

Massachusetts  
Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and  
Correctional Institutions

**Handbook for  
Student Achievement in Reading  
(STAR) Implementation**



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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
**EDUCATION**

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## The STAR Vision



**The STAR (STudent Achievement in Reading)\* vision is to establish structures and practices at the classroom, program, and state levels to support evidence-based reading instruction that result in increased learner outcomes.**

### **STAR structures and practices include:**

- ★ Provide evidence-based reading instruction for intermediate level learners;
- ★ Conduct diagnostic assessments;
- ★ Group students according to instructional needs and develop a daily STAR class routine; and
- ★ Plan and deliver instruction in fluency, alphabets, vocabulary, and comprehension that is:
  - Responsive to student needs identified through diagnostic assessment;
  - Delivered through explicit instruction;
  - Based on evidence-based instructional practices; and
  - Monitored and adjusted as students' needs change.

\* This vision statement was developed by national STAR.

## Introduction

**Note:** *If you wish to print a copy of the handbook, be sure to print the additional content made available through the use of hyperlinks throughout the document.*

The [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) requires that programs provide students with the appropriate combination and level of essential components of reading instruction, based on the results of their individual diagnostic assessment and ongoing formative assessments. STAR is a nationally developed professional development reform initiative focused on building the reading skills of intermediate level adult learners (i.e., grade level equivalent or GLE 4-8) in the essential components of reading instruction: [alphabetsics](#), [fluency](#), [vocabulary](#), and [comprehension](#). At the national level, student outcome data shows that pre-Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students make measurable gains in reading achievement when teachers implement STAR's structures and practices. For a concise overview of WIOA, EBRI and STAR, see the SABES ELA document, [To the Point: WIOA, EBRI, and STAR](#).

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) of the U.S. Department of Education supports and promotes the STAR initiative because its instructional practices are grounded in peer review research. Since OCTAE began the STAR initiative over a decade ago, 21 states have adopted this evidence-based reading instruction approach. Massachusetts began training programs in 2010 and the majority of ESE-funded programs participated in the STAR trainings.

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) offers training in STAR for directors (or coordinators) and pre-ASE teachers in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions. As part of their training, participants complete thirty online modules and attend three face-to-face meetings. **STAR participants must commit to the:**

- full participation of at least one pre-ASE teacher and the program director/coordinator in all aspects of the STAR training;
- administration of diagnostic reading assessments to determine instructional priorities at the appropriate reading level;
- adjustment of program design to meet STAR requirements (e.g., some form of managed enrollment, class intensity);
- implementation of direct and explicit instruction, using the most relevant [evidence-based reading instruction](#) (EBRI) strategies as presented during the training;
- use of instruction and materials that are engaging and relevant to learners' needs;
- provision of instruction that is formatively assessed—continuously monitored by teachers and learners to gauge its effectiveness;
- participation of STAR teachers in observations by STAR TA providers (either in person or via video), and implementation of trainer feedback; and
- Classroom observation by the program director of the STAR teacher.

## Evidence-Based Reading Instruction and the College and Career Readiness Standards

Evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) refers to instructional practices that have been proven by systematic, objective, valid, and peer-reviewed research to lead to predictable gains in reading achievement. As stated by national STAR:

“With EBRI, teachers use diagnostic assessment procedures to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of each learner and target reading instruction accordingly. Teachers who use EBRI help learners improve their skills in each of the four components of reading—alphabeticity, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—by explaining new concepts, modeling strategies, and providing feedback when learners practice.”

Although STAR and EBRI pre-date the [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#) (CCRSAE), they support each other well. The national STAR initiative illustrates this connection by having readers “picture a road winding into the distance. At the end of the road are the CCRSAE, the destination or goal that students are trying to reach. At the beginning of the road is a diagnostic assessment, the starting point for the students, where they are now. A car travelling along the road is labeled EBRI, showing that evidence-based reading instruction is the vehicle that moves students from where they are to reaching the standards.”

“But how does STAR address Reading Anchor 10 (*Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently*) of the CCRSAE? Anchor 10 challenges students to read increasingly complex texts. Evidence-based reading instruction begins with diagnostic assessment to identify instructional levels, the level beyond mastery, where the text will be challenging (but not too frustrating) for the student. Once the student applies newly learned reading strategies to successfully read text at their instructional level, we move them up to practice using the strategy with text at a higher level. Diagnostic assessment and continuous monitoring allow STAR implementers to select texts that are challenging and complex for each student.”<sup>1</sup>

### Contact Information

Please contact the following staff with questions or concerns:

**Massachusetts STAR Coordinator:** Merilee Freeman [mfreeman@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:mfreeman@qcc.mass.edu) (508-854-4296)

**Massachusetts STAR Trainers:**

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- Jillian Moriarty [moriartyjillian@gmail.com](mailto:moriartyjillian@gmail.com) (508-963-1830)
- Evonne Peters [evonnepeters@comcast.net](mailto:evonnepeters@comcast.net) (781-696-1016)
- Joan Schottenfeld [jfshatz@gmail.com](mailto:jfshatz@gmail.com) (339-206-1766)

**ACLS STAR Contact:**

- Dana Varzan-Parker, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specialist, [dvarzan-parker@doe.mass.edu](mailto:dvarzan-parker@doe.mass.edu) (781-338-3811)

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<sup>1</sup> [STAR Tips and Techniques, July 2016, vol. 7](#). For more about the use of research and evidence-based practices as an indicator of quality, see Indicator Four and Standard 4.2 in the [Indicators of Program Quality, June 2017](#) document.

