

**STAR STUDY CIRCLES FACILITATORS GUIDE:
SUMMER 2006**

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is Project STAR?

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), is working to infuse evidence-based practices into state professional development delivery systems and adult basic education (ABE) classrooms. Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) is a pilot project designed to improve classroom instruction by using a toolkit and training package that translates reading research into practice. The project has engaged six states in implementing systemic reform in evidence-based reading instruction. A National Technical Assistance Team (NTAT), with broad expertise in reading research, adult education, teacher training, and system change, was created to develop the Toolkit and implement the pilot project.

The STAR Toolkit is designed to be a companion resource to professional development that assists teachers as they implement evidence-based reading instruction. The Toolkit provides a teacher friendly approach to reading instruction for intermediate-level ABE students (Grade Level Equivalent 4.0-8.9). It reflects a balance of empirical evidence and professional wisdom about reading practices. The reading components of alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are clarified in easy to understand explanations with examples of teaching practices that meet learners' diverse instructional needs. The assessment and instructional tools related to each component are materials teachers can "use on Monday" with intermediate-level students who have different strengths and needs in particular reading skills. At the center of its development, the Toolkit was created to enable teachers to make the most effective instructional decisions for their students.

How is Project STAR using Study Circles?

Project STAR uses Study Circles as a vehicle for providing professional development for STAR program and state administrators. STAR Study Circles create a forum for administrators to explore key implementation issues in a collaborative setting. The goals of the STAR Study Circles are to:

- Introduce administrators to important research on practical issues they face in their day-to-day implementation of STAR;
- Facilitate cross-site and cross-state sharing of experiences, discussion of problems, and identification of successful strategies and practices; and
- Generate concrete, research-based plans for implementing change in adult education reading programs.

What is a Study Circle? ¹

A number of education organizations have utilized Study Circles as a vehicle for collaborative learning and planning. These Study Circles share several common characteristics that are replicated in the STAR model. A Study Circle:

- Is a process for small-group learning that is voluntary and participatory;
- Is a small group, usually 8 to 12 individuals, who may volunteer or be selected to participate;
- Is led by a facilitator who is impartial, who helps manage the learning process,
- Considers many perspectives, rather than advocating a particular point of view;
- Uses ground rules to set the tone for a respectful, productive discussion;
- Is rooted in dialogue, not debate;
- Has multiple sessions which move from personal experience of the issue, to considering multiple viewpoints, to strategies for action; and
- Does not require consensus, but uncovers areas of agreement and common concern.

What distinguishes STAR Study Circles from other Study Circles?

- STAR Study Circles are different from other Study Circle models because they are administered online, thus, eliminating the need for co-located meetings and enabling professionals to connect with their peers across state lines. STAR Study Circles are run as “virtual learning communities,” in which 8 to 12 administrators volunteer to interact through online, asynchronous discussions moderated by a facilitator. After an initial conference call designed to set expectations, describe procedures, and make introductions, all activity in the Study Circle occurs online at the convenience of the participant (within a general set of overall parameters established by the facilitator). The facilitator selects and assigns current research-based reading material, monitors participants’ online postings, and assists the group in achieving its objectives – both individually and collectively. Participants in the Study Circle:
- Discuss (through online postings) assigned readings related to current research on the selected topic;
- Develop and post case studies describing current, real-world challenges they face;
- Provide feedback and suggested solutions to other members of the Study Circle on how they might overcome their challenges; and

¹ © 1998 by Topsfield Foundation. Reprinted with permission from *A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators* by the Study Circles Resource Center, P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258, (860) 928-2616, Fax (860) 928-3713, e-mail: scrc@neca.com.

- Craft and post specific plans for implementing adult education reading reforms at their program site or in their state.

What is studied?

Study Circles, unlike workshop-based trainings, are built around reading texts and discussing them, as opposed to being built on the specific knowledge of a particular trainer. In other words, the information and knowledge in online Study Circles comes from articles, monographs and other research reports, and from the participants' reflection on the content of the articles and their knowledge of what works in their classrooms and programs. The STAR Study Circles were designed to provide STAR program administrators with the opportunity to read, discuss, and reflect upon the best available empirical research on four important topics in the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI): professional development, diagnostic assessment, supports for classroom teachers, and managing enrollment.

Who facilitates the STAR Study Circles?

STAR Study Circles are facilitated by one or two individuals with extensive experience and knowledge in the domain of adult education and literacy.

Facilitators should:

- Be interested in the topic of professional development and have some experience planning and conducting professional development;
- Have experience utilizing technology to deliver professional development;
- Have read all of the readings and be familiar with the issues; and
- Be available to check the STAR Study Circle Web site everyday, as well as respond to individual queries.

What kind of platform is used for STAR Study Circles?

STAR Study Circles take place on a Web site built through an online platform called CommunityZero. CommunityZero is an interactive Web site that allows a group of people to communicate and exchange information over the Internet in their own private and secure area. Within each area, called an online community, participants have access to an array of powerful tools that enable a group to effectively organize themselves share knowledge and communicate. CommunityZero is targeted specifically at supporting peer collaboration, and includes file sharing, online discussion, and facilitator administration capabilities. Participants do not need to install software, nor do they need specialized training in how to navigate the platform.

What will I find in this guide?

This guide provides all the information that you need to plan and administer your own Study Circles on the topics of professional development, diagnostic assessment, supports

for classroom teachers, and managing enrollment. Each section of this guide provides an outline of key steps involved in preparing to launch a STAR Study Circle. In addition, reading lists, facilitator biographies, weekly assignments, case study, and implementation plan templates from the original STAR Study Circles are included. Finally, the guide includes an Appendix with information on the CommunityZero platform, sample letters to Study Circle participants, proposed weekly agendas, and suggested evaluation questions.

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY CIRCLE

This section of the guide provides the directions and materials that you will need to plan and administer a Study Circle on the topic of professional development for adult educators as it relates to the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). This Study Circle has been designed to assist state and local program administrators in identifying and implementing the types of professional development that will best support their teachers in using EBRI in their classrooms.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Describe recent research in professional development;
- State whether and how the findings from such research are relevant and applicable to adult basic education and to their particular program context, specifically how professional development would support changes indicated by STAR;
- Create a plan for next steps for professional development within their own program, based on the research; and
- Call upon an informal network of peers made up of the participants in the online Study Circle and available experts.

Facilitator Preparation

Based on knowledge gained from previous STAR Study Circles, facilitators should set aside two to three work days over the course of three to four weeks to develop a reading list, weekly assignments and activities. In preparation for the Study Circle, you will:

- Create a reading list. For your convenience, a suggested reading list on the topic of professional development is included in this section.
- Develop guiding questions and weekly assignments to stimulate discussion about the readings and to support participants in applying what they have learned in their programs. This section also includes guiding questions for the proposed reading lists.
- Familiarize yourself with CommunityZero – the online platform used to conduct STAR Study Circles. A guide to CommunityZero’s features appears in the Appendix.

For additional information on planning your Study Circle, please refer to the Sample Study Circle Work Plan located in the Appendix.

Participant Preparation

Based on findings from Study Circles conducted through the STAR pilot program, it is anticipated that participants will spend 2- 2 1/2 hours per week, for a total of 12-13 hours over the course of the Study Circle. Encourage participants to familiarize themselves with the CommunityZero Web site, login process, and introductory materials at least ten days before the Study Circle is scheduled to begin.

Helpful Hints for Administrators and Facilitators

You may want to send an email to participants before the Study Circle begins to introduce yourself, encourage everyone to log on to the CommunityZero, and to offer assistance in the event that participants have questions about the content or technical aspects of the Study Circle. A sample introductory letter appears in the Appendix.

Study Circle Facilitators

Cristine Smith, Deputy Director, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). Cristine Smith is a Senior Program Officer at World Education (since 1988), a Boston-based non-profit organization that provides training and technical assistance to adult education projects in the U.S., Asia, and Latin America. She currently serves as Deputy Director of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), a U.S. Department of Education research center focused on adult learning. Her areas of expertise include dissemination, connecting research and practice, professional development, evaluation and research, training development and design, publication production, and project management.

Dr. Smith holds an Ed.D. in International Education from the University of Massachusetts, a master's degree in Adult and Continuing Education from Cornell University, and two bachelors' degrees (English and Linguistics).

Beth Bingman, Associate Director, Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee. Beth Bingman is an associate director of the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee. Her work there currently includes coordination of the NCSALL work Connecting Practice, Policy and Research and development of training resources for Equipped for the Future. She has published and presented at state and national conferences on professional development and on assessment and accountability. She holds a Ph.D. with a concentration on adult education from the University of Tennessee. Before coming to the Center for Literacy Studies, Dr. Bingman worked as a county coordinator for a literacy program in Virginia.

