions can engage members around professional development issues that are important in their locality.
- Districts and unions can find common ground in the research to collaborate on educator preparedness and student assessments.

- The program develops school-based experts to provide ongoing support to veteran and novice educators.
- Modules can be bundled in groups of three or four for a more extensive study of an overarching topic, which could qualify for college credits.
- An online community ([aftelearning.org/sss](http://aftelearning.org/sss)) provides resources that support the content in the SSS modules.

### In other words, SSS is for you if you want:

- high-quality professional development delivered in manageable chunks of time;
- a mechanism that fosters collaboration on teaching and learning among stake-holders;
- to provide supports to help educators meet the indicators on their evaluations and consequently student learning; or
- a professional learning program that is ongoing and not a single event.

### SSS is a Part of the AFT Professional Learning Program for Educators

AFT Professional Learning is a program for educators that offers 45-hour graduate level courses, 3-hour and 15-minute SSS modules, webinars, lesson-sharing tools,

For local training opportunities and for developing SSS program trainers, please contact:

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online communities, technology tools and more to appeal to all educators. The program also provides solid research-based content that validates existing practice while encouraging professional growth. Professional learning opportunities based on the content of the courses are offered throughout the year and the AFT national office works with state federations and local affiliates to deliver coursework locally and assist in developing the capacity to provide the offerings directly to affiliate members. For more information about the AFT PD program, please contact Lisa Dickinson at [edickinson@aft.org](mailto:edickinson@aft.org).

## SSS Module Descriptions

### ACTIVATING LEARNING IN ALL DISCIPLINES

Teaching content without the necessary skills will not activate learning for students nor produce ownership of the learning. In this session, explore a pathway where lessons connect with cultural norms; students own their learning; and are expected to think and apply knowledge.

### ASSESSING TEACHING AND LEARNING

The goal of every educator should be ongoing assessments to measure students' depth of understanding. A misconception gone unattended

can make the entire learning experience an abject failure for teacher and student alike. Investigate the "student factor" in teaching and learning, develop assessments at critical phases for a lesson you have created; and learn efficient study habits to teach to your students.

### BEYOND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Beyond Classroom Management places educators at the center of the debate on compliance over motivation; autonomy; and an examination of how conventional structures (rewards, sanctions and punishments) are in place primarily to keep order. This session explores how growth mindsets, grit, peace building, compliance, autonomy, educator behaviors and classroom layout all affect the learning environment.

### CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Research suggests that students from diverse cultures may need to be engaged in ways that support their self-efficacy, esteem and their learning. In this session, we will establish the connection between culture and learning, and explore research-based strategies, such as cultural competency, high expectations and critical consciousness. (6.5 hours)

## CURRICULUM MATTERS

Participants will explore lesson design for engagement through the lens of the curriculums they have. They will then learn how to map their curriculums to meet the needs of students in an engaging way and to prepare them for next steps and the future.

## DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

Despite the fact that students learn at different rates, have different interests and levels of motivation, many instructors overlook these differences and treat students as if they were all alike. This session will examine three differentiation models: Tomlinson's tiered lessons, Conklin's choice boards and Sternberg's triarchic model.

## ENGAGING FAMILIES AS EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

We need to communicate with our students' families, but how do we do it successfully? How do we develop an empowering partnership that works to help our students reach their highest potential? Research can provide us with answers. This SSS module outlines how and when to talk most effectively with families, the kind of school climate that fosters a positive learning and working environment, and what educators can do to help families discover how to effectively support student learning at home.



## ENGAGING STUDENTS' LONG-TERM MEMORY

The greatest desire of educators is to have students retrieve information long after it has been taught. Research shows that information can easily be retrieved over a long period of time if lodged in the long-term memory. This session probes research-based strategies to assist students in storing content in their long-term memory.

## THE GAME FACTOR

Would you consider using games as an instructional tool? Research says that you should. A combination of joy and challenge is in store for teachers and students through this module, which examines the research, different types of games, and how they can be used to enhance content instruction for students in today's diverse classrooms. Walk away with a clear distinction between game-based learning and gamification.

## **GRADING IN A STANDARDS-BASED ENVIRONMENT**

What do grades tell us about mastery of content? How should students' levels of understanding be assessed and reported? What are the obstacles to making grades more informative? Above all, what should the grading process look like in a standards-based environment? Discover the answers to these questions in this module.

## **HANDLING STRESS**

Stress is inevitable. Educators face many challenges, especially the desire to be the best for their students. Unmanaged stress, however, can cause irreparable health issues. This module examines researched-based ways of handling stress and provides tips on how to turn challenges into opportunities.

## **IS MY TEACHING EFFECTIVE?**

You did your best to teach it, but your students didn't seem to get it. You're looking for something more powerful to engage them, but what is it? This module explores high-quality research that shows how to create effective learning conditions in the classroom through the use of effective tools as well as appropriate ways to assess background knowledge, student-friendly instructional plans, lesson designs for specific learning opportunities, and the infusion of

rigor and relevance into your repertoire of instructional strategies.

