

# The Student Success Curriculum

## Introduction to the Curriculum

The *Student Success Guide* was developed to provide support to students beginning massage school. Schools know that new massage students often start classes filled with enthusiasm and the energy to succeed. Those with good study habits are able to maintain their motivation even when classes are challenging. But many capable adult students experience frustration, and even failure, in school. This is not because they lack ability, but because they do not have adequate study skills. The *Student Success Guide* uses goal-setting exercises, charts, graphic organizers, and personal assessments to help students learn the skills they need to achieve their academic goals.

The Student Success Curriculum is available for schools' use with the *Student Success Guide* to make this material easy to bring into a classroom. The curriculum is designed to provide everything the school needs to use the *Student Success Guide* in a variety of settings (see details in the next section). Each topic is set up as a stand-alone teaching kit so that topics can be mixed and matched to best fit the needs of each school. Each teaching kit includes:

- **Introduction:** A brief introduction to set the stage for the topic and clarify the goals of the lesson.
- **Time Frames:** This section helps instructors determine how long it will take to teach the material in a particular topic. It also provides suggestions for ways to combine multiple topics within a single class session.
- **Strategies:** This section outlines the types of learning strategies that are used in the lesson.
- **Instructor Preparation:** This section gives direction to instructors for the most efficient way to prepare to teach the topic.
- **Resources:** This section provides a list of additional resources the instructor might read to support an understanding of the topic. These resources might also be offered to students who want more information.
- **Supplies and Equipment:** a comprehensive list of the supplies and equipment needed to teach each topic is provided.
- **Learning Objectives:** Learning objectives are provided to describe the basic skills a student should acquire during the class session.
- **Activities:** In most topics, one or two activities are provided to ensure the class stays interactive and interesting.
- **Self-Assessments:** Directions are given to help instructors incorporate the worksheets included in the *Student Success Guide*

with the day's lesson. These worksheets are an important part of helping students develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

- **Lecture Outline:** The lecture outline provides a written plan of the PowerPoint presentation. The information provided in the PowerPoint presentation and lecture outline follows the *Student Success Guide* to ensure curriculum continuity. Instructors prepare by reviewing the written outline side by side with the PowerPoint slides and reading the associated materials in the *Student Success Guide*.
- **PowerPoint Presentation:** PowerPoint slides are prepared for each lecture to ensure that lectures remain visually stimulating. The PowerPoint slides can be shown with an LCD projector and laptop or printed onto transparencies for overheads.
- **Tips:** Throughout the teaching kit, tips provide ideas for ways instructors can follow up with students to ensure they are using their new success skills. Tips also offer fun ways to integrate the material with other classroom activities.
- **Homework:** When appropriate, a homework assignment is included in the teaching kit, and should be used at the discretion of the instructor.
- **Milestones Checklist:** Milestones indicate when a student lives or owns the material. The Milestones Checklists are not used during the class in which the topic is taught. They should be used two weeks or one month later, when students have had time to incorporate their new understanding. Students can see if they now own and live the material or if they learned it but didn't implement it. Each checklist can be used just once or used multiple times to

check on progress as determined by the instructor. The student may also use the milestones checklists as a self-assessment.

## **Why and How to Use the Student Success Curriculum**

Educators know that students often begin a massage program completely unprepared for the academic nature of massage training. Students come to massage school with education gaps from high school or from a prolonged absence from an educational environment. Some students do not have the life skills they need to be successful and their interactions with their classmates and instructors are less than optimal. By providing this information at the beginning of a program or throughout a program, schools help students prepare for massage school and achieve success in their studies.

This preparation also has positive benefits for the school and its instructors. Schools find that students demonstrate more persistence when they have the skills they need to be successful. This persistence results in lower attrition rates and higher overall retention. In the competitive school marketplace, retaining enrolled students is important for the financial status of the school business. This preparation also cuts down on student frustration and fears, leading to more positive and productive classrooms. Instructors who teach this curriculum tend to become more aware of classroom dynamics and learning styles. This awareness leads to faster and more appropriate instructor intervention when necessary.

There are a number of ways that schools can integrate the Student Success Curriculum into their current program.

- 1. Student Success Workshop:** Teach the Student Success Curriculum as a one-day (Saturday) or two-day (Saturday and part of Sunday) workshop for new students before the start date of the program. This material could be partnered with an “experience massage” segment where students actually get on the massage tables and learn some effleurage and petrissage strokes. Adding the massage segment ensures that students understand that they will be giving and receiving massage to and from people they don’t know very well—something that often shocks new students.
- 2. Orientation:** Well-developed orientations help students fill in academic readiness gaps, bond with peers, anticipate and prepare for challenges, and fit into the school’s culture. It’s difficult to meet these requirements with a one-day orientation. Instead, campuses are encouraged to include an orientation segment in every class the first week of school, or to hold an orientation week to smooth the students’ transition into the training program. Good orientations include an overview; social integration, study skills, and time management segments; a visioning exercise; and an introduction to the rules, regulations, and culture of the campus. The Student Success Curriculum provides these segments in an easy to use format for solid orientations.
- 3. Jump-Start Program:** Some schools are adopting “Jump Start” or “Master Student” programs for their massage schools. These programs occur the first week of the school program during students’ regularly assigned class times and are integrated with orientation. This arrangement allows time for the student to fully integrate into student

life before the “heavy lifting” courses, like Kinesiology or Anatomy and Physiology, begin.