## Student Assessment

Three discrete assessment processes are used in STAR classrooms:

- **Initial Placement:** For placing incoming students into the intermediate level, pre-ASE STAR class (GLE 4-8). Because STAR is designed specifically for intermediate readers (GLE 4-8), accurate placement is a critical first step in determining STAR eligibility. Students who score below GLE 4 or above GLE 8.9 in all areas of the reading diagnostic assessment should not be placed in a STAR class. Attempting to provide instruction to these students compromises the delivery and outcomes of evidence-based reading instruction within the intermediate level STAR class.
- **Diagnostic Assessment:** For assessing the reading profile of each student assigned to the STAR class, to determine their profile of strengths and needs in order to provide targeted instruction.
- **Pre- and Post-testing for Educational Functioning level Gains:** For determining the Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains of STAR students. Per ACLS assessment policy, programs must annually pre- and post-test to capture students' progression through [Educational Functioning Levels](#). See the [ACLS Assessment Policies](#) for more information.

### *Diagnostic Assessment*

In STAR, ACLS requires use of diagnostic assessment results to inform instruction. Once initial placement is completed, programs administer a diagnostic assessment of reading *for each* pre-ASE student in the essential components of reading instruction<sup>2</sup>: [alphabetics](#), [fluency](#), [vocabulary](#), and [comprehension](#). The goal is to determine learners' specific strengths and instructional priorities in reading so that teachers can (1) create a learner profile for each student, (2) select appropriate materials and evidence-based reading strategies, (3) group students by similar profiles, and (4) design appropriate instruction.

During STAR training, programs will learn how to administer diagnostic assessments. Programs must use diagnostic assessments of the essential components of reading, either the [Diagnostic Assessments of Reading \(DAR\) Interpretive Profile, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#), or other diagnostic assessments (some free) recommended on the [LINCS Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles Web page](#) and [LINCS diagnostic test resources](#).

### **Beginning a Diagnostic Reading Assessment**

Test administrators need to roughly estimate the grade level at which to begin a learner's diagnostic reading assessment. The MAPT-CCR (or, for Corrections, the TABE 11/12) scale scores may be used (along with other information such as class placement information, other class work or formative assessments), to help make that determination, if available. Once a starting level is determined, the test administrator may easily adjust the difficulty of the diagnostic assessment to pinpoint the learner's reading strengths and needs. The initial grade level of the diagnostic assessment is meant to be a rough guide and does not have to be extremely precise. Test administrators will learn much more about the administration process during the STAR training.

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the teaching the essential components of reading as required in WIOA, see this [WIOA Brief](#).

## Converting MAPT-CCR Scale Scores to Grade Level Equivalents (GLEs)

| NRS EFL Levels                 | GLE Range | MAPT-CCR Scale Scores | TABE 11/12 Reading Scale Scores |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Beginning Literacy             | 0-1.9     | N/A                   | 300-441                         |
| Beginning Basic                | 2-3.9     | 200-299               | 442-500                         |
| Low Intermediate               | 4-5.9     | 300-399               | 501-535                         |
| High Intermediate              | 6-8.9     | 400-499               | 536-575                         |
| Low Adult Secondary Education  | 9-10.9    | 500-599               | 576-616                         |
| High Adult Secondary Education | 11-12.9   | 600-700               | 617-800                         |

Refer to the chart above. Suppose a learner has a MAPT-CCR scale score of 349, placing her within the Low Intermediate range on the MAPT-CCR from 300 to 399 and a GLE range from 4 to 5.9. Her diagnostic assessment should start at approximately grade 5.

Another learner has a MAPT-CCR scale score of 425, placing him in the High Intermediate range, 400-499, corresponding to a GLE range from 6-8.9. His diagnostic assessment should start at either grade 6 or 7.

Since we are making estimations, it does not make sense (and is not recommended) to determine scores down to the tenth of a GLE. A general estimate is good enough for this purpose.

### Why do we need to know Grade Level Equivalents (GLEs)?

It is often necessary to be able to translate MAPT-CCR Scale Scores in Reading into Grade Level Equivalents (GLEs) for two reasons. First, many diagnostic assessments provide results in GLEs, including the DAR and the diagnostic assessments (some free) available on the [LINCS Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles Web page](#) and [LINCS diagnostic test resources](#). Instructors need to use the results of a diagnostic assessment for each of the four essential components of reading to create a reading profile. This will be much easier to do when GLEs are used. A second reason for translating MAPT-CCR scores into GLEs concerns instruction. Teachers need to know the difficulty level (readability) of reading materials in order to make sure the materials they plan to use are at the right level of challenge for their learners – not too easy, not too difficult. Some materials come with their readability level already calculated by the publisher, and this level is usually expressed in GLEs. For materials whose readability is not known, **teachers should not guess** about their difficulty. Instead, teachers are expected calculate a text’s readability using readability formulas – most of which express readability in GLEs. [Free readability calculators](#) are available online.

Test administrators may also use estimates of reading levels derived from MAPT-CCR scores (or in the case of Corrections, TABE 11/12 scores) to determine a learner’s instructional level for reading comprehension. This may be used instead of the DAR Silent Reading Comprehension test. Test administrators may use the directions for “Converting MAPT-CCR Scale Scores to Grade Level Equivalents (GLEs)” on this page to roughly estimate each student’s reading comprehension level for instruction. Teachers may use the Comprehension Interview/Student Questionnaire to gain additional information about the student, but it is optional.

