



# **A Report on the Minnesota (MN) Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) Project**

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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this cumulative report are to: 1) share background information about MN ABE's partnership with the National STAR Project, 2) document internal evaluation outcomes collected over three years of the MN STAR Project, and 3) identify next steps for project organization, trainings, and evaluation.

ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS), housed at Hamline University in St. Paul and provider of statewide professional development (PD), completed a mixed method of evaluation to determine the impact of STAR trainings and technical assistance (TA) on teachers, programs, and students participating during the academic years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012 (referred to as STAR 10, 11, and 12). A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis confirmed that participation in MN STAR positively impacts:

1. Teachers' learning, confidence, and use of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), the foundation of STAR
2. Programs' support for structural changes specific to the implementation of STAR
3. Students' level completion rates, program persistence, and satisfaction with STAR instruction

MN STAR Leadership hopes these outcomes inspire all stakeholders to maintain their support of STAR and evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). Special appreciation to MDE-ABE staff for continued funding and to all MN STARS, whose commitment and critical responses contributed immensely to this report.

## Table of Contents

National STAR Project.....	5
MN STAR Project.....	9
MN STAR Project Evaluation.....	12
MN STAR Project Outcomes and Supports.....	16
Next Steps.....	30
References.....	31
Appendix A: MN STAR Programs.....	32
Appendix B: Teacher Survey.....	33
Appendix C: Teacher Lesson Plan.....	34
Appendix D: Team Action Plan 1.....	35
Appendix E: Team Action Plan 2.....	36
Appendix F: Observation Notes.....	37
Appendix G: Observation Feedback.....	38
Appendix H: Observation Rubric.....	39
Appendix I: Students Surveys.....	40
Appendix J: Participant Agreement.....	41
Appendix K: Participant Continuance Agreement.....	42

## National STAR Project Background

### Purpose and Focus

The National STAR Project is a reading reform initiative developed by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), a division of the United States Department of Education (USDE). STAR is closely aligned with a strategic goal from USDE: “To transform education into an evidence-based field.” According to STAR’s website: “STAR focuses on implementing evidence-based practices to provide adults with the reading skills they need to achieve their goals in school, the workplace, and their daily lives” (STAR Fact Sheet, n.d., p. 1).

STAR focuses on Intermediate-level students reading between 4.0-8.9 grade level equivalency (GLE) because they were the largest and most complex group identified in the *Adult Reading Components Study* (ARCS, 2003) conducted by John Strucker and Rosalind Davidson, researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Over a three-year period, 676 ABE and 279 English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students from seven states were interviewed and assessed with a battery of language and reading tests. In the ABE population, ten clusters of students with similar reading profiles were identified and placed into three groups. The majority of them (56%) fell into Group 2: Intermediate Students. Their primary needs were in fluency and academic vocabulary with a slightly lesser need in alphabets. They appeared to have some decoding skills, but generally did not make strong use of them. Across the nation, Intermediate-level students are a very challenging and challenged group of adult readers.

### Research and Expert Support

STAR’s implementation model is based on two sources of valid and reliable evidence: 1) scientific research studies, where data is collected and analyzed according to rigorous design and 2) consensus amongst expert practitioners, who carefully study outcomes as part of their practice. A limited number of scientific research studies from adult education (approximately 70) met criteria for the publication *Research-based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction* (2002), written by John Kruidenier and supported by the National Institute for Literacy, Partnership for Reading. Eighteen “emerging” principles based on two or more experimental studies and any number of non-experimental studies and thirty-two trends based on less than two experimental studies were identified. Ideas from the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000) filled in the gaps of the adult literacy research base.

The following emerging principles from Kruidenier (2002) are highlighted because they support EBRI practices recommended by STAR:

Principle 1: When measures of achievement are obtained for each crucial aspect of reading instruction (alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), instructionally relevant patterns of scores, or profiles of adults' strengths and needs in reading, may be observed. These profiles suggest that ABE readers, including those in ESOL programs and those with a reading disability, are very diverse and that any one measure of reading achievement may not be sufficient to identify strengths and needs for instruction (p. 20).

Principle 7: Word analysis may be taught using approaches that include direct instruction in word analysis along with instruction in other aspects of reading (p. 21).

Principle 10: Fluency may be taught using approaches that include the repeated reading of passages of text, words from text, and other text units (p. 23).

Principle 15: Providing explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies may lead to increased reading comprehension achievement (p. 27).

Principle 16: Combining comprehension instruction with instruction in various other components of reading may lead to increased reading comprehension achievement (p. 27).

The emerging principles were combined with the professional wisdom of adult literacy experts in a teacher-friendly resource called *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* (2005), authored by Susan McShane and supported by the National Institute for Literacy, Partnership for Reading, and National Center for Family Literacy. This publication was intended as a first step for ABE teachers with little knowledge of reading research or evidence-based reading instructional practices. It begins by building background knowledge of important reading research concepts, vocabulary, and principles and then provides practical, reading instructional methods for adult education settings. It is not presented as a one-and-only resource, but rather as a starting point for improving knowledge and skills related to adult reading instruction.

The following reading instructional methods from McShane (2005) are highlighted because they align with EBRI practices recommended by STAR:

Chapter 4: "Do not make decoding skills the entire focus of the reading lesson. In each lesson, address the other needed component skills as well, and provide opportunities for learners to gain access to adult-interest reading materials" (p. 47).

Chapter 5: “Use guided repeated oral reading techniques to build reading fluency. A learner may read aloud to, or in unison with, a teacher or tutor, who provides modeling and assistance” (p. 57).

Chapter 6: “Ensure multiple exposures to words by teaching useful, “real-life” words and words learners will encounter subject-matter texts they are studying” (p. 68).

Chapter 7: “Teach strategies one at a time, providing plenty of opportunities for guided practice to ensure learners can use them independently” (p. 103).

An updated reading research resource was recently published by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL): *Adult Education Literacy Instruction: A Review of the Research* (2010). The purposes were to identify scientifically-based adult education research, prioritize it in terms of relevance to adult literacy instruction, determine gaps in the research, and fill in those gaps with research findings from adolescent reading, K-12 reading, K-12 second language, K-12 reading-writing, and other adult populations. The findings are presented as “stronger or weaker” for each major component of reading instruction. Even stronger findings are considered emerging because they are based on just a few experimental studies; weaker findings do not have much support in the research base.

The following stronger findings from this update (NIFL, 2010) are highlighted because they affirm EBRI practices recommended by STAR:

“AE [Adult Education] readers, including those in ESOL programs and those with reading disability, are very diverse and any one measure of reading achievement may not be sufficient to identify strengths and needs for instruction” (p. 19).

“Alphabetic instruction may lead to increased achievement in alphabetic and other components of reading, especially reading comprehension” (p. 20).

“Fluency may be taught to AE students and fluency practice may lead to increases in reading achievement” (p. 22).

“Instruction that can lead to increased vocabulary achievement provides opportunities for adult learners to (1) use new vocabulary words multiple times and (2) process them deeply by relating them to other concepts in a text and to prior knowledge” (p. 24).

“Integrating adult-oriented, contextually relevant material into literacy programs may lead to increased reading achievement” (p. 25).

## Training and TA Goals

OVAE contracts with the National STAR Training Network (or Project STAR) to provide training packages designed “to support teachers and administrators in acquiring the knowledge and skills required to successfully implement EBRI in their classrooms and programs” (STAR Fact Sheet, n.d., p. 2). The initial training package includes three STAR Institutes led by national trainers, onsite or electronic TA provided by the lead national trainer, and 24/7 access to an online STAR Toolkit. Subsequent packages may include STAR trainer certification/coaching intended to develop a cadre of state trainers or STAR state expansion intended to expand STAR implementation within a partner state.