Professional Development Reading List

This reading list is thought to represent the best available research on professional development as it relates to adult education.

- Week One: Bingman, M. & Smith, C. (in press). Professional development and evidence-based practice in adult education. In H. Beder & A. Belzer (Eds.), *Improving quality in adult education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Week Two: Smith, C., & Gillespie, M. (in press). Research on professional development and teacher change: Implications for adult basic education. *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, 7. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Week Three: Taylor, B.M., Pearson, P.D., Peterson, D.S., & Rodriguez, M.C. (2005). The CIERA School Change Framework: An evidence-based approach to professional development and school reading improvement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(1), pp. 40-69.
- Week Four: Taylor, J., Smith, C., & Bingman, M.B. (2005). *Program administrators' sourcebook: A resource on NCSALL's research for adult education program administrators*. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Smith, C., & Hofer, J. (2003). *The characteristics and concerns of adult basic education teachers*. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Smith, C., Hofer, J., Gillespie, M., Solomon, M. & Rowe, K. (2003). *How teachers change: A study of professional development in adult education*. (Report Summary). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.
- Week Five: Smith, M.C., & Rose, A. (2002). Using a learning organization approach to enhance ABE teachers' professional development. *Focus on Basics*, 5(D).

Week One Readings and Activities

Read:

Bingman, M. & Smith, C. (in press). Professional development and evidence-based practice in adult education. In H. Beder & A. Belzer (Eds.), *Improving quality in adult education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

To Do:

- Review the Study Circle Users Guide and log on to CommunityZero.
- Post answers to the following questions about Who You Are:
 - How long have you been a program administrator or professional developer?

- Do you hold a full-time or part-time position in your program?
- How long have you been in the field of adult education?
- What state are you from?
- Were you a K-12 teacher or an adult educator before you became a program administrator or professional developer?
- What is one thing about your state that you think everyone else doesn't know and should know?
- What's one thing about you as a person that you think everyone should know?
- Read (but don't write answers to) the guiding questions about the Bingman & Smith reading:
 - Thinking about the stances for how practitioners would be prepared to use research (questioners, consumers, producers), what do you think your stance is, and what would you guess are the stance(s) of the teachers in your program? How do you feel your teachers would respond to these stances: "research is useless" and "research can be useful"?
 - The definition of evidence-based practice includes professional wisdom. How do you see "integrating" professional wisdom with the empirical evidence from the research on reading instruction in your program? How could you/do you help teachers accomplish this?
 - This paper claims that for teachers to utilize research and change practice, they need to access, understand, judge and use research. How has that happened or could that happen in your own program? What might you need to do as a program director to encourage each of those components?

Week Two Readings and Activities

Read:

Smith, C., & Gillespie, M. (in press). Research on professional development and teacher change: Implications for adult basic education. *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, 7. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

To Do:

- Complete the guiding questions about the Smith & Gillespie reading:
 - Traditional vs. job-embedded: What's your experience with these two models of professional development (PD)? Has anyone been involved in job-embedded PD, and could you comment on it? What questions do you have about traditional PD and how it can be effective, and what questions do you have about job-embedded and how it can be effective?

- If your experience has mostly or entirely been in the traditional PD, what are your thoughts about the relative effectiveness of these two? What are your thoughts about organizing these two? Would job-embedded PD be feasible in your program?
- Write and post your case study using the Case Study Template.
- Participate in Week Two Conference Call.

Week Two Conference Call

Agenda

- Introduction: Participants
- Orientation: Study Circle objectives, format and assignments
- Discussion: What is a Study Circle?
- Review: What are the expectations for this online Study Circle?
- Group Discussion: What kinds of professional development do you currently offer to your instructors? What kinds of professional will be required to implement changes indicated by the STAR project? What challenges may you face in delivering this professional development?
- Discussion: Bingman and Smith reading on professional development and evidence-based practice
- Discussion: Week One assignments

Week Three Readings and Assignments

Read:

Taylor, B.M., Pearson, P.D., Peterson, D.S., & Rodriguez, M.C. (2005). The CIERA School Change Framework: An evidence-based approach to professional development and school reading improvement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(1), pp. 40-69.

To Do:

- Comment on the common challenges you saw in each other's case studies.
- Complete the guiding questions on the Taylor, Pearson, Peterson & Rodriguez reading:
 - Research on effective schools indicates that the following elements are important: Strong leadership; Strong staff collaboration; On-going professional development; Teachers sharing student assessment data; and Priority on improved student learning. To what extent do you agree that these elements would be important in an effective adult education program? To what extent are they

present in your program(s)? What would you need to put into place to support these elements in your program(s)?

- As part of their professional development and study groups, teachers in the CIERA project examined and analyzed student achievement data. Have you attempted or had any success in your program helping teachers to use student data (either examples of student work or test scores or other types of data)?

The job-embedded professional development in the CIERA project included a school leadership team and an external facilitator; small study groups of teachers that read and discussed the reading research, watched and shared videos, searched for information on the internet, and problem-solved; looking at student data; classroom observations and getting feedback; large group discussions of what teachers in study groups were doing. Is such an approach feasible in your program or state, and if so, what would it take to initiate and keep it going?

- The findings of this study indicate that program-level (school-level) factors made a significant difference in how much teachers changed their practice, especially in the second year, and how that affected reading achievement. The authors conclude that “these findings stress the importance of evidence-based, reflective professional development. Teachers in the high-reform effort schools appeared to be more attuned to the research on effective reading instruction, and they used this information, along with data on their teaching and their study-group activities, to implement more effective teaching practices.” (p. 64) Schools that weren’t as successful “tended to lack principal support, and usually no teacher leader emerged to keep the reform effort moving forward” (p. 64). The findings also indicated that “teachers and principals need to improve shared leadership AND collaborate in the delivery of reading instruction with a model that puts students first AND use data to inform instruction and improve teaching practices, AND they need to engage in collaborative, job-embedded professional development. Within classrooms, teachers must reflect on their instruction AND implement research-based practices that focus on providing support to promote active student involvement in high-level cognitive tasks AND develop and maintain high expectations for student learning”(p. 64-65, emphasis in original text).
- This will be a tall order in adult basic and literacy education programs where teachers and sometimes administrators are part-time, teachers sometimes are neither paid for professional development nor for prep time, and teacher turnover is uncertain. Can job-embedded professional development be a workable model in our field, and if so, what would need to happen in your program for this type of reform to occur?

Week Four Readings and Assignments

Read:

Taylor, J., Smith, C., & Bingman, M.B. (2005). Program administrators’ sourcebook: A resource on NCSALL’s research for adult education program administrators. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Smith, C., & Hofer, J. (2003). The characteristics and concerns of adult basic education teachers. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Smith, C., Hofer, J., Gillespie, M., Solomon, M. & Rowe, K. (2003). How teachers change: A study of professional development in adult education.(Report Summary). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

To Do:

- Complete the guiding questions for the Smith, Taylor & Bingman reading:
 - The readings for Weeks 1 and 2 highlighted several factors that can contribute to the effectiveness of programs of professional development. The research of Smith, et al. also identifies program factors that influence the effectiveness of professional development in changing teachers' practice including working conditions. Discuss the working conditions in your program that might affect teacher change. Drawing on the strategies in the Sourcebook, reflect on how you could improve working conditions in your program.
 - A second set of program factors that this research found affected teacher change had to do with the opportunities teachers had to interact and to influence curriculum and policy. How might you increase the collegiality and voice of teachers in your program? Is this something you might try?
 - Choose three of the strategies suggested in the Sourcebook to address the implications of the research that you are most likely to implement. Talk about why and how they are connected to implementation of your STAR project objectives.
- Draft an implementation plan (please see the Implementation Plan Template) and send it to the facilitator who will provide feedback within the week.

Week Five Readings and Assignments

Read:

Smith, M.C., & Rose, A. (2002).Using a learning organization approach to enhance ABE teachers' professional development. Focus on Basics, 5(D).

To Do:

- Complete the guiding question for the Smith & Rose reading:
 - This article suggests that real adult basic education (ABE) classes are complex and messy and that it is not enough for professional development and training to just present new approaches and programs need to become learning organizations in order to integrate new practices into their own situations. What features of learning organizations that Smith and Rose discuss are in place now in your

program? What other features might you put in place to support transfer of the training you and your teachers received as part of the STAR project into the reality of your program?

- Revise and post your implementation plan.
- Read others' implementation plans and respond by email.
- Participate in a final conference call.