## **MEANINGFUL CHANGES**

Delve into core behaviors, using tools proven to ensure success even when the environment is chaotic. Practice change-making behaviors and experience clarity of thought, successful strategizing and feeling prepared for the challenges ahead.

## **NAVIGATING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN STRESS & SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Stress cannot always be avoided, but it can be effectively managed. This session will focus on stressors that affect one's well-being and professional life. Participants will also learn to implement preventive measures and coping strategies. However, failure to address one's social and emotional learning can lead to stress as can a host of other factors. Whether you are an adult, adolescent or young child, you learn from every experience both socially and academically. In this session, we will explore the social and emotional aspects of those occurrences and the lessons we can learn from them.

## **QUESTIONS PACKAGE**

This session is a series of three modules that can be done consecutively or independently.

### 1. USING QUESTIONS TO TEACH AND LEARN

Teach students how to examine the surface and deep structure of questions as well as the process of formulating meaningful questions.

### 2. QUESTIONS: A SECOND LOOK

Participants examine how questions can be used to assess understanding.

### 3. QUESTIONS BEYOND BLOOM

Participants examine three models used to design questions that highlight the purpose of questioning, and equip participants to use research to structure questions more effectively.

### RETHINKING PUNISHMENT

It is important to identify behavior that impedes learning and apply interventions that promote positive student attitudes to learning and the acquisition of social skills.

Through hands-on and reflective activities, participants will learn how to identify the root cause of behavior whether in person or online, by determining the questions they should ask in order to implement an appropriate intervention.

### SETTING MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of every unit, students should be able to demonstrate measurable distinct skills and knowledge. The accuracy of assessing student understanding of content begins with crafting objectives or outcomes that are measurable. Learn how to write measurable objectives using a rubric, and consider ways of assessing student mastery.



## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING: WHERE, HOW AND WHEN?**

Research is clear: The social and emotional context of learning matters, but is it relegated only to a classroom setting or can it be applied to a virtual setting? In this module, examine the differences, if any, in how to support students' social and emotional learning, as well as their academic development, and the strategies and tools that support that learning environment.

### **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Data show that engaging your students in the classroom is an area greatly in need of improvement. In this session, discover structures and resources that foster student engagement and support learning.

### **STUDENTS, ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING**

Today's students are regularly using advanced technology as they tap into their natural inclination to access information, communicate and create. Many of these advanced technology tools and platforms are appearing in classrooms regularly. The use of advanced technology as an instructional tool is no longer a new phenomenon, and many educators have already found success through careful planning and preparation. Participants in this



module will build their repertoire of ed tech instructional frameworks and strategies to ensure that they use technology most effectively, as tools toward students achieving their learning goals.

### **STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGES**

In education, currency is a medium of exchange, and any behavior students use to acquire knowledge and skills functions as currency. However, students who are “wired” differently or face traumatic experiences may not possess this currency. This session demonstrates how to meet students where they are to ensure success.

### **TEACH THEM TO THINK**

There seems to be little time to teach the “soft skills” that standards and curriculums have always demanded. But students need these skills, atti-

tudes and dispositions particularly for 21st-century success in learning and living. In this session, we will show educators how to make decision-making, problem-solving and assessing the reliability of a source more explicit during instruction.

### **TOOLS FOR TEACHERS FROM BRAIN RESEARCHERS**

Join this interactive session for tips from research that you can use as you plan your next classroom lesson. This session will focus on the brain's essential workings related to class work, strategies for designing a lesson so that students can recall tomorrow what you taught today, in a way that results in professional satisfaction.

### **THE TRIO: INQUIRY-BASED, PROBLEM-BASED AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

Many researchers are requesting that the education process moves away from compliance and more into stimulating student creativity and curiosity as a way to facilitate the transference of knowledge. This module examines the three approaches to learning, and participants develop a sample lesson for each type.

## Let's Bundle!

Whether for a week, on consecutive days or throughout the school year, you can bundle SSS modules. Here are a few ideas:

### A Close Look at Lesson Design

- Curriculum Matters
- The Game Factor
- Setting Measurable Objectives
- Tools for Teachers from Brain Researchers

### Social Context Matters

- Beyond Classroom Management
- Engaging with Families as Educational Partners
- Rethinking Punishment
- Social and Emotional Learning: Where, How and When?

### The Reflective Practitioner

- Assessing Teaching and Learning
- Is My Teaching Effective?
- Navigating the Bridge Between Stress and Social and Emotional Learning

### Motivating Students to Learn

- Activating Learning in All Disciplines
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
- The Game Factor

### Teaching and Learning 3.0

- Grading in a Standards-Based Environment
- Students, Advanced Technology and Learning
- Student Engagement
- Teach Them to Think
- The Trio: Inquiry-Based; Problem-Based and Project-Based Learning

### Strategies Matter

- Differentiating Instruction
- Engaging Students' Long-Term Memory
- The Game Factor

## Other SSS Modules

We are regularly adding new SSS modules. For a complete list of all offerings including our newest additions, please contact Sarah Elwell at [selwell@aft.org](mailto:selwell@aft.org)





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