## Administering the DAR

See Appendix B for an overview of DAR administration.

**The DAR must be administered by teachers, directors, or volunteers who have participated in the STAR Institutes or SABES professional development on administering EBRI diagnostic assessments.**

The benefits of teachers administering to students the diagnostic assessments of reading in all four essential components of reading include providing opportunities to:

- establish an initial rapport with students;
- learn about students' reading preferences (i.e., high interest genres and topics); and
- design and differentiate instruction in light of observations made during the assessments.

While SABES-trained program directors or volunteers may assist with diagnostic assessment, the STAR teacher must administer the **Comprehension Interview** in Appendix C as it yields important information for guiding instruction.

Prior to beginning STAR instruction, teachers need to develop instructional priorities, group their students based on their diagnostic results, and develop a daily STAR class routine. Teachers complete student groupings before instruction begins because the daily routine and instruction for the STAR class is based on the diagnostic assessment results. Programs must administer and score diagnostic assessments of reading as instructed in the STAR training.

## *Ordering DAR Materials*

The DAR is available through Riverside Insights. To order, contact the Massachusetts representative Lauren Wallack at (317) 364-8432 or [Lauren.wallack@riversideinsights.com](mailto:Lauren.wallack@riversideinsights.com).

Alternatively, call Riverside Insights Customer Service at 1 (800) 323-9540; Fax: (630) 467-7192; Email orders at: [orders@riversideinsights.com](mailto:orders@riversideinsights.com)<<mailto:orders@riversideinsights.com>>.

## *Reviewing Student Data*

As a best practice, the program director and STAR teacher should meet at least quarterly to discuss and review data related to performance in the STAR class. Particular attention should focus on overall NRS Educational Functioning level outcomes, but also on the steps to achieving those outcomes, such as formal and informal assessments, attendance, classroom observations, class groupings, and class routines.

## Program Planning for Sustainability

### *Managed Enrollment*

**STAR classes must use some form of [managed enrollment](#)** because it is a key component of evidence-based reading instruction. When students enter the classroom in an open enrollment model, it not only disrupts the flow of learning with established groups, it requires teachers to frequently regroup students. STAR teachers and trainers have found that a leveled class where enrollment is managed provides the best environment for successful implementation of STAR.



There are a number of ways to implement managed enrollment; for additional suggestions, see [STAR-recommended Managed Enrollment Strategies and Scenarios](#). One method would be to begin by only adding new students to the class every four weeks, as needed. Try managed enrollment for a period of time and then reevaluate. Changes such as this may take some time to work and become comfortable. Alternatively, the schedule below gives another example that provides longer spans of enrollment before adding new students.

| Sample Procedure                               | Sample Dates                                    | Notes  |
|--|---|--|
| Pre-planning week for the STAR teacher         | One week in mid-August                          |  |
| Administer diagnostic assessments/Orientation  | One week prior to class start date              | Test on M, T, W – Teacher Determines Groups on Th or F |
| 12-week Class Session I                        | End of August through mid-November              |  |
| DAR Testing/Orientation                        | One week following the end of Class Session I   | Thanksgiving week – Assign students/ Regroup           |
| 12-week Class Session II                       | Last week in November through early March       | Includes Holiday breaks                                |
| Administer diagnostic assessments /Orientation | One week following the end of Class Session II  | Assign students/Regroup                                |
| 12-week Class Session III                      | Mid-March through early June                    | Includes Spring break                                  |
| Post-planning week                             | One week following the end of Class Session III |  |

For more suggestions regarding the use of managed enrollment, see the [SABES PD Center for ELA’s STAR web page](#).

### *Intensity*

Like managed enrollment, the intensity of instruction is an important variable in supporting student learning gains in the essential components of reading. Teachers need enough time to provide explicit instruction for the leveled student groups in the four reading components. The number of hours needed per week will vary depending on the number of students in the class and how varied their needs are, as well as whether or not a teacher has an instructional aide or volunteer to help with some groups. As a best practice, programs that provide less than nine hours per week of instruction for their pre-ASE class should try to devote at least 50% of class instruction on evidence-based reading instruction.

Generally, more intensity is better than less, and research indicates that shorter, more frequent lessons are more effective than one longer session (e.g., one-hour STAR classes occurring three days per week are more effective than a three-hour class once weekly). STAR classes of as much intensity as possible offer teachers the opportunity to utilize evidence-based reading instruction to a greater extent and still have ample time to address other areas of instruction, such as math and writing. It is extremely difficult for teachers to successfully implement the [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#) in conjunction with STAR in fewer hours. Many programs find that offering at least nine hours per week for ABE instruction enables them to provide instruction in needed areas. During STAR training modules and on-site visits, programs will receive guidance in maintaining optimal intensity for STAR students.

### *Training New Staff and Planning for Staff Turnover*

- Staff who will be teaching a pre-ASE (GLE 4-8) STAR class must participate in the entire STAR training. In order to ensure fidelity to STAR’s use of evidence-based reading instruction, teachers and directors involved in STAR must be trained by nationally certified STAR trainers.
- In the course of participation, a STAR program may experience the loss of its STAR-trained instructor or director. In the instance of the loss of an instructor, that instructor’s class will not be considered a STAR class until a fully trained STAR instructor is in place.