4. **Tutoring Program:** The Student Success Curriculum brings structure and focus to a tutoring program. It’s easy to integrate topics or parts of topics into one study session or into lunchtime support classes students can attend at set points during the program year.
5. **Space throughout the Program as Part of the Main Curriculum:** In some situations it works well to space out topics and teach them directly before a new skill set is needed. For example, an instructor might cover the Exam Taking topic in the review class before the first exam. Alternately, an instructor might teach the Note Taking topic right before giving the first lecture. This way the success skills directly relate to the task at hand, adding meaning for students.

## **Overview of Topics in the Student Success Curriculum**

### **Topic 1: Transitioning**

Studies show that students in early stages of training drop out at higher rates than other student groups. When a student’s academic experiences share an affinity with his or her goals and commitments, the student is more likely to persist when things get challenging. This is why career visioning, taught in this class, is so important early in a massage training program. This class also attempts to empower students to take charge of their educational experience by helping them understand how their

attitudes, choices, and beliefs directly correlate to their successes or failures.

### **Topic 2: Goal Setting**

This topic helps students organize their time, resist distractions, and take pride in achievements. By helping students learn how to write and set goals, schools promote student motivation and self-confidence. This class also helps students understand how to use the *Massage Year Planner*, also included in ABMP student membership.

### **Topic 3: Positive Affirmations**

The things students say and think to themselves form some of the most powerful influences on their school experience, career, relationships, success, and happiness. Negative thoughts and internal dialogue feed doubts and fears. Persistent negative thinking makes it difficult for students to achieve success and reach the goals they strive for. This topic discusses the roots of negativity and explains different types of positive affirmations. The goal is to empower students to manage their own thought processes, to develop a shared class language for discussing negativity and to improve student resilience, persistence, and self-confidence

### **Topic 4: Time Management and Organization**

In massage school, students are expected to attend class and complete outside course work. Students often find they must sharpen and refine their time-management skills in order to balance school, homework, job, family, and social obligations. This class teaches students how to use the tools in the *Massage Year Planner* for better time-management. Good

time management leads to better homework completion, and better overall preparedness for quizzes, exams, and practical skill checks.

### **Topic 5: Learning Styles**

It's a good idea to teach students how to spend the least amount of time getting the most amount of information. To do this, a student must analyze the way he or she approaches learning, the study environment, and how information is gathered, processed, memorized, and understood. Careful analysis may lead the student to more efficient and effective ways of learning. When students understand their learning style, they study more efficiently and are better able to take control of their educational experience.

### **Topic 6: Memory**

To memorize information a person must interpret incoming data, store it for use in the future, and recall it when necessary. Students who understand how memory works are more likely to use study skills that help them organize and input information in a logical manner. This cuts down on overall study time, and leads to better recall of information. This session aims to teach basic information about memory and mnemonic activities that aid information recall.

### **Topic 7: Core Study Skills**

When students combine good time management with good study skills they can plan efficient and effective study sessions. The goal of this session is to teach core study skills such as note taking, textbook reading homework tracking, and grade tracking.

### **Topic 8: Motivation**

Students are motivated to go to school for a number of reasons. Some don't like their current career. Some want to provide a better life for their families. Some want to live at a certain income level or long for success in a career they find exciting. No matter the reason, motivation prompted them to start school, and further motivation will be necessary to complete school. This topic aims to teach students how to stay motivated even when course work is challenging.

### **Topic 9: Concentration**

Concentration is associated with effective learning. Everyone can concentrate some of the time, and everyone experiences problems with concentration at one point or another. The goal of this topic is to help students understand their concentration levels and to give them tools to improve concentration.

### **Topic 10: Test Taking and Exams**

Many students experience some anxiety before quizzes and exams, but with sufficient preparation and some test taking strategies, test taking will get easier and performance will improve. This topic aims to teach students the skills they need to be strong test-takers.

### **Topic 11: Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory**

The Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory has evolved into the most widely used personality test in the world. Over two million people take the inventory each year to gain insight into themselves and the people with whom they interact. When students understand their Myers-Briggs personality type, and those of their classmates, they gain new awareness of classroom dynamics and learning dynamics. This understanding leads

to increased sensitivity for others, increased self-awareness, and a better overall learning environment.

### **Topic 12: Professional Conduct and Classroom Dynamics**

When a class of students behaves according to accepted principles and shows compassion and caring for each other, a safe and productive classroom environment is fostered, and students develop the skills they need to work in the real world. This topic looks at professional conduct, and the ways students can directly impact the class for positive results. While this section occurs last in the *Student Success Guide*, it is useful information to include in new student orientation.