

Teaching For Success

Volume 17, Number 2

The Curriculum of Success: Part 1

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ALL NEW



TFS Critical
Success Factors
of Good Teaching:

- Leadership
- Management
- Instructional Design
- Communications
- Evaluation

TFS PIE-R³
Instructional
Model:

- Prepare
- Input
- Explore
- Retain
- Reconfirm
- Reflect

Building a Curriculum of Success: Introduction to the Foundations

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Success is misunderstood. It's a life track, a way of living and working, and a lifelong project. Success is not winning the lottery; it's not a single destination or even a series of spectacular career achievements. Success and happiness are often conjoined in the balanced life. Robust health, positive relationships, spiritual understanding, meaningful work, and financial abundance are all manifestations of one's mastery of success principles.

Teaching For Success is about enhancing the lifelong, meaningful learning and work portion of the success schema and discovering your uniqueness: your special strengths, insights, capabilities, talents, and gifts, and putting those attributes to some good use. It's about building a legacy to give to humanity, the earth, and beyond.

Whether the success you seek is one great achievement, the benefits of financial security, strong personal influence and power, or an internal sense of equanimity and wisdom, knowing the foundations, applying strategies, and using the tools of success can improve the odds that any or all these will happen.

Professional success is also complex. Becoming professionally competent requires hard work, dedication, lengthy study and much trial and error. However, there is no need to go it alone. With the help of experts who have simplified, organized, and codified this huge body of knowledge into an understandable structure, the road to success is much easier.

To help you succeed in your journey, I've created a "Curriculum of Success," composed of three courses:

- ❑ Success 101: Principles and Foundations
- ❑ Success 102: Strategies and Applications
- ❑ Success 103: Tools and Rules.

This curriculum is an outgrowth of 16 years of higher education teaching coupled with another 16 years of writing, studying, and publishing success materials for faculty. I've experimented with success ideas in the classroom and in my business and personal life.

I've learned that everything can be done better. There is no limit to improvement. Achieving aims is not an accident: if you learn and apply success principles and tools, you will greatly improve the likelihood of enjoying the outcomes you want. And gaining more control over your life definitely increases satisfaction.

To enjoy the fruits of a professional success, you will need to commit to a three-step process:

- ❑ Know and understand the laws of success.
- ❑ Select and apply a strategy relevant to your goals and operational context.
- ❑ Select the best tools to solve specific problems, difficulties, and challenges.

Even though your situation is unique, there is a set of laws and principles that apply to everyone; this body of knowledge has been passed on to us from many practitioners of success from early civilizations to the modern moment. These laws and principles

Achieving aims is not an accident: if you learn and apply success principles and tools, you will greatly improve the likelihood of enjoying the outcomes you want.

have stood the test of time; therefore, they are of great value and well worth learning.

However, even when you possess complete factual knowledge of success laws and principles, you need to know how to develop strategies that apply these principles in the proper way; this is the subject of the second course.

Finally, like any good craftsman, you need a good selection of the right tools for the job. Fortunately, a selection of practical action-step tools now exists for use in very specific situations—in the third course.

By reading *Teaching For Success* and other success resources, you can become schooled in the success curriculum and will be far more prepared personally and professionally to meet and transform disappointments, threats, shortcomings, and challenges into growth and learning experiences. Thus transformed, these setbacks and struggles reveal the way to the next vantage point of wisdom, appreciation, understanding, greater teaching competence, and improved life satisfaction.

In this issue and the following March and April issues, I will explore in depth the specifics of the three courses. My goal is to clarify the specific contents of these courses so you can more easily apply this knowledge to your life and teaching situation.

Also, I hope you will place at least some of this special curriculum into your own courses for the benefit of your students. I also hope that this TFS series of articles will motivate you to teach your students the specific success skills, knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes they will need as they progress in their academic careers.

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Building a Curriculum of Success: Introduction to the Foundations

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The First Course: Success 101—Foundations

This course begins with a look at some of the human factors and universal laws that play a role in success and form the foundations for further study.

The starting point for this exploration is at the emotional level: strong emotions such as hope, caring, enthusiasm, desire, passion, and even disgust, anger, and impatience play a role in fueling a decision to start on and complete a success journey.

Of course, depending solely on emotion—which can be erratic, temporary, fickle, and changeable—does not provide one with the long-term focus and direction needed to achieve success. Therefore, the power of rational thought and will must be combined with emotion. Success experts argue that with practice, thoughts can be controlled and directed to accomplish your aims. The idea that thoughts can be observed and then let go or accepted as the mind wishes is an Asian concept that is finding acceptance in the West. Unbidden thoughts can be bypassed and desired thoughts can be strengthened through reinforcement to create long-term success.