### *Volunteers*

Under the direction and guidance of the STAR-trained teacher, volunteers can be a great help in the classroom. For example, volunteers may assist with a small group of students on advanced alphabetics, while the teacher is working with another group on comprehension or fluency. Volunteers may also assist students needing additional support during a class activity. Volunteers may attend the STAR training and/or EBRI trainings offered by SABES. Volunteers who have received this training may administer diagnostic assessments under the supervision of the STAR teacher.

### *Program Support for STAR Teachers*

There are a number of ways that program directors can support STAR teachers, thereby increasing the likelihood of student success in the STAR class. An experienced program director recommends the following best practices:

- Have STAR teachers develop class groupings based on the diagnostic assessments results and create a daily STAR class routine to ensure enough class time is allotted to EBRI activities as well as all the other aspects that are necessary parts of their STAR teaching routine.
- Provide additional time for STAR lesson plan preparation. Because evidence-based reading instructional practices are explicitly taught, teachers need more time to prepare teaching materials and lesson plans. For example, STAR teachers who are full-time may use the summer and other non-teaching weeks to develop all the vocabulary instructional materials (e.g., vocabulary quadrant charts, vocabulary prompts, and Yes/No/Why questions) to use with purchased EBRI vocabulary workbooks. Teachers may also use this time to identify leveled readings and develop “read and respond” questions.
  - Experience shows a best practice for STAR implementation is to provide 1:1 prep time for STAR classroom teachers at a minimum, or 2:1 (prep to instruction).
- Set aside time for STAR support at monthly staff meetings, in addition to providing time for STAR teachers to work together and support each other’s growth as users of EBRI.
- Assist by administering diagnostic reading assessments and include administration of diagnostic reading assessments during Student Orientation. When teachers are unable to complete all the diagnostic reading assessments themselves, the directors’ assistance will enable the STAR class groupings to occur in a timely fashion and keep directors more connected to student growth in STAR.
- Purchase STAR-recommended and STAR-appropriate books to use for vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension activities. Label all books with student reading levels (e.g., GLE 4-8).

Programs may use funds from their Community Adult Learning Center or Corrections grant to support:

- time for diagnostic assessment administration
- increased preparation or common planning time for STAR teachers and relevant staff
- purchase of STAR-recommended reading materials
- purchase of DAR or other diagnostic assessment consumable test booklets
- travel expenses to STAR-scheduled meetings and/or substitute teacher expenses

## State and National Support for STAR Programs

Because fidelity to the STAR vision and to EBRI for intermediate level learners is essential for student success, ACLS and STAR trainers provide technical assistance to programs as outlined below:

### *Initial STAR Training*

The STAR training is provided in an online, flipped classroom approach by Massachusetts STAR-certified trainers. Participants work through 30 online modules, which include opportunities for classroom practice, written reflections on that practice, and program team meetings.

In the self-paced online modules, EBRI is explained, modeled, and guided practice activities are provided. Then participants practice in class by applying what was learned with their own students. No time estimates are given for these practice and reflection modules as planning and lesson times will vary from teacher to teacher. In modules where participants are asked to plan and reflect, STAR trainers provide feedback and support. Participants also receive feedback from other training participants from their program and from any staff members who participated in previous STAR training cohorts (if applicable), as they are also invited to participate in these meetings.

In addition to the self-paced modules, there are three face-to-face training days that allow participants to dig deeper into implementing what they have learned. Two optional modules provide additional information and support. Once a module is started, participants may go back to it at any time.

Appendix D provides a brief outline of the EBRI strategies for use with intermediate level learners titled *Planning Menu of STAR Instructional Strategies*.

### *Classroom Observations by Program Directors*

**Program directors or their appointed designee should participate in STAR class observation(s) and the debriefing session provided by a STAR TA provider. They should also observe the STAR teacher at least once per year and submit their results to the STAR TA Provider.** Directors should use the STAR observation forms provided in Appendix E. Directors may consult with their assigned STAR trainer for guidance and support.

### *Technical Assistance and Classroom Observation by STAR TA Providers*

All STAR programs will have one annual classroom observation by a STAR TA provider in order to (1) support the teacher in accurately identifying each student's needs and responding to those needs and (2) support the director/coordinator in overseeing the implementation of STAR at their program. A STAR TA provider will either conduct the observation through a visit to the program, or request that the teacher provide to them a video recording of her/his class instruction. More than one observation may take place if requested by the program or trainer and if time allows.

STAR observations will take place for two years after the completion of the training. If the teacher or director would like an additional observation, please contact the STAR State Coordinator, Merilee Freeman. Observations are conducted to ensure fidelity to EBRI and the STAR Vision as presented on page three of this handbook. During an observation, the STAR trainer may provide the teacher and director with feedback on the degree of accuracy with STAR and EBRI implementation. Because classroom observations are intended to support the success of the STAR teacher and her/his students, program directors and teacher(s) will be asked to meet with the STAR trainer after the classroom observation for feedback and discussion. The STAR TA provider will contact the program director to schedule an observation visit.