Week Five Conference Call

Agenda

- Discussion of implementation plans:
 - What will support or prevent you from instituting the features of your implementation plan? What resources do you need to get this done and how will you marshal those resources?
 - How to use your plans? Do you need a team or collaboration from others? With whom should you share your plan?
- Discussion of next steps for the Study Circle participants:
 - Do you want be in e-mail contact? Do you want have another conference call in a month?
 - Who will manage the communications?
- Group Reflections:
 - What's the one concept, strategy, or idea that you will walk away with from this Study Circle?
 - What did you find most useful or helpful about the Study Circle?

Professional Development Case Study

The purpose of this case study is for you to describe your program and challenges or questions you have that relate to professional development. The goal is for participants to understand each other's context, so each of us has enough information to support one another in developing an implementation plan. Please complete the following table with your information in the right-hand column, then, post your plan to our CommunityZero site. Please email the facilitators if you have any questions.

Your Name		
Your State		
Size of Your Program (# teachers, # of students served annually, approximately)		
Types of services offered (ABE, ESOL, etc.)		

Type of program (library-based, school-based, community-based, community-college based, correctional facility, etc.)		
Urban or rural?		
Percent of new (teaching less than a year) and experienced teachers		
Type(s) of PD teachers in your program regularly receive (Mostly offered by state? Mostly offered in program? Mostly workshops?)		
Amount (in hours) of PD teachers in your program generally receive per year (cite a range)		
Challenge that you most face in professional development or question you have about how to help teachers learn what they need in order to implement changes indicated by the STAR project training		

Implementation Plan Template and Instructions

As part of this Study Circle, you will be completing an implementation plan to address a goal related to implementing or sustaining professional development in your program. The plan may focus on the steps you will take to overcome the challenge you stated at the beginning of this Study Circle, or it may focus on steps toward sustaining professional development within your program beyond the end of the STAR pilot. The template below is designed to help you develop your plan.

Your goal for implementing STAR in your program or state:

Your goal for professional development to support your STAR goal:

How will you reach your PD Goal?

Action Step	Timeframe	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Required
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3. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT STUDY CIRCLE

This section of the guide provides the directions and materials that you will need to plan and administer a Study Circle on the topic of diagnostic assessment as it relates to the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). This Study Circle has been designed to assist state and local program administrators in identifying strategies to implement and sustain diagnostic reading assessment in their programs.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the importance of diagnostic reading assessment in adult education programs;
- Describe how this type of assessment is similar to and different from the types of assessment traditionally administered in adult education programs;
- Complete a plan that will help them address a challenge or goal related to sustaining diagnostic reading assessment; and
- Network with peers and available experts to share ideas and experiences.

Facilitator Preparation

Based on knowledge gained from previous STAR Study Circles, facilitators should set aside two to three work days over the course of three to four weeks to develop a reading list, weekly assignments and activities. In preparation for the Study Circle, you will:

- Create a reading list. For your convenience, a suggested reading list on the topic of diagnostic assessment is included in this section.
- Develop guiding questions and weekly assignments to stimulate discussion about the readings and to support participants in applying what they have learned in their programs. This section also includes guiding questions for the proposed reading lists.
- Familiarize yourself with CommunityZero – the online platform used to conduct STAR Study Circles. A guide to CommunityZero’s features appears in the Appendix.

For additional information on planning your Study Circle, please refer to the Sample Study Circle Work Plan located in the Appendix.

Participant Preparation

Based on findings from Study Circles conducted through the STAR pilot program it is anticipated that participants will spend 2- 2 1/2 hours per week, for a total of 12-13 hours over the course of the Study Circle. Encourage participants to familiarize themselves with the CommunityZero Web site, login process, and introductory materials at least ten days before the Study Circle is scheduled to begin.

Helpful Hints for Administrators and Facilitators

You may want to send an email to participants before the Study Circle begins to introduce yourself, encourage everyone to log on to the CommunityZero, and to offer assistance in the event that participants may have questions about the content or technical aspects of the Study Circle. A sample introductory letter appears in the Appendix.

Study Circle Facilitators

Lori Forlizzi, Professional Development Specialist, Tuscarorra Intermediate Unit. Lori Forlizzi is a Professional Development Specialist for Tuscarora Intermediate Unit (TIU) Community Education Services in Lewistown, Pennsylvania. She has worked in adult education for 17 years, doing teaching, research, instructional materials development, program evaluation, and staff development. Dr. Forlizzi has worked for TIU's adult education program since January 1997, where she has primarily worked with statewide and regional professional development projects, developing and delivering professional development offerings and providing technical assistance to adult education program staff in a variety of areas, particularly reading/writing, assessment, and continuous quality improvement. While at TIU, she has also taught adult learners and provides training and support to teachers in the adult education program. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Penn State University.

Susan Finn Miller, National STAR Reading Trainer. Susan Finn Miller has worked in the field of adult literacy education in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for over fifteen years. She has taught ABE/GED, Family Literacy, and all levels of English for Speakers of Other Languages. For the past eleven years, Dr. Miller has worked as a professional development specialist and is looked to as a mentor within Pennsylvania's adult literacy professional development system where she has provided professional development opportunities and support to teachers and administrators on various topics, including reading and writing, ESL, assessment, and managing multilevel classrooms, among other topics. Dr. Miller is a national reading trainer for STAR project and, in this capacity, has worked with programs in Maine, Ohio, and California, as well as Connecticut, where she serves as lead trainer. Dr. Miller holds a Ph.D. in Language, Literacy, and Culture from the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Her dissertation research was a case study of parent/family involvement in one Even Start Family Literacy program. In addition to her work in adult literacy, for the past three years, Dr. Miller has worked half time with K-12 pre service and in-service ESL teachers.

Diagnostic Assessment Reading List

This reading list is thought to represent the best available research on diagnostic assessment as it relates to adult education.

- Week 1: Diagnostic Assessment Flow Chart
- Week 2: The Adult Reading Components Study (ARCs) Web site <http://dti-associates.communityzero.com/assess>
McKenna, M. C., & Stahl, S. A.. (2003). Assessment for Reading Instruction, Chapter 1: Introduction to Reading Assessment. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Week 3: Krudenier, J. (2002) Literacy Assessment in Adult Basic Education. In J. Comings, B. Garner & C. Smith (Eds.), Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 3. (pp. 84-151) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Week 4: Snow, C. E., & Strucker, J. (2000). Lessons from Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children for Adult Learning and Literacy. In J. Comings, B. Gardner, & C. Smith (Eds.), The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 1. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Week 5: Black, P., and Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment. Retrieved April 15, 2006 from: www.pdkintl.org.

Week One Readings and Assignments

To Do:

- Review the Study Circle Users Guide and log on to CommunityZero.
- Post answers to the following questions about Who You Are:
 - How long have you been a program administrator or professional developer?
 - Do you hold a full-time or part-time position in your program?
 - How long have you been in the field of adult education?
 - What state are you from?
 - Were you a K-12 teacher or an adult educator before you became a program administrator or professional developer?
 - What is one thing about your state that you think everyone else doesn't know and should know?
 - What's one thing about you as a person that you think everyone should know?
- Write and post on CommunityZero information about your program using the Case Study Template.

Week Two Readings and Assignments

Before this week's reading:

Consider what you already know about diagnostic assessment. What diagnostic assessment tools are you already familiar with?

Read:

The Adult Reading Components Study (ARCs) Web site <http://dti-associates.communityzero.com/assess>.

McKenna, M. C., & Stahl, S. A.. (2003). Assessment for Reading Instruction, Chapter 1: Introduction to Reading Assessment. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

To Do:

- Read all of the responses to the “Who Are You” questionnaires.
- Read all of the case studies and post a response to each of your group members.
- Post any questions you may have related to the reading.
- Participate in a 90-minute conference call.

Week Two Conference Call

Agenda

- Introduction: Participants
- Orientation: Objectives, format and assignments
- Discussion: What is a study circle?
- Review: What are the expectations for this online study circle?
- Group Discussion: How are you currently using diagnostic assessment in your program? What questions do you have about how to oversee the administration of these assessments?
- Discussion: Week One assignments

Week Three Readings and Assignments

Before this week’s reading:

Think about the similarities and differences between the NRS/standardized reading tests you are familiar with and diagnostic reading assessments.

Read:

Krudenier, J. (2002) Literacy Assessment in Adult Basic Education. In J. Comings, B. Garner & C. Smith (Eds.), Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 3. (pp. 84-151) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

To Do:

- Read any recent postings to the Study Circle Web site. Please respond by posting thoughts, insights or questions.
- Submit your draft implementation plan.
- Respond to one or more of the guiding questions.