Right Thinking

In addition to strong emotions, humans have the ability to apply logical, focused thinking to any challenge, problem, or desire. This foundations course examines the basic principles upon which success operates—the first one of which is right thinking. The concept of right thinking is premised on the idea that success is an interior event before it is an exterior event. This concept was made famous by Napoleon Hill in his classic success handbook, *Think and Grow Rich*,

first published in 1937. Hill devotes an entire chapter of the book to his theory that “thoughts are things.” In the same vein, even success in physical activities such as golf begins with the correct thought and mental image, according to Dave Mancour, Lake Tahoe’s top professional golf instructor. After 40 years of teaching golf, he maintains that a good golf swing is an outgrowth of the proper “swing thought.” He teaches golf as an inside-out process, and this concept can be applied to every other field, including teaching.

Universal Laws

Next, this course investigates the context for success—namely, the natural world. Over the ages a set of universal laws have been described by philosophers, religious leaders, politicians, economists, business leaders, and teachers that makes success a predictable enterprise. These laws describe an ordered universe in the area of human interactions as well as in the physical world.

Cause and Effect

For example, consider the Aristotelian Principle of Causality, or the law of cause and effect. Sowing leads to reaping; it’s not getting then giving, but the other way around; the law of cause and effect is unidirectional.

This causality principle branches into several related principles. One of these is the belief principle, which holds that belief coupled with strong emotion creates the thinker’s reality. There is truth here worth considering: Having an emotionally supported dream and a robust belief in yourself and greater powers is essential to creating what you seek in your own life and career.



This foundations course also examines the basic principles upon which success operates. Success begins with right thinking or put another way it’s an interior event before it’s an exterior event.

Accomplishment and Association

Another principle, the law of accomplishment, states that if someone else has done something, it’s likely that you can too. Learn what a person whom you admire has done and do the same things yourself, and your chances of a similar accomplishment are increased.

Of course, success is not about living a copycat existence; it means that others who have gone before you in a similar area have valuable information to share. Therefore, study of how a person accomplished his or her success goals is a logical place to start one’s own inquiry into the foundations of success.

Studying what other successful people do also ties in with the law of association. Successful, innovative, creative, positive people tend to associate with each other. Like attracts like in the universe of success.

Responsibility

Whatever happens to you on your success journey, you are the one responsible for making the choices and living with the results. There are no passengers on the success highway. The law of responsibility reminds us that we are responsible for our actions—“If it’s going to be, it’s up to me,” as Robert Schuller used to sermonize.

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Teaching Science: Learning by Serving

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I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain.

—Mahatma Gandhi, 1933

...ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.

—John F. Kennedy, 1961

Real change in our culture comes from the bottom up, not the top down. It gathers the momentum of a million committed hearts.

—George W. Bush, 2000

So, what do these three quotes have to do with effective college science teaching? First, Gandhi's quote summarizes the need to apply active teaching. Active teaching means getting students involved in their learning.

Strategies such as group projects and case study analyses get students thinking about how to use the facts they are learning in class. The educational literature is replete with cogent and convincing studies about the effectiveness of active learning for content retention and understanding. This is just as true for adults as it is for young children. College students show a higher degree of understanding and more preparedness in their careers when taught using active learning.

The next two quotes may seem unrelated to college science teaching. On the contrary, however, the type of volunteerism promoted by Kennedy and



Dr. Brian R. Shmaefsky
leading a class.

This type of learning gives students ownership of the content; they are free to evaluate and use the information to resolve prescribed social issues or remediate open-ended problems. Again, there is a wealth of literature supporting service-learning for effectively teaching content.

So, what does service-learning look like in the classroom? It uses student volunteer efforts to address societal needs using course content. For example, students in general biology courses can take part in volunteer water monitoring activities. Texas Water Watch is a program that collects water-quality data using volunteer monitors. The information is then placed in a real-time database that then goes to the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, DC. Volunteers get to see the information they collected used to make policy decisions about water quality. Nursing students enrolled in anatomy and physiology courses can donate their knowledge and time teaching elementary school students about personal hygiene or healthy eating. Computer science students can lend their skills to nonprofit agencies needing technical help that they normally could not afford as part of their operating expenses.