### *Before the Class Observation: Preparation*

The following documentation must be emailed to the STAR TA provider **at least two days prior to the scheduled observation**. Relevant forms and guidance can be accessed via the TA provider. **Note: If the documentation is not received, the observation will be rescheduled, thereby delaying the receipt of valuable feedback that can affect student outcomes.** As a reminder, the STAR TA provider will email the teacher one week prior to the scheduled visit and request the documentation below by the specified date. The email will be copied to the program director and the Program Specialist. Documentation includes:

1. Diagnostic assessment results for all students in the STAR class;
2. Class groupings based upon the diagnostic assessment results;
3. *Daily STAR class routines*;
4. Lesson plans for both the day before and the day of the observation.

### *After the Class Observation*

- Following the observation (either face-to-face or virtual), the STAR TA provider will provide verbal feedback to the teacher and director, touching on the major points noted during the lesson.
- No later than two weeks after the observation, the STAR TA provider will send a brief written report to the program via email and copy the Program Specialist. The written report will include recommendations for future lesson planning and use of the STAR strategies, with special attention to aligning instructional strategies with student needs based on diagnostic assessment results.

## Appendix A: Glossary

**Alphabetic:** The set of skills and abilities that enable readers to turn letter combinations into spoken words. Alphabetic includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics or word analysis ability, and rapid word recognition.

**Comprehension:** The conscious activities readers undertake to construct meaning from texts, to remember details and ideas, and to make use of text for their own purposes.

**DAR:** The [Diagnostic Assessments of Reading \(DAR\) Interpretive Profile, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#) is an individually administered set of tests to determine the appropriate level of instruction in the four components of reading: alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The DAR is not designed to be a placement tool and should not be used for this purpose.

**Diagnostic assessment:** Diagnostic assessments are used to determine the causes of persistent learning problems and to formulate a plan for remedial action. (Linn and Gronlund, *Measurement and Assessment in Teaching*, 1995, p. 15). For determining the causes of reading difficulties, Massachusetts ABE programs may use the [Diagnostic Assessments of Reading \(DAR\) Interpretive Profile, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#), or other diagnostic assessments recommended on [LINCS' Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles Web page](#) and [LINCS diagnostic test resources](#).

**Evidence-based reading instruction:** Instructional practices that have been proven by systematic, objective, valid, and peer-reviewed research to lead to predictable gains in reading achievement.

**Explicit instruction:** An instructional approach in which the “teacher presents content clearly and directly, providing step-by-step instruction which includes explanation (i.e., why the teacher is teaching this strategy and how it will help students to improve their reading skills), modeling, followed by guided practice with feedback, independent practice, and frequent monitoring to ensure that they are able to continue to work independently. If students are not able to do so, they should participate in more guided practice with close monitoring from the teacher, with the goal of working independently. Similarly structured approaches are also called direct instruction, active teaching, or expository teaching.” (McShane, *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults*, 2005, p. 155).

**Fluency:** The ability to read connected text accurately, at an adequate rate, with appropriate expression (i.e., prosody).

**Managed enrollment:** The practice of allowing students to enter a class during specific, predefined enrollment periods and participate in an instructional cycle with fixed start and end dates. The cohort of students under managed enrollment stays together through the duration of the instructional cycle with no additional student enrollments (either after a pre-determined date or not at all) for the duration (or a portion) of the class term. Compare to “open enrollment,” the practice of permitting students to enter a class at any time of the day, week, month, or year to replace exiting students.

**Vocabulary:** All the words for which an individual associates meanings. Vocabulary instruction should address the total number of word meanings known (breadth or vocabulary), the level of understanding of known words (depth of vocabulary), and how to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (strategies).

## **Appendix B: DAR Administration Instructions** *page numbers are the same for Forms A/B.*

### **Alphabetics/Word Recognition**

- Begin at the grade level the student received on the MAPT-CCR or TABE 11/12.
- The Word Recognition test directions are on p. 14 of the Response Record.
- The Word Recognition lists of words are in the Student Book, pp. 7-17.
- Mastery is 7 out of 10 words correct; if achieved, student moves up to the next level. Keep going until student receives 4 or more incorrect. The previous level is the mastery level. Remember, the mastery level here will determine the starting point of subsequent assessment components.
- For a score of Level 4 or below, administer the Phonics assessments in the Response Record on pp. 4-13 (Phonological Awareness and Letters and Sounds sections) and on pp.18-26 (Word Analysis).

### **Fluency/Oral Reading**

- Begin the test at the student's mastery level for the Word Recognition (alphabetics) test.
- Oral Readings begin on p. 27 of the Student Book Forms A/B for Levels 1-2 and on pp. 30-37 for higher levels.
- Have the student read passages aloud while you record errors.
- Identify the highest level at which the student is accurate (95%) or has 3 or fewer errors.
- If the student read at an appropriate rate but the prosody (expression) was choppy, that level will be their instructional level for rate and prosody.
- The level above will be the student's instructional level for accuracy.

### **Vocabulary/Word Meaning**

- Begin at the mastery level of the Alphabetics/Word Recognition test.
- The directions for the Word Meaning test are on p. 49 of the Response Record. Additional directions are on p. 25 of the Teacher's Manual.
- The test is on pages 50-54 of the Response Record
  - The teacher reads: "What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?"
  - Mastery is three out of four correct.
- There are sample correct responses in the Response Record.