Guiding Questions:

- Think about the standardized/NRS reading test(s) you are using in your program. What kinds of information do you get from the assessment(s)? What kind of diagnostic information do you glean from these assessments? How do you use it? How does the diagnostic reading assessment you've implemented through STAR differ from this? How does it supplement this?
- Skim the information on pages 106-122 of the Krudenier chapter that outlines various reading assessment tools. Are there diagnostic reading assessment tools described in this section – or other diagnostic reading assessments tools that you are aware of, including those in the ARCS Web site test bank – that you would like to know more about? Discuss in a posting how these tools might address a need in your program.

Week Four Readings and Assignments:

Before this week's reading:

What questions do you have about how the report Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children might relate to our work with adults?

Read:

Snow, C. E., & Strucker, J. (2000). Lessons from Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children for Adult Learning and Literacy. In J. Comings, B. Gardner, & C. Smith (Eds.), The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 1. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

To Do:

- Read recent postings to the Study Circle Web site. Please respond by adding thoughts, insights or questions.
- Read your group members' implementation plans and post a response to each one.
- Post a response to one or more of the following guiding questions.

Guiding Questions:

- How does the concept of “Matthew effects” (pp. 33-35) relate to the adult learners in your program? How have the diagnostic assessment procedures you’ve implemented in your program helped you identify individual students’ strengths and needs? What is one thing that surprised you about the outcomes?
- On page 62 of this chapter, the authors suggest that we need to learn “as much as possible about the childhood literacy experiences of adult literacy students, including parents’ level of education, access to literacy activities, and history, if any, of reading problems.” What are your thoughts about this recommendation? What kinds of information do you gather from learners in your program? How does this information shape reading instruction in your program?

Week Five Readings and Assignments

Before Reading:

Are you familiar with the term formative assessment? How do you think this concept relates to your work with evidence-based reading instruction?

Read:

Black, P., and Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment. Retrieved April 15, 2006 from www.pdkintl.org.

To Do:

- Read any recent postings to the Study Circle Web site. Please respond by adding thoughts, insights or questions.
- Submit your final implementation plan.
- Complete the Study Circle evaluation.
- Post a response to one or more of the following guiding questions.

Guiding Questions:

- In your program, how do teachers talk with learners about their strengths and weaknesses in reading? How do teachers assess reading progress? How do teachers provide feedback to students on their needs and progress?
- In what ways has reading instruction changed in your program since you have begun using diagnostic reading assessment? What has been the most significant change?
- How do you see your role in sustaining evidence-based reading instruction in your program?

Diagnostic Assessment Case Study Template

Case Study Template: The purpose of this case study is for you to describe your program and the challenges or questions you have related to diagnostic reading assessment. The goal is for participants to understand each other's context, so each of us has enough information to support one another in developing an implementation plan. Please complete the following table with your information in the right-hand column, then post your template to our CommunityZero site.

Your name	
Your state	
School/Agency	
Size of your program (# teachers, # of students served annually, approximately)	
Types of services offered (ABE, ESOL, etc.)	
Type of program (library based, school based, community based, community college based, correctional facility, etc.)	
Urban or rural?	
Percent of new (teaching less than a year) and experienced teachers in your program	
What assessment does your program use to determine learning gains for accountability purposes?	
What diagnostic assessment tools are you currently using in your program to assess alphabets, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension?	
What procedures have you put in place to administer diagnostic reading assessments? What changes have you had to make?	
How do state or local policies impact your ability to institute diagnostic assessment?	
Describe your most significant challenge in implementing diagnostic assessment in your program, or pose a question about how to sustain the changes to your program's assessment practices.	

Implementation Plan Template and Instructions

Purpose: As part of this Study Circle, you will be completing an implementation plan to address a goal related to implementing or sustaining diagnostic reading assessment in your program. The plan may focus on the steps you will take to overcome the challenge you stated at the beginning of this Study Circle, or it may focus on steps toward sustaining your ability to continue including diagnostic reading assessment within your program beyond the end of the STAR pilot. The template below is designed to help you develop your plan.

What is your goal related to implementing or sustaining diagnostic reading assessment in your program? Record it here:

How will you implement this goal?

Action Step	Timeframe	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Required

Final Conference Call

Agenda

- Introductions
- Discussion Questions:
 - What progress have you made in implementing diagnostic assessment since our last call?
 - What is one new or continuing issue regarding diagnostic assessment?
 - What are some lessons learned regarding implementing evidence-based reading assessment (or instruction based on assessment results)?
 - What are some creative ways to support staff in an ongoing way to learn how to implement diagnostic assessment and evidence-based reading instruction?
 - How can programs access support to diagnostic assessment and evidence-based reading instruction?
- Time for questions or clarification regarding the completion of Study Circle requirements

- Closing Remarks

Diagnostic Assessment Evaluation Questions

Please respond to the following evaluation questions and send them to your facilitators in an email message:

- What aspects of the Study Circle did you like best? What was the most valuable aspect of the Study Circle for you? Why?
- What would you suggest we change or do differently next time?
- What's the one concept, strategy, or idea that you will take away from this Study Circle?

4. SUPPORTS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS STUDY CIRCLE

This section of the guide provides the directions and materials that you will need to plan and administer a Study Circle on the topic of supports for classroom teachers as it relates to the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). This Study Circle has been designed to assist state and local program administrators to identify and implement the types of supports for classroom teachers that facilitate the use of EBRI. Some of the concepts explored in this Study Circle are instructional leadership, peer mentoring and coaching, and making time for professional development.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Describe research, theory, and professional wisdom on classroom supports;
- Increase understanding of the factors involved in successfully sustaining change efforts over time;
- Examine ideas gleaned from research, theory, and professional wisdom on classroom supports can be applied to adult basic education and to their particular program context, specifically how effective classroom support practices would support changes indicated by the STAR project;
- Create an informed action plan that reflects evidence-based practices of instructional leaders who successfully sustain change efforts over time; and
- Call upon an informal network of peers made up of the participants in the online Study Circle and available experts, who they can call upon afterwards to share experiences and ideas.

Facilitator Preparation

Based on knowledge gained from previous STAR Study Circles, the facilitator should set aside two to three work days over the course of three to four weeks to develop a reading list, weekly assignments and activities. In preparation for the Study Circle, you will:

- Create a reading list. For your convenience, a suggested reading list on the topic of supports for classroom teachers is included in this section.
- Develop guiding questions and weekly assignments to stimulate discussion about the readings and to support participants in applying what they have learned in their programs. This section includes guiding questions for the proposed reading lists.
- Familiarize yourself with CommunityZero – the online platform used to conduct STAR Study Circles. A guide to CommunityZero’s features appears in the Appendix.

For additional information on planning your Study Circle, please refer to the sample work plan located in the Appendix.

Participant Participation

Based on findings from Study Circles conducted through the STAR pilot program, it is anticipated that participants will spend 2- 2 1/2 hours per week, for a total of 12-13 hours over the course of the Study Circle. Encourage participants to familiarize themselves with the CommunityZero Web site, login process and introductory materials at least ten days before the Study Circle is scheduled to begin.

Helpful Hints for Administrators and Facilitators

You may want to send an email to participants before the Study Circle begins to introduce yourself, encourage everyone to log on to the CommunityZero, and to offer assistance in the event that participants may have questions about the content or technical aspects of the Study Circle. A sample introductory letter appears in the Appendix.

Study Circle Facilitator

Alisa Belzer, Assistant Professor of Adult Literacy Education, Rutgers University, New Jersey. Alisa Belzer is an assistant professor of adult literacy education at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She received her B.A. in elementary education and Ph.D. in reading/writing/literacy from the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to her appointment at Rutgers in 1999, she directed a state-wide teacher research-based professional development initiative in Pennsylvania. She began working in adult literacy education in 1987 and has been a program coordinator, tutor trainer, classroom teacher and tutor. Her research interests have been in the areas of alternative assessment, professional development and teacher research, policy, learner beliefs, and adult reading development. Dr. Belzer is currently editing a book on defining and improving quality in adult literacy education. Recent publications include an ERIC monograph (with Ralf St. Clair) synthesizing the previous decade of research in the field, and an article in *Adult Education Quarterly* on the role in adult education of prior experiences with school.

Supports for Classroom Teachers Reading List

This reading list is thought to represent the best available research on classroom support as it relates to adult education.