As new participants attend a series of STAR Institute trainings, spend outside time on the STAR Toolkit, complete action planning, and request or receive TA, they are expected to move steadily along a continuum. Full implementation of STAR classes involves completion of these four goals:

1. Establishing structures and policies at the program or classroom level to support STAR instruction
2. Conducting diagnostic reading assessments to identify eligible STAR students and their strengths and needs
3. Planning and delivering needs-based and explicit instruction in alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
4. Organizing and providing reading instructional routines (separate and regular STAR classes)

In Minnesota’s experience, full implementation of STAR classes may not occur until into the second year. For many programs and participants, the first year is about building a STAR team, incrementally planning for changes in structures and policies, acquiring new knowledge and skills, practicing recommended instructional techniques, selecting and purchasing leveled reading materials, and gaining confidence with all of the above. The fall of the second year is a more reasonable time to fully implement changes in program schedules, teacher assignments, enrollment policies, reading assessment processes, and reading instructional practices. (For more information on the National STAR Project, go to [www.startoolkit.org](http://www.startoolkit.org))

## MN STAR Project Background

### Pilot Year

Like many other states, MN ABE has struggled to meet National Reporting System (NRS) level completion targets in the area of reading for Low and High Intermediate-level ABE students (GLE 4.0-5.9 and GLE 6.0-8.9, respectively). State accountability procedures require that new students entering ABE complete standardized pre-tests from the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Pre-test scores place them into separate Basic Skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), or GED classes (more common in large programs) or mixed category and multi-level classes (more common in small programs). After 45-60 hours, they complete TABE or CASAS post-tests. Pre- and post-test scores are compared to determine whether students have completed an educational functioning level. Across MN ABE, Intermediate students had lower level completion rates and often dropped or stopped out because of discouragement and dissatisfaction with reading instruction or progress.

In early 2008, MDE-ABE and ATLAS staff began investigating a partnership with the National STAR Project and purchase of an appropriate training and TA package. ATLAS is funded by state and federal dollars awarded annually through a competitive grant process directed by MDE. In Fiscal Year (FY) 09, ATLAS received funding to support a STAR Project Lead, Leadership Team, and national training and TA package for up to 45 participants. The Leadership Team included the state PD Specialist, ATLAS Director, Project Lead, and Senior Training Manager from the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC). As the year progressed, a STAR administrator and two STAR teacher representatives were added. They were selected because of their obvious commitment and interest in STAR.

In September of 2008, STAR 09 teams comprised of one administrator and one or more teachers, began their training year. Participation required attending all three STAR Institutes, spending time on the STAR Toolkit, completing action and lesson plan assignments, and implementing evidence-based practices between September and June. TA support, including an onsite observation and feedback conference, was co-provided by the lead national trainer and the project lead.

STAR 09 participants (including Leadership Team) learned many key lessons during this pilot year. It became obvious that implementing STAR classes was not simple, but rather very complex. It required a team effort with strong administrative and technical assistance support; it often involved steps forward and backward; it required a willingness to learn from mistakes or misunderstandings. However, many positive changes in structures and policies, reading assessment processes, and reading instructional practices were accomplished by STAR 09s. This laid a foundation of learning and success for continuing years.

## Continuing Years

In 2009-2010 (STAR 10), MDE and ATLAS funded STAR trainer certification for the project lead and three other STAR 09 teachers. The certification process is very rigorous and requires Project STAR's review and approval of five modules: a state training plan, study guide, case study report, set of video observations, and coach's recommendation. Three of four candidates successfully completed the process and became certified STAR trainers.

The STAR 10 training plan was changed to a series of four STAR Institutes: STAR I focused on the background of STAR/EBRI and diagnostic reading assessment processes; STAR II on explicit alphabets and fluency instruction; STAR III on explicit vocabulary instruction; and STAR IV on explicit comprehension strategy instruction and putting it all together into a reading routine. STAR trainers felt this schedule provided a more incremental delivery of training content at a more sustainable pace. They also made changes to action and lesson plan templates by adding explicit guiding questions (see Appendices C-E). The option of earning three graduate-level credits from Hamline University was made available at reduced tuition. Three half-day trainings called Boosters were held for STAR 09s to "boost" their knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm.

In 2010-2011 (STAR 11), two more changes occurred: the Project Lead became the ATLAS Reading & STAR Coordinator and STAR Leadership increased to four levels or teams:

1. Executive: includes the original Leadership Team, who meet monthly and oversee the project's direction, selection, and evaluation
2. Leadership: includes the Executive members, trainers, an administrator and teacher representative from STAR programs, who meet quarterly to share updates and provide further direction
3. Trainer: includes the STAR trainers, who meet monthly to share program updates, plan trainings, review assignments, and discuss responsive TA
4. Teacher: includes the coordinator and STAR teachers, who meet quarterly and contribute ideas for TA, evaluation, and refresher trainings

Participation requirements were the same as during STAR 10 and the option for graduate credit was again available. Two half-day trainings (now called All-STARs rather than Boosters) were held for STAR 09/10s to renew their commitment to the evidence-based, STAR model.

In 2011-2012 (STAR 12), all four levels of STAR Leadership were maintained, another STAR teacher completed trainer certification, and the coordinator was selected to be a member of the National Cadre of STAR Trainers. Participation requirements remained the same, the option for graduate credit was still available, and two All-STARs were held for STAR 09/10/11 participants. The only major change was a rearrangement STAR Institute training content. STAR II focused on explicit alphabetics and *vocabulary* instruction: the favorite components of STAR teachers. STAR III focused on explicit *fluency* instruction: the most challenging component for STAR teachers, but now preceded by alphabetics and vocabulary success.

Because of some confusion or lack of awareness regarding training year expectations, new STAR 12 administrators and teachers were asked to sign and submit a Participant Agreement (see Appendix J). This agreement explicitly outlined expectations for training attendance, use of the Toolkit, assignment completion, and TA responsiveness. It proved to be a useful tool for holding new participants accountable to agreed expectations in a fair and respectful manner.

Because of the growing number of MN STARs and increased resources necessary to support them, all continuing administrators and teachers were asked to sign and submit a Participant Continuance Agreement (see Appendix K). This agreement documented their commitment to STAR and continued their access the STAR Toolkit and ATLAS/STAR Resources, participation in electronic or face-to-face TA, and invitation to All-STARs. It was received from over 80% of participants and alleviated a lot of frustration for those who could just not commit to sustaining separate STAR classes.

Throughout all four years, STAR-related information and resources have been posted on the ATLAS website-STAR link (<http://www.atlasabe.org/resources/star-resources>; a user name and password are required). Some are public domain, many were developed by the coordinator, and others by STAR participants. They are organized under the headings: Alphabetics, Comprehension, Fluency, Vocabulary, Academic Word Lists, Assignments and Credit, Contacts, Diagnostic Assessment, Evaluation and Research, Managed Enrollment, Management and Organization, MN STAR-Recommended, and Program Models. They are frequently updated and/or revised by the coordinator to include input and new ideas from STAR trainers and participants.