### **Silent Reading Comprehension**

- If using, administer the optional Comprehension Interview/Student Questionnaire located in Appendix C.
- The DAR Silent Reading Comprehension test is optional; test administrators may use the directions on pp. 7-8 of this handbook to determine a rough estimate of the grade level to begin instruction.
- If administering the DAR Silent Reading Comprehension test, begin the test at the mastery level for the Word Recognition test, and continue with the bulleted directions below it.
- Directions are on p. 34 of Response Record for levels 1-2 and p. 36 for all other levels.
- The readings and multiple choice questions are on pp. 27-55 of the Student Book.
- After a student silently reads the passage, he/she will answer the multiple-choice questions.

**NOTE:** If a student achieves mastery in any of the components up to level 8, stop there and write that the student's mastery level was 8+, which indicates that you didn't administer any additional levels. This is perfectly acceptable to do. You may continue with administering the test if you prefer.

## Appendix C: Optional STAR Comprehension Interview/Student Questionnaire

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Do you like to read?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Sometimes

2. **In what languages do you read?**

3. **Outside of class what do you read?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Not much

\_\_\_\_\_ Newspapers, which sections?

\_\_\_\_\_ Magazines, which ones?

\_\_\_\_\_ Books, what kind?

4. **If I asked you to read something, how would you know if you were reading it well?**

**Directions: Choose a number to show how each statement fits you.**

**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**  
 Never    Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 5. Before I read something, I look at the title and the pictures and try to think what the reading will be about.           |  |
| 6. When I read something, I think about what my purpose is for reading it.  |  |
| 7. When I read, I stop every now and then to think about what I am reading.   |  |
| 8. When I read stories, I try to guess what will happen next.   |  |
| 9. I picture what is happening in the story when I read.  |  |
| 10. When I read, I slow down when something does not make sense.  |  |
| 11. I go back over parts I do not understand when I am reading.   |  |
| 12. When I read something, I think about how the reading fits with what I knew about the topic before reading.              |  |
| 13. When I read something, I ask myself questions about what I am reading and check to see if I have answered my questions. |  |

## Appendix D: Planning Menu of STAR Instructional Strategies

| ACTIVITY NAME  | DESCRIPTION   | BASED ON STUDENT NEED |          | WITH WHOM / MY NOTES |
|--|---|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
|  |   | HAVE USED             | WILL USE |                      |
| <b>FLUENCY STRATEGIES</b>  |   |                       |          |                      |
| <b>Collaborative Oral Reading</b><br>★ Good for accuracy, rate, and prosody<br>★ Less scaffolding                                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Done in small groups with teacher. Students grouped according to diagnostic assessment results; instruction targeted to each group.</li> <li>2. Each person reads three to five lines of text and then passes the turn to another group member, including the teacher. Turns are short, so even less fluent readers can participate comfortably.</li> <li>3. Keep groups small so that each student has numerous opportunities to practice fluency.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |
| <b>Repeated Reading</b><br>★ Good for lower level fluency-more scaffolding<br>★ good for accuracy                                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student and teacher set goals.</li> <li>2. The student performs an unpracticed reading with a short text at the target level.</li> <li>3. The student hears a fluent reading of the text.</li> <li>4. The student practices reading the text independently.</li> <li>5. The student reads the text for the teacher.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |
| <b>Echo Reading</b><br>★ Good for accuracy, rate, and prosody<br>★ Best done one-on-one for a struggling reader in need of support | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher selects a text to be read aloud.</li> <li>2. Teacher reads the first sentence aloud and the learner repeats—or echoes—the sentence.</li> <li>3. Once teacher and student have read/echoed each sentence, the teacher reads the entire paragraph aloud again. The student then echoes the entire paragraph to ensure he/she is not just parroting back what was heard.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |
| <b>Marked Phrase Boundaries</b><br>★ Used for rate and prosody   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher prepares a text by marking it to show students where words should be grouped together to form meaningful “chunks.”</li> <li>2. Teacher reads the marked text aloud while students follow along.</li> <li>3. The teacher and students then practice reading the text together.</li> <li>4. Students practice reading the marked text aloud on their own.</li> <li>5. Instruction progresses until learners can mark phrases themselves—first on texts they have practiced with, then on new material—and eventually read unmarked text with appropriate phrasing.</li> </ol> |                       |          |                      |



| ACTIVITY NAME   | DESCRIPTION  | BASED ON STUDENT NEED |          | WITH WHOM / MY NOTES |           |  |  |  |
|---|--|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|--|--|--|
|   |  | HAVE USED             | WILL USE |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>VOCABULARY STRATEGIES</b>  |  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Tier 2 Vocabulary Instruction</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher introduces one meaning of each new Tier 2 word.</li> <li>Teacher gives examples of contexts for the words, and then asks students for their own examples.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Quadrant Chart</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One chart is filled out for each new word.</li> <li>May be done on board, newsprint, and/or blank handouts.</li> <li>May be used as a follow-up, review, and/or homework activity.</li> </ol> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Vocabulary Word</td> <td>Meaning</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Examples</td> <td>Opposites</td> </tr> </table>                       | Vocabulary Word       | Meaning  | Examples             | Opposites |  |  |  |
| Vocabulary Word   | Meaning  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| Examples  | Opposites  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Read &amp; Respond</b><br>★ Answers may be written instead of oral   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher provides short articles on topics of general interest.</li> <li>Teacher prepares questions about the articles that use the new words.</li> <li>Learners will apply their knowledge of the word meanings when they respond to the questions.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Yes/No/Why</b><br>★ Answers may be written as well as oral   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher prepares questions in which new Tier 2 vocabulary words have been paired (e.g., “<i>Is a <b>commotion</b> always <b>conspicuous</b>?</i>”)</li> <li>The questions have no “right” answers. The teacher shows students how to support their answers—<b>Yes</b> or <b>No</b> alone are not enough; <b>Why</b> is the important part.</li> </ol>                           |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Who Needs to Know, and Why?</b><br>★ Great activity for the last few minutes of class<br>★ Must be modeled several times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher selects a word and asks, “Who needs to know this word, and why?” (e.g., the word “<b>revise</b>”)</li> <li>Learners respond with examples (e.g., “<i>A cook needs to know ‘revise’ because s/he may have to <b>revise</b> a recipe for a diner’s allergies</i>”)</li> <li>Teacher prompts with additional questions as needed until the connection is clear.</li> </ol> |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |
| <b>Fill-in-blank, Cloze, or Sentence Completion</b><br>★ May be done orally or on worksheets                                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher provides exercises where new Tier 2 words are used in different contexts.</li> </ol>  |                       |          |                      |           |  |  |  |