Applying Service-Learning

In all honesty, it is not that simple to initiate service-learning in the classroom for the first time. However, it does become simpler as it is done more and more. Plus, the rewards of using service-learning to teach

Bush are valuable science teaching tools. The use of volunteer activities to teach course content is called service-learning. Service-learning belongs to a body of pedagogy called experiential

college students fuels its continued use as part of the curriculum. Few faculty regret using service-learning, in spite of the organization needed to get it going for each class. Faculty wishing to engage service-learning should follow a series of steps to properly implement it:

- ☐ Identify content information in the course that can be used in the community.
- ☐ Make community contacts with people or agencies needing services related to the content.
- ☐ Produce a contract detailing the types of duties students should perform and the amount of time and effort put into the volunteer activities.
- ☐ Come up with a plan for assessing student achievement.
- ☐ Create a measure for assessing success of the service-learning experiences for that course.

These steps do not have to be done in isolation; most colleges have resources for obtaining community contacts. College presidents and PR officials regularly work with area chambers of commerce and school districts having volunteer opportunities. Agencies such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Red Cross, and United Way have many projects needing specialized volunteers. Local churches and civic groups also have a wealth of volunteer assistance contacts. Plus, a wealth of service-learning ideas for the sciences are available in the references and websites provided with this article.

The next set of criteria provided below take into account student learning outcomes needed for successful experiential learning in the service-learning activities. Each project must have these elements to make the content an integral part of the volunteer experience:

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Authentic Learning Tips

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Students who take distance-learning courses need to experience the world around them even more than classroom students. Keeping them too busy browsing Web sites and viewing your PowerPoint slides can be a teaching mistake. It's a better strategy to connect information to the real world and stimulate students to make learning authentic and personal. Planning world-connecting assignments transforms learning into a vital and personal experience.

For example, are you teaching a lesson on the effects of poverty? Ask them to go to a grocery store with only a \$15.00 budget and create a shopping list and a menu to feed an adult and a six-year-old child for a week. Such an experience can be quite eye-opening, and it makes learning more authentic. Considering teaching a lesson on the media and gender roles? Assign students an analysis of a TV show or movie that portrays couple interactions. They should record and compare the roles played by males and females.

A colleague, Barry Haigh, has a suggestion for studying microeconomics and looking at price, quality, and personal preference issues: students should go to three stores and select an item they would wear, note the price, and rate the construction and design qualities and fashion appeal. Such a trip may enrich the discussion of price and quality far above what is provided by a quick Web search. These are but a few examples of what you can do to stir your Web-bound students into becoming more immersed in real-world learning.



Learning by Serving

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- ❑ Define the concepts being covered or terms needed to carry out the service-learning tasks.
- ❑ Ensure the content is mastered to a degree that will assure success before students volunteer in the activity.
- ❑ Provide an initial session in which students form teams to identify the needs being satisfied by the volunteer activity.
- ❑ Have the students in a team identify and prioritize the facts and concepts they need to know to take part in the volunteer activity.
- ❑ Let the students form work groups to seek out any other resources needed to carry out the volunteer activity.
- ❑ Encourage the students to have question-and-answer time to clarify any confusion about their roles in the volunteer activity.
- ❑ Have the students come up with a plan to organize the duties required to fulfill the needs being addressed in the service-learning activity.
- ❑ Provide the students with guidance for assessing the work that they did.
- ❑ Give the students time to reflect about their feelings as they were planning and carrying out the service-learning project.

Service-learning teaching strategies should be handled like any classroom instructional activity: They should be goal oriented and have defined tasks that can be assessed with a fair degree of objectivity.

Benefits

Service-learning is just one tool for improving instruction in college science education. It can be done on a small scale using short-term projects that reinforce a few simple concepts. The service-learning experience can also be structured into a semester-long project that grows with the progression of the content being covered in class. Service-learning is a proven way of reinforcing content and improving concept retention. Plus, it is a wonderful way to produce civic-minded students who will be using the information they gained in college to improve society. Very few students or faculty regret their service-learning experiences. Service-learning builds students into responsible citizens.

Service-Learning Web Resources

American Association of Community Colleges: http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ResourceCenter/Projects_Partnerships/Current/HorizonsServiceLearningProject/HorizonsServiceLearningProject.htm

Campus Compact: <http://www.compact.org/>

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health: <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/servicelearningres.html>

Corporation for National and Community Service: <http://www.cns.gov/> <http://www.cns.gov/>

Learn and Serve America: <http://www.learnandserve.org/>

National Society for Experiential Learning: <http://www.nsee.org/>

Readings in Active and Experiential Learning

For a list of readings in active and experiential learning, click on the above title to download this list in .pdf format. Or enter this URL into your browser: http://teachingforsuccess.com/IssueSupport2/Feb05_SrvLrnRead.pdf



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A Capital Idea: Instructor-Counselor- Administrator Collaboration

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If you give a hungry person a fish, you feed him for a day. If you give a hungry person a fishing pole and teach him to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.