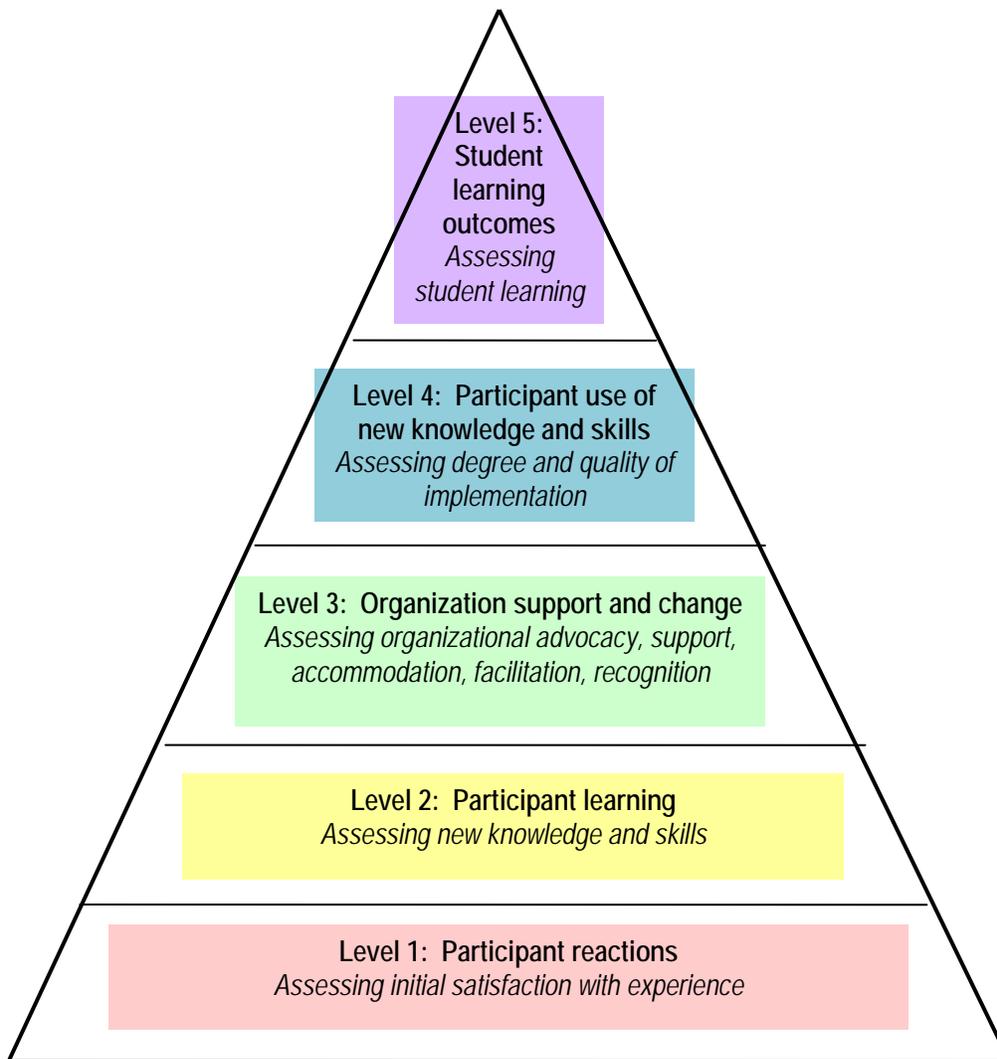
As of June, 2012, more than 120 MN ABE practitioners have completed the series of STAR Institutes. Nineteen urban, suburban, and rural MN ABE programs strive to implement and sustain STAR classes at forty-one sites. By September of 2012, it is expected that more than fifty STAR classes will be offered to hundreds of Low and High Intermediate-level readers across Minnesota (see Appendix A)! (For more information on the MN STAR Project, go to [www.atlasABE.org](http://www.atlasABE.org))

## MN STAR Project Evaluation Framework

In the fall of 2009, MN STAR Leadership approved an evaluation plan based on a PD framework adopted from Guskey (2002). As shown in the pyramid below, this framework involves five ascending levels of evaluation: from assessing participants' reactions (least challenging) to assessing student learning outcomes (most challenging).

### MN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION MODEL

(Adapted from Guskey, 2002)



For professional developers to:

- 1) ensure teachers are satisfied with the experience
- 2) ensure teachers learn something
- 3) ensure supports for change/implementation are in place
- 4) ensure opportunities and awareness of how to use new knowledge and skills
- 5) see what the impact is on students

## MN STAR Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan used mixed methodology to measure participant (meaning administrators and teachers) reactions (Level 1), participant (meaning teachers) learning and use of new knowledge and skills (Levels 2 and 4), organization (meaning programs) support for structural changes (Level 3), and student learning outcomes (Level 5). The evaluation tools and methods are summarized on the next pages with references to samples or forms in the Appendix.

**Level 1: Participant Reaction** was measured by completion of post-STAR Institute evaluation forms. Results were tallied and reported to Trainer and Leadership teams and used to revise STAR training content, improve trainer delivery, and increase participant interaction. Because they revealed only initial satisfaction/dissatisfaction with trainings and did not assess program, teacher, or student outcomes, they were not included in this report.

**Level 2: Participant Learning** was measured by a variety of evaluation tools. The first involved calculation and comparison of Yes/No percentages to the following statements from 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher surveys (numbered according to how they appear on the complete survey; see Appendix B).

1. I can describe the four components of reading and how they are inter-related.
2. I can describe the key elements of evidence-based reading instruction.
3. I administer diagnostic reading assessments to my Intermediate-level ABE students.
4. I can interpret diagnostic reading assessments and determine strengths and weaknesses of my Intermediate-level students.

Other tools included trainer review of 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher lesson plan assignments (see Appendix C) and 2<sup>nd</sup> year observations of STAR classes. Trainer notes and questions were recorded during the observation (see Appendix F), a brief conference was held after, and electronic feedback was sent to the teacher and administrator (see Appendix G). For sites located in more distant regions of the state, a Flip™ video camera was mailed to the teacher along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Notes and questions were completed by the coordinator while viewing video-clips, questions were asked and answered via email, and electronic feedback sent to the teacher and administrator.

Twenty-six observations of STAR 09/10 teachers during their 2<sup>nd</sup> (or early into their 3<sup>rd</sup>) year of implementation were completed by trainers or the coordinator between October 2010 and October 2011. Sixteen observations of eighteen STAR 11 teachers (two classes were team taught) during their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation were completed by the coordinator between June 2011 and March 2012.

In April, 2012, the coordinator reviewed all forty-two observation feedback notes and used a rubric (see Appendix H) to rate whether managed enrollment structures, diagnostic reading assessment processes, explicit instruction steps, and organized reading routines were *completely, partially, or insufficiently implemented* at the time of observation. The rating *not applicable* was used when the evidence-based practice or step was not observed during the hour-long observation. The ratings were tallied and calculated into percentages.

Finally, annual Stories of Success were collected at STAR Institute IV or at All-STAR 2, the final trainings of each academic year. Participants were prompted to think about and then write a brief program, teacher, or student story of success on a note card. If time permitted, they shared their stories at tables and all note cards were collected by the coordinator for consolidation.

**Level 3: Organization Support and Change** was measured by calculation and comparison of Yes/No percentages to the following statements from 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher surveys (again, numbered according to appearance on the complete survey):

10. I have support for learning and applying evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.
11. I have time to plan and deliver evidence-based reading instruction.
12. I have materials to deliver evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.

Other tools included trainer review of 1<sup>st</sup> year team action plans for establishing 1) managed enrollment structures and 2) diagnostic reading assessment processes (see Appendices D & E), coordinator ratings of 2<sup>nd</sup> year observation feedback notes, and annual collection of Stories of Success.

**Level 4: Participant Use of New Knowledge and Skills** was measured by calculation and comparison of Yes/No percentages to the following statements from 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher surveys:

5. I organize my reading lessons based on the strengths and needs of my Intermediate ABE students.
6. I teach alphabetics to my Intermediate ABE students.
7. I teach fluency to my Intermediate ABE students.
8. I teach vocabulary to my Intermediate ABE students.
9. I teach comprehension to my Intermediate ABE students.

Other tools included trainer review of 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher lesson plans for explicit instruction in alphabetics or vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, coordinator ratings of 2<sup>nd</sup> year observation feedback notes, and annual collection of Stories of Success.

**Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes** were the most challenging to measure because of multiple variables present in STAR classrooms and the use of two different databases in MN ABE. During STAR 09/10, only self-reported student surveys (see Appendix I) and anecdotal Stories of Success were collected to support student learning outcomes.

During STAR 11, ATLAS collaborated with the MN ABE accountability and database consultant to validly and reliably analyze STAR and non-STAR student testing and attendance data. The ultimate goal of this analysis was to compare differences between level completion rates and persistence, two important concerns in ABE. To eliminate some variables, ten STAR programs were selected based on the coordinator's review of observation evidence. In her judgment, they had established managed enrollment structures, conducted diagnostic reading assessments, provided explicit instruction in needed components, and organized reading routines. In addition, most had complied with the request to track STAR students separately in their database.

The consultant used these constraints to analyze STAR student testing data:

1. All students were pretested with TABE or CASAS Reading assessments up to one month prior to STAR class placement.
2. All students received at least 12 hours of STAR instruction.

Student data were analyzed using an approach known as *survival analysis*, also called *time to event analysis* (Statsoft, 2011), to determine if there was any difference in student persistence between students receiving STAR reading instruction and those who did not. Because survival analysis is very sensitive to bias, the analyst used these constraints for STAR and non-STAR students:

1. Students had to attend at least a day of instruction beyond intake.
2. Students had to have an average of 1 class event per 10 calendar days at a minimum.
3. Students had to have a minimum TABE score  $\geq$  GLE 4.0.
4. Students had to have a maximum TABE score  $\leq$  GLE 8.9.
5. Student data entered into Minnesota Adult Basic Education (MABE) database with daily attendance.

Statistical analysis was based on program data from two academic years (2009-2010 and 2010-2011), inclusive of STAR programs and teachers beyond their training year. The results were presented by STAR programs, where multiple STAR teacher and student data entries were figured as totals.

## MN STAR Project Outcomes and Supporting Evidence

Four outcomes from data collected between September 2009 and June 2012 are reported in this section. Data collected between September 2008 and June 2009 was not used because this was Minnesota’s pilot and learning year. Each outcome is numbered, boldfaced, and supported by evidence in table, summary, and/or list formats. The outcomes address four of the five PD evaluation levels from the evaluation model on page 12.

1. What is the impact of MN STAR on teachers’ learning about EBRI (Level 2)?
2. What is the impact of MN STAR on programs’ support for change and implementation of EBRI (Level 3)?
3. What is the impact of MN STAR on teachers’ use of new knowledge and skills (Level 4)?
4. What is the impact of MN STAR on students’ learning outcomes? (Level 5)?

### Outcome 1:

**The MN STAR Project positively impacts teachers’ learning about EBRI.**

### Support 1:

The table below compares percentages of pre/post Yes responses to relevant statements from surveys collected in September (not shaded) and June (shaded) from STAR teachers in training.

Statements N=64	STAR 10		STAR 11		STAR 12	
	Sept. 09	June 10	Sept. 10	June 11	Sept. 11	June 12
I can describe the four components of reading and how they are inter-related.	22	100	46	100	45	100
I can describe the key elements of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI).	7	95	19	92	8	100
I administer diagnostic reading assessments to my Intermediate ABE students.	13	100	40	92	25	100
I can interpret diagnostic reading assessments and determine strengths and weaknesses of my Intermediate ABE students.	22	95	46	100	25	100

Overall, this comparison documents that participation in STAR trainings and TA substantially increased teacher learning about the four reading components, the key elements of EBRI (identified as conducting diagnostic reading assessment, providing direct and explicit instruction, maximizing student engagement, selecting relevant materials and activities, and monitoring the effectiveness of instruction continuously), and diagnostic reading assessment administration and interpretation.

### **Support 2:**

Three teacher lesson plans were assigned after STAR Institutes II (for alphabets or vocabulary), III (for fluency), and IV (for comprehension). After each due date, STAR trainers met to review the lesson plans, determine strengths and weaknesses, and develop complimentary, clarifying, or corrective comments for electronic feedback.

Across all three years of lesson plan review, trainers noted increases in teachers' learning about how to: 1) use diagnostic reading assessment results for STAR class placement and grouping, 2) select appropriate reading instructional techniques and materials, and 3) incorporate explicit instruction steps (explanation, modeling, guided practice, application) into reading practices.

### **Support 3:**

These quotes from Stories of Success were selected as examples of increases in teachers' learning and confidence.

- I have a student who asked me to work with her individually on reading aloud and comprehension and vocabulary skills. This feels like success because she was comfortable enough with me and confident that I could be a good teacher.
- When I started STAR, I did not have any formal reading instruction training. After being trained in and implementing STAR, I feel like I have more guidance and confidence to deliver quality reading instruction.
- After attending STAR trainings, I now feel confident in introducing and reviewing vocabulary in a meaningful manner which will benefit my students.
- As a teacher, I feel so much more confident in my abilities to help my students become confident and successful themselves. The STAR program has been instrumental in helping me become a better teacher!
- After attending all of the STAR Institutes thus far, I feel so much more prepared and trained to teach reading to my intermediate level students than I ever have in the past. It is wonderful to be able to specifically know what part of reading (comprehension, fluency, alphabets, or vocabulary) a student may need the most help with. This makes the time we spend together in our classroom so much more productive (and successful).

**Outcome 2:**

**The MN STAR Project positively impacts programs’ support for change and implementation of EBRI.**

**Support 1:**

The table below compares percentages of pre/post Yes responses to relevant statements from surveys collected in September (not shaded) and June (shaded) from STAR teachers in training.

Statements N=64	STAR 10		STAR 11		STAR 12	
	Sept. 09	June 10	Sept. 10	June 11	Sept. 11	June 12
I have support for learning and applying evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.	47	91	63	75	83	100
I have time to plan and deliver evidence-based reading instruction.	45	71	28	54	83	100
I have materials to deliver evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.	26	91	46	88	58	100

This comparison documents that participation in STAR trainings and TA substantially increased programs’ support for learning, applying, and delivering EBRI, the foundation of STAR classes.

Of interest are the September percentages from STAR 12 teachers regarding support and time for EBRI. Eighty-three percent reported they had *support and time to plan and deliver EBRI at the start of their training year!* This percentage was surprising because they had not yet learned about the complex changes required for implementation of STAR classes. It may indicate prior knowledge and/or heightened awareness about the MN STAR Project, its expectations and responsibilities.

**Support 2:**

The table below presents relevant percentages based on coordinator ratings of 2<sup>nd</sup> year observation feedback notes. As described earlier, the rubric ratings *completely*, *partially*, and *insufficiently* were used to determine the degree of implementation of EBRI practices. The rating *not applicable* was used when the practice was not observed during the hour-long observation.

Questions N=42	% Completely	% Partially	% Insuffi- ciently	% Not applicable
Are managed enrollment structures and policies in place to support EBRI?	79	7	9	5
Is reading instruction prioritized and planned according to diagnostic reading assessment results?	40	55	5	0
<b>Overall</b> , was there an organized reading routine based on students' reader profiles?	74	19	7	0

Overall, the results are very positive considering the programmatic structures, policies, processes, and schedule changes required for organizing reading routines based on students' reader profiles.

Seventy-nine percent of STAR programs participating between fall 2008 and spring 2011 had completely implemented managed enrollment structures and policies for STAR classes. In fact, since participating in STAR, a number of programs have implemented *program-wide* managed enrollment structures and attendance policies for *all* ABE classes.