- Week One: Leithwood, K. A. & Riehl, C. (2005). What do we already know about educational leadership? In W. A. Fireston & C. Riehl (Eds), A new agenda for research in educational leadership (pp. 12- 27). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Week Three: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (n.d.). Critical issue: Finding time for teacher professional development. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd300.htm>
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (n.d.). Create time for professional development. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd3lk6.htm>
- Week Four: Galbraith, P., & Anstrom, K. (1995). Peer coaching: An effective staff development model for educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Directions in language education National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education 1(3). Retrieved from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/directions/03.htm>
Garmston, R. J. (1987). How administrators support peer coaching. Educational leadership 44(5).
- Week Five: Feiman-Nemser, S., "Teacher Mentoring: A Critical Review," ERIC Digest, July 1996, Vol. 95, No.2
James Rowley. (1999). The good mentor. Educational Leadership, 56 (8). Retrieved April 30, 2006 from http://www.ascd.org/ed_topics/el199905_rowley.html
The Mentoring Resource and Leadership Network. (n.d.). Key components of a new teacher induction and mentoring program. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.mentors.net/03library/keycomps.html>
The National Education Association Foundation. (n.d.). Creating a teacher mentoring program. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.neafoundation.org/publications/mentoring.htm>

Week One Readings and Assignments

Read:

Leithwood, K. A. & Riehl, C. (2005). What do we already know about educational leadership? In W. A. Fireston & C. Riehl (Eds), A new agenda for research in educational leadership (pp. 12- 27). New York: Teachers College Press.

To Do:

- Post answers to the following questions about Who You Are:
 - How long have you been a program administrator or professional developer?
 - Do you hold a full-time or part-time position in your program?
 - How long have you been in the field of adult education?
 - What state are you from?

- Were you a K-12 teacher or an adult educator before you became a program administrator or professional developer?
- What is one thing about your state that you think everyone else may not but should know?
- What is one thing about you as a person that you think everyone should know?
- Post a response to the following guiding questions:
 - In what way do you see yourself functioning as an instructional leader in supporting the implementation of STAR?
 - What have been some of your struggles in fulfilling this role?
 - What do you feel you have been able to do effectively?
- Respond to at least one other participant's posting by commenting on issues that resonate with you, ways you have handled similar challenges, or questions you have about things that have been written.

Week Two Readings and Assignments

Read:

Case Study Template

To Do:

- Interview STAR teachers by asking them the following questions:
 - What have been your greatest challenges in implementing STAR?
 - What do you see as my role in helping you overcome those challenges?
 - What would you like me to do (more of/differently) to help you implement STAR better?
- Respond to the following guiding questions:
 - What stands out for you about what the teacher(s) told you?
 - What was most surprising about what you heard from the teachers?
 - What does what you heard from the teachers suggest to you about your role as an instructional leader?
- Respond to at least one other participant's postings by commenting on his/her observations that resonate with you.

Week Two Conference Call Agenda (90 minutes)

- Welcome from Study Circle Administrator

- Welcome from Study Circle Facilitator
- Group Introductions (name, state, program, job position, scope of program and individual involvement in STAR)
- One word to describe what implementing STAR has been like at your program
- One word to describe what you see STAR accomplishing for learners in your program
- Overview of how the Study Circle is meant to work
- Technical questions
- Next steps and closing

Week Three Readings and Assignments:

Read:

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (n.d.). Critical issue: Finding time for teacher professional development. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd300.htm>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (n.d.). Create time for professional development. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd31k6.htm>

To Do:

- Although this week's articles focus on making time for professional development, please think about how they could apply to making time for teachers to improve their implementation of STAR.
- Based on your own reflections about your role as an instructional leader and the interview(s) you did, write up and post your program case study using the template provided.
- Read other participants' case studies. Respond by writing about what stands out for you about them.
- Begin working on your implementation plan by thinking about actions you will take to make more time for STAR teachers.

Week Four Readings and Assignments

Read:

Galbraith, P., & Anstrom, K. (1995). Peer coaching: An effective staff development model for educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Directions in

language education National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education 1(3). Retrieved from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/directions/03.htm>

Garmston, R. J. (1987). How administrators support peer coaching. *Educational leadership* 44(5).

To Do:

- Respond to the following guiding questions:
 - What do you think of peer coaching as a way to support the implementation of STAR at your program?
 - Is it feasible/desirable? If so, what would you need to do to initiate this kind of classroom support? If not, why not?
- Read other participants' case studies. Respond by writing about what stand out for you, is interesting to you, or raises questions for you.
- Continue working on your implementation plan by thinking about what actions you will take with regard to peer coaching.

Week Five Readings and Assignments

Read: Read two of the four articles on Mentoring.

Feiman-Nemser, S., "Teacher Mentoring: A Critical Review," *ERIC Digest*, July 1996, Vol. 95, No.2

James Rowley. (1999). The good mentor. *Educational Leadership*, 56 (8). Retrieved April 30, 2006 from http://www.ascd.org/ed_topics/el199905_rowley.html

The Mentoring Resource and Leadership Network. (n.d.). Key components of a new teacher induction and mentoring program. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.mentors.net/03library/keycomps.html>

The National Education Association Foundation. (n.d.). Creating a teacher mentoring program. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from <http://www.neafoundation.org/publications/mentoring.htm>

To Do:

- Respond to the following guiding questions:
 - What do you think of mentoring as a way to support the implementation of STAR at your program?

- Is it feasible or desirable? If so, what would you need to do to initiate this kind of classroom support? If not why not?
- Read other participants' case studies. Respond by writing about what stands out for you, is interesting to you, or raises questions for you.
- Continue working on your implementation plan by thinking about what actions you will take with regard to mentoring.
- Complete your implementation plan by thinking about what other actions you can take, as an instructional leader in your program, to support teachers implementing STAR. Post your implementation plan to the Study Circle Web site.

Supports for Classroom Teachers Case Study

The purpose of this case study is for you to describe your program and the challenges or questions you have related to supports for classroom teachers. The goal is for participants to understand each other's programs, so each of us has enough information to support one another in developing an implementation plan. Please complete the following table with your information in the right-hand column, and then post your template to our CommunityZero site.

Your name		
Your state		
School/Agency		
What has been your role in supporting the implementation of STAR?		
What are the most significant challenges that your program has faced in implementing STAR?		
What are some program level changes that have been made to support the teachers in the implementation of STAR?		
In what ways has your program managed the time challenges involved in implementing STAR?		
What are one or two things you'd like help thinking through regarding your role in supporting the implementation of STAR?		

STAR Supports for Classroom Teachers Implementation Plan

As part of this Study Circle, you will complete an implementation plan to address a goal related to your supporting and sustaining the implementation of STAR in your program. In your role as instructional leader, your plan may focus on the steps you will take to

overcome the challenges you named in your case study, or it may focus on steps toward improving the implementation of STAR, sustaining teachers' involvement in using STAR, and going beyond the end of the STAR pilot by implementing some of the strategies you've read about and discussed over the last few weeks. The template below is designed to help you develop your plan.

As an instructional leader, what is (at least) one goal you can commit to working towards as a way to support continued (and improved) implementation of STAR in your program?

How will you implement this goal?

Action Step	Date Completed	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Required

Final Conference Call

Agenda

- How did you enjoy doing this Study Circle online? What did you think about the readings and the activities (i.e. guiding questions, implementation plan, and case study)?
- What's the key idea or concept that you will carry away from the Classroom Supports Study Circle?
- What do you intend to do next as a result of the Study Circle? What do you see as the potential obstacles and what have been your thoughts about overcoming them?
- What suggestions do you have about changing/ improving the Study Circle to make it more effective or engaging?
- How do you feel about the technology (the CommunityZero) site? What did you like? What did you not like?

Supports for Classroom Teachers Evaluation Questions

Please respond to the following evaluation questions and send them to your facilitators in an email message:

- What aspects of the Study Circle did you like best?

- What would you suggest we change or do differently next time?
- What was the most valuable aspect of the Study Circle for you? Why?
- What's one concept that you will take away from this Study Circle?

5. MANAGED ENROLLMENT STUDY CIRCLE

This section of the guide provides the directions and materials that you will need to plan and administer a Study Circle on the topic of managed enrollment as it relates to the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). State and local program administrators who participate in this Study Circle will compare the effectiveness of open entry/open exit classes to those with a required attendance policy.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Describe research, theory, and professional wisdom on managed enrollment;
- Examine how ideas gleaned from research, theory, and professional wisdom on managed enrollment can be applied to adult basic education and to their particular program context, specifically how effective enrollment practices would support changes indicated by the STAR project;
- Create and develop an informed action plan for improving enrollment policies and practices within their own program; and
- Call upon an informal network of peers made up of the participants in the online Study Circle and available experts, who they can call upon afterwards to share experiences and ideas.

Facilitator Preparation

Based on knowledge gained from previous STAR Study Circles, the facilitator should set aside two to three work days over the course of three to four weeks to develop content and weekly assignments and activities. In preparation for the Study Circle, you will:

- Create a reading list. For your convenience, a suggested reading list on the topic of managed enrollment is included in this section.
- Develop guiding questions and weekly assignments to stimulate discussion about the readings and to support participants in applying what they have learned in their programs. This section includes guiding questions for the proposed reading lists.
- Familiarize yourself with CommunityZero – the online platform used to conduct STAR Study Circles. A guide to the CommunityZero's features appears in the Appendix.

For additional information on planning your Study Circle, please refer to the sample work plan located in the Appendix.

Participant Participation

Based on findings from Study Circles conducted through the STAR pilot program it is anticipated that participants will spend 2- 2 1/2 hours per week, for a total of 12-13 hours over the course of the Study Circle. Encourage participants to familiarize themselves with the CommunityZero Web site, login process and introductory materials at least ten days before the Study Circle is scheduled to begin.

Helpful Hints for Administrators and Facilitators

You may want to send an email to participants before the Study Circle begins to introduce yourself, encourage everyone to log on to the CommunityZero, and to offer assistance in the event that participants may have questions about the content or technical aspects of the Study Circle. A sample introductory letter appears in the Appendix.

Study Circle Facilitator

Maricel G. Santos, Assistant Professor, San Francisco State University. Maricel G. Santos is an Assistant Professor at San Francisco State University (SFSU) where she trains adult ESL/EFL teachers in an M.A. program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Prior to coming to SFSU, she was a research associate with the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), a U.S. Department of Education research center focused on adult learning. With colleagues at NCSALL, she co-authored a monograph entitled *An evidence-based adult education program model appropriate for research* (expected publication 2006), which included a review of the existing literature on managed enrollment in adult education. Along with a team from NCSALL and the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Santos will soon complete the development of three Study Circles focused on integrating health literacy into adult education classrooms. Dr. Santos' research and teaching interests include second language vocabulary development, the literacy development of adults transitioning from non-academic ESL programs into post-secondary and training programs, health literacy, and the professional development of novice adult ESL teachers. Dr. Santos holds an Ed.D. in Human Development and Psychology, with a focus on Language and Literacy, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and an M.A. in TESOL from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, CA.

Managed Enrollment Reading List

- Week 1: Ramirez, S.G. (2005). Enrollment policy options: Open entry/open exit and managing enrollment. In M.C. Klein, M. Corley, & J. Tibbetts (Eds.), *CALPRO's Adult Education Administrator's Guide*. (pp. 51-54). Sacramento, CA: CALPRO/AIR. Retrieved May 7, 2006, from http://www.calpro-online.org/o_guides/admin Og/Admin_guide.pdf

- Week 2: Belzer, A. (1998). Stopping out, not dropping out. Focus on Basics, 2A, 15-17. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=417>
Lucey, M. (1998). Where attendance is not a problem. Focus on Basics, 2A. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=416>
Kerka, S. (2005). Learner persistence in adult basic education. California Adult Education Research Digest No. 2. Retrieved from http://www.otan.us/images/publicarchive/ArchivesDigitalFiles/casas%5CDoc_AB0066.pdf
- Week 3: Rowley, D.J., Herman, D.L., & Dolence, M.G. (1997). Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Ingersoll, R.J. (1988). The enrollment problem: Proven management techniques. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan.
- Week 5: McCrossan, L., MacDowell, C., Cooper, P. (1998). A comparison of the effectiveness of open entry/open exit classes to closed entry classes requiring attendance 1997-1998 final report. Pennsylvania State Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education: Harrisburg, PA and Washington, DC. ERIC Reproduction No. ERIC 427 314

Week One Readings and Assignments:

Read:

Ramirez, S.G. (2005). Enrollment policy options: Open entry/open exit and managing enrollment. In M.C. Klein, M. Corley, & J. Tibbetts (Eds.), CALPRO's Adult Education Administrator's Guide. (pp. 51-54). Sacramento, CA: CALPRO/AIR. Retrieved May 7, 2006, from http://www.calpro-online.org/o_guides/admin_og/Admin_guide.pdf

To Do:

- Post responses to the following guiding questions:
 - How does the Ramirez article help clarify the relationship between enrollment policy and other programming components (e.g., curriculum design, teaching, learner advising, assessment of learner goals)?
 - What part of the Mira Costa case study do you find most impressive? What aspects of the Mira Costa case study would be feasible in your program?
 - Ramirez offers seven suggestions to programs considering a shift towards a managed enrollment policy. Which ones seem most appealing, and which ones could you see actually implementing in your own program?
- Post introductory information, which includes:
 - Your name

- Program context and your title/position
- Something about your program of which you are especially proud
- Your goals for participating in the Study Circle
- Two to three questions you have about managed enrollment
- Something about yourself that you'd like to share and has nothing to do with managed enrollment
- Participate in a 90-minute orientation conference call.

Week Two Readings and Assignments:

Read:

Select one of the following readings:

Belzer, A. (1998). Stopping out, not dropping out. Focus on Basics, 2A, 15-17. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=417>

Lucey, M. (1998). Where attendance is not a problem. Focus on Basics, 2A. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=416>

Kerka, S. (2005). Learner persistence in adult basic education. California Adult Education Research Digest No. 2. Retrieved from http://www.otan.us/images/publicarchive/ArchivesDigitalFiles/casas%5CDoc_AB0066.pdf

To Do:

Post your responses to the following guiding questions:

- Each of these articles addresses an important reality in adult education: that “some students will always be coming and going” (Alisa Belzer, 1998, n.p.). In your role as a program director, how do you see your decisions regarding enrollment policy directly responding to issues of learner persistence and motivation? Give a concrete example from your program experiences.
- In the Kerka (2005) article, the author calls for “the creation of an organizational culture that understands persistence from the learner’s point of view and the development of an environment that both acknowledges and respects the learner’s multiple contexts and roles and offers a safe space for identifying and pursuing educational goals” (p. 3)
 - Is this an achievable outcome in adult basic education?
 - As you contemplate changes in enrollment policy, how important are changes in your program’s organizational culture?

- What is one change in organizational culture you are likely to implement? How would this change support your implementation of STAR project objectives?

Week Two Conference Call

Agenda

- Orientation to the Study Circle format, history, objectives and agenda
- Introductions of facilitator and participants
- Participating in a Study Circle: What to expect
- Your goals for improving enrollment policy in your program
- Discussion of the guiding questions to Sylvia G. Ramirez's Enrollment Policy Options: Open Entry/Open Exit and Managed enrollment

Week Three Readings and Assignments:

Read:

Rowley, D.J., Herman, D.L., & Dolence, M.G. (1997). *Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ingersoll, R.J. (1988). *The enrollment problem: Proven management techniques*. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan.

To Do:

Post responses to the following guiding questions:

- Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) make a distinction between “conventional planning” and “strategic planning,” with the former more focused on short-term, operational goals, and the latter more focused on a longer-term vision for the larger organizational context. To what extent would a shift towards managed enrollment in your program reflect conventional planning goals? To what extent would it reflect strategic planning priorities?
- Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) also discuss the limitations of ‘mission-driven planning,’ pointing out that a better approach might be to focus on “the actual obligations of the campus as the basis for planning” (p. 44). How do you think your program mission informs enrollment policy decisions? Or, how are the ‘actual obligations’ of your program prompting the need for a change in enrollment policies?
- Ingersoll (1988) identifies five variables that need to be considered for a school to “create involvement, commitment, and effective change when dealing with enrollment problems” (p. 11):

- Product: what a school offers its learners, which can include the curricular offerings, resources, facilities, location;
- Data and information: a vital source of input if a school is to make informed enrollment decisions;
- Communication: the steps a school takes to get information out to students and potential students and the quality of the messages conveyed;
- Management: the kind of leadership that oversees enrollment decisions as well as the kind of training these leaders receive; and
- Climate: the way the school environment facilitates planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Which of these factors are essential for effecting positive change in enrollment policy in your own program? In what ways are these factors already in place in your program? What steps would need to be taken to strengthen these factors?

- Post your draft implementation plan.

Week Four Readings and Assignments

To Do:

- Peer-review: Read and exchange comments on implementation plans with your peers. Peer reviewers should address the following questions in their evaluative comments:
- What is one thing you learned from reading this implementation plan?
- What is one thing you found impressive about this implementation plan?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the implementation plan?
- What questions come to mind?

Agenda for online discussion:

- Share implementation plans.
- Refine enrollment model, including goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, through online consultation with peer/facilitator.
- Begin identifying ways to evaluate success of enrollment model.

Week Five Readings and Assignments

Read:

McCrossan, L., MacDowell, C., Cooper, P. (1998). A comparison of the effectiveness of open entry/open exit classes to closed entry classes requiring attendance 1997-1998 final report. Pennsylvania State Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education: Harrisburg, PA and Washington, DC. ERIC Reproduction No. ERIC 427

To Do:

- Post responses to the following guiding questions:
 - McCrossan et al. describe a study which compared the effectiveness of open entry/open exit classes to that of classes with a required attendance policy. Their study design included several program/classroom activities that were designed to boost student attendance, including: new student orientation for all students; follow-up orientation for students in the managed enrollment classes; use of daily sign-in sheets and record-keeping in a class attendance book, including records of unexcused absences; use of student attendance contracts; recording and monitoring of student attendance records in program's management information system; use of goal-setting surveys; use of pre/post-tests and portfolios to assess student progress and provide on-going feedback. Which of these activities does your program currently do? Which ones would you most likely want to improve or implement? Talk about how and why. Also, talk about how these activities are connected to the implementation of your STAR project objectives.
 - The study by McCrossan et al. also found that differences in student attendance were not related to the class's enrollment policy (whether it permitted open entry/open exit or required attendance) but rather to the "identity of the teachers" (p. 15). The authors raise the following questions in their implications section: "What do teachers who have regular student attendance do that teachers who do not have this attendance do not do? Does this lead to a staff development program or is this a personal issue? Are some teachers better at working with a particular type of student" (p. 19)? Think about the qualities of your own teaching staff in light of these questions. Do you think some of your teachers are more effective in open entry/open exit classes, while other teachers are more effective in classes with specified attendance? What teacher qualities do you think affect whether students will attend regularly?
 - The study by McCrossan et al. also mentioned two findings related to the relationship between student attendance and academic progress. One, students who attended more than 75% of the time were likely to make academic progress. Two, the teachers found that they were able to make fairly reliable predictions of who was going to attend regularly based on pre-test scores. Think about students in your own program. Who attends regularly? Who does not? Are there any qualities that seem to separate one group of students from other? Should classes with open entry/open exit policies be geared toward some students and classes with managed enrollment geared toward others? Explain.
- Post final draft of strategic plan
- Participate in final conference call

STAR Managed Enrollment Case Study

Case Study Template: The purpose of this case study is for you to describe your program and challenges or questions you have that relate to managed enrollment. We want participants to understand each other's programs, so that when you share your implementation plan for enrollment, others will understand enough so that we can help each other develop our plans. Fill in the following table by putting information about your program into the right-side column. Then, post it on our CommunityZero site.

Your Name	
Your State	
Size of Your Program (# teachers, # of students served annually, approximately)	
Types of services offered (ABE, ESOL, etc.)	
Type of program (library based, school based, community based, community college based, correctional facility, etc.)	
Urban or rural?	
Percent of new (teaching less than a year) and experienced teachers	
Current enrollment policy (or policies)	
Challenge that you most face in managed enrollment or question you have about how to improve enrollment policy to implement changes indicated by the STAR project training	

STAR Managed Enrollment Implementation Plan

As part of this Study Circle, you will be completing an implementation plan to address a goal related to enrollment policies (which may involve managed enrollment, open entry/open exit, or some model combining the two) in your program. The plan may focus on the steps you will take to overcome the challenge you stated at the beginning of this Study Circle, or it may focus on steps toward sustaining your ability to implement changes in enrollment policies within your program beyond the end of the STAR pilot. The template below is designed to help you develop your plan.

What is your goal related to the development and implementation of improved enrollment policies in your program?

How will you implement this goal?

Action step	Completed by	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Required

Final Conference Call

Agenda

Topic: Measuring success of enrollment models

- Introductions and review of agenda
- Discuss reactions to the McCrossan, MacDowell, & Cooper, P. (1998) article
- Discuss the cultivation of a climate within a program that supports change; assessing program readiness for change
- Discuss strategies for documenting success of your own enrollment model
- Next steps:
 - a) Discussion of what to do with your implementation plans
 - b) Discussion of next steps for this group
- Evaluation of the Study Circle
- Closing remarks

Managed Enrollment Evaluation Questions

- The Study Circle on managed enrollment stimulated my thinking about enrollment issues. Yes or No
- The assigned readings were useful in helping me reflect on enrollment issues. Yes or No
- The discussions were useful in helping me reflect on enrollment issues. Yes or No
- The case study, including creating my own and reading others', was a helpful and useful assignment. Yes or No
- The implementation plan, including creating my own and reading others', was a helpful and useful assignment. Yes or No

- The online technology facilitated my learning and ability to participate in this Study Circle. Yes or No
- The way the Study Circle was organized was effective and useful in stimulating my learning and reflections. Yes or No
- What is the most valuable thing you've learned about managed enrollment from this Study Circle?
- What is one enrollment strategy, concept or idea that you will take away from this Study Circle?
- What's one thing you would definitely NOT CHANGE about the way the Study Circle was run? Please explain.
- What's one thing you would definitely CHANGE about the way the Study Circle was run? Please explain.

APPENDIX

Sample Introductory Email

Hi STAR Study Circle Participant,

Welcome to the STAR Study Circle. The goal of this Study Circle is for participants to consider the existing research on (Insert Study Circle Topic). As indicated in earlier communications, this is an online course that follows a Study Circle model. Information and knowledge in this Study Circle will come from articles, monographs, other research reports, and from participants' reflection on the content of these articles.

We will be meeting from (Insert Kickoff Date) through (Insert Final Conference Call Date).

During each session, we will discuss various readings. Please see the attached reading list, which is also posted on the CommunityZero Web site.

Our expectations for you as a participant are as follows:

- Complete the weekly readings and homework assignments.
- Participate in two conference calls (Insert Dates).
- Complete a brief case study about your program and a challenge/goal related to diagnostic reading assessment.
- Complete an implementation plan to address your diagnostic assessment challenge/goal.
- Provide feedback and an evaluation of the Study Circle.

We anticipate that you will spend 2 - 2.5 hours per week, for a total of 12-13 hours over the course of the five weeks. I have attached a copy of the Study Circle Overview, which you should have received when you registered for this Study Circle.

For your convenience, we have posted all the readings on the CommunityZero Web site. You can find the readings under the tab for "Files" in a folder called "Assigned Readings". We will be 'unveiling' the readings each week with a lesson plan. We will post the readings and activities for each week on the following dates: (These dates will be determined by the facilitator). However, Week 1 readings and activities will be posted on the CommunityZero site this coming Day (Month/Date).

For now, we ask that you log in and familiarize yourself with the Study Circle on CommunityZero. I have attached a User Guide explains how to log on to the Study Circle Online Community. The URL is: <http://www.dti-associates.communityzero.com/>. You have been assigned a User Name and Password for the online community.

User Name: Jane.Doe

Password: Doe

There is a questionnaire on the online community that we ask you to complete as soon as possible. It can be found under "Getting Started" in the Highlights Section.

If you have any problems logging on or need assistance with the technology at any point, please contact your Study Circle site administrator (Insert Name, Phone and Email).

Our first conference call will be on (Insert Date), from (Insert Time). The call information is as follows:

Phone Number: *****

Participant Code: *****

Please RSVP to (Insert Name) at (Insert Email Address) by (Insert Date).

If you have any questions about the Study Circle or the online community, please do not hesitate to contact us. I look forward to working with you over the next five weeks.

Thank you,

Study Circle Administrators

ONLINE COMMUNITY USER GUIDE

Introduction

The STAR Study Circle Online Community is hosted on a Web site built through an online platform called CommunityZero. CommunityZero enables peer collaboration, file-sharing, online discussion, and facilitator administration capabilities. Users will find this online community useful and user-friendly. CommunityZero provides the following tools:

- Highlights Section
- File Sharing
- Articles (text, HTML, links)
- Database
- Threaded Discussions
- Group Calendars
- Opinion Polls
- Real-time Chat

Signing In

To access and sign in to the STAR Professional Diagnostic Assessment Online Community, go to: www.dti-associates.communityzero.com.

Exhibit 1 shows the initial entry screen for the workspace. To enter a user name and password, users must: Click on or tab to the User Name and type in their assigned username. Tab to the Password box, and type in the password.

To enter the site, tab to or click on the Login button.

Once you have entered the Online Community, you will be prompted to agree to the Terms of Service (see Exhibit 2). Click on the I Agree button.

At this point, if you would like to create your own personalized password, you can choose the link “Change Password” under “My Account” to do so.

Next, select “Edit Profile” to update your information.

After you have updated your information, under “My Communities”, select the URL link for “Diagnostic Assessment Study Circle” <http://dti-associates.communityzero.com/assess>

You are now in the 'home page' for the Study Circle Online Community.

Highlight Section

The CommunityZero Highlight Section provides an area for items to be featured in the different views (folder and most recent) of each content tool including the What's New Page.

For our Study Circle, we will be using this section to feature the lessons plans for each week.

Calendar Tool

The CommunityZero Calendar Tool keeps everyone on track and improves efficiency across international time zones. By sharing critical timelines and dates with the team through the Calendar tool, team members are never left out of the loop. The Multi Calendar feature enables multiple calendars to be created for specific purposes and functions. All calendar entries are consolidated into one Global Calendar for unified dates or separate calendars for specific purposes.

Members can set their calendars to their own time zones and can easily set up group meetings across different time zones. When a remote user in a different time zone schedules an event, the date and time is converted to the local time of attendees. The calendar reminder feature allows members to set up e-mail reminders for any upcoming calendar entry and reminders are sent directly to your inbox. Calendar items can be linked to important information related to events, meetings, or conferences.

Discussion Tool

The CommunityZero Discussions Tool is critical for effective group collaboration. The Discussion tool easily facilitates discussions, conversations, brainstorming, and decision-making around various topics and issues. The discussion groups offer members added opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with one another, or with the entire community. Discussions groups are organized by topic and stored in user-defined folders or grouping for easy viewing. Discussion threads are user-friendly and easy to follow. Responses to the Discussion threads are entered in the Visual HTML Editor, which enables members to add web links or create additional graphic based content.

To start a new discussion group, members can simply start a new discussion topic of their choice with the HTML editor. Simply enter a new topic heading and then add content in the Visual HTML editor. Related links to discussion postings can be added to facilitate easier access between discussion and related content in Files or Articles. The discussion groups are organized within user-defined folders. Within the folders, discussions are further organized under topic areas. Members no longer have to search through entire threads to find the conversation they're looking for. Messages posted in the discussions

can be easily sorted in chronological or reverse chronological order. The simple to use interface enables members to quickly sort through the discussion threads to find what they're looking for. Members can quickly reply to another member's post by clicking on the reply button. This enables a member to reply directly to the post.

Files Tool

You can optimize your collaboration goals with the CommunityZero Files Tool. Members can securely share a vast array of files, documents and other content with the group for enhanced collaboration from anywhere, at anytime. Members can store, share, download, or upload a variety of files, including office documents, software programs, and multimedia files. With the user-friendly file folder-storing feature, members can easily search through files to find the information they're looking for. CommunityZero's Files tool supports the following file formats: MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat PDF.

Members can share ideas and solicit feedback on files by commenting on the posted files. Individuals from the Study Circle can provide their feedback on the file from anywhere at anytime. Members have a centralized area to view and assess the comments.

Articles Tool

With the CommunityZero Articles Tool, members can instantly publish and share content across the community using the Visual HTML Editor. You can enhance group collaboration efforts with the centralized repository for shared articles and eliminate the need for storing critical business information on individual computers.

The Articles tool is ideal for creating or posting news items, research documents, news releases, documentation, newsletters, sales forecasts, recommendations, project updates, and any other HTML based pages. Edit directly on the community with the Visual HTML editor to create and customize your content. Members can simply access articles stored in user-defined folders for cross-referencing and moderating.

Chat Tool

With the CommunityZero Chat Tool, members can carry on and conduct live conversations with other members who are logged in to the community at the same time. Why send a lengthy email that may end up buried in a mailbox when you can reach out to another member and get the answer you want immediately. Hold a live one-on-one conversation or hold group wide discussions by setting up a Chat event to make quicker decisions. Chat with the person you've been trying to get a hold of immediately by starting the online conversation with one click.

The tool allows you to immediately connect with other members of the community and share thoughts with each other about the posted content. While inside the community, a

‘Who’s On’ indicator shows how many community members are online and accessible for a real-time conversation. You can also schedule chat events ahead of time by using the Calendar tool to set up a group chat session with community members. Eliminate the need to send out a group email by posting the chat event with the time and details on the community.

Database Tool

With the CommunityZero Databases Tool, you can gather, solicit or provide critical information by setting up databases. Members can choose to import and export the entered information to an external file format, including Microsoft Excel. Using

CommunityZero’s database search and view features, records can be displayed to members in a tailored fashion.

Polls Tool

The CommunityZero Polls Tool gathers consensus for group based decisions. Live polls are ideal for gaining input on meeting times, market research, policy decisions, product planning, and much more. Members can run one poll or multiple ones at the same time on various topics. Votes are tabulated in real-time for instant results. The poll can be created, viewed, and posted within minutes. Members can also view previous polls or create future polls to begin at a later date. Polls can be set up to be public or anonymous depending on the voting topic.

Directions for Posting Case Studies and Implementation Plans on CommunityZero

- When you have completed your case study, go to the CommunityZero site.
- Select the File button on the left hand side
- Under “Folders”, select the folder for “Participants Case Studies”
- Click on “Add”
- Complete the field for “File” , click on “Browse” – Select where your file is on your desktop; Put in your name under “Name”
- Click on “Add” at the bottom of the page.
- Click on “Uploading” at the bottom of the page.

Sample Study Circle Work Plan

This work plan outlines all of the tasks and activities involved in launching and administering a successful Study Circle.

Task	Day	Person
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<p>Logistics/Technical:</p> <p>Recruit expert facilitators for Study Circle</p> <p>Contract with CommunityZero to establish the platform</p> <p>Train facilitator on how to use the Web platform</p>	<p>Day 1</p> <p>Day 1</p> <p>Day 5</p>	<p>Administrator</p> <p>Administrator</p> <p>Administrator/Facilitator</p>
<p>Content/Materials:</p> <p>Establish a reading list; submit reading list to Administrator</p> <p>Submit draft reading list and materials for approval</p> <p>Conduct conference call between facilitators and STAR team regarding reading materials</p> <p>Develop and finalize facilitator's outline/agenda</p> <p>Develop and finalize Study Circle materials for participants</p> <p>Place all necessary materials (reading list, user's guide, etc.) onto CommunityZero</p>	<p>Day 10</p> <p>Day 11</p> <p>Day 14</p> <p>Day 18</p> <p>Day18</p> <p>Day 20</p>	<p>Facilitator</p> <p>Administrator</p> <p>Administrator/Facilitator</p> <p>Administrator/Facilitator</p> <p>Administrator/Facilitator</p> <p>Administrator</p>
<p>Recruiting/Outreach:</p> <p>Recruit Participants</p> <p>Develop initial list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact individuals or program sites • Send out preliminary expectations, goals, objectives <p>Confirm participants</p> <p>Inform participants on purpose, expectations,</p>	<p>Day 1</p> <p>Day 11</p>	<p>Administrator/ Facilitator provide input on expectations, goals, etc</p> <p>Administrator</p>

topics, background materials on STAR, Study Guide, etc.	Day 14	Administrator
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Sample Study Circle Schedule

This schedule will assist facilitators and administrators in organizing a lesson plan based on the STAR guidelines and objectives and using the CommunityZero online platform.

Before Week 1:

- Study Circle guides, introductory information packets, and reading lists are sent to all participants.

Week 1:

- Kick-off conference call is conducted for all participants to set expectations, discuss procedures, and make introductions.
- Participants work on their case studies and discuss the week's reading assignment.

Week 2

- Facilitator works individually with participants on revising case studies and post final drafts.
- As case studies are posted, participants read and discuss them.
- Participants discuss the week's reading assignment.
- Due by the end of the week: case study – final draft (posted on Web site)

Week 3

- Participants continue to discuss solutions for challenges posted in case studies.
- Participants complete initial drafts of implementation plans for solving the challenge posed in their case study.
- Participants discuss the week's reading assignment.
- Due by the end of the week: implementation plan – initial draft

Week 4

- Facilitator works individually with participants on revising implementation plans and post final draft.
- As plans are posted, participants read and discuss them.
- Participants discuss the week's reading assignment.
- Due by the end of the week: implementation plan – final draft (posted on Web site)

Week 5

- Participants offer feedback on posted implementation plans.
- Participants revise implementation plans as necessary.
- Participants discuss the week's reading assignment.
- Final wrap-up conference call to discuss reactions to the Study Circle and next steps.
- Due at the end of the week: Study Circle evaluation

Sample Evaluation Questions

In an effort of to monitor the results of the Study Circles, participants are asked to complete an evaluation. The evaluations are administered via email and participants are given one week to reply with their answers.

- What are your thoughts about having participated in this Study Circle online? Have you participated in online professional development before?
- What are your thoughts on the length of the Study Circle?
- Was there enough time between the weekly sessions and assignments?
- Was the number of readings appropriate?
- Did the guiding questions prompt you to make connections between the readings and your work? Were there enough or too many?
- Were the conference calls useful?
- How do you feel about the using technology? What did you like? What did you not like?
- What would you do differently if you were to run a Study Circle like this one?
- What was the most valuable aspect of the Study Circle for you? Why?
- What's the one concept, strategy, or idea that you walk away from this Study Circle?