This is the paradigm of Capital Ideas (CI), a nonprofit program that is a collaboration of Austin Community College, a local interfaith organization, and the local government. My part in the CI complex is to prepare adult students for the state college entrance exam and the college level math courses they will have to take to fulfill their degree requirements.

The students I teach have weak math backgrounds and usually haven't been in school for quite a long time. Most of them also have families, along with all their accompanying joys and problems. These hardships could make teaching a difficult and frustrating experience; yet, I wake up every morning eager to get to school and start my three-hour, four-day-a-week CI class. The reason is that the students are serious, want to learn, and are glad they've been accepted into the program.

The CI class has 12 contact hours per week, compared to 4 hours for an equivalent course I teach in the afternoon at the college. The material I cover in both classes is similar. The big difference is that I spend a lot more time reviewing and reinforcing concepts in the CI course. Also, because of the time we spend together, I find there is a better student-teacher

relationship. However, it's not as much these things as the way CI supports its students that makes the big difference. Both Tracy, the CI counselor, and Pat, the college liaison, are on call for student needs. These two people also run weekly V.I.P. meetings for the students, in which everything from career opportunities and study skills to general gripes are discussed.

Finally, at least once a week Pat or Tracy drop in on my class. They keep me informed about student problems and find out if there are any student or teacher concerns.

For example, a student having problems with an abusive spouse, a change of welfare status, or trouble with a child will raise her hand, and Tracy, after asking my permission, will take the student out of class and have a private meeting in my office. They also check with me about any academic problems students might be having. Now, once a month, Tracy and Pat get together with faculty for a staff meeting to discuss everything from students to vacation.


This collaboration between teacher, student, counselor, and administrator/liaison helps students help themselves. I think it's the reason CI has both a low dropout and a high graduation rate. It's also the reason that this semester I'm going to bring these "capital ideas" over to my college classes.

Up until now, here's the way it's been: Every

semester that I've taught a college class I received a letter from counseling services asking if I want them to come into class and answer student questions. I deposit this letter into the garbage can. "How can I take time away from the important and demanding syllabus to deal with non-mathematical problems?" I wonder.

This semester things are going to change. The first week contains time for counseling services to explain what they do. It also provides me access to a counselor so that when a student is in danger of failing, all three of us can work together to ensure success.

CI's paradigm of teaching, counseling, and student support has reminded me that I'm teaching people, not mathematics. I can help students solve equations, but I can also help provide resources so they can solve their own problems.

I guess sometimes you can teach an old dog a new trick. Capital Ideas sure taught me. 

Super Idea Contest: Win a \$300 Prize

Win a cash award; enjoy the recognition of being published; grow your career, and contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning in higher education. Contest entries must reach TFS by May 31, 2005, to be considered.

Your teaching improvement idea could win you a cash award in the 2005 TFS Super Ideas Contest. In the SuperIdea category, First Place wins \$300, Second Place \$200, and Third Place \$100. In the QuickTip category, First Place nets \$100, Second Place \$50 and Third Place \$25. There are two contest idea categories: SuperIdeas and QuickTips.

Be sure to go to: <http://teachingforsuccess.com/Contests2/ContestInfo.html> for the contest rules and more information.



Oh! This is way too easy!



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Create A Low-Cost Audio Infomercial to Pull Them in Like A Magnet

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Marketing and advertising can be an unusually expensive proposition for any institution of higher education: Radio, television, and newspaper advertising are anything but cheap. Therefore, an institution is often forced to take out ads that pitch the campus as a whole or focus on one or two programs. Because of this, many excellent programs do not get the exposure they deserve. Even when a program is highlighted in a paid ad, a few paragraphs or a thirty-second radio spot is hardly enough to do the program justice! A student might glance at the program in the course catalog for a nanosecond and never give that particular program a second thought.

Nevertheless, any program can create a simple, low-cost audio-cassette or CD—an infomercial, if you will—that can entice students to try out your specific program.

Let's face it: The current generation of college students has been exposed to more audio and video information than any generation in history; this innovative strategy capitalizes on this trend.

Creating an audio infomercial (which is easier to create than a video program) is an exciting and rather simple procedure. First, the head of the program contacts a handful of students who have successfully graduated. Needless to say, the program director is

looking for enthusiastic students who will most likely praise the school and the program.

Since an array of students will listen to the program, it is best if the program features a diverse student population. Hence, the program could include a very young student just out of high school, a senior citizen who has been out of school for an extended period of time, and still another who was only able to take one or two courses at a time because of work and family obligations. The student should emphasize any current accomplishments, such as working on an advanced degree or perhaps working in a desirable job. The purpose of diversity is merely to increase the likelihood that the student listening to the program will mentally bond with at least one individual pitching the program on the tape or CD. Remember to secure written permission from students prior to making the recording.