STAR classes with partial (7%) or insufficient (9%) managed enrollment structures and policies were primarily in rural communities or correctional sites. In some rural areas of Minnesota, there is not always a volume or consistent pattern of attendance from Low and High Intermediate-level students. In correctional education, despite a large population of struggling adult readers, the priority of most facilities is to fill empty classroom seats to generate student contact hours, which determines ABE funding. In both cases, it has been challenging, and sometimes impossible, to implement and/or sustain separate and regular STAR classes.

The two STAR classes rated as not applicable (5%) were provided exclusively for adults with documented brain injuries. This required documentation of a disability pre-manages enrollment of students into this special STAR class.

Forty percent of STAR programs had *completely* implemented diagnostic reading assessment, including the process for prioritizing and planning instruction according to results. From the perspective of the coordinator, there are two possible reasons for partial (55%) implementation of this practice:

- Some programs were not able to administer diagnostic reading assessments to all eligible STAR students before placing them in STAR class; therefore, their reading instruction was not yet planned according to results. The coordinator was assured that assessment occurred within 1-2 weeks of placement.
- According to coordinator review of class lists (combining diagnostic reading assessment results for all students), some teachers misunderstood the complex process of determining student instructional levels in order to prioritize students' needs and select appropriately-leveled materials. The coordinator addressed this misunderstanding during the conference and in written feedback.

Only a few programs were judged to be insufficiently conducting diagnostic reading assessment on a consistent basis (5%). Most were located in rural areas where one teacher is responsible for all levels of students and subject areas. Unfortunately, this results in a lack of time, staff, and space for conducting one-to-one assessment in all four components.

Seventy-four percent had completely implemented organized reading routines based on students' reader profiles. Another 19% had partial implementation of a reading routine. The combined percentage (93%) is very positive; it supports the earlier statement that full implementation of an organized reading routine may not occur until the second year.

Only a few observed STAR teachers were judged to be insufficiently providing STAR instruction on a regular basis (7%). This was highly related to difficulties with implementation of managed enrollment structures and diagnostic reading assessment processes.

### Support 3:

Five team action plans were assigned after STAR Institutes to move participants along the continuum of STAR implementation. After each due date, STAR trainers met to review action plans, determine strengths and weaknesses, and develop complimentary, clarifying, or corrective comments for electronic feedback.

Across all three years of action plan review, trainers noted increases in programs' learning about how to: 1) establish and enforce managed enrollment structures, 2) develop reasonable attendance policies, 3) implement and sustain diagnostic reading assessment processes, and 4) incorporate evidence-based alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension into a reading instructional schedule or routine.

### Support 4:

These quotes from Stories of Success were selected as examples of successful programmatic implementation of EBRI:

- After one year of STAR and other changes, our consortium is *at or above* state goals for level changes in *every* category.
- STAR has empowered by teachers to do EBRI. I have seen amazing lessons in the classroom where students and teachers are engaged, learning, and excited about the four components.
- Our STAR sessions are *always* full and there is *always* a waiting list for the next session.
- Because of the STAR managed enrollment model, our program has successfully implemented other managed enrollment classes.
- We have successfully implemented managed enrollment classes – my first time after 15 years of ABE!
- As a result of being involved in STAR, our program has had to look more strategically at several issues that we have historically not talked about much. One is effective reading instruction for Intermediate level students, but managed enrollment has also been an important issue for us to consider.
- Based on the success of an afternoon STAR class, we were able to add an evening class. Core groups stick with the class; both staff and students build community as well as improve instruction.
- After using the diagnostic reading assessment we formed alphabetics and fluency groups that are a mix of Reading 1 and Reading 2 students. It has been rewarding to see learners understand the components of reading. It has been great for me to be more involved with the other teachers.

**Outcome 3:**

**The MN STAR Project positively impacts teachers' use of EBRI practices.**

**Support 1:**

The table below compares percentages of pre/post Yes responses to relevant statements from surveys collected in September (not shaded) and June (shaded) from STAR teachers in training.

Statements N=64	STAR 10		STAR 11		STAR 12	
	Sept. 09	June 10	Sept. 10	June 11	Sept. 11	June 12
I organize my reading lessons based on the strengths and needs of my Intermediate ABE students.	50	90	67	100	58	100
I teach alphabets to my Intermediate ABE students.	23	95	41	83	31	91
I teach fluency to my Intermediate ABE students.	37	95	61	96	38	91
I teach vocabulary to my Intermediate ABE students.	97	100	86	96	92	100
I teach comprehension to my Intermediate ABE students.	97	95	90	87	92	100

The percentages for teaching alphabets and fluency document that participation in STAR trainings and TA substantially increased instruction of these components. This is very positive considering that an adult literacy study (Strucker & Davidson, 2003) determined the primary needs of Intermediate-level students were in fluency, academic vocabulary, and to a lesser degree, alphabets.

The percentages for teaching vocabulary and comprehension do not document substantial changes in practice. It's likely that STAR teachers were already providing vocabulary and comprehension instruction to their Intermediate-level readers and maintained those practices while incorporating alphabets and fluency instruction into their routines.

## Support 2:

The table below presents relevant percentages based on coordinator ratings of 2<sup>nd</sup> year observation feedback notes. The questions focused on implementation of the four explicit instruction steps (see underlined words). The rating *not applicable* was used when a step was not observed during the hour-long observation.

Questions N=42	% Completely	% Partially	% Insuffi- ciently	% Not applicable
Were reading skills or concepts <u>explained</u> by the teacher?	67	2	0	31
Were reading skills or concepts <u>modeled</u> or demonstrated by the teacher?	76	22	0	2
Were ample <u>guided practice</u> activities provided by the teacher?	81	19	0	0
Was the teacher monitoring <u>application</u> of taught reading skills or concepts?	62	12	2	24

Overall, the results are very positive. The majority of STAR teachers were implementing the steps of explicit instruction as needed. In fact, many report that understanding explicit instruction has transformed the way they teach not only reading, but math and writing too.

Explanation, defined as introducing a new skill, technique, or strategy by telling what, why, and how was not observed as frequently (67%) as modeling or guided practice (76% and 81%, respectively). This is likely because most observations were completed mid-week or mid-session and explanation is typically provided at the beginning of a new session, week, or series of lessons. If this appeared to be the case, it was rated as not applicable (31%).

Monitoring and/or application activities, defined as independent assignment completion or checking, verbal feedback, or comprehension checking, was also not observed as frequently (62%) as modeling or guided practice. This is probably because students were not always ready for application or independent work during the 45-60 minute observation. If this appeared to be the case, it was rated as not applicable (24%).

### Support 3:

These quotes from annual Stories of Success were selected as examples of teachers' successful use of EBRI practices.

- The STAR program has helped me to include all four components in my lesson plans and has me to specifically identify student weaknesses and adjust my lesson plans accordingly. The result has been TABE test level gains. One student made 3 level gains on his last test!
- Student buy-in during [diagnostic reading assessment] encourages understanding. In turn, student put forth effort with an open mind and without complaint. Then they move up.
- Teaching has been my profession for 35 years (yikes, can it be?!?!) and I think I'm a good teacher. However, in STAR the focus on EBRI/explicit instruction has revolutionized my teaching. There is now always a tape that plays in my head when I'm teaching (not just STAR but all subjects)... "Did I provide enough guided practice?" etc.
- I have had what I would consider great success with a STAR vocabulary class. The students are very engaged and really learn the words. I have appreciated the opportunity to learn new and better ways to help students.
- Using STAR has given my class a much more predictable structure.
- As a high school teacher for many years, I had always taught vocabulary in my English classes. However, implementing the STAR vocabulary techniques has drastically improved my instruction and the students' enthusiasm, motivation, and comprehension of vocabulary lessons.
- I have a ways to go in creating a regular STAR class in our evening basic skills program, but the knowledge I have acquired regarding EBRI and the components of reading instruction has helped me in my current classes of science, MED terms, and Pre-CNA.

