

Birmingham AFT Strategies for Student Success

Welcome to the Birmingham AFT's Strategies for Student Success. This research-based program consists of modules that address teaching and learning for both new and veteran teachers. These modules are designed to be delivered in three hours, which create a manageable method of connecting with educators. The goals of this program are to offer high-quality professional learning and strengthen institutions for teaching and learning.

Student Success Strategies Module Descriptions

Activating Learning in All Disciplines

Can students learn core concepts from any subject yet practice listening, recalling, retelling, time sequencing, the critical thinking skills as well as learn how to take notes and make presentations in very engaging lessons? The answer is “yes.” Find out how in this session.

Beyond Classroom Management

Beyond Classroom Management invites educators to look beyond rules and procedures to maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning.

Coherent, Cohesive Teaching and Learning

Nothing can match the excitement of lessons that succeed—those times when our students light up with the recognition that comes from learning something new. Research tells us that we can make this happen more often when we create lessons that are coherent and cohesive in their structure, process and delivery. Examine the research and learn how to apply the research and learn how to apply the research findings to create lessons aligned with standards, curriculum and units. This experience will enhance your own practice and provide greater rewards for you and your students alike.

Constructing Effective Classroom Assessments

This session will help participants answer the question: “What should we consider when creating and administering classroom assessments?” Participants will discuss the differences and appropriate uses of two types of classroom assessments (*formative* and *summative*) and two main types of test items (*selected response* and *constructed response*) that make up the assessments.

Cooperative Learning Groups

Although many teachers have had some exposure to the concept of cooperative learning groups, several misconceptions exist about these groups work and how to make them efficient. This module will present the “how” of cooperative learning.

Customer Service

Rate your school or institution's level of customer service using “*The Rater Principle*” and then put plans in place to improve or sustain the level of customer service that keeps customers loyal.

Differentiating Instruction

Most contemporary classrooms serve students who learn at different rates, come to school with different experiences, have different levels of motivation toward their schoolwork, represent different language groups and learn in different ways. Yet, instruction in many classrooms overlooks these differences and treats students as though they were all alike. This session is designed to raise awareness of research that supports differentiation and to examine the basic elements of two differentiation models.

Essential Structures for Academic Learning

The mind cannot reach the stars without the heart as a partner. Decades of research studies bear out the fact that students learn social as well as academic lessons in the classroom, and the most effective teachers teach both. This interactive session examines:

- What effective teachers do to address the three basic needs of every student in the classroom;
- How caring is linked to academic; and
- What concrete, research-based ways can be used to structure the social context of the classroom to help all students reach both their social and academic potential.

Engaging Students' Long-Term Memory

Listening is an important component of learning, but the best learning takes place when students engage in activities that foster thinking about and interacting with the content. When students are asked to think and even create by applying the content they have learned, they will retain the new information for a longer time.

The Game Factor

Would you consider using games as an instructional tool? Research says, "Yes!" Fun is in store for teachers and, in turn, their 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.

Handling Stress

Stress is inevitable in today's schools and classrooms with so many challenges to address including our own desire to be the best we can be for the sake of our students. Take a look at research findings in this module and discover ways of handling stress more successfully as well as practice strategies you can use to turn challenges into opportunities.

Homework: Let's Get It Right

How much homework is appropriate? What form of homework is the most effective? What types of homework provide the best structure to engage parents interactively? This session will strengthen participants' decision-making abilities with regard to homework as well as address the need to rethink homework practices.

Is MY Teaching Effective?

You taught it, but your students didn't seem to get it; they're turning out, maybe even dropping out. You're looking for something more powerful to engage them, but what is it? This module explores high-quality research and shows you how to create effective learning conditions in your classroom, and add powerful tools to your repertoire of instructional strategies.

LINCS: A Learner Strategy

This is an efficient and effective way to support student learning of new concepts and vocabulary at all levels. Participants learn a research-based memory-enhancement technique that requires students to transform information, or elaborate on it, in a variety of ways including: creating visual images, using mnemonic devices, and relating new information to prior knowledge.

Making Parents and Guardians Partners in Educating Students

We need to communicate with our students' parents and guardians, but how we do it successfully? How do we develop a partnership that works to help our students reach their highest potential? Research can provide us with answers. This session examines what the research has to say about how and when to talk most effectively with parents or guardians, the kind of school climate that fosters a positive learning and working environment, and what teachers can do to help parents discover their most effective supporting role at home.

Rethinking Punishment

Participants will learn two types of interventions and the steps required prior to designing intervention strategies for students. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Explore the kinds of questions they should ask;
- Learn how to determine if the strategy required should include both types of interventions; and
- Use the research-based interventions in hands-on activities that reflect their own experiences.

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 that are measurable. Learn how to write effective objectives using a rubric, and consider ways of measuring student understanding.

Social Media, Students and Learning

Is social media a learning tool or one that students should be discouraged to use? Are restricting school policies the best way to handle this epidemic that has engulf this generation? This session will explore the educational benefits of social media, the cautions and what it means for education and the world.

Success Begins With You

No matter what your stage in life – a student or member of the workforce – your personality, work ethics, study habits and how you deal with life's challenges all contribute to your success

as an individual. In this session, you will learn habits and behaviors that support success in life, in school and on the job.

Supporting English Language Learners

The research is clear: Every student can learn through the use of effective pedagogy and instructional strategies. In this session, participants will become proficient at five standards for effective teaching that work for all students, especially English language learners.

Using Questions to Teach and Learn

One stated goal of schools is to promote critical thinking. Usually, teachers use questioning as the means of attaining this goal. Questions may or may not promote critical thinking- depending on the approach to questioning in the classroom. This session will frame the use of questions to improve students' critical thinking skills.

What Effective Schools Do When Students Don't Succeed: The Power of Collaborations

Research shows that professional learning communities (PLC) are good for students and teachers alike, but how can you and your colleagues make a PLC work effectively to improve both classroom instruction and your school – in other words, to “make the impossible possible”? This module will examine ways of forming PLCs; developing collaborative and decision-making skills; and using a proven process for researching, planning and implementing plans that get results.

Words Can Nurture or Hurt: Are You a Feedback Friend or Foe?

Teachers give continuous feedback to students; unfortunately, sometimes what a teacher says can do a student more harm than good. Very often, adults (teachers and parents) say things they mean to be nurturing, but sometimes even well-intentioned remarks or advice can destroy rather than uplift. In an energized setting, using theatrical and discussion skills and examining everyday scenarios, discover how positive words sometimes can have a negative impact – and you will walk away thinking twice about what you say and how you say it.

Use Strategies for Students Success to Engage New and Current Members

The Strategies for Students Success modules can be offered to all educators (from bus drivers to top administrative educators). The topics are varied enough to address some aspect of every aspect of every educator's work. Engaging in the delivery of professional development sessions helped both current and potential members understand the AFT's focus on helping teachers improve their practice and raise student achievements. These modules can be disseminated in merged states, right-to-work states and charter schools. Likewise, all who work with children are invited.

To learn more about building a cadre of Strategies for Students Success trainers in your affiliate or to find out about training opportunities, contact:

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