|                                 | DESCRIPTION  | HAVE USED BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WILL USE BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WITH WHOM / MY NOTES |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES</b> |  |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Summarizing</b>              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class reads text paragraph by paragraph; teacher asks for each paragraph, "What is the topic of this paragraph?"</li> <li>2. Teacher then asks, "What is the most important point the author makes about that topic?"</li> <li>3. Once important points are identified for each paragraph, teacher asks, "Is every point needed to understand the author's ideas?" Points that are unnecessary are eliminated.</li> <li>4. Class joins the remaining points to create a summary of the text.</li> <li>5. Students may practice summarizing in small groups or on own.</li> </ol> |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Questioning—5 Ws &amp; H</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher begins by discussing the words people use to form questions (e.g., what, why, how). Then, shows them how to ask questions about a text (e.g., "Who saved Joe from drowning?")</li> <li>2. Teacher provides students with opportunities to practice questioning, in small groups and on their own.</li> <li>3. When both summarizing and questioning have been taught, teacher shows students how to combine the two strategies.</li> </ol>   |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Getting the Gist</b>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher and class read the first paragraph of the text together.</li> <li>2. Teacher and students come up with one brief (10 word) sentence describing the main idea or gist of the paragraph.</li> <li>3. Students do this for each paragraph as the teacher gradually releases responsibility to the students.</li> <li>4. As a challenge, students could come up with one sentence describing the gist of the entire text.</li> </ol>   |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Reflect and Evaluate</b>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students and teacher read the first paragraph of a text to find the main idea.</li> <li>2. Together, they list the reasons to support why they selected this particular main idea.</li> <li>3. Students do this for every paragraph of the text in order to evaluate if what they selected supports the main idea.</li> </ol>  |                                 |                                |                      |

|   | DESCRIPTION  | HAVE USED BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WILL USE BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WITH WHOM / MY NOTES |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <p><b>Text Marking</b></p> <p>★ Useful only if students are somewhat familiar with the subject of the text</p> <p>★ Very useful for learners who have a habit of reading word by word</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students use codes throughout a reading as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ I knew this before.</li> <li>! This was new to me.</li> <li>? I'm not sure what this means.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Teacher shows students how to mark a text, describing each code.</li> <li>Class works together on a new text, discussing similarities and differences in the way each person would mark the text.</li> <li>Students work in pairs so that they can compare how they would mark a text with their partner. Students mark a text on their own.</li> </ol>   |                                 |                                |                      |
| <p><b>Text Structures</b></p> <p>★ Can be taught to show the link between reading and writing</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher explains that authors organize information in text.</li> <li>Teacher provides examples: some authors want to tell a story (involving a setting, characters, actions, and consequences), explain how things are alike or different (compare/contrast), list some characteristics or facts about a topic (description), show how something operates (sequence), or explain how or why something happened in history (cause/effect).</li> <li>Teacher provides graphic representations of these structures and then, as a group, class discusses how to fill some in (e.g., a folk tale for a narrative, two countries for a compare/contrast, climate change for cause/effect.)</li> <li>Teacher gives students examples of texts that fit these patterns, and class works together to identify the text structures.</li> <li>Students practice recognizing text structures, in small groups and on their own.</li> </ol> |                                 |                                |                      |
| <p><b>Fix-Up Strategies</b></p> <p>★ Can be useful to help students have lifelong strategies for comprehension</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher asks students to quickly summarize what they just read.</li> <li>Teacher asks students to briefly retell what they just read.</li> <li>Teacher rates summary or retelling using STAR rubrics.</li> <li>A full list of other strategies "good readers" use is found in Appendix F.</li> </ol>  |                                 |                                |                      |

|   | DESCRIPTION  | HAVE USED BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WILL USE BASED ON STUDENT NEED | WITH WHOM / MY NOTES |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>ALPHABETICS STRATEGIES</b>                         |  |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Basic: Decoding</b><br>★ Phonics assessment needed | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer individual phonics assessments to determine specific phonics skills needed.</li> <li>Based on the diagnostic results, teacher provides instruction in decoding skills, phonemic awareness, short and long vowels, sight word recognition, compound words, open/closed syllables, etc.</li> </ol> |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Advanced: Root Words</b>                           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher provides groups of words with the same base word root (e.g., “interrupt,” “disrupt,” “bankrupt”).</li> <li>Students and teacher practice determining what words mean, or how they change, based on their common base words or roots.</li> </ol>   |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Advanced: Affixes</b>                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher provides groups of words with similar prefixes or suffixes.</li> <li>Students and teacher practice determining what words mean, or how they change, based on application of the affixes.</li> </ol>   |                                 |                                |                      |
| <b>Advanced: Multisyllabic Words</b>                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher provides instruction in syllabication rules and syllable patterns to help readers read multisyllabic words.</li> </ol>  |                                 |                                |                      |