The audio program itself is not difficult to create and can be recorded with or without the assistance of the college's media services department. The program director begins with a few words about the program and emphasizes that these are real students and not actors. Next the students either tell their stories or they can be interviewed. The idea is not to make the program a slick Madison Avenue production. Instead, it should sound believable. Students who tell human-interest stories and exude honest emotion help keep the listener's attention.


Another way to keep the cost as low as possible is to tell students that you need the tapes or CDs returned when they are finished listening to them (though a small percentage still will not do so).



The purpose of diversity is merely to increase the likelihood that the student listening to the program will mentally bond with at least one individual pitching the program on the tape or CD.

Once the audio program is complete, there are several effective methods of disseminating copies:

- ❑ A number of CDs or tapes can be given to the counselors and advisors to help them sell your program. The potential student is given a copy of the infomercial to listen to after the formal advising session ends.
- ❑ The tapes and CDs are perfect to send in the mail when a potential student calls and asks for program information. I know from experience that some students who will barely scan the written materials will listen to the audio program.
- ❑ The program is the ideal marketing device for ambivalent students or curiosity seekers in your intro courses who say, "I'm not certain I want to major in this field, I just took the course to see what it would be like."

The next time you spy a student clad in earphones, he or she might just be rocking to the sound of your program infomercial. 

Editor's Note: This idea is perfectly adaptable to managing a class too—a panel of your students could create an audio CD explaining how to succeed in your class or learn the most difficult topic.

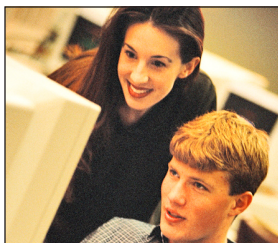


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The Power of Goal Specificity

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How important is it for your students to know the goals at the start of a class lesson? The answer is: very important. But how do you ensure that learning goals are clearly communicated? Follow this simple routine, and you will be amazed at how easy it is.

Here is my technique for clarifying class goals: List the following topics on the board or project them onto a screen at the beginning of class, or more preferably before students arrive or begin on an online lesson.

The following is an example of how this procedure can be optimized. For the example, I will use this technique itself as it were today's lesson. You would list for your students the following headers (shown in bold type) and write the details following each header.

Main Goal(s): To demonstrate a system for adequately and clearly informing students as to the pertinent class topic(s) for today.

Key Question(s): How does formally stating goals in the suggested pattern enhance learning?

Personal Application: When you publicly state your intentions, research indicates that you are much more likely to follow your goals through to completion. So why not ask students to list their learning goals for each class session, chapter, or course section and for the entire course?

They should evaluate each goal at the proper time and check off its attainment. This technique becomes even more powerful when the students share their goals with their learning-group partners and instructor.

Next Class: Practice formatting, increasing precise goals, questions, applications for each class during the next two weeks and survey student responses.

For closure, at the conclusion of the class, ask your students verbally or anonymously on a response card if the stated goals have been accomplished.

Try the Power Goal technique for several weeks and see what a difference it can make in ensuring that planned learning outcomes are met. ✨

Building a Curriculum of Success:

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Self-knowledge and Respect

The law of self-knowledge urges us to take ourselves seriously. Success requires an honest and detailed inventory of one's weakness, talents, abilities, and interests. As William James wrote, "Seek out that particular mental attribute which makes you feel most deeply and vitally alive, along with which comes the inner voice which says, 'This is the real me.'" This success law requires one to follow a path consistent with the authentic self.

Tenacity

Louis Pasteur is credited with saying, "Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal: my strength lies solely in my tenacity." The law of tenacity and persistence practically makes one unstoppable, if the many historical quotes and bibliographic references are to be believed.

Clarity

The final law, that of clarity, is vitally important: "Clarity accounts for probably 80 percent of success and happiness. Lack of clarity is probably more responsible for frustration and underachievement than any other single factor," says Brian Tracy in *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success*.

This portion of the TFS Success Curriculum has briefly highlighted the most important foundational laws; however, a complete discussion of this large body of knowledge would take many volumes.

Remember the basics: right actions produce right results; success is not accidental, it's planned; if others have accomplished something you want, it's very likely you can do it too; you are responsible for the outcomes you create; associate with positive, innovative people; respect your uniqueness—you are a special interest; and persistence is unstoppable, especially when coupled with clarity of direction and sharp focus on a specific goal.

In the March issue, you will find practical applications through the use of unique strategies based on these and other success laws explained in the second success course: Success 102: Strategies and Applications. ✨

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