**Outcome 4:**

**The MN STAR Project positively impacts students' learning outcomes.**

**Support 1:**

The table below presents percentages from STAR 11 student surveys created by MN STAR Teacher Team to capture student input about the effectiveness of STAR instruction. Paper copies were disseminated to STAR teachers, students completed the paper survey under teacher direction, and over two hundred completed surveys were mailed to the coordinator for tallying and calculation. Teachers were encouraged to review and reflect upon students' responses before mailing their surveys to the coordinator.

**STAR 11 Student Survey**

<b>Statements N=200</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% No</b>
I can sound out words more easily.	94	6
I can spell words more easily.	81	19
I can read out loud more correctly and smoothly.	88	12
I know and understand more words when I read orally and silently.	92	8
I better understand the meaning of sentences and paragraphs.	91	9
I feel better and more confident about my reading skills.	92	8

Based on a collective review of the results, Teacher Team concluded that:

1. Most STAR students benefit from alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction.
2. Most STAR students feel more confident about their overall reading skills.

The table below presents percentages from STAR 12 Student Surveys. The process of dissemination, collection, tallying, and calculation remained the same; however, the survey format was modified by Teacher Team in two ways:

- The “I” statements were changed to “This class” because some English Language Learners (ELLs) appeared to have difficulty judging their performance; they tended to respond according to what they thought the teacher needed or wanted to hear.
- The “Yes/No” scale was changed to “Often/Sometimes/Seldom” because it appeared that both ELLs and native English speaking students had a hard time deciding between just yes or no. Three choices gave them a wider set of responses.

### STAR 12 Student Survey

Statements N=250	% Often	% Some- times	% Seldom
This class helps me sound out words more easily.	82	17	1
This class helps me spell words more easily.	71	26	3
This class helps me read out loud more correctly and smoothly.	84	14	2
This class helps me know and understand more words when I read orally and silently.	80	18	2
This class helps me better understand the meaning of sentences and paragraphs.	81	17	2
This class helps me feel better and more confident about my reading skills.	87	12	1

Again, based on a collective review of the results, Teacher Team’s conclusions were:

1. Most STAR students benefit from differentiated instruction in the four reading components.
2. Results from the revised rating scale were a more accurate and realistic portrayal of how STAR class often, but not always, helps with reading skill improvement. Variables include entry skill levels, commitment to STAR class, length of time in STAR class, and overall attendance.

Most inspiring from both surveys were the high percentages for question #6: “I feel or this class helps me feel better and more confident about my reading skills” (92% and 87%, respectively). Across two years, STAR students report being highly satisfied with STAR classes and their progress in reading skills.

**Support 2:**

The table below compares level completion rates between STAR students and the total Low/High Intermediate ABE student population attending the same program. When the rate for STAR students was higher than the rate for all Intermediate-level students, it favored that STAR program for level completion.

Program & Location	# STAR Students	# STAR Level Completers	% STAR Level Completers	% Total Int.-Level Completers	% Difference	Favors
A: rural	4	3	75	26.9	+48.1	STAR
B: suburban	62	39	62.9	23.6	+39.3	STAR
C: suburban	40	27	67.5	40.6	+26.9	STAR
D: urban	40	21	52.5	35.2	+17.3	STAR
E: rural	9	5	55.6	40.9	+14.7	STAR
F: suburban	65	35	53.8	43.2	+10.6	STAR
G: suburban	105	50	47.6	37.4	+10.2	STAR
H: suburban	94	36	38.3	33.8	+4.5	STAR
I: suburban	53	17	32.1	30.7	+1.4	STAR
J: urban	102	23	22.5	28	-5.5	Non-STAR

The consultant’s conclusion was: “In general, [STAR] students taking TABE [Reading] appear to respond favorably to STAR instruction as measured by level completions vs. the general [Low and High Intermediate ABE] student population in most ABE programs.”

More specifically:

- Five of ten programs had substantially higher STAR completion rates compared to their total Low/High Intermediate rate.
- Four of ten programs had slightly higher STAR completion rates compared to their total Low/High Intermediate rate. Due to database limitations, Program I (+1.4%) was not as compliant with the request to track STAR students separately.
- One of ten programs had a slightly lower STAR completion rate compared to its total Low/High Intermediate rate. Program J (-5.5%) was also not as compliant with the request to track STAR students separately.

### Support 3:

The table below compares results from survival analysis, a statistical approach for determining “who lives or lasts longer” in populations. Lifelines for STAR and non-STAR students were estimated by taking the difference in days between their first and last days of class. When the median number of days for STAR students was greater than the median number for non-STAR students, it favored that STAR program for persistence.

<b>Program &amp; Location</b>	<b>STAR Median (Days)</b>	<b>Non-STAR Median (Days)</b>	<b>Favors</b>
D: urban	1225	120	STAR
B: suburban	335	71	STAR
G: suburban	267	97	STAR
J: urban	254	147	STAR
F: suburban	125	336	Non-STAR
E: rural	77	78	Neither

The consultant’s conclusion was: “Four of five larger [urban or suburban] programs showed a difference between STAR and non-STAR persistence. Assuming a lack of programmatic bias, students introduced to STAR show evidence of staying longer in their program.”

Program F had a high level of persistence in general compared to the other programs, but there is no obvious explanation for the favoring of non-STAR students. Program E, the only rural program in the group, did not show a statistically significant difference between STAR and non-STAR student survival.

The consultant’s overall conclusion from his statistical analysis of pre/post TABE or CASAS Reading scores and student attendance for STAR and non-STAR students was: “There is evidence that STAR instruction positively influences student completion rates and persistence for the majority of teachers/ ABE programs.”

#### **Support 4:**

These quotes from Stories of Success were selected as examples of students’ learning outcomes.

- A 55-year old man in STAR class was telling me how excited he was about the class because they were reading a book he really liked, and he’s never read a book in his life.
- I had a student who came to me with a very negative attitude as a result of unfortunate educational experiences. He had so much test anxiety that he had to take a break during diagnostic STAR testing! He began to feel more at ease and worked hard. On the next TABE test, he finished for the first time and went from a TABE 0.4 to 8.0!
- A student came to STAR class as a very reluctant reader –low confidence, always putting himself down. In 6 weeks, comprehension increased from 5.2 to 8.4 (TABE pre/post tests).
- We have many students on their third or fourth attempt at returning to school staying and progressing in reading skills and test scores rather than stopping or dropping out.
- A [student] came in homeless, poor study skills, reading and math scores. [She] is now in an apartment, scores have increased to the point that she’s taking her first GED practice test next week.
- Alphabetics has made a huge impact on my students. English Language Learners have rules to understand rather than just being told that English is a “melting pot” of different languages and confusing. It simplifies English for them – they love it and it’s improved their spelling, pronunciation, and reading.
- One of my STAR students remarked how far he has come since coming to my class (he got a level change), and told me he enjoys reading for the first time in his life.
- Recently, I had a student who started by class with a TABE of 6.5. By learning to apply STAR strategies he was able to bring his TABE score up, take the NCRC test, and he received a promotion at work.

## Next Steps

MN STAR Leadership is encouraged by these positive teacher, program, and student outcomes. Evidence from our mixed method of evaluation affirms that MN STAR PD is meeting the purposes of the National STAR Project and making a difference for struggling adult readers.

Presently, a five-year strategic plan for MN STAR is under construction. This long-range planning process will continue into the fall and winter of 2012. An addendum to this report will be available in early 2013 from the author. In the meantime, the following organizational and training structures are recommended for continuation into STAR 13, beginning on July 1, 2012:

- Full-time coordination of a meetings, trainings, evaluation, resource development, and communication with Project STAR - with Trainer assistance as needed
- Centralized TA delivery via coordinator replies to emails/phone calls and facilitation of onsite meetings - with trainer assistance as needed
- Monthly Executive Leadership Team meetings to provide direction, oversight, and evaluation planning
- Quarterly Leadership Team meetings to provide updates, direction, and evaluation review
- Quarterly Teacher Team meetings to provide ideas for TA, All-STARs, and resource development
- Pre and post STAR Institute trainer meetings to plan Institutes and generate ideas for TA and All-STARs
- Four STAR Institutes offered over seven days to new participants
- Two All-STARs offered in the fall and spring to continuing participants

It is also recommended that a mixed method of evaluation continue into STAR 13. This includes collection tools and processes such as:

- STAR Institute paper evaluations
- Teacher surveys
- Trainer action and lesson plan review
- Coordinator onsite or video-taped observations
- Collection of Stories of Success
- Student surveys
- Analysis of TABE/CASAS pre and post testing
- Analysis of student attendance

Finally, our request to access student databases for MN STAR evaluation has resulted in consideration of system changes to better link teacher PD to student learning outcomes. It is our hope that this will improve and streamline MN project evaluation in the future.

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## APPENDIX A: Programs, Locations, and Classes

Predicted for September, 2012

\*STAR class offered on a MN State Colleges and University system campus

STAR Consortia or Program	STAR Site Locations	Number of STAR Classes
Adult Options in Education (AOIE)	Hopkins, St. Louis Park	3
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)	Aitkin, Cloquet, Fond du Lac* (pending)	2-3
Carver Scott Educational Cooperative	Chanhassen, Chaska, Shakopee	3
Cass Lake-Bena ABE	Cass Lake	one-to-one instruction
Central MN ABE (East Region)	Cambridge*	1
Department of Corrections (DOC)	Faribault, Rush City	3-4
Glacial Lakes ABE	Litchfield, Cokato	one-to-one instruction
Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning	St. Paul	2
Metro North ABE	Anoka*, Blaine, Brooklyn Center, Columbia Heights, Elk River, Forest Lake, St. Francis	9-10
Minneapolis ABE	Hennepin County Government Center, Northside, Southside	3-4
Moorhead ABE	Moorhead	2
Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC)	Crookston, East Grand Forks, Thief River Falls*, Warroad	1 and some one-to-one instruction
Osseo Adult and Family Learning	Brooklyn Park	4
Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program	Brooklyn Park*, Robbinsdale	7-8
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan (RAVE)	Apple Valley, Rosemount	2-3
Metro South ABE	Bloomington, Eden Prairie* (pending)	3
South East ABE	Austin*	1
South Suburban ABE	South St. Paul, West St. Paul	3
South Washington County ABE	Cottage Grove, Woodbury	3
<b>TOTAL=19</b>	<b>TOTAL=41</b>	<b>TOTAL=50+</b>

## APPENDIX B: Teacher Survey

Statements	Yes	No
1. I can describe the four components of reading and how they are related.		
2. I can describe the key elements of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI).		
3. I administer diagnostic reading assessments (besides CASAS and TABE) to my intermediate students.		
4. I can interpret diagnostic reading assessments and determine strengths and needs of my intermediate ABE students.		
5. I organize my reading lessons based on the strengths and needs of my intermediate ABE students.		
6. I teach alphabets to my intermediate ABE students.		
7. I teach fluency to my intermediate ABE students.		
8. I teach vocabulary to my intermediate ABE students.		
9. I teach comprehension to my intermediate ABE students.		
10. I have support for learning and applying evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.		
11. I have time to plan and deliver evidence -based reading instruction in my classroom.		
12. I have materials to deliver evidence-based reading instruction in my classroom.		

## APPENDIX C: Teacher Lesson Plan Template

Name:

Program:

**Check the component:** \_\_\_ Alphabetics \_\_\_ Fluency \_\_\_ Vocabulary \_\_\_ Comprehension

**Check the format:** \_\_\_ Large group \_\_\_ Small group \_\_\_ Individual

**Grouping:** How will you use diagnostic reading assessment results to form an alphabetics (or vocabulary, fluency, or comprehension) group?

**Purpose:** What ONE alphabetics (or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) concept, skill, or strategy will you teach?

**Materials:** What published or teacher-made materials will you use?

**Explanation:** What will **you tell** students about the purpose (why) and process (how) of alphabetics (or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) instruction?

**Modeling:** What is your “I” step? What will **you do and say** to model or demonstrate the alphabetics (or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) concept, skill, or strategy?

**Guided Practice:** What is your “We” step? What will **students do with you** to practice the alphabetics( or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) concept, skill, or strategy?

**Application:** What is your “You” step? What will **students do independently** to apply the alphabetics ( or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) concept, skill, or strategy?

**Monitoring:** How will **you check** on progress or mastery of the alphabetics (or vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) concept, skill, or strategy?

## APPENDIX D: Team Action Plan 1 Template

Program:

State: Minnesota

Date goal set:

Goal: Establish managed enrollment structures and attendance policies to support evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) and STAR class(es)

Steps:

1. What existing ABE/ESL/GED classes will be your “pool” of possible STAR students?
2. How long will your STAR classes be? (1-3 hours?)
3. How often will your STAR classes meet? (1-5x/week)
4. How long will your STAR sessions be? (3-12 weeks?)
5. When will new students join STAR classes? Will you have a waiting list?
6. How often will students be expected to attend? (75%-100%)
7. How will you enforce your attendance policy?
8. How will you explain managed enrollment and attendance expectations to students?
9. What classroom alternatives to the managed STAR class will you offer?
10. How will you “tag” STAR classes in the MABE or MARCS database systems?
11. Who is responsible for each step?
12. What state supports will you need?

## APPENDIX E: Team Action Plan 2 Template

Program:

State: Minnesota

Date goal set:

Goal: Conduct diagnostic reading assessments with potential STAR students to determine their strengths and needs

Steps:

1. How will students be selected for diagnostic reading assessment?
2. What diagnostic reading assessments will you use?
3. Who will conduct diagnostic reading assessments?
4. When will they occur?
5. Where will they occur?
6. How will they be organized?
7. How will you share results with students?
8. How will you use results to plan reading instruction?
9. What process and staffing will you need to sustain diagnostic reading assessment?
10. How can you use support staff or volunteers?
11. Who is responsible for each step?
12. What state supports will you need?

## APPENDIX F: Teacher Observation Notes

(During onsite or video-taped observation)

STAR Implementation Goals	Notes	Questions
1. Are managed enrollment structures and policies in place to support EBRI?		
2. Is reading instruction prioritized and planned according to diagnostic reading assessment results?		
3. Were reading skills or concepts explained by the teacher?		
4. Were reading skills or concepts modeled or demonstrated by the teacher?		
5. Were ample guided practice activities provided by the teacher?		
6. Was the teacher monitoring application of taught reading skills or concepts?		
7. <b>Overall</b> , was the reading instruction explicit, effective, and engaging?		
8. <b>Overall</b> , was there an organized reading routine based on students' reader profiles?		

**APPENDIX G: Teacher Observation Feedback**  
(After onsite or video-taped observation)

STAR Implementation Goals	Comments	Recommendations
1. Are managed enrollment structures and policies in place to support EBRI?		
2. Is reading instruction prioritized and planned according to diagnostic reading assessment results?		
3. Were reading skills or concepts explained by the teacher?		
4. Were reading skills or concepts modeled or demonstrated by the teacher?		
5. Were ample guided practice activities provided by the teacher?		
6. Was the teacher monitoring application of taught reading skills or concepts?		
7. <b>Overall</b> , was the reading instruction explicit, effective, and engaging?		
8. <b>Overall</b> , was there an organized reading routine based on students' reader profiles?		

## APPENDIX H: Coordinator Observation Rubric

<b>STAR Implementation Goals</b>	<b>Completely implemented:</b> All recommended practices in place; no need for Trainer TA	<b>Partially implemented:</b> Some recommended practices in place; needs Trainer clarification	<b>Insufficiently implemented:</b> Few to no recommended practices in place; needs Trainer or Toolkit review	<b>Not applicable:</b> Recommended practices not applicable during the observed lesson
1. Are managed enrollment structures and policies in place to support EBRI?				
2. Is reading instruction prioritized and planned according to diagnostic reading assessment results?				
3. Were reading skills or concepts explained by the teacher?				
4. Were reading skills or concepts modeled or demonstrated by the teacher?				
5. Were ample guided practice activities provided by the teacher?				
6. Was the teacher monitoring application of taught reading skills or concepts?				
7. <b>Overall</b> , was there an organized reading routine based on students' reader profiles?				

## APPENDIX I: Student Surveys

### STAR 11

**Directions:** The purpose of this survey is to find out if you think your reading skills have improved from reading class. Please listen carefully as your teacher reads the six statements; then mark **X** under **Yes** or **No** for each. Thank you for your time and answers!

Statements	Yes	No
1. I can sound out words more easily.		
2. I can spell words more easily.		
3. I read out loud more correctly and smoothly.		
4. I know and understand more words when I read orally and silently.		
5. I can sound out words more easily.		
6. I can spell words more easily.		

### STAR 12

**Directions:** The purpose of this survey is to find out if you think reading class has improved your reading skills. Please listen carefully as your teacher reads the six statements; then mark **X** under **Often**, **Sometimes**, or **Seldom** for each. Thank you for your time and answers!

Statements	Often	Some- times	Seldom
1. This class helps me sound out words more easily.			
2. This class helps me spell words more easily.			
3. This class helps me read out loud more correctly and smoothly.			
4. This class helps me know and understand more words when I read orally and silently.			
5. This class helps me better understand the meaning of sentences and paragraphs.			
6. This class helps me feel better and more confident about my reading skills.			

## APPENDIX J: Participant Agreement

Name:

Program:

Preferred email address:

Preferred phone number:

**Purpose:** To document MN STAR participants' understanding of training year responsibilities, expectations, and consequences.

**Directions:** Please read and check off all ten MN STAR responsibilities or expectations. Then sign and date at the bottom and return to Marn Frank as described on page 1. Thank you for your time and commitment!

**I agree to fulfill the following responsibilities beginning in September, 2012 and continuing through June, 2013. Failure to uphold this agreement may result in my discontinuance in the MN STAR Project.**

- Attend and participate in all 4 STAR Institutes scheduled for September 20-21, 2012, November 15-16, 2012, February 8, 2013, and April 11-12, 2013 (tentative date depending on spring breaks).
- As directed by Project STAR, set up a STAR Toolkit account in September, 2012 and spend time on the STAR Toolkit before and/or after each scheduled STAR Institute.
- Participate in action planning and implementation of structures and policies that support STAR classes (Assignment 1).
- Participate in action planning, conducting, and interpreting of diagnostic reading assessments to determine STAR students' reading strengths and weaknesses (Assignment 2).
- Participate in action planning and delivery of evidence-based reading instruction in alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Assignments 3, 5, 7).
- Develop (teacher) or support (administrator) three explicit lesson plans for alphabetics or vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction (Assignments 4, 6, and 8).
- Electronically submit all eight assignments using the assignment templates on time according to announced due dates (or stipends will be reduced).
- Respond or reply to all technical assistance or evaluation requests from STAR Leadership, Coordinator, or Trainers in a timely manner (within 3-5 business days).
- Meet with STAR Team (and STAR Coordinator if appropriate) to discuss STAR implementation challenges, possible solutions, and next steps.
- Cooperate with STAR Administrator to complete observations of STAR instruction and identify strengths and weaknesses in placement, grouping, prioritizing, and delivery of explicit instruction.

## APPENDIX K: Participant Continuance Agreement

### Introduction and Rationale

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) in the U.S. Department of Education is committed to improving the quality of reading instruction in adult education. To this end, OVAE and the National STAR Training Network (NSTN), an organization encompassing national reading experts, federal policymakers, and adult education practitioners, work in partnership to support implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) and the STAR Model.

As members of NSTN, Minnesota STAR Leadership Team is obligated to “expand and ensure the integrity of evidence-based reading practices and contribute to long-term sustainability of STAR implementation” (Cheryl Keenan, OVAE Director). To this end, STAR Leadership Team and ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS) are committed to supporting Minnesota STARs beyond their training year. We fully realize that sustaining the evidence-based, STAR Model *and* achieving level change outcomes require intensive, ongoing, professional development (PD) activities and technical assistance (TA) support.

However, ATLAS, a supplemental services provider receiving grant funding from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), must be fiscally responsible and accountable for all investments and activities related to the Minnesota STAR Project. Therefore, STAR Leadership Team and ATLAS request that all STAR-trained Administrators and Teachers re-commit annually to sustaining the evidence-based, STAR Model by completing a **Participant Continuance Agreement** and submitting to the STAR Coordinator by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each STAR year (see page 2).

- Completion and timely submission of this agreement will result in your continued participation in all aspects of the Minnesota STAR Project:
  - 24/7 access to the secure, online STAR Toolkit
  - 24/7 access to password-protected ATLAS/STAR resources
  - Responsive, in-person or electronic support provided by the certified STAR Coordinator and/or certified STAR trainers
  - Invitation to fall and spring All-STAR reunion trainings
  - Possible opportunities to participate in STAR Leadership activities
- Non-completion of this agreement indicates that you cannot *currently* commit to sustaining the evidence-based, STAR Model. Consequently, your participation in all aspects of the Minnesota STAR Project listed above will be discontinued.
- If your administrative or teaching circumstances change, you may re-engage in the Minnesota STAR Project by contacting Marn Frank, STAR Coordinator, via email or phone to discuss your participation and completion of the agreement.
- In the meantime, STAR Leadership Team and ATLAS encourage you to use and improve your knowledge of evidence-based and explicit reading instructional practices. Many of these universal, best practices are applicable to math and writing as well. Thank you for your time and effort.

## For Completion and Submission

**Directions:** Read and discuss the eight Minnesota STAR Project continuance goals and expectations as a STAR Team (or individually, if more appropriate); each STAR Teacher needs to sign and date an agreement to document his/her commitment; STAR Administrators need to co-sign each agreement to document his/her support of continuance. Thank you for your commitment.

**As a Minnesota STAR, I commit to sustaining the evidence-based, STAR Model and fulfilling the following goals and expectations to the best of my current circumstances and abilities:**

- Continue establishment or enforcement of managed enrollment structures and policies that support delivery of EBRI and STAR classes.
- Continue or ensure conduction of diagnostic reading assessments with potential STAR students to determine strengths and weaknesses in alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Continue or ensure delivery of research- or expert-based STAR techniques for alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction within STAR classes.
- Continue or ensure organization of STAR reading routines for alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension based on students' assessed needs and instructional priorities.
- Request technical assistance (TA) support via email or phone regarding STAR implementation problems and challenges *before* they become overwhelming; and as needed, meet with the STAR Coordinator to generate possible solutions and next steps.
- Respond to electronic or phone technical assistance or evaluation requests (check-ins, surveys, etc.) from STAR Leadership, Coordinator, or Trainers in a timely manner (within 5-7 business days).
- Participate in an onsite or distance STAR observation and feedback conference intended to promote continuous improvement of the evidence-based, STAR Model.
- Distance and budget permitting, attend fall and spring All-STAR trainings and/or Administrator Minds meetings intended to re-unite, re-train, and re-energize continuing Minnesota STARs.