## Appendix E: STAR Class Observation Forms

### ALPHABETICS INSTRUCTION

#### Alphabets Observation Guide

Directions: Using the guide below, indicate the instructional elements observed. Make notes on what the teacher and students were doing. Ask the teacher about instructional elements you did not observe.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

| Instructional Elements to Observe  | Notes | Recommendations |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| Taught alphabets concepts appropriate to the learners' needs, according to diagnostic results and students' class work |       |                 |
| Provided a clear explanation of how concept will help students   |       |                 |
| Provided enough examples so that students could understand the concept   |       |                 |
| Engaged students in guided practice in context   |       |                 |
| Monitored students' progress formally or informally  |       |                 |

## Appendix E: STAR Class Observation Forms

### FLUENCY INSTRUCTION

#### Fluency Observation Guide

Directions: Using the guide below, indicate the instructional elements observed. Make notes on what the teacher and students were doing. Ask the teacher about instructional elements you did not observe.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

| Instructional Elements to Observe   | Notes | Recommendations |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| Taught fluency skills appropriate to the learners' needs, per assessment results and class work |       |                 |
| Clearly explained why fluency was being taught  |       |                 |
| Used materials at an appropriate instructional level  |       |                 |
| Provided appropriate modeling of fluent reading   |       |                 |
| Engaged students in guided fluency practice activities and provided appropriate scaffolding     |       |                 |
| Monitored students' fluency progress, formally or informally                                    |       |                 |
| Provided feedback to students on their fluency skills   |       |                 |
| Provided activities for students to complete independently                                      |       |                 |

## Appendix E: STAR Class Observation Forms

### VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

#### Vocabulary Observation Guide

Directions: Using the guide below, indicate the instructional elements observed. Make notes on what the teacher and students were doing. Ask the teacher about instructional elements you did not observe.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

| Instructional Elements to Observe   | Notes | Recommendations |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| Selected word meanings appropriate to the students' instructional needs                         |       |                 |
| Provided a clear explanation of word meanings being taught                                      |       |                 |
| Provided appropriate contexts and helped students to connect word meanings to their daily lives |       |                 |
| Gave multiple opportunities for students to use word meanings in a variety of contexts          |       |                 |
| Used activities that promoted awareness of word meanings outside of class                       |       |                 |
| Monitored students' vocabulary progress, formally or informally                                 |       |                 |

## Appendix E: STAR Class Observation Forms

### COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

#### Comprehension Observation Guide

Directions: Using the guide below, indicate the instructional elements observed. Make notes on what the teacher and students were doing. Ask the teacher about instructional elements you did not observe.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

| Instructional Elements to Observe  | Notes | Recommendations |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| Gave explanation of the strategy/knowledge being taught and how and when it will be helpful                    |       |                 |
| Demonstrated how to use the strategy/ knowledge and modeled the thought process needed to use it               |       |                 |
| Guided students as they learned how and when to use the strategy/knowledge                                     |       |                 |
| Provided opportunities for learners to practice the strategy/knowledge until they could apply it independently |       |                 |
| Monitored students' progress formally or informally  |       |                 |



## Appendix F: Comprehension Fix-Up Strategies

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Slow down your reading rate</b>                                 | It is okay to read difficult parts slowly and speed up on the easier parts.   |
| <b>Reread</b>  | Sometimes it is difficult to understand new information by reading it once. By rereading it a few times, you may understand what the author is saying.          |
| <b>Continue reading</b>  | Sometimes the author helps you understand new information by using context clues to define, explain, and give examples.   |
| <b>Check your understanding of the vocabulary</b>                  | Use word parts, such as prefixes, suffixes, base words, and root words. Use a dictionary or other reference aid.  |
| <b>Use text aids</b>   | Sometimes authors use maps, charts, graphs, or marginal notes that are easier to understand than the text.  |
| <b>Ignore what is difficult and continue reading</b>               | Especially if what is causing trouble is not critical to understanding and does not involve too much of the text.   |
| <b>Ask someone</b>   | Sometimes others have more experience with the topic you are reading about and can help you understand it. However, don't get dependent on asking other people. |
| <b>Make a connection between the text and your life</b>            | Connecting your own memories, personal experiences, or background knowledge to the text can help you understand.  |
| <b>Retell</b>  | Think about what you have read and retell or summarize it in your own words.  |
| <b>Ask yourself a question and try to answer it</b>                | Clarify by asking <i>who, what, when, where, how, or why</i> .  |
| <b>Visualize</b>   | Create images in your head to help make sense of what the words are saying.   |
| <b>Notice patterns in text structure</b>                           | See if there is something on the organizational pattern of the text to help you understand.   |
| <b>Decide the problem is because of poorly written material</b>    | Decide to continue anyway or to stop reading.   |
| <b>Decide that the difficulties are too frequent or too severe</b> | You need to find different reading